

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Happy Hanukka and Merry Christmas

The current controversy being waged in newspapers and the electronics media about the appropriate way to greet people during the Christmas season tends to obscure when and what they are all about. Like op-ed columnist Mike O'Leary we're a Merry Christmas person but would happily change the greeting to Happy Hanukka when it is appropriate for the time.

Perhaps the greeting Happy Holidays or Season's Greeting is also politically correct and designed to cover all celebrations but they tend to obscure the centuries old reason for the season which has been the birth of Jesus Christ, hence CHRIST-mas.

Hanukka, also called the Feast of the Dedication or the Feast of Lights, is an eight day and night Jewish festival which this year started on December 8 and ends December 15. It is not considered a major celebration of the Jewish faith, commemorating the rededication of the holy temple in Jerusalem after the Jews' 165 BC victory over the Hellenist Syrians.

The Greek king had outlawed the Jewish rituals and ordered the people to worship Greek gods. In 168 BC the holy temple was seized and dedicated to the worship of Zeus. The Jewish people staged a rebellion under Mattathians and later his son Judah Maccabee. After three years of fighting the Jews defeated the Greek army despite fewer men and weapons.

One of the first things Judah Maccabee and his soldiers did after their victory was to clean and repair the desecrated Holy Temple. When they were finished they decided to have a dedication ceremony and light the golden menorah. They looked everywhere for oil and found a small flask that contained only enough oil to light the menorah for one day. Miraculously, the oil lasted for eight days, giving them time to get more oil.

Today, Jewish people all over the world celebrate for eight days by lighting candles in a menorah every night to commemorate the eight day miracle called Hanukka.

Christians, on the other hand, are now observing Advent, four Sundays of devotion before Christmas. Acton Ministerial Association opened the season of Advent with an Advent service at Bethel Christian Reformed Church on the first Sunday of Advent on November 26.

Churches who follow the liturgical calendar, including mainline Protestant churches and the Catholic Church also observe Advent each Sunday as a devotional approach to the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, Who is what Christianity is all about.

Christmas has certainly become the second major event in Christendom eclipsed only by Good Friday and the most important feast, Easter, which celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.

So to use the words of the Good Book: "To all things there is a season" and to each one could use the proper greeting be it Happy Hanukka, or Merry Christmas. Or when Muslims observe Ramadan the appropriate words.

Greetings at this wonderful season should not be a source of division or anger but a time of joy and peace.



**We wish you a merry Christmas tree**  
**TIS THE SEASON:** The Acton Kinsmen were busy Saturday morning setting up for their annual Christmas Tree Sales. Helping this year were the Tanners Major Midget BB Hockey team and their coaches. The tree sales continue at the corner of Eastern Avenue and Mill Street, nightly 6 to 9 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. - Angela Tyler photo

## Finding that one perfect tree a puzzle

A Christmas tree, for me, is special. Each tree is special for someone. While some trees may not suit a person there's a special one somewhere for them.

When I was little, getting the Christmas tree always seemed like a great event. The one I remember the most was when I was just barely a teenager.

My dad called Mr. Nelles and asked if we could cut down a tree on his property. The ground that day was completely covered with snow and it was snowing heavily, so much you could barely see in front of you. Along with my folks, our dogs Falcon and Gurle accompanied us. They didn't get to go on many field trips" and before long we knew why. For a moment they would get lost in the forest of Christmas tree. However, they soon would be found along with the tree we picked to fill our home with the Christmas spirit.

Returning home with the tree, my mom would direct my dad while he steadied the tree straight in the living room archway. Even though it wasn't decorated yet, the tree had a presence about it that made it feel like Christmas.

Each year when we were growing



By  
**Angela Tyler**

up and taking piano lessons in Erin from Mr. Tocher, my mom would stop at Cavans before our lesson. Here, my sister and I were allowed to pick out one ornament, just for us. It made our Christmas tree memories even more vivid. Now when my mom hangs those same ornaments on their tree, we each know those we picked out those years ago.

Even better than Christmas Day would be Christmas Eve. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care. Mine had a gold "A" brooch on it, while Tracey's had her official "T". As the fire glowed red, amber and orange, I would love to sit in the front room with the tree aglow waiting and wondering which fireplace the man in red would come down? Would it be the upstairs one or the one in the basement? His cookies and milk were waiting for him on the kitchen table while the adults were down below enjoying friendships that had grown over the years.

Late that night, I would sneak halfway down the stairs. As I sat there watching them dressed in their Christmas best, toasting the season, they would wish me a good night's sleep as I scurried back to my room, barely able to get to sleep in anticipation of the morning.

For years, I awaited the time when I could have the perfect Christmas tree of my own. When I became single again, I was determined to do it all myself and headed out to the tree farm. Being the only one without a family in tow didn't stop me. I was cold, it was snowing and I really had no idea of what I was doing.

A short while later I had cut down my own tree and was dragging it through the snow. At home in the stand, the tree was crooked, but I had done it myself and it was decorated with beautiful clear lights and gold ornaments. At night, I would sit in my living room, lit only by the tree. I finally had my own perfect tree.

I've done the cut-my-own tree thing, now, I opt for the Kinsmen lot. Fresh trees and I don't have to drag them through the snow. Kinsmen Dude gets frustrated with me

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