

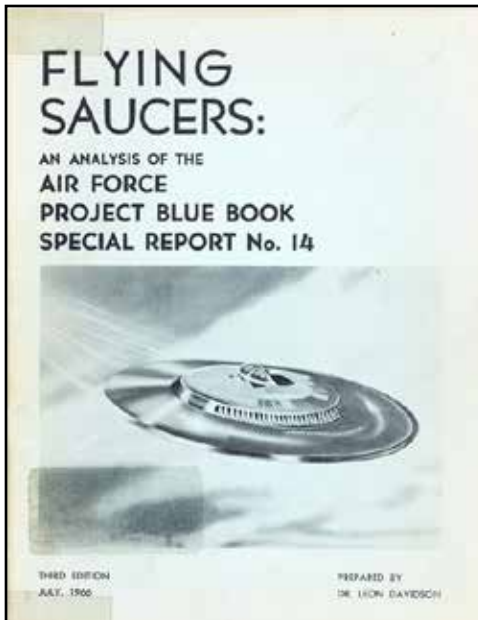
Dec. 14-20, 1969

By Tom Bodle

Mid-December arrived and silver bells decorated the streets of northeast Ohio for it was Christmas time in the city. Yuletide music filled the airwaves of local radio stations and television networks aired Christmas specials. Along with the festive sights and sounds of the season, pop entertainment refused to play second fiddle. Popular folk musicians, Peter, Paul and Mary took top spot on the pop chart as "Leaving on a Jet Plane" rose to number one. Ed Sullivan's Sunday evening television show introduced a family group from Gary, Indiana. Debuting on a national stage, the Jackson Five wowed t.v. viewers with their high energy presentation of "A,B,C" and "I Want You Back." Holiday season always presented an opportunity for movie goers to be entertained by high end productions. The premier of "Hello Dolly" arrived to delight holiday film goers. The highly acclaimed stage musical was brought to the big screen by director Gene Kelly. It starred Barbara Streisand in the title role. Walter Matthau was the co-star in a production that led box office receipts in December and went on to be nominated for eight Oscars, of which it won three. For those who love intrigue, "On Her Majesty's Secret Service" was a major entertainment draw. This film was the sixth in a series of James Bond movies. George Lazenby starred as "007" along with Diana Rigg. A highlight of the week came in late night television. Tiny Tim, a quirky ukulele player, who achieved national attention with his version of "Tip-Toe Through the Tulips" married the love of his life, Miss Vicky. Drawing a television audience of over forty million, the couple was married on Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show" on December 17th.

Major national and international news seemed to be muted by holiday spirit for few events headlined the media. Of note from Britain came the abolition of the death penalty by Parliament in the United Kingdom. In the United States, "Project Blue Book" was closed by the Air Force. The project had been established in the early 1950's to investigate unidentified flying objects. Such investigations would be delegated to other agencies in the future.





Snow was falling as students entered the halls of St. Joe's this last week of school before Christmas break, but oddly no carols were heard. On December 15th, the lyrics "Girl...I hear you're getting married... this time you're really sure" could be heard from the Student Council office. Yes, in the midst of Christmas time, the St. Joe Student Council was presenting a pop concert with national recording artist "the Brooklyn Bridge." In the late 1960's, St. Joe's mixers had been renowned throughout northeast Ohio. Some of the best bands in the area performed in the "Purple Palace" to overflowing crowds. Our student leadership wanted to take the next step and bring a rock concert to our stage. "The Brooklyn Bridge" gained national attention in 1968 with their first album that featured "The Worst That Could Happen" and "Welcome Me Love." In 1969, they produced their second album for Buddah Records. St. Joe's auditorium provided the size of venue that complemented their needs. Popular dance band "The Charades" would be their lead in. But that snow that began early in the day continued and intensified, thwarting the walk-up crowd that was expected. By the 7:30 p.m. start, traffic in Cleveland made travel impossible. Those who battled the elements to get to St. Joe were thoroughly entertained and "the Brooklyn Bridge" didn't fail to deliver. Financially, the event was a setback to the Student Council budget and prevented sponsoring another such concert.



Winter sports continued to dominate activities going into the holiday break. The Viking basketball squad travelled to the always inhospitable "Eagle's Nest" at St. Edward High School. In a physical, hotly contested game, the Vikings emerged with a 79-74 victory. While the hoopsters were in Lakewood, the wrestlers drove up Highland Road to take on Class A power Richmond Heights. This match did not require any late heroics, as was needed in all previous matches. John Storey's bunch defeated the Spartans 28-11.



Just as a concert began this last week of school, so a concert concluded the week. The St. Joseph Glee Club, Chorale and combined Villa Angela and St. Joseph chorus gave the beautiful holiday gift of Christmas music on Saturday night.

Friday December 19th was a date long awaited by Viking students. It signaled the end of a very busy academic time and ushered in two weeks of a much anticipated vacation. On this last day, the editors of the school paper, the Norseman, distributed a memorable December issue. A red overprint of the Magi looking upon the star over a simple manger covered the stories on the front page. Scripted in the right corner was the wish "Merry Christmas" from the staff. Nothing more succinct can be offered today, fifty years later.

Merry Christmas from the Viking Chronicles.