

the kids in his big arms and gave them a hug. They clung to him and didn't want us to go. At the door Pa turned to Widow Jensen and said, "The Mrs. wanted me to invite you and the children over for Christmas dinner tomorrow. The turkey will be more than the three of us can eat, and a man can get cantankerous if he has to eat turkey for too many meals. We'll be by to get you about eleven. It'll be nice to have some little ones around again. Matt, here, hasn't been little for quite a spell." Widow Jensen nodded and said, "Thank you, Brother Miles. I don't have to say, May the Lord bless you, I know for certain that He will."

Out on the sled I felt a warmth that came from deep within and I didn't even notice the cold. When we had gone a ways, Pa turned to me and said, "Matt, I want you to know something. Your Ma and me have been tucking a little money away here and there all year so we could buy that rifle for you, but we didn't have quite enough. Then yesterday a man who owed me a little money from years back came by to make things square. Your Ma and me were real excited, thinking that now we could get you that rifle. I started into town this morning to do just that, but on the way I saw the little Jensen boy out scratching in the woodpile with his feet wrapped in those gunny sacks and I knew what I had to do. Son, I spent the money for shoes and a little candy for those children. I hope you understand." I understood very well, and I was so glad Pa had done it. Now the rifle seemed very low on my list of priorities. Pa had given me a lot more. He had given me the look on Mrs. Jensen's face and the radiant smiles of her three children. For the rest of my life, whenever I saw any of the Jensens, or split a block of wood, I remembered, and remembering brought back that same joy I felt riding home beside Pa that night. Pa had given me much more than a rifle that night, he had given me the best Christmas of my life.

### They're Back! Those wonderful Church Bulletins!

These sentences (with all the BLOOPERS) actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services:

- *The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.*
- *Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.*
- *Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.*
- *The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.*
- *At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.*

*A Very Merry Christmas, One and All*

*Get the Edge*  
with... **TEAM M<sup>c</sup>MILLAN**

[teammcmillan@sympatico.ca](mailto:teammcmillan@sympatico.ca) [www.homesaroundlondon.com](http://www.homesaroundlondon.com)



First Canadian Corp.  
BROKERAGE

Each office is independently owned & operated



Let our 30 years of combined business experience work for you. Get the Edge with the power of a team!



*Get the Edge*

with... **TEAM M<sup>c</sup>MILLAN**

*News 'n' Views*



First Canadian Corp.  
BROKERAGE

Each office is independently owned & operated

**LONDON**  
519.673.3390  
Fax: 519.673.6789  
420 York Street  
London, ON N6B 1R1

[teammcmillan@sympatico.ca](mailto:teammcmillan@sympatico.ca) [www.homesaroundlondon.com](http://www.homesaroundlondon.com)



**DORCHESTER**  
519.268.8304  
Fax: 519.268.0352  
4150 Hamilton Road  
Dorchester, ON N0L 1G3

*In the spirit of the Christmas, we thought we'd share an edited story with you instead of what would normally be in our Newsletter at this time of year. We hope you might take a moment to read it and no matter your religious beliefs, take from it the sentiment of the Season.*

*With Our Very Best Wishes for the Holiday Season and the Coming New Year,*

*Gary, Sharron and Barb*



## A Christmas Story

(Author unknown)

It was Christmas Eve 1881. I was fifteen years old and feeling like the world had caved in on me because there just hadn't been enough money to buy me the rifle that I'd wanted for Christmas. We did the chores early that night for some reason. I just figured Pa wanted a little extra time so we could read in the Bible, instead he said, "Come on, Matt," he said. "Bundle up good, it's cold out tonight." Now I was upset. Not only wasn't I getting the rifle for Christmas, now Pa was dragging me out in the cold, and for no earthly reason that I could see. Ma gave me a mysterious smile as I opened the door to leave the house. Something was up, but I didn't know what.

Outside, I became even more dismayed. There in front of the house was the work team, already hitched to the big sled. Whatever it was we were going to do wasn't going to be a short, quick, little job. I could tell. Pa was already up on the seat, reins in hand. I reluctantly climbed up beside him, the cold biting at me. I wasn't happy. When I was on, Pa pulled the sled around the house and stopped in front of the woodshed. Pa went into the woodshed and came out with an armload of wood - the wood I'd spent all summer hauling down from the mountain, and then all Fall sawing into blocks and splitting. What was he doing? Finally I said something. "Pa," I asked, "What are you doing?" "You been by the Widow Jensen's lately?" Pa asked. The Widow Jensen lived about two miles down the road. Her husband had died a year or so before and left her with three children, the oldest being eight. Sure, I'd been by, but so what?

Yeah," I said, "Why?" "I rode by just today," Pa said. "Little Jake was out digging around in the woodpile trying to find a few chips. They're out of wood, Matt." That was all he said and then he turned and went back into the woodshed for another armload of wood. I followed him. We loaded the sled so high that I began to wonder if the horses would be able to pull it. Finally, Pa called a halt to our loading, then we went to the smoke house and Pa took down a big ham and aside of bacon. He handed them to me and told me to put them in the sled and wait. When he returned he was carrying a sack of flour over his right shoulder and a smaller sack of something in his left hand. "What's in the little sack?" I asked.

"Shoes, they're out of shoes. Little Jake just hadgunny sacks wrapped around his feet when he was out in the woodpile this morning. I got the children a little candy too. It just wouldn't be Christmas without a little candy."

We rode the two miles to the Jensen's pretty much in silence. I tried to think through what Pa was doing. We didn't have much by worldly standards. Of course, we did have a big woodpile, though most of what was left now was still in the form of logs that I would have to saw into blocks and split before we could use it. We also had meat and flour, so we could spare that, but I knew we didn't have any money, so why was Pa buying them shoes and candy? Really, why was he doing any of this? Mrs. Jensen had closer neighbours than us; it shouldn't have been our concern.

We came in from the blind side of the Jensen house and unloaded the wood as quietly as possible, then we took the meat and flour and shoes to the door. We knocked. The door opened a crack and a timid voice said, "Who is it?" "Lucas Miles, Ma'am, and my son, Matt, could we come in for a bit?" Mrs. Jensen opened the door and let us in. She had a blanket wrapped around her shoulders. The children were wrapped in another and were sitting in front of the fireplace by a very small fire that hardly gave off any heat at all. Widow Jensen fumbled with a match and finally lit the lamp. "We brought you a few things, Ma'am," Pa said and set down the sack of flour. I put the meat on the table. Then Pa handed her the sack that had the shoes in it. She opened it hesitantly and took the shoes out one pair at time. There was a pair for her and one for each of the children - sturdy shoes, the best, shoes that would last. I watched her carefully. She bit her lower lip to keep it from trembling and then tears filled her eyes and started running down her cheeks. She looked up at Pa like she wanted to say something, but it wouldn't come out. "We brought a load of wood too, Ma'am," Pa said. "Let's get that fire up to size and heat this place up." I wasn't the same person when I went back out to bring in the wood. I had a big lump in my throat and as much as I hate to admit it, there were tears in my eyes too. My heart swelled within me and a joy that I'd never known before, filled my soul. I had given at Christmas many times before, but never when it had made so much difference. I could see we were literally saving the lives of these people. I soon had the fire blazing and everyone's spirits soared. The kids started giggling when Pa handed them each a piece of candy and their Mother looked on with a smile that probably hadn't crossed her face for a long time. She finally turned to us. "God bless you," she said. "I know God has sent you. The children and I have been praying that he would send one of his angels to spare us." In spite of myself, the lump returned to my throat and the tears welled up in my eyes again. I'd never thought of Pa in those exact terms before, but after Widow Jensen mentioned it I could see that it was probably true. I started remembering all the times he had gone out of his way for Ma and me, and many others. The list seemed endless as I thought on it. Pa insisted that everyone try on the shoes before we left. I was amazed when they all fit and I wondered how he had known what sizes to get. Then I guessed that if he was on God's errand, the Lord would make sure he got the right sizes. Tears were running down Mrs. Jensen's face again when we stood up to leave. Pa took each of