

Sweet Grass viewpoint

A page of opinions. Features may or may not reflect the editorial position of The Pioneer

PIONEER VIEWPOINTS

Holiday greetings...

I Salute you! There is nothing I can give you which you have not; but there is much, that, while I cannot give, you can take.

No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in it today. Take Heaven.

No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present instant. Take Peace.

The gloom of the world is but a shadow; behind it, yet, within our reach, is joy. Take Joy.

And so, at this Christmas time, I greet you, with the prayer that for you, now and forever, the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

FRA GIOVANNI

A.D. 1513



Phone [406]932-2681 Box 190 224 McLeod Street
BIG TIMBER, MONTANA 59011

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Larry Lowary.....Publisher

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READER OPINIONS

Reactions to reader opinion, Pioneer viewpoint and other topics of interest

TO THE EDITOR:

Who is this man James Tulley? Seems to me that he must be a Drug Store cowboy. I don't see that he has an ad in the Pioneer.

He says the people of Big Timber are going to Billings and Bozeman to do their shopping. He by-passed Livingston, so Livingston must be in the same category we are.

In the past several years, several of the stores have had a face-lifting. I'll admit my store front is an eye-sore to the community, but hopefully, I plan to have it fixed. The community has still stood behind me 100 per cent—front or no front.

As to Christmas decorations, I would like to be able to purchase decorations that would last 10 years.

We can't compete with Rimrock Mall. Did you ever buy anything at the Rimrock Mall that you had to return? It takes an Act of Congress.

Any one of the local merchants wishes to please his customers with the goods and services he offers.

I think we have a very nice town, cooperative merchants, merchants who in many cases extend credit far beyond one's asking, not cash on the barrel head.

I think, Mr. Tulley, you should have taken a better look at our town before you decided to settle here.

OMMUND OSEN

TO THE EDITOR:

Even though I am extremely busy this time of year, I felt that I should write to you and tell you how I felt.

When I stopped in Big Timber, Saturday, the 20th of December, to talk to all of the children, I was reminded of the reason of Christmas.

All the kids were wonderful. They were happy, joyful and lovable. The little ones who were scared, the ones who were nervous and forgetful, and the ones who came running just to sit on my knee and be close to me.

Christmas is for kids of all ages. May God bless all of them and I hope that I can come again next year.

A Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

SANTA CLAUS, 1975

P.S. Thanks also to the Lions Club for

Pioneer policy about reader opinions

The Pioneer welcomes reader opinions on topics of interest to readers.

Roses or brickbats, letters will be published on this page soon after they are received.

To be published, letters must be signed, and some sort of identification should be given to facilitate verification, if necessary.

The Pioneer reserves the right to edit material which may be libelous or in bad taste. At least one week must appear between publication of letters from the same person. No poetry is accepted.

being Santas helpers and to the Fire Department for letting me use their firehall.

TO THE EDITOR:

I very strongly disagree with The Pioneer viewpoint that a Bible Club should be kept in the church. I have a hard time understanding your reasoning. If the club is to be an objective study of the Bible, why does "where" it is held make any difference?

You say the parents might be offended. If this ecumenical program was held in a church, the parents wouldn't be offended? If the student was learning the same thing in either place? Why should it make any difference if the club was held in a church room, a school room, the library, the Dugout, or a private home?

If a parent didn't want his child learning about the Bible, he wouldn't want him to be a part of a club held in any of these places.

This would not be a mandatory class—only students wishing to attend would do so. Having it held in the high school would only make it more convenient for any student wishing to attend the Bible Club. If a group of students want to meet and learn about the Bible and are forbidden to do so, isn't that a violation of their Constitutional right to freedom of religion?

I have read about high schools that

offer a study of the Bible as a regular literature class. In these instances, it has been a great success, where the enrollment is more than the class can handle. So why not give it a chance?

I could think of many worse ways for students to spend their noon hours than attending a Bible Club.

SHIRLEY BOWDEN
Box 69
Big Timber

TO THE EDITOR:

Mr. James Tulley's letter in the Pioneer raised some interesting points. I was not aware that there were law schools that also offered degrees in merchandising but it seems I have been in the dark, again! Be that as it may, the fact remains that a great number of Sweet Grass County residents go to Billings and Bozeman to do their serious shopping. After all, didn't Mr. Tulley admit to doing just that?

However, I daresay that a few Big Timber businessmen have ever considered putting a branch store in Rimrock Mall, nor do they have access to the carload (or truckload) lots of merchandise that are available to the shops in the larger cities. Advertising is great—we all know that. But there is a difference in buying an ad that will reach 3000 people and in buying one that will reach over a million prospective customers. One is designed to bring in customers—the other is recognized as

more a means of supporting your local newspaper than any positive method of generating new business. Rural areas will find it difficult to duplicate the shopping facilities of even moderate sized cities, let alone try to compete on an equal basis with multi-million dollar shopping centers such as Rimrock Mall.

I daresay that every business man in Big Timber is well aware of how inflation has affected his retail trade. Practically every item sold off the shelf costs more to replace than the item sold for. Any profit derived from the sale is wiped out by the increased wholesale price of its replacement. With 3000 people to draw upon for an occasional customer, the rural merchant is hard-pressed to even stay in business, let alone compete with giant discount centers, who, by Mr. Tulley's own admission, cut the price on some items and raise it on the rest of the merchandise they offer.

I admittedly don't know very much—but I've lived long enough, in enough different areas, to have observed a few things in life. One of those things I have observed is that small rural towns all over the country have the same problems that Big Timber faces today. Basically, that is a majority of business houses that have made a comfortable living, serving their community over a long period of time, now being suddenly faced with inflation, with high labor costs, high stock replacement costs, increased out-of-town buying by their former customers and, usually, no youngsters chomping at the bit to take over the family business, with a resultant surge of enthusiasm and new ideas.

More than one town the size of Big Timber has suddenly become merely a "bedroom community" for a larger town within easy shopping distance down the road, simply because of brighter stores, new ideas and merchandise, fancy merchandising practices and a yen to go somewhere. The latter is responsible for the exodus of customers as anything—unfortunately nobody notices until too late that the local car dealers are going out of business, the hardware store has closed, the drug stores are closing and all the little grocery stores are suddenly represented by one big super market

Continued on page 14

HERE & THERE

By LARRY LOWARY

It seems too dangerous that to remind people about it, borders on lecturing.

But, the facts indicate a need to continue hammering away at the message: Towing behind or "clinging" to vehicles is like Russian Roulette.

Police Magistrate and Justice of the Peace Rose Crockett's an outspoken advocate of safe driving, and it follows that she's concerned about the danger of having humans risk serious injury for some winter fun.

Pavements that are slick enough to sled on, pose an invitation to disaster for the unprotected person riding behind or clinging to a vehicle.

The practices are against the law...but Mrs. Crockett thinks there's a better reason to avoid the winter folly—personal safety.

PERHAPS IT was a coincidence—perhaps it was planned.

Either way, it was interesting to drive around town early Friday night and look at churches.

For some reason or other lights at the Congregational, Lutheran, and Episcopal church were burning brightly, illuminating the intricate designs on stained glass windows.

The energy crunch still is with us, but it might not be too expensive to keep a small light on in the sanctuaries at least certain nights.

The sight was really beautiful—certainly fitting for the holiday season.

WE THOROUGHLY enjoyed last week's Big Timber Grade School operetta. Director Jon Quam deserves a pat on the back for launching such an energetic program. And teachers did their part (from helping "paint" faces, to devise a philosophy to get the lower-grade youngsters (boys) to don pairs of leotards for the production.

We have only one gripe, and that has nothing to do with the school. We resent the attitudes of a very small group of former school students (they've now graduated and in high school). Their behind-the-scenes antics were appalling as they stood up in the corner during most of the program, giggling, laughing, and in general disrupting the program for persons in that area.

To the offending students, we boldly suggest you stay home next time, and let others enjoy the program!

caught in the blade.

HOW MANY are left? And how many can you remember? These merchants and professional men ran Christmas Greeting advertisements in the Dec. 24, 1925 Pioneer: Cort Cafe; Blue Bird; Scandinavian Bank; Montana Power; Citizens Bank; Commercial Bank and Trust; Big Timber Garage; O. Miller Co.; Bechtol Meat Market; City Meat Market; A.W. Miles Co.; Oie Hardware; Motor Inn; Dr. L.H. Lintz; Bailey and Lamb; Cook Hotel; Phillips Drug Co.; City Pool Hall; Fallang and Pederson, blacksmiths; The Dollar Market; An-

AS WINTER continues its off-again, on-again affair with Montana, we salute a group of local men who have a job that few of us would like—braving icy and drifted roads to bring students to school each day.

We admit we're "chicken" when it comes to traveling on bad roads, so the job seems even more heroic that it really is.

We admit we're "chicken" when it comes to traveling on bad roads, so the job seems even more heroic than it really might be.

Nevertheless, we salute the men who diligently enter the unknown five days a week to bring our kids to school. No matter how you look at it, it's no easy job.

IF YOU OWN a snowmobile, and don't want to risk a ticket for an outdated registration, you've got only a few days left to purchase your 1976 snowmobile ticket.

Registration laws were changed this past year, and under the new set of procedures, 1975 registrations expire at midnight Dec. 31. The several week grace period allowed last year no longer exists. If you haven't registered your unit by Jan. 1, you're running the risk of a violation.

AS YOU no doubt already have noticed, today's paper contains our annual "Christmas Greetings" section, sponsored by area merchants.

Look through the pages and read the special messages from your friends and neighbors. It's their way of wishing you holiday greetings, and expressing their thanks for your patronage during the past year.

Again this year we are excited about publishing another original Christmas sketch by local artists. This year's picture was drawn by David Hodges, who's been in and around the area for several years. A self-employed furniture maker, Dave is a native of Pennsylvania.

As in the past, a limited number of reprint copies of the sketch are available at our office at no charge. Stop in and pick up a copy...it's another way of wishing you a Merry Christmas.

AS YOU prepare for Christmas, we'd like to express our sincere greetings for a happy holiday season.

May you and your family find the joy of the season...and the hope of tomorrow.

Merry Christmas, friends!

DUSTING OFF THE OLD ONES

70 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 21, 1905

KID ROYAL was in jail, so he couldn't be blamed for the theft of two horses in the county that week. Al McComb and J.S. Campbell had each reported a horse stolen from them.

THE BIG TIMBER Cash Grocery Store was advertising china as an appropriate Christmas gift. A set of bone dishes could be purchased for 90 cents, a "Jap" bon bon tray for 90 cents, individual butter trays for 5 cents, berry sets for two dollars, and celery trays for

50 cents. They said: "Having somewhat an idea how china should be packed, we are prepared to pack dishes from the most delicate to the clumsiest so that their safe delivery is certain. Our line of Japanese Ware is new. It is the handsomest line you ever saw. The designs and decorations are original with the Japs. They are bound to be popular for Christmas."

KELLOGG'S WAS advertising talking machines—"just the thing you want around the house". They also suggested to 1905 Santas these ideas: "Swell neckties, 35 to 75 cents; swell

suspenders in individual boxes, 50 to 75 cents; fur lined gloves \$3 and silk handkerchiefs, 35 cents to \$1.25."

DIER-BROWNING, who declared they were "The Always Busy Store" advised holiday hostesses to top off a good dinner with 2 Blend Coffee, one of Chase and Sanborn's best at 25 cents a pound.

50 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 24, 1925

"SANTA CLAUS, advertisee for the

Big Timber Bakery Saturday afternoon came on time, in a handsome auto driven by Mrs. Claus. His arrival was greeted by a mob of kids, not crowd, who waited patiently his coming. Each kid was given a ball of pop corn as a remembrance. Santa was represented by Christ Mortenson, baker, and Mrs. Claus by Miss Lillian Knapp."

J.C. FINCHER, Melville, had lost part of his right foot in a ranch accident. While using a buzz saw to cut wood, he kicked away sawdust, and his foot was

drew Sleveland; Cort Hotel; Powers Elevator Co.; J.J. Lacklen Co.; Jack Watt the tailor; John Renzeman, Rawleigh dealer; J.S. Solberg; E.R. Patterson Co.; Andy's Soft Drink Parlor; Sketnan and Snyder, blacksmiths; Swift Grain Co.; Knapp's Filling Station; Big Timber Hospital; Davis Sanitary Grocery; Big Timber Pioneer; Sawyer's Nepstad and Flattum, Grey Cliff; The Fair; Grand Hotel; Big Timber Pharmacy; L.F. Douthett Co.; Big Timber Bakery; The Golden Rule; Same Cohn, dealer in hides, pelts and wool. Now, who can remember where each business was located?