



STORY HOUR: Children from the Story Hour program at Beth-El Christian Reformed Church entertain the ladies of Acton Coffee Break after they packed hangers for the needy last week.

Kissing under the mistletoe goes back to the Norsemen

How did the centuries-old custom of kissing under the mistletoe originate?

Mistletoe is an aerial parasite that has no roots of its own and lives off the tree that it attaches itself to. Without that tree it would die.

Mistletoe was thought to be sacred by ancient Europeans. Druid priests employed it in their sacrifices to the gods, while Celtic people felt it possessed miraculous healing powers. In fact, in the Celtic language mistletoe means "all-heal."

It was thought mistletoe not only cured diseases, but could also render poisons harmless, make humans and animals prolific, keep one safe from witchcraft, protect the house from ghosts and even make them speak. It was also thought to bring good luck to anyone privileged to have it.

Norsemen had a symbolic myth about mistletoe. The story goes that mistletoe was the sacred plant of Frigga, goddess of love and the mother of Balder, the god of the summer sun. Balder had a dream of death, which greatly alarmed his mother, for should he die, all life on earth would end.

In an attempt to keep this from happening, Frigga went at once to air, fire, water,

earth and every animal and plant seeking a promise that no harm would come to her son. Balder now could not be hurt by anyone on earth or under the earth.

But Balder had one enemy, Loki, god of evil and he knew of one plant that Frigga had overlooked in her quest to keep her son safe. It grew neither on the earth nor under the earth, but on apple and oak trees. It was lowly mistletoe.

So Loki made an arrow tip of the mistletoe, gave it to the blind god of winter, Hoder, who shot it, striking Balder dead. The sky paled and all things in earth and heaven wept for the sun god. For three days each element tried to bring Balder back to life. Frigga, the goddess and his mother finally restored him.

It is related the tears she shed for her son turned into the pearly white berries on the mistletoe plant. In her joy Frigga kissed everyone who passed beneath the tree on which it grew. The story ends with a decree that who should ever stand under the humble mistletoe, no harm should befall them, only a kiss a token of love.

Later, the eighteenth-century English credited mistletoe not with healing powers, but with a certain magical appeal called a kissing ball. At Christmas time a young lady standing under a ball of mistletoe, brightly trimmed with evergreens, ribbons, and ornaments, cannot refuse to be kissed. Such a kiss could mean deep romance or lasting friendship and goodwill. If the girl remained unknissed,

EWAG NEWS

Happy Holiday greetings to all of you from EWAG Community Services! We wish you all a safe and healthy Christmas season.

We would like to extend many thanks of appreciation to the individuals, churches, schools and service groups with their overwhelming donations of food, toys and money. All items will be used to help those less fortunate within the Guelph/Eramosa area. This community has always been a very caring one and seems to prove more so every year. Thank you!

Stop in and see us in the New Year when all items in the thrift store will be on for half price! We have name brand items with great savings. A super way to start 2002! (Excludes new hand

knit items)

Rockwood EWAG will be closed from Saturday December 22 until Wednesday, January 2. If you need some assistance throughout this time, please call EWAG Community Services at

#856-2113. Messages will be checked on a regular basis and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

We are located at 126 Main St. S. Rockwood. Our phone number is #856-2113.



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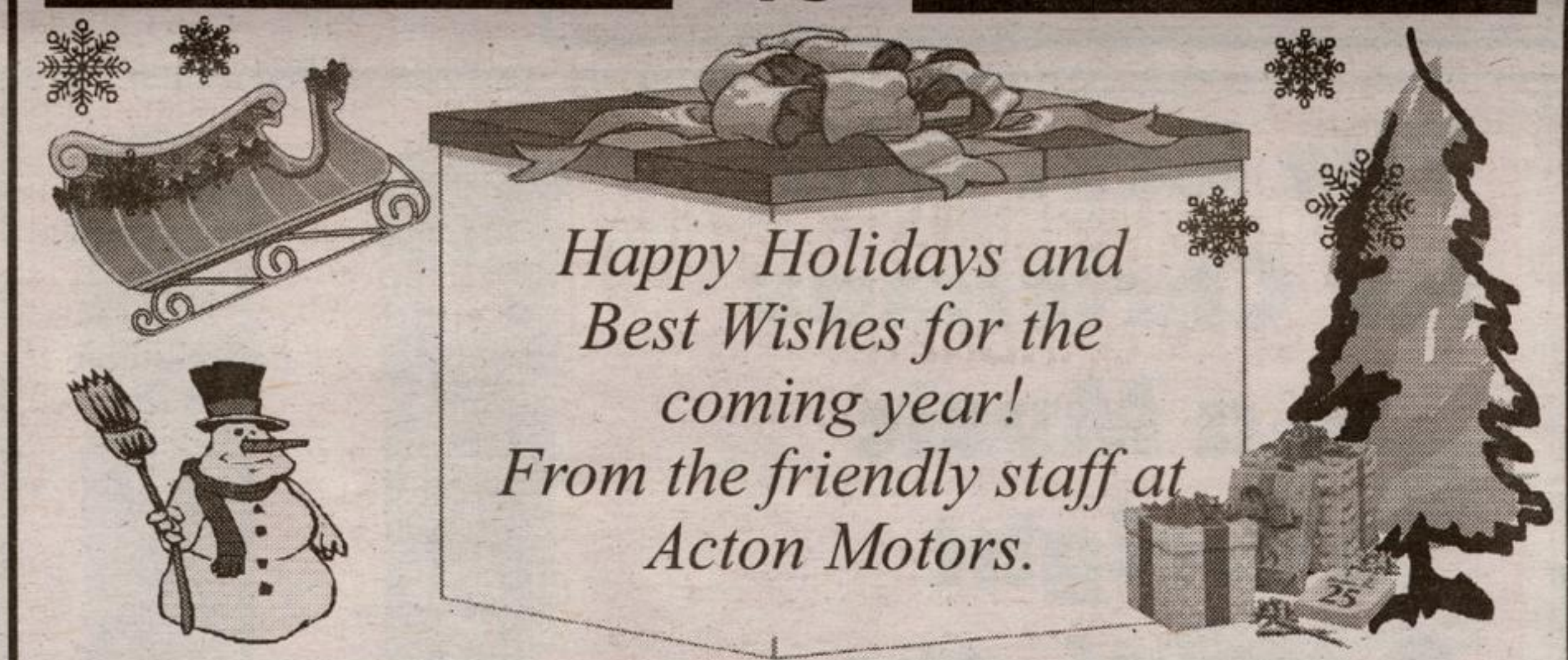
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