

The Cobbler's Christmas Guest

Many years ago there lived in a small village a cobbler by the name of Conrad. Though alone and poor, this kindly old man always had friendly and consoling words for everyone.

At Christmas time, some neighbors decided to visit their friend Christmas morning since he had no family. To their amazement, they saw that his wrinkled old face was radiant.

As they entered his shop, they saw a room made festive with holly and evergreen, and the table was laden with delicacies.

"Who is coming to visit you?" one neighbor asked in surprise.

"Last night the Lord appeared to me in a dream and told me that He wanted to be my guest on Christmas Day. I am prepared for his arrival," Conrad replied.

After the neighbors had left, Conrad sat waiting for his hallowed guest. While he waited, a beggar passed his window, ragged, and half starved. Conrad called him in, fed him and gave him shoes to his nearly frozen feet. After the beggar had left, an old woman

hobbled by carrying a sack of wood. Conrad served her dinner, let her rest before the fire, and then helped her on her way.

Again he sat by the window waiting for his important guest. Suddenly, he heard the sobbing of a child. When he opened the door, he saw a frightened, cold youngster.

After some warm milk and soothing words, he reunited the child with its worried mother.

Once more he returned to his vigil, but night was falling fast. Where was the promised guest? Anxious and weary, Conrad dropped to his knees.

"Oh, Lord," he pleaded, "What has delayed You?" Then out of the silence came a voice:

"Conrad, be not dismayed, for Three times I came to your friendly door,

Three times my shadow crossed your floor.

I was the beggar with frost-bitten feet, I was the woman given food to eat, I was the child in the lonely street."

Happy Holidays to all our readers...

Sifting through the TIMES

The prospect of a white Christmas in Heppner was enhanced this week in 1967 when 2½ inches of snow fell overnight and temperatures dropped near zero. More of the white stuff was expected later in the week.

Another sign of the holiday spirit was the awarding of Christmas decoration prizes sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. and Mrs. Carl Spaulding were judged top winners in the outdoor lighting contest and Mr. and Mrs. Glen Ward were given the \$15 first prize for the best residential window and indoor display.

Also in the week, the Times featured a picture of Clifford Williams accepting a trophy from Heppner Elementary student body president Dean Wright for his selection as Morrow County Teacher of the Year.

A decade earlier, the snow wasn't around but Santa was right on time as he showed up in Heppner atop a horse drawn buggy with Harold Johnston at the reins. Santa was greeted by 500 youngsters on Main Street. And entertaining the kids after Santa made his appearance was Mrs. Elaine George, owner of the Star Theater, who invited all county youngsters to the theater's 24th annual free Christmas show while the parents finished up last minute shopping chores in town. There was candy provided by the Heppner Elks Lodge to go along with 'Boys Town' starring Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney on the screen.

Business was picking up for Heppner merchants this week in 1947 as the country was working to get its peacetime economy flowing again.

"Signs of returning to normalcy are seen in the current Christmas shopping season. Stores are laden with a greater variety of items, making for larger quantity—and the quality shows improvement over goods offered in the immediate past few years.

"Buying has been brisk the past two weeks and from all indications will continue in that tenor right up to closing time Christmas eve. This assumption is based on the premise that there are two types of shoppers—early and late. The early shopper is the type that likes to paw over a complete stock, making careful selection and getting the gifts tucked away at home or into the mail, as the case may be, long before Christmas eve arrives. The late shopper is the guy, or person, as the case may be, who forgets all about gift shopping until the night before Christmas and has to make up the mind at a rapid rate or else not at all, taking this, that and the other thing and putting pressure on harried clerks to get the parcels Christmas wrapped before store closing time. Most of us are acquainted with this guy because we meet him almost every Christmas eve on our last rounds.

"The weather is as unpredictable as a drunken car driver and there may be a white Christmas, and again the guess is equally as good that there will be no snow. This has not deterred people from lighting up Christmas trees in their houses and otherwise manifesting the holiday spirit. At least one tree has been set up in the yard amidst blooming flowers and on lawn grass that needs cutting.

Such is the condition of things as we find them this week before Christmas in the year 1947."

This week in 1937 the Times carried an ad from Ma Bell who was pitching for a new type of Christmas gift—the telephone.

"To wife or mother, it will help lighten household duties and bring friends and relatives with voice reach.

"For the young folks, it makes the home a clearing house for social engagements.

"With friends and relative nearby and in distant places, it's a means of closer personal ties."

Letters to the Editor

Praise given Posse for help

Editor,

It gives me great pleasure at this time to extend the richest and warmest "Thanks" to Simon Winters, Bud Englert, Larry Fetsch, Grant Weatherford, each and every member of the Morrow County Sheriffs Search and Rescue Posse, and last but not least, to all the individuals involved in the all night search of October 5, 1977, in the Blake Ranch area for Mike Miller.

It was, beyond a shadow of doubt, the most well organized, well planned, all out effort on the part of each individual under extremely adverse conditions, that anyone could expect.

A special thanks goes out to the two young hunters, whose names are unknown, that located Mike and contacted officials in charge of the search.

The manner in which the entire operation was conducted was beyond reproach.

We are please to report that Mike is recovering extremely well after undergoing two major surgeries. He suffered a severe skull fracture and quite extensive damage to the right eye. After approximately three weeks of hospitalization and additional recovery time at home, Mike has returned to school and is progressing quite well.

It goes without saying that it is a true honor to make this small donation to the Morrow County Sheriffs Search and Rescue Posse, in hopes that they will continue their great efforts in future problems that arise in the Heppner vicinity.

Again, Many Thanks,
Walt Scott and family

Where to write

Federal

Following is a list of Oregon and Eastern Oregon public officials for the information of readers who want to communicate with them:

U.S. Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510. Member of Appropriations Committee, Interior Committee, Rules Committee and Indian Policy Review Commission. Portland office, Pioneer Courthouse, Rm. 107, 520 SW Morrison, Portland, Ore. 97204, phone 221-3386.

U.S. Sen. Bob Packwood, Dirksen Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C., 20510. Member of Finance Committee and Commerce Committee. Portland office, 1002 NE Halladay, Rm. 700, (P.O. Box 3621), Portland, Ore. 97208, phone 233-4471.

U.S. Rep. Al Ullman, of the Second District, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. Member of Ways and Means Committee. Salem office, 150 N. Church, Rm. 219 (P.O. Box 247), Salem, Ore. 97310, phone 399-5724.

State

Gov. Robert Straub, State Capitol, Salem, Ore. 97310, phone 378-3100.

State Sen. Ken Jernstedt (Morrow, Gilliam and other counties), 311 Pine St., Hood River, 386-1393.

State Rep. Jack Sumner (Morrow, Gilliam and other counties), Route 1, Heppner, 676-5364.

New Social Security Bill rapped

Politics has caught up with the politicians.

On a national scale. And on the eve of an election year.

Oh, woe to those who now must convince voters that paying new taxes equal to a third of the national debt is really a good thing!

They'll be talking about the just-enacted Social Security financing bill. And they'll be selling increases on top of tax increases that in the next decade will amount to \$227 billion. Those taxes will be paid by workers and their employers in

Salem Scene

by Jack Zimmerman

Legislative Report from the State Capital EXCLUSIVE to Oregon's Weekly Newspapers from Associated Oregon Industries.

an attempt to rescue the near-bankrupt system originally designed to provide every working person with a modest supplemental retirement pension.

Those taxes—which already have increased a staggering 3,469.5 per cent in 40 years—will triple again in the next 10. By then, Social Security will require taxes equal to more than 14 per cent of all taxable payroll.

If you work for a living, you probably wonder how this could possible have happened to you.

It's simple. You never see your Social Security taxes so you don't miss them. They're withheld from your paycheck. And the check stub probably doesn't even list a Social Security tax deduction. Likely it's itemized under FICA, which stands for Federal Insurance Contributions Act. That's almost sneaky, isn't it? Accustomed as we are to governmental alphabet soup, who would guess FICA really means Social Security tax?

Maybe you ought to speak to your boss about this check stub situation and suggest somethings like SOSEC be substituted for FICA. He has a big stake in this, too. Just as big as yours. Because he matches every dollar you pay with a dollar from company earnings in equal taxes to support the system.

Congressmen returning from Washington, D.C., for the holidays will be telling us they had to raise taxes drastically to save the system. But they probably won't care to dwell on the reasons behind the drastic increases. And they won't appreciate it if you hint the newest raises actually threaten

the nation's economy.

They also won't like it if you suggest they've been playing politics with the system by increasing benefits faster than people can pay for them. Actually, Social Security benefits have been enacted with such regularity they now are recognized as substantial contributors to continuing inflation.

The old ploy of increasing benefits during election years and raising taxes to pay for them in off years has finally caught up with self-perpetuating lawmakers bent on returning to Congress at any price. Little wonder it took until the final hours before adjournment to get such a big tax increase approved—considering 1978's elections are just around the corner.

They might try to ease your concern by explaining the just-passed increases on top of increases won't apply until 1979. But that should satisfy only those who will retire next year.

Are Social Security taxes really inflationary? It seems everything costs more. You don't have to be ancient to remember when a cup of coffee cost a nickel or a dime.

Well, there are some folks still around and still employed and paying Social Security taxes who can recall being taxed \$30 a year. That was in 1937. Workers paid up to \$30 and their

bosses paid up to \$30, for a total of \$60 in Social Security taxes.

In 1978 the total tax will be as much as \$2,141.70. And that's an increase approaching 3,500 per cent!

An Oregon weekly newspaper published on Dec. 23, 1937 carried advertisements with prices for familiar merchandise that make interesting comparisons.

You could buy a pound of coffee in 1937 for 28 cents. Using the hottest advertised prices available today, your cost for a pound of coffee has increased about 1,135 per cent in those same 40 years.

On the same basis, potatoes are up 885 per cent; sirloin steak, 1,573 per cent; three pounds of shortening, 170 per cent; bananas, 300 per cent; salad dressing, 275 per cent, and hamburger, 206 per cent.

If that doesn't get your attention, consider a three-bedroom home costing \$4,500 in 1937. Its price tag today would be no more than 1,000 per cent higher. Rents are up about 733 per cent in the mid-Willamette Valley.

And you can buy a new automobile in Oregon this year for about 450 per cent more than you would have paid in 1937.

Who said Congress has been playing politics with Social Security? To play used to equate with a pleasant experience. Maybe playing with Social Security has pleased Congress. But it's no fun for taxpayers.

Letters Policy

ALL LETTERS of general interest are welcomed, providing they are in good taste and not libelous.

250 WORDS IS about the maximum length we can accept, however, if you need more space, please use it.

ALL LETTERS MUST be signed to be considered. If you wish to have your name withheld—for good cause—we will do so after contacting you for an explanation.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS should be included. The number will only be used by the Gazette-Times to confirm it was you who wrote the letter.

THE GAZETTE-TIMES reserves the right to refuse any letter it deems unfit for publication.

LETTERS SHOULD BE addressed to Editor, Gazette-Times, P.O. Box 337, Heppner, Ore., 97836.

OBITUARY

Wayne McMillan

Wayne D. "Pete" McMillan, 65, died Dec. 13 by an accidental drowning in Grande Ronde.

Mr. McMillan was born in Lexington July 25, 1912. After graduating from Lexington High School, he attended Decker Business College in Portland and later operated his own shingle mill business. From his marriage on Oct. 21, 1939 to Nellie Bishop came three children; Don, Jim and Diane.

Mr. McMillan is survived by the immediate family along with brothers Robert, Hillsboro; Sam, Milwaukie; and Jack, Redmond, sisters Eula Markle, Newport; Naomi Hill, Redmond; and Frieda Slocum, Heppner, and seven grandchildren.

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