

The Stouffville Tribune

ESTABLISHED 1883

A. V. Nolan & Son, Publishers

Member of the Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association and the Ontario-Quebec Newspapers Association.

Authorized as second-class mail. Postoffice Dept. Ottawa.

Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Issued every Thursday at Stouffville, Ont.

In Canada \$3.50

Elsewhere \$4.50

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JAS. THOMAS, Editor

JAS. MCKEAN, Advertising

OUR EDITORIAL COMMENT

The Record Speaks For Itself

It was most gratifying to hear a member of town council express appreciation in public at the recent nomination meeting for the service provided by the village assessor, Mr. Lloyd Turner. These words were echoed by Reeve Lehman at the regular year-end meeting on Thursday night.

An assessor, like any municipal employee who is continually in touch

with the public, has a rather difficult task to perform. He may be even more subject to ridicule than a tax collector and yet we have heard few, if any, complaints of Mr. Turner's work. This year, only four appeals were filed, and three of these requested rather minor assessment changes. In other towns and townships where appeals have totalled up in the hundreds, the Stouffville figure is a mere drop in the bucket.

Annual Township Dinner Serves Important Purpose

The cancellation of Christmas turkey bonuses to the employees in the Township of Pickering was a move that apparently met complete agreement with the majority of members of council. We feel that the practice that was instituted some four years ago was a procedure that would have been halted in the near future as the staff continued to grow. There is little doubt, however, that the "letter to the editor" which appeared in this paper and condemned the action, was at least partially responsible for council's thinking on the matter.

Deputy-Reeve Mrs. Jean McPherson spoke against both the turkey give-away and the annual employees' dinner that has been held at Brougham for the past few years. We certainly cannot agree with her on the latter practice. The banquet is a small token of appreciation to the unsung workers throughout the township who give of their time and talents without remuneration in the

service of the municipality. We have spoken in favor of this function in the past, and we still feel that it serves a very important purpose. In this day and age, it is most difficult to find men and women who will work for nothing. Surely, a township-sponsored dinner is very little to expect.

In past years, the banquet has served two purposes. In addition to expressing appreciation to its non-paid employees, it has provided a timely occasion to honor certain parties who have given many years in the service of the township. Municipal servants of long-time standing should not be permitted to pass out of the picture without some form of recognition. No time could be more appropriate.

We realize that no council can become overly generous with taxpayers' money and expect to escape criticism. We contend, however, that the annual dinner is one bit of public relations that cannot be viewed only in dollars and cents.

Christmas Cards for More Than Century

Christmas cards have been arriving in your mail now for several weeks, and their delivery possibly reached its peak last weekend. For all the grumblings we hear of the commercializing of Christmas, these cards, nevertheless, bring happy contacts for many people once a year and a renewal of acquaintances of long standing.

We were reading the other day that it was in 1841 that Charles Drummond placed his first greeting card in his shop window in Edinburgh, Scotland, giving birth to a new industry.

The idea had been proposed by Drummond by a friend, Thomas Sturrock and the first engravings were designed by A. T. Aikman. England began to produce cards in 1843 and in 1846 with the birth of Dickinson's Bob Cratchit, and the conversion of Scrooge, Christmas had really arrived as a festive social event.

Shortly after this period, the idea spread to Europe, particularly Germany. With that country's advanced methods of printing, a success was made of the Christmas card feature, both artistically and commercially.

Summons at Christmas

This is Christmas Eve, Christmas bells throughout all Christendom are ringing out the most joyous proclamation of the gospel message:

"Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (St. Luke 2:10-11).

Yes, 1959 years ago, the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," and those that followed the star in the east found the Saviour, Christ the Lord, lying in a manger, in the city of David.

But the first Christmas was a trying and painful time, despite all the manifestations of glory. Was not Joseph summoned from sleep to take unto himself Mary, who gave virgin birth to Christ Jesus? And were not Mary and Joseph summoned by decree from Caesar Augustus to go from Galilee to Bethlehem to be taxed? And were not all men of good will summoned by the angels to go to the manger in Bethlehem to find their King?

Mary and Joseph lived under a dictatorship in which life was cheap. Their income was more than likely in the lower third of the nation. When it came time for the Baby, they were

summoned to make a trip to meet the demands of their government. Whether the Baby lived or died was of no concern to the society in which they existed. As far as their own people were concerned, Mary and Joseph could make out for themselves.

But because God reigned, they were not alone. The Wise Men brought gifts of great treasure. There was great rejoicing.

And so tonight there is rejoicing and there are visible tokens of Christmas. Most business sections have been bright with Christmas decorations for days past. Holly wreaths are found in many home windows, bells on doors and gaily lit Christmas trees, if not on the front lawn, visible in the living rooms, from the street. Stores, in most centres, will have closed for a three-day holiday. Everywhere about us, there seems to be a new spirit, a new life, a new hope, a new joy! Tonight children will go to bed assured that Santa Claus is on his way and will come down the chimney, in our respective homes, to deliver a portion of his heavy load. Most of us will banish all thoughts of external troubles and for the next few days concentrate on internal joys.

It is, indeed, a time of Merry Christmas.



Sugar and Spice

By BILL SMILEY

Christmas is fine for kids, the selfish little ingrates. And it's pretty good for old people, because somebody pays some attention to them, for a change. But for everybody in those prime-of-life years, it seems to be a time of tension, scrambling, worry and weariness.

It's a great pity, but Christmas has got out of hand, economically and socially. The Family Provider watches with growing unease as the demands increase annually and he knows he'll be in debt until June. The harassed housewife, trying to cope with children's concerts, an ever-swelling list of gifts and cards, and an ever-increasing round of pre-Christmas entertainments, along with all the cleaning and fussing to do before the big day, becomes a study in exhausted asperity.

However, it's all our own fault, and there's no need to feel sorry for ourselves. People who have weak stomachs shouldn't ride on roller coasters. And people who haven't enough gumption to climb off the pre-Christmas bandwagon and make it a good and happy time, deserve to wake up on Christmas morning worn out, hung over and broke.

Despite the seasonal serenade and the high-pressure salesmanship, it CAN be a happy climax in our year, with a little effort, a little thought, and a good measure of tolerance. Just adopt the following simple formula, and you'll have the happiest, most rewarding Christmas season you've ever enjoyed:

DON'T win a 25-pound turkey at a pre-Christmas raffle, totter up the stairs under its weight at 3 a.m. and throw it triumphantly on the bed just as your ball-and-chain is getting upon her elbow to blast you. I did one year, the bed collapsed, and the Old Battleaxe wound up on the floor in the embrace of a cold and very dead turkey. This is conducive to neither peace on earth nor good will toward men.

DO be as helpful and inconspicuous as possible around the house during those hectic days before Christmas. Your wife is not necessarily undergoing her change of life. Those screams at the children, snarls at you, and other manic depressive symptoms merely mean that (a) she lost her Christmas card list from last year, or (b) Aunt Sadie and Uncle George have just written to say that they'll be along for Christmas, with the five kids, or (c) she has found the present you bought for her and hid so carefully, and she is not enamoured of that lovely pair of kneeling pads.

DON'T leave all your Christmas shopping until the last day, then get a few hookers under your belt and sally forth to wrap it all up in one merry excursion. Fellow I know did that last year. It took him until April to get rid of the pony that arrived on Christmas morning for his four-year-old son. And he never could get back the down payment from the airline company on one of those "Fly Now—Pay Later" trips to South America with which he presented his wife.

DO take the family out in the woods to get a Christmas tree. As your wife points out, it's an old tradition, and sort of, well, fun. You wind up with wet feet, head colds, torn clothing, the car all scratched, and a tree that looks as though it had been the locale of the Annual Spruce-buds Convention. But you can always buy one down at the corner the next day.

DON'T allow women and children in the house when you're

putting up the tree. There is a time that tests men's souls, and by the Holy Old Jumping Jeremiah, that is one of them. It is not the language I worry about at this time. It is the fact that there is an axe too handy.

DO make up a big basket and take it yourself to the poorest family in town, on Christmas Eve. But don't be put off if they're all sitting around watching television and the youngest child looks at your basket and pipes: "Another chicken, Ma. That makes four geese, two turkeys and eight chickens." It's the principle that counts.

To top off this recipe for a happy Christmas, I suggest you memorize these lines, the only known fragment from the works of Hugh Dunnet, the great Welsh bard of the eleventh century:

Rather than help the wassail flow,
Or loiter under the mistletoe,
Get up early and off you go,
On Christmas Day in the morning.
Visit your friends and wish them cheer;
Add to your wishes "A Happy New Year."
Scorn all offers of rye or beer,
And you'll feel better, I know, my dear,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

There are fewer optimists than there used to be. This observation is based on the fact that far fewer concerns than formerly distribute calendars.

"The average man doesn't know what to do with his hands," says an authority on etiquette. Maybe not, but he has learned to quit drawing to them for an inside straight.

FOR PARENTS ONLY

CHRISTMAS TIDE
What is your favorite Christmas poem? There are so many beautiful ones from which to choose! One lovely poem by an unknown author, quoted in The Grade Teacher, is this:

Within A Lowly Manger
Within a lowly manger the heavenly baby lay,
A glory shone around Him and shepherds came to pray.
Above, a star beamed golden, and wise men from afar
Brought gifts to lay before Him, frankincense, gold and myrrh.
O little child so gentle, to honor Thee we sing.

With happy hearts and joyful songs a gift of love we bring.
Almost two thousand years ago a Baby was born in a stable in Bethlehem to a young Jewish maiden named Mary. The birth of a child is always a special occurrence. Ask any mother or father if they did not experience a feeling of awe and wonder — as well as thankfulness, when they gazed down at the face of a new son, or daughter!

But Jesus' birth was the greatest event our world has ever known. He was God's son and in His life and death as well as His birth, He revealed God's love for all mankind.

Christmas is Christ's Birthday. We miss the true significance of this greatest of all days if we fail to place the emphasis on the spiritual meaning of the 25th of December. Not just a holiday—but a holy day!
The children in our homes should never feel that Santa Claus crowds out the Christ Child, or that the excitement of getting gifts is greater than the quiet happiness of giving presents to show our love to our dear ones. If Christmas is merely an occasion for feasting and merriment, it is but a pagan festivity.

Of course, Christmas is a family day. In the Psalms is the lovely verse: "God setteth the solitary in families." The Heav-

Sunday School Lesson

(Lesson for December 27)

GOD, OUR HELP

Acts 12

GOLDEN TEXT — Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. — 1 Pet. 5:7
THE LESSON AS A WHOLE

Approach to the Lesson
Simon Peter's predicament was severe. His chances of survival seemed very slim indeed. Herod, king of Palestine, was a cruel and effective foe. The Herodian line was known for its infamy, and he was no exception. He was aggressive and determined to have his way. Note that when his plot against Peter was foiled, he did not hesitate to order the death of the prison guards (Acts 12:19).

Determined to unify his kingdom, Herod was eager to please the Jews by eliminating any disruptive elements. He regarded the church as divisive and concluded that its leaders must be liquidated. Peter's plight seemed hopeless. Why?

First, Herod had already persecuted other believers and murdered the Apostle James; therefore, he had delighted the Jews. His program of destruction was producing results and at the same time pleasing the public. Second, Herod was not likely to desist. His zeal and self-assurance continued unabated until his ghastly death (verses 20-23).

Third, Peter's escape from prison appeared impossible. He was chained by his wrists to two Roman soldiers, while two others were on guard outside his cell. Usually, doomed prisoners were bound to only one soldier. But Herod was taking no chances.

Fourth, Peter had no stalwart allies among his friends to instigate a popular revolt and to rush to his aid. He was cast upon the mercies of his God. But the power of Herod was as nothing when God intervened to deliver His beleaguered servant. The Heart of the Lesson

The story of Peter's deliverance from prison is highly appropriate for the last Sunday of the year. No matter how great the odds against believers, God is still on the throne. His ears are ever open to the prayers of His people and His arm mighty to save.

The weapon which the church forged against the enemies of the Lord was effectual fervent prayer. God heard her supplications, sent His angel, and restored Peter to his praying friends (See 12:12).

Prayer is still a formidable instrument. God honored it in Peter's day. He honors it today. But notice carefully how the Jerusalem saints prayed, and learn from their example. Acts 12:5 is a classic.

Their prayers were earnest and fervent ("without ceasing"). They "stretched forth" their souls as well as their hands toward Heaven. They meant business. Peter was in prison. They pled with God to release him.

Their prayers were united — "of the church". All joined in intercession. All were in perfect agreement as they approached the throne of grace. The army of the Lord was a harmonious

enly Father in His own good time, sent His son into a family. The story of Christ's coming, of the Shepherds and the Wise Men is the most beautiful in all the world.

Are we reading aloud to our children, while they are still quite small, this account of the First Christmas Day? Let us not leave this just to the Church or to the Sunday School teachers. A child's religious instruction is his parents' responsibility and privilege.

But Christmas is above all, a day when we should remember the gifts which Jesus brought to the world. They were many and varied. They were the hidden things of the spirit which make life worthwhile — peace and joy and love. As we read our daily newspapers, we cannot but feel that our world is sadly lacking in these very qualities. There is little peace. How can there be joy among the hungry war orphans in Europe? Love seems to be conspicuous by its absence in the bickering between the nations, the quarrels between Labor and Management!

But the efforts of the nations, towards unity, the large scale U.N. plans to feed starving people, the struggle for harmonious settlement of international and industrial disagreements should not be forgotten. At Christmas, we all should gain new faith that if men and women seek God's guidance and commit themselves to His way, the Saviour's coming will not have been in vain.

In our own family circles, let us celebrate Christmas aright. Let each of us keep Christmas in our hearts.
Let us resolve anew to create an atmosphere of peace and joy and love (as far as it is possible) in our homes, not just at Yuletide but throughout the year! Then our Christmas will indeed be Merry and the days ahead will form a truly Happy New Year!

Granddad Says

CHRISTMAS TIME

There's something about the Christmas Time
With its hymns of praise and Carols dear
That mellow the heart and hallow the home,
Lightens the task, brings hope and cheer.

Hide in the very air we breathe
We feel a spirit we cannot see,
And sense its warm benevolence,
Its heartfelt force for equity.

'Tis a time to think more deeply
Of the life laid down by Him,
To save mankind from the downward path
Of sin so dark and grim.

We recall that glorious pageant
Upon a Judean hill,
Host on its knees!

Their prayers were directed ("unto God"). This was no introspection or wool-gathering; their help was in the Alighting. They had no other recourse. God was their solitary hope and aid.
Their prayers were definite ("for him"). This was practical, pointed, specific, focused intercession. Our Lord is pleased when His people bring their personal, particular desires to Him in persistent, expectant prayer. He stands ready to answer their requests far beyond their dearest dreams.

When shepherds watched and angels sang,
"Peace on earth, to men good-will."

When the wise men brought their treasures,
Gold, frankincense and myrrh,
To lay at the feet of the Virgin's child,
Our Lord and Saviour.

There was no room in the inn that night
For Joseph and Mary of Galilee,
Who had come to be taxed at Bethlehem.
As prophets did foresee.

Yes, God revealed Himself that night;
A Babe in a manger born
Brought hope to souls so long depressed
By tyranny and scorn.

Oh that the manger of every heart
Could cradle the Child, God's gift of love,
And link this old earth to heaven anew
In unity, faith and love.
—Myrtle Dowswell

A bachelor sometimes is a man who envies married men until he gets married.

Very few persons have snug fortunes, but many have snug incomes, in that it's all they can do to keep within them.

TO OUR PATRONS

That our staff may be able to spend Christmas and New Years with their families, there will be . . .

NO MILK DELIVERY on Christmas Day & New Years Day.

Maple Leaf Dairy & Staff

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