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Christmas Spirit Catches Square; Merchants Finish Holiday Trim Job

Laurel, Ribbons, Holly Appear in Windows

NO WRITER ATTRIBUTED

The people that sell holly wreaths and red ribbon are sitting on top of the world today as the Square rushes through the process of decorating itself for Christmas.

Local traders are missing no opportunity to jump on the bandwagon and envelop themselves in the traditional Christmas baubles, in order to catch undergraduate trade before the December 19 rush decimates the cash-bearing population. To set the pace, the city of Cambridge has already decorated its lamp posts. Yesterday workers finished wrapping the poles with strands of laurel and aluminum, and hung the final pine wreath on top. The cost of this decoration is met by the city with the help of the Harvard Square Business Men's Association.

Colored Lights

Leavitt & Pierce is already sporting laurel and one of the few sets of colored lights around, and its front window positively glistens with lighters, cigaret cases, etc.

Briggs & Briggs is set for the usual rush on music. The classics are expected to comprise 70 percent of the holiday trade, as they did last year, and in deference to this, the window is packed with records of symphony and opera. For those who plan to give someone a television set, the Briggs basement is the place.

Scoring the traditional Yuletide decorations, Brine's has devised a crafty exhibit that spins around, demonstrating the camber on an aluminum ski. Of course it's all a trick to get you inside the store to see the stock of winter sporting goods.

Snappy Ties

J. August's windows have just taken shape. No flash or luxury items this year; gadgets, leather cases, etc. are out. Practical wearing apparel is featured in this citadel of tradition, but a new line of ties has sneaked in somehow, and is expected to be successful.

The Coop believes in plenty of wreath and ribbon, and the store has been thoroughly festooned with them. For those who yearn for a big profit check next fall, and for those who want to do most of their shopping in one place, shuttling from department to department, the Coop has what it takes. And it has a fine collection of candles.

Cazmay joined the group in 1912 and became its secretary seven years later. The late Frank Knapp of Leavitt and Peirce joined about the same time and until his death this fall was extremely active in the group.

Since 1910 the association has had more than 30 presidents. Sage was one of the first heads of the group, and in recent years his son, R. Rodney Sage, has held the same, post. Other presidents have included Knapp, George E. Cole, of the Coop, and Richard A. Dow, local real estate man.

Slate is President

The present organization is headed by Bob Slate, proprietor of the Massachusetts Avenue stationery store. He is assisted by more than 35 members who serve in other executive and committee posts. The association works in close cooperation with the Cambridge city government and Chamber of Commerce.

Aside from facing business problems, the Square merchants participate in many social functions. Before each meeting competitors can be found in the bar of the Hotel Continental engaged in good-natured conversation.

After school closes in the spring, the association holds an outing to which most of the members and their employees go. After noon of this day, stores and offices in the Square are closed for business. Athletic events of the day include a golf tournament, horseshoe contest, softball game, and touch football games.

Secret Formula

During the afternoon, however, most of the men can be found around an amply filled punch bowl on the sidelines of the baseball field. Traditionally, Stanley Semers of the University Theatre prepares the mixture with a formula which has sidetracked many celebrants.

At night a banquet is held, at which the prizes for the day are awarded, and a show is held.

Though this annual outing began only 15 years ago, it has since become the highlight of the association's social program.

Parking a Problem

Today the association is especially concerned with the parking and traffic situations in Harvard Square. For the past few years the group has attempted to secure land adjacent to the Square for parking facilities. Lack of adequate space has developed because commuters to Boston leave their cars in the Square for the day and use the subway to travel into town.

The installation of parking meters has lessened this practice but has created problems equally disturbing. A one hour parking limit causes Square shoppers inconvenience. Parking space is still difficult to find, and this lack hinders Suayo business