

EDITORIAL

Celebrate the humble, not the famous, this Christmas

This is a tough era in which to celebrate Christmas. Think about it: we live in a time when celebrity, whether in sports, entertainment or public service, rules the society. Scientists, physicians, statesmen (what a quaint description of an honest politician) sit on the sidelines while people who can make a 3-point basket, hit a home run, sing obscene lyrics or otherwise call attention to themselves are rewarded with multi-million dollar contracts, and fawning public approval.

What chance would a man riding a donkey into a major city have in such circumstances? Never mind the religious and spiritual implications of Jesus Christ, just judge him as a man, and he would be regarded with derision at best — and more likely scorn — in 21st century America. Come to think of it, that was pretty much how he was seen in the first days of A.D., too.

What examples is modern society presenting to our children? How many of us have been won over — no matter how unwillingly — to the cult of personality that has engulfed America and the world 2000 years after the birth of that humble child in a manger. Sure, that characterization may have been no more accurate than the romanticized image of a gangland killer on the silver screen, but it has survived through the millennia, and will surely persevere for centuries to come.

Jesus is the focus of dominant Western religions, but he also represents a philosophical and emotional purity that is hard to come by in our oh-so-cynical time. Many of our kids grow up thinking they've failed if they're not an NBA star or a featured performer on MTV. Most of us know better, but how are we to convince them that what is in their hearts and heads is infinitely more important than the size of their paycheck or the breadth of their notoriety? And yet, this humble son of a carpenter has had as great an influence on society as anyone in human history.

Christmas means presents and days off to many of us, and that's all fine; we should give our time and treasure to the people we love most. But we should also share the story of the humble baby, born among the beasts, who went on to teach the whole world how to care for all the other creatures who inhabit the earth. If he's the basis of your religion, so much the better, but even if he's not, Jesus sets an example all of us would be wise to emulate, and this holiday celebrates the beginning of one man's journey that helped point the human race in a direction from which it has wavered, but hasn't diverged. And we're all better for it.

Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



Mother Nature threw a teaser at all the folks who like to strap on a pair of boards and slide down snow-covered hills. Then, just as quickly as some fresh powder appeared, it was washed away by steady rains. Being a skier in the mid-Atlantic region is a little like being a handsome waiter in Hollywood — you can see the potential clearly, but it's awfully frustrating to wait for the reality to arrive.

Our enjoyment is also diminished by the armies of neophytes who swarm the slopes, after trooping off buses from cities to the south, where a pile of trash on an empty lot is the closest approximation to a ski slope. Most of these folks are earnest enough, and as long as they confine themselves to the bunny slope they don't cause too much trouble, except at meal time. Actually, many of them spend most of the day in the lodge munching on overpriced hamburgers, which is all the better for everyone else.

The fact is, though, that we need ski tourists — and anyone else who wants to bring their wallet to town — in order to sustain the facilities. And we're pretty lucky to have decent ski venues so close to home. That makes for a quicker trip to the hospital after being rammied by an out-of-control novice screaming down the slope.

Letters, columns and editorials

The Dallas Post attempts to publish opinions on a variety of topics in many forms.

Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of The Post, appear on the editorial page and are written by the editor unless otherwise indicated. Any artwork represents the opinion of the cartoonist, and columns are the opinion of the author.

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, subject to the following guidelines:

- Letters should not exceed 500 words.
- No writer may have more than one letter published during a 30-day period, except as a reply to another letter.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a telephone number for verification.
- Names will be withheld only if there exists a clear threat to the writer.
- The Post retains the right to accept or reject any letter, and to edit letters for grammar and spelling, as well as to eliminate any libel, slander or objectionable wording.

In addition to letters, we welcome longer pieces that may run as columns. The author or subject's relevance to the Back Mountain will be the prime consideration when selecting material for publication.



Nativity scene at Dallas United Methodist Church. Photo by Ron Bartizek.

ONLY YESTERDAY



70 Years Ago - December 23 1932

DALLAS READY TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS DAY

Preparations for the celebration of Christmas in Dallas were nearing completion, churches, civic organizations and charitable institutions announced plans for various observances of the day. Central Dallas took on a real Christmas atmosphere when addition to the building decorations, a large cluster of evergreen trees was erected on main street.

About fifty students of Noxen primary schools reported at their homes suffering from measles. They were treated by Dr. George H. Rauch and Dr. C.L. Boston.

Some of the items you could get at the American Stores were: peas, 2 cans 29¢; mince meat, 2 lb. 35¢; sugar corn, 3 cans 29¢; cranberry jelly, 2 cans 29¢; Asco coffee, 1 lb. 23¢.

50 Years Ago - December 26, 1952

DALLAS TOWNSHIP PLANS TWO ROADS

Dallas Township supervisors prepared to enact an ordinance opening portions of Garbutt and Gerald Avenues as public roads, according to a report submitted to the court in compliance with the Second Class Township Code.

Barbara Jane Melkemes of Shavertown, was granted leave from National Art School in Washington to make her annual Christmas window pictures. Some of the windows she will be doing are at Duke Isaacs, Gosart's store, Kingston Auto Parts, Guyette's, Hall's Drug Store.

Mrs. Ruth Turn, organist and choir leader at Dallas Methodist Church, was elected second vice-president of North East Region Pennsylvania Federation of Music Clubs, in charge of music for hospitals, especially veterans, of the region.

40 Years Ago - December 27, 1962

EDITOR OF THE DALLAS POST DIES SUDDENLY

The death of Howard Risley struck the Back Mountain a crushing blow. He was the editor for over thirty years, ever since he acquired the Dallas Post in 1930. Everyone knew him as Howard, from school children to centenarians. Risley died of a heart attack.

Army 2d Lt. Fred C. Ruggles, Dallas, completed the eight-week officer orientation course at The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Ga.

The Smithfield Packing Company announced the re-election of Robert J. Parks as Secretary-Treasurer. Parks is a native of Dallas.

30 Years Ago - December 28, 1972

DALLAS BOROUGH TAXES HELD AT PRESENT LEVEL

Dallas Borough Council presented residents with a 'no tax increase for 1973' Christmas present at the regular monthly council meeting.

Finance chairman Harold Brobst read the projected temporary budget of \$123,000 to the group.

Ed Buckley, postmaster at the Dallas Post Office will retire after 31 years of service. Following the death of Mr. Polack, Ed Buckley was appointed postmaster in 1962, the first person to be appointed postmaster following promotions through the ranks.

The Mountaineers of Coach Bob Cicon will go into the seventh annual Wilkes-Barre Basketball Invitational Tournament with three wins and two losses in their pre-season exhibition competition.

20 Years Ago - December 29, 1982

WILLIAM CAMP LOOKS TO FAVORABLE YEAR

Dr. William Camp, newly-elected president of the Dallas School Board, stated recently that he believes the overall goal of the board members for the coming year is to achieve the best quality education possible for the students of the school district. Dr. Camp believes it is commendable that 72 percent of Dallas High school graduates continue their education.

Thomas Bly, 16-year employee of the United States Postal Service, had been named to the position of Postmaster at the Dallas Office to fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Bernard Gawlas.

Shavertown Fire Company Ladies Auxiliary presented their fire company with a Motorola Mitrek Radio and components to be installed in the new fire truck to be delivered after the first of the year.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

The New York Sun was started in 1833 by Benjamin H. Day, then just 23. The publication - which became one of the great newspapers in America - was the first New York "penny paper."

The Sun ceased publication in 1950, but every Christmas its memory is revived by an editorial printed on Sept. 21, 1897.

Virginia O'Hanlon, a New York City youngster, wrote this letter.

Dear Editor:

I'm 8 years old. Some of my 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.

The letter wound up on the desk of Francis Pharellus Church, an assistant editor of The Sun. A more hardened person might have thrown it away, but Church felt differently.

He wrote this reply.

"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 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 eternal 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 they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove?"

"Nobody sees Santa Claus. But that is not a 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 in the unseen world which not the strongest man, not even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, 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 ten times ten thousand years, from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

The Dallas Post

TIMES•LEADER Community Newspaper Group

P.O. BOX 366, DALLAS, PA 18612 • 570-675-5211

Ronald Bartizek
GENERAL MANAGERErin Youngman
REPORTERKari L. Wachtel
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC.Claudia Blank
AD PRODUCTION MANAGERDarlene E. Sorber
OFFICE MANAGERTerry Quinn
PAGE DESIGN

Q: Where do you find the most Back Mountain news each week?

A: Only in The Dallas Post