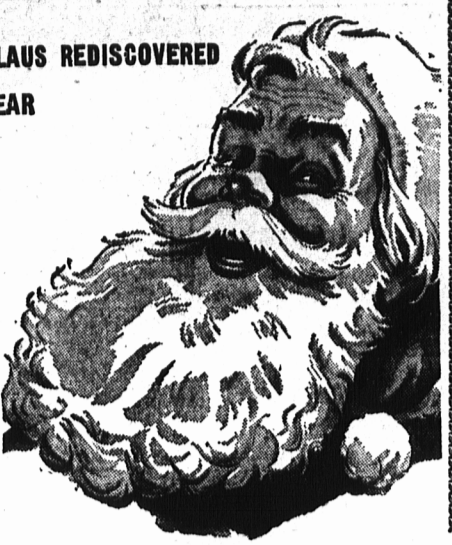


SANTA CLAUS REDISCOVERED EVERY YEAR AT THIS SEASON

B.T.R. IN THE OTTAWA CITIZEN



In a skeptical era, Santa Claus is still going strong. The evidence is all around on Christmas Eve. One needs only to relax and listen until it is quiet in a child's bedroom, so that he can begin to fill a stocking and place the parcels at the Christmas tree.

It is quite plain, as plain at least as the nose on Rudolf the Reindeer, that if an idea possesses the dreams of a million children and the thoughts of a million adults at the same time, then it has something in it that is immortal.

That is perhaps the complete answer to the perennial dispute over Santa Claus. As a fable, does he do harm as well as good? Of course, he does some harm. An immortal idea is subject to abuse.

It may be that we are only just discovering Santa Claus again. He has been rediscovered many times and he has always been a controversial figure. It is easier, as Dr. Brock Chisholm found, to praise than to criticize Santa Claus.

Praise flows past without a second thought, while criticism sticks in the minds of Christmas devotees. We were brought up to think that Charles Dickens has best expressed the spirit of Christmas. There is no doubt that his Christmas Carol will endure for a long time, though not as long as Santa himself.

But now we are re-discovering Dickens. We have stumbled on the truth his fame rests on the simple fact that, in an age of harsh confusion and social striving, it was Dickens who re-discovered Santa Claus for his generation.

No one needs to defend Santa. He is as fabulous as any character in mythology. He lives in the spruce bluffs of the atomic age just as happily as he did in the oak groves of the Druids. He is as enduring as the divine spark in the human heart and mind.

In the early Canadian era, which we all remember, it was fashionable to think that he brought gifts for use as well as for pleasure. Many a father will honor the Canadian tradition by expressing incredulous surprise and unbounded appreciation for a study tie that he will not dare wear to his office.

Nothing dampens the cheer of the occasion so much as a sour face at the ceremony of opening the presents, and the Canadian child soon learns that one of the great secrets of Christmas is the discovery that gifts are appreciated; not the gift that lends enchantment to Christmas.

No one needs to defend Santa. Yet if he needs defending, it is obvious that he has become in our times the new spirit of invention as well as the old spirit of joy. Even now the Russians may be planning to adopt him, for the stores have been full of evidence in recent days that the draughting boards of Santa's factories still bring forth fresh miracles.

may have vanished and become an extinct species, but the inflated toys of plastic stand three and four feet high and defy the efforts of a child of the twentieth century to knock them down.

One of the real secrets of Santa Claus is not his influence on impressionable children. He may find it unwise to introduce himself into the comic strips and encounter the onslaughts of the psychologists and the parliamentarians.

But he is bound to survive forever as an influence upon adults whose shells have hardened. That is where he does some of his best work. There is always the danger that something of Scrooge has been imprisoned within the shell of everyone of us.

Yet on the days leading up to Christmas, by some magic the windows of daily life are opened. The spoken words of "Merry Christmas" are heard on the lips of everyone.

No one escapes the vast activity of Christmas, or the transformation that sets across the landscape of daily life.

The preparations that have been going on have now reached the climax. They are a tribute to Santa Claus. Even if he is only an idea, he proves that ideas are the strongest thing in men's lives.

Christmas is the time for family get-togethers. One of the best ways to make these gatherings memorable for all concerned is to engage in games which the whole group can play.

A nice one to start off with would be a Sugar Plum Hunt. Have one member of the family hide Christmas candies ahead of time in various nooks and corners around the house.

At a given signal everyone starts hunting and gathering the pieces. The one who gathers the greatest number would be given a prize.

The Christmas Puzzle is another good one to get things going. Look through some magazines, which are filled with pictures of Santa Claus at this time of year.

Cut out enough of these to go around, paste them on stiff cardboard, and cut them into pieces. Then put each group of pieces in a separate paper bag.

At the signal, everyone opens a bag and starts putting the puzzle together.

The Xmas Scramble Contest is good for a group with older children in it. This is simply a contest to see who can unscramble a group of words the fastest.

Just for fun, see if you can work out the following — astna, erireden, ehsgil, dyncna, gosiknet, erte, trepsen, hupnc, alsorc, and nhorb.

Is There A Santa Claus?

(This editorial which has justly become timeless, was written in The New York Sun in 1897 by Francis Pharos Church in answer to a letter from a little eight year old girl named Virginia O'Hanlon, who had been told by some of her friends that there was no Santa Claus.)

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see.

They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless worlds about him.

As measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound.

And give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus!

It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance. To make tolerable this existence, we should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight.

The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished. Not believe in Santa Claus!

You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus.

But even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus.

The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn?

Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a well covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart.

Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond.

Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever.

A thousand years from now, Virginia, may, ten times ten, thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Royal Pledge The year 1947 brought her most memorable broadcast from Charlottetown. She and Princess Margaret had accompanied their parents to South Africa, and it was during this tour that the Queen celebrated her twenty-first birthday.

Her Majesty Pictured On Visit Here

Queen to Broadcast Christmas Day



Although this will be Her Majesty's first Christmas Message, the Queen is an experienced broadcaster. She began at the age of fourteen, during the war, when she spoke from a room at Windsor during the BBC Children's Hour and sent a message to the children of the Commonwealth—especially to those who had been evacuated from Britain to Canada and the U.S.A.

No one who heard that broadcast will forget the surprise ending of it. Princess Elizabeth, as she then was, announced that her sister (who was then) was sitting in the room with her and that they were going to give the closing message together.

Listeners then heard a spontaneous "Come on, Margaret!" followed by the voices of the two girls calling "Good night, children".

Four years later that same Princess Elizabeth, with her destiny clear, was taking an increasingly important place on public occasions, and we heard her launching a new battleship. For this engagement she had for the first time made an official journey out of London without her parents.

The Queen was nineteen when the second world war ended, and soon she began to make more and more public appearances. And as she grew in the nation's knowledge and affection, so too she grew in modest assurance at the microphone.

We began to know and to like her voice—clear, composed, and remarkably like her mothers.

Now comes the special broadcast. At Christmas we shall hear our Queen in the first year of her new reign, giving a message from her home to her family of nations.

Santa Through The Years

It's little wonder that Saint Nick is especially generous to the American people. History proves that the Americans have done a lot for Saint Nick!

They have given him a new name, a new face and figure, and a new means of transportation. The original European version of Saint Nick pictured him as a tall angular man who rode on a bony gray mare.

Both the horse and Saint Nick looked as if they hadn't had a good meal in some time. The early English settlers in this country started giving Saint Nicholas his "New Look".

The English children adopted the legendary Christmas figure from the Dutch, but the English children had trouble pronouncing "Saint Nickolous". Somehow the name changed to "Santa Kalouf", and finally it was corrupted to "Santa Claus."

However, this was only the beginning. In 1809 Washington Irving, in his "Knickerbocker's History of New York," wrote of the Saint as the guardian of New York City.

Irving described Saint Nick as a jolly fellow with a broad-brimmed hat and huge breeches. He taught Saint Nick to smoke a long pipe, and, in the story, replaced his shuffling hay-burner with a trim wagon.

A short time later, Saint Nicholas' transportation was aided by Clement Moore in his famous poem, "The Visit from Saint Nicholas," written in 1822.

Moore, a professor of divinity in a New York theological seminary, gave Saint Nick a sleigh, twinkling eyes, cheeks like roses, nose like a cherry, and a round like belly.

Today's Santa Claus is by no means streamlined, but he is a far cry from the lean, ascetic, somberly dressed fellow who, for centuries, on Christmas Eve, guided his mare through the streets of Europe.



AN AGE-OLD STORY RETOLD. "She brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger."

Christmas gifts

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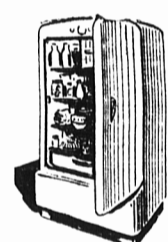
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Games For All Make Christmas Family Party

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Ancient Church Bells Still Summon Village

A pair of ancient church bells, brought to Frankenthuth, Mich., from Bavaria shortly after Frankenthuth was founded as an Indian mission, has been calling the congregation of St. Lorenz to Christmas eve services for more than a 100 years.

Ninety-five per cent of the residents of the small community are members of the church, earning the village the title of "the most Christian community in the United States."



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ROSEMARY for Remembrance

The rosemary shrub, symbol of fidelity and constancy, was once supposed to possess many occult virtues. Hamlet's Ophelia said, "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance." The fact that Rosemary blooms at Christmas has introduced it into celebration of this feast.