

THE BEND BULLETIN

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Silent Night, Or Fatal Night?

Christmas, the season of joy and family reunions, is no time for tragedy—yet tragedy frequently strikes on this holiday.

Few parts of the Pacific northwest have reason to recall this more graphically than Central Oregon, for the state's worst tragedy occurred in this part of the state on a Christmas eve long ago.

The story of that tragedy has been told many times. It occurred at Silver Lake, on Christmas eve, 1894. Forty-three persons died, or were fatally burned, when fire swept through an upstairs hall in which a Christmas party was being held.

A hanging kerosene lamp toppled to the floor in a flaming mass by a spectator who stood on a bench to get a better view of the stage, was the cause of that fire.

A weathered memorial stone in Silver Lake cemetery serves to recall for the present generation that tragedy of long ago.

Through the years there have been other tragedies in this part of the state—tragedies not as appalling as that of Christmas eve in 1894, but still terrible.

There have been car wrecks on highways that have claimed lives of people bound for family reunions. Christmas presents strewn over the road after bodies were removed served as grim reminders of happiness suddenly turned into mourning.

Last year, in a 54-hour period from the night before Christmas until midnight Christmas, 515 persons died in accidents in America. Most of those died on highways.

And many of those who never arrived at their destinations were headed for family reunions, with presents that were to be heaped around a Yule tree.

There are many reasons for the heavy death toll seasonably charged against a holiday set aside as a time of joy, of happiness and goodwill.

Possibly the gay spirit of the holidays is an important factor. Then there is the matter of heavy traffic, iced highways and long hours of darkness. Put all these together and we have all the ingredients of multiple tragedies.

Seasonally the warning goes through the nation: Be careful—Don't be carried away by the Christmas spirit, or you may not live to enjoy it again.

It is well to remember that Christmas is not only a silent night—for more than 500 persons each year in America it is a fatal night.

Lesson In "Tele-Manners"

Many government departments, city, county, state and federal, have been putting considerable emphasis on "tele-manners" in the year that is now ending.

This is proper, for, notes the Civil Service Assembly, much of the business of government, down even to the city level, is done by telephone.

A lesson stressed is never to let the person on the other end wait and wait while you dig up the information sought. Better let him go back to his regular duties. Then call him later.

There are also a number of other lessons being passed on to those who work for the public. Expressed negatively, some of them are contained in the following "don'ts":

- Don't yell into the telephone.
- Don't eat a dessert or put on lipstick or chew a pencil or clench a cigar while talking on the telephone.
- Don't pick up the receiver, then try to think of the number you want to call.
- Don't unhook the 'phone to stop its ringing, then leave it unanswered.

Don't be affected. It may come as a shock, but people won't think they are being buzzed by the Duke of Windsor.

And here is a bit of, seemingly contradictory advice: Don't be too helpful. This may slow down business. It is proper to give information about what date taxes are due this year, but why go into an unwanted discourse as to the reasons for a change in date?

This lesson in "tele-manners" might prove beneficial to a lot of us.

The Nordenskiold Race

A veteran Bend skier, Emil Nordem, who years ago starred seasonally in the Fort Klammath-Crater Lake ski races, recently translated for The Bulletin a news story from a Swedish paper which should be of interest to skiing Skyliners.

The article told of the Nordenskiold, the greatest ski race ever run in Sweden, in 1884. The course was between two towns in northern Sweden, 70 miles apart, or around trip of 140 miles for the race.

Eighty ski runners registered for that memorable race. Only two of the 50 were under 30 years of age. The oldest was 51. Snow conditions were bad, and the time was not the best.

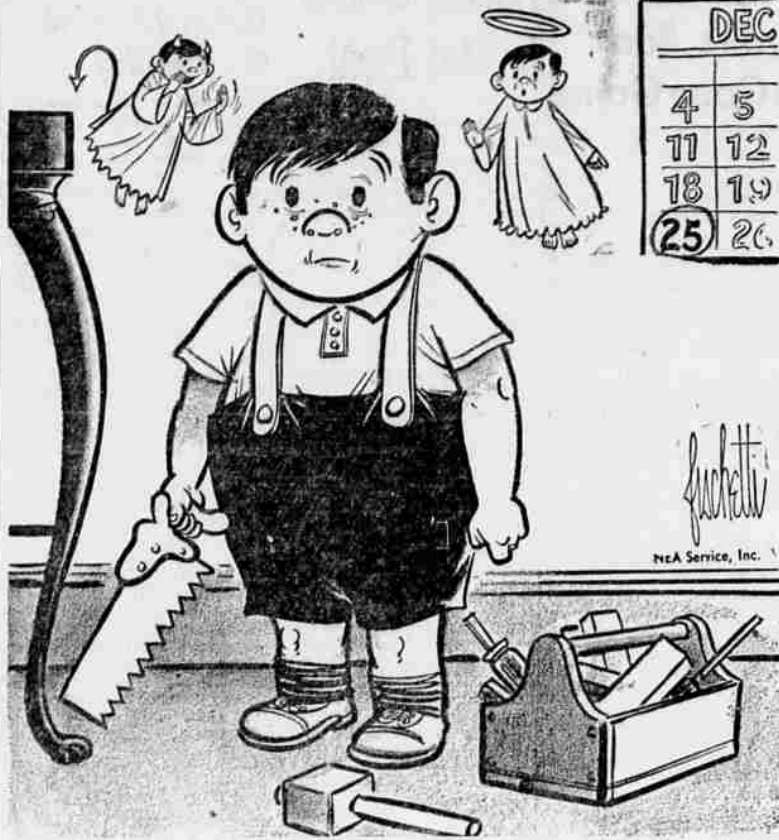
Lars Tuorda, 37, was the winner, and he covered the gruelling course in 22 hours and 22 minutes. Per Olof Lanta, 40, was second, and he finished just five seconds behind Tuorda. In third place was Armut Anderson, 33. He went on a bear hunt the following day, and drowned.

It was the 1884 race that awakened interest in skiing as a sport. Down through the years the sport has gained in popularity, not only in Sweden, but in America.

The Nordenskiold ski race has become an annual event in Sweden, but it is over a shorter route, 35 miles.

And, we have a hunch, taking part in the shortened race are younger men.

War of Nerves



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Letters

To the Editor:

This is the season to come to the coast to miss all that cold weather we have been reading about. We have had quite a number of beautifully sunny days during the last week, and many of us have spent all the time we could spare wandering along the beaches—some hunting agates, some searching for drift, and some just enjoying a day on the open beach in the sunshine.

The fishing has been steady and fairly productive. The sea has been too rough for casting, but steelhead and a few silvers are being taken from the rivers.

For the next several months Agate hunting will be good. The storms have opened up numerous beds. Right now the best places are Squaw Creek, Bob Creek and the Kelp Beds.

Elizabeth Swan,
Yachats
Chamber of Commerce
Yachats, Oregon
December 19, 1955.

School Adopts Safe-Teen Plan

MADRAS — The Madras Union High school student council has adopted the Safe-Teen crusade, student leaders report. Any student with a driver's license is eligible to join the program.

Purposes of the crusade are to improve teenage driving habits and publicize the fact that most teenagers are good drivers. Charles Brooks, senior chairman, explained.

Acting committee members include Marilyn Macy, Bill Davis, and Joe Dobbel.

Bend's Yesterdays

Fifty Years Ago

From The Bulletin, Dec. 21, 1905.

There is a great amount of work being done by sneak thieves in this vicinity and some of the home-owners are threatening dire vengeance. Numerous cabins have been found broken into, in the absence of their owners.

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. McGillivray and four children arrived here last week from Alberta, Canada.

Postmaster Grant has announced that the Bend post office will be closed all day Christmas, except for one hour after the arrival of the evening mail.

H. C. Ellis, Bend, superintendent of the Deschutes Telephone Co., went over the line from Bend to Prineville this past week and put it in condition for the winter.

The city council met Monday and passed a resolution setting the tax for city purposes at 13 mills on the dollar of taxable property.

Hugh O'Kane fought to keep the levy at 12 mills, but was outvoted.

On Dec. 20 last year, at the very crest of the ditch camp boom and the pre-Christmas mailing rush, \$11.75 worth of stamps were cancelled at the Bend post office. That was a record day. This year, on the same date, the cancellations amounted to \$11.39. This indicates that business is healthy now—a year ago it was having a raging fever.

NAMED EDITOR

Special to The Bulletin

MADRAS — Howard Hillis, journalism instructor at Madras Union High school, has been named regional editor of Student and Publisher, a monthly magazine serving eight western states. The appointment was made by Howard M. Brier, magazine editor.

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Ma S. Grant's

Sage Brushings

Some columnists turn out a lot of copy by answering, in the public press, their personal mail. This is a very clever device, the origin of which I have not been able to trace. Sometimes, it is safe to assume, a columnist is faced with the necessity of writing not only the answers, but the questions. I would say that this is not exactly correct, but it sort of gives the illusion of audience participation. It goes something like this:

Dear Madame:
You don't mind if I call you madame, do you? I am one of your avid fans, and I hang on every word you write. In fact, my husband says that you're apt to hang on some of them yourself. Comin' thru the bye, indeed! What troubles me at the moment is this: Why do the historians keep changing the dates of events, as time goes by?

—Disturbed
Of course you may call me madame. And may I call you a crazy, mixed-up kid?
This little habit of the historians bothers me, too, if you want to know the truth. For instance, according to the Old Farmer's Almanac, today (December 21) is Forefathers' Day. Presumably, it is the anniversary of the day the Pilgrims stepped out on Plymouth Rock. The Rock is still there, so I'm sure the story is true. You can see it yourself if you visit New England.

I have done considerable research on the subject, because of you, and I quote from the encyclopedia:

"FOREFATHERS' DAY, the day celebrated as the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims, first commemorated in 1769. Owing to a mistake in the change of Old Style (11 December) to New it was made 22 instead of 21 December."
I trust that this clears up the matter, and that you will go on happy in the belief that the Pilgrims did, indeed, make some sort of a landing. I'm glad they did, because otherwise, the Daughters of the American Revolution would have even more trouble than usual in earning their Ancestor Stripes.

Why don't you forget the whole thing and celebrate the first day of winter? That's tomorrow.
P.S. The Pilgrims landed in 1620.

"Don't get confused," said the Old Square when he turned in the following lyrical effort:

It's amusing to go twosing in the twilight with you,
Missing on the day gone by,
Welcoming the night so night,
Just patrolling, idly strolling,
On the hillside through the dew,
It's amusing to go twosing in the twilight with you,
"You" is a bull pup, the Old Square said.

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