

## Poll vote advocated, to help avoid apathy



It is November 9 sometime in the future. A 40-year-old man gets up in the morning, goes to work, and at 5 p.m. returns directly home. As he relaxes in his favorite chair, he turns on the television set to find the only program on is the election returns. He has no interest in them so he turns off the TV and starts to fix dinner.

This man did not vote. He has no apparent interest in the direction his country is taking or even what his tax money is doing. Is this man an exception or the rule?

Adult apathy does not suddenly appear in the beginning of the 21st year. It has its beginning in childhood and deeply takes root in adolescence. High school activities can either alter this or further it. Which is Grant doing?

Spring student body elections are in the near future. As usual students will be given pencils, paper and class time to cast their votes with. Student government will continue as always with students making no effort to vote. Could this be a seed of apathy?

If student government is supposed to teach us how to become good and responsible citizens, how is it doing so?

Time could be allowed before and after school, and during all three lunch periods for students to register. In this way the interested students would take the initiative to vote and this responsibility would be taken from the reg room teacher and given to the students, as it should be.

The actual voting could be handled in the same way, leaving all the actions up to the individual. If students had to register before voting, and if they had to vote upon their own initiative perhaps a smaller number of students would be electing the officers, but they would be the ones who really cared.

## Christmas commercial characteristics blamed

A child's Christmas should be one of wonder and happiness. It seems that his eyes should shine and mist at the simple Christmas tale about a mother, a father, and a child who was born in a stable. The world does not emphasize these.

What are the most common symbols of Christmas? Santa Claus and the Christmas tree, you may answer. What do these have to do with the Christmas story? Well, the three wise men brought gifts . . . , you may say, but this is a minor part of the Christmas tale.

Why then are these symbols so common? Perhaps it is because they emphasize the commercial gift-giving spirit. Santa and the trees can be considered essential to the economy, perhaps, because they provide the incentive to buy gifts, and a decorative place to put them.

These emphases usually mean more to a child than the real Christmas tale. Parents encourage this by building and protecting for as long as possible a mythical "Santa" land, and some children are terribly hurt when this belief is shattered.

But later, when as parents, they look back on their childhood, they will remember waiting happily for Santa, and so will continue the custom with their own children. After all, it is a pleasant illusion.

Should anything be done about the illusory commercial Christmas?

No. On a legal basis, separation of church and state could stop action. On a practical basis, not everyone would agree that the real emphasis should be placed on Christ.

Many people are not Christians, yet they celebrate Christmas. They celebrate the gift-giving aspect because it seems a pleasant national custom. Christians should resurrect the real story among themselves.

## Christmas goals paradox of today's reality

"Peace on earth, good will toward men . . ."

In Asia, men are fighting and dying to preserve an ideal. The mass media broadcast war—cold war, real war, past war, future war. In our generation there has been no pause in what seems to be a chain from one war to the next. Peace has become a word rather than a reality.

Each day, hundreds of people receive threats, obscene mail and harassing phone calls. Human beings cannot live with each other in an America that lacks no physical needs. Brotherhood has become an outmoded term, a cause that has claimed many deaths and needless suffering.

There seems to be no end to war, neither is there a beginning of the time when people learn to accept one another. Perhaps it will be up to our generation to decide whether or not to blow up the world. Will we be the ones to change society into a life where people can associate with each other regardless of race, religion or ideals?

It is drastic to say whether the fate of the world is in our hands; but it does present something to think about. Can we decide to take a life needlessly? Who are we to play God—but wait, even now controversy stirs over whether God is dead.

Society knows too much. It has been said that a little learning is a dangerous thing. With progress in all matters from medicine to movies, from simple things like children's toys to complicated computers, mankind in our age is mastering and has mastered the earth and now sets out to control the universe. We are striving to reach the moon while ignoring poverty and depression in our own cities.

"God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay . . ."

## Christmas customs evolved from legends, traditions

by Cynthia Evans

Christmas customs have their roots in ancient legends, ancestral beliefs and ceremonies. Today many of these customs play a part of the Christmas season.

As in earlier times, holly, ivy, and mistletoe are favorite decorations representing strong life symbols. By tradition, holly is masculine and ivy feminine, both being needed to share the holy blessings they imply.

Mistletoe, the Golden Bough of classical legend, was held sacred by the Celtic Druids and Norsemen. It was once called Allheal, the plant of peace, which was used in folk medicine to cure many ills.

Kissing under the mistletoe is an English custom, never found in other countries unless Englishmen have

settled there. Survival in its native land is thought to be due to the fact that the English were formerly given to much kissing.

Lighting and decorating trees at Christmas came originally from Germany. How or when it began there is not known. Legend connects it with Saint Boniface who came from England in the eighth century to convert the heathen Germans.

Later stories say that Martin Luther introduced the custom by using a candlelit tree to represent the starry heavens from which Christ came.

In 1821 the first English Christmas tree appeared at a children's party given by a member of the queen's court. They were usually lit by as many tapers as

## Rich holiday foods ringed by legends adds to popularity

by Gayle Fleming

Richest perhaps of all the holiday traditions can be found on the epicurian's list. That is, rich in the sense of spicy, buttery, fruit-nutty good, and calorie-filled.

Around these foods are built legends and ceremony, adding to the drama and popularity of the dishes.

Religious associations are the most commonplace origin of such traditions, although some, like our turkey and its associated trimmings, are results of circumstance.

For several hundred years in feudal England the first course in the Christmas feast was plum pottage or broth.

This pottage was made from slowly stewed mutton or beef thickened with brown bread. When the meat was half tender, raisins, currants, prunes, cloves, mace and ginger were added and the dish simmered for another hour.

Main dish of the feast for these people was varied. It might have been boar's head, "baron of beef," a haunch of venison or even peacock. However, the fitting dessert was plum pudding.

Even King Arthur made a plum pudding:

"A bag of pudding the King did make  
And stuffed it well with plums;  
And in it put great lumps of fat  
As big as my two thumbs."

Great ceremony always surrounded the plum pudding. After the dishes were removed, it was brought to the table and lighted, using brandy.

Our sixteenth century ancestors were very fond of mince pie and their legend that "whosoever eats one such pie on each of the twelve days will have twelve happy months the coming year," lives on today.

In the Scandinavian countries and in certain settlements of America, Christmas eve feasting begins with a smorgasbord including molje.

Molje is a pot of rich liquor in which the meat is cooked. Norwegian flat bread is then dipped in the molje and eaten.

Grot, a rich sweet rice pudding, is the traditional dessert. The pudding is covered with sugar and the center is scooped out and filled with butter, forming the "eye."

there are days in the year. For awhile ordinary people hesitated to follow the new idea, but within twenty years the Christmas tree custom was firmly rooted.

Christmas cards, which are now sent in millions each year, are little more than a century old. Their immediate predecessors were "Christmas pieces" made by schoolboys at the end of winter term.

More elaborate sheets of the same type were sometimes used by adults to send with a gift or letter. Greeting in this way was uncommon and not until the 1840's did the true Christmas card come into being.

As a result of legend, ancestral customs and efforts of unknown inventors, people all over the world celebrate a bright and decorative Christmas season.

## Merry Christmas from the Grantonian Staff



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