

Battalion Editorials

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1949

Once Upon A Midnight Clear . . .

"One more day till vacation, we're leaving College Station"—these are the strains we hear almost every night, as the carolers return to their respective dormitories.

Yes, we're leaving College Station, going home for Christmas. "Going home for Christmas"—those few words mean much to everyone.

Regardless of individual plans for much merriment and celebration, the old Christmas spirit will still be most prevalent in the minds of A&M students for the next week and a half.

Among the many contributions to that Christmas atmosphere are the many and beautiful Christmas carols. These songs have become so standard that we sing only the words, our minds not comprehending their meaning.

"Silent night, holy night"—will it be?

"Peace on earth, good will towards men"—this above all is what we pray for this Christmas. "Joy to the world"—most of the world will be joyous.

A prominent churchman said last week, "There is no Santa Claus" or words to that effect. He cited that Santa's replacement of the birth of Jesus as the chief reason for the seasonal festivity.

We cannot believe that. To him, and to other unbelievers, we refer to the story, "Is There A Santa Claus?", printed elsewhere in today's paper. This was originally a letter written by a young girl to the editor of a New York paper, asking the time-honored question.

That little girl is an old lady now, if she is still living. We often wonder if she still believes in Santa Claus. Five will get you one that she does.

Sports Must Be Fed With Dollars . . .

Dollars and cents have a peculiar way of filtering into sports and becoming as important as victories. This unfortunate condition makes sports smack of commercialism, and almost robs them of the right to be called "sports."

College sports, chiefly football, have fallen victim to the dollar mark. Though the sport of the game is still there, the dollar has almost equal importance.

A glance at this past season's football attendance figures of home games by Southwest Conference schools reveals to what extent these various schools' athletic programs can function. Athletic programs are tied directly to gate receipts.

The larger the gate receipts, the more money for athletics, the broader and more complete can be the athletic program. Southern Methodist led the conference with 484,000 attending its eight home games. Texas University was second with 203,000 at five home games. Rice, third with 152,900 at six home games. Texas A&M, with four home games, drew 120,000 customers. Texas Christian was fifth playing host before 115,500 five times, and Baylor's four home games brought 53,000 customers. These figures include student attendance.

Gate receipts for Southwest Conference games split between opposing schools after expenses have been deducted. This year A & M's attendance figures were boosted by an over-capacity crowd for the

Texas-A&M game and a near-capacity crowd for the SMU game. However, in 1948 these games in Austin and Dallas attracted over 50,000 more fans than they did on Kyle Field. Dollars and cents-wise that's over a half hundred grand less for A&M athletics.

Money derived from all athletics at A&M goes into one big pot. Football is by far the greatest contributor to the pot. Out of the money pool the college's athletic program is financed—coaches salaries, scholarships, equipment, awards, and all the many other costs necessary for a formidable athletic program of both major and minor sports.

The problem of attendance is a constant problem for all colleges, and A&M in particular. Located at considerable distance from large cities, A&M must provide home game sports of sufficient caliber to induce city folks besides local residents to spend their money witnessing AggieLand sports. Fortunately, winning teams are not always produced by schools with the largest attendance records, though certainly these attendance records and the money they represent are not without influence.

Athletic conscious A&M must, whether we like it or not, be a dollar conscious A&M. If we are to have a vigorous athletic program, our efforts for dollars must be as tireless as our battles for championships.

A famous theatrical agent appeared at his office one morning complaining of a violent headache. His staff gathered around him to sympathize, and a junior clerk volunteered:

"I had a terrible headache not long ago, but it didn't last long. My wife pulled me over on the sofa with her and gave me a great big kiss. Believe it or not, the pain disappeared immediately.

The sufferer reached for his hat. "I've tried everything else," he moaned. "Is your wife home now?"

Now here's a range sayin'—
Not many can match it:
There ain't no use itchin'
Unless you kin scratch it!

An efficiency expert in Washington asked a government worker, "What do you do?" The reply was "Nothing." The expert asked another clerk the same question and again the reply was "Nothing."

"That settles it!" exclaimed the E-man. "This damned duplication has got to go."

When as a youth I went to school
I was quite dumb, you see;
In fact I found school very dull—
And that's how school found me

Oh, shed a tear for
Poor Harry Van Ness
He agreed when his wife
Said, "My hair is a mess!"

The Battalion

"Soldier, Statesman, Knightly Gentleman"

Lawrence Sullivan Ross, Founder of Aggie Traditions

News contributions may be made by telephone (4-5444) or at the editorial office, Room 201, Goodwin Hall. Classified ads may be placed by telephone (4-5324) or at the Student Activities Office, Room 209, Goodwin Hall.

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SCENE STEALER



The Real Meaning Of Christmas

(Editor's Note—It is with pleasure that we publish the following article by P. L. "Pinkie" Downs Jr. One of the most respected men ever connected with A&M, "Pinkie" will, in a few years, complete a half century of service to the college.)

By P. L. "PINKIE" DOWNS JR.

Christmas really means, "Christ, the gift to men, women, and children." To the English people we owe the word Christmas—Christ Mass—a religious ceremony celebrating the birth of Christ.

December 25 is the accepted date of the birth of Christ as He was born at midnight on Christmas Eve.

Do you know why Santa Claus comes down the chimney at Christmas time instead of coming through the window? It is attributed to an old English custom of sweeping down the chimney at New Year so good luck could enter.

It is to the Hollanders that we owe the custom of hanging up our stockings. They placed their wooden shoes before the large fireplace, but we Americans substituted stockings because wooden shoes wouldn't stretch.

The holly wreath that we hang in our homes was copied from the English who believed the holly leaves represented the thorns Christ wore upon the cross, while the little red berries were the drops of His blood.

The giving of Christmas presents brings out the thought—"Peace on Earth, good will toward men."

It was General W. B. Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, who was once asked the question if he were solicited to leave a message to the world, what would it be. He wrote only one word and signed his name. That word was "others".

Happiness is not seeking pleasure for ourselves, but doing the necessary things for others.

God grant me the power to accept things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.

I think we should pause long enough to thank God for the privilege of living in a Christian country. You know, I believe in prayer. My definition of prayer would be—communicating with God for that which we desire—not deserve.

Did you know that Mohammedan people pray five times daily, but only pray for themselves—never others? Christmas is a good time to pause long enough to take stock of ourselves and really see of what value we have been through the year to our neighbors, city, county, state and nation.

Let us all enter into the Christmas spirit, love one another, give to those less fortunate than ourselves, and try to carry out Christ's teachings.

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'Is There A Santa Claus?'

(Editor's Note: The following story is reprinted from The New York Sun, Sept. 21, 1897.)

We take pleasure in answering at once and thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of the Sun:

"Dear Editor—I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says 'If you see it in the Sun it's so.' Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?"—Virginia O'Hanlon, 115 W. 95th St."

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith

then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your Papa to hire men to watch all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real—and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God! He lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, may 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Boyle's Column . . .

Approaching Christmastime Leaves Boyle Reminiscent

BY HAL BOYLE

New York—(P)—The heart turns back at Christmastide:

The Christmas that most grown-ups remember best is some Christmas as a child at home, when our faith was as bright as Santa's beard and a bright new sled under a popcorn-decked tree filled life with joy almost too tremendous to bear. For Christmas wasn't just fun when you were young and got what you asked for—it was ecstasy. Remember?

But many a land-locked heart this season isn't merely voyaging back to childhood Christmases at home. It's ranging in memory overseas to wartime Christmases abroad.

There are three I like to remember—in Algiers, in Belgium, in Manila.

It was in Algiers in 1942 that I learned how the war had divided the loyalties of countrymen as

well as countries. A fellow correspondent and I were invited to have Christmas dinner with a young Frenchman, Paul Millon, his wife and their two children.

Looking down at us from the wall was a portrait of Marshal Petain. This seemed odd as the old hero of Verdun was even then widely regarded as a German puppet. But Paul wouldn't take the picture down.

"We simply cannot believe all they say about the old Marshal," he said. And you couldn't help but admire him for his faith, however misplaced.

The spookiest Christmas I ever spent was in Spa, Belgium, in 1944. The little town had been evacuated by the American First Army Headquarters in the first days of the Battle of the Bulge. It looked like a drab Christmas for a few correspondents who had elected to remain in the Hotel Portugal.

Then a strange Santa Claus indeed—a begrimmed, stubble-bearded supply sergeant for an anti-tank company dug up three turkeys, cranberries, potatoes—and the hotel provided wine, cognac and the other trimmings.

While German guns boomed across the hills we sat down to a merry banquet presided over by Madame Beaucoup, the hotel proprietor. We called her "Madame Beaucoup" because her bill for cognac were always "Beaucoup

big." I remember a 1945 Christmas Eve dinner in Manila because it was the first Christmas season of peace. We were guests of Mrs. Siaron, a Filipino woman, and her family.

Outside firecrackers popped and the Gecko lizards sang a serenade. A famous lithograph of Jesus hung in the living room, and a flickering light beneath it lit these words:

"I will bless the homes in which the image of my sacred heart shall be honored and exposed."

Somehow it seemed like a message of a peace that would be lasting.

Dear Mrs. Siaron, Dear Madame Beaucoup, good Paul Millon—to you and the millions like you in many lands who took American strangers into your homes and made them happy—a merry, merry Christmas, in remembrance of things past!

Official Notice

If you ordered S. L. Green, The Theory and Use of the Computer Variable, call Mrs. Sugareff at the Library.

Mrs. G. L. Sugareff
Order Librarian

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Wives of city officials will be hostesses.

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