

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1875

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Avoid the rush . . .

by Robin Inscoc

There was a time when people would take a day or two before Christmas and do their annual shopping for the holiday season. This is fast becoming an impossibility.

In today's world of fast escalating prices it seems you must start saving as soon as one Christmas is over for the next.

High prices are evident at this time of year, even more so than only two and three months ago.

This Christmas season I thought I would try something different, at least for me.

It was October when I trekked out to do my Christmas shopping this time around. There were no Christmas "SALES" or even decorations lining the aisles in the stores I visited.

From shop to shop I travelled looking for just the right item, size and color. The prices were high but complaining about it is totally useless. I made my purchases and prepared to sit back while others I know began preparing their lists and getting ready to head into the totally crazed world of Christmas shoppers.

When December came my gifts were all wrapped and put away waiting for the 25th but curiosity got the best of me and I headed to a nearby mall just to watch the crowds and maybe pick up a few odds and ends that I had overlooked, like something for my dog and cat.

At the mall I found Santa Claus, decorations galore the Christmas "SALES" and shoppers by the groves. You couldn't move for bumping into someone. The line-ups and the check out counters were unreal, but the most

Christmas wishes . . .

By Eric Elstone

What do you want most for Christmas is the question you, as parent ask of your son, daughter or children. Most often, I think, replies are for things such as books, records, toys, camera, trips and, well you know what you have to buy, between now and next Tuesday.

What if number one son or daughter asked you; what do you want most for Christmas, what would you say? Here's what I'd say; if I had a son or daughter to ask: I wouldn't know, at first. The question means different things to the grown up than to the child. That's natural.

I've got all the things one really needs to get by in the late '70s. Things are no problem.

I'd like for us to stop scaring ourselves with outsized "monsters" such as what ever it is in the Alien—a movie, Star Wars, Star Trek are money-making entertainments; which amuse us for about two hours at a showing. So what!

I'd like to see people return to entertaining themselves with music, conversation, story telling and other human scale activities. We do not need the million-dollar apparatus to keep us happy. The return in terms of enrichment for the spirit is puny compared to the investment.

I'd very much like to see the so-called "me generation" wake up in whichever bed it slumbers in, and understand there is much more important studies than the

surprising thing I found was how quickly prices rise, especially at this time of year.

I checked out the prices of some of the items I had bought two months earlier and despite being marked with a big red "SPECIAL" sticker the prices were still increased by ten per cent. On sale no less, I wonder what the regular price would have been increased to.

I can no longer see how anyone can go out the beginning of December and buy, buy, buy. It is becoming a time when a 'buck' is not so easy to come by and saving a couple here and a couple there are very important.

Maybe the time to start collecting Christmas gifts for next year is now or the middle of June. Christmas can no longer be a holiday of giving and receiving that people think about for one month of the year. If you don't start making purchases early you wind up paying 'through the nose' for things and it is not always what you are looking for.

Shopping early saved me many headaches this year. I know I would be upset if I had to pay ten per cent more for things one day when I know they were cheaper a short time earlier. I also had little trouble finding what I was looking for, they certainly weren't sold out of the size I wanted or the type of game I was looking for.

I have shopped both ways, in the rush, and long before, and believe me it was much easier this time around.

All things considered I feel last minute, day or week shopping is fast becoming an impossibility. See you next July when I'm doing my Christmas shopping.

pursuit of narcissism. For Christmas I'd like someone to erase all the dull, death and injury happy statistics insurance companies thrive on. People who think with their wallets could be filled with the spirit—"To life". Life today.

I want the killers of all nations to take a page out of the book that was written this week in London—the book on the new peace in Rhodesia. Out of a most difficult, complex and tragic war someone has worked the nuts and bolts correctly to stop the slaughter. Look on Cambodia and hope.

No less seriously, I ask for Christmas, a set of politicians who will mean exactly what they say when they mouth the words: "I promise." If they can't promise; I should like them to say so. If not, "the only way we're going to be able to tell if someone is telling truths is if we get him to swear so on the Bible."

The words—Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men—come from one of the season's nicest carols. I've sung them; so have most of you. For Christmas, this Christmas, I'd like to hear them backed with as strong a connection with what we foolishly call reality as the concerns behind the everyday question: Where do we go from here? What's for dinner? Why do things always seem to go wrong. Do you love me? Do we have enough?

I also hope the children understand their replies from Moms and Dads.



Christmas Joy

May the light of the Yuletide holiday guide the way for everyone.



Temperatures which dipped below freezing put a glassy surface on the north arm of Fairy Lake. Canada Geese found the mirror-like surface a puzzle. Some landed and skidded to a stop. Others flopped and flipped unable to get firm footing on the ice. The comedy was watched with glee by residents along Elizabeth Drive.

The night Snoopy froze

by Helen Murray

Learning the true meaning of Christmas is an emotional time in one's life, especially when the truth comes out with the near death of someone you love very much.

My family had acquired the mutt Snoopy that summer. He was an inquisitive dog, and liked to get into everything. Thus, he was usually covered in something casting a repugnant odor. Being a sensitive teenager, I preferred to just ignore the dog rather than risk the chance of getting the smell on my clothes as I headed out to school. Our relationship grew no further than letting her out every few hours.

Christmas Eve in Collingwood is just not right without a snow-storm. As a young child, even if the ground was green when we went to bed, we felt assured it would be white by morning. That year was no exception.

I let Snoopy out for his regular run as my family and I were heading out to the midnight church service. When we got home, we all presumed someone else had brought her in.

In the morning, the snow was drifted high and cold winds shuddered the entire house. The back door was pinned shut with the pile of white stuff mother nature had so kindly dumped.

It was my sister's job to let Snoopy out for his morning constitutional. It was only then we realized he was nowhere to be found. We all immediately got dressed and trudged out in the storm to find him. My Dad spotted him first, frozen stiff by the garage door. We thought our pet was dead. Our Christmas morning was devastated.

Then, a faint heartbeat was discovered and we rushed him into the house. I set Snoopy in my lap while I opened the massive pile of gifts. As the morning wore on, I could feel life come back to his body. He sort of thawed out.

It was like a miracle. The gifts around me seemed to fade as I realized how much I loved my dog. All the presents in the world could not replace that animal if he did not survive his wintry ordeal. I patted him for hours, helping the circulation return to various parts of his body.

Then when all the gifts were unwrapped and the cleaning up process going on, Snoopy stretched his body out, slowly stood up, turned around and gave me a kiss and walked over to her favorite spot beside my Dad's chair. My last gift was the best—the reassurance my dog was going to be okay.

As with every dog we ever had, a small present sat high on the tree for Snoopy. However, in the worry to revive him we had forgotten about it. Around nine o'clock Christmas night, Snoopy stood at the foot of the tree and did his little "give me something" jig. I looked at the tree and noticed his gift. I lifted it down and he took it from my hand, knowing it was his.

Snoopy wasn't around the next year. A rash of dognappings in the area claimed the life of many pets in town, and Snoopy was one of them. However, even though we only had him ten months, Snoopy taught me more than any other pet we ever owned.

Christmas is a day to show the love you are unable to show the rest of the year.

A Christmas pot pourri

by Hartley Coles

When I awoke last Tuesday morning I could see large flakes of snow falling softly in the spruce trees in the back yard.

The flakes reminded me Christmas would be a reality in less than a week, last minute shopping would soon be necessary and it was time to wash my hair.

The flakes also reminded me of the late Bing Crosby's Yule hit, "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas." Only a few minutes before radio announcers predicted we would have a green Christmas. The weather is going to turn mild and continue in that vein until Boxing Day, wiping out all the thoughts of the traditional Canadian Yuletide with its soft, falling snow reflecting myriad of colored lights festooning homes and business places.

Somehow most of us like to have snow for Christmas and then, except for the ski and snowmobile buffs, curse it for the rest of the winter. Both moods are traditional. Despite the relatively short life of this country we treasure traditions.

To me the coming festival of Christmas is fundamentally

religious. Although I enjoy the secular and profane parts of the holiday as well it is the religious message which is paramount in my mind despite all the fluff about falling snow and Dickensian characters singing carols under flickering gaslight.

It seems to me radios and TV did themselves proud this year by holding back on the carols and secular Christmas music until a week or so before Christmas. Other years I've heard the familiar carols and Rudolph the Red Nose around the end of November, which disgusted me.

Probably part of the reason for my disgust is I haven't got the time to listen properly in the weeks before Yuletide. It is a busy time in the newspaper game and frazzled nerves don't appreciate the message behind all the music and glad tidings of great joy.

If I had my way all radio stations would not be allowed to broadcast any Christmas music until two or three days before the big event. Then they would be allowed to come out all systems blazing that triumphant Christmas music by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert and other great composers including Handel and his

Messiah. They should continue playing the festive music until New Year's. Usually they dry up after Christmas Day and I miss much of the enjoyment of the season.

But these are selfish thoughts. I know there are other people who enjoy the spirit and music of Christmas for all the weeks before the big day, erect their tree weeks ahead of the event and generally enjoy themselves for a month.

At our place the tree is up. It stands forlornly in the living room sans any decorations. And it will likely sit that way until a couple of days before Christmas.

In deference to my neighbors I threw some outdoor lights on the cedars beyond the front thresholds. Each evening I throw the switch that sets them aglow with greens, reds and blues, helping to turn the street into a winter fairyland.

So you see I'm not such an old grouch after all. And in that spirit I wish you and yours the very best in this season and with the heavenly chorus sing, "Glory to God in the highest and peace to men of good will."

Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Wednesday, December 17, 1969.
 Did Price was presented with an autographed axe, coffee table and life membership in the fire brigade at ladies' night. He is retiring after 20 years on the fire brigade.
 Joe Hurst at the town office will accept DDT, now banned for home use. He expects to just "keep it" until he hears from the province.
 At the Christmas meeting of Dublin WI, life memberships were presented to Mrs. Alex Near, Mrs. William McIntyre and Mrs. Willard Britton.
 Due to new provincial legislation, there will be no Christmas tree burning this year.
 Safety patrol from the schools attended a special dinner arranged by Cons. Roy Woods. They presented gifts to crossing guards Cam Leishman, George Paul and Jack Scriven.
 Norm Braida is chairman of the Canadian Shoe and Leather Fair.
 The largest crowd ever attended the Christmas Band concert. Guest artists were the Legion Chorales.
 Congregations of the United and Anglican churches will join together for Christmas Eve communion.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, December 23, 1959.
 Christmas stockings were presented to the kindergarten classes of Miss Alice Sidey and Miss Betty Fosbury by ladies of Acton WI.
 Mrs. G. Somerville was hostess to Dublin WI for their Christmas meeting. Mrs. C. Britton impersonated Santa Claus.
 The annual Santa Claus party was held at the fire hall Sunday. Fire Chief Jack Newton was MC.
 A gold wrist watch was presented to Mrs. Ray Wallis by the PUC and Acton council, prior to her resignation at the end of the year.
 Over 300 crowded the auditorium of the Legion for the annual party. Sam Brunelle and his committee had everything well organized.
 About 30 girls took part in the annual CGIT service at Knox church. The candlelighting ceremony was conducted by Linda Parker, Mary Wilds and Geraldine Calder.
 Beardmore employees' Christmas party for about 450 children was held in the Robert Little auditorium.
 50 years ago

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, December 19, 1929.
 All of childhood and much of the older element was out in full force on Christmas Eve and assembled at the corner of Mill and Main at the Community Christmas Tree. (Old Santa Claus arrived with a big sleigh load full of Christmas treats, with the band playing Jingle Bells. Each of over 600 children received a treat and the band led in the singing of Christmas Carols.
 Superintendent Wilson had made an excellent job of lighting the tree. The True Blue Lodge will distribute treats to any children who were unable to be there.
 Treats to the value of \$75.50 were given out at the Town Hall in connection with the Shoemakers' Concert and Christmas Tree. During the distribution of prizes, solos were sung by Miss Jessie Coles, Mrs. Ernest Coles and Rigby Cross.
 Acton's new arena, was formally opened by Reeve Mason on Christmas night. After the speeches there was a carnival with prizes. Cost of the arena is \$15,000, and the curling rink has two splendid sheets of ice. All the usable equipment is retained from the old rink, given by Beardmore, who have also helped in many ways.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Free Press of Thursday, December 18, 1879.
 The shop windows of our merchants are resplendent with beautiful things. Do not forget that there are the poor among us who should be remembered.
 A concert will be given in the Temperance Hall on Saturday evening 26th inst. by the Concert Troupe of the Mohawk and Chippewa Indian Vocalists of the New Credit, Grand River reservation. The company includes Mr. Mah Koonce, the renowned Profundo Basso. Proceeds in aid of the organ fund of the New Credit Mission church. Indians to appear in full national costume.
 The anniversary of the Sabbath School of the Methodist church will be held on Christmas Eve. The entertainment will consist of music by the Church Choir, dialogues and recitations by the children of the school, and a Christmas tree will be unladen at the close of the Entertainment Tea at 7 p.m.
 Mrs. D. Henderson will give a social on Monday evening at residence, Glasgow House, Acton. Proceeds in aid of Knox church Sabbath School.
 Sleighing is splendid and hurrah for the Christmas rides.