

THE GORGE GAZETTE

YOUR GUIDE TO FAMILY FUN
IN THE RED RIVER GORGE



The Official (only!) Newspaper of The Red River Gorge

Vol. 3 No. 10 Adventure ~ Relaxation ~ Accommodations ~ Awe Inspiring Natural Beauty ~ Friendly People

December 2023



Celebrating a Gorge-ous Christmas!

This year's Cliffview
Community Christmas Party for
the surrounding counties will be
Saturday, Dec. 9th
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This project is supported by the
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Christmas, please contact
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Yes, Virginia there Is a Santa Claus



Dear Editor: I am 8 years old.

Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.

Papa says "If you see it in the Sun it's so."

Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?

-Virginia O'Hanlon

My Dear Virginia,

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God, he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

This was the response to Virginia's letter to the editor of the New York Sun, written by Francis Pharcellus Church, a Civil War correspondent for the New York Times before he joined the Sun.

THE GORGE GAZETTE

The official Red River Gorge Newsletter

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

Luke 2:14

Peace on earth. What a terrific idea. But what is peace?

The dictionary gives many definitions ranging from quiet and tranquility to lack of motion or movement.

Peace is defined as the freedom from war, conflict and hostilities; concord and amity; a state of mutual harmony.

Aside from a physical condition where one is free from disorder and civil commotion, peace is also a mental and spiritual calmness and freedom from disturbances arising from passion or a sense of guilt.

Peace was an important concept to Christians; indeed, Jesus is often referred to as the "Prince of Peace".

The word peace or words based on the word peace are found in more than 130 Old Testament verses and more than 100 New Testament verses.



One of the most enduring Christian icons is the dove as a symbolic representation of peace. This of course is taken from the tale of Noah in the book of Genesis.

Through the years, other symbols have come to be associated with the idea of peace; none more familiar than the so-called "peace sign".

This was originally a representation of a jet bomber and was used in the "Ban the Bomb" protests of the very early 60's in England. England is also the origin of the other peace sign, two fingers raised. It is believed Winston Churchill used this as a "V" for Victory salute and the gesture later became associated with the hippies and "Peaceniks".



"Peace!", is an expression of well-wishing. Or a salutation. As well as a word of parting, so let me say, no matter how you say it, no matter what the accent...

Peace! Pax! Frieden! Paco! Fred! Pokoj! Mir! Shalom! Heiwa! Paix! Sulh! Ruaha! Perdamaian! I'ini! Scholim! Paz! Beke! Salam! Fridur!

I really, really, love this time of year! The music, the traditions, the colorful decorations, and the attitude of the people. Don't you wish there was some way to bottle that feeling or at least to be able to spread it around all year long! I think it's not just because of the hype or even the true reason we are celebrating that people are more friendly and caring at this time. I think most, if not all, people actually wish to be like that all year 'round, but for whatever reason, feel they should keep it to themselves the rest of the year.

It's as if Christmas is an excuse, and a very good one, the best one, to share the joy, to let all that niceness show. Maybe our culture, our new century zeitgeist has taught us that being nice or caring is a weakness. That is absolutely not so. I think those traits are a person's greatest strengths. So, no matter what, I'm gonna try to feel Christmas-y every day. Again, Merry Christmas and be thankful for what you have and remember those less fortunate. Hug a loved one, help a neighbor. Spread the JOY!

Jenny Ison



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Hark! How All The Welkin Ring!

Christmastime is beautiful music time

Music Writer

Clifford "Cliff" Tones



Hello! How are ya? Keeping warm? Are you ready for the holidays? Me neither. I think you'll all be happy with this article's opening poem. Why? Well, for one thing it's a real good one and for another thing, 'cause I didn't write it. This one was by a fella named Longfellow. That's Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

*"I heard the bells of Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play
and wild and sweet their words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men."*

Hey, I couldn't have said it better myself!

Ok. Actually, I couldn't have said it nearly as well; that's why I used Henry's.

Welkin We Have Heard on High

"Hark, how all the welkin ring!" That opening line may not be familiar to you, but that was the first line of a hymn by Charles Wesley written in 1739.

In 1840, Felix Mendelssohn wrote a cantata commemorating not Jesus, the most important person of the 1st millennium, but one Johann Gutenberg of movable type fame who the A&E's *Biography* says is the most important person of the 2nd millennium.

Fifteen years later, an English musician, W. H. Cummings took a piece of melody from that very sonata and put Wesley's words to it.

It worked well, but didn't have the "pizazz" needed to climb the charts.

A musician friend of Cummings suggested the problem was that few knew what in the world a "welkin" was and even when they found out it is a cloud, a metaphor for heaven, they still weren't moved.

The next to the last or the penultimate (I can't tell you how long I've waited for just the right opportunity to use that word!) line in the hymn where angel hosts were mentioned was much stronger.

Well, Cummings obviously took his friend's advice or we would be singing "Hark how all the welkin ring!" instead of "Hark! the herald angels sing." Cool huh? But wait, there's more.

Charles Wesley or Chuck as his friends may have called him was the brother of John Wesley who formed the Wesleyan Societies that evolved into the Methodist Church. Charles wrote another 6,000 or so hymns for that church. This Mendelssohn guy was the grandson of a Jewish philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, and the son of a baker.

A terrific piano player from age six and a prolific writer from an early age, he wrote everything from vocal duets to symphonies to operas. His biggest hit (I think it went platinum!) was an overture for Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. That overture has become one of the most popular wedding songs.

If you have ever been to a wedding, you have heard this piece. You know how the tune, "Here Comes the Bride" goes? Okay. It's the *other* song. The one played as the newly married couple depart.





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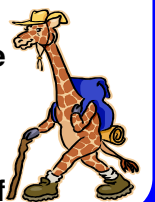
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Check Page 3 or Ask One of our Staff

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