



**Hauling logs in 1939**

This photo, taken in 1939 on Sorber Mountain shows Phil and James (right) Sorber with the oxen they used to haul logs to their father Claude's sawmill. Phil was nine or ten at the time, and James about 13 years old. The photo was taken from the porch of their home by their sister, who is now Margaret Freeman of Freeman's trailer park. Phil Sorber has passed away, but James lives on Troxell Switch Road in Idetown.



**GETTING READY** - Engineer John Yagodzinski and conductor Milt Welter set up the G-scale model train for the Lake-Noxen first grade's Christmas program "Polar Express." (Post photo/Grace R. Dove)

J.W.J.

## All that glitters is not Christmas

By J.W. JOHNSON

The sensory message of Christmas stabs the eyes and assaults the ears with ferocious glitter at this time of year, particularly to those who recall the Christmas Advertising which appeared, even before Halloween.

According to many theological scholars, it would, in fact, be more historically accurate to move Christmas closer to summer...some history.

To avoid discovery and persecution, Christians in the second century A.D. began the celebration of Christmas around the end of the Julian Calendar year (December) so that it would coincide with a celebration of the pagan Feast of Saturnalia...the theory being, scholars suppose, that a celebration of Christ's birth would then be unnoticed among the general revelry.

Most theological scholars agree that Jesus was not born on December 25; rather that he was born somewhere between the first and fifth day of July; there is even disagreement about exactly what year to begin A.D. To the Christian, of course, it is irrelevant when Christ was actually born; the message of an abiding life after a daily death is what's important to Christian believers.

And how, in fact, are we abiding while living as America approaches Christmas-1991?

While there is much to suggest a nation in economic, moral, ethical and political disarray, there are also messages of hope.

In 1991, Americans contributed more to charity than during any other year in this nation's history. Not that simply more money was collected, which was true; rather that corporate America gave less, and the average citizen found the spirit to dig deeper.

In every community, in every county, in every state in these United States, there are citizens who believe in 'giving something back' through volunteer work of every sort and kind. Here in Wayne County there are, for example, hundreds of volunteers currently working to create a better Wayne County Public Library; working to

keep that bulwark against tyranny here, and everywhere in the U.S., accessible, vibrant and growing.

On the eve of Christmas, 1991, there are also less hopeful messages:

—We stand in the dawn's early light knowing that on the other side of the world there remain war clouds over the Middle East.

—Our banking system, functioning in practice during the 1980's on greed, literally mortgaged by grossly inflated real estate values, is faltering.

—We've become the world's largest debtor nation, dependent upon foreign investment to remain even theoretically solvent.

—We have many among this and succeeding generations who will have destroyed mind and body with drugs...while, at the same time, we pay lip service to our most insidious drug problem, alcoholism.

Americans, however, should not find undue comfort in the messages of hope, nor deep despair in the less hopeful realities; rather the message of Christmas should be used to personally strengthen efforts in dealing with these disturbing temporal realities.

Many threads have been woven into the Christian fabric since Jesus walked the earth. Many interpretations of his message have resulted in a variety of faiths subscribing more or less to the beatitudes and other teachings.

And yet the simple message of Jesus was one of life, of life that should be lived in the shadow of the Ten Commandments. It is only through ego manifestation by worshippers that the message gets lost in the interpretive ecstasy of denomination; or historically has been trampled through millions of people being killed in the name of Jesus; or has been deadened in a rush to argue how many angels can dance on the head of a pin; or has been cast aside today, along with the charity of Christ, as many Christians, either as individuals or as churches, stand in front of the government trough taking temporal handouts to the glorification of whom?

More to the point, how many humans have been killed in the

name of religion in general—in the name of varying moralities which proclaim—on whatever day worship is held—the sanctity of human life, and wage war on fellow humans the rest of the week...with, this month, Christians around the world selling the memory of that seminal man of non-violence, Jesus, as so much wrapping paper and appliances.

Still, as an infant nation we struggle forward. And while we continue to wrestle with these dichotomies, following is an updated Christmas list for this planet.

—Where it isn't necessary for TV public service announcements to ask: "Did you hug your child today," or for similar announcements to plead for children to just say no' to despair, and yes to fulfillment.

—Where one death does, indeed, diminish us all rather than get us to tune in next week, or to the 6 o'clock news, to witness yet another.

—Where hatred is understood to be born out of ignorance and fear, and for us to possess the courage to act upon that understanding.

—Where politicians will not promise to build bridges even where there are no rivers, or to change the course of rivers in justifying the building of new bridges.

—Where 'religion' isn't used as an excuse to judge and classify, to maim and kill.

—Where we spend more time seeking to understand the questions, rather than boasting of knowing the answers.

—Where we take individual responsibility for our actions, successes and failures.

—Where tolerance means more than the what an engineer says should be the space between two pieces of metal; indeed closing the space between ourselves.

—Where the Ten Commandments are not a ceiling, but rather a horizon.

—Where communication among human beings is not simply a road to an end, but a highway toward new beginnings.

Merry Christmas, America.

## First graders ride the 'Polar Express'

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

Magic sleigh bells, the whistle of a wondrous steam locomotive and children's laughter echoed through the halls of the Lake-Noxen Elementary School December 20 as the first grade gathered for a special Christmas program, "The Polar Express."

Joining for a trip to the North Pole aboard the magic train, the "Polar Express," first graders recreated the atmosphere of a train ride on Christmas Eve — complete with sound effects and a large G-scale model train.

"The story tells of a child who rides the 'Polar Express' to the North Pole and meets Santa, who gives him his choice of gifts. The child modestly asks for a bell from the reindeer's harness," explained first grade teacher Sue Yagodzinski. "But on the ride home, the bell is

lost, only to reappear Christmas Day under the tree. Only those who truly believe in Santa Claus can hear it ringing."

While conductor Milton Welter and engineer John Yagodzinski blew the whistle and collected tickets, the children arranged their chairs to simulate a train in a hallway. The model train chugged merrily on its track around the outside of the group as principal Bob Kunkle narrated the story. Kids wore their bathrobes, just like the little ones in the story, to complete the atmosphere.

First grade teachers Mrs. Lolly Larkins, Mrs. Margaret Holmgren and Mrs. Sue Yagodzinski, along with PTA president Joyce Birt, Mrs. Yagodzinski's husband John and a friend, Milton Welter, organized

the program, which took a month to plan. Welter and Yagodzinski did sound effects and set up and operated the train. Each class made a book illustrating each child's first choice of a gift, while the teachers made up the train tickets.

Santa Claus made a surprise visit, giving each child and teacher a magic sleigh bell which, like the one in the book, will ring only for those who truly believe in Santa. Even the teachers must believe in Santa, for the hall resounded with ringing.

"This was lots of fun," laughed engineer Yagodzinski and conductor Welter. "These kids are really special." And so are the "big kids" who shared their love of Christmas, magic and trains with the first graders.

## Religious services

**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH** - 196 N. Main St., Shavertown. 675-3859. Pastor Harold R. Baer, Jr. Worship, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month. Church School 9:45 a.m. for all ages. Tuesday Bible Study 9 a.m.

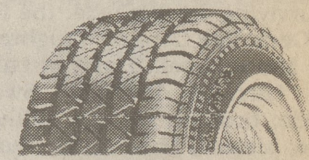
**DALLAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** - 4 Parsonage St., Dallas. 675-0122. Rev. Michael A. Bealla, Pastor. Morning Worship 10:30 a.m., Sun. School 9:00 a.m.

**SHAVERTOWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** - 163 N. Pioneer Ave., Shavertown. 675-3616. Pastors, Rev. James A. Wert, Rev. Harriet L. Santos. Music Director, Rosento E. Santos. SATURDAY: 5:30 p.m., Chapel Service. SUNDAY: 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Worship Services.

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