

# Horse sense

By

ERNEST V. JOINER



• One of the charms of Christmas is that one must wait a full year from one to another in order to enjoy it. There is no such thing as "instant" Christmas. It can't be packaged and merchandised like coffee, TV dinners or store-made clothing. No matter how rich, powerful, petulant or impatient one may be, he'll still wait a year for Christmas. It must be frustrating to those who find themselves accustomed to having everything they want, and right now about it. There have been experiments in celebrating Christmas in July, but it never caught on. A few years ago a night club hit on the idea of having New Year's Eve party every Saturday night. It was as ridiculous as it was a failure. No matter that some people try to rush into Christmas before the Thanksgiving turkey is out of the oven, Christmas still comes on Dec. 25. Maybe we should just try to live with that!

• As a boy on a Texas Panhandle ranch I recall that Christmas was a two-day affair. On Christmas Eve the tree, if we could afford one, was put up and decorated with hand-made ornaments that included garlands of strung popcorn, strings of bright red cranberries, colorful chains made of construction paper, and individual ornaments made from paper and colored crayon. The tree was lighted by tiny lighted candles attached to the tree. (We never had a tree catch on fire, or heard of anybody who did. Maybe we were a little more careful in those days.) The family was up early on Christmas morning. It was a festive and joyous occasion, even though the gifts were on the skimpy side, running to oranges, apples, nuts (I didn't know a nigger-toe was a Brazil nut until I was 21!) and peppermint candy. Christmas was a great day, enjoyed to the hilt. But it ended as abruptly as it began. On Dec. 26 the tree was taken out and burned. Everybody was out riding the range or working the fields again. But the goodwill lingered on, and it was around July 4 that the fist-fighting broke out again!

• I don't know how the custom started, or where it went. But in those days everybody in our house tried to be the first one up on Christmas Eve to wake the household with the shout, "Christmas Eve gift!" Whoever was first was the day's hero, and I don't recall what benefits accrued to him for his disruption of early morning sleep, but it was part of the magic of the season. It was the same thing on Christmas morning. The first person up roused everyone with the cry of "Christmas gift!" Everybody else moaned and lamented they had lain too long abed to achieve the honor. I never knew the significance of "Christmas Eve gift" and "Christmas gift." I only know it was terribly important.

• Christmas, like all good things, has its detractors. Upton Sinclair, late Socialist writer, once wrote: "Or consider Christmas—could Satan in his most malignant mood have devised a worse combination of graft plus buncombe than the system whereby several hundred million people get a billion or so of gifts for which they have no use, and some thousands of shop-clerks die of exhaustion while selling them, and every other child in the western world is made ill from over-eating—all in the name of the lowly Jesus?" If I had written that outburst in the Gazette-Times today I would, after being properly tarred and feathered, been required by readers to name one shop clerk who died of exhaustion selling Christmas gifts, and to produce credible authority that every other child gets ill from over-eating on Christmas. Since Sinclair wrote that nonsense in 1927 nobody has bothered to refute him—a gift of indulgence the American people reserve for their more literate non-conformists. That Christmas survives its detractors is testament that Bethlehem, the Manger and the Star in the East still represent man's best hope for the better world.

• Among the detractors are Christians themselves. Some deny that Jesus was born on Dec. 25. So? They point out that the early church did not celebrate His birthday. True. They say that Santa Claus, the Christmas tree, and the custom of exchanging gifts come from the pagan past and are condemned by the Bible. Also true. As far back as 1660 in this most Christian nation, Christian opposition to Christmas is illustrated by that statute of the Massachusetts Colony:

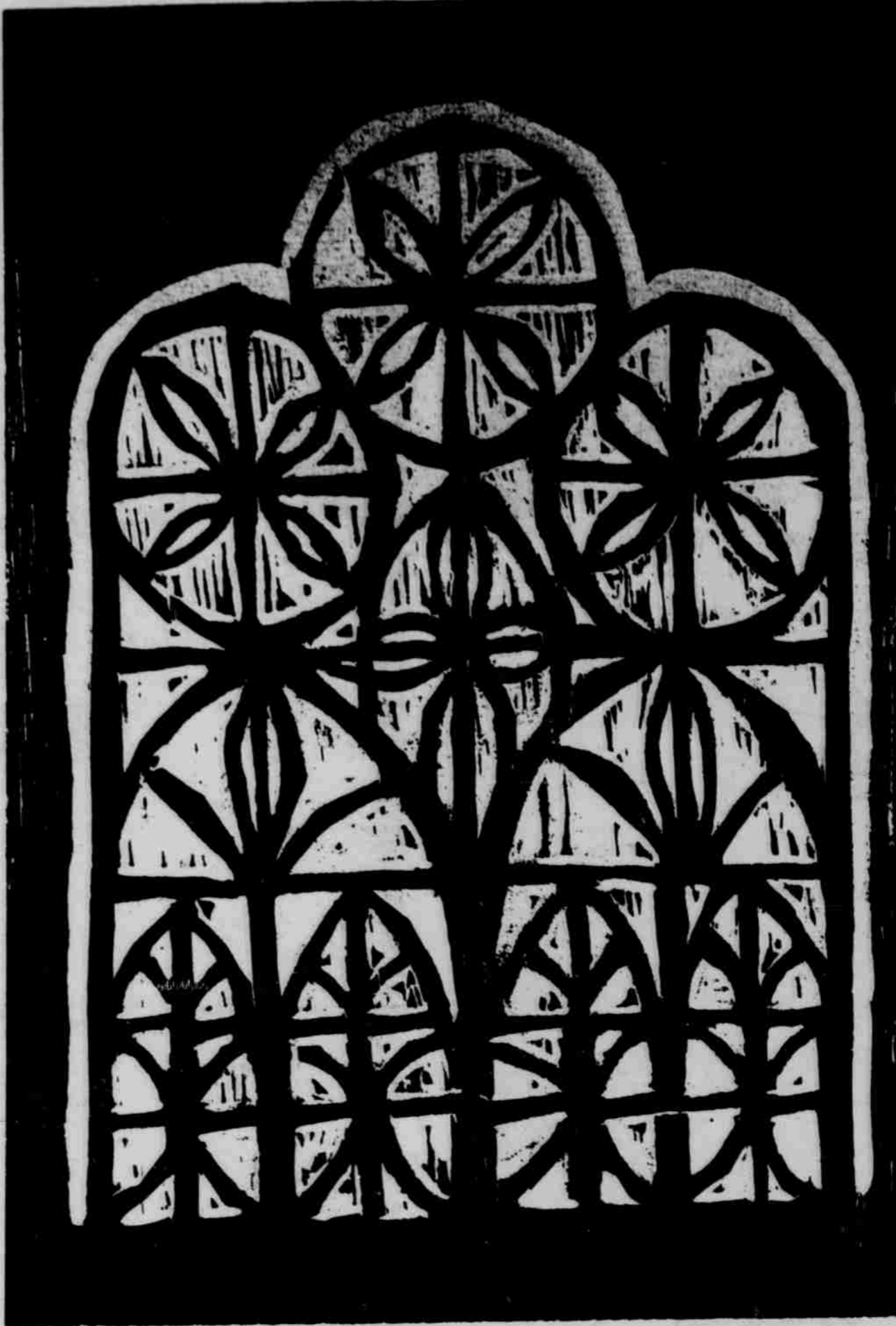
**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
*The Observation of Christmas having been deemed a Sacrilege, the exchanging of Gifts and Greetings, dressing in Fine Clothing, Feasting and similar Satanical Practices are hereby FORBIDDEN.*  
 With the Offender liable to a Fine of Five Shillings

• If Christmas is indeed rooted in paganism, does it really matter? If it does, we had better examine the cherished institution of marriage and its rites, for it is deeply rooted in paganism. So is hunting, fishing, religion, family, love, loyalty and the doctrine of "do unto others." Does it distress any of you that homo sapiens 1973 traces his ancestry back to pagan days?

• No matter. Christmas 1973 is a joyous reality. Our schools are jammed with children participating in plays, songs and pageants tuned to the birth of Christ—no matter how hard some administrators try to erase any religious overtones in education, they fail miserably, and justly so. On Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day our churches will be packed with worshippers, and their church bells will join with those of churches around the world in pealing tribute to the Prince of Peace. Each church, civic club and organized group of people in our town has been busy for weeks preparing food and cheer for needy persons. There are not enough needy in all Morrow County to consume this outpouring of heart and treasure. The biggest problem for these organizations is to find enough people upon whom to shower these gifts. Local citizens are sending gifts of money and food to unfortunates in more than 50 nations of the earth. That money is in short supply and taxes a crushing burden makes no difference, for it is Christmas. The elderly, the sick, and always the children, are remembered. The lonely are comforted and the hungry fed. There will be fewer fights in the saloons and taverns in Christian countries. Everywhere is the ring of "Merry Christmas!" The police officer is reluctant to issue citations for minor infractions. People who don't speak all year exchange seasonal greetings. The girl on the street whom you never met returns your smile. More children are patted on the head than at any other time of year. In the stores there is less haggling over prices, less complaining of shortages, and the sound of Bing Crosby's perennial "White Christmas" brings tears to eyes that haven't been moist since this time last year. Because it's Christmas!

• How tragic that wars cannot be made to begin on Christmas—when nobody would have the heart for it! For during this one time each year there is an outpouring of love, understanding, generosity, kindness and consideration among people of the Christian community. And some damned fools want to change Christmas!

• One of the miracles of Christmas is that no man however poor, sick, suffering, lonely or low-placed or ill-used can fail to be spiritually uplifted and touched in his soul by its presence. Christmas can be shared by believers and non-believers; by all races and creeds. I am happy to share this Christmas with you all; and whether you know it or not, you're sharing your Christmas with me. Merry Christmas.



## The mail pouch

EDITOR:

As I enclose this check for renewal of my subscription I want to tell you I enjoy your old Gazette-Times with the "new dress" very much.

I will also add that it pleases me the way you call a spade a spade, with very little, if any, equivocation. Also, that you and Mayor Roy are bringing dear old Hardman back from the grave. And it's not all humor either, for I note the old dance hall is again open and doing a lively business, from all reports.

Your articles on the tussock moth by your able photographer has an impact of terrific importance, being well ahead of many of the California newspapers in this respect. The latter are only now awakening to the peril in the forests as this larvae is wreaking untold damage. Keep up this good work and hit the ecologists wherever and whenever they deserve that recognition. Some of their boys are making boo-boos every day—but I should tell you: you seem to have the situation well in hand.

The people of Heppner and all Morrow County are the finest. Of course, you know that. Many are my dear friends of many years, and I go back to visit at every opportunity. Some of the men in business in Heppner today are two generations removed from my happy days on the Gazette-Times staff. Holiday greetings to you, Mr. Joiner, and to the members of your staff and all your readers. I hope to see you on my next visit to the old home town.

ART CRAWFORD,  
 San Jose, Ca.

P.S. Hubert Scudder of Sebastopol (Ca.) was a very dear friend.

(ED. NOTE—Thank you for making our Christmas! According to Historian Giles French, the Crawford family bought the Heppner newspaper in 1912. French wrote in his book, "Homesteads and Heritages: A History of Morrow County, Oregon," that "The Crawfords weren't mad at anyone, and were excellent printers, good writers and strong enough to not be swayed by temporary waves of public sentiment. And they worked for Morrow County and Heppner, observed it carefully and reported it respectfully." That is a hard act for any publisher to follow. Congressman Hubert Scudder was also a friend of mine. Mr. Crawford, and I was privileged to have been his friend before his death a few years ago in Sebastopol, Ca.)

**THE GAZETTE-TIMES**  
 MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER  
 Box 137, Heppner, Ore. 97834, Tel. 474-9228  
 "If you don't want it published, don't let it happen!"

The Heppner Gazette was established March 30, 1883. The Heppner Times was established Nov. 18, 1897. The two were consolidated Feb. 15, 1912.

Member: National Newspaper Assn., Oregon Newspaper Publishers Assn.

Ernest V. Joiner	Publisher
Ernie Ceresa	Photography and Sports
Ann Toney	Office Manager
Marcia Beorma	Advertising Features
Phil Strandvold	Shop Foreman
Peggy Taylor	Operator, Circulation

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$5 per year in Oregon; \$6 elsewhere. Single Copy, 15 cents. Mailed single copy, 25 cents. No subscription accepted for less than one year.

The Gazette-Times assumes no financial responsibility for errors in advertisements. It will, however, reprint without charge or cancel the charge for the portion of an advertisement which is in error if the Gazette-Times is at fault.

## Cut your own tree? Cut red tape first!

It is that time of the year again, to remind readers of Christmas tree cutting and transporting.

Anyone cutting a single Christmas tree should have permission of the land owner and if more than five trees are to be cut and transported they need a bill of sale which will state:

The date of its execution, the name and address of the vendor or donor of the trees, the number of trees, by species, sold or transferred by the bill of sale and the property from which the trees were taken.

The State Police, sheriff's patrol and state forestry will be checking on Christmas tree cutting and transporting.

You will not be asked to establish citizenship, submit fingerprints, furnish character references or have a letter from your Congressman.

Merry Christmas!

## New record set for rainfall

Records were made to be broken, and this year the Old Man Weather broke old ones and set new ones.

Up until September Morrow County was experiencing one of the driest years ever recorded. According to Don Gilliam, Heppner weather man, Heppner had 4.55 inches of rain fall.

The dry conditions brought reduced yields of wheat and shorter grassing period. But from September on, the rain-maker gave dry Morrow County a real bath. In September, 3.24 inches of rain fell over the county; in October the rainfall total was 2.10 inches.

November turned out to be a record breaker as 3.94 inches of rain was reported. This broke the record for the wettest month ever remembered in this country. In 1897, the rainfall was a record 3.36 inches.

November rainfall also broke the predicted forecast, that this year would be a dry abnormal year for moisture. With November's rain, the total amount of rainfall for the year is over 1/2-inch of the normal rainfall.

"1.72 inches of rain has been recorded so far this month, with over 56 inches falling in Heppner in a three-hour period Monday morning," Gilliam said.

With December's rainfall, Heppner broke another record for being the wettest month

period. In the four-month period, September through December, over 10 inches of rain fell in Morrow County to break the 1950 record of 8.21 inches.

"So far this year, 14.55 inches of rain have covered the ground. This is over 1.30 inches of the normal recorded rainfall of 13.25," according to Gilliam.

Monday's rain dropped 56 inches in Heppner and as much as 1 1/2 inches in the surrounding areas.

Soil erosion, creek flooding, and flooded roads were a common sight Monday morning.

### HONOR SOCIETY IN CANNED FOOD DRIVE

The annual canned food drive is being revived this Christmas season by the Heppner High School National Honor Society.

Class competition has been stressed to stir interest in the project.

The drive will last two weeks, ending on December 21, when the NHS will distribute all cans collected. The club's advisor is Mrs. Jane Rawlins.

Heppner High School is looking for a full time custodian. Applications forms can be obtained at the main office of the high school or at the district office in Lexington.

# Mayor of Hardman

DEAR MISTER EDITOR:

Bug Hookum started off the session at the country store Saturday night by reporting where we final got a cause going fer majority rights.

Bug had saw where ugly folks is demanding equal treatment with pritty people, and he said this movement will open a hole new can of worms in the rights business.

Fer sure, said Bug, the Government is going to have to step in and set up a Bureau of Ugly Equality, and somebody is going to have to draw up 300 pages of federal guidelines on what is ugly. A person has got to be declared official ugly afore he has a case agin the pritties, Bug allowed, and he didn't see how they could staff the new Bureau equal with uglies and pritties till Congress or the Supreme Court rules on how to quality fer the job.

Actual, went on Bug, he figgers the ugly movement has about as much chancet as that one some years back about putting clothes on all the naked animals. They is some things still left to personal opinion in this world, Bug said, and what is pritty and what ain't is one of em. Personal, Bug said, he allus has found that all wimmen is beautiful, some is jest more beautiful than others.

Clem Webster was agreed with Bug. Looks allus has been a matter of opinion. A youngun so ugly you have to tie a bone around his neck to git the dog to play with him still is beautiful to his Ma and Pa, was Clem's words.

Clem said he had saw by the papers where a survey had found that 52 per cent of all poets tested in England and France was crazy to some degree. Clem was of the mind that them poets is jest as shore that it's the other 49 per cent and the rest of the world that's needing help.

The fellers was general agreed that the ugly movement ain't got much future, special if it has to wait fer Government ugly guidelines. Zeke Grubb said it would take Congress to sessions jest to decide who ought to be on the guidelines committee. And Zeke said Congress would take the hole thing serious, even if nobody else would, cause regulating the ugly movement would mean more people on the federal payroll.

Zeke said he had saw where the Civil Service Commission reported it had 12 college-trained applicants fer ever Government job that comes open, and it's a shame fer all that education to go to waste.

General speaking, broke in Ed Doolittle, we is over-colleged in this country. We got folks walking around with degrees that don't know how the pour rain our of a boot. Ed said a panel of them would be as good as anybody to decide who's ugly enuff to get a federal job and balance out the employment in Line with the guidelines.

Yours truly,

MAYOR ROY.



## Military or civilian chaplains?

BY LESTER KINSOLVING

A drive to civilianize all military chaplains seems evident in official reports of the American Civil Liberties Union, the United Church of Christ and the United Presbyterian Church.

For the chaplaincy has been a prime target of those clergy critical of U.S. participation in the Vietnamese War. Military chaplains have been identified, rather unfairly, as being the worst among their number, rather than the best. Hence they have all been characterized as blessers of bombings and body counts who are isolated from the enlisted men by virtue of their officer's rank—a rank which is, in turn, dependent upon how willingly they allow themselves to be manipulated by commanding officers all the way to the White House.

This general caricature has been effectively challenged by Navy Chaplain R.G. Hutcheson—effectively, because he does not deny that occasionally there are such chaplains. He notes, however, that there are just such clergy, and similar, if not identical pressures, in the civilian parochial ministry.

Writing in Christian Century magazine, Chaplain Hutcheson cites a letter to all Air Force chaplains by the Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam. This letter, he notes, was "widely interpreted as urging chaplains to counsel airmen to disobey orders," and may have been an attempt to "get at" the military by "manipulating their chaplains."

He goes on to note that the issue is not whether the military should or should not exist, but how churches and synagogues can most effectively minister to the millions who comprise it. He brands as "startling naive" the idea that the military would allow "persons whose selection it has no part in and over whose conduct it has no control" to minister in the areas where chaplains are most needed—such as combat.

Chaplain Hutcheson asks this key question later in his article: "West Point has a civilian chaplaincy. What are its characteristics?"

Yet the Rev. James Ford, Chaplain of the United States Military Academy, told this column: "I'm really not a civilian chaplain, because I'm paid and housed by the military."

No such pay or allowances accrue, however, to West Point's Catholic Chaplain. For Father Robert McCormick is pastor of the Church of the Most Holy Trinity by appointment of the Archbishop of New York, rather than the President of the United States.

Despite his civilian status, Father McCormick did not take to his pulpit to denounce the widely publicized (and severely deplored) "silencing" of a Catholic cadet named James Pelosi.

While he counseled with Cadet (now 2nd Lt.) Pelosi during his long ordeal of isolation, Father McCormick did not denounce this ancient punishment from his (civilian) pulpit.

"When you're part of an organization you can be more effective by working within the organization," Father McCormick told this column. "Of course this is difficult in an iconoclastic society."

Said Chaplain Ford: "I was an area campaign manager for Hubert Humphrey when I was a Lutheran pastor back in Ivanhoe, Minn.. But since I felt an obligation to try to relate to all my parishioners, I preached goals and left the specific methods of the political campaigning."

How much these two chaplains had to do with the Corps of Cadets' recent veto to abolish the silencing system, neither of the two will detail. But it is doubtful indeed that this reform would have been aided by a frontal attack from the pulpit by either chaplain—or by a silent press outside of the Academy.

Perhaps as Chaplain Hutcheson puts it: "The military needs prophets pronouncing judgement from the outside and also pastors sharing the life of the institution."

**Miasmatic Vapors**

One colonial doctor believed that the yellow fever epidemic of the late 1700's was due to an upsetting of the balance of liquids and solids in the body by the "miasmatic" vapors of the air.