

You Said It

“It makes me happy to see them enjoy it.”

~ Evie Seidlitz

Handmade Nativity / Page 16

Rumor Has It
The oldest Santa Claus parade takes place every year, in Peoria, Ill. It's taken place every holiday season, since 1888.

If you gave all the gifts listed in the *Twelve Days of Christmas*, it would equal 364 presents.

There are nearly 750 different versions of *Silent Night*.

Hit the Polls

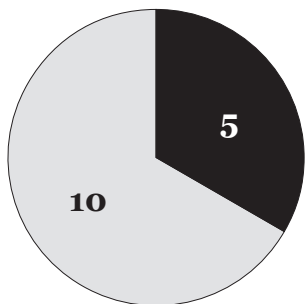
Do you like a white Christmas?

Yes = 🟢

No = 🟡

Go to the *Courier Sentinel* Facebook page to find this week's poll and vote!

Last Week's Poll
Do you bake holiday cookies?



Yes = 10 | No = 5

The mission of the *Courier Sentinel*, as a local, hometown newspaper, is to support our democracy, by publishing editorials and letters to the editor, that stimulate thought and discussion, but, because of the ongoing divisiveness following the recent U.S. presidential election, we have decided to put in place a moratorium on editorials and letters that will further inflame partisan rancor, and ill-will within our community of readers. We need a period of quiet, so we can begin to listen to one another. The newspaper will continue to run editorials, but as commentary on our local news coverage. We welcome letters from our readers that also focus on local issues, things that we cover in these pages.

Kris O'Leary, general manager

– Editorial –

Christmas season sends a message of hope

Members of the *Courier Sentinel* editorial board include publisher Carol O'Leary, general manager Kris O'Leary and *Star News* editor Brian Wilson.

Peace on earth. Good will to all.

That is the promise proclaimed by the angels to the shepherds in the fields with their flocks, in *Luke 2:14*, announcing the birth of the savior.

Judged by the history of the past 2,022 years since that message was first proclaimed, humanity has done a pretty lousy job living up to its side of the bargain. This is especially true in recent years, with the ongoing war in Ukraine and conflicts around the globe. The promise of peace on earth seems to ever further recede from becoming reality.

It is easy to become disillusioned by the message of the Christmas story. It is easy to be worn down by the injustices, both grievous and petty, that people inflict on one another on a daily basis.

It is easy to get worn down in the spirit of the season. To see those who are grieving, injured and battling each day, to see the next dawn, and

to question if the story and promise of Christmas is just a tale to tell children, and a false hope.

It is easy to lose faith when you see people suffering, when you see the strong take advantage of the weak, both physically and economically, or when a child cries out in fear and hunger in the darkness.

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” (*Isaiah 9:2*)

The Bible message promises hope. The hope that a child born humbly among the animals in a manger, would right the wrongs and bring justice to the world.

This week, as we as a community gather at church services, and join with family and friends to celebrate Christmas, it is important to keep that hope alive in each of our hearts and our actions. Each one of us must jealously protect the flickering candle of hope in our hearts, so that when the time is ripe, its light will catch on the tinder and will spread throughout the world.

The past few years have been dark ones in

America, and throughout the world.

This time of year, many of us wake up to begin our daily routines, long before the sun rises.

If you think about the sunrise, many people picture only that bright burning light as the sun clears the horizon, as if some cosmic-scaled light switch has been flipped. It is easy to forget the slow and steady progression of the pitch black of night, steadily giving way to the light of day.

As the light slowly increases, it is hard to pinpoint the exact moment where things become more light than dark. This is just the same as the long climb from the gloom of recent years, back into the sunlight of normalcy.

The world remains far from perfect, but in seeing the light that came into the world at Christmas, each of us has the ability to work toward that light and to guide others who follow the path each of us chooses.

The Christmas story is a story of hope. It is the story of a guiding light in the darkness. In the darkness, we must not lose faith that the dawn is coming.

– Time For A Tiara: Column by Ginna Young –

18th time is the charm

To catch you up, we're on Take 4 of buying a new camera, which has been fraught with peril and really bad luck, even for me. So, here I sat, with a very expensive camera I despised, two lenses that wouldn't fit my Canon camera that did work and a pile of expired return receipts.



First off, I had to think what to do to recoup at least some of the money I'd spent trying to get a camera that worked right and that I enjoyed using. Couldn't return them, so scratch that. Should I try to post them in Facebook Marketplace to see if someone wanted them?

That would have been a good option, except there probably aren't any true-blue photographers around here who would want a \$4,000 Nikon that was only for studio portraits. I'm sure someone in a large city, such as Madison or Milwaukee, might have wanted it, but for that price?

Plus, would they come pick it up? I have no time to even meet them halfway and I can't go that far from Mom. So, I'd have to ship it. The problem with that, is I don't have Paypal or Venmo, or any of that online payment stuff. The buyer would have to send a check, and you can darn well be sure I'd want the check in-hand and cashed, before I'd send the equipment.

It stands to reason if I'm suspicious, any buyer would be, too, and would refuse to send a check until they had the goods in their possession.

Scratch that option.

I did a little research and a few camera companies bought used equipment. I asked for quotes and selected the highest bidder, which wasn't very high, considering the camera and lenses were brand new. Still, it was something.

With a few misgivings about whether or not I would actually receive the money for the equipment, I printed out the shipping labels and packaged the stuff up. And by packaged, I mean fought until I finally got the camera and lenses safely bound up in various boxes.

Let me just state for the record, tape and I are not friends, and will likely never be on speaking terms.

Anyway, I headed for the UPS drop-off point at Rocque Ridge in Holcombe, confident that my harrowing experience was finally at a close. Yeah, I know, but I can dream, can't I?

When I trudged in with the multitude of packages, I was met with a “I have bad news” expression. *Um, two of these are FedEx labels. You'll have to go to a FedEx drop-site.*

Of course they are! Poor Tom, he probably thinks I'm a complete idiot. I just was so stressed with the whole thing, I never even looked at the labels to make sure they were all UPS. That begged the question, where do I take them, then? Tom kindly looked up locations on the internet and found that there are two places in Ladysmith, where FedEx will pick up mail/packages.

Well, I was halfway there anyway, so I decided to just make a rush trip to Ladysmith. Kwik Trip was the first location mentioned, so I headed there, with very little faith I would have any luck. I was positive I'd get there and there wouldn't be a dropbox, and I would have wasted my trip.

Lo and behold, when I pulled in, there was the box! Maybe my luck was finally turning. But, as I lugged the packages over to the box, I could tell by looking they weren't going to fit through the lid. I stood there glumly, hating my existence, while people passed by and helpfully declared, “They're not gonna fit!”

Really? I wouldn't have guessed.

Finally, a Kwik Trip employee walked by and I asked her if they had a place inside to hold the

larger packages. No, but I was welcome to leave them on top of the outside dropbox with a note and FedEx would pick them up in the morning. Um, yeah, no, I will not be doing *that* anytime soon!

I took the packages back to the car and went to the other location at Dollar General, with no hope at all that it would be any different. However, when I got there, they took the packages (inside the store) without question.

OK, one thing off my list. Now, what to do with the external flash I had ordered to replace my old one that quit? Well, apparently I'm not the only one who thought it was worthless, as no camera company would take it. I finally just pitched it and ordered a new one.

That one came in good time and works well, but by then, my camera bag strap was about to break. So, I ordered not one, but two new bags – one to use and one for a back-up. Unfortunately, I didn't order from the company I normally do, so when the bags came and were the wrong size, I was unable to return them (email address – straight off their website – was “invalid”) and am now out that money.

I turned to Amazon for a new one, but alas, when that came, it, too, was the wrong size, despite the description to the contrary. That one I could return, but I was too busy to wrap it up and take it to a drop-off point, and my return window passed. So, if anyone needs three, brand new, medium-sized camera bags, I'm the person to see.

I managed to patch my wearing out bag, but what I'll do for a new one, I have no idea. One good thing, I did get a couple checks for the Nikon camera and lenses. So, even though I lost about \$2,500 on the whole two-month saga – not including the purchase of a working camera – things are looking up.

At least, I think they are. It's not long until the end of the year, so maybe nothing else bad will happen to me in 2022...with the camera, that is.

It doesn't look promising for everything else, considering just this morning, I bent the home screen door, broke the snow shovel and had the driver side windshield wiper snap off in my hands. But hey, my camera works!

Where am I?

(See Page 5 for location)



