

opinion

Yuletide blues

"What do you want for Christmas this year?" he said during a commercial between football games.

"Christmas? We haven't even eaten Thanksgiving dinner yet!" I said, as I put the final touches on the gravy for the thankful dinner.

Setting the table I heard what had triggered his Christmas spirit outburst.

Christmas jingles, announcers telling us that if we haven't done our shopping yet, we're pushing it, and pictures of snow and Christmas trees filled the screen of the tube.

A newscaster told us that consumers are pickier this Christmas than before. They are buying less items, but spending more money on the ones they choose.

Pickier? How does he know? It's only Thanksgiving! Surely not everyone has done their Christmas shopping so soon! Am I the only one who still has to shop? Will I be able to get what I want?

No, I won't let it happen to me. They're trying to get to me. They have the sickness and they're trying to give it to me! Then it hit me -- does Santa have commercialism, too? No, that can't be.

I went to a department store to buy a birthday present for my sister. Christmas songs were playing and synthetic snow lined the aisles. I paid for the gift and the salesperson announced that it was great that I was shopping so early.

"Early for what?" I said. "This is a birthday present for my sister."

"Oh, that's too bad," she said. "Don't wait too long, everything is already being picked over. Merry Christmas!"

I left the store with an uneasy feeling. But, I wouldn't let them get me.

I wrapped the package and took it to the post office. The lines of people holding packages and letters were long. Finally I reached the window. The postal representative wished me a Merry Christmas and told me that it was a good thing I mailed my package now, otherwise it may not reach its destination until after Christmas.

I was stunned. Everyone has the sickness.

I walked across the street in a stupor. Santa Claus was waiting for me in front of another department store. He handed me a candy cane.

"Me-e-ery Chri-i-istmas," Santa said. "Me-e-ery Chri-i-istmas!"

"Merry Christmas, Santa," I said. "Merry Christmas." CB

feedback

Mural facts

To the Editor:

Re: Your item in Nov. 15 issue, entitled "Mural to Brighten Library," these facts are the background for the "donations."

In September 1973 a class was offered in Rose Villa on "Writing Family History," by Clackamas Community College Division of Community Education, under Mrs. Elizabeth Ryan, a professional writer.

The teacher became impressed by the true stories coming from the class of life in past years. Each term new members joined the class, many from outside the Villa. Writer friends encouraged the thought of a book to be published.

In November 1977 an organization was formed, officers were selected, and inquiries were sent to possible publishers and contact was

made with Charles Rooks, an industrial printer who agreed to prepare a book for \$2,630.

Thirty stories were chosen, edited and prepared. The College furnished 2,000 flyers and letters were written to libraries and colleges throughout the country.

A careful copyright was planned whereby the rights to individual stories would remain with the writers, but any proceeds from the book would be given to the College for creative projects.

One thousand books were delivered in May and orders began to arrive. In July all expenses were paid and the Rose Villa Bank opened an account for "Leaves." With orders continuing to arrive, Mrs. Ryan contacted Bill Anton, College Development Officer, to plan for the use of the fund. Now a mural of Clackamas County History is being planned.

Elisabeth Donaldson
Secretary, "Leaves From Family Trees"



THE GIFTS ARE LOVELY AREN'T THEY JOSEPH JOSEPH ?

guest shot

Men-talk

By Milt Freudenheim
(from the *Oregonian*,
February 26, 1978)

Men, not women, do most of the talking and especially the interrupting in middle-class white America, a series of studies by sociologists has found.

"The old saw has it that women talk too much. But what research there is shows that women talk less often when men are present," says Prof. Barbara Bate of Northern Illinois University.

Professors Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman recorded male-female conversations in coffee shops, drug stores and private homes in a California university town. They found that "46 out of 48 interruptions were made by males to females."

"In every conversation, the male interrupted the female more frequently than vice-versa," report Ms. West, now at Florida State University, and Zimmerman, of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

"Females showed a greater tendency toward silence," they said. This was especially true after the men had interrupted them--96 percent of the time in West-Zimmerman sample.

In another study they suggest that male-to-female talk often resembles the high-handed conversation style adults use with children.

Another sociologist, Erving Goffman, sees children being treated conversationally as "nonpersons." Their status in a conversation depends on adults deigning to listen, and they can be turned off or ignored at will.

"We take the view that the use of interruptions by males is a display of dominance or control to the female (and to any witnesses), just as the parent's

interruption communicates an aspect of parental control to the child," West and Zimmerman write in the scholarly journal, "Social Problems."

Northwestern University Professor Arlene Daniels, editor of the publication, says this type of "women's movement research has revealed a lot about the real divisions of power in our society. It shows the ways in which women through overt discrimination and informal gestures, even friendly ones, are made to feel their subordinate status."

"Language reflects power," agrees Sharon Veach, co-editor of *Women & Language News*, published at Stanford University.

Another way of using language to reflect power is by calling a person by his or her first name, Harvard psychologist-linguist Roger Brown has noted. First-naming someone who replies using a respectful title amounts to a reminder of who is boss.

"Women are first-named much more often than men," says Professor Barrie Thorne, Michigan State University Sociologist. "This is compounded by their subordinate positions, as secretaries and the like, in the work force. But it also happens with men and women in the same job. For example, I am first-named much more than the men here.

They are all 'Dr. So-and-So. You also can notice it on the talk shows, Johnny Carson and so forth."

She cited a study by sociologist Pamela Fishman describing how men control conversation. "Men have a more obtrusive listening style. They say 'Right' and 'Oh' which gives them an opportunity to interrupt, while women are more circumspect. Women say 'mm-hmmmm' to nod their heads or keep silent."

Professor Cheris Kramer of the University of Illinois speech department says that male dominance of television news and other public forums may account for the fears some women feel about speaking out. One example: women who are terrified to speak in class.

Professor Nancy Henley, co-author with Thorne of the book "Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance," has extended her studies beyond language to what are called "nonsymbolic gestures. Examples include tone of voice, touching, eye contact."

In her book "Body Politics" she notes that men let their gaze travel over women's bodies, while women learn to avert their eyes. Men touch women in public, patting their buttocks. But if women reciprocate by initiating eye contact or touching, this is read by men as a gesture of sexual invitation.

the print

19600 S. Molalla Avenue, Oregon City, Oregon 97045
Offices: Trailer B; telephone: 656-2631, ext. 309 or 310

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