

GIFT

(taken from carbon,
original misplaced)

December 24, 1965
Dallas Townsend

A Lufkin, Texas - a Texas-size surprise today for industrialist Walter Trout. As the result of a casual conversation a few months ago - with Philadelphia insurance executive Clayton Wentworth.

It seems that Trout mentioned the fact - that he was trying to help a municipal zoo in Lufkin. To which Wentworth replied: "Fine - I'll send you an animal or something."

The promised "animal or something" - a baby hippopotamus - arriving just in time for the holiday season.

A card attached - stating: "Merry Christmas. And may all your troubles in nineteen-sixty-six - be big ones."

EUROPE

A report from Paris raises speculation today - that President Johnson may be planning a visit to Europe next spring. And then again - maybe not.

In any event - French sources disclosing that DeGaulle has passed along the word - that he would welcome a meeting with President Johnson. In Paris - in the spring. The President said to have replied in turn - that he would be most happy to meet DeGaulle - a man he holds in the highest esteem - if he does come to Europe.

And there the matter stands - for the moment.

DeGaulle clearly anxious to meet with Mr. Johnson - to discuss the war in Vietnam, West German nuclear rearmament, and a possible reorganization of the NATO alliance. The President - for his part - politely noncommittal.

COUNTERFEIT

Royal Canadian Mounted Police today smashed a budding international counterfeit ring - operating from a suburb of Montreal. By seizing a cache of about a half-million dollars - in bogus U.S. ten-dollar bills.

This one of the largest hauls of counterfeit American currency - in recent years. The funny money so new - that most of it was still in sheets of four - waiting to be cut.

WEATHER

The weather outlook: A White Christmas for many of us - a wet one for more of us. As the second major storm of the winter - continues to churn eastward across the nation.

Up to three inches of the white stuff - already blanketing the Pacific Northwest. With heavy snow warnings posted tonight - in the Cascades and the Northern Rockies. And an overnight snowfall of seven inches or more - predicted for the Central Plains and the Upper Great Lakes.

To the East and South of the cold front - warm weather, but wet. The rains expected to continue off and on - through most of Christmas Day.

VIETNAM

Christmas Eve in Vietnam - a silent night - if not entirely holy. Christmas Day dawning the same way - both sides apparently in complete compliance with that promised Christmas truce.

A bonus for American troops - in the lifting of a dawn-to-dusk curfew in Saigon. Imposed last Saturday to keep American GI's off the streets - during a wave of increased Communist terrorist activity.

The ban lifted - Saigon's streets once again crowded with American soldiers. Many of them celebrating their first Christmas away from home - in the midst of a tropical heatwave.

Meanwhile, expressions of hope around the world - that the Christmas truce might be extended - perhaps indefinitely. To pave the way - for future peace talks.

TRUMAN FOLLOW VIET NAM

Here in New York - former President Truman joining the chorus. With the comment that he doesn't believe in Santa Claus anymore - but he does believe in the Christmas spirit. That spirit kindling his own hope that an extension of the truce - could culminate in a lasting peace.

By contrast - the former President was just as salty as ever - when asked about the recent reelection of French President DeGaulle. "If the French want him" - said Mr. Truman - "then why the blank shouldn't they have him!"

DEATH

Whatever the season - no holiday for death. As evidenced by a series of tragic accidents - that seem to be part and parcel of every holiday weekend.

Twelve persons killed when a cross-country bus skidded off an icy road - plunging over a twenty-foot embankment - near Rogue, River, Oregon. The worst traffic accident ever - in that state.

Eight persons dead in a pre-dawn fire - that swept through a three story apartment house in Newark, New Jersey. Also - three trainmen killed in the fiery crash of two freight trains - in a freak accident near Denton, Texas.

RHODESIA

Rebel Premier Ian Smith of Rhodesia admitted today - that the breakaway British colony may be forced to ration fuel. In the face of that Anglo-American oil embargo - ordered last week.

Smith adding, however, that he is more confident of Rhodesia's future now - than when he declared its unilateral independence from Britain last November. Said he: "I don't say we won't have to pull in our belt - but I'm reasonably optimistic."

WALL

Some twenty-five thousand Germans passed through the Berlin Wall today - to visit friends and relatives in East Berlin. Raising to more than a quarter-of-a-million - the total number of West Berliners who have crossed into the Communist East in the last two weeks - since the beginning of the Christmas pass period. First time the wall has been opened to visitors - since the Pentecost holiday of six months ago.

Tonight, thousands of West Berliners burning candles in the windows of their homes - facing the Berlin Wall. A symbol of their desire for reunification of Berlin - and all of Germany - in freedom.

SATCHMO

From Reno, Nevada - the story today of Louie Armstrong - in what may well have been his crowning performance. And he didn't even bring his trumpet.

Satcho the hit of the evening - as he played Santa Claus to a hundred orphans at the Nevada State Children's Home.

The Children greeting him with shouts of "Hello, Dolly" - begging him to sing - which he finally did. Leading them in the chorus of a carol that turned out to be - "Jingle Bells, Yeah Man." Complete with Satchmo's call for "one more time" - that brought down the house.

Once an orphan himself - Louie Armstrong later observing: "Those cats - are the most."

END

Perhaps the best note on which to close this Christmas Eve - a holiday greeting from Vietnam. From Sergeant Joseph Eggert of the First Air Cavalry Division - in response to the flood of Christmas mail to our fighting men in that embattled nation.

The sergeant noting that many of the encouraging cards and letters were without return addresses - making personal reply virtually impossible. "Therefore," said he, "I would like to say from all of us to all of you - thank you very much - and may each and every one of you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."