

THE JUDSON JOURNAL

WINTER EDITION
VOL. 52, NO. 6
DECEMBER 15, 1996

IT WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS EVE CIRCA 1956.

I am returning home from 22nd St. where I did some last minute Christmas shopping, after shining about forty pairs of shoes today. Aunt Martha is in the kitchen putting the finishing touches on her last batch of pizzelles. The entire house has a sweet aroma of anise oil. I wish I could taste one, but I must receive Holy Communion at Midnight Mass tonight. Looking around the first floor of the house there are Christmas balls everywhere the eye can see; even the door knobs are decorated with a crocheted red cover over them. Aunt Martha says, "You are filthy! Go and soak in the tub; scrub under your finger nails and clean behind your ears." Immediately after taking my bath, I sit on my bed looking at the 45rpm records I have collected over the past year and say a prayer that I will get a record player from Santa Claus, then I won't have to bug my cousin Mary Moccio to let me use her record player.

Suddenly, I hear a funny sounding horn honking, bells ringing and the singing of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town." Jumping off of my bed and looking out the window, I see Mario (The Mop) Filagrano in his antique car a 1916 Velie. Sitting "shot gun" is Scuzzie playing the guitar. Jo Jo Santanello is in the back seat next to, Uncle Hatch as Santa Claus. Billy (Pennbrook) Allen is standing on the running board. Aunt Martha invites them into the house. Uncle Al pours each of them a shot of "VO" and they are on their way to

complete their rounds before midnight Mass begins at St. Mary's. Midnight Mass is always packed, so if you want to get a seat you must get there by 11pm, at the latest. I don't have to worry about a seat, because the altar boys always sit up in the front of the church opposite the girls in their white satin gowns with gold tipped angel wings on their backs. Later walking to church down Indiana Ave., the snow already covering the sidewalks, the first people we greet are Annie with her daughters Michelene and Lois talking to the Giannetti's (Minnie, Balloons, Rocky, Annemarie, Billy, Fannie, Bud and Joanna), followed by "Horn", his mother Antoinette and his Uncle Vince. Passing 23rd St. I notice Carpy just closing his grocery store. Emily, and her daughter Mary and her sister's Vera (Chuck), and Mary wave to all of us and join the crowd. Turning up Croskey St. Sam Mattocia and his niece Nettie are coming out of their houses. Sam shakes Uncle Al's hand and says, "Buon Natale". Turning onto 22nd St, we see many neighborhood friends, but the mood was quiet and solemn, as we all quickly climb the steps and enter the church. The sanctuary is decorated with so many red and white poinsettias and the choir is singing "Silent Night". I can hear Olivia's beautiful voice standing out as Marfisa plays the organ. The Solemn High Mass was long but inspiring and as it concludes, the procession begins with Fr. Busco, carrying the

Baby Jesus Statue. He is assisted by Fr. Walker. The angels file out of their pews and then we altar boys follow at the end. The choir is singing "Mio Bambino Vio Divino", as we walk around the church. It is unbelievable the overwhelming aroma of whiskey I can smell as we complete the procession. After the Mass outside of the church, it is a different mood. Everyone is happy and no longer quiet. People are kissing and hugging each other. Leon and Helen Scirocco are greeting the Petruzzelli's (Pat, Sylvia, Jake, Carmen, Barbara, Theresa, and Annie). Ann and Judy DiGiacomo greet Aunt Pansy and Sophie. Uncle Sam Panico is hugging Aunt Anna, Aunt Helen and Sis. Rose Simpson, Jeanette, and the Citro's are talking to Helen and Teet. Soon to be, Fr. Fred Buccafurni is talking with Rosie Pittore, Linda Arnone and Miss Pascuzzi. Mary and her sister Juliette embrace Mom who is talking to Dot Fratini. The Vitale's (Victoria, Theresa, Lois and Vickie) are waving goodbye, as they begin to walk over Clearfield St. making their way home. All the Nuns habits are covered with snow, as they bid their farewells, and walk down 22nd St. toward the convent. I give Margaret Martosella a Christmas hug. On our way home we walk down 22nd St. behind the Lavanga's, Nanni's, Mangini's, Cervone's, Galloway's, Martino's, Gatto's, D'Amore's, Diciano's, and Rizio's. Hopefully when I get home I will be able to play my 45's. Merry Christmas!!!

A NIGHT CAP WITH JOEY PAL

SOUTH PHILLY, OCT. 25, 1996. AFTER AN ALMOST PERFECT SATURDAY OF GOLF, ITALIAN FOOD AND THE COMPANY OF THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD CROWD, IT WAS TIME TO BID OUR FAREWELLS. HOWEVER, BOB GATTO SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD STOP IN AT KATHLEEN'S FOR A NIGHTCAP. A FEW OF US WERE GAME, SO WE VENTURED OVER TO THE CORNER OF 9TH & CHRISTIAN STS. WHEN WE ENTERED THE CLUB WE IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TO LOOK FOR JOEY PAL. WHEN HE FINALLY PASSED US, BG TOLD HIM WHO WE WERE AND JOEY FLIPPED OUT. HE SAID, "I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GUYS ARE REALLY HEAR. PLEASE! STAY UNTIL THIS SET IS OVER." LISTENING TO HIM PERFORM WAS GREAT. IT BROUGHT BACK MANY MEMORIES OF WHEN HE USED TO COACH OUR SINGING GROUP THE "ASCOTS" AT OUR PRACTICE SESSIONS BACK AT THE SONS OF ITALY CLUB IN THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD. JUDGING FROM HIS PERFORMANCE JOEY IS BETTER THAN EVER. ESPECIALLY HIS PHANTOM OF THE OPERA NUMBER. AFTER THE SET

WAS FINISHED, HE WALKED OVER TO US AND ASKED ABOUT THE OLD CROWD. HE WAS VERY GLAD TO HEAR ABOUT EVERYONE, ESPECIALLY ABOUT JULES PETRONE. WE ENJOYED THE MUSIC VERY MUCH AND HAVE DECIDED TO RETURN TO KATHLEEN'S FOR THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DANCE. RIDDING HOME AND NOT WANTING TO LET GO OF THE NOSTALGIC MOOD, (WHICH WAS ENHANCED BY THE COINCIDENTAL MEETING OF GILDA AND GENE LUCARINI AT KATHLEEN'S), I PICTURED JOEY THE WAY HE LOOKED YEARS AGO WHEN HE LIVED AT 3232 N. 27TH ST. I VISUALIZED HIM IN HIS IRIDESCENT RAIN COAT WITH HIS SHORT CROWNED FELT HAT, TILTED TO THE ONE SIDE OF HIS HEAD; WALKING NEXT TO JULES HIS BEST FRIEND. THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED THAT NO MATTER WHERE LIFE BRINGS ME, IT ALWAYS MANAGES TO SOMEHOW BRING ME BACK TO THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD. SO IT IS THE SAME IN MY MIND FOR JOEY PAL; WHO SHALL FOREVER REMAIN RAY "ALTO" ANTONELLI TO ME.

Joey & Mickey, Zaney Musical Entertainment, perform every Wed. & Fri. night at Kathleen's. During the summer they appear in Wildwood.

MIND TEASER:

- 1) What was the name of the bar at the corner of 19th & Somerset.
 - 2) What was the name of the cafe at the corner of 22nd & Fox.
 - 3) What was the name of the Beauty Salon at 2211 w. Toronto St.
- Answers to last publications Mind Teasers. 1.\$5. 2.BLUE WHITE. 3.THE BIG 18.

EVENTS 1996 & 1997

Dec. 18: Christmas Dance, KATHLEEN'S, 9TH & CHRISTIAN STS. 8PM.

Feb. 15: Valentines Social, Call Vi Crupi Stuffo, 609- 234- 9267.

Mar. 19: Murphy's, Corner of Henry & Roxborough Aves, 7pm.

Jun. 14: Annual Picnic, FDR Park, across from Veteran's Stadium, 1 to 7 pm

SATURDAY GOLF OUTINGS, VALLEY BROOK GOLF CLUB. JUL. 19; AUG. 16; SEPT. 20; OCT. 18; NOV. 8.

PRAYER TO SAINT. RITA OF CASIA. MY CONSOLER.

O GLORIOUS ST. RITA, THOU WHO MIRACULOUSLY SHARED IN THE PAINFUL PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, OBTAIN THAT I MAY BEAR THE SORROWS OF THIS LIFE WITH RESIGNATION, AND PROTECT ME IN ALL MY NEEDS.

PUBLISHER:

**AARON ROSSI DOMENICO
PO BOX 58
HADDON HEIGHTS, N.J.
08035**