**A Reindeer Called ... Rollo?**

**From Gene Autry to Burl Ives,**

**the little reindeer with the bright red nose**

**has left his mark on Christmas.**

**Remember the ninth reindeer? He's the misfit reindeer with the bright red nose that lights up against his will -- making him feel like he won't ever really belong with Santa and the other reindeers at the North Pole. But that's just what we know from the movie, Uncle John went looking for Rudolph's real story. Here's what he learned.**

**What's in a Name? In 1939, Robert May, a copywriter for Montgomery Ward, was asked to write a Christmas poem for the holiday season. May came up with one he called "Rollo the Red-Nosed Reindeer." Executives of the company like the story, but didn't like the name Rollo. So May renamed the reindeer Reginald -- the only name he could think of that preserved the poem's rhythm. Montgomery Ward rejected that name, too. Try as he might, May couldn't come up with another name that fit -- until his four-year-old daughter suggested Rudolph.**

**A Little Reindeer Goes a Long Way: The poem was a huge success. Montgomery Ward published a little book out of it and sole some two and a half million copies that season. Ten years later, the popular story about trhe misfit reindeer was set to music by Robert May's brother-in-law, songwriter Johnny Marks. When the song was recorded by singing cowboy Gene Autry, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" (betcha can hear it now) became the second-best-selling Christmas single in history -- after "White Christmas."**

**Animagic Effects: But that's just the beginning of the little reindeer's popularity. Most of us have seen -- on a yearly basis perhaps -- the classic Animagic special, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, which aired for the first time in 1964 on the General Electric Fantasy Hour. In the show, Yukon Cornelius, Hermey the Elf, and the misfit toys all help Rudolph save Christmas. Narrated by Burl Ives, the TV special has been watched by an estimated 100 million families over the years. Today the show, and Rudolph, are permanently established in the Christmas tradition. *(Uncle John's Bathroom Reader - Christmas Collection, p. 83)***