

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Do It On Home Ground

There may not be much snow on the ground, or even too much frost in the air, but winter is upon us, and with it, the Christmas season.

Most of us still face one great requirement: Christmas shopping. It matters not if we believe that Christmas is too commercial, or not commercial enough: each of us thinks about giving.

And giving means getting. When you think about getting, or buying, this season, think about shopping at home.

By at home, we mean shopping in the community in which you reside. Living next to large centres of population always raised the attraction of shopping where the stores are bigger and the lights are

brighter. But the deals aren't necessarily better or the selection much greater. There may only be more stores to visit.

For most of us, if not all of us, Christmas buying can be done with success close to our front doors. In small communities, the people know the merchants and the merchants know the people. The one should rely on the other.

There are bargains to be had in our home town, there is a wide array of merchandise to fit gift lists. And there is the knowledge that shopping can be quick and convenient.

This Christmas, do yourself and your community a favor, and settle your yuletide shopping on home ground.

An Oldtime Christmas

Christmas cheer among the earliest pioneers in Upper Canada varied greatly, for what we think of as Christmas fare was very scant. In the earliest period before the War of 1812, salt pork, potatoes and Indian corn were the only supplies available.

To obtain flour, the settler's grain had to be carried—often on his back—to a distant mill for grinding. Children were fed porridge made from Indian corn, boiled sometimes for a whole day to produce a soft mush. Occasionally the settlers were able to shoot partridge, pigeon or game, but powder and shot were scarce, and fish, while plentiful, took time to catch. With little or no fencing, chickens and livestock could not be kept because of the all-enclosing forest, into which they were likely to stray and be lost.

As for the quality of the pioneer cooking, Dr. William Dunlop, the "Backwoodsman", who wrote one of the earliest accounts of life in Canada, quotes the old saw: "God sends meat and the devil cooks".

Not surprising, since without cold storage facilities, butter, milk and cheese soon become rancid.

As the years passed and conditions improved, holiday fare became more plentiful. Ann Langton, in her journal (published as "A Gentlewoman in Upper Canada") describes a Christmas party in 1838, just a year after the Rebellion. Ann tells of "popping three plum puddings into the pot for a holiday dinner, which included 'soup, boiled pork (the national dish), roast goose, chicken pie and vegetables, with a second course of plum pudding, apple tart and a trifle'".

Winters were really cold in those early days. The winter of 1833, the mercury froze in the thermometer, which touched 40 below zero.

But travel on Upper Canada's primitive roads was better when they were snow-packed. And Christmas visiting was popular, the snugly dressed guests arriving in sleighs or even in wagon boxes mounted on runners.

The Welfare Humbug

Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

That's not a realistic greeting for the welfare community. For them Christmas is a frightening experience—seasoned with booze, shattered hopes, blighted dreams.

Dare we slip them a Christmas bonus—to make life a pinch more joyous? Even that special Commission of Senators inquiring into the wages of poverty 3 years ago, suggested a minimum wage floor through which the poor shouldn't be allowed to plunge. But welfare remains fragmentary, arbitrary, close-fisted—and subject to whim.

For instance, Quebec has just raised payment to foster parents to \$75 and \$100 a month, which sounds great but it favors one group at the expense of another.

Parents on welfare must pay, through deductions, for their children in detention or foster homes to the tune of \$37 to \$42 per month.

Perhaps if we paid welfare families the same rate as foster parents they would be able to care for their own children more adequately.

It is a delightful Christmas present idea.



TIME TO PASS THE PEACE PIPE

BILL SMILEY

Do They Ever Grow Up? Some Parents Wonder

Perhaps someone who has gone the whole course can tell me when one's children stop depending on their parents when it comes to the clutch.

Is it in their forties, fifties, sixties? Certainly it is not in their twenties.

Recently we received a note from our son Hugh, to tell us he was taking some holidays and would be home for a few days visit.

I thought, "Good. He's saved some money and won't arrive broke, as usual." He had.

OFF TO CHICAGO?

Some days later, in a telephone conversation with daughter Kim, we learned that Hugh had dropped in to see her, and had drifted off, muttering something about going to Chicago. That is a slightly roundabout way of getting to our place.

And a few days later there was a collect call from Houston, Texas. You guessed it. Hugh, flat broke. Could we wire him money for bus fare to get home?

He was crafty enough to call when I was at work. I would probably have refused the collect call, and regretted it later. Or I'd have shouted, "No, I will not send you the price of one serving of Kentucky fried chicken!" and slammed up the receiver.

But he sweet-talked his mother for five minutes before he popped the question. She was not only affronted but taken aback and didn't think quickly enough to tell him we were just off to Florida or the west coast or anywhere.

She waffled a bit, and eventually said she'd see what his Dad said but not to expect anything. He sighed with relief and told her where to send the money.

But that other kid. She's a different matter. She's almost a mother. And she pulled a swifty on us this week. Another collect call, on Sunday. Nice to hear her. Asked how big the tummy was. All very maley and maternal.

Then came the punch line. Don, her husband, was with their cat, to put in our care. He had to hitchhike because he couldn't bring the cat on a bus. Her mother nearly blew a cork. The danged cat isn't trained.

OFF WITH THE SHOES

I came home from work on a Friday after a hard week. All I wanted was to get my shoes off, have a quiet drink before dinner, and read the latest goodies about the energy crisis.

And all I got was a family crisis—a scramble to the bank, and a dash to get to the telegraph office before it closed for the weekend.

At first I stood my ground. Not a penny. Let him starve in Houston. At least he won't freeze to death (he'd airily told his mother it was 90 degrees down there.)

And she agreed with me. "He doesn't deserve a cent. He was told he was never to do that again. Ungrateful young pup. Why doesn't he hitchhike home?"

"Well," I said, "some of those southern states are pretty tough on hitchhikers. Throw them in jail for a month."

I could just see her thinking of her first-born slaving on a Georgia chain-

20 YEARS AGO

Warden J. M. McDonald, reeve of Acton was host to more than 60 guests at the annual Halton County warden's dinner, held in Burlington.

Only a light vote was reported in Georgetown municipal elections. In Ward 3, a political newcomer, W. S. Orr, headed the polls.

District governor Walter Fisher of St. Catharines was a guest of the Georgetown Lions Club. He was introduced by club president Ralph Ross, with thanks extended by Bill Long.

Mild weather was the rule this December, with only a shower of light snow recorded. The Herald reported a high temperature of 42 with lows never going below 25.

Bible Verse

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:15

gang or something of the sort. After a heated half-hour, we agreed that money isn't everything, that you can't take it with you, that he's the only son we have, that it would be nice to see him, that I'd better hustle if I wanted to get to the bank in time.

It cost me about \$115, counting the bus fare and grub to get home, the cost of the collect call, and the charge for sending the money.

GOOD MONEY AFTER GOOD

This is what I call sending good money after good. Of course, Hugh wouldn't dream of accepting a gift. It was strictly a loan. According to his figures, he now owes me \$380.00 without interest, and will have the whole thing paid off any time now.

According to my figures, he owes me \$380.46, at eight per cent interest, and he'll never pay it off.

This has been happening to me for years. First, the kids go to their mother, and soften her up. Then she comes to me, and softens me up. Then I go back to the kids and practically apologize for being so slow with the loot.

Of course, I reason, Hugh's only a kid. Practically a baby. He won't be twenty-seven until July. You can't expect him, at that tender age, to know enough to save some money for bus fare home!

But that other kid. She's a different matter. She's almost a mother. And she pulled a swifty on us this week. Another collect call, on Sunday. Nice to hear her. Asked how big the tummy was. All very maley and maternal.

Then came the punch line. Don, her husband, was with their cat, to put in our care. He had to hitchhike because he couldn't bring the cat on a bus. Her mother nearly blew a cork. The danged cat isn't trained.

ABSOLUTE HAVEN FOR INCIDENTALS

BY DON O'HEARN

TORONTO—"TOADS: There might still be people who believe you can get warts from toads.

"This, of course, is an old-wife's tale."

"Warts on a toad's back are really glands."

How's that for a piece of scintillating, incidental information? Passed on to you indirectly from the news letter of the ministry of natural resources.

One of the incidental and little known aspects of this centre of government is that it is, or would be, an absolute haven for any magpie of incidental information.

Thousands and thousands of words, thoughts and observations, from the daily to the fantastical, flow factually from the reports, speeches, studies, pamphlets, news releases and just plain statements of the many segments of government and the many members of the Legislature.

Example: "Surprisingly, people get drunk from the feet up."

Ontario Traffic Safety quotes that rare item of information from Dr. A. Eugene Le Blanc of Addiction Research Foundation.

Intended as advice to try to drink standing on your head? "No, a caution that your driving is only as good as your feet, which get boiled first."

NOBODY HOME: The smallest municipality in Ontario? Bet you don't know this one.

It's the township of Cockburn Island in the District of Manitoulin.

Its population? Zero! That's from a speech by Treasurer John White.

And when can the needle cure the disease of the needle? It is used in acupuncture.

At least that's the claim of Fred A. Burr, NDP member for Sandwich-Riverside.

So we have two additions to the household this week. Two fat cats. One in the backyard, yowling to get in. The other watching TV, sleeping till noon, and waiting to put the bite on me for more bus fare back to his job in Quebec.

I shoulda been a cranky old bachelor.

O'CONNOR'S OTTAWA

by TERRY O'CONNOR, MP for Halton

One of the least important issues in Ottawa at present, ranking about 56th after energy, inflation, unemployment, UIC and 51 others is the one concerning private members and their written questions on the order paper.

In their role of government expenditure watchdogs and policy performance critics, backbenchers, and especially opposition backbenchers, have the right to submit written questions to the government about its activities.

These queries are recorded in Hansard and are reprinted at frequent intervals until answered. They dig, pry and attempt to expose all manner of government foibles, mis-spending of public funds and things done or not done by ministers and departments.

They include questions about the cost of the Prime Minister's trips, the number of people he took along, how much business was actually done and questions on the number of prisoners in penitentiaries over the last 20 years, their sentences, and the average cost of keeping such prisoners.

The contentious issue arises between the government and the opposition parties. The government says that the opposition is asking far too many questions, the answers to which are public knowledge and that in any event their record of answering them is exemplary. The opposition says that it takes exorbitantly long periods to get answers and even when answers are forthcoming, they are incomplete and evasive.

To the end of November, some 3,367 questions had been placed on the Order Paper. A large majority of them (82 per cent) had been answered within a reasonable time, usually about six weeks. But they tended to be the ones which caused little embarrassment to the government or could be easily evaded.

The politically sticky ones remain unanswered. For instance, two questions asked the first day of the session, January 4, have still not been dealt with. They seek information on the amounts of money spent by departments on outside consulting services, the names of those who got contracts and particulars of the contracts. Answers would obviously expose something of the government patronage machine. Many more in this vein remain from February, March and April.

The issue blows up into a shouting match in the House about once a month. Usually John Reid (L. Rainy River) quotes statistics of questions answered in jig time all in defence of the government's stellar performance of its responsibility to the Canadian people. Tom Cousitt (P.C. Leeds) usually harangues on about incredible delays, gross inefficiencies and government fears of the truth.

Most questions are seriously seeking information. Some are asked to cause political embarrassment. Nearly all of those not answered are left so in an attempt to avoid political umbrage.

Recently, in frustration Tom Cousitt asked for the names and the job designations of the persons assigned to answering his many long-unanswered questions. Determined follow, he.

If you have a problem, idea, comment, criticism or if you simply wish to get in touch with me, please stop by my hiding office at 325 Lakeshore Rd. E., Oakville, or telephone Fran Baines at 877-8475.

READER'S FORUM

Charity Concept Refuted

Sir: With reference to the report in The Herald of last week entitled, "Halton To Keep Support For Local Charitable Services," may I

through your columns make a rebuttal to Reeve Morrow's concept of charity and to his objections of grants being made to local services.

What constitutes "charity"? A grant was made last year by the Halton County Council to the North Halton Homemaker Service, (not to the Georgetown Red Cross as reported in your column last week). This Homemaker Service is applying for a grant again this year. The Service tries to help people who are neither so poor that Family Services will assist, nor rich enough to pay the whole cost of having a Homemaker when the wife and/or mother is so incapacitated that the family cannot function properly. This Service functions financially and administratively independently of the Red Cross and relies on a grant to keep it in operation.

Recently, members of the Regional Municipality of Halton voted themselves annual salaries for performing a service to the taxpayers of the Region. Such a remuneration provides for the well-being of just one person. Grants made to such organizations as the Burlington Rotary Club, the North Halton Homemaker Service, the Multiple Sclerosis Association go for the well-being of a large group of taxpayers of the Region.

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persons who have a real need for financial and other help. May the taxpayers' money be given where it is really needed.

Congratulations to those members of the Regional Council who understand the true meaning of the word "charity" and who also seem able to assess priorities.

Richard C. Perrott  
One Member of the  
Homemaker Service  
Executive

New Chief Wished Best

Sir: The issue of your paper today (Dec. 5) states that our present police chief in Georgetown will be replaced by the present Milton chief, Ray Andrews, on Jan. 1, 1974.

Floyd Schwartz, who came only recently to Georgetown, has given a very credible performance, and we wish him well in his new position.

I have known Ray Andrews for many years, when he was with the Ontario Provincial Police at Milton, and subsequently as chief of Milton.

At Milton, he has won the confidence and support of the council and of the public and has established a force second to none for the size of its membership. We wish him the best.

Ed. A. Peters  
Georgetown

asking people to boycott California grapes.

In this way, we are urging all concerned citizens of Georgetown to aid the farm workers in achieving justice and democracy for the farmers of North America by not buying California grapes.

M.F. Mills, Georgetown  
John Hole, Georgetown  
for the Georgetown Grape  
Boycott Committee

Grape Boycott Pushed By Georgetown Group

Sir: In your issue of Nov. 21, you carried an informative letter from Bob Melcombe concerning the California grape boycott.

Since that time, a group of concerned Georgetown citizens has formed the Grape Boycott Support Committee to aid the cause of the United Farm Workers. We will be distributing leaflets, speaking before local organizations and

asking people to boycott California grapes.

In this way, we are urging all concerned citizens of Georgetown to aid the farm workers in achieving justice and democracy for the farmers of North America by not buying California grapes.

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Total Lack Of Concern

Sir: The provincial and federal governments have asked citizens to conserve energy, in light of current evidence of diminishing resources. This seems a reasonable request. Responsible people will cooperate.

One is not encouraged to make sacrifices, however, when others show a total lack of concern. An obvious disregard is shown by public utilities, municipalities, citizens or businesses who show outdoor Christmas lighting.

Indoor lighting seems acceptable, for it contributes to warmth in buildings and to its inhabitants. Business or others who use outdoor Christmas lights indicate their irresponsibility; and we individuals are discouraged from voluntary restraints.

Therefore, it is necessary for legislation to restrict use of energy for all members of society in order that everyone gets a fair share.

—Mr. and Mrs. R. Hansen  
Norval

Lights Or Donations?

Sir: In view of the present shortage of world energy, surely Georgetown Town Council should reconsider its recent purchase and future installation of \$5,000 worth of Christmas lights. Just yesterday, Donald MacDonald, Federal Energy Minister, recommended that individuals limit their Christmas lighting to a few hours a day; how can the use of \$5,000 worth of Christmas lights be justified?

Since Christmas is a time for goodwill amongst men-women, would it not be more humanitarian for the Town of

Georgetown to donate the above money to any-all the service clubs in Georgetown or to a community project such as a recycling project? Having participated in a recycling survey which gained overwhelming support by the town residents, we were amazed to learn that neither the Works Committee nor the Town Council were willing to show any support for this worthwhile project. Considering once more the world resource and energy situation, why has this project not received support?

Mr. and Mrs. R. Sheekey

Housewife As Politician; It's A Complicated Life

The poor housewife has to consider a lot of angles when she makes her weekly shopping list. The most obvious is the rising cost of food. And then there's the question of how nutritious it is. Now she has to ask herself whether she is encouraging exploitation by buying the products she does.

Some people have been avoiding South African goods in protest against that country's racial policies. More recently coffee and grapes have been the objects of boycotts.

In the Portuguese colony of Angola, Africans (including the children) are liable to do forced labor on plantations, in the process being snatched from their homes north to the coffee growing areas.

They work under brutal conditions for starvation wages: in 1970 the average white agricultural worker earned \$1685, the average black \$48. Last year the Canadian government voted for a UN resolution expressing sympathy for the liberation movements in Portuguese Africa and condemning the ruthless measures of troops like the destruction of villages, and the bombing and sniping of civilians to dominate the black majority. Yet last year too the Canadian people were the third largest customers for Angolan coffee, and their purchases contributed at least \$1.3 million toward the colonial warfare.

There are parallels in the lot of the Mexican-American grape workers in California. The laws against child labor are rarely enforced, yet whole families are working make only about \$3000 a year. Working and living conditions are poor: the infant mortality rate is 125 per cent above the national average. Their plight, though not as pronounced as the Angolans', still makes a vivid contrast to what the average north American can expect.

In most parts of this continent, the day of unions fighting for basic rights is long past, but that is not so in California. A boycott pressured growers to sign contracts with the United Farm Workers in 1970, bringing many improvements (such as controlling the use of dangerous pesticides near the workers).

But the contracts have expired, and the growers are fighting not to sign new ones. The workers responded with a new strike and boycott. Because of intimidation and violence at the pickets, in which two Chicanos were murdered and hundreds hospitalized, the pickers have decided to devote all their energy to the boycott. In Halton Hills, local people concerned about the cause have been handing out leaflets at supermarkets selling grapes.

It is hard to judge how effective the long and all-inclusive South African boycott has been. The effects of the other more limited efforts are more readily visible. What the Presbyterian Church in Canada this summer urged people to avoid General Foods, Nestle's and Standard Brands instant coffees, the last company responded by saying its Chase and Sanborn brand would no longer contain beans from Angola.

Canadian imports of Angolan coffee in the first half of this year have been cut almost in half. The grape workers won contracts three years ago because of their only weapon—the boycott—and hope to repeat that success.

The individual shopper does affect these issues by her decision to buy or not to buy such products. In the modern global marketplace, even buying groceries can be a complicated matter.

Deadlines For Christmas Mail

A Canadian Forces post office has been set up in the Middle East to handle letters and parcels being sent to Canadian troops with the United Nations emergency force outside Cairo.

Mail for the Canadian personnel should be addressed: Number, Rank, Name Unit C.F.P.O. 5002 Rates for letters up to one ounce are eight cents for surface mail and 15 cents for air mail. Information on letters over one ounce and parcel post can be obtained from the Georgetown post office.

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