

Nebraska Editorials:

Happy Holidays

Through the stillness of the snow-drifted night comes a tiny, merry sound. Soft and high at first, it sounds like the chuckling of the wind, until it comes closer and becomes more distinct, and a sound of tapping as from tiny hoofs is heard on the shingles.

Not everyone can hear this merry, jingling sound; perhaps it is only the wind through the trees. But children can hear it, even if grown-ups cannot. It is the sound of Santa Claus and his reindeer and his sleigh.

Santa Claus is strictly American, like baseball. Like baseball, he derived himself from customs and traditions brought over from Europe by his ancestors. In Europe it is Saint Nicholas and cricket; in America it is Santa Claus and baseball.

Saint Nicholas has always been a very busy figure. He is the patron of robbers, special guardian of virgins, children and sailors and the protector of scholars. He is also known as the patron of pawn brokers, through no fault of his.

Because he once made gifts of gold to a man to provide dowries for his daughters, Saint Nicholas started the idea of giving presents in secret. A legend attributing him with miraculously restoring the lives of the three boys killed by an irate innkeeper, Saint Nicholas has been deemed the patron of children.

In Europe he visits houses on Christmas Eve, dropping gifts down the chimney—much like our own Santa Claus. Children place their shoes, stockings and baskets under the chimney to catch the gifts being dropped down. He is reputed to ride a white donkey or a gray horse.

The Dutch brought the Saint Nicholas customs to New York from where they spread across the country. Santa Claus is a corruption of the Dutch "San Nicolass." Santa has since spread back across the Atlantic to England, down to India and across the jungles into Australia, where he is as popular as in the United States.

Santa has become immortal through the famous poem, "The Night Before Christmas," by Clement C. Moore, which makes him a jolly old elf "Saint Nick," who rides "in a miniature sleigh drawn by eight tiny reindeer"—a far cry from a gray horse and a white ass.

So, on the night before Christmas, countless tiny stars will be glued to the chimney, waiting for a tiny, ageless sound of sleigh bells.—F.T.D.

The Christmas season is indeed fine. It provides a welcome and heaven-sent break in the drudgery of school work, activity-busting and professor-baiting. It is a time for long sleeps and watching too much television.

It is also the time for New Year's Eve. In some respects it is a shame to end up a perfectly good vacation period with New Year's. Instead of coming back to school fat, sleek and clean-shaven, students often return to the scholastic wars white of face and foul of breath. It can be ghastly.

New Year's Eve has, of course, the usual historical background, dating back to the Romans, who could throw a really fine orgy when they felt like it. This has carried over into modern times almost intact. Some of the Romans might even be a little startled.

The Romans did it because of religious significance, and the beginning of the new year. Modern man celebrates largely because it is New Year's Eve, and everyone else is doing it. New Year's without a little party? Heavens! About the only real excuse for staying home and going to bed early on New Year's is a death certificate, extreme old age or a frisky liver.

Another tradition has been built up around the first day of the year—that of the bowl games. It all started with the Rose Bowl back in 1902, and has spread to cover almost every other conceivable bowl that could exist, including a Refrigerator Bowl, which seems a little unlikely.

The Gator Bowl is another rarity, approached by the Ice Bowl in Alaska, which is played between the University of Alaska and a service team, and which every year ends in a 0-0 tie. Players are more concerned with cold-weather survival than the dive-buck.

Bowl games prove a fine occupation for the morning after. Post-mortem celebrations can be held quietly in front of the television set around a bowl of chilled tomato juice, cringing slightly at the crowd noises and the clatter of a cat walking across the rug.

Such is our New Year's. It is an old tradition, and a bubbly one. When the bubble breaks and the tongue becomes coated with moss and small animals, there is a good bit of bitter revelation and stern vows to spend a "safe and sane" holiday next year.

As you well know, next year never comes.—F. T. D.



"NOW! HOW'S TH' CHOW TODAY?"



Activities' Base Shallow, Needs Less Push, Honors

The "facts of NU political life," as outlined in an editorial Tuesday by Dick Fellman, are supposedly this:

- 1. The independent element is lazy.
2. The Greeks perform the necessary functions of government and do it "downright well."
3. Unless someone starts a two-party system, he should not attack the status quo.

However, we think there are a few political facts of life that were overlooked.

First, let's look at the proletariat, both Greek and independent, which permits itself to be ruled by a small oligarchy.

One of these "lazy" groups is composed of working students. After toiling 30 hours a week in order to eat, and carrying 15 to 18 semester hours, they do not have time to slap posters all over campus urging people to attend a Ralph Flanagan dance.

One must belong to the bourgeoisie (those either partially or fully subsidized by Papa) to meander around in the Union all afternoon. Few Innocents, Mortar Boards (or for that matter, Phi Beta Kappas) have received these honors without having at least board and room provided for them.

And then there are those whose purpose is the broad quest of knowledge. Though some enlightened schools have, for the nucleus of their activities, dinner clubs, dis-

—'Room In Our Hearts'— God Sent Us His Only Son

Alvin M. Petersen University Lutheran Pastor Lutheran Student Foundation

In a commercial recently it was said, "Christmas is getting more expensive each year," and we were urged to start saving for next Christmas now. And it almost seems so, for the stores get their wares out in early November, and each year the packages are stacked higher around the Christmas tree.

Did God make a mistake? Did He gamble and miss? Is it possible that in the tinsel and wrappings, if these were pushed aside, we would not find the Christ?

The circumstances at this season are quite different from those of the first Christmas. Christ slipped into the world almost unnoticed. He was in the world... yet the world knew him not; he came to his own, and his own people received him not.

Just a few saw the star—and the child. Our generation, although it keeps the tradition, is in danger of missing the content. What is the central fact of Christmas? God sent His Son; the Word became a human being!

Is God being ignored? Can we push Him around as we want to and make out of the season what we like? Oh, no! God will neither be ignored nor possessed. He is not at our mercy, nor has He ever been.

Everything about the story of salvation in the New Testament conveys perfect planning and timing. When the right time came, God sent forth His Son.

One wonders why in the year 4 B. C. on a certain day, during the night, the fullness of time had come. There is no doubt that God's intervention was due. From the point of view of history, the world was at a low ebb religiously.

Little "light" shone — only in the hearts of a few who expected a Messiah. These were the days of brutal conquests; human life was cheap; slaves were as numerous as free people; women were chattel to be exploited. It was a dark world.

Some have suggested that the fullness of time meant that, since Rome had "united" the then known world and the Greek language was the universal tongue, the time was propitious for the spread of the Gospel. Whatever we may attempt as an explanation, it was God who chose this timing.

And He chose the method, the mode! He chose to become a human being, to be born of a lowly peasant. That baffles many. Looked at as being God's way of saving the world, it appeared mighty weak and inadequate. It almost seems that if Herod had found the child, with one sword he could have foiled the plan of God.

But you don't tell God how to do anything. St. Paul puts it this way: "For consider what have the philosophers, the writer and the critic of this world to show for all their wisdom? Has not God made the wisdom of this world look foolish?"

"For it was after the world in its wisdom had failed to know God, that He in His wisdom chose to save all who would believe by Gospel message."

—'Ecumenical Approach'— Jackson Reviews Horton Volume

By EMILY JACKSON Danforth Graduate Oberlin College

(Eds. note: This is the second in a monthly series of book reports sponsored under the auspices of The Nebraskan and the Religious Emphasis Committee. Miss Emily Jackson, the first Danforth Graduate at the University in five years, reviews the book, "The Ecumenical Approach" by Walter Marshall Horton.

In these days when students are working and thinking about the Ecumenical Conference of the Student Volunteer Movement at Athens, Ohio, in December, I can think of no better book to stimulate thinking on the ecumenical problem than this one.

Written by a man well-known in ecumenical circles and professor of theology at the Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin, Ohio, this book presents the wisdom of a man who all his life has considered himself a mediator among theologians.

Here Dr. Horton not only points out the major differences and major points of agreement among theologians today but brings in his own penetrating analysis of what the problems are to which religion is trying to speak.

He believes that an ecumenical approach to theology can only be based on the idea that there is a universal necessity for an ultimate object of trust and devotion, for a final goal of hope and endeavor, and for a connection between the object of trust and the goal of hope which releases power from above into the stream of daily life.

In Christian terms the object of trust and devotion is God, the ultimate hope is the Kingdom of God, and the connection between the two is the way of salvation given by Jesus Christ.

Having consulted with theologians from all major positions both here and abroad Dr. Horton is perhaps the ablest man in America today to write a book of this sort.

It is not a book of pat answers to such theological problems as the existence of evil but rather a real searching among the various positions for relevant answers, noting the particular contribution which each position can make to the solution.

The knowledge and nature of God, God and man, Christ the Savior, and the Church and the means of grace are a few of the topics considered by Dr. Horton. It is significant that in pointing out major differences in point of view on these topics that he also indicated how these disagreements can be held in fruitful tension if not resolved.

One Way Out

After sincere and very honest, well-meaning attempts at solving what should be called the annual rush week mess, the Interfraternity Council is right now just about the same place it was a few months back. There is still no plan; there is still no easy solution and even worse, it almost appears that there is now no hope.

Now, to begin with, it must be admitted that nobody is going to find a perfect plan. But if the men in all the fraternities represented in the IFC really want to work at solving the problems common to the entire system there are ways and means.

One of these was proposed by the report of the Rush Week committee. It called for legalizing spiking, that horrid practice which everyone knows about but which scares most groups so much that nothing is said.

In essence, the entire plan for legalizing all presently illegal activities merely admits the inability of the IFC to cope with its own problems and almost shows the non-Greek that the IFC only wants to glaze the surface of fraternity life with a coat of good public relations while the inner surfaces are allowed to slowly rot away, in full sight of anyone interested enough to look.

Yet, all need not be bleak. If the fraternity men at Nebraska really want to show they can control themselves; if they want to demonstrate that they are prepared to sacrifice individual loss for the good of the system; if they really want to cure the evils of Rush Week; then there

is a way, for there will at that time be a will. Parts of this "way" already exist, but they have not yet been unified. The newest proposal, presented at the IFC's Wednesday meeting, is part of this plan.

This measure will set up an enforcement agency for the IFC. It will be representative of all the fraternities on the campus. It will guarantee specific assignment and responsibility.

Then, the IFC should reconsider the old rule, only recently voted out of law, making all contact with rushees during rush week other than that during regular rush dates illegal. This measure would give the enforcement committee a rule with the so-called teeth in it.

Finally, what might be called an executive court should be set up. Composed of the executive committee of the IFC, men from the Dean's office and alumni IFC representatives, this court would have the power and authority to reprimand or penalize any fraternity engaged in illegal maneuvers during or immediately prior to Rush Week.

Now it is admitted that this three-part plan might cause embarrassment to those groups caught committing any of the ageless fraternity crimes of spiking, hotboxing, after-hours contact and the like.

But, how much better this small bit of poor public relations will be in comparison to the present smooth surface job of good public relations with the well known sham existing below the surface in plain sight.—D. F.

NU's Free Press

Recent discussion by many members of the Student Council, both privately and on the assembly floor, leads The Nebraskan to believe that many members are not fully aware of the relationship between the Council and the Board of Student Publications.

Here are the facts. The Pub Board is the subcommittee on Student Publications, which means that it is a subcommittee of the larger faculty committee on Student Affairs. This committee, in turn, is one of the major committees of the Faculty Senate.

As a committee, it has three student members and five faculty members. The faculty group is selected by the Committee on Student Affairs. The student members are picked, annually, by the Student Council.

Thus, in fact and in theory, the Pub Board derives all of its authority from its parent body, the Faculty Senate. The student members are invited to join the committee and are given voting privileges at the discretion of the committee.

The only authority, then, of the Council is to pick the three student representatives at the beginning of the year. The student members report periodically back to the Council to let the student body know what the Board is doing.

However, technically, this is a matter of courtesy and not obligation.

Perhaps one reason for much of the misunderstanding is that most of all of its other committees are composed of Student Council members. The Pub Board, however, is not confined to Council membership for its representatives—but may be filled by any qualified sophomore, junior or senior in the University.

The Nebraskan thinks the present situation is sound and wholeheartedly supports the theory that the Student Council should have no control, implicit or explicit, direct or indirect, over the Pub Board—except for the selection of the student members.

After all, it's difficult, and virtually impossible, for the 33 members of the Council to understand completely the physical setup of the Rag and the Cornhusker. Most Council members would, then, be unqualified to exert control of any kind over either the student members or the committee itself.

Any move on the part of the Student Council to place the Pub Board under its jurisdiction or to tell the student representatives how to vote would be an abridgement of the rights of the free press—which, The Nebraskan is very proud to say, exists at the University.

The present system is good. It should not be changed.—B. B.

Nebraskan Letterip

Oil U Policy . . .

(Eds. note: The following letter was received some time ago by The Nebraskan. Because it is doubtful if George Gusher or his school, Oil U, existed, the letter was not printed. However, "reliable sources" have revealed that the article was actually composed by critical elements of the University debate squad on a southern trip. Thus, it can now be published.

Dear Editor: Recently, we at Oil U heard that your Student Council was investigating the status of activities at other Universities. As the secretary of our student council, I am writing you this letter to explain how the activity system at Oil U operates.

All freshmen are required to join an organization which we call "Pebbles." The work which they do in this organization is vital to the welfare of our University.

They form a cheering section at the Central Texas Chess Championships, sell tickets for our annual Oil U Review, take orders for our Bi-Annual and drill wells for our homecoming displays.

For each function which a freshman participates in he receives a pebble. When he collects two hundred pounds of crushed rock, he advances to our upper class organization, known as "Stepping Stones."

Stepping Stones, being a select body, does not concern itself with menial tasks. Instead, members of Stepping Stones concentrate on developing their leadership ability.

They supervise our annual charity drive, WRS (We Rock Students), the work of Drillers (the organization which publishes our 53 week calendar) and the activities of Ollers and Gassers (our male and female pep groups which sell aspirin at the chess matches.) Also, they constitute the membership of the Friction Society which supervises the action of our Student Council.

When a Stepping Stone reaches the end of his junior year, he is eligible for admission to our senior service organization, the "Do-Gooders." On Poison Ivy Day, 487 (sometimes 489 depending upon our selectivity) Stepping Stones are branded for membership in the Do-Gooders.

They are selected on the basis of their criticism of faculty policy, low grade average, number of times they speak at Student Council meetings, and friendship with past Do-Gooders.

Although members of this organization officiate at dances and exchange trinkets with opposing

schools at soccer matches, their load is generally light. They are our campus leaders and they must be free to give advice to Pebbles and Stepping Stones.

We, at Oil U, feel that this system has worked well. We realize, as we are sure you do at Nebraska, that the primary value of college life is found in activities. We know that the rewards gained from activities far outweigh those of class work.

Only activities can adjust a person socially, teach him leadership, make him a BMOC and enable him to get a job in a large corporation.

Thus, we are submitting our plan of training your people with the hope that it will help you to achieve the noble purpose of activities.

Sincerely yours, GEORGE GUSHER Secretary Oil University Student Council Dallas, Texas

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