

EDITORIALS

Our best to you in this season of joy and hope

If there wasn't a Christmas, as the saying goes, we'd have to invent one. Whether this is an important religious holiday for you, or just the time of year when you go out of your way to show love and concern for others, the Christmas season serves an important purpose. The days are short, the nights long and the biting wind can multiply normal winter discomfort to intolerable levels this time of year. But when the lights start going up and the carols ring out, an inner warmth gradually displaces the unpleasantness, as thoughts turn to family and friends, and the birth of a baby so long ago and far away.

You don't have to be Christian to appreciate the message of the bright star in the dark sky, a sign that we all can be forgiven our weaknesses and offenses, whether by God or one another. Only the most cold-hearted person hasn't noticed how people's rough edges are smoothed by the holiday spirit, how laughs deepen and consideration grows. Even the dreaded commercialization of the holiday isn't all bad — it may be the only time of the year that some of us think more about what someone else likes than about our own acquisitions and desires.

Of course, there are people for whom no season is merry and bright, because of poverty, illness or hopelessness. We believe even they can draw comfort from this holiday, an inkling that better, warmer days are coming and that their fellow men will share with them some of the material and spiritual riches that are central to the holiday. After all, that is one of its central messages.

There are better, cheaper ways to collect taxes

By ruling in favor of Dallas School District in a suit brought by tax collectors, Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas Judge Correale Stevens upheld the right of the district to manage its affairs in a more economical manner. The decision also is a signal to all units of government that they can take firm control of tax collection while saving taxpayers' money.

There is no longer a need for independent tax collectors at any level of government. The position may have made sense when small towns and school districts had little if any administrative staff, because there was little for anyone to do outside of care for roads. For better or worse that has changed, and even the tiniest towns now need someone to keep track of incoming and outgoing funds from a variety of sources, and to see that protocols are followed when state or federal money is involved. The technology has changed greatly too. Where a tax collector may once have worked from a list of names and been responsible for creating a mailing list, or even personally visiting properties, to assess the accuracy of the tax bill, a computer operator now maintains the tax schedules and at the touch of a button prints the bills, which the tax collector places in envelopes, takes to the post office and waits for the checks to start rolling in.

Even the term "tax collector" is outdated. Something like "tax receiver" would be more appropriate, since the present system makes no demands to achieve an appropriate level of receipts and the collectors simply turn in overdue accounts to the county for further action.

Some towns have already taken steps to rationalize their tax collection systems by installing a computer that will store necessary information and mailing bills from their offices. The whole setup can be operated by a part-time clerk, or the duties can be added to an existing position, all at reduced expense and greater convenience for the community and taxpayers. There's an added bonus — whereas a tax collector deposits receipts in a non-interest bearing bank account until there's enough to bother transferring to the town or district's general account, when the tax collection is done directly the funds can be immediately deposited to earn interest.

The Back Mountain's tax collectors have been trustworthy and conscientious in their work, but times have changed, and the position is now an anachronism. Most towns and school districts will be better served by taking the job "in house."

Do you know what's news? Tell us

A lot of interesting stories go unreported because we never hear about them, but maybe you do. We'd love to have you tell us what you think is news, and where to find more of it.

You'd be surprised how many articles get their start from readers' tips. While we try to get around as much as possible, the people who are out and involved come in contact with ideas we never hear about — unless someone tells us about them.

If you have a tidbit, a story lead, or just a hunch, please pass it along. We'll follow up, and maybe you'll see your idea in print. Please include as much

detail as you can, and your name and phone number if you'd like to be interviewed, or have more to say.

But if you want to remain anonymous, our lips will be sealed.

You can send items several ways:

By mail: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612

In person: Our office is at 607 Main Rd., Dallas, just off Rt. 309, across from Offset Paper-back. There's a night deposit box on the front porch.

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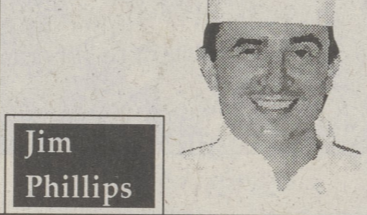
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A snowy scene along Dug Road on Bunker Hill. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

Food 'n' fun



Jim Phillips

For me, holiday cooking is a heart warming mix of storied tradition and exciting experimentation. As far back as I can remember, (which sometimes isn't too far!), Christmas Eve dinner was the most anticipated meal of the year. The meal would begin (and still does) with the breaking of the Christmas wafer and a heartfelt wish of a Merry Christmas.

The first course, mushroom-barley soup, was a hearty start to the meal and when mixed with fresh sour cream it soon became cream of mushroom-barley soup. The second course, herring, was what made the meal special. This once a year food did take some getting used to as a kid — I mean

Christmas is an eating tradition, too

what child anticipates a meal consisting of mushrooms, barley and sour cream, let alone, raw fish with sliced green onions on top! All kidding aside, the herring, gently soaked with vinegar and water and topped with the thinnest slices of scallions, truly typified the Christmas Eve feast in our home. The combination of flavors complemented each other perfectly, setting the stage for the main course of fresh flounder, breaded and pan fried to a golden brown. The main course also included super smooth mashed potatoes, glazed carrots and of course homemade tartar sauce.

If you were still able to sit up after you completed the main meal, the desserts were sure to finish you off and make you head right for the couch.

The lineup for dessert included Toll-House cookies, fruit cake, all butter pound cake with walnuts and candied fruits, Christmas cookies (the thicker the better!) and of course steaming hot coffee. I'm pleased to say the tradition

continues today not at Grandma's house but at my parents' home. One day it will surely take place at mine, you see, my wife, a convert to the Christmas Eve meal, has developed a taste for herring and even mushroom soup and has been secretly taking notes in order to continue this tradition for another generation.

What about the experimentation I mentioned in the first sentence? Well, here you go!

DUTCH CHOCOLATE PUNCH

Dissolve in 4 1/2 ounces hot whole milk, 2 tablespoons grated chocolate, 2 teaspoons sugar, 1 teaspoon instant coffee powder. Stir in one ounce Rum.

BASIC LIGHT FRUIT CAKE

1 cup butter
3/4 cup sugar
4 eggs
1/4 cup blanched and slivered almonds
1/4 cup Brazil nuts, chopped
2 2/3 cups cake flour

1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup raisins
1 cup currants
1/4 cup candied orange peel, chopped
1/4 cup candied lemon peel, chopped
1/4 cup citron, chopped
1/4 cup candied cherries, chopped
1/4 cup orange juice

Cream butter, beat in sugar, beat in eggs, one by one, beating well before adding the next. Stir in nuts. Sift flour, baking powder and salt into a bowl, add all the fruits and juice and stir well. Add the butter and egg mixture and pour into 3 loaf pans, buttered and lined with brown paper and rebuttered.

Decorate top of cakes with whole blanched almonds, candied cherries and citron. Do not attempt to cut fruit cake until the second day, preferably longer.

Spray with whiskey or other liquor.

ONLY YESTERDAY

60 Years Ago - Dec. 31, 1937 NEW THEATER COMING TO SHAVERTOWN

A \$15,000 theatre with a seating capacity of nearly 400 persons, is being constructed on Main Street, Shavertown by Daniel M. Shaver. Excavation work is well along and Shaver hopes to open the theatre about April 1.

The first wedding to be held in the Kunkle M.E. Church since it was built 50 years ago took place at 6 p.m. on Christmas Day when Dorothy Elston of Kunkle and Fred Dodson of Muhlenburg were married by Rev. Guy Leinthall, pastor.

Playing along Fernbrook Creek this week several boys found a 6 foot black snake about 2 inches thick in the snow. Kenneth Cobleigh who happened to be passing by, saw the snake and vouches for its size.

50 Years Ago - Jan. 2, 1948 CTCO PLANS A \$2 MILLION PLANT EXPANSION

R.W. Kintzer, vice president and general manager of Commonwealth Telephone Co. announces a \$2 million plant expansion program designed to give subscribers a telephone services second to none. In the Dallas area where the company has purchased additional plot of land, this will mean reconstruction and enlargement of its present building and installation of dial equipment no later than early part of 1949.

On Sunday, Dec. 28, Keller Class of Shavertown Methodist Church presented an organ and tower chimes to the Methodist Church. Mrs. Ernest Keller, teacher of the class for the past 20 years made the presentation.

40 Years Ago - Jan. 3, 1958 RESTAURANT ROBBED BEFORE HOLIDAY

Orchard Dairy Restaurant was robbed early Monday morning, the thieves gaining entrance by reaching through a smashed glass and turning the latch of the door. The cigarette machine was rifled of its coins but the thieves were appar-

ently frightened away by the coming of the man who cleans and waxes the floor.

Just at the beginning of evening office hours, New Year's Eve, a frantic neighbor rushed a patient through the waiting room of Noxen Clinic. Ten minutes later Mrs. William Belles, Noxen became the mother of a bouncing baby boy, weight, 8 pounds. Mother and child were admitted by Noxen ambulance to General Hospital an hour later.

More than 200 taxpayers will have been added to Lehman Township tax rolls with the completion of a survey now in progress in that community. Among those added to the rolls is one person who has lived in the township for more than 17 years without paying the per capita tax.

30 Years Ago - Jan. 4, 1968 SERVICE STATIONS SWAMPED AS SNOW FALLS

The Back Mountain shuddered under a heavy storm just before the long New Year's weekend with snow amounting to 13 inches in some spots slightly over 10 inches in others. Three more inches were called for as a New Year's Eve bonus. Service stations were swamped with calls.

Saturday is the last day you can mail a letter with a five cent stamp on it. Sheets of new six cents stamps are available at all post offices. If you're stuck with a supply of five cents stamps buy some one cent stamps to sweeten the postage. The post offices have plenty of those, too.

You could get - Boneless round steak and roast, 89¢ lb.; gr. round, 89¢ lb.; new cabbage, 8¢ lb.; grapefruits, 5 lb. bag 59¢; Excel mixed nuts, 14 oz., can 69¢.

20 Years Ago - Dec. 21, 1977 VANDALS KNOCK DOWN CHRISTMAS TREE

Harveys Lake vandals have again knocked down the Lions Christmas tree at Harveys Lake, and stolen the tree lights. William Gallagher, public relations chairman for the Lions reported the destruction of the tree, decorated for the community by Harveys Lake Lions seems to happen every year.

Leonard Venable, manager of Dallas Water Co. was present at the bi-monthly meeting of Dallas Township Board of Supervisors and announced that a 5 h.p. pump had been installed on the Old Lake Rd. to eliminate water pressure problems in College Manor.

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