

The First Christmas

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.

And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David,)

To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there

was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

—Luke 2:1-20

Opinion Page

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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Thursday, December 19, 1985

Teach Them To Eat (U.S.) Fish

What does the government do to get people to eat more homegrown American fish?

The same thing it did to promote homegrown apples, beets and beef... start a network of marketing councils, says U.S. Rep. Walter Jones, chairman of the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, which is advocating support of H.R. 2395, a bill authorizing establishment of seafood marketing councils.

As the pork producers', sweet potato growers' egg and dairy councils do for their respective commodities, seafood councils could promote the role of seafood in the American diet.

We know seafood is a healthy addition to the diet. And our coastal areas contain the richest and most productive fishing grounds in the world. And last year, our fisheries trade deficit soared beyond \$5 billion annually. Americans are eating fish—imported fish.

Seafood councils could change this. Emphasizing the current "Buy American" campaign, they could send food editors complimentary layout pages and free recipe booklets, hold cook-offs for the best pickled shark and barbecued mullet recipes, and place national advertising that shows seafood eaters as the healthiest, most popular and patriotic people in America.

They could offer state fair demonstrations on how to use fresh, flash-frozen and canned fish products, and how to build a backyard fish smoker. All this would certainly stimulate demand for the product.

The councils would, it appears, take over at least some of the educational and promotional activities now performed by Sea Grant with the use of federal dollars.

As proposed by H.R. 2395, establishment of the councils would require majority support of the seafood processing industry. Operating funds would come from an assessment against processors, refunded by the council on request. Membership would include equitable representation by region, and by sector (harvesters, processors, importers, etc.)

The bill now goes for concurrence to the U.S. Senate, which passed legislation with a similar intent during the last session of Congress, but which called for funding with federal dollars, not industry assessments.

It isn't clear what seafood products would be covered by the councils' marketing efforts—fish, shellfish—but if the councils can persuade Americans to eat more fish, it's an idea whose time has come.

Let them eat (American) fish.

The Importance Of Light

The winter solstice happens several days before Christmas each year. This event when the sun "stands still" as it reaches its southernmost limit away from the equator also signals the shortest day of the year. Perhaps the shorter days of winter help emphasize the importance of light in our lives.

One of the basic elements of our system of energy is that light from the sun is transferred through photosynthesis into chemical energy to build organic food stuffs. Without that light energy life on earth would not be possible. Not only is light an essential for life, but light is also symbolic of the best life can offer.

From the early "caveperson" days when fire was first discovered, it is believed fire was used to give light, to lengthen the daylight, as well as to provide warmth and later, to prepare food. Light and darkness have been synonymous with good and evil, with enlightenment and ignorance, and with joy and despair. Our everyday expressions like "see the light" and "shed some light on this" indicate light as understanding.

Christmas lights are a part of the



Bill Faver

decorations both inside and outside our homes. But light has a much deeper meaning at Christmastime. Biblical references abound to light as truth and to the coming of Christ at Christmas as the breakthrough of God's "light" to the world. This light promises new understandings, new insights, and new directions out of the darkness of all times.

So, during this Christmas season, acknowledge the importance of light in our lives—the light of the sun's energy that warms us, feeds us, gives us oxygen to breathe; the light of knowledge and understanding that enriches our lives; and the "Light of the World" that comes at Christmas to give our lives meaning and purpose.

Merry Christmas!



Some Stories Cost More Than Others

Sometimes you just don't know how to call the shots.

Thursday night I landed in an awkward position through no fault of my own. I got a story, but not one I was looking for or particularly wanted.

The school board went home at about 11 p.m. Thursday after 2 1/2 hours behind closed doors. The discussion must have gotten heated at times, because even from the lobby we could sometimes hear raised voices. At one point, members took a break before continuing their talk. Outside, school system employees, several reporters and a group of black citizens waited.

Whispered more than once was "transfer"—often considered a dirty word in the school business because of its earlier linkage with wholesale relocations of personnel.

The topic behind closed doors apparently concerning at least one black school system employee, given the waiting group and the fact reporters had earlier been denied a copy of the personnel list though it had apparently been approved before the door shut.

Six pages had been, but not a seventh page. It had been detached



Susan Usher

from board members' copies, but not staff members', before the meeting. That was the source of the ensuing conflict.

Inadvertently a staffer gave several reporters a copy of the list with all pages intact.

What would have happened if we had just taken the reports, gone home and written our stories? We'll never know.

The last sheet contained a title I'd never heard of, so I wanted to know what the job was and why it was being created at mid-year.

When I walked into the head honcho's office and popped the question, he said 1) the job didn't exist yet; and slightly flustered 2) asked "Where did you get that from? That hasn't been approved."

No kidding.

But it had sure been discussed—at

length, both in the board room and in a rear office where one upset board member had retreated.

When asked not to print the information, I debated a moment, then commented to no one in particular that it would seem kind of funny for everyone in the south end of the county to be talking about the subject except the paper.

Not that it would be the first time this had happened, despite the paper's best efforts to get accurate, timely information.

Having a problem's nothing to be ashamed of; all agencies have problems. The board should identify what's wrong, deal with it as best as possible ability, and get on with the show.

Instead "political" pressures—and I'm not talking about party politics, but politics as the term relates to people in general—take over, sometimes backing decision-making boards into awkward corners—kind of like the one I was in Thursday night.

Sometimes the cornering is for good cause, sometimes not. In this case, I have little idea which term applies. Maybe both, depending on the angle from which you're watching.

The exact problem the school board was tackling Thursday isn't

entirely clear, though there has been a general effort in recent years to boost administrative leadership in the individual schools. Next year, when the leaders at each school will be responsible for implementing the state's new teacher evaluation system, it will be more important than ever to have the best people available at all schools.

In any case, I didn't enjoy being asked to keep the proposed shift in personnel under the hat, so to speak, until the board resolves any internal differences it may have.

Personally, I don't expect board members to be 100% unanimous on every decision. I do expect them to consider decisions from every angle before voting and, once the vote is taken, to act like grownups and live with whatever decision the majority makes without pouting or causing trouble over unrelated issues.

In the back of my mind, I try to keep in mind two things: 1) the school board is hired (elected) by the people to look after our overall best interests, not those of any one group; and 2) we're all interested in knowing how those we've chosen are doing on the job, how and why they make certain decisions.



LIGHT RAYS in the sky are symbolic of the sun's energy, knowledge, and the essence of Christmas.

PHOTO BY BILL FAVER