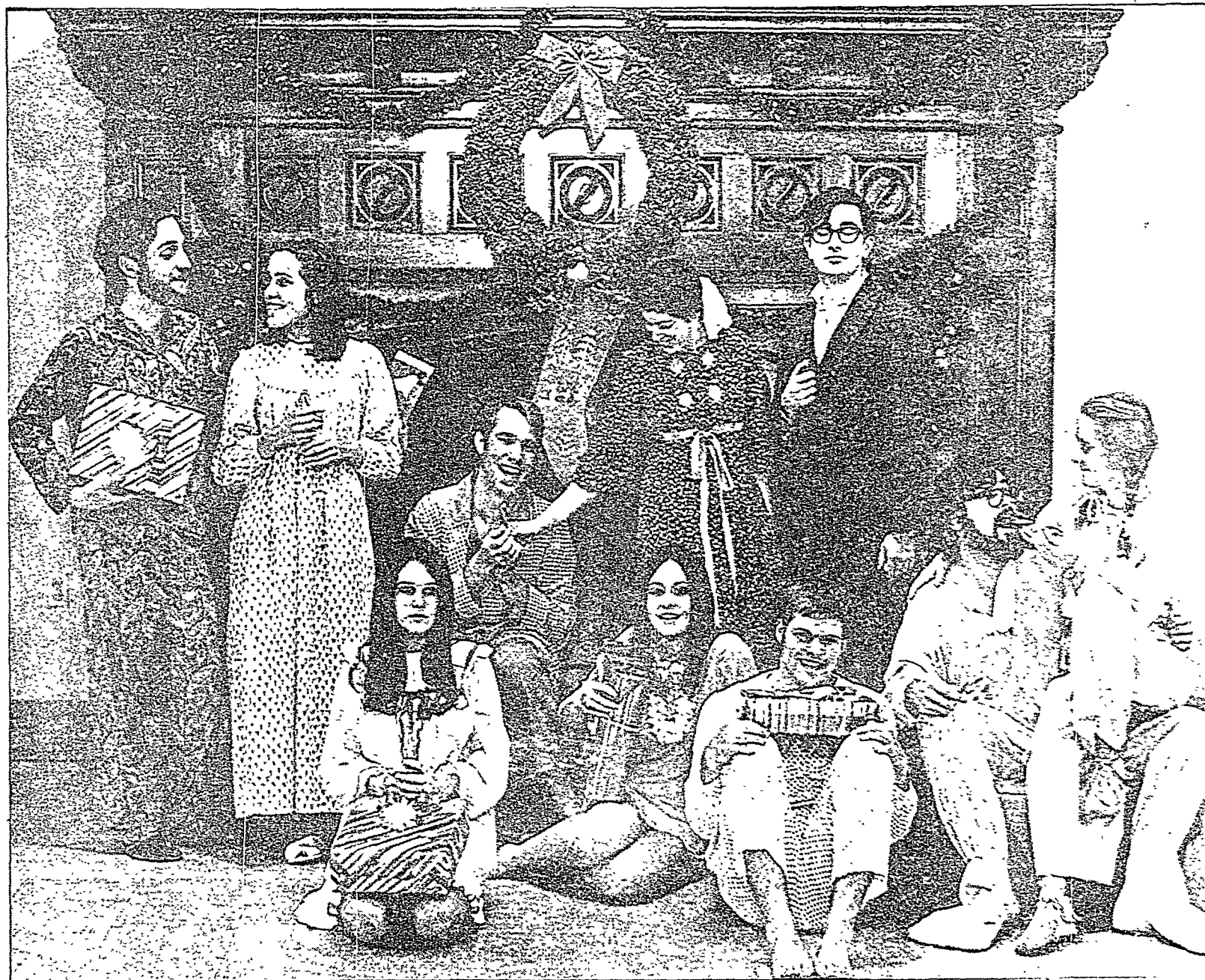


SCHOLASTIC



Notre Dame / December 6, 1968

When We Were All
Six Christmases Old . . .



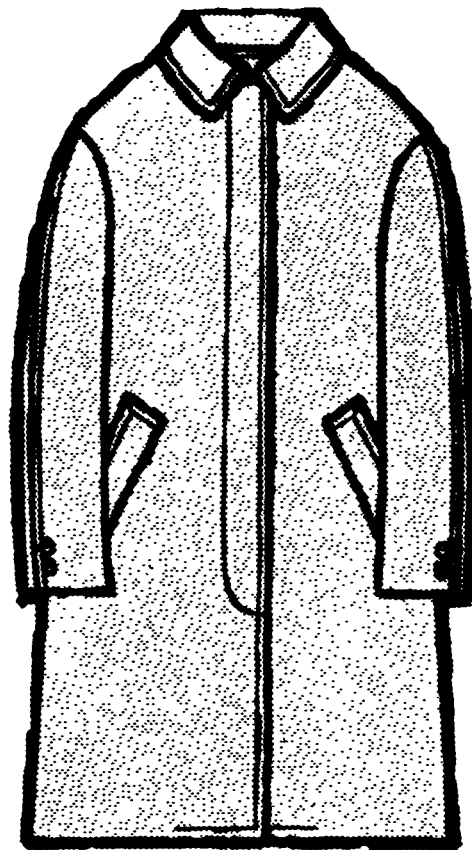
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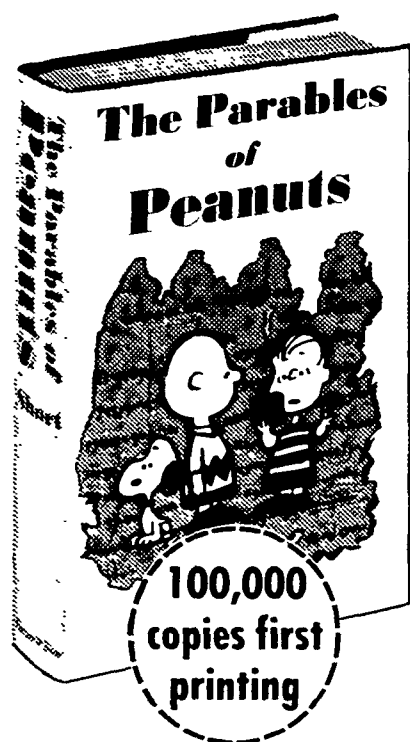
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SCHOLASTIC

Dec. 6, 1968 / Notre Dame, Indiana / Vol. 110, No. 10

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If you're not at all interested in Jazz, folk music, Indian music, the avant-garde, drama. If you couldn't find a little joy in listening to Dick Gregory rapping about the U.S. for 30 minutes, or in David Moynihan describing the Coleman report, or in specials about Acid, the Presidency, blues and rock, politics, and just about everything else. And if you don't want the news, not just from the United States viewpoint, but as described in the foreign press.

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letters

The SCHOLASTIC welcomes letters from its readers on all topics of current concern. Letters should be addressed to William Cullen, Editor-in-chief; Scholastic; Notre Dame, Indiana 46556.

PAYING FOR SPIRIT

EDITOR:

What is happening to Notre Dame Sports when we have to pay to show our spirit? We can't even cheer our basketball team on in an intrasquad game without paying our fifty cent admission. This is not to mention the twelve dollars for a season ticket (which does not include three home games during the Christmas vacation) and the admission price for two freshman football games. It's ridiculous. After all, these athletic teams are representing Notre Dame and are therefore our teams. We should be encouraged and not discouraged from attending games. So I ask you, "Why must we pay to show our spirit?"

Dave Bauman
175 Dillon

CONFRONTATION

EDITOR:

I yield to no one in my opposition to the Vietnam war. Yet, as a member of the Faculty Senate, I am prepared to support a resolution approving disciplinary sanctions against students who, on the ground of their hostility toward that war, interfere with the normal processes of the academic community.

I do not share the CIA's conception of the public interest any more than I share General Motors or Dow's conception of the public interest. But I don't think that gives me or anyone else the right to exclude the CIA, General Motors, or Dow from this campus, unless one is willing to argue that it is improper for a University to cooperate with any governmental or business organization. But to my knowledge no student has made such an argument. This question must therefore be treated within the framework of the University's current policy with respect to recruiting on campus. That policy is to allow representatives of lawfully recognized organizations and professions—corporations, government agencies etc.—to use campus facilities for the purpose of recruiting students. This is not only the University's way of serving the community, but also of serving

the students. And so long as the University extends this service to both community and students it seems to me that it has no choice but to follow a rule of neutrality.

Such a rule of neutrality seems mandatory since reasonable men disagree about the moral legitimacy of the policies and practices of certain corporations and government institutions, not to mention the total arbitrariness of isolating Dow and CIA for special treatment. It seems to me that another group of students could become equally outraged over the closed society of General Motors—whose policies affect our lives every bit as much as an Asian land war—or the production of automobiles that take the lives of far more innocent men, women, and children than have been incinerated by Dow's napalm in Vietnam. (In fact, one can think of literally dozens of institutions and corporations in this country whose links to the Vietnam war are far greater than Dow's.) For every student or faculty member in this University community who does not morally approve of Dow or CIA, you will find one who does. In this situation simple prudence would seem to dictate a university policy of neutrality, unless one subscribes to the notion that it is right and just for one segment of the University—a minority at that—to impose its views of social and political morality on the rest. In fact, we do not even give that right to a majority.

The liberal argument against confrontation—in an open and free academic community—is based also on practical grounds. The student lay-ins may well have precipitated violence on this campus, not between themselves and the recruiters or the Administration of the University, but between themselves and their fellow students. Suppose that another group of students, equally convinced of the morality of the practices of Dow and CIA, had been equally determined to insure access to the recruiters. You need no imagination to know what would have happened. A free university community—or for that matter a free society—is based on certain procedures. It is this procedural context that really gives meaning to both freedom of expression and moral commitment. Should this structure fall the University as a center of independent thought will also col-

lapse, and our freedom along with it. Nothing could be more obvious to me than that.

In the final analysis what I am pleading for is tolerance, even for the ideas and policies we despise. If this is necessary for a democracy to survive, how much more necessary is it for the survival of the University. (In this connection I am reminded of the remark of a very wise man—Justice Oliver W. Holmes—who once said that it is "the mark of a civilized man to doubt his own first premises." If we were to subscribe to this view we would not be so inclined to impose our notions of right and wrong upon others.) A University is a very delicate mechanism. It is the only institution of our society whose very existence depends upon mutual trust among its constituent units—administration, faculty, and students—and tolerance of other men's views and ideas. The University is the only genuine marketplace of ideas in our society; it is the last preserve of intellectual independence and, I am almost driven to say, integrity. It is a place where men can elevate themselves to the level of their humanity, and the place where we can still find traces of some tradition of civility. The tactic of confrontation, like the tactic of shutting off a speaker's voice, is a rejection of all this, however lofty or benign the purpose. The use of muscle power to support brain power has no place in a University community. I do not say that confrontation is an improper tactic to use in the political community, so long as men are motivated by moral purpose and intellectual conviction, and are willing to take the consequences of their actions if they lose. But it is improper in an academic community where the only kind of power that really counts is the power of reason.

It seems to me that these general principles could easily have been applied by the students involved in the lay-in. It is no argument to say that the recruiters should have presented their views in an open forum. Certainly, that does not justify the tactic of confrontation. In any case, my assumption is that students as convinced as the lay-ins of their moral certitude would have blocked access no matter what the outcome of such a discussion. Had they any imagination, they might have dressed up in their Sunday best

and gotten in line for interviews, and then engaged the recruiters in some interesting conversation. Finally, they might have used any number of forums on campus in order to discuss the policies and practices of Dow and CIA.

Donald P. Kommers
Dept. of Government and
International Studies

CLEARLY TYRANNY

EDITOR:

Father Hesburgh's letter to the faculty and students of Notre Dame ignores the basic issue at stake in the Dow-CIA demonstrations and uses a very questionable argument for opposing disruptive demonstrations of this kind.

There is no question that the freedom of action of others was obstructed and that there was an imposition of personal convictions upon others. This we grant. Father Hesburgh conceded the sincerity of the demonstrators' motives, and he asserts that their action is "completely out of order" in a free society like the University. However, there was no examination of the demonstrators' purposes or of their goals. It was assumed that their purpose was disruption of the University system when in fact it may have been the preservation of the University as a *humanistic* institution, not simply a mechanism of self-serving bureaucracy.

Our president stressed the sincerity of the demonstrators' motives, but he did not address himself to the possible validity of their position nor did he appear, from the letter, concerned with it. On the contrary, he addressed himself exclusively to a secondary argument: "the first duty of the whole University community, as an open society, is to preserve its own right to be. . . ."

Father Hesburgh assumes that the demonstration was "clearly tyranny." He then proceeds to ask the community to "declare itself" against this sort of activity. The question comes to mind, what if the community fails to "establish its standards" or establishes standards not in harmony with the suggestions of the president? How will this relate to the "great difference between leadership and tyranny?"

The president shows concern that his lack of unilateral action has led to accusations of weakness and lack

of leadership. As we see the issue, none but this tempered position could be consistent with true leadership within the University community, since a) the community has not declared itself, and b) the basic issue at stake has not been examined. Without addressing ourselves to these basic issues, can we hope to preserve the University community as an open society?

Michael G. Macaulay
Lloyd A. Wagner
Graduate Students,
Department of Government

EDITOR:

Last Friday night the cops found me lying on the sidewalk in front of the Senior Bar. Why? I don't know. Except that I had just been completely blitzed. For no reason at all, in view of several spectators, and at the hands of five Negro assailants!

WHY are our Negro brethren so hostile this fall? WHAT are we able to do about it? WHEN? These questions I have presented lately to several average citizens. The South Bend employer: "Let them eat cake!" The South Bend employee: "Kiss me, I'm Polish!" And the man in the street: "Git me a gun, and win one for Wallace!" But only the local cop possesses the most truly enlightened answer: "Just get a gang of Notre Dame football players, stake out some freshman as a decoy, and when they jump him, you guys lay into them."

Yet, nobody offered "themselves" for any involvement. Three patrol cars were already on the scene before me—but did nothing. And folks passing by were there as it happened—but also did nothing. So don't pity other incidents as being that much different: when Frankie's was leveled by a herd of bat and club fighters or when the countless other Golden Domers are beaten and robbed almost every weekend—even in their own house.

Life is no easy solution. Yet, burdened with such problems as these, no wonder people are attracted to the opposing poles of extremes today. Here are the fast, pat, and easy answers. In one corner: the man of Wallace politics, and Babitt social values. And in the other: the man of hippie apolitics, Playboy morals, and Marxist social values. But never the twain shall meet?

Never. Unless each of us is con-

cerned enough to involve "ourselves" with composing these extremes together—within ourselves. To contribute to composing a society where we all are everything. Where we all are FREE. By LAW. In Peace!

John T. Schroder

TO THOSE WHO WILL LISTEN

EDITOR:

"None die but the brave." That was the joke with which he would reassure me when we talked. And we talked a lot — over Notre Dame beers and under the Indiana suns. But after four years of ROTC and another year of training, he left for Vietnam. But don't worry, he would say, for none die but the brave!

We talked of the difficulties and the success he had as an army infantry leader. He led a platoon of smart boys at Notre Dame and a company of uneducated ones in training. And we talked of the necessity, the futility, and the sadness of war in Southeast Asia. Fortunate thing, that none die but the brave!

So he could leave the Coke-and-hot-dog stand which he had set up in front of Sorin for the home games. He could leave the Dan O'Neil he admired so much. He could go to lead his part of the 196th Infantry Brigade on its perimeter of the Central Highlands, numerous yards south of the DMZ. Dropping his M-1, he could applaud the bombing halt. He could write home to his book-bound cousins about the shrieks, shrapnel, and shudders of a war. And I could join him in philosophizing on the honor and the guilt of the American position. But I could not finally join him, for none die but the brave.

One was born, one was chosen. And one was sent. One accepted the debated wisdom and the studied decision of his culture's leaders.

Lt. Kevin E. Burke, 05539311, APO San Francisco. Home address: (simply) Anita, Iowa. A 1967 graduate of the University and the ROTC of Notre Dame. A man of emotion and of compassion. Killed, Vietnam dawn, November 20, 1968. And so, for what it is worth, you text-troubled scholars of contemporary activity, you tribal gods who guide sharp arrows, final Fates that sometimes grind so sudden, Remember: None die but the brave!

Ronald R. Burke, '66
Yale

A Christmas Childhood

*O you, Eve, were the world that tempted me
To eat the knowledge that grew in clay
And death the germ within it! Now and then
I can remember something of the gay
Garden that was childhood's . . .*

Patrick Kavanagh's poem, which opens this issue, celebrates his recollection of rustic childhood Christmases. The joy of giving, of receiving gifts, the magic and the music of peaceful family life — these memories, these possessions from the past, are consolation in the face of later tribulations.

It is a season for memories, for reverence too, and certainly also for uproar and fun.

But we don't have the prettiest of images to bedeck our daydreaming recollections. After all, is a trip to Kresge's for a box of tinsel worth Kavanagh's trek to milk the cow with Mother?

Yes. It has to be.

Kavanagh tells us of a homely penknife and a father's melodeon, but we content ourselves with the thought of Lionel guided-missile flat cars and a translucent red 45 r.p.m. disc of "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer." For these are the images of our life, our world. This is our poetry.

There is love in cellophane-wrapped presents and peace in a five-and-one-half room split-level. This is where we are at home.

This issue of the *Scholastic* is a collection of our childhood Christmases. It is a serious effort, a gift to you, our friends, and each other. The work was play — and the effort to avoid a maudlin presentation was work.

Thanks and Christmas greetings are due to many friends — the writers, of course, who bared their infant souls to give us some smiles, and the engravers and printers who had to be even more patient than usual while

this issue and the Football Review were prepared simultaneously.

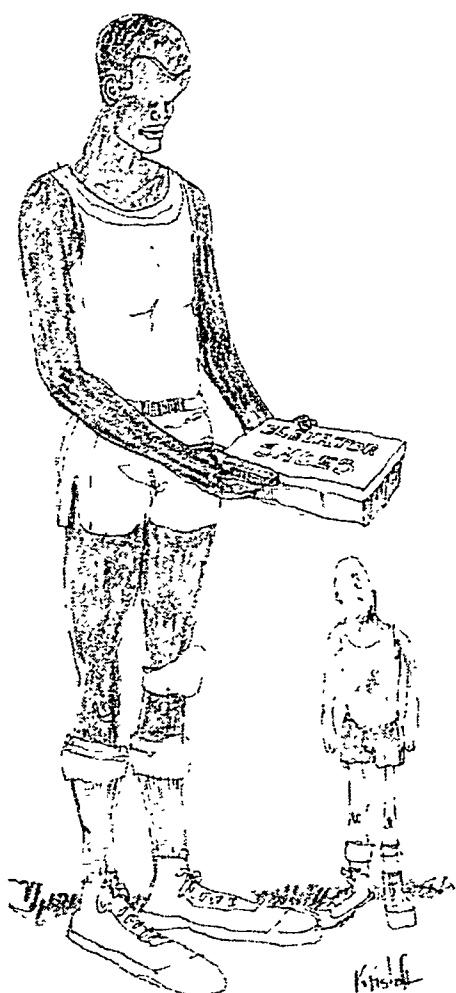
Special thanks to the Moran, Garreau, and Walbeck families for saving the pictures of their little sons which grace our pages today. Similarly to Denny Malloy who patiently shot two rolls of film as some of the staff disrupted LeMans Hall in an effort to provide illustrations of more recent vintage.

And to veteran art director David Heskin and copy editor Steve Krchma, deep gratitude for making the issue possible. Dave, the smiling face in the center of our cover photo, sorted through piles of old toy catalogs and toured South Bend's finest dime stores to come up with decor for these pages, then joined Steve (seen squatting on the floor with a present on his knee) in several all night sessions to put this melange together.

Merry Christmas!

passing gifts around . . .

to *Lew Alcindor*: elevator shoes
 to *Ralph Nader*: a tricycle
 to *Amanda Crabtree*: a new name
 to *Chuck Nau*: 1,000 "Chuck Nau for Senator" buttons
 to *the Rugby Club*: a live alligator
 to *the YAF*: a copy of the book "What To Do When The Twentieth Century Comes"
 to *Jim Bogle*: a candidate who can win
 to *George Wallace*: a walking tour of Harlem
 to *Dick Gregory*: a black Christmas
 to *Rick Rembusch*: the world's biggest pumpkin and 24 cases of beer
 to *Senator Eugene J. McCarthy*: a copy of *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats* and a mountain top
 to *the Angers students*: a return trip to France
 to *Mayor John V. Lindsay*: a magic wand
 to *the maids*: birth control pills
 to *Father Burtchaell*: the maids
 to *Chris Wolfe*: a copy of *Intellectual Currents of the Western World Since The Reformation*
 to *Tom Pagna*: a black backfield
 to *David and Julie Eisenhower*: an all-white picket fence



to *the ND Band*: June Taylor
 to *Michael Patrick O'Connor*: a football autographed by the Notre Dame football team and three cases of Drewry's
 to *Brother Conan*: a good 19 cent ball point pen . . . with ink
 to *Johnny Ray*: a defensive backfield
 to *President Johnson*: a barbecued Christmas tree with chili sauce
 to *Father Thornton*: a position at the University of Portland
 to *Brother Gorch*: a clean tee-shirt
 to *President Thieu*: a leg to stand on
 to *Terry O'Neil*: a Terry Hanratty talking doll and a complete set of Chip Hilton books
 to *the Innsbruck students*: a free pass to any local bar
 to *Louie Rappelli*: a bottle of "Mogan David" wine
 to *Richard Rossie*: a copy of *How To Win Friends and Influence People* autographed by Tom Payne
 to *William F. Buckley, Jr.*: a lisp

to *Gore Vidal*: a date with Bill Buckley
 to *Tom Payne, Tom Henehan, Marty McNamara, and David Heskin*: magazines of their very own
 to *the Notre Dame Library*: quicksand or another earthquake
 to *the Huddle*: a new day-glo mural
 to *Johnny Dee*: a white forward
 to *Pat Nixon*: a cloth coat
 to *Johnny Dee*: another white forward
 to *Cardinal O'Boyle*: a muzzle
 to *Chuck Perrin*: a cloud without a silver lining
 to *Steve Krchma*: a dictionary and a copy of Fowler's
 to *Richard Nixon*: a long and happy life—for at least four years
 to *Spiro T. Whatshisname*: Three fat Japs, two Polacks, and a partridge in a pear tree
 to *Theresie Ambrusko*: some obvious reasons
 to *John Lennon*: a velvet codpiece

to the average Saint Mary's freshman: a free date with Tuli Kupferberg

to the Notre Dame Knights of Columbus: the Administration Building, cheap

to James Robinson: a Gant shirt

to Indiana State Police Sergeant, Tim McCarthy: a new writer

to Ara Parseghian: a win on national television

to King Constantine of Greece: a copy of *The Republic*, translated into Danish by Victor Borge

to Bill Beyer: a soap box

to Father Theodore M. Hesburgh: a copy of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, autographed by John Walbeck

to General William Westmoreland: a tunnel and a light

to David Kahn: a Harpo Marx short

to David Heskin: a design-oriented world

to Father Edward O'Connor: the Catholic Church in the 12th century

to Joel Connelly: a throne to stand behind

to John Mroz: taste

to Vice-President Ky: the island of Elba and a bottle of hemlock

to Lance Davis: a dull moment

to the Irish Guard: underwear awareness

to Terry Hanratty and Jim Seymour: a season's ticket to the Burger King

to the Memorial Library: the Martha Washington Monument — a 550 foot deep hole in the middle of the reflecting pool

to Mike Mead: two twelve-ounce cans of silicone and a hypodermic

to Jacqueline Onassis: a copy of *The Life of Anne Boleyn*

to Arthur Pears: a Fanner 50

to Mayor Daley: Mrs. O'Leary's cow
to Mardell, Father McCarragher's secretary: a vice-presidency of her very own

to Mark Hatfield: a "For Sale" sign
to Bill Luking: a year's supply of Nutriment and some hair

to Pope Paul: a copy of the encyclical *De Constipatione* forbidding the use of laxatives because it upsets the natural rhythm

to Moose Krause: a new philosophy of sports

to Father Theodore M. Hesburgh: a C— in Freshman Rhetoric and Composition II

to Bernard Mehall: a controlling interest in a glue factory

to Leonid Brezhnev and Alexei Kosygin: Christmas in Prague

to the men in Vietnam: Christmas at home



on other Christmases . . .

THE SCHOLASTIC YEAR

December 21, 1867

ATENTION and thought are now concentrated upon the holidays. Many of the young ladies are to pass the joyful season at home with their parents, while the large majority will remain to celebrate their Christmas and New Years' at Saint Mary's. Boxes are expected, and the great event after midnight Mass, the denuding of the Christmas tree, is exciting the anticipations of the children and the industry of the ways and means committee appointed by his marvelous lordship, the great Santa Claus. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year are plainly read on the faces of all we meet.

NOTRE DAME SCHOLASTIC

December 14, 1928

OF this earth . . .
An iced ball from the planet
stuffed basket
Of a God with solar systems for
flame-set finger rings . . .
Of this earth I sing . . .
Three words wrench themselves
from human speech
And fly at the stars like eagles
unleashed,
Burning with the unbearable
splendor of their message,
"Christ Is Born!"

December 13, 1929

As we wish one another "Merry Christmas" will we have in mind a stable that was the birthplace of a new world, a birth that was a blast of trumpets across the lands and waters of that world?

In our concern with the means let us not forget the end; and when morning of Christmas Day bursts her bombs in the far horizon, let us remember that the silent thunder of the explosions once heralded such a birth as man has never known,

always heralds a word that is a star bringing man to the foot of its ladders of light — *love*.

December 24, 1943

A great exodus began early in the week as students began leaving for home or for the homes of friends and distant relatives for the Christmas holidays.

The climax of this exodus is not expected until tomorrow afternoon when the great bulk of servicemen stationed on campus begin to leave.

Although it is true that "there is no place like home," it has proved more practical for the majority of civilians and trainees to plan modified trips to nearby Indianapolis, Cleveland, Chicago or other places in the vicinity rather than attempt the long ordeal home to spend perhaps one day with their folks.

Those men remaining in the vicinity of South Bend are urged to drop around to the Service Center, as there will invariably be something doing. A most entertaining program has been outlined by the senior hostesses to make Christmas a merrier one for the hundreds of men who will be away from their homes and family on this joyous feast.

December 17, 1948

FLUSH, the final class bells will say, and then like a covey of quail, several thousand ND men will take off for their homes and Christmas vacation. Using every transportation convenience known to modern man, including the thumb, they will seek out their home towns in every corner of the country.

Trains, busses, planes, cars and even boats will be overloaded with the Notre Dame specimen. Farewell to the drudgery of books. So-long early classes and night checks. Clear the tracks, we're heading home.

December 14, 1951

THE best two weeks of the year, coming up! Up at the crack of midday, no limit on how late you can stay out at night. Sitting around the tree on Christmas Eve with an eggnog in one hand and that new Bulova in the other. The grand feast the next day, turkey and all the trimmings. Then turkey hash, turkey sandwiches and turkey soup. The parties build up all week to the killer which says goodbye to the old year. Finally a few resolutions, a few more good meals, and it's back to finish the semester.

December 13, 1963

THE King of Heaven
(For the Students of Notre Dame)
In the windows you may see no light,
At the doors there may be no crowding,
In the voices heard no hint of him,
No sounding of the Name.
But He will come to the house
Through a thousand earth-fed fires,
Crashing a thousand chains.
He will find His way to the city,
And the streets will be bright with His face,
And the lands loud with His Voice.
Then sleep will not break again or breath tear,
Or the multitudes mourn from room to room,
From tower to tower of flags aflame or falling.
He will come,
And within the eyes of the lonely women
By shaken pillars and shattered walls
Their souls will speak:
"How does our sorrow seem old
For He is here and the enemy near no longer."—Frank O'Malley

—Steve Novak

... and another holiday

This may be a Christmas issue, and we are leaving for Christmas vacation in a week or so, but the fact remains that there are people who many of us know that don't celebrate Christmas. Every year around mid-December the usual trauma sets in in many houses. It could be very embarrassing to send a "Merry Christmas" card to the Goldsticks or the Lichtensteins, which is why some cards only say "Season's Greetings" or some similar vaguery. Notre Dame doesn't have an enormous non-Catholic population, but there are some nonbead rattlers in residence on this campus. This is how they spend their holidays. . . .

I REMEMBER the smells of December most of all. My mother would be baking cookies and the rich but-tery smell seemed to permeate the house with deliciousness. Outside, the snows of a New England winter would be piling up, to be pushed and kneaded into fortresses and ammunition by the guys on the street. And there were the sounds: doors slamming shut, boots clumping down to shake off the snow. . . . Red cheeks, runny noses and a half-dozen mugs filled with hot chocolate appearing from nowhere.

As the time approached, the excitement grew. The

closet in the foyer that "was not to be opened" drew children like a magnet; and we would stare at it forever (at least, it seemed that long). Then the packages from relatives would begin coming in, each clearly marked "Do Not Open Before . . ."; each package determining which aunt was the favorite and who loved whom the best. My father would come home each night and light a fire. As the flames crackled through the logs, the questions rained down; "I'll die if I don't get. . ."; "Do you think I'll get. . ."; "gimmee" was the order of the day.

Finally, the time arrived. Relatives gathered, and while children squirmed impatiently, memories were revived and prayers recited, recalling that long-ago time in the far-away place. Candles were lit, songs were sung, and then we could be contained no longer. With war whoops equal to any Crazy Horse might have made, wrappings were made short work of, ribbons destroyed, cards glanced at and tossed down and packages opened. Clothing was groaned at and toys oohed, thanks were muttered on the run as we disappeared to try the gifts, the best we had ever had and all we ever wanted, until the next night.

Happy Chanukah.

—Richard Libowitz

feiffer

IN THE PAST I FAVORED DIALOGUE WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT, BELIEVING THAT IN TIME IT WOULD LEAD, THROUGH A PROCESS OF CONCESSIONS, TO A GRADUAL ACCEPTANCE OF RADICAL CHANGE. THESE VIEWS NOTWITHSTANDING, MY EARLY DIALOGUES WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT PROVED WHOLLY DISAPPOINTING, THE OTHER SIDE ARGUING THAT THE AIRING OF DIFFERENCES WAS PROGRESS ENOUGH, MY SIDE HOLDING OUT FOR MEANINGFUL CHANGE. FURTHER DIALOGUES LED ONLY TO FURTHER MIS-UNDERSTANDINGS WHICH BECAME THE



SUBJECT FOR NEW DIALOGUES DURING WHICH PREVIOUS POSITIONS WERE RESTATED AND PREVIOUS CONCESSIONS REAFFIRMED, AND ONCE MORE NOT CARRIED OUT. SINCE DIALOGUES ARE MEANT TO SERVE AS A SAFETY VALVE AGAINST VIOLENCE, I WONDERED WHY THE MORE WE TALKED THE MORE I FELT BRUTALIZED, EVENTUALLY HAVING NO CHOICE BUT TO TURN INARTICULATE BECAUSE I WAS UNWILLING TO ADMIT THAT THE ONLY WORD I COULD THINK OF SAYING WAS: "KILL."



FINALLY I WAS FORCED TO STOP TALKING IN ORDER NOT TO START KILLING. THE ESTABLISHMENT BLAMES THE COLLAPSE OF OUR DIALOGUES ON A BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATION.



FOR THEIR SAKE I HOPE THEY DO NOT SUCCEED IN REESTABLISHING CONTACT.

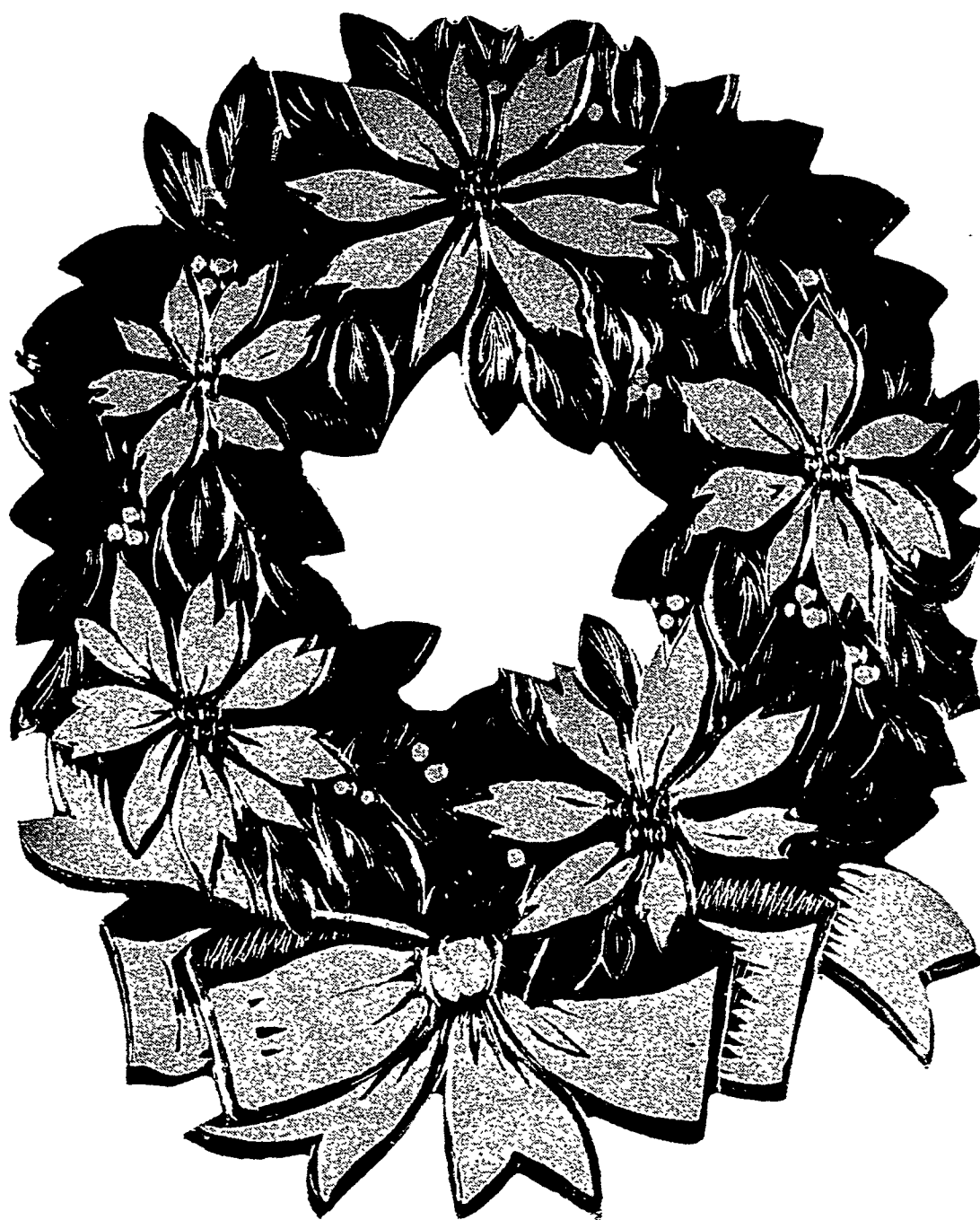


LIKE MAN Y'KNOW.



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Remember way back when . . . the Decembers of the late 1940's and early 1950's . . . the glowing excitement of the night before, the lights and presents of the days after . . . the trains, the dolls, all kinds of toys, all the trappings of a Christmas childhood.

A Christmas Childhood

by Patrick Kavanagh

1905-

I

One side of the potato-pits was white with
frost—

How wonderful that was, how wonderful!
And when we put our ears to the paling-post
The music that came out was magical.

The light between the ricks of hay and straw
Was a hole in Heaven's gable. An apple tree
With its December-glinting fruit we saw—
O you, Eve, were the world that tempted me

To eat the knowledge that grew in clay
And death the germ within it! Now and then
I can remember something of the gay
Garden that was childhood's. Again

The tracks of cattle to a drinking-place,
A green stone lying sideways in a ditch
Or any common sight the transfigured face
Of a beauty that the world did not touch.

II

My father played the melodeon
Outside at our gate;
There were stars in the morning east
And they danced to his music.

Across the wild bogs his melodeon called
To Lennons and Callans.
As I pulled on my trousers in a hurry
I knew some strange thing had happened.

Outside the cow-house my mother
Made the music of milking;

The light of her stable-lamp was a star
And the frost of Bethlehem made it twinkle.

A water-hen screeched in the bog,
Mass-going feet
Crunched the wafer-ice on the pot-holes,
Somebody wistfully twisted the bellows
wheel.

My child poet picked out the letters
On the grey stone,
In silver the wonder of a Christmas town-
land,
The winking glitter of a frosty dawn.

Cassiopeia was over
Cassidy's hanging hill,
I looked and three whin bushes rode across
The horizon—the Three Wise Kings.

An old man passing said:
'Can't he make it talk'—
The melodeon. I hid in the doorway
And tightened the belt of my box-pleated
coat.

I nicked six nicks on the door-post
With my penknife's big blade—
There was a little one for cutting tobacco.
And I was six Christmases of age.

My father played the melodeon,
My mother milked the cows,
And I had a prayer like a white rose pinned
On the Virgin Mary's blouse.

There aren't too many of us who remember our first Christmas, but Jimmy does.

Jimmy and the Angel

ONE thing about Christmas back then. It didn't begin until after Thanksgiving. It was Thanksgiving, and I was enjoying my Gerber's Strained Turkey & Vegetables when I heard Mom mention that, after all, I still had a month and maybe I would cut some teeth and graduate to the Junior variety in time for Christmas dinner. Eating was really a joy for me in those days, and I resolved to cut some teeth even if some knuckles got nipped in the process. I was busy working on a teething ring one day when they brought in a tree and put some lights on the branches. The bulbs were smaller than the ones now, more pointed, and every time one burned out the whole tree got dark. I hadn't learned about red and green and blue yet, but it was cheap thrills and I dug it, especially an angel named Mitsy who stood on the treetop and smiled down at me. She was really a doll, and she never once lost her cool, even when the lights went out.

I was doing my teething thing one day when Mom came in, and, swaddling me in six sweaters and a zip-up coat, explained that we were going to go see Santa Claus. I wasn't really up for it, but it was no use trying to tell her. We bussed it downtown to the department store and got in a long line of other intense mothers and bawling babies. Some of them were really groovy, though, and I learned a few things even then from my fellow Baby Boom-ers. We finally got there, and I met and posed with the nuttiest-looking guy I have ever met before or since. I was really scared by then, so I lost control. The picture came out OK, and I wanted to stick around and groove with the other kids, but Mom was embarrassed when Santa left muttering to change his pants, so we split.

Well, Grandma and Granddad and Christmas finally came on the same day, and I got a horse, a Goose Book, some blocks and other educational toys, but the best part was wrestling with Granddad while he cussed at me and called me Gaelic nicknames. I liked the smell of his R. G. Dun's and resolved to try them myself someday. I got high on Dextri-Maltose and we all laughed and sang Rudolph and had a great time. By and by, I got tired and fell blissfully asleep under Mitsy's protecting glow.

—James Fullin



How long did it take you to figure it out? Tommy claims to have found out all about Christmas when he was four.

Tommy Starts to Think



MUCH ink has been spilt — and very often to little purpose — attempting to establish aviomorphically the nonexistence of Santa Claus. That this unwholesome belief should continue to hold so powerful a sway over the minds of the young is less a result of the tendency of the young to cling to outdated modes of thought or the persuasiveness of the arguments in its favor as it is an indictment against those whose arguments to the contrary assume framulatoritary categories within a schematic framework without successfully dealing with the analogical implications with respect to modality which bind it to an epiphany wholly divorced from the subject at hand. The mindless canting of catch phrases such as “reindeer don’t fly” is a totally inadequate approach.

The existential situation of a child inquiring into the

aerodynamical properties of reindeer must naturally lead to an inner questioning of the Uncomprehending, lying between the metaphysical and the metatarsal, the whole pulsating with the thrilling rhythm of becoming intertwined with transfuscent process of waiting. But what then? Nothingness? The Void? Or the ultimate experience of beiruting reality in the ever-present When? If Professor P. E. Dant’s conjectures on the relationship between *The Birds* and *The Frogs* is correct, then the sublime answer was given by Aristophanes when he wrote *αρακαρὰκ*.

In view of these facts, the attention given to the Odorific Argument for the Nonexistence of Santa Claus is most gratifying. The argument is not an *a priori* one unfortunately relying as it does upon the child’s ability to smell the liquor on Santa’s breath. Tradition has it that the argument was first formulated by Fr. Urban and his fellow priests of the Congregation of the Sacred Shroud after a visit to the wine cellars of the seminary which the order maintains in Rome. Indeed, certain of the little band who pondered the beautiful mysteries together with Fr. Urban have devoted their lives to the disproof of the belief in Santa Claus through the use of drink. The final word on this subject remains to be heard.

Finally, let us turn to the argument concerning the ability of material objects to be bilocal with other material objects, that is to say, can Santa Claus pass through walls or does he need chimneys? The realists, maintaining that Santa Claus has existence primarily as the Spirit of Christmas and holding that spirits can pass through walls, naturally maintain that the lack of chimneys in some houses and the presence of gifts on Christmas day are not incompatible. This view drew a storm of criticism, especially from high Vatican sources, and was discussed at length by Innocent VI in his encyclical letter *Quid Me, Anxium Esse?* or *Centum Annos Abhinc*. His Holiness maintained that all things being required to pass through the orifices which God has ordained for them, and Santa Claus, whether spirit or not, being a creature of God and bound by his laws, would be required to go through the chimney. The position of many Catholics who own no chimneys and still believe in Santa Claus was made ambiguous by this pronouncement. However, rumor has it that certain unidentified saints have appeared to a group of villagers in Spain and instructed them to found a religious order for the construction of chimneys. It remains for Rome to officially recognize the order.

—Thomas Payne

*Even after a couple of years,
we were still more interested in playing
with new trains and stuff.*

Spotting the Choo-Choo

How I ever got to sleep on Christmas Eve is still a wonder to me. I was always going to stay up and catch Santa Claus in the act, but either my fortitude failed or my parents' forbearance could tolerate no more, for I never really caught a glimpse of that hoary old gentleman (although my dreams were usually pestered by the imaginary sounds of jingling bells and the impatient stamp of reindeers' hooves on our roof).

However, my anxiety, once I was safely tucked in bed, was not of the sort that contents itself with a lengthy slumber. Generally a rather sound sleeper, I could assume the precision of a clock on Christmas Day, and many were the times that stubbled, rumpled father staggered out of bed, dragged out his camera to record the joy on my face, and was met with the sight of dishevelled remnants of the tree that Santa Claus had so painfully bedecked the night before.

On one such morning, when I was five or six, my unique, built-in, one-day-a-year alarm sounded even earlier than usual. It couldn't have been later than 5:30 a.m., and everybody else in the house was sleeping off the effects of the night before (hardly sugarplums, I would imagine). I scrambled out of bed, dashed down the hall about as quietly as a fifty-piece military band, and was all set to bathe myself in wrapping paper when I spotted a huge green plywood board sporting a shiny new American Flyer train. I yelled.

My parents probably thought I was being attacked by a wild animal, and they must have spent a long while congratulating each other on such a windfall, for they did not appear for many minutes, probably to allow the beast time to finish his work. I later discovered that when they finally did enter the room, stiff-legged and glassy-eyed, my father was about ready to clobber me on the head with a fire poker out of sheer disappointment with my happier fate. But good old Mom, it seems, gently restrained him, motioning instead toward a piece of thick red ribbon and indicating my neck. Gleefully, almost demonically, my father advanced toward me with the ribbon grasped taut in his fists, and I believe he would have used it had it not been for my cries of joy over the train. Even in his angered state, he could not resist the infectious spirit of Christmas and it was only half an hour later that he and I were arguing over the possession of the control switch.

I had always been entranced with trains and can still remember going to the county fair and spending endless hours around the model train exhibit, enraptured with watching the tiny metal cars play follow-the-leader among the landscaped hills and lifelike miniature villages. For a boy of five or six such things possess a great deal of meaning; they are the gateway to the mysterious, adventurous never-never land of the

adult, and their attraction is irresistible. And now, to be the owner of such a machine! I was ecstatic.

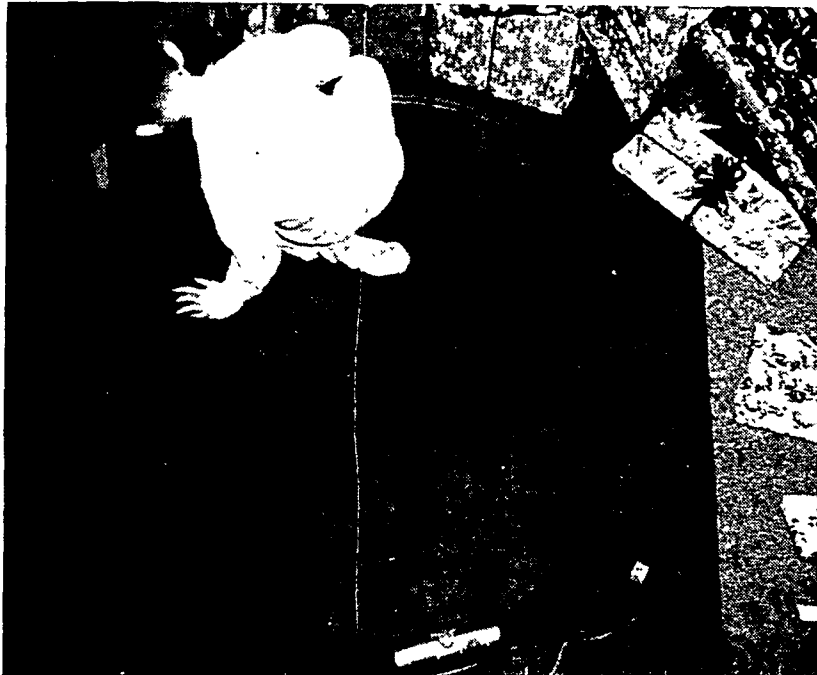
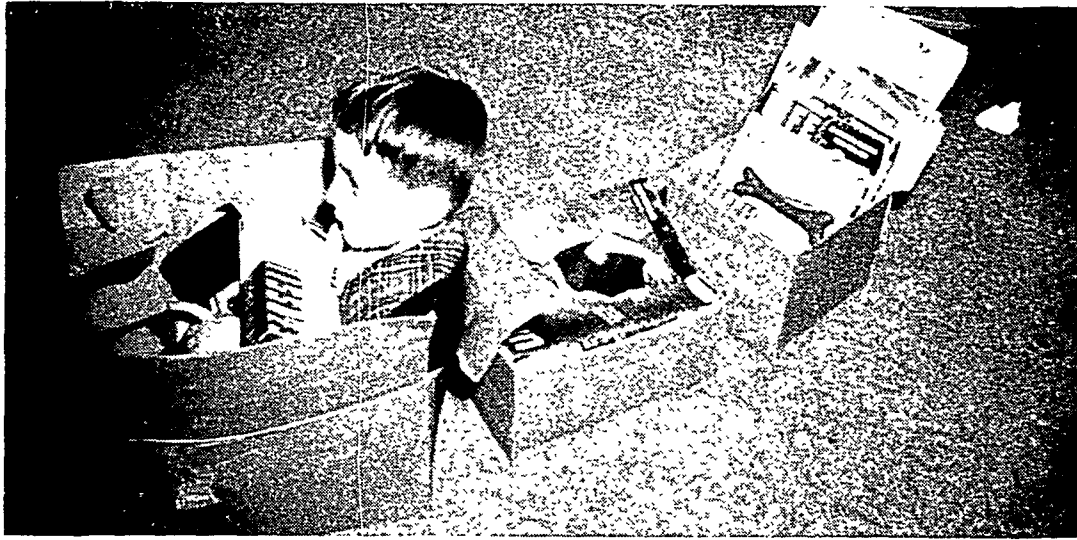
THERE were other presents for me beneath the tree, but I think I would have been content to let them lie there unopened for the rest of the day, as long as I could play with my train. However, my father, who knew, as I did not, all the care that Mom had put into wrapping my gifts, finally flipped the switch and observed that Santa had brought me more. Not one to argue when more booty was to be gained, I scrambled off and began the ripping, tearing ritual of discovery; I suppose that my glad expression and cries of surprise were reward enough for a mom who had taken so many pains to create an effect she well knew would soon be demolished.

Although my father took joy in her pleasure, the train was still his doing, and I cannot really blame him for wanting to try his hand at it. The happiness that parents can share with their children seems to be what keeps them young, and if that is the case, my father was about ready for diapers. Consequently, when I turned once again to my train, he willingly offered the guiding hand I had never requested. Almost at once I noticed his hands: battered and cut, with one thumbnail as black as axle grease, and bandages everywhere. He blamed it on his gardening, and I accepted the explanation then. Indeed, how could I have realized his spastic attempts to assemble the train two days before? He was always "all thumbs," and I can now reconstruct in my own mind what he must have gone through to make my Christmas what it was: a full hammer swing which drove his thumb into the board, a screwdriver that slipped and knifed his palm, a thousand minor electric shocks, and that final damning blasphemy against the sacred name of Santa Claus. And for all that, he probably found ample compensation in showing me, like a wise old sage, the very tricks he had learned to perform only yesterday.

Fascination is hastily extinguished and old wounds gradually heal of themselves. By the time summer vacation rolled around, the train had been utterly forgotten amid a host of other cares. My father's hands had recovered sufficiently for another escapade to be attempted, and Mom had relinquished her "Mrs. Claus" role for the daily routine of a Mrs. Somebody. Even now, the train lies stashed away in some cluttered corner of our garage. But I realize now that something of it yet lives on; a spirit that had been given it by human hands; a spirit I could never see as a child; a spirit that will survive long after the train has lain rotting on a forgotten trash heap somewhere in Nowhereland.

—Jeff Davis

The Scholastic



Several times during the month of November, you made it kind of clear that you wanted that Lionel train set for Christmas. When the big day came, you ripped right into the biggest of your presents, going right for that special steam engine. Within a half hour you had the whole deal set up right up next to the tree; the transformer was a little tricky at first, but after you got over those sixteen or eighteen minor shocks and crashes, you just couldn't tear yourself away from the tracks, even to eat a Turkey dinner. Three days later, just before the New Year's party, the whole thing had been moved down into the cellar, but you were still there, re-arranging barns and buildings, ripping that new engine around the huge figure eight.

Tommy's Family Album



Here I am with Mom and Dad, posing with a phoney empty box for our family Christmas card. "Season's Greetings from Tom, Kathy, and Little Tommy"—to everyone in five states who we owe money to. Bah! Humbug!

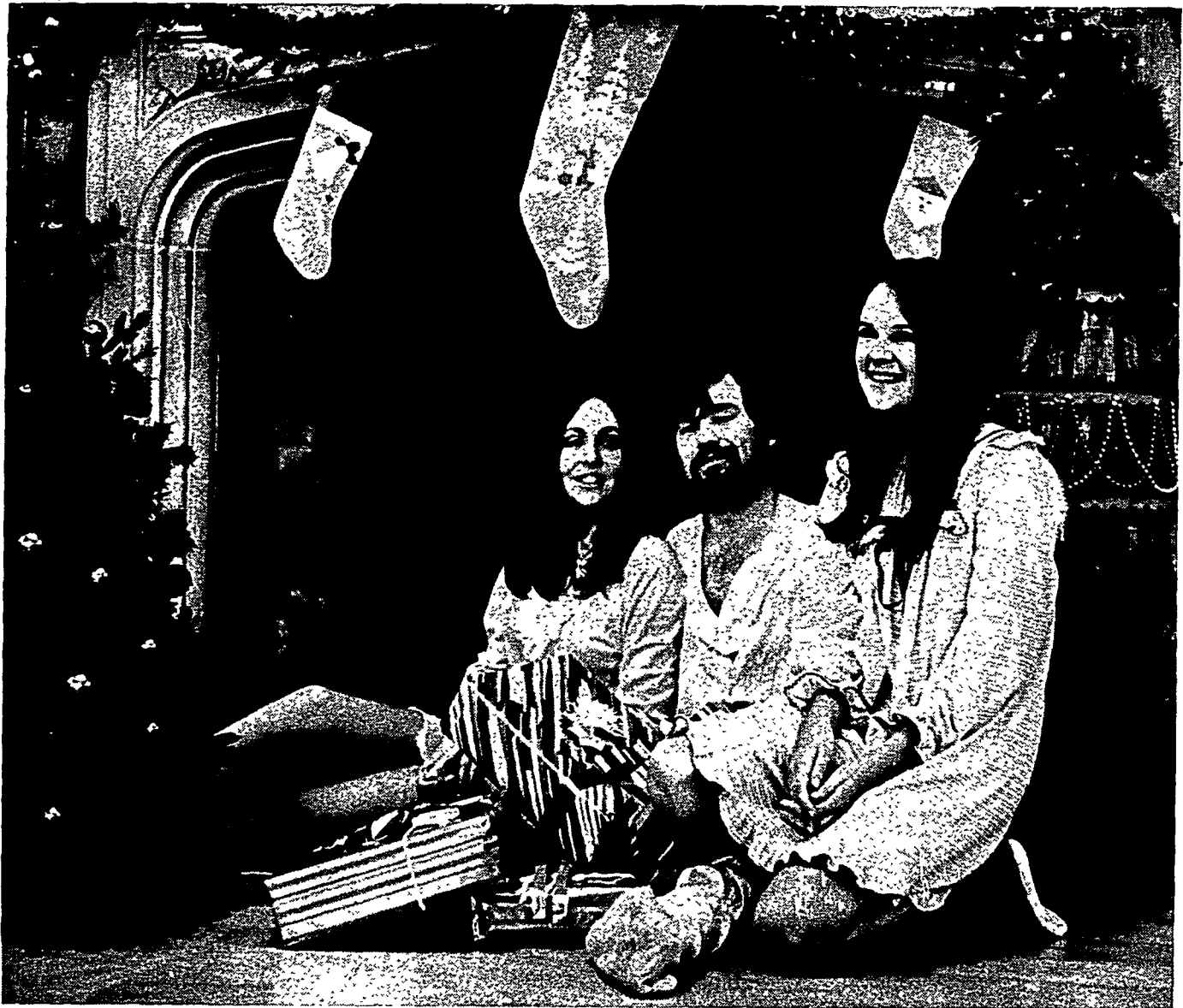
I've really had it with this Santa Claus business. *This* year I'm gonna check it out for myself. I won't believe it till I see it with my very own eyes.



Just as I suspected! Nothing up there but bricks and soot. And they thought they could put one over on me; just because they can sell the old "we wish you well" story to their dumb old friends, they think they can feed their own kid some old story about an old man who flies around rooftops. Come on. . . .

Well, now!

I just fell asleep for a minute or two and what to my wandering eyes should appear? Santa Claus, I'm sorry I ever doubted you. Anyone who knows what to give to the only hairy-faced seven-year-old on the block HAS to be magic.



A Christmas Vision Downtown

by Richard Moran

Red and green lights flash upon
the mud-soaked, foot-melted snow.

Two old ladies,
their arms withered
with the weight of Christmas,
totter on the curb.

And the urgent crowds around them
await the mechanical signal atop an orange pole.
Walk.
The opposing armies enmesh themselves
into each other's camps.
And knit a soon-disappearing pattern.

Pressed against a cold windowpane on that same corner,
a small nose disregards the pulsating crowds.

The cold wind whistles in one ear
but whispers into the other.

And the scraggly old Santa Claus
becomes a plump and jolly old man.
His tobacco-stained beard
proves pure and white and flowing.
Magic.

The honking horns and the harsh talk of business
disappear.

And only wonder remains.

Announcing!

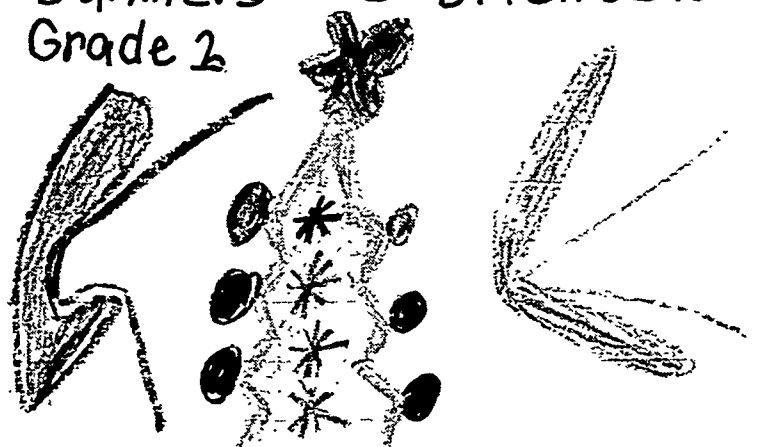
The SCHOLASTIC'S First Christmas

These six stories were all written by the second graders of O'Brien Elementary School in South Bend. They were chosen as the best of a good group of stories whose topic was, at least to begin with, "Christmas At Our House."

Christmas Is Fun
I Love Christmas.
I like The toys.
I like to open
presents.
I like Sants Claus
presents.
I do I do!
Debra TolBER

T
O'Brien
Grade 2

Christmas Eve
I love to open
presents Christmas Eve
Christmas is best
of all because presents
are good too. We're
going to Georgia
for Christmas My
Grandmother's name is Booboo
Laura Leigh Cricket
Summers O'Brien School
Grade 2



Annual Second Grade

Spirit Essay Contest

Christ Day
 I Pray. I Be good.
 I Be kind. I Be
 Surprise. I sit down
 When other people are
 talking. I dream about
 Christmas! Mike Keszei
 O'Brien School
 Grade 2

Christ mas Day
 I sleep and dream
 opening my presents.
 Jim Urbanski
 O'Brien School
 Grade 2

Christmas Day
 I am thankful four
 Christmas because it's
 Jesus's birthday.
 And i am thankful four
 God to, there are many
 people that ar thankful four
 that to. Billy Good room 22

Christmas Eve.
 The bells ring.
 The doors open.
 I visit Santa Claus!
 I open my presents
 in his lap.
 Robin Abraham
 O'Brien School.
 Grade 2



*By the time we were seven, cowboys
and Indians moved off the TV screen
into our back yards.*

Timmy Kills 'em Dead

LACKING the mental acuity or the intellectual curiosity of some of my more gifted friends at age seven, I was still waiting for Santa Claus and would do so for at least another year. Surrounded by nonbelievers, I nonetheless managed to remain secure in my ignorance and oblivious to the reality surrounding me. I came out of this state of semi-unconsciousness only infrequently and then only to quiet a few of my younger and more skeptical friends with explanations as to why the existence of Santa Claus was not just a possibility but a certainty. Anyway, who wanted to take any chances with a guy who was reputed to have a bevy of flying reindeer at his disposal?

At least half the fun of Christmas lies in the expectation of things to come. Christmas Day often seemed almost anticlimactic after the weeks of preparation and suspense. Wondering whether or not Santa Claus would come through as he always had in the past and bring you everything that had been asked for — well, almost everything. Hoping that good behavior over the past two weeks was enough to prove my worthiness. This ever-pervading doubt filled me and lent just enough uncertainty to my expectations so that the excitement and suspense could mount to an almost unbearable point sometime around 8:30 p.m. Christmas Eve, when I went up to bed.

There I lay dead still, eyes tightly closed, for about ten minutes. Then I began to twist and turn. Finally I jumped out of bed and ran to the Christmas tree to see if Santa Claus had come yet and asked my parents what time it was and when he would be coming. Then, back to bed again, this time with the resolve to stay awake until Santa Claus came. But after about fifteen minutes of staring at the ceiling and thinking about the Texas Ranger gun and holster with the rawhide leg-ties and the big silver buckle — if it didn't have a silver buckle and leg-ties then it just wasn't an official Texas Ranger holster and pistol — and the new cowboy boots and hat that I hoped I'd get, I thought I'd close my eyes for just a few minutes to let them rest and in a few seconds found myself sitting outside Major

Swanson's office talking to Rusty and Rin-Tin-Tin (or Rinny, as he was known to his friends).

Rusty was complimenting me on my choice of "shootin' irons" and asked where I had gotten them. When I told him that Santa Claus had given them to me, he just smiled and said, "Oh, yeah." I could tell he didn't believe me but Rusty was such a goody-goody he wasn't about to let on. He asked me if I'd like to go out to the Apache Village with him and Tonto and Rin-Tin-Tin to steal some Ovaltine or rather to get it back from those "thievin' injuns" who had swapped some innocent settlers a year's supply for a thousand acres of land that turned out to be arid desert with now and then a pool of some oozy black stuff called oil.

Even at seven, being a Texan, I knew that oil was worth more than all the Ovaltine in Arizona and I informed Rusty of its worth but he, patient as always, reminded me that cars weren't invented yet, so oil was still worthless stuff. We met Tonto and Rinny outside the gate of Fort Apache. I immediately questioned Tonto as to the whereabouts of Kemo Sabe and was informed that his ego had been shattered one day in Dodge City when he met in a showdown with some Kansas gunner. The dude accused the Lone Ranger of being a Class B TV star and said his claim was confirmed by the poor grade of silver that the Lone Ranger used in his bullets. Then the dude proceeded to load his Colt .45 with platinum bullets. That was the crushing blow, the Lone Ranger was humiliated; he jumped on Silver, bid his Western Sancho Panza farewell, and went back to Texas to rejoin the Rangers and spend his weekends looking for uranium. He had his heart set on being the first TV star to have atomic bullets.

I WAS still distrustful of Tonto. After all, hadn't John Wayne once warned that the only good injun was a dead injun? But Rusty quieted me with the explanation that Tonto had an insatiable desire for Ovaltine and there was no more left at Fort Apache. Anyway, Tonto wasn't really an Indian but one of those dark Irishmen and his real name was Patrick Carey Aloysius Lynch McGillicutty — Tonto for short. Rusty explained



that if we were successful we could keep all of the labels and send them in to Ovaltine and Co. for two Captain Midnight secret rings. I couldn't resist the temptation. And so it was that we found ourselves late that night inside the village, creeping out of Chief Thunderthud's tepee with nine cases of Ovaltine. But Rin-Tin-Tin was missing. I asked Rusty and he looked worried. An instant later, I heard Rinny howl. "He's done it again," cried Rusty. "What?" I demanded. Rusty explained that Rinny was $\frac{1}{8}$ St. Bernard so he loved the kickapoo juice (i.e., firewater) that Thunderthud's medicine man Booze Hounds made. Unfortunately, Rinny didn't know how to hold his liquor and every time he got drunk he started singing and/or howling. Anyway, the jig was up. Thunderthud was awakened by Rinny and, noticing his Ovaltine missing, sounded the alarm. Soon the whole village was alive. I looked at Rusty and Tonto and said, "Well, looks like we've had it, hey, McGillicutty?" Tonto shot back, "What you mean, *we*, little white eyes?" and then grabbed my three cases of Ovaltine and ducked into the nearest tepee. Rusty had already disappeared (some good guy he turned out to be) and I started running but tripped over my leg-ties. Before I could clear leather with my Fanner 50, I was disarmed by two braves and taken back to the center of the village.

So I stood tied to a stake, surrounded by a hundred silent, staring Indians, the only long knife in the crowd. Thunderthud approached, his face expressionless as always, mumbling something about little palefaces and said, "We want 'um Ovaltine."

I said that I'd give him my vitamin-enriched Bosco instead but he replied, "No! Want 'um Ovaltine."

"Hershey's chocolate syrup?" I apologetically suggested.

"Want 'um Ovaltine," he persisted.

Now if there's one thing I hate it's uppity injuns, but considering the circumstances I swallowed my pride and sought to placate him with flattery.

"You know, I always used to sit up in the peanut gallery and root for you against Clarabell in those selzter fights on the Howdy Doody show."

Chief Thunderthud's eyes lit up as he said, "One

day we scalp 'um freckle face and clown."

"Yeah, they were a pretty dumb bunch," I chimed in.

His face darkened again. "Want'um Ovaltine now!" he yelled.

Well, I'd been patient about as long as I could. "I haven't got your silly Ovaltine," I yelled back. Lt. Masters always said that you had to show them that you weren't afraid of them, but maybe I'd overdone it just a bit. For Thunderthud boomed, "Kow-a-bunga," grabbed the nearest bow and arrow, and took aim.

I swore that if Rusty and Rin-Tin-Tin didn't save me I'd never eat another bowl of Nabisco Shredded Wheat. I told Thunderthud that if he hurt me, he'd wished he died a thousand times 'cause Buffalo Bob was sure to find out. But the Chief was not to be stopped. He let the arrow fly.

"Ow!" Right in the ear.

"Hey, what did'ja do that for?" I shouted at my brother who had just shot me with one of the rubber bullets from his "swell" eight-shot Mattel Winchester rifle.

"C'mon downstairs and open your presents," he shouted. "Everyone's up and waitin' for you."

We both hurried down to the Christmas tree and everyone opened their presents. I got my Texas Ranger gun and holster with those clumsy leg-ties and a cowboy hat and boots and several other gifts I hadn't expected. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves when my brother shot my sister with another one of those rubber bullets. She in turn tried to squirt him with her Betsy Wetsy doll but succeeded only in getting me wet, for which I handcuffed her to the Christmas tree with my Dick Tracy handcuffs. She started to cry. My father turned to my mother and said, "I knew we shouldn't have gotten them those. . ."

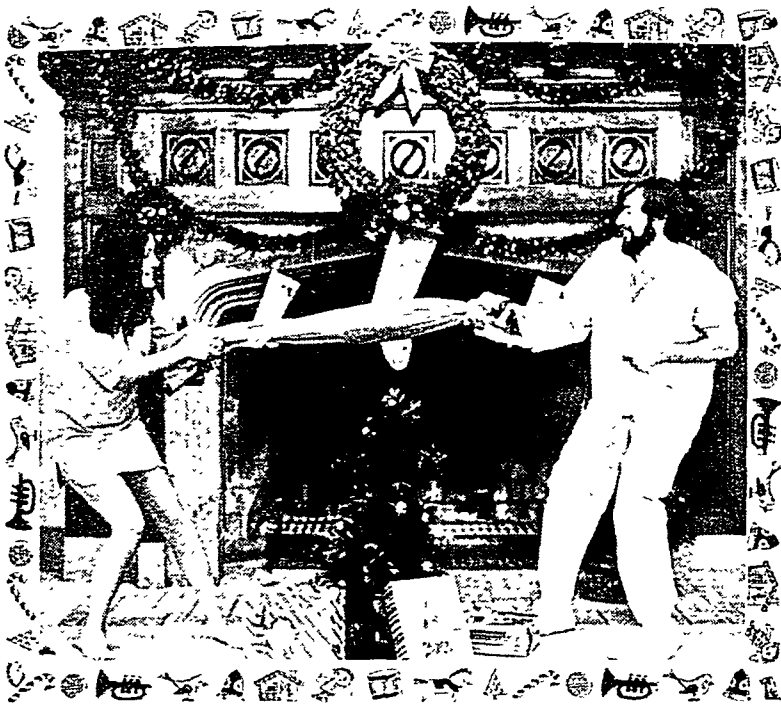
Another Christmas season was coming to an end. My brother looked up from a pile of wrapping paper and said, "Hey, Mom, you know what I want for next Christmas. . ."

"Fast away the old year passes.

Tra-la-la-la-la, La-la-la-la."

—Timothy Unger

Christmas Eve At Waiting for



Our House

Santa to Come





*At age eleven, Christmas
was only the last big thing
in a long, eventful year.*

Saturday Mornings at Phil's

WHEN you are 11 or so, time isn't measured by days, weeks or even months. Time passes in huge lumps, each "lump" governed by one particular activity performed with religious devotion that only a kid of 11 can maintain. The early spring usually announces the beginning of a nature "lump." Every forest, swamp, stream and sewer is scoured for anything that resembles animal life. Social status is determined by the ability to stalk, capture and bring back alive snakes, frogs, turtles and pollywogs. Nearly everybody, even those kids who were afraid to get their P.F. flyers dirty (dirty sneaks were neat), manages at least a tadpole or two. But to capture a snap-pin' turtle, the most ferocious beast to lurk in the marsh behind the shopping center, was tantamount to the discovery of the Hope Diamond and invariably enshrined one as the Davy Crockett of the grammar-school set.

As soon as summer started the sports season began. Every imaginable athletic activity from kickball to baseball with a Ping-Pong ball and a tennis racket is intermittently cheated at and played. If one was really cool, he made up his own game (the more arbitrary and contradictory the rules the better) and became recognized as the world's authority on that pastime.

When the World Series was over (the Dodgers won), sports faded rapidly and collecting assumed paramount importance. Stamps, coins, bottle caps, leaves and trading cards overflowed drawers and closets. The collecting lump proved an especially difficult time for parents. Important letters and large amounts of pocket change disappeared with unnerving regularity. A true collector knew the worth of everything. Only a fool or a girl traded a "team" for less than three other players. Roger Maris, Mickey Mantle or Willie Mays commanded a price that staggered the imagination of the preteen set. Even a "clearie boulder" paled in comparison to the worth of having these players in a shoe box in the closet.

Christmas vacation was one of those awkward periods that one must pass through between "lumps." Everybody is hanging around the house because it's too cold outside and a new "lump" won't begin until you get your Christmas presents. Actually there ain't nothin' to do except swap comics, watch TV and wait.

SATURDAY morning during vacation was as close as a kid can come to heaven. The idea was to get up so early that you can eat your toast and cereal while the station sign and tone are the only thing showing on the tube. The trick was to gulp our last soggy cornflake just as the cartoons start and then settle back to four or five hours of uninterrupted eyestrain. But that's not to say that Madison Avenue controlled the mind of an 11-year-old during those hours. Kids discriminated. Even though Captain Midnight and Ichabod Mudd (two d's) exhorted you to buy Ovaltine you knew the stuff tasted terrible, magic decoding ring or no.* By age 11 it was common knowledge that a piece of Saran Wrap and a crayon served as functional substitutes for the Winky-Dink kit in solving the puzzles flashed on the screen. You couldn't fool kids for long.

Those hours spent glued to the screen invariably gave rise to more than a few guilt feelings. Nearly everybody at some time or another hoped that the Song Bird will someday crash and take Penny with it. Girls just don't belong in Westerns. But *some* girls did have their place. Hearts throbbed whenever Annette Funicello's face flashed across the screen. Everybody loved her passionately but to admit this fact to anybody ranked worse than recognizing the existence of your little sister. Roy Rogers' sex life posed another knotty problem that troubled the mind.

* In order to avoid any legal complications we wish to make it perfectly clear to the manufacturers of Ovaltine, re: *Pez Peril*, that we consider Ovaltine neither addictive nor hazardous to the health.





Was he really married to Dale Evans? If so how could he still be a cowboy and why didn't she have the same last name? Or was Roy simply shacking up with Dale? When Rags the Tiger nearly got his stripes removed for use in making India Ink everybody wondered if they were spilling the blood of some less fortunate tiger as they did their homework.

TV invited group participation. Not to have sung *Happy Trails*, *Tales of Texas Rangers* or *Mickey Mouse* was almost as bad as missing the show entirely.

If you got bored with TV during vacation you could always turn to your comic-book collection for a little entertainment. Curled up in bed with the latest issue of *Action Comics*, a Coke and a Devil Dog, you could forget the trials of mere humans for a while and imagine yourself as Robin foiling the villainy of The Joker. To make the ecstasy last longer the trained mind could read through the magazine once, just look-

ing at the pictures and wait for the second reading to fill in the words. At that age Batman and Superman were the big favorites. Superman was at his best either when he retired to the Fortress of Solitude or when he battled one of his archrivals in the Phantom Zone. The discerning reader knew the varied physiological effects that red, green and white kryptonite had on the Man of Steel and eagerly awaited a kryptonite issue. Nearly everybody who was anybody in comics had some fatal flaw that invariably tested his wits. John Johnzz had to avoid fire, G.L. lost his power if his ring wasn't re-charged, Aquaman couldn't stray too far from the ocean and, alas, Batman and Green Arrow had to labor under the handicap of mere mortality. But the things that really interested kids in regard to the superheroes never seemed to make their way into the strips. How did Superboy and Robin get their homework done if they were busy every night saving the world? Why didn't the Batmobile ever run out of gas? Could Superman really see through a girl's dress? Why didn't somebody else beside Sgt. Rock and Easy Company help to fight WW II?

CHRISTMAS meant everybody had nearly three un-interrupted weeks to tour department stores and catalogues for Christmas gifts. If a toy couldn't wound, maim or kill one of your close friends, it certainly didn't rate a place on your list. The Bluntline Special or a real bowie knife had class. A neat toy had to do something; everybody wanted a toy that shot something, moved around by itself, or made a noise. But simple things were not neglected. Those unfortunate few who as yet did not have the complete set of Whammo gimmicks, including (1) a yoyo, (2) a hoola-hoop, (3) a slinkee, (4) a booba-loop, made sure heavy emphasis was placed on these essentials. No self-respecting 11-year-old could enter the sixth grade before he could twirl a hoola-hoop from his neck to his feet without it falling, complete a successful around-the-world, walk a slinkee down the stairs and snare the booba-loop the "hard" way.

Christmas morning usually proved something of a disappointment. Invariably you never got something you really wanted because it was either too dangerous or too expensive. Every relative you had been depending on for something really big instead gave you something practical like clothes or a book. Nothing is more impractical than a practical gift for a kid. Money ranked as a mixed blessing. It never came in a package and you never could spend it right away. But on the bright side it promised a series of Coke and comic-book sprees after the vacation. The worst trauma of all came when you visited a friend's house only to discover he had received the very present you had asked for but didn't receive. The average well-adjusted, middle-class child generally responded to this situation by breaking the toy as soon as the friend's back was turned.

Somehow this Christmas just won't be the same.

—Philip Kukielski



And then, of course, when you were a little older, there was the Christmas Eve party with all the grown-ups.

The Sons of Pulaski



EVEN if you're just a little one like me, a couple of times a year it's great to be a Polack (it's OK to use the term if you're one of us, but not if your name is Spiro). Like at Polish weddings where you usually don't know who's getting married. But better yet is Christmas Eve. That's when three generations of the sons of Pulaski get together to observe the traditional Christmas Eve "fast." It's really just an intimate family thing — only 50 to 60 people — so anybody's house is big enough to serve as a substitute for Dom Polski Hall. If you're the host, all you need is a lot of food and a lot more whiskey.

All sorts of miracles are happening tonight. For instance, my big brother Bill is wearing a coat and tie, and none of the old men are arguing politics yet. There they go again — "*Na zdrowie!*" *Na zdrowie* are the first Polish words I ever figured out. It means something like "OK let's all clank our glasses together and drink this shot of whiskey, so we can get back to our beer." You see, it's a lot easier to just say *Na zdrowie*. Hey, there're my cousins Joey and Shirley. It's about time you guys got here. Our mothers are watching us so we'd better not try to have too much fun yet. Mothers make it their lives' work to keep their kids from having fun when someone else's mother is around.

Anyway it's time to eat and this year us kids are putting up a united front—no *barszcz* is going to be forced down our impressionable throats. Always, it seems, one of my aunts is coming by and saying, "What kind of Polack are you? Look, even your brother Johnny is eating *barszcz!*" Ha, that just proves that he's a little kid who doesn't know any better.

We'll get even with him later. Hey, pass some *pierogi* down here, would ya?

After dinner most of the women go upstairs and gossip. That means it's safe for my uncle to put a little spike in Bill's ginger ale. Bill would really catch it if my mother found out. He knows I won't tell. That's because he knows that I know what he'll do to me if I do tell. I may be little, but I'm smart enough to know when I didn't see anything. Besides, I'm busy in a hot game of tag. As usual, we're all conspiring to make Johnny "it." Getting picked on all the time is the price he has to pay for being allowed to play with us bigger kids.

THE most important rule in this game is to keep the big people from noticing us. Of course it would be a miracle if any of the men noticed us. In the state of happiness they're in, most of them can't even recognize their wives. Maybe that's why they're so happy. Well, well, here comes Santa Claus, tumbling down the stairs instead of the chimney. Some Santa he is, his "ho, ho, ho" is as bad as my Uncle Louie's. In fact, so is his breath.

Oh no, one of the men suggested singing Christmas carols. In Polish, of course. Somehow my quiet, reserved father manages always to be the loudest singer once a year. These guys try hard, you know, but their songs still come out more like *Beer Barrel Polka* than *Silent Night*. All this racket is the cue for the women to start nagging about going home. Anyway, the night was great while it lasted. Poor Dad, he didn't even get halfway through his musical repertoire. Oh well, as long as you're a Polack, there's always next year.

—Raymond Serafin



About fifteen or sixteen years after that first Christmas, you began to ask for more than just trains and guns.

Joel Maneuvers the Mistletoe

YOU had volunteered to go down to the florist shop near the church to pick up some laurel wreaths for your mother. This was not particularly to be helpful — more to get your hands on the car, having just got your license.

And then you saw the mistletoe. That's probably where the trouble started. The real thing with its sparse leaves and motley grey berries was something of a disappointment, after having seen the bright, plastic imitations. But it only cost fifteen cents for a sprig, and it was accompanied by big ideas.

Your best friend had been fixed up with a girlfriend of The Girl you had been taking out. That meant that you had taken her to the big Thanksgiving football game, and she had sat all the way over to the middle of the car on the way back (leaving one discreet foot or so between you and her, as opposed to five). And what's more, you, in degenerate daring, had not only held her hand through most of the last three quarters, but had actually put your arm around her when she started shivering in the last five minutes of the November drizzle.

At any rate, since conquest had followed conquest with a speed that had made your head swim on that oh-so-delicious afternoon, it made you cocky. And you were fated to plan that intimate Christmas party for four.

Plans were made, times were set.

When your parents confiscated the pint of rum for the punch — the pint that you had spent days getting someone's older brother to buy for you — you should have recognized it as an omen. But, blind as you were, you didn't.

The tree, when the four of you had finished decorating it, didn't look bad at all, your mother noted, bringing in more cheese and crackers and discreetly turning off the four 100-watt overhead lights, thus plunging you into the darkness of the three table lamps and the five strings of lights on the tree. The tinsel didn't exactly fall the way it had in past years, but then again, how was one to realize that jump shots from five feet out was not the technique one used for maximum success.

And so, the triumphant moment. Softly, the move to the refrigerator where the symbol of all carnal delight had been stored. Gently, the green tissue paper was unwrapped, revealing the red beribboned wonder. Slyly, back to the living room where the thing was hung with care, while you ignored the various shifting

noises from the direction of the couch.

You get down from the stepladder, fold it away, and then turn expectantly.

Well, your friend and the other girl had lost no time waiting for you to finish putting the mistletoe up, and for that matter, they weren't really following the tradition very closely at all, for they hadn't even bothered to get under the mistletoe. But The Girl wasn't paying any attention to them. She was sitting, knees together, in her best what-kind-of-a-girl-do-you-think-I-am posture, glaring pure venom.

A frontal attack obviously would lack not only esthetic appeal, but efficacy under such conditions. Taking the *Jingle Bell Rock* off the turntable and replacing it with Bobby Vinton, you suggested, with such élan as you could at this point muster, dancing. Your friend, making little attempt to cover his disappointment at the turn of events, nevertheless manfully struggled into his version of the Crowded Floor Two-Step.

"I'm Mister Blue,
Wha-ah-wah-oooh,
When you say you,
Love me, . . .
. . . me, too. . . ."

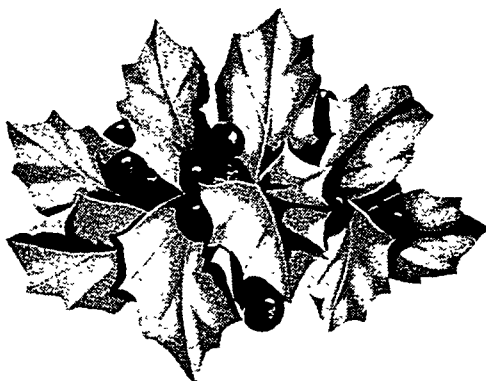
Then came the problem of maneuvering him out from under the mistletoe, but months of practice elbowing your friends out from

under the playground basketball hoop while avoiding the cracks in the blacktop simplified your dancing style.

What it didn't at all help was the fact that she had her face buried firmly on your shoulder and she had absolutely no intention of moving it so you could get a decent try at making use of the mistletoe. The only known defense for that is stepping on her toe and then moving fast as she screams. But this was a quiet Christmas party, not a sock hop.

And on and on it went, getting less a matter of beautiful moments as you had planned, and more a matter of alternately eating the crackers and cheese earnestly, and remarking again and again what a wonderful job you all had done decorating the tree. And all the while he who formerly was your best friend and the girl that you realized in your agony was the very same girl you had fixed him up with less than four weeks before — could it only have been four weeks since Thanksgiving? — stared dreamily and silently into each other's eyes.

—Joel Garreau





AT CHRISTMAS

Let the Christbrand burst!
Let the Christbrand blazon!
Dartle whitely under the hearth-fire,
Unwind the wind, turn the thunderer,
And never, never thinning,
Forfend fear.
Flare up smartly, fix, flex, bless, inspire,
Instar the time, sear the sorcerer,
And never, never sparing,
Save all year.
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Let the Christbrand blazon!

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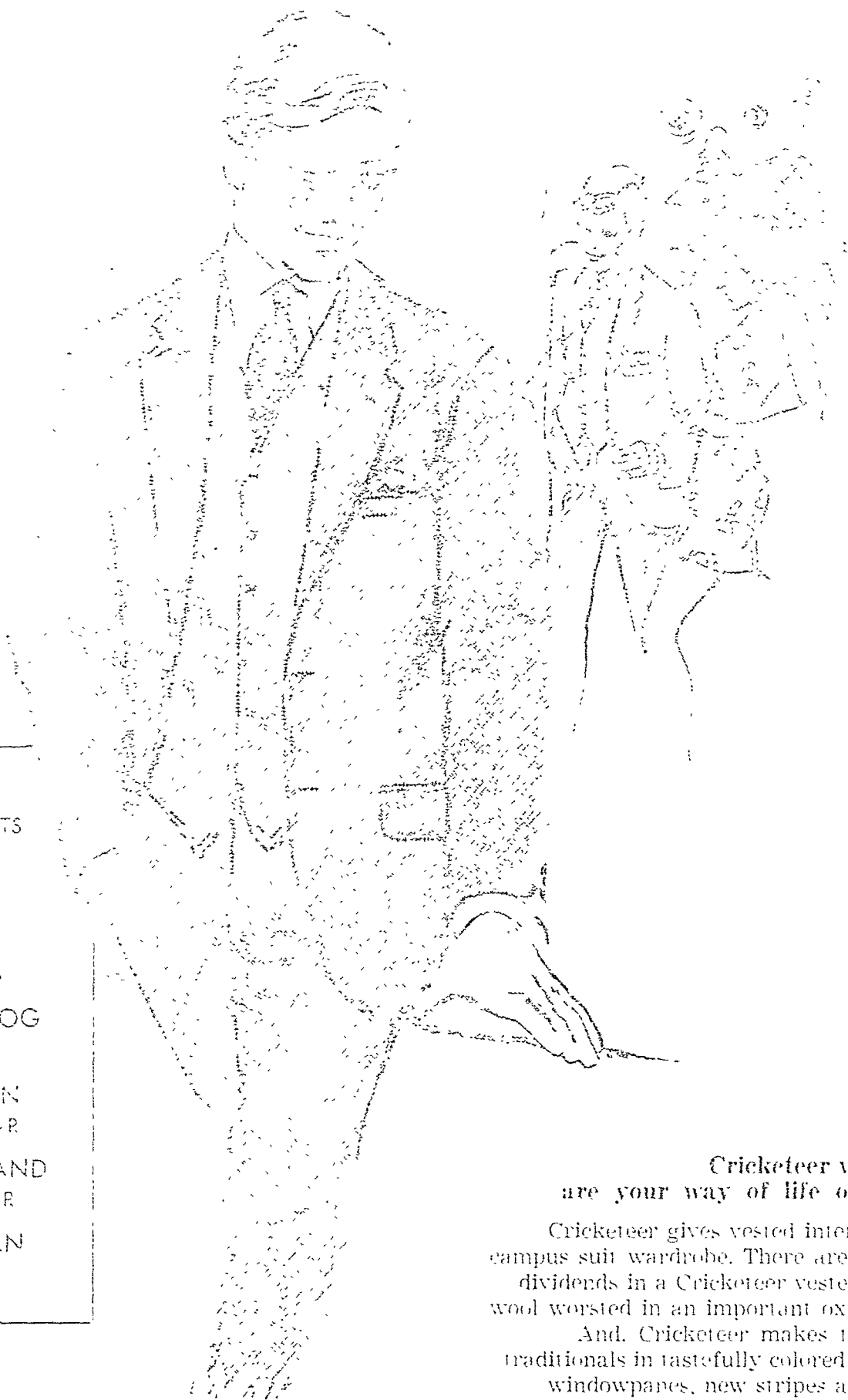
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