

# Press-Herald

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Wednesday, December 22, 1965

## The Christmas Spirit

Saturday is the day recognized throughout Christendom as the anniversary of the Saviour's birth, and is therefore the most important celebration of the Christian year. It is the beginning of the liturgical year in many churches, and the basis for all Christian worship.

The historian's unbending insistence on provable fact has cast doubt on the exact date of the birth of Jesus Christ. Finding no documents to fix the date, the proof-oriented historians have arrived at — and thereby passed on as fact — the suggestion that the Christmas celebration is what today's sharp-eyed investor would call a spin-off from the several pre-Christian celebrations, including the Roman saturnalia, the Greek worship of Dionysus, and various pagan ceremonies occurring near the winter solstice.

Other historians, equally insistent that all allegations must be supported by hard fact, have suggested that there is no Santa Claus. The suggestion, we must assume, is predicted on the belief that the spirit of something great is less real than the flesh which sometimes is used to enfold that spirit.

These suggestions are widely rejected and we here reject them as not worthy of serious consideration.

Perhaps a Life photographer was not present at that obscure manger nearly 2,000 years ago, it is admitted that the remote television crews were not roaming at that time.

It is equally true that other tangible records of the birth in Bethlehem are less than the historian would deem ideal — yet, all the evidence most men need is present.

Is the testimony of St. Luke to be disregarded, or that of St. Mark, St. Matthew, or St. John? Was St. Paul's conversion and his journeys throughout the Biblical world inspired by anything less than the nativity of the Saviour?

As certain as the rising of the sun each morning is the knowledge that indeed a child was born in Bethlehem who was to bring a new dimension to the lives of men.

And equally certain is the knowledge that the spirit which was created through the birth of Jesus Christ is as real as any tangible shard which a curious historian might retrieve from an ancient pagan's grave. To most of us, it is a far more real thing.

Let us remember Christmas, then, as the feast of Christ's nativity and during the coming hours of rejoicing, give thanks to the Father for His Son.

## Opinions of Others

"Some of the vociferous advocates of government-owned electric systems have suggested the government should move into the electricity field to prevent another blackout. . . . They imply, of course, that such a thing could never happen if Uncle Sam ran the show. Let's see, now, who'd take care of the place when all the government holidays come along and every office shuts down? And more obvious yet—have these public power advocates checked into the efficiency of the government-operated mail service? We'd be back to the coal range, kerosene lamp, and lignite furnace in short order if the bureaucracy controlled the power system in our nation."—*New Rockford (N.D.) Transcript.*

"There was a happening in Chester, Pa., recently which, in its own small way, is a kind of horror story which tells a lot about how well-intentioned Federal programs can turn into instruments of compulsion that touch individual freedom. Two grade students in Chester were suspended from school for three days. Their only crime was that they brought their lunch from home instead of paying the 35 cents for school-supplied meals. The school board president explained that the school lunch program is subsidized by the Federal government, and for a school to qualify, all the children must participate. The parents of the two boys had refused to go along."—*Arlington (Texas) Journal.*

"Believe it or not, Peace Corps officials have started a recruitment drive for foreign workers among members of the communist-backed youth group, Students for a Democratic Society. This is the group behind recent anti-Viet Nam student demonstrations and draft card burnings."—*Rockville (Md.) Monitor.*

"It's a strange world: The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that it is unlawful to require Communists to register as such as heretofore required. . . . Freedom is a great thing—that is what these Communists have vowed to destroy. Yet, we give them every aid and encouragement that is possible."—*East Point (Ga.) Reporter.*

"During the autumn of 1943, citizens of the Scandinavian nations worked with resistance leaders to save thousands of Jews from extermination by the Nazis. Today, a generation later, American Jews still remember. A scholarship fund has been established to say 'thank you' in a practical way. . . . The Scandinavian story is a reminder to the world of what morality means. It is a reminder by which all of us can profit."—*Terre Haute (Ind.) Tribune.*

Throughout the country there are undoubtedly many people who have mixed feelings about the advisability of our being in Viet Nam, and everyone is entitled to his own opinion in this regard. But to advocate the burning of draft cards and feigning mental sickness and even homosexuality in an attempt to evade the draft is downright repulsive and dangerous to the morale of our fighting forces."—*Auburndale (Pa.) Star.*

## I Already Gave At The Office!



STAN DELAPLANE

## Caribbean Islands Offer Charming Vacation Hours

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad — A pastel town that drips with humidity. They call it "petit caren" weather this time of year. . . . patois for a little rain, a little sun. They serve a tiny oyster here, very flavorful, harvested from the roots of tidewater mangrove trees. . . . Trinidad is farthest of the Caribbean islands. There's an attractive combination rate: Come here by ship, fly home with a choice of stops in a dozen islands. Or by way of Panama with stops in every country up to Mexico.

"Could you suggest some places in the Caribbean for three weeks? I shall be alone. . . ."

Always seemed to me a woman alone has more social life on a cruise ship. By the third day you are talking to most of the passengers. But you can sit a couple of weeks in a resort hotel without meeting anybody. If it must be an island, make it St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. More relaxed social climate than the others.

"We want to plan now for our summer trip to Europe, our first. . . ."

I have a manila envelope for each country. Stuff each one with information for that country. A map of the capital city—free from airlines. Road map of the country. If you're moving around. Usually free from the country's tourist bureaus. All of them have New York offices. Local ones in big cities.

Put in clippings. Things you want to see. Notes of advice from friends. Telephone numbers should be written on the outside of the envelope. A little money of the country for airport tips and taxis if you want to be

well prepared. A small phrase book is handy.

On arrival, have the proper envelope ready. Get out the money and phrase book. At your hotel, get out your information. Start adding to your phone numbers as you have to look them up. And you've got a working thing going.

"Your advice on a guided tour or going it alone the first time to Mexico. Not too much money?"

Then I'd say Greyhound's 21-day tour, is what you want. About \$340 which includes nearly everything. I did this a few years ago. And though I'd been in Mexico a lot, I learned much I never knew before. Had a lot of fun, too.

Buses were comfortable. Hotels were very good. Guide aboard all the way. Baggage and tips were handled by the guide. All you have to do is get on and off. West Coast people go from Los Angeles, Midwest and East pick it up at El Paso.

"Would you see what you think of this driving trip from Frankfurt, where we pick up a new car, down to Malaga in Spain?"

Your daily runs are too long. You're thinking in terms of American highways. A day's run of 150 miles — 250 kilometers — is about equal to our 300 miles in time. And you feel like you'd driven 300.

"I shall be on a round-the-world cruise and would like to know which countries would be best for dolls for my granddaughter?"

Every country seems to have dolls in native costume. I thought the best looking ones were in Japan and Spain. Japanese dolls

are more to look at than to play with.

"Please give us a few colorful and good London restaurants."

King's Head and Eight Bells near the Albert bridge. Rule's in Maiden Lane. Shepherds, a pub in Shepherds Market. Coq d'Or just off Piccadilly. Wheeler's Oyster House in Duke of York Street up from St. James's Square. For a pub lunch, the Grenadier in Wilton Place.

"My husband must go to Tegucigalpa in Honduras. Can you tell us anything about it?"

For a number of years I wanted to go to "Tay-goo." That romantic background of gun runners and William Walker and Lee Christmas. When I got there, I thought it was the dullest town in the world. However, friends of mine (who like most things I like) thought it was one of the best places they'd ever been.

The hotel is the Lincoln. The back bar is decorated with quotes from stories by O'Henry. (He was on the lam from a bank charge down here.) You can fly from here to some interesting and remote Maya ruins. The liveliest place I could find was a teen-age Coca Cola place with a juke box.

WILLIAM HOGAN

## The Spirit of Christmas Leads Family to Trouble

No book is more outrageously sentimental than Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" (1843). Yet Ebenezer Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, and the rest have become as much a part of the English-speaking holiday as mistletoe.

It seems to me that someone is always trying to stake a claim to a permanent place in the Christmas literature. One "A Christmas Carol" would seem to be enough, and certainly Dickens was a better hand at this sort of thing than most. But still they appear, designed, one supposes, for a public that looks back on old Norman Rockwell magazine covers with unabashed nostalgia.

The chief entry in the seasonal sentimental literature is a short fable titled "A Tree Full of Stars," by the West Virginia novelist Davis Grubb ("The Night of the Hunter"). It is a Christmas sermon played around a fine, fragrant spruce tree in a small, presumably Mid-

## HERB CAEN SAYS:

# Some Last Minute Hints For Those Late Shoppers

IT LOOKS LIKE another green Christmas, out here in our little gay home in the West. On the downtown streetcorners, the Salvation Army belles are ringing their bells, alongside the smoothly dressed Black Muslims peddling their papers with smiles on their lips and hate in their eyes. Chauffeured limosines slither along the curbs past the blind men, three to a block, holding out tin cups for copper quarters. Sacred music, nicely recorded, plays seasonal counterpoint to the busy cash registers.

THE TWO CHRISTMAS-ES, the Sacred Dichotomy, the Profane Dilemma, God and Mammon, and he loves me best who gives me most. The season of faith in your credit card, hope that the bills won't arrive till February, and charity as long as it's tax-deductible. . . . the sign of the Cross vs. the Dollar Sign. Yankee-know-how piled to the art of conspicuous consumption and the artistry is as considerable as the consumption is conspicuous. "Christmas is for children." the old-timers used to say, but at Christmas we are all children, and the package under the tree outshines the star on top. "Well, that's human nature," shrug the apologists—and why is that phrase used only to excure

the weaknesses of human nature? OF THE TOYS for grown-up children, there is no end. A three-liter crystal flacon of perfume for \$2,500; a 24-karat gold toilet seat for \$250 ("Surely one of the most memorable gifts you could ever give," and wrapped in a jeweler's cloth bag, at that); and a blanket for your bed, lined in white mink, for \$595—and if that is a bit steep, there's one lined in vicuna for only \$385.

You know what you get for the man who has everything. Nothing, right? But on the other hand, one jewelry salon has thought of something for this mythical chap: a pocket-size folding steak knife with a solid gold handle—only \$150 and very neat. Another is offering Anna Held's gold mesh opera bag, diamond-encrusted, for \$5,000 even. Tiffany can supply, for \$2,750, a quartz crystal replica of the Patek Philippe clock presented by the people of Berlin to John F. Kennedy. If you really don't know what to do with your money, here are some answers.

THE TWO FACES of Christmas, the Child in the manger and the partridge in the pear tree. Sometimes, in the din of December, the message of the former is almost lost or are "Peace"

and "Love" the kind of words even a cash register can't muffle? The money doesn't seem to be running out. Time is.

HANG ON, SCOOFY: I guess those \$100-a-plate dinners aren't too filling. Following his at the Fairmont here, Vice-Pres. Hubert Humphrey (with a mob of toadies in tow) headed for Kan's in Chinatown, where he noshed the anti-Communist Fighting Duck, the Yin Yang Chicken and the Diced Squab Tumble ("The vice squad rumbled?" he asked) till 3 in the morning. . . . Pres. George Meany of the AFL-CIO, here recently for the group's nat'l convention, had an unexpected supporter: Harry Bridges, whose ILWU was kicked out of the AFL-CIO years ago. At a meeting of anti-Meany union chiefs Bridges warned: "Better go slow on attacking the guy — you could wind up with Somebody worse" (and I do believe he meant Walter Reuther). . . . Comedienne Phyllis Diller arrived for her show a little on the tacky side. First, \$40,000 worth of her jewels were heisted from a hotel room in Pittsburgh. Then, on the set of the movie she's making with Bob Hope, somebody snatched her \$17,000 chinchilla coat. She didn't even have her love (Wardle Donovan) to keep her warm. He was occupied elsewhere.

ROYCE BRIER

## Kennedy Legend Builders May Be Missing the Mark

The continuing flow of books about President Kennedy was motivated largely by the assassination. . . . Whether a large segment of the people, however, is looking at this unrelieved tragedy with clear eyes, is another matter. There are disturbing signs that a great many Americans are not remembering John F. Kennedy as he, by reason of his character and personality, would like to be remembered.

We have lost four Presidents to assassins. Presidents Garfield and McKinley did not hold office in great times, and it is only realistic to suggest that they left no extraordinary impression on the American historical consciousness. . . . But Lincoln and Kennedy did, even though the latter, unlike Lincoln, had not reached his full potential when he died.

The Lincoln impress on historical consciousness is one of the great sagas of the human record. But he had not been dead a day before his image underwent a

distortion at the hands of a grieving people, and it has never fully recovered its homely human shape.

He was the first modern historical man to whom the word "martyr" was attached, and generally accepted. His funeral train from Washington to Springfield begot a pathological national experience. The hate and doubt which had swirled about him for four years was washed away in baths.

This may be extenuated in a people who had passed through such an ordeal. But in any case it made it difficult to take the measure of the man, and the process went on for years on end, and is still going on. . . . Without an ordeal of like intensity, but in an era of uncertainty, the same process is being applied to the memory of John F. Kennedy.

Alice Roosevelt Longworth is one who is dubious of it. In an interview in the Saturday Evening Post, she said: "I have no use for the

martyr epithet. . . . (he) was much too good for the kind of things that are being done about him." She doesn't think he would have liked it — "it is tiresome to turn him into an immaculate little icon. . . . he was an engaging character of great ability who needed no window dressing."

The manner and shock of Kennedy's death, of course, is the key to the situation about which Mrs. Longworth sounds a warning.

Kennedy's associates while he was President are now publishing books about him. Some seem to be realistic portrayals. They are perhaps more realistic than the earliest books about Lincoln. But books only reach a million or two, and are not the stuff of legend which settles in the hearts of a people.

Any historical figure who begets a legend is unfortunate, but so are his people. A man of the bent of either Kennedy or Lincoln must scoff or be appalled at many elements of legends imposed upon them. But the people are unfortunate because the legends obscure the problems their leaders must feel.

Lincoln and Kennedy had plenty of problems of vast portent to our grandfathers and to us. Each licked some and muffed some. They were men, and we ourselves would be wiser to regard them as such.

## Quote

A husband who gives his wife his salary check the first of every month will never have trouble — unless she finds out he's paid twice a month. — Ellis W. Ramsey in the Beebe (Ark.) News.

Lack of education is not the same thing as lack of intelligence. . . . but to vote in an intelligent manner one must be aware of the issues, of constitutional provisions, political processes, economic principles, and political history.

It will take a rededicated American citizenry and government, a free press, our schools, churches, and homes to thwart Communism's clearly indicated program to undermine from within. — Agnes M. Crawford, French Camp.

## Morning Report:

I figure that if a magazine dedicated to the 89th Congress can scoop up a million dollars worth of corporate advertising, another magazine dedicated to, say, the glory of Dwight Eisenhower could double that figure. I'm not alone. General Lucius Clay, Republican finance chairman, feels the same way.

It took him less than 48 hours to digest the sheer genius of the Democratic publication before he planned something similar himself. It's illegal for corporations to make campaign contributions. But no law says they can't buy advertising — from politicians.

General Clay didn't mope around about the Democratic scheme and call it dirty pool, highly irregular, and somewhat un-American. Not on your life. He's happy to play "me-tooism" on the GOP cash register.

Abe Melnikoff