

A Merry Christmas

God bless us all

God bless us, every one.
 The children who have been so happy at the Christmas parties. The adults who arranged them.
 The clergymen, and the people who go to church all times of the year, not just holidays. And the people who just go at Christmas Eve.
 The bandsmen and women, for the lovely annual concert Sunday.
 The town men, out sanding and grading all night as well as all day.
 Our councillors, speaking up for Acton and Esquesing all year, and helping make regional government come true.
 Our teachers, who aren't on

strike.
 Our post office staff, who aren't either.
 All our volunteer workers for all causes.
 All our paid workers in industries, who take pride in their work, be it tanning, extruding, saw making.
 Our service workers - restaurants, hairdressers, taxis, bakers, florists, cleaners... we need you all.
 Our housewives. To all women in International Women's Year. Something must have been gained in the struggle for recognition.
 God bless us every one.



MRS. ROSEMARY BLACK's kindergarten class at the Robert Little school tell their teddy bears what they want for Christmas. There were closing concerts at the school last week.

Free Press Editorial Page

Time to worship — separately

Here's a happy statistic for Christmas time... there are more people attending church on any given Sunday than people watching Canada's national sport on television on a Saturday night!
 The world is full of Christians, and what's more many of them go to church regularly.
 In their different churches, of course!
 How many people will take the opportunity this week to attend a candlelight service or Christmas

Eve service in a church they have never attended before?
 And would they receive a hearty welcome if they did?
 The fact there are so many denominations seems hard to justify. And the past year has been marked by more failure at efforts for churches to unite.
 Some day, surely, all Christian people will feel denomination makes no difference in their faith or method of worship.

Thanks to our librarian

Congratulations on a special anniversary for Mrs. Isobel Watson!
 On January 1 she celebrates the 50th anniversary of her hiring as librarian. And before that she has worked as an assistant librarian, while a young girl.

Her work in the library has been a labor of love all of those years. She enjoys the books and she enjoys the people.
 She is one of the dedicated people.
 A big New Year "thank you", Mrs. Watson!

Christmas jottings

Some letters to Santa Claus sound as if the writer would be handy to have around on a union executive. A few of them send Santa quite a list of demands, rather than requests.

Merchants were too busy to arrange a special Christmas shopping promotion this year. The Trip to Nassau draw was popular when it was on. But there has been no draw for the past two years now.

A challenge and celebration

Christmas, 1975, comes to a world that wants "peace on earth, goodwill to men." But the desires of much of the world, including our own strife-torn and uncertain Canada, stem more from weariness than from love. This world expects more from the flights of Henry Kissinger and the manoeuvres of Pierre Trudeau than from the flights and singing of angels.
 What then are we to make of Christmas this year?
 To many it is but a pleasant legend that takes us for a day or two from the daily drudgery of trying to make ends meet—a chance to forget how powerless many of us have become. To others, who treasure the celebration of human experience, Christmas is a bonus—an extra occasion, even an extra reason for celebration.
 But Christmas, as Christians understand it, is neither an idle legend nor a happy plus. It is a challenge to our human existence. It is an uplifting of our human existence. It calls for celebration, not because we need a party but because Christmas in reality upsets the life we have designed and changes the reason for celebrating.
 Unlike most of the mystic religions that are flowering today in the midst of our disillusion, Christmas faith proves that God does act in human history in unexpected ways and calls on a community to join his action.
 As realists we know that the home of a friend or relative is

bricks and mortar, wood and nails. It is a functional place, ornamented and often filled with comfort, but still a functional place that has no real feeling. But all that is changed and takes on meaning when we realize that a loved one or an old friend lives there. The silent walls speak a language of love.
 Something like that happens to human history when we remember that Jesus Christ lived here. The cosmos consists of matter and energy, as always. People and communities continue to act with mixed motives. Possibly peace among nations is a little more likely because of Christ, but we cannot be certain of that. Yet when we remember that Christ lived here, the walls and ramparts of the world speak a different language.
 We can say and believe then that we are about to enter "the year of our Lord 1976."
 —Unchurched editorials

Of this and that

Youngsters keep writing letters to Santa Claus right up until the last minute. The post office has been diverting them to the Free Press, and from here they're diverted to the North Pole, naturally.
 When you are in low spirit and discouraged, remember that the lowest ebb is the turn of the tide.

I have had trees so crooked that when they were finally raised after much sweat and many maledictions, it was like standing in the presence of a man with two wall eyes, one pointing west, the other east.
 My wife used to leave the house when I was putting up the tree. It was better that way.
 This time, she came home after two hours ready to help me decorate our handsome Spruce. She gave a shriek the moment she entered the house. She thought it was on fire. Clouds of blue smoke were pouring out of the living room. She heard the sound of weeping. Her heart almost stopped.



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

There is something terribly wrong around our house this year, as Christmas looms. I have a disturbing feeling that a catastrophe is in the offing.

What bothers me is that everything is going too well. Two weeks in advance, the turkey was ordered, special, fresh-killed, not one of those frozen, eviscerated, straw-tasting, morgue-like, pallid blobs we usually pick up at the last minute.

Christmas cards were dispatched on time (after those rotten posties ended their strike just a little too soon).

Christmas gifts were actually bought and wrapped almost a week in advance, instead of that mad lurch through the stores on Christmas Eve, snatching up broken toys, soiled sweaters and other junk a drunken lumberjack wouldn't buy, and bundling it into last second wrappings that were too skimpy.

We even knew two weeks in advance who was going to be here for Christmas. Many a time and oft, our kids have come popping in from hundreds of miles away as late as Christmas morning, without warning.

This year, it's just Pokey and his mom and dad, the old Battle Axe, and yours truly. Grandad is going to sit this one out at home, alone. Son Hugh won't be here. He'll be dining on roast llama in the highlands of Paraguay, if he's not in jail.

We even have a plum pudding all ready. You see what I mean? It is not only all wrong for the Smileys, it is virtually frightening. It has never happened before. It's got to be the calm before the storm. Something eerie is going to happen. Even my wife is becoming convinced we're going to get it in the groin, or some other vulnerable spot.

What has convinced me that the roof is going to fall in, the final piece of evidence, is the Christmas tree.

Not only was it purchased two weeks in advance, but it's a beauty, a blue Spruce about 10 feet high, that even looks like a Christmas tree. You know, it has branches all around instead of just one side.

This is ridiculous on all counts. My usual tree is bought the day before Christmas. It is one of the last four trees on a lot that held 300. It is covered with snow and ice. It is either eight feet tall and one foot wide, or it is hump-backed, or it is one half of a pair of Christmas tree Siamese twins, totally devoid of anything on the side you're not looking at.

I have had trees as bandy-legged as a cowboy. I have had huge White Pines, so vast I had to cut a couple of saw-logs off the bottom to get them into the house. One year I had a tree with so few branches on it that I had to drill holes in the trunk, and insert branches from another tree to make it look less skeletal.

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daughter and family arrived a couple of days after Christmas, it was still leaning there in the corner.

"What happened to the tree, Dad?" she queried in horrified disbelief.

"Ah... it was too dry; needles were falling off. Decided to take it down, throw it out." Brusquely.

"Needles? It hasn't even any branches left!"

Oh well, this year it's going to be different. Usually we have two trees, one small and one big. This year, just one, because of Pokey. I figure that if we mount a 24-hour guard, in shifts, we just might be able to prevent him from trying to climb it.

And my son-in-law claims to be an artist. So the tree is ready, and your faithful correspondent is going to sit in a big chair, reading the lives of the Saints, while the artist not only erects the tree, but decorates it.

All is golden, for once. And yet... and yet, I have this sense of unease. Things are too golden. A lump of lead is going to come out of somewhere and get me right between the eyes.

And may you, too, all of you, have a Merry, rather than a hairy, Christmas.

OUR READERS WRITE:

Cites 'conjured-up power'

To the Editor:
 How much of this force-fed diet can we take, before throwing up? It isn't enough that the Halton Board of Education bleeds us for \$59,500 for Norval school, but now Chairman Alexander says the board has to wait for Ministry approval to close the deal!

Is this the same Ministry, Judy that has no power over board programming? Is this the same Ministry, that has no power over our board's money expenditures? Is this the same Ministry, that when asked to enforce section 229 of the Education Act, Tom Wells says "No one has said these are laws to be obeyed. They are principals to be achieved."

Is this the same Ministry who when invited in to defend the people of Norval in their fight to keep their school open (along with Bill Davis) had no power to influence the dictates of the Halton Board of Education in this matter? Is this the Ministry who has no power over the actions of members of boards of education? Is this the Ministry who so far, has no power in influencing teachers' strikes? Is this the Ministry that

has chosen to hide behind the skirts of the Federal Government when this "power" is questioned? Aren't boards of education autonomous?

And now Judy would have us believe that this very same Ministry of Education all of a sudden has "power" to make its own decision on a real estate transaction of Norval school???

It would appear that this is a classic example of face-saving on the part of the board, because they have come to the half respectable price of a school that they didn't pay a red cent for in the first place.

Does Mrs. A. take us to be complete idiots? All of a sudden the Ministry has conjured up "power" or a reasonable facsimile?

Mrs. Judy Alexander will represent responsible parents and taxpayers of Halton as chairman for possibly yet another year.

It's enough to make me "regurgitate" all the way to the board meetings!

Christine Louth
 Committee chairman, H.E.A.L.
 Halton Hills.

'Daring to be Daniel'

To the Editors:
 Re the following statement made by Dr. Meyer, purveyor of the moral values education:

"The past few weeks and the past few years in Halton has certainly reinforced my conviction that moral values education is more needed than ever especially on the part of certain individuals. We are deeply concerned about the expression of Judeo-Christian Values..."

It is quite obvious from this statement that Dr. Meyer has no faith in the Judeo-Christian morals or values. Therefore, when he remarked in reply to a question put to him that during the time of the traditional values we had two world wars. I was not surprised or even perturbed because I had heard it so many times before.

Therefore, in spite of Ken Campbell's letter, it seemed a little ridiculous that the Board of Education should make such an issue over it for they must know that this philosophy abounds in the educational world. We are always being told that the world has changed; that the old values don't count any more and the very fact that

they are so anxious to foist the secular and intellectual reasoning philosophy has taken the place of the traditional values under which we did have two world wars.

So why all the fuss? Isn't it fashionable to downgrade war? Isn't it fashionable to say what fools the last generation were to go off and fight. Our prime minister is one of the intellectuals who was not so foolish; he avoided the conflict and he came out on top. Isn't it fashionable to quote the trials at Nuremberg every time someone issues an unpopular order; isn't it fashionable to see intellectual forces made of the 'innocence' of the lads who went?

So Ken Campbell got mad because he felt that somewhere along the line the traditional Christian values which were the backbone of the English speaking world have been elobbered, good and hard. And not many people, least of all the Christians themselves have really "Dared to be a Daniel" in order to circumvent the insidious social philosophies which have crept into our society.

Even those people who don't go to church but profess to be Christians by virtue of

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The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, December 29, 1955
 A surprise gathering was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Davidson on Friday evening to celebrate their 40th anniversary.

The family of Tom Munt, forced from their small home near Silvercreek last week when fire raged through the structure, destroying it, all their furniture and personal belongings, found many with spirit of Christmas and sympathetic to their plight.

Two masses will be celebrated in St. Joseph's church each Sunday beginning New Year's Day. Rev. Father V. J. Morgan announced on the weekend. Constant overcrowding has necessitated the new arrangement. The Masses will be held at 9 and 10.30 a.m.

License plates for 1956 will go on sale January 3, and must be purchased by January 31, giving Ontario motorists a month's grace on their 1955 plates, it was learned this week.

Firemen were roused from their beds early Monday morning to answer a call to the Mill St. home of S. Brunelle. Considerable smoke filled the house but little damage was caused after the blaze was traced to an air foam mattress in a basement room occupied by a roomer. Some bedding, in addition to the mattress, was damaged.

Mr. and Mrs. Jean Marcoux, Michael and Mary Frances are spending Christmas and New Year's in Quebec City at the home of his mother.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, of Thursday, December 24, 1925

Just one day more for Christmas shopping. Merchants of Acton have out done themselves in securing stock that is new and most acceptable at this season of the year. No effort has been spared to provide attractive goods.

A large number of hands are out of work in Milton. The loss of work at the brick yards will be serious for them and their families.

Acton Post Office has been one of the busiest places in the community during the past ten days. The mails have been crowded with Christmas matter and Postmaster Matthews with his Deputy Miss Brown and their assistants have indeed been hard-worked civil servants.

A meeting of the Public Library Board was held at Moorcroft to consider the applications received for the position of Librarian rendered vacant by the resignation of Miss Lettie Scott. Mrs. Perry Watson was chosen from the five applicants, all of excellent character. It was evident that the fact Mrs. Watson was assistant librarian for several years prior to her marriage had weight with the members. The salary was fixed at the same amount paid to Miss Scott.

Mr. A. T. Brown has been favoring the public on Mill St. with Christmas carols over the radio. They have been remarkably clear and distinct.

Some Georgetown citizens are so enamored of dancing they are even doing it on Sundays.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 16, 1875

The many friends of Mrs. R. Little will be glad to learn she is rapidly recovering from the severe affliction with which she has been prostrated the last two weeks.

A fruit and oyster business has just been opened by Mr. Geo. Stoddard. We have no doubt he will receive a good share of patronage.

We learn from Mr. J. H. Lloyd that he purposes opening a night school in Matthews Hall two evenings a week for instruction in writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, orthography and elocution. He will also give lessons in Latin and French. We have no doubt a large number of our young men will avail themselves of his services.

We, the undersigned, have agreed to close our places of business at 4 p.m.—James Matthews, Christie Henderson and Co., Secord Bros., J. W. Mann, Kennedy Bros., G. M. Scott, Dickson and McNabb, Chas. T. Hill, Robert Craine, G. E. Morrow.

A large number of petitions, signed by women, were presented to the Legislature in favor of further restriction in the liquor traffic. The ladies of Milton also got up a petition to limit the number of tavern licenses to one per thousand of the inhabitants, and to abolish saloon and store licenses.

Six pairs of Ailsa Craig curling stones have been ordered by the Milton curling club.

Guelph Armory—manufacturers and importers of breech and muzzle loading rifles, shotguns, etc. Revolvers of every description always on hand. Rifle gallery on the premises.

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