

POOL REPORT, December 24, 1975, Vail, Colo.

Meandering through the snow, your pool assembled outside Ted Kindel's house shortly after 7 p.m. to await the arrival of the president and family. A small crowd, maybe 15 or 20 folk, stood around and watched. ~~It~~ Preceded, at brief intervals, by Susan and Steven, The President and Mrs. Ford arrived at 7:31, in a brief motorcade, ~~through~~, coming to dinner.

Easily returning the crowd's greetings, Mr. Ford first waved his pipe and then his hand at them. He and the crowd exchanged "Merry Christmas" and he said "have a nice day tomorrow."

Reporters asked the President and Mrs. Ford, who was wearing a black coat trimmed with black fur, about what they wanted for Christmas. At one point the President said "just being here." Mrs. Ford said no presents had yet been opened.

Ringling through the air came the determined shouts of "Merry Christmas" from an upstairs window of a house near the Kindel residence. A group was gathered at the window, and they succeeded ~~at~~ after a time in attracting the President's attention and a returned shout of "Merry Christmas."

Yea, and as the dinner hour had been reached for the President, it had also arrived for the pool, which adjourned to Cyrano's at approximately 7:40, where the friendly management seated us at 8:30. The food was fine.

Caroling was in progress ^(outside) when the pool returned to the Kindel residence ~~at 9:45~~ at 9:45 p.m. It was led by Richard Bass, the president's landlord and the President's tenant, both. He ~~had~~. About 75 persons were singing, carrying ~~some~~ songbooks. They sang loudest when the television lights went on, perhaps because it was then easiest to read the words. They sang "Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful," and "White Christmas." After a time Mr. Bass left, and with him ^{went} most of the group. But perhaps some 25 persons remained, and when, at 10:05 p.m., a voice with a Brooklyn accent called from an upstairs window "Silent Night," they ~~could~~ sang it.

Happily dancing a ~~jazz~~ jig, or perhaps a hornpipe, Santa Claus emerged from the ~~house~~ house a few minutes later. As he leaped about, the President and Mrs. Ford also came out on the front steps. The crowd sang "We Wish You a Merry ~~Christmas~~ Christmas" and the President smiled and swayed with the singing. He joined in for a bit, and plainly enjoyed himself.

Responding ~~then~~ to their good wishes, he said "Thank you all, nice to see you."

In the course of the drive to the church, the pool was advised that Santa was none other than the ubiquitous Mr. Kindel.

Snow was falling, noticeably enough to keep the windshield wipers going on the drive to the Vail Interfaith Chapel. And when the president got out of his car there, he was ~~once~~ once again greeted with "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." He replied "Thank you very much.... God Bless You."

The church ~~is~~ is a simple wooden building, with a small balcony where the musicians sat and performed. It was crowded quite a bit beyond its normal seating capacity, which seemed to be 240. I would estimate the crowd at about four hundred. *The service was Lutheran.*

Mrs. Ford sat to the ~~President's~~ President's left, about four rows from the back. Susan was on his right. Mike and Gail to her right. Steve and Jack and Dr. Ukash in the row behind. With his tan topcoat off, it was possible to see the president attired in a red blazer and a white turtleneck. He wore his glasses through much of the service, and had a couple of spots of windburn on cheeks and upper lip.

After assorted carols, and the Revised Standard Version (I'm pretty sure, and know it wasn't King James) account from Luke ~~2:1-20~~ 2:1-20 of the birth of Jesus, the sermon was preached by Don Simonton, pastor of the Church of the Holy Cross, High Country Lutheran Parish.

Skiing figured prominently in the sermon, as he talked about ski trail design and a prominent local designer Max (Sorry, couldn't catch last name). The designer's main point was to design trails that would have an appeal when a skier looked "back up the trail." And the designer, said, according to pastor Simonton "I design ~~new~~ trails for looking up."

And, he said, "Skiing and Christmas have something in common -- the need to look up if you want to appreciate them fully."

New Mexico, he said, was the place where he first appreciated this fact. A few years ago, walking to church on Christmas Eve ~~in a star-bright sky~~ under a star-bright sky, Rev. Simonton himself looked up and heard angels singing ... "I was transported back through the years.... For the first time I was feeling the spirit of that first Christmas."

Drawing on that experience, he observed that the ^(shepherds) ~~shepherds~~ were the only one aware at the Nativity that anything special was happening. The rest, he said, were 'preoccupied with accommodating and entertaining crowds of visitors.... merry-making in the inn... the kinds of things that are apt to preoccupy us in a place like ~~this~~ this."

A true appreciation of Christmas, he urged, requires looking up. "you may see stars, or, hopefully, snowflakes." (that line got a chuckle.)

He emphasized that it was necessary to do more than look up physically, but spiritually, too.

