

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Names, names, names

An essential element of your local newspaper 50 years ago, when I first started at the *The Mercury*, was people's names.

People love to read their own names in print. And back in the days before the internet, your local newspaper was the pre-eminent name game in town.



As self-help guru Dale Carnegie wrote, "a man's name is to him the sweetest and most important sound in the English language."

Commentary by
Thomas Hylton

And when a list is printed, the first thing people look for is their own name.

Back in the day, it's remarkable how many lists *The Mercury* printed: Hospital admissions and discharges; births; honor rolls; the names of people who attended a party, took a trip, performed on stage, or participated in a wedding.

There were daily birthday congratulations, often accompanied by a photo of the birthday celebrant.

There were contests, with names and photos; and the weekly Roving Reporter, with names and headshots.

The Dec. 22, 1971 edition of *The Mercury* featured an article headlined, "Washington School pupils will present Christmas musicale." (The school subsequently closed and is now used as the Pottstown School District administration building.)

Participants in the musicale for each grade level, K through six, were listed, such as: "Instruments will be played by 'angels,' James Grassi and Lori Valentine, tambourines; Leslie Iezzi, musical sticks; Valentine Bartchak, drum; and Steve Minnick, cymbals.

(Wait, there's more!)

"Also, Lisa Dunn, jingle clog; Anita Lucidi, jingle bells; Christopher Oswald, wood block; Tracy Levan, triangle; and Gary Fesmier, maracas."

The names go on and on and can become somewhat mesmerizing. I kept reading until I found one I recognized: kindergartner Heather Downie, who now teaches second grade at Lincoln Elementary School. She reportedly sang "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "made motions to depict the song." That's local news!

A Different Slant

By ROBERT J. BOYLE

Annual Christmas List is Released

Today is Friday, Dec. 24 the 368th day of the year with 7 days to come. In case you're interested the pilgrims landed on Dec. 21 in 1620.

Tomorrow is the fourth day of winter and Saturday is Christmas day. As in the past, each year I have Santa open his bag of goodies for area residents.

Here are the gifts for area residents:

Myrtle Davidheiser, a bowlful of pretzel soup; Ray and Gladys Willauer, a box of instant cake mix; Edgar Frymoyer and Patty, a place in the sun; Sen. Edwin G. Holl, a railroad car; Martin Dobbs, an 1909 VDB; Peter Buzzar, a 1909 S VDB; Rachel Theis, a quiet place among whispering pines; Bob McKinney, a bridge; Becky Biedler, a bit of green; Charles T. Carter, an autographed photo of Geraldine; Barry Rohrbach, a history of Glenside; Mrs. Evelyn Baurele, a library card; Capt. Lloyd Meyers, major bars; Leonard Rhoades, his own post office; Dollie Smith, a fountain of youth; Mary Sweeney, a new hair covering; Bill Yohn Sr., his own bank; Pressley Day, a new football team; John Paul Jones, a parade; John Henry, a robe; Bill Boden Sr., an autographed photo of President Nixon; Rosie Snyder, a portion of pretzel soup.

Jim Corum, a supply of pencils; Sally George, an autographed copy of "Be An Editor"; James Rodgers, his own parking lot; Daniel Kerwin, free hamburger; Clapper White, another toe; Lillian Williams, a new chopping block; Mr. and Mrs. George Fisher, a vacation paradise; Robert Trace, a vacation from vacations; Esther Gray, more filing space; Dr. Robert O'Connell, several more boys; Mary Campbell, a seat on the library board; Harry Leister, payless water bills; Forest Kreiger, a new uniform; Dr. and Mrs. James Griffith, a comfortable winter; Ray Kohler, a free car wash; Jake Sotter, a supply of toys; Mrs. Ann Seavers, a good year; Paul Rodenberry, three Jeeps; Bob Calvario, a photo of Andy Granitelli; Evelyn Shelly, a copy of Keats; Steve Chijka, a new needle for his phonograph.

Howard Cates, a wooden model; David Bause, a meatgrinder; Bill Hillyer, a new sewer; Ralph Ingersoll, a watch; Rev. John B. Frantz, sleep on a windy night; Bob Meloy, Joe Miller's joke book; Paul Oliphant, a 'honeydew' retirement; Guy Sperat Jr., figs from Italy; Francis Shock, a trip to Heidelberg; Ralph Maack, a flashlight; Jean Davidheiser, a sign for her 'Pottstown Mercury Downtown Office'; Karl Keiser, a cup of hot coffee; John Cary, a bouquet; Mrs. Howard Cates, a book on Christmas shopping; Mrs. Duke Kinckiner, a telephone extension; John Brower Jr., an apron and chef's hat; Mrs. Anthony Alba, wooden shoes; Mrs. Helen Brower, a needle and thread; Betty Gephart, fewer customers; George Stevens, free delivery of *The Mercury*; Joseph Bell, a slicing machine; Nick Maleski, straight A's; Kevin Clark, red roses; Cheryl Christ, her

1971 CHRISTMAS LIST — Each Christmas Eve, Mercury editor Bob Boyle would publish a list of Christmas gifts he wished for area residents. He named so many people his column needed to be jumped to a second page. His 1971 column listed gifts for 481 locals — including me!

