

THE FRIENDLY SEASON



I got "that feeling" the other day. It happens every year along about December 15. I guess it's been happening to people ever since that bright star appeared in a distant sky nearly 2000 years ago.

When I entered the kitchen at my usual time, I found Jack had the coffee perking. "How come?" I asked the boy in obvious surprise.

"Couldn't sleep this morning," he replied. "Our band's gonna play carols at school today and I got to thinking about Christmas. Thought I might as well put the coffee on, long as I was awake anyway."

By the time I was ready to leave for the office, the whole family was on deck, smiling, wishing me a good day! As I started down the street to the bus stop, I suddenly realized that the Christmas "glow" was back for its annual visit.

The mailman greeted me with a cheery "hello" and even Pat, the big Irish Setter down at the corner, wagged his tail as I passed by.

I boarded the bus and moved to my favorite seat at the rear. After a while a husky man dropped down beside me and propped a big bundle on his lap. I recalled having seen him before, but this time he gave me a wide smile and burst into conversation.

"My wife's starting early this year," he laughed. "She sneaked my Christmas present into the house the other day. But last night she couldn't hold out any longer. She asked me to try it for size. It's a real nice sports jacket but, as usual, it doesn't fit. So here I go back to the exchange desk and Christmas isn't even here yet."

"You certainly seem cheerful about it," I commented.

He laughed again. "If she asked me to do this in February, I'd chew her ear off. But, what-the-heck, Christmas comes only once a year!"

By this time work-bound citizens were beginning to fill the bus. When the operator asked them to move to the rear, they responded quickly . . . and with a smile!

When one of the lady passengers took up standing space nearby, I offered my seat. A look of amazement covered her face, but she accepted with a gracious grin.

I noticed a number of friendly conversations

developing at various points on the bus. "Guess the Star of Bethlehem's caught up with all of us," I told myself.

I caught the same spark among the folks at the office. And when I decided to start my Christmas shopping at noon, I found the salespeople in the department stores rushed but friendly and cooperative.

By dinner time I was completely mellowed. "It's been a good day," I said to the family. "This is certainly 'the friendly season.' Everybody seems to be happier and at least a bit more considerate of their fellow humans! Wish we could all keep this spark alive through the year. It would certainly make our town a better place."

"I had a good day, too," Jack chimed in. "We made plans for our class Christmas party on Thursday. And the scouts are gonna have theirs on Friday."

"Me, too," Penny chuckled. "Mommy took me to see Santa Claus and he sure promised to bring me a lot of things." She looked at me with a sly grin that made me realize 8 year olds are smart humans, indeed!

"Let's break this up," Kitty ventured. "There's a big holiday program on TV tonight. Let's go watch it."

The family filed toward the TV set. As I turned into the living room, my foot touched a toy truck and I hit the floor with a resounding bang. A sudden quiet settled over the scene, broken only by the barking of our little dog.

"You blasted kids," I shouted, red-faced. "When are you going to learn to put your things where they belong? Do you realize I might have broken my back?" My anger was mounting, as Kitty quickly snapped the switch on the television set.

"Good evening," a pleasant-faced announcer said. "In this, the friendly season, let me be the first to extend Christmas greetings to you."

There was a moment of silence. We were all smiling as I struggled to my feet.

Sincerely,



Bill Saver

Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
To All



Chicago Transit Authority