

Befana's Legend Lives On in Italy

Befana was sweeping her threshold when the Wise Men passed on their way to Bethlehem—and Befana finished her sweeping before she thought about going to Bethlehem. Finally she blew out her candle, latched her door and, clutching her basket of treasures, she set out to follow the Wise Men.

A straw doll and a large seed—these were Befana's treasures. The large seed had been her own baby's ball and, long ago, chubby hands had fondled the straw doll whose garment she had made from a piece of her wedding dress. Had not the shepherd told her the Little King was a poor child? As she hurried onward, Befana visualized the Little King fondling her meager treasures.

Alas! night passed and morning came; then night again, and there was no one from whom she might ask the way. When the Star disappeared Befana knew that, having hesitated, she would search forever without finding the Christ Child.

In Italy, La Befana goes from house to house bearing gifts to children on Epiphany eve. Her counterpart, Russian Babouska, knocks on each door with her staff and, entering, holds a candle to the faces of sleeping children. She slips a toy beneath their pillows and hurries on, always hoping she is bearing gifts to the Babe of Bethlehem whom she has never found.

Sweepers of Armageddon! let there be toys this Christmas—lest the magic hour passes, lest both sweepers and broken dreams of childhood join the wanderings of Befana.

Army Exchange Is Biggest Santa Claus

The biggest Santa Claus of them all, the army exchange service, has started its "do your Christmas shopping early" campaign—and by early it means right now.

For overseas Joes, who can't join the Night-Before-Christmas department store crowds, the exchange service has issued its "Christmas gift suggestions" catalogue.

The catalogue's No. 1 item is war bonds, for a home, for family, for education—but for those who want to contribute toward a gift bedecked



GIs play Santa

tree or a packed stocking, the catalogue has suggestions for every member of the family.

For mother, sister or the "best gal" the catalogue lists perfumes, jewelry, compacts and other women's niceties—all of them the very best.

The APO soldier can buy a tie, shaving kit, key chain and other items for dad and Bud. Books, playing cards, luggage, cigarette cases and other welcome gifts are listed in the catalogue for relatives and friends.

Naturally there is a children's section with dolls and other toys. Consideration is also given to the old holiday gift reliable, candy.

The army exchange service's claim to being the biggest Santa Claus is borne out by the 360,000 orders handled last Christmas, according to the Army Times.

But even this large total will be small fry compared to the 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 orders expected this year.

Operating on a nonprofit basis, the army exchange gift service isn't just a holiday organization. It provides gifts for every occasion—birthdays, Mother's day, Easter and any other time a soldier feels like sending a gift to someone.

TOO GENEROUS

A 40-year-old woman stood on a New York subway platform during the afternoon rush period peeling bills off a thick roll and tossing them to a quickly gathered crowd with the cheery cry: "A Merry Christmas. Have lots of luck."

As people scrambled madly for the money, policemen stopped the fun with the ruling that the woman could do what she wanted to with her money but that her manner of distribution constituted disorderly conduct.

Outdoor Decorations

Before the era of electric lights, men were obliged to confine the expression of their Christmas spirit indoors. Symbolizing this spirit were the becardled indoor tree, sprigs of holly, gaily wrapped gifts, and the common greeting card.

Came the advent of the colorful multiple burning Christmas-tree lamps like glowing jewels on a string. Came "projector" lamps designed for outdoor flood and spotlighting. The custom of expressing the Yule spirit outside has grown.

Christmas Trees Are Of Many Varieties

The spruces are the least desirable of the trees used for Christmas. The foliage is sharp pointed and it is the first Christmas tree to shed its needles.

The fir, sometimes called the balsam fir, is the ideal Christmas tree and has been so revered for years. It resembles the spruce except that the needles are not sharp pointed and the tree becomes golden brown before it sheds its leaves or needles.

The Douglas fir is also commonly used as a Christmas tree. The needles are flat and smooth to the touch. It can be identified by a number of buds at the tip of the branches, which cause the needles to bend aside, changing the regular comblike appearance of the twig. This tree has cones which are short appendages on each scale.

Hemlock, while used as a Christmas tree, is objectionable because



of the shedding of its foliage when kept indoors. A hemlock is distinguished by having two white lines on the lower side of each of its narrow, needlelike leaves.

Pines have never been a favorite Christmas tree. To those who do not desire the conventional and are content with an informal or irregular growth, they prove satisfactory. Pines are distinguished by having needlelike leaves which are associated in clusters of three and five.

The red cedars, which produce berries rather than cones, are seldom used as Christmas trees except in neighborhoods where they grow wild. The foliage is rather prickly but is very small and scale-like.

Festive Games Provide for a Real Home Party

Progressive parties have become popular as a feature of the New Year's joyous celebrations. Four, five or more families join together and invite guests to meet at one of the homes. A punch or light refreshment can be served at the first home, a few games, and then on to the second home. Each home in turn provides some form of entertainment, games or refreshment. The party can take place on New Year's day, or New Year's eve, ending with the dawn of a new year.

Many different games can be played. One called "Mixed Resolutions" will fill the bill for fun-making in a mixed crowd of all ages.

Guessing Time.

Anyone can estimate the length of a second, but few people know how long two or three minutes will last.

Have the guests sit in a circle around the room and announce that you are going to ask them to estimate the amount of time it takes for three minutes to pass.

Clap your hands when the three minutes is to start. To prevent the guests from counting out the time to themselves, pass around some refreshments, or if someone can play the piano, sing a song they all know. This will not last more than a minute or two, but it will throw the players off count. Soon the guests will begin to call off the three minutes. A prize can be given the winner.

True or False.

Another game is similar to many of the radio contests or programs, true or false, or do you know the answer. Have a set of questions start the guessing contests. The questions should be of general interest.

Spell Backwards.

A good old-fashioned spelling bee may prove of interest, however, one in which the spelling is done backwards, usually creates more interest.

A little competition will enliven the game, so arrange the guests into two or three teams, then tell them the rules. Each contestant will be eliminated from the game when he makes his miss, and the first team to be spelled down loses the game.

Another Time.

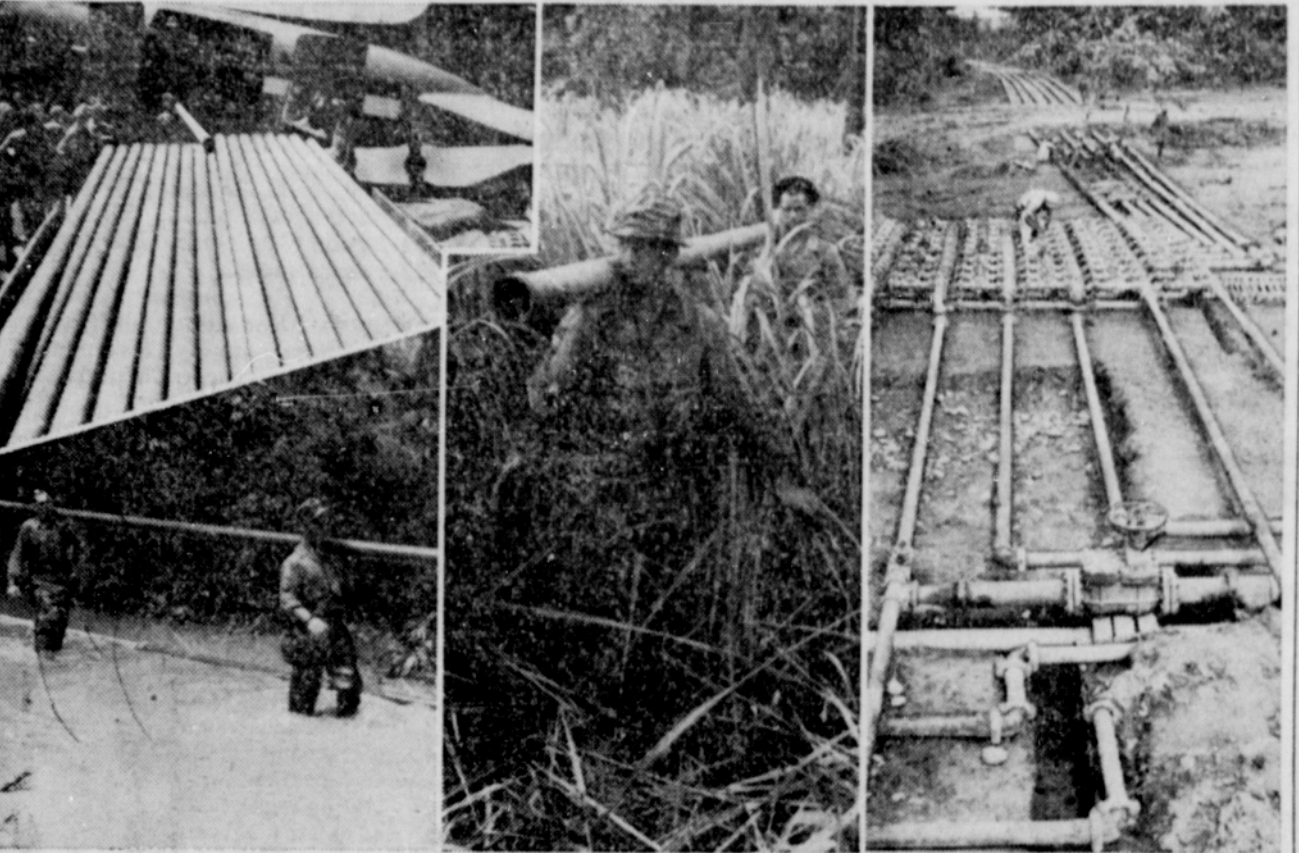
The name of this contest is also "Time." Prepare the slips of paper, writing on each a different variety of time, such as Killing Time, Beating Time, Saving Time, Marking Time, Father Time, Losing Time, March of Time, Nick of Time, Waltz Time, Night Time, Summer Time, etc. Make two copies of each slip. Give one each to the women and place the other set in a hat for the men to draw. The men then demonstrate in pantomime the kind of time he represents, so each girl can identify her partner.

Flyers Map Bad Luck for Japanese



They talk it over, lower photos and load them up, upper photo, for attacks that repaid in part the debt owed the Japs for their surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. B-29s carry tons of destruction on each trip into the land of the "setting sun." Few medals are awarded, but the hits are effective.

'Carrying Coals to Newcastle'



Members of the U. S. Army Engineer Petroleum Distributing company are shown unloading airplane pipes from India to be used in the building of the India-Burma-China pipe line. The line will relieve the load of the road as well as the air force in furnishing the essential gas needed for planes attacking the Jap strongholds.

SPARs All-Out for V-Bonds



Every state in the Union with a SPAR on duty in Washington, D. C., was represented when the Sixth War Loan roll was called at U. S. coast guard headquarters. More than 85 per cent of the enlisted SPARs throughout the country bought bonds during the last war bond campaign, and hope to better this record during the Sixth Bond drive. In addition to individually signing up for bonds, these SPARs have aided materially in the campaign in drives conducted in Washington as well as other cities where they are stationed.

How Food Prices Have Risen

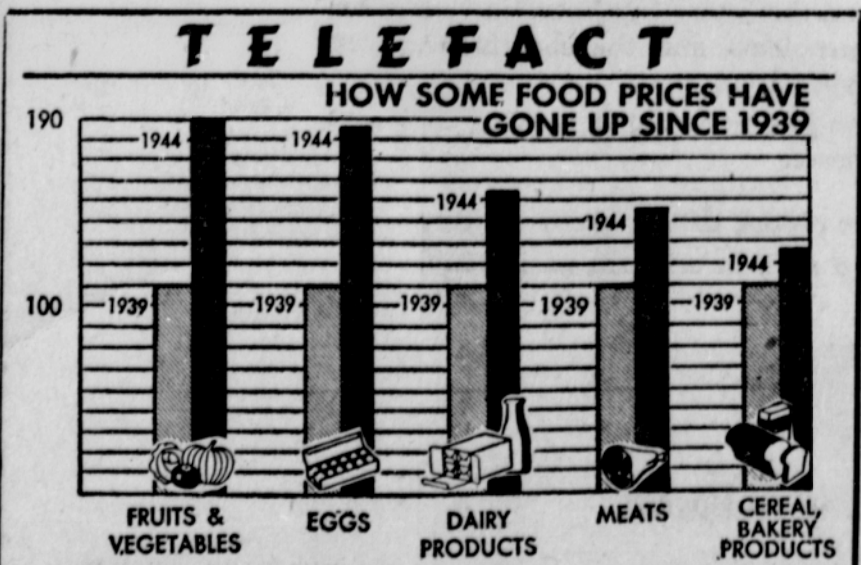
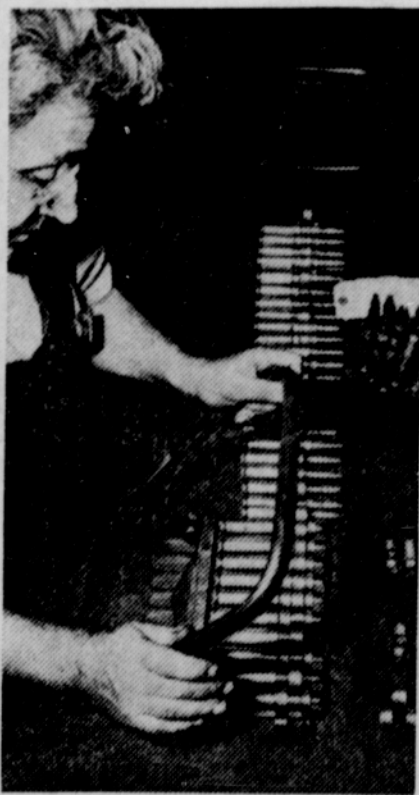


Chart shows how the food prices have risen in the United States since 1939, despite price control, ceilings and general effort to equalize living costs and wages. The new session of congress will see several bills presented to remedy the condition. Several bills already call for increased wages for federal employees.

Answer Eisenhower



This "hand packer" enables aerial gunners and ammunition plant test gunners to link ten cartridges at a time into belts of any length, to help supply the ammunition needed by General Eisenhower and his fighting GI troops in Europe.

He Saw Tokyo Afire



Maj. Jack J. Catton of Glendale, Calif., one of the pilots of the first B-29s to raid Tokyo, landed at Saipan with General Hansell, reporting that hits had set Tokyo afire.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

If that rinse-and-risk policy has been carried to an extreme in cleaning the coffee pot, and you have sour milk you can't use, put it in the coffepot, leaving the gadgets in place. Allow to stand a day or two, then pour out, and that awful brown will drain away with it. Wash the pot well with soapy water, scald thoroughly and allow to air. It's good as new!

If a small article has fallen into some hard-to-get-at place, use a wad of chewing gum stuck on the end of a long stick to get at it.

Do you have an old eye-glass case around that isn't in use? Employ it as a red and blue ration token holder.

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DENTAL PLATES... AND ALL BRANCHES OF DENTISTRY ON CREDIT TERMS... DR. HARRY SEMLER, Dentist

An easy way to coat doughnuts with sugar is to place them in a paper sack with powdered sugar. Shaking the bag will do the rest.

Adjust the cover of the ironing board onto the board while it is still wet after washing. It will then fit tight.

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