

EDITORIAL

according to Luke

The Christmas Story

AND IT CAME TO PASS in those days, that there went out a decree from Casear Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria).

3. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David):

5. To be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

6. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying.

14. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16. And they came with haste, and found Mary, Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

20. And the shepherds returned, glorying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Luke, Chapter 2,

KJV



AWAY IN A MANGER: Mary and Joseph, Katie Price and Jeffrey Becker, both of Acton, rehearse for "Live from Bethlehem", the Sunday school Christmas pageant at Trinity United Church. - Frances Niblock photo



SANTA TUNES: Members of the Acton High school jazz band donned Santa hats as they got into the Christmas spirit during the jazz and concert bands annual Christmas concert at Robert Little school. The concert and jazz bands also performed at McKenzie-Smith Bennett and Brookville schools. - Frances Niblock photo



Editor's Notebook



Christmas music brings much joy

Even though radio stations and department stores boom carols over the air waves weeks before Christmas, they never seem to lose their appeal. Some of them are centuries old, some fairly modern, and they come from a variety of cultures and countries.

If someone asked you what your favourite carol is, could you reply without some thought? The most played and popular carol is the Austrian, Silent Night. The story is that in a small church in the Tyrol the organ bellows had been chewed by a mouse and the pastor needed a guitar accompaniment for the Christmas Eve midnight mass. He contacted Franz Gruber of the parish. Together they came up with the beautiful carol, Silent Night.

As a matter of interest I asked the three other people in the office what their favourite carol was. None of them named Silent Night. One said What Child is This? to the tune of Greensleeves. Another said, The First Noel. The third one said O Tannenbaum. I think that first named is an English carol, the second French and O Tannenbaum (O Christmas Tree) of course, is German.

I really don't have an instant favourite but the French, O Holy Night, sung by a tenor who can reach those high notes without straining their tonsils, moves my emotions. But, as a child the carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem always had a special appeal. It drew a mental picture of Bethlehem, under a brilliant star and the quiet streets which housed a stable where wondrous events happened.

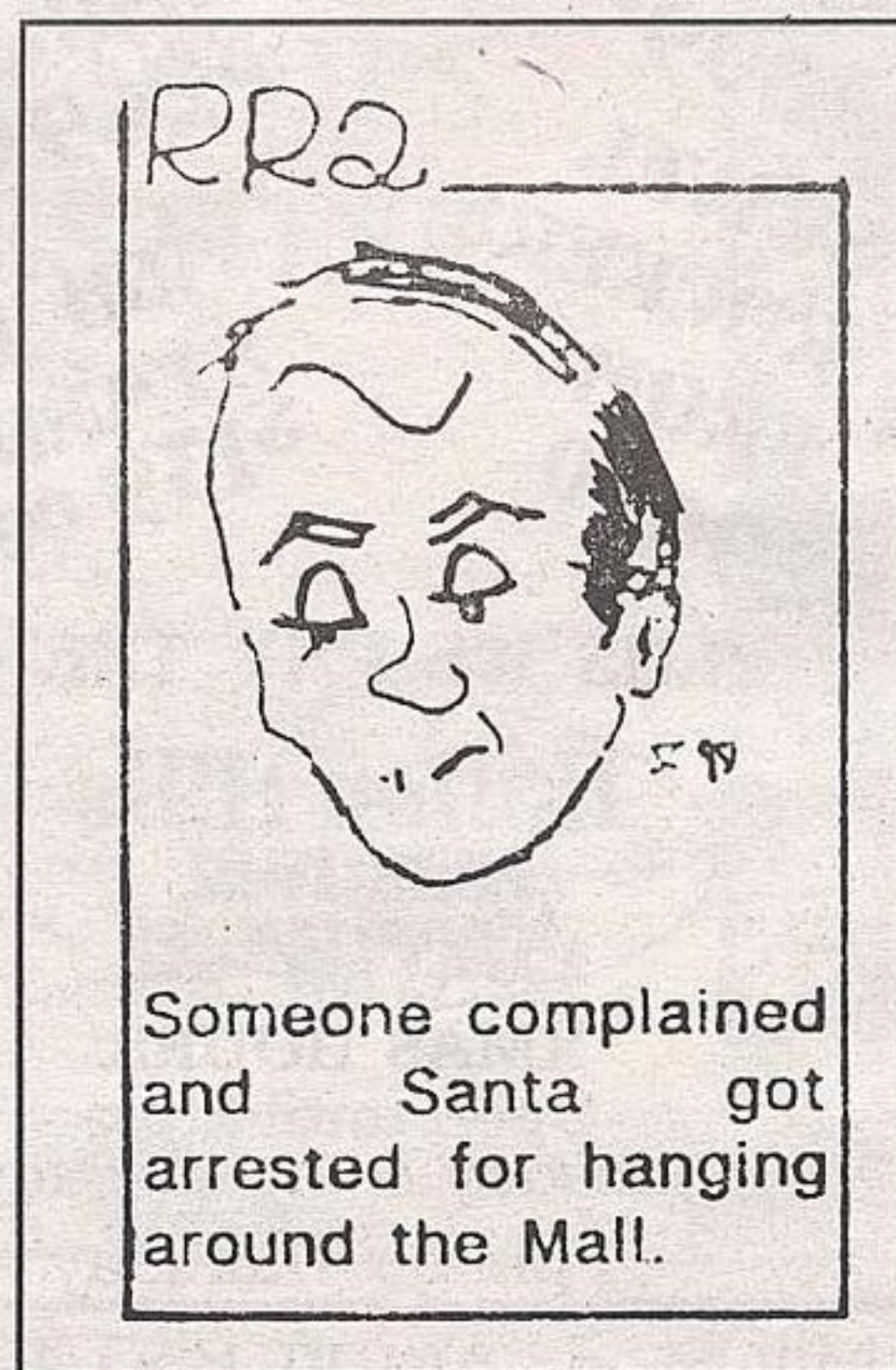
Another favourite is Canadian, called The Huron Carol. The words were written in French by Father Breufeuf of the Huron tribes from Fort Ste. Marie near what is now Midland, Ontario. The words were translated into English conveying the birth of the Christ Child in simple words and the rhythm of Indian drums.

Twas in the moon of Wintertime,
When all the birds had fled,
That mighty Gitchy Manitou
Sent angel choirs instead:
Before their light the stars grew dim

And wandering hunters heard the hymn,

Jesus, your king is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria!

Within a lodge of broken bark
The tender babe was found.



A ragged robe of rabbit skin,
Enwrapped his beauty round;
But as the hunter Braves drew nigh,

The angel song rang loud and high:

O children of the forest free,
O sons of Manitou,
The holy child of earth and heaven

Is born today for you.
Brebeuf, a big strapping man, nevertheless had a feeling for transposing the events from what is now Israel to the rugged Canadian forest so his First Nations converts could envision the events of Bethlehem.

There are so many other beautiful carols such as O Come All Ye Faithful, Joy to the World, The Little Drummer Boy, Angels We Have Heard on High, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Away in a Manger, It Came Upon the Midnight Clear, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, Carol of the Bells, and others that lend themselves to expressing the joy of Christmas.

and there are the songs of Christmas, mostly secular, which convey the joy of the season. Consider Winter Wonderland, that old favourite Jingle Bells, Silver Bells, The Christmas Song:

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire
Jack Frost nipping at your nose
Yul-tide carols being sung by a choir

And folks dressed up like Eskimos.

And so like the Christmas Song, I'm offering a simple phrase to those from one to 92, and although it's been said, many many ways.

"Merry Christmas to You!"

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