



Baby Steps into 2015

By Hannelore Volpe

It seems hard to believe that Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are behind us and we are looking ahead to the New Year.

The hoopla and hype of the festive season have surrounded us for at least two months. It was easy to become preoccupied with the presents we had to buy (all those sales!), the colourful decorations and the Christmas carols which had been blasting at us since two days before Halloween.

We all know what comes between these two major holidays: Boxing Day!

Add to that Boxing Week and Boxing Month, and shoppers who still have money or credit left are shouting "Hooray!" and heading out to their nearest store.

The festivities got me to thinking about what actually ties Christmas and New Year's together.

Babies, of course!

As in Baby Jesus and the Baby New Year.

The season starts off with the hopeful promise of the one and the year ends with the hopeful promise of the other.

The Christmas story of Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus has been re-enacted and depicted for hundreds of years. It may even have been re-enacted by you. How many of us or our kids have come home after school all excited that we've been chosen to be Mary or Joseph, a camel, a palm tree or a Wise Man at our elementary school Christmas pageant? I remember oversize sweaters, bath robes and bath towels, and cotton batting material as major components of the costumes. While a doll has to substitute for Jesus in the little kids' pageants, there's often an honest-to-goodness baby at Living Nativities re-enacted by the grown-ups.

That led my thoughts to grandparents (it must be all that brandy-soaked fruitcake).

Grandparents go absolutely gaga over their grandchildren. A relative once told me, "I love my grandchildren more than my children!"

I can see that: the smell, the mess and the noise can be handed back to the parents.

But the joy goes on forever.

In the olden days, when people carried fat wallets filled with pictures of their favourite grandchild, it would take you about an hour to "Ooh" and "Aah" over this shrimpy kid who can do such wonderful things - burp, smile and just look darn cute.

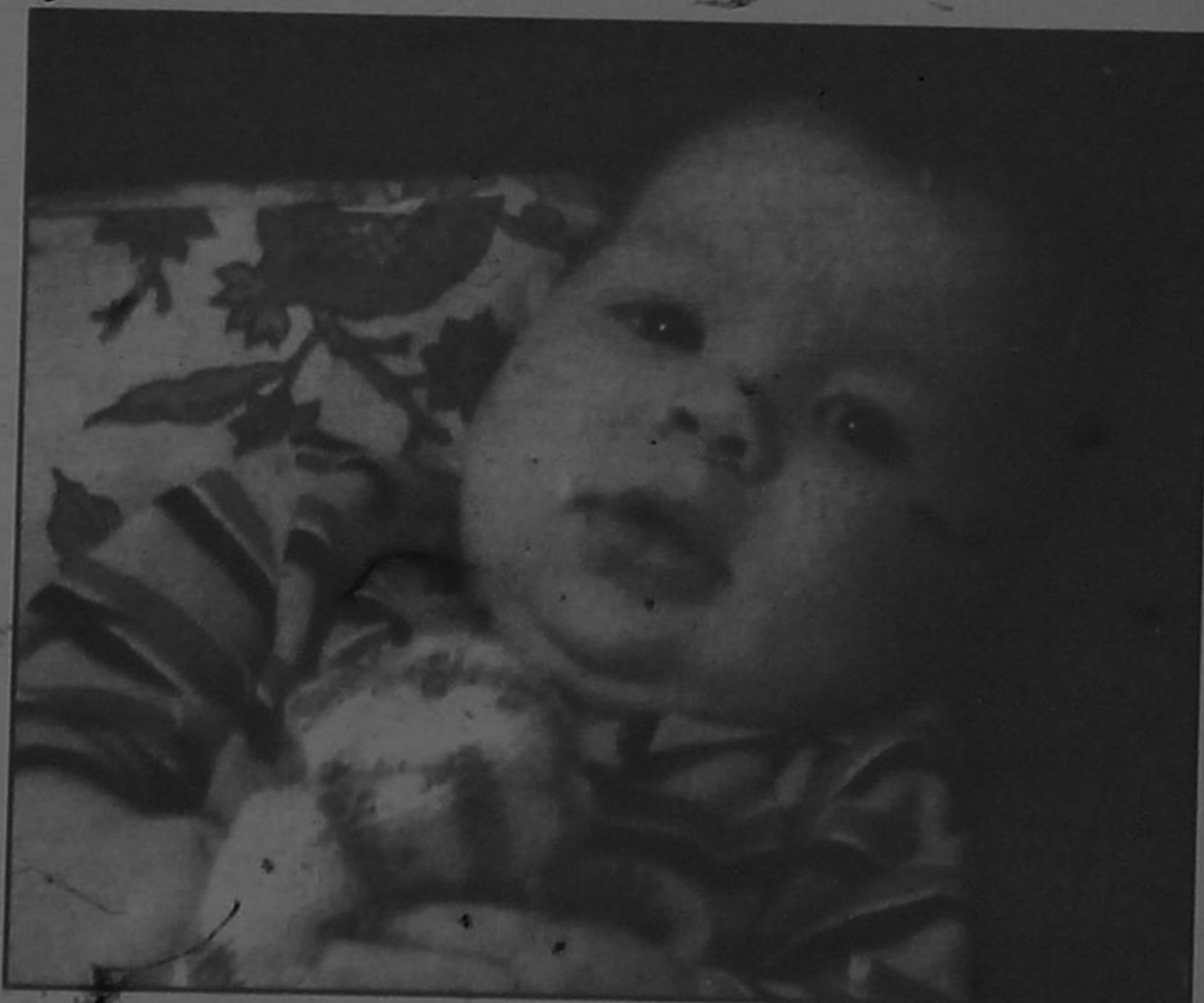
Now out comes the much-more daunting electronic gadget, where you can see both photos and movies of this most wonderful creation. This has to be the most photographed generation of kids ever. When they grow up and say, "I never did that!", parents can easily flourish the recorded evidence, in all its digital glory. The youngsters won't have a chance of getting away with that, or any, statement.

This, of course, leads us to the New Year, which we all anticipate as a time of being smarter, thinner, better looking, more giving, more generous - in short, much better than we were this year.

At the stroke of midnight on December 31st, Baby New Year, often shown wearing nothing but a diaper, this year maybe with a sash with 2015 emblazoned on it, will toddle onto the scene. Meanwhile, Old Father Time shuffles off this mortal coil, hopefully taking all our sadness, disappointments and other bad stuff with him, while encouraging all the good things to continue on.

Like all newborn babies, the New Year is fragile and full of hope. It is up to all of us to take good care of it, to see if we can fulfill its hopeful, joyous promise of better things to come.

It is in your hands
Happy New Year 2015, everyone!



Possibly the most beautiful baby of 2014, according to an unbiased assessment by Free Press editor and newly-minted granny Kate Gilderdale.

When it Comes to Drinking & Driving ONE DRINK IS TOO MANY



Make the right choices this
New Year's Eve
and throughout the year.

- Plan ahead
- Have a designated driver
- Call a friend or family member for a ride
- Take a taxi by calling #TAXI on your cell phone
- Arrange for overnight accommodation
- Be a responsible host



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