

Christmas unenjoyable for some

By JIM RYAN
Herald Special

Christmas Eve
Luke 2:1-14
Feast of the Holy Family
Luke 2:41-52
Christmas Reality and
Christmas Fantasy.

If you were to ask adolescents what they thought about Christmas, you'd get a "yes and no" kind of answer.

Yes, because it's a season full of light, mystery and light, and they're still captivated by the Christmas Story.

No, because for many of them Christmas isn't a happy time for family life.

Is there a problem here... You bet!

Unfortunately, the reality level around Christmas time takes a nosedive into the nearest snow bank. It remains there in suspended animation until The Brick begins demanding payment with interest.

Actually, that's hyperbole.

Reality levels return much more quickly than that.

You choose. Reality levels return...

1. Before Christmas morning coffee is cold and you take the coffee grounds out to your snow-covered compost heap.

2. Before the second garbage bag is filled with torn wrapping paper.

3. Before the turkey is carried to the table.

4. Before your relatives and guests have gone out to warm up the car for the drive home.

What is so unreal about the way we celebrate Christmas...



Religion
and
Reality
by
Jim Ryan

It has something to do with unreal expectations. It has something to do with wanting to be raptured to a magical realm where families don't fight; where parents, children, extended family and friends can spend time together without drinking too much, and insulting each other, and acting very unchristmas-like.

Jennifer said it like this: "When you normally spend very little time together with your family, and then you get 24 hours or more of uninterrupted 'model Christmas-family-time'... it's too much. We get on each other's nerves."

Trying too hard to be happy...

Let's look again at the Christmas Story for clues on how to approach the Christmas celebration.

Check out the reality levels of the characters.

1. The Shepherds. They were poor of Palestine. A folk saying has it that they were so poor that they were always on the point of stealing. According to Luke, the poor are the first to hear the good

news of Christmas.

2. Mary and Joseph. Mary is pregnant, but she has no OHIP, no midwife, no rooming-in for Joseph, not even a room at the inn. They have no family to take them in, no American Express Card.

When you read it again, the Christmas story isn't a reality that many of us would welcome.

IS THERE ROOM IN THE CHRISTMAS INN FOR YOU...

Here are some suggestions to help your Christmas reality come true.

1. Go to the grocery store with your children. Buy \$50.00 worth of groceries. Then take the groceries to your local food bank or helping agency. Talk to your children about what they see.

2. The Thrift Stores in Acton and Georgetown are low on toys this year. Why not encourage your child to buy a toy with their own money and donate this toy to the Salvation Army.

3. Organize carol singing on your street.

4. Visit the nursing home in your town. Make sure you bring your children with you.

CHRISTMAS REALITY NOTE

Food hampers are being delivered on Saturday in Georgetown by the Good Neighbours and on Monday in Acton by the Salvation Army. If you haven't called yet, it's not too late. They'll deliver up to Christmas Eve. Call 853-1140 in Acton; or 873-3321 in Georgetown.

Captain Budgell says food and clothing donations are strong this year in spite of the recession.

Food and toy drive a success

By KEN BAKER

Halton Hills British Canadian Club

Christmas 1991, a joyous time for most, but for many this year, a time of additional stress caused by the struggling Canadian and local economy.

A time when the main concern is often not what gifts Santa will leave but whether or not they will be able to provide the basics of life that so many of us take for granted, a nutritious hot meal, warm clothing to ward off the biting chill of our Canadian winter and adequate shelter for their loved ones. This is a growing concern for many Canadians, and yes, a concern for a growing number of families in our own community.

The Halton Hills British Canadian Club, in an attempt to assist with the needs of the local community; once again this year ran their Toy-Food drive in conjunction with the Georgetown Santa Claus Parade.

At a time when it seems that everyone has their hand out looking for a contribution of one sort or another, the final outcome of this year's drive was very encouraging.

As well as donations collected on the day of the parade, a large

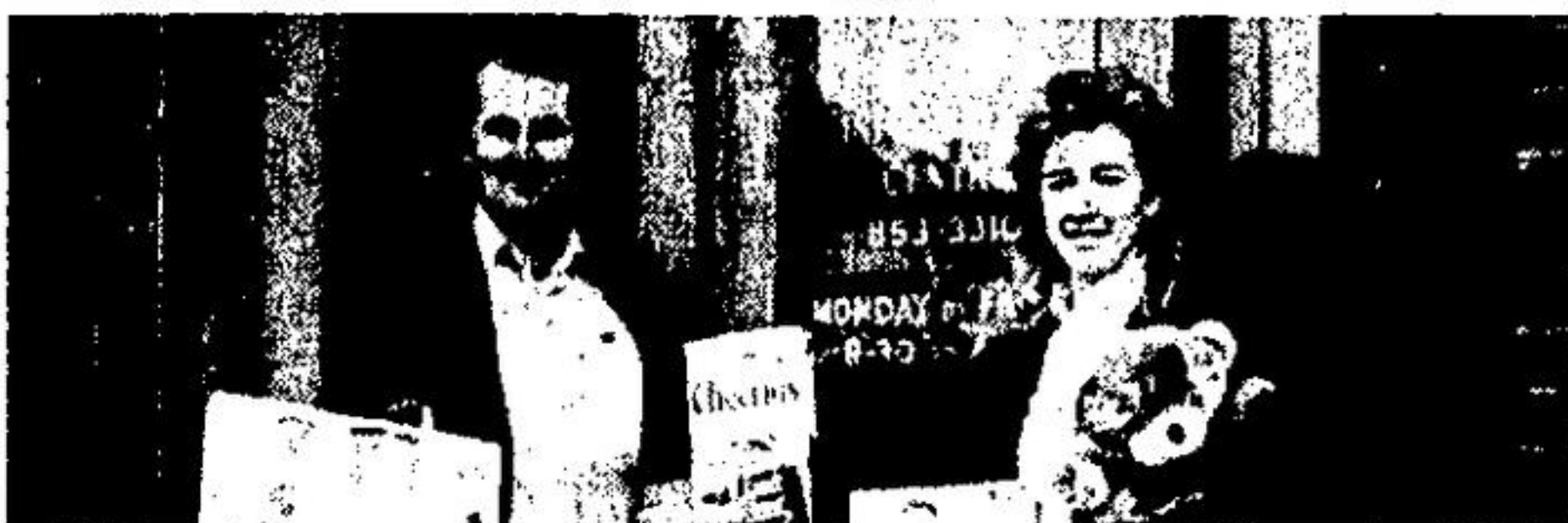
number of toys and non-perishable food items were collected at several drop-off locations which were established this year.

Special thanks is extended to the management and staff of Municipal trust, Main St. Miller's Scottish Bakery, Guelph St. and the proprietors of the Terra Cotta General Store for their assistance and of course to all the individuals who took time to drop off a donation, whether to our program or to any of the additional local drives.

This year the British Canadian

Club chose to support the Acton Social Services and Information Centre (ASSIC), a multi-service organization providing a wide variety of programs and services designed to meet the needs of seniors, young families, and the general public, including support of the Acton Parent-Child Resource Centre at 85 Wallace St., in Acton.

At the time of the clubs contributions, ASSIC was providing ongoing support for 47 families which included 87 children. This is over and above individuals requiring assistance on a drop-in basis.



On behalf of Acton Social Services, Lin Sallay (Community support worker) accepts a portion of the donations collected by the Halton Hills British/Canadian Club during their recent food/toy drive. Making the presentation on behalf of the club was Dave Rutherford (president).

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ANGLICAN

St. Alban's Anglican Church, 19 St. Alban's Drive, Acton 853-2711
Sunday Services: 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School 10:30 a.m.

St. Alban's The Martyr Anglican Church
537 Main St., Glen Williams 877-8323
Service Times: Sunday 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

St. George's Anglican Church
60 Guelph St., Georgetown 877-8044
Service Times: Sunday 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:15 a.m.
Thursday 10:00 a.m. - Sunday School 9:30 a.m.

BAPTIST

Acton Baptist Church, 8 Mill St. E., Acton 853-0690
Worship 11:00 a.m.; Christian Education 9:45 a.m.
Maple Avenue Baptist Church, 177 Maple Ave., Georgetown... 873-9211
Worship 11:00 a.m.; Family Bible Hour 9:30 a.m.;
Coffee Fellowship 10:30 a.m.; Evening Praise 6:30 p.m.
Mountainview Baptist Church, 1 Mountainview Rd. S.,
Georgetown 873-2184
Worship and Children's Program 11:00 a.m.
Location of LOVE IN CHRIST FOODBANK - Open Wed. mornings

CHRISTIAN & MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

Georgetown Alliance Church, Main St. S., Georgetown 873-0249
Service Times: Sunday 11:00 a.m.; Sunday School 9:45 a.m.

LUTHERAN

Immanuel Lutheran, Windsor & Carole Sts., Georgetown 877-1172
Worship 11:00 a.m.; Sunday School 9:45 a.m.

PRESBYTERIAN

Knox Presbyterian Church, Church & Main Sts., Georgetown . 877-7585
Worship 11:00 a.m.; Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

UNITED

St. Andrew's United Church, 89 Mountainview Rd. S.,
Georgetown 877-4482
Worship 9:45 a.m.

St. John's United Church, 11 Guelph St., Georgetown 877-2531
Worship 11:00 a.m.; Sunday School 11:00 a.m.

St. John's United Church, Main St., Glen Williams 877-2531
Worship 9:30 a.m.

St. Alban The Martyr Anglican Church
537 Main St., Glen Williams
DATES TO REMEMBER:
December 29th:
8:00 a.m. Holy Communion BCP
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist BCP
NEW YEAR'S RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Windsor Rd. & Carole St.
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
Rev. Fritz Schmitt, Pastor
873-0264

St. John's United Church
11 Guelph St., Georgetown
DECEMBER 24th SERVICES
7:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve Family Service
11:00 p.m. - Communion Service

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Ontario L7G 1X2
(416) 873-1887
SACRAMENT OF PENANCE
Saturday, Dec. 14 - 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
3:00 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.
Thursday, Dec. 19 - 8:00 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.
Saturday, Dec. 21 - 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
1:30 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.
Monday, Dec. 23 - 7:00 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.
CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE
CHRISTMAS EVE
Tuesday, Dec. 24 - 5:00 P.M.; 7:30 P.M.
12:00 Midnight
CHRISTMAS DAY
Wednesday, Dec. 25 - 10:00 A.M. & 12:00 Noon
(There is no Mass in the evening on Christmas Day anywhere in the Diocese of Hamilton)
NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE
Tuesday, Dec. 31 - 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 01 - 8:00 A.M.; 10:00 A.M. & 12:00 Noon
May Christ be born again in your hearts and may His peace reign in your home and family.