

Editorial Opinion

Xmas or Christmas?

by Jeffrey Matson
Executive Editor

When it comes to Christmas I am a stubborn traditionalist. I hate unnecessary fake trees, plastic santas, Xmas sales (at least most places have the decency to separate Xmas from Christmas), and most of all, spray can pine scent. On the other hand, I love snow, Christmas carols, happy children, giving money to the Salvation Army, and making gifts for my friends. Still, it's hard for me to really enjoy the holiday season when even my parents are giving in to an artificial tree this year.

It is not that I don't understand why this is all happening, that part is easy. It's just much easier to have a fake tree. But I still think it's kind of sad to treat such a beautiful season in that way. Like "how can I most easily and cheaply get through this time of the year". It could only happen in America. Still, the sentence is not final, there is some hope for the Christmas season. And that hope lies with us. (I know that the Peanuts have told you all this once or twice already, and probably did it better than I can but it's an obsession with me, OK.)

Tradition should and can be a beautiful and enjoyable thing, it's all a matter of attitude. Too often I hear people talk about the great

chore that Christmas has become for them, the cards, the presents, the wrapping, the shopping, the house cleaning, the company. These people treat the entire holiday season as some kind of plague they are stuck with every year and must make the best out of it. It's very sad when something with the potential for such great joy and togetherness is reduced to a set of tedious yearly tasks.

Well, we can't go out and change the world (this year) but we could change something within ourselves first. Instead of buying your mother a pot holder because she needs one, make something only you could give her, or buy something she would never buy for herself. Contrary to popular belief, Christmas is not meant as a time to replenish our underwear drawers. There are some other things we can do, like

don't put your tree up right after Thanksgiving dinner. Make the putting up and decorating of the tree a special part of your Christmas eve party with family and friends. Also, talk to your older relatives and find out what kinds of traditions their families had and try to preserve some of the traditions of your particular family. Many beautiful ethnic and family traditions will be lost forever if our generation does not make an effort to preserve them.

If our generation doesn't make an effort to hold on to the Christmas season as the joyous,

beautiful, religious time it once was, it will become just another sale season and we can then change the name of the season officially to Xmas because no trace of Christ will be left. (Remember him? A carpenter with a lot of good ideas about the world and people, born, of all places, in a manger in Bethlehem.) Well it's his birthday we're celebrating, or used to. Of course it's more than just Christ's birthday. It's the promise of life, of a spring to follow winter and warmth to follow the cold. It is a time, when in the deep cold of

winter, people gathered around fires, exchanged gifts, and shared a common faith, a common hope, of life.

Remember this one? "Peace on Earth - Good Will Towards Men." I realize that this is slightly old fashioned. To think about peace on earth in 1973 can be very depressing, but at least we can make peace with ourselves, and spread that peace among those we love. If that can happen, maybe some of that elusive "Christmas spirit" (not to be confused with Xmas spirits) will return again.

Strive For A Foster Child

The sophomore class is investigating the plausibility of supporting a foster child. The cost of \$12 a month and \$144 a year would be raised through various activities such as the "Greaser" dance held a week ago Tuesday which grossed about \$50.

According to Sophomore Class vice president Bob Stein, most activities at Behrend are for the students and not orientated towards making money. The goal of the sophomore class project is to sponsor an activity such that some one else will benefit in addition to the students at Behrend.

"The main problem," Stein stated, "is keeping the tradition going. Once we start it, we have to make sure other classes will keep it going." Another problem that has to be investigated is how to promote the project over the summer.

Some possible ideas for monthly activities are future dances, raffles, a skating night and a hayride. Student suggestions are not only welcome but needed. Students should contact either Jim Armstrong or Bob Stein.

Letter To The Editor

In my brief experience with Behrend activities I have come into frequent encounters with the idea of student apathy. Perhaps apathy is not the most proper word; perhaps it is more an outright unwillingness for involvement as opposed to sheer disinterest. Perhaps it isn't limited to students; perhaps administrators and faculty are guilty as well; perhaps they are unknowingly instrumental in propagating that attitude of non-involvement.

I had long raised my voice vehemently against this accusation of apathy. I was of the opinion that students were not unwilling, they were simply unaware of the opportunities that lay before them for involvement. But, after trying at registration to sell the Behrend College 25th Anniversary yearbook and some extras of last year's literary magazines (Illusions) for those who had missed it, I became quickly disillusioned.

Out of over 400 copies to sell, we managed to sell seven yearbooks so far, five to faculty and administrators, and possible a sixth as well (I don't know who bought the one). We made 21 dollars towards paying a bill of nearly 2,000 dollars. We also sold an outstanding number of literary magazines; a whole four (one dollar total). Neither endeavor can be considered a financial success by any stretch of the imagination. Luckily, the literary magazine had advertisers. Although we made no real profit, we at least are not greatly in debt. The yearbook is a different matter.

While selling these things, we arbitrarily selected students to answer ten questions on a student interest survey concerning

yearbooks, literary magazines, and the possibility of combining the two. We asked over fifty people if they would mind taking it. Most, surprisingly (to me at least), refused quite bluntly. Of the twenty (out of over fifty) that agreed, five of them neglected to answer one question, four skipped another, three missed two others, and one missed a fifth question. Only four questions were answered by all twenty. And only four of the twenty made any additional comments; a section of the survey which I tried to attach particular importance to.

Summing up the survey; the figures show a great interest in both yearbooks and literary magazines, the possibility of combining the two is strongly supported, and a high majority reported that they would buy both a yearbook and a literary magazine. I compared those figures with our sales, and found it very difficult to stifle a burst of cynical laughter.

When things don't sell, the administration is quite naturally hesitant to provide funds for another attempt. In light of the fact that every attempt at publication at Behrend has fallen flat on its face for the past few years I find it almost incredible that the administration still backs such attempts at all. But their support has lessened. The quality of the publications, quite unavoidably, is lessened as well by this more limited budget.

I am personally very interested in seeing some type of student publication this year at Behrend; particularly a literary one. I would much like to see a combination of the literary and the yearbook formats, if I thought it might go over well enough. But I have to do some convincing. I

have to be able to demonstrate student interest before I can induce administrative interest. Faith will only beat a dead horse so long, and student interest has at least been a dying horse far longer than I like to recall.

There are certain individuals (far too few in number) who have been of great help and support. I won't mention their names because I do not wish to place them in a position where they feel that they are committed to what is largely my cause; unfortunately so. I hope that these people realize my appreciation for all they have done. But, again, they are far too few. The few who have shown sufficient interest are incapable of doing much at all without the interest and support of the many from whom we have not heard.

We need photographers (or even one photographer) desperately, we need contributors for the literary efforts, we need people with ideas, and people who are willing to work and able to work, we need illustrators. I would much like to become undisillusioned (if there isn't such a word there should be) by an expressed student interest; either to me, to the Behrend Collegian, or to Mrs. Horne or Dr. Runzo (advisors of the literary magazine and the yearbook respectively). I would also like to see that interest applied towards making both endeavors (the 25th Anniversary yearbook and the literary mag.) financial successes. Maybe then we can procure the funds necessary to create some really quality material for this year; something that the students and the college can be proud to call theirs.

Doug Julius
Editor:
Illusions—Tempus

Pros & Cons

- ...cottage cheese without paprika.
- ...getting caught under the mistletoe.
- ...skiing class...the snow's finally here.
- ...term break vacation is over...Christmas break vacation begins.
- ...roundball team gets season underway.
- ...President Nixon getting a glimpse of the lights in our beautifully decorated dorms.
- ...no housemother in Niagara.
- ...the grapplers have started off with a winning season.
- ...eight more weeks of winter term left.

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Mailing Address - Behrend Campus, Station Road, Erie, Pa. 16510
Office - Student Offices, Reed Union Building
Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday
Phone: 899-3101 Ext. 238.

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or delete portions of all letters for publication purposes.

All letters must be signed, but names will be withheld upon request. Term standing, major, and hometown must be included.

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