

WORD'S WORTH

With Eric Balkind



And what of Christmas still to come?

Christmas past holds memories of a different style of living; times when life was, perhaps, less complicated and tastes more simple. Yule logs burned then in open fireplaces and families gathered to enjoy both the heat of the open flame and the opportunity to share together the happenings and the highlights of the 12 months fast drawing to a close. Gift-giving was more limited and what was given more spartan. One long-departed friend and colleague of mine recalled that as a child he was given a toothbrush and an orange as his presents; he was, in his own words, "damned glad to get 'em."

Christmas present is upon us now and we are busily creating what will become our own memories; bustling kitchens, warm living rooms, hot turkey dinners, mounds of presents and more than likely in the background, the ever-present TV set providing entertainment unlimited.

Past and present are linked by the mystery of the Christmas story and the wondrous possibility of enlightenment. Who would have thought, after all, that that miserly, old curmudgeon Ebenezer Scrooge could learn to live anew? Well, if Scrooge could do it so can we and — here's to those who are making the effort to help us.

There have always been people who are just a little more aware. People who through their work, churches, social organizations or even by themselves set out to ensure that their fellow citizens get something closer to a square deal. But needs have grown much greater and within the last couple of years we have seen, in addition to the network of existing services, the opening of some 400 food banks across the length and breadth of the land. This Christmas, let's give thanks and a hearty vote of appreciation to that essential army of helping hands but let's also make a resolution — that next year we're going to start to put them out of some of those lines of work.

Where we are today is a sad commentary on our inability to harness our own creative abilities and national resources in order to end poverty. What is even more troublesome is the thought that, if we who live in the single, most fortunate country on the planet cannot find ways to deal effectively and fairly with our problems then — who on earth and where on earth can anyone else accomplish the job?

We have a relatively small population coupled with almost unlimited natural resources and space. What appears to be needed now is the political will and the bloody-minded determination to create a plan of action, to put that plan into operation and stick to it no matter what the obstacles.

Most recently, a new impetus appears to have emerged on the national scene — *a populace which has learned, at long last, that, through citizen involvement and by means of the bailot box, it can make it's presence felt.* Given that potentially galvanizing factor, 1993 could prove to be the year the changes begin. What a memory that would be for Christmases still to come!

Wit & Wisdom

Well, let's put aside the disquieting fact that Santa Claus is said by some to be the patron saint of thieves (I kid you not!); instead, let us dwell upon the magic and the mystery of the season and the opportunities for renewal in a story which is ever new.

No Santa Claus? Thank God, he lives, and he lives for ever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

— Francis P. Church

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men.

— Longfellow

A star is for living in heaven when it is not for wearing in a Christmas tree's hair.

— Unknown child

Santa Claus lives just north of the imagination.

— Another unknown youngster



"I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, REINDEER. NEXT YEAR I'M GOING BACK TO USING MY DEPENDABLE OLE QUILL PEN AND SCROLL!"

LETTERS

Christmas meeting

To the editor,

What a lovely time we had at our annual Christmas meeting. It was held at the beautifully decorated home of Linda Cairns, who cooked a turkey, and the other ladies supplied the vegetables, dessert and other goodies. It was a delicious meal and we all enjoyed it.

Later, Anne opened the meeting and each of the 11 ladies answered the roll call. "What is popular on the Christmas market that wasn't

10 years ago." Ina Peterson read a story by Gregory Clark entitled the "Christmas Rose." Plans were made for some of the ladies to attend the workshop at Fergus in February.

The Program was handed over to the capable hands of Isabel McDonald and Ina, who put on a comical skit to the delight of all.

Gifts were exchanged: "Something that comes in a bottle." It is surprising what you can get in a bottle these days!

Courtesies were given to Linda and we wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in 1993. See you at Ruth Linham's on Jan. 12/93.

Edith Medland
Bannockburn W.I.

The night before...

*'Twas the night before Christmas,
when all through the house
not a creature was stirring,
not even a mouse*

*The stockings were hung
by the chimney with care,
in hopes that St. Nicholas
soon would be there.*

*The children were nestled
all snug in their beds,
while visions of sugarplums
danced in their heads.*

*And Mamma in her kerchief,
and me in my cap,
had just steeled our brains
for a long winter's nap.*

*When in the house
arose such a clatter,
the smoke alarm sounded,
oh what's the matter?*

*Not to panic,
not to fret,
gather the children
and out er get!*

*The smoke is rising,
oh what to do!
A crawling we go,*

*for the air is cleaner below!
Is the door hot,
nay it is not.*

*To the window we flew,
the rope ladder I threw!
To the neighbours I darted,
calmly for a fire has started.*

*Outside we stood
wearing only blanket capes,
prepared we were
for emergency escapes.*

*Remember this tale
and remember it well,
for fires spread quickly
and become difficult to repel.*

*Here are some
tips for you today
take them seriously
for they do pay.*

*Is your smoke alarm working,
for some day a fire may be lurking.
Fire hazards there will always be,
please remove them for your safety.*

*Contact the Halton-Hills Fire
Department
for they are quite bright,
they will answer questions
to your delight.*

THE ACTON Tanner

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