

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Yes, Virginia . . .

From the Editorial Page, New York Sun, 1897:
 We take pleasure in answering 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:
*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

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a sceptical age. They do not believe except what 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 as 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 in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you 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 that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, 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 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.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Now Is The Time
By Leon Ressler
 Lancaster County Extension Director

To Remember The Reason For The Season

This time of the year it is especially important that we take time to count our blessings. This year has been a tough one, with many challenges for farmers.

A prolonged drought combined with low prices for most agricultural commodities including milk, poultry products, pork, beef, and grain put most farm operations into a tight squeeze. Some may have suffered setbacks in their health.

In spite of this, we all can find something for which to be thankful. It is especially important for our children see us model gratitude for the good things we have even in hard times.

All of us can find some needy folks in our communities who have it tougher than us. Make it a family project to get involved in helping others. Recently I came across some facts that help put our situation in perspective. Twenty-five percent of the world lives on \$1 or less per day and 47 percent of the world lives on \$2 or less per day. If you have food in a refrigerator, clothes in your closet, a roof over your head, and a bed to sleep in, you are healthier than 75 percent of the world's population.

While farms are great places to raise a family, they are also very demanding. If we are not careful, the workload can prevent us from developing the family life we desire. Take time to evaluate your life and make sure things are in a healthy balance. Make a special effort to slow down and make some Christmas memories with your family this year.

To Properly Care For Your Horse

Lancaster County livestock agent Chester Hughes reports neglect is the worse thing that happens to horses during the winter months.

Most horses are turned out to pasture, and we only see them in the dark at feeding time. In the summer months, it is easy to provide proper care for the horse, when we are riding every day and want to make certain the horse is fit and in good health.

About the worst thing for a horse during the winter months is ice, most importantly, the ice that covers the watering trough or water bucket. Water for the horse during cold weather is too often overlooked. The water may freeze up, making it inaccessible to the horse.

Mature horses need about 10 gallons of water a day. To keep the horse healthy during freezing weather, owners should make sure an ample supply of fresh water is always available. Excessively cold water will decrease the horse's consumption of water.

Ideally, water should be maintained at a temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit. When the horse drinks less water, feed intake will decrease. A reduction in feed intake results in less energy being available to maintain body temperature and body weight during the cold months. Reduced feed and water intake could lead to colic and an impacted intestinal tract in the horse.

To help prevent water consumption problems in the winter, water should be made as accessible to the horse as possible. Heated waterers are one way to assure your horse an ample supply of drinking water. If electric water heaters are used, the water tank should be checked every

day to insure that the heater is not shorting out and shocking the horse. An electric shock would prevent the horse from drinking.

To Learn To Manage Your Small Woodland Parcel

The forests of Pennsylvania are being converted to other uses and divided into smaller and smaller parcels. The result is an increasing number of landowners on a smaller forest land base, thus making traditional forest management activities more difficult to practice.

A number of factors are driving this land conversion and development. These include rising property taxes, unexpected estate taxes, and the inability to manage the forest because of state or local regulations. Failing to consider the impacts of property taxes or estate taxes can disrupt effective management, result in abandoning forest ownership, or cause fragmenting the property in such a way that the benefits of past and future forest management are lost.


In recent years, many innovative approaches have emerged to help forest landowners deal with these issues. You can learn how these tools can help you get the most out of your woodland by attending the Forestland Conservation Conference on Jan. 16 at the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology in Pleasant Gap. This conference will discuss the factors affecting forestland conversion or parcelization and describe some innovative approaches to help keep landowners managing their forests.

For more information and to register, contact David R. Jackson, extension educator, forest resources, at (814) 355-4897. Registration must be received by Jan. 9.

Quote Of The Week:

"And the angel said to them, 'Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.'"

— Luke 2:10-12 RSV



THE BIBLE SPEAKS
 BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

KEEPING JESUS IN THE MANGER

Background Scripture:

Luke 2:1-20.

Devotional Reading:

Isaiah 9:1-7.

If God was ready to reveal himself in the Christ child born in Bethlehem, it would appear that the world was not. In three decades this infant would grow into the man that we worship as Lord and Savior of the whole world. But baby Jesus was not given the red carpet treatment. In Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph found that "there was no place for them in the inn."

So, instead of a place of honor, Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a feed trough for animals. We have so "prettified" the stable and the manger that we fail to realize what a lowly, unsuitable place it was for the birth of a baby in general and for God's Son in particular. Today, we'd invite a host of the most notable citizens. But there were no VIPs at the Bethlehem stable, no press, no keys to the city.

Instead of city officials or religious leaders, Jesus was visited by the most common of workers, shepherds from the fields outside Bethlehem. Only these rough men heard the angelic chorus that sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased" (2:14). Of course, when the shepherds left the stable, "they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child . . ." (2:18). But who was likely to believe such simple men?

'Jesus Christ!'

Today, his name is well known far and wide. Churches, hospitals, and places of higher learning bear his name. It is so commonly known today that among non-Christians as well as Christians it is probably most frequently uttered as a profane exclamation. So, for all this familiarity, the world has not yet made room for the Christ. Even within our churches we may wonder whether there is room for him.

Someone once told me that the only thing they had against puppies is that "they grow up to be dogs." The same thing might be said of kittens — and even babies, even the infant Jesus. Now that Christ has come into our world, many people do their very best to keep him in the manger.

A baby in the manger doesn't seem very threatening. We can control infants because they are not designed to be autonomous. But, if we cannot keep him out of the world, we can keep him in his place. March under his banner. Use his name, of course. Spread that name like peanut butter over everything, but don't let Jesus out of the manger!

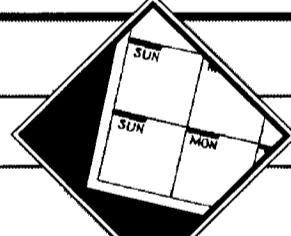
What will we do with the Prince of Peace this Christmas, as from one end of the nation to another we clamor for war? Keep him in the manger! How can we handle this Christ who comes "with great joy" not only to us but "to all the people?" That includes Christians, Jews, Moslems, Hindus, and Buddhists; Latinos, Blacks, and Orientals; Israelites and Palestinians; Democrats and Republicans, Liberals and Conservatives, Haves and Have-Nots? Keep him in the manger!

Self-Salvation

The angels proclaim the birth "of a Savior who is Christ the Lord" (2:1). Several decades ago, when the Roman Catholic Church contemplated declaring Mary "Co-Redemptrix of the race," a cartoonist pictured Mary and Jesus with the latter exclaiming, "Please, Mother, I'd rather do it myself!"

Well, wouldn't we all? Wouldn't we prefer to save ourselves and not have to bring Jesus into it? Sooner or later we come to realize that we cannot do it ourselves. If we want salvation, we cannot keep Jesus in the place to which we have consigned him.

William Barclay writes, "That there was no room in the inn was symbolic of what was to happen to Jesus. The only place where there was room for Jesus was on a cross."



FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, December 21

Wednesday, December 25

Sunday, December 22

Merry Christmas! Lancaster Farming office closed.


Winter begins.

Monday, December 23

Thursday, December 26

Tuesday, December 24

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FARM FORUM

Editor:

In the early years of our country, our government was funded almost exclusively through tariffs. Even when tariffs became a less important revenue source, they remained in place because they served another very important purpose. Tariffs protected American workers from being undercut by very low wages in other nations. Tariffs enabled the existence of a strong middle class and prosperity in manufacturing and agriculture.

Several decades ago, however, economic planners with no national loyalty and presumably much personal gain at stake began to deride tariffs as an impediment to economic growth. The push was on to scour the earth for cheaper and cheaper products made with cheaper and cheaper labor with no regard for American workers.

"Protectionism" has been de-

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