



VOLUME 1
ISSUE 3

Jingle Press

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By Bill McKee, Editor; *Jingle Press*

From Santa's Garden What's in your toy bag? Lead coated toys perhaps? Or, could there be other poorly made items, as corporations cut costs, outsource and maximize profits; acceptable risks, I think they call it. Acceptable to whom? Short term profits, with little thought to the safety of the children, can not be acceptable in the world of Santa Claus.

Have you become more cautious of what you select; checking the source more closely, scrutinizing the 'workshop' which produces or procures the items for you? Do you talk with parents, out of earshot of the children, voicing your cautions, solely for the safety of all the children?

The sacred connection between Santa Claus and the children comes with great responsibilities, as many of you already know. Protecting the innocence of childhood, and the futures of children, must come in many ways and take many forms.

With the recent rash of recalls, what is safe to give to children this year? Santa has always had to be savvy when it comes to toys. Now, it has become critical for the very safety of the

children. Lives and futures face real risks, daily. There are alternatives. Look for them. A quick search on the internet turns up many offerings and varieties.

Perhaps this Christmas would be a good opportunity for Santas to let the representatives of the children be made aware of Santas concern for the safety of the children. You know, those Congressmen and Senators who make the laws and oversee the government of all the people. Perhaps you have contacted them already? Phone calls from Santa can be powerful things! Naturally, toy manufacturers should be made aware of Santas concerns, always.

Do we keep silent, giving quiet consent for the status quo? Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said it best, I think; "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." So, make the children matter!

This is the final issue of the Jingle Press for 2007. We wish ALL a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Feed the Reindeer well and pack the sleigh, we are off on another journey, as every day should be. May your travels be safe and your journeys interesting.

Bill McKee Santa@TheSantaClaus.com

RU Ready For Christmas? by Kris Kringle

It's almost Halloween and if you haven't already started your Christmas preparation, you are already behind.

There are a lot of Santa's out there who just wing it. They think that looking the part is all there is to being Santa or that their years of experience will carry them through yet another season. If so, you are not doing justice to the red suit. Now is the time to be preparing. Make sure your suit is up to par. Look it over with a careful eye. Check for soiled areas that the cleaners may have missed. Check for areas that need to be repaired or just touched up to ensure

Remember This at CHRISTMAS TIME. According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, while both the male and female reindeer grow antlers in the summer each year, male reindeer drop their antlers at the beginning of winter. This is usually late November to mid-December. Female reindeer retain their antlers until after they give birth in the spring. Therefore, according to EVERY historical rendition depicting Santa's reindeer, EVERY single one of them, from Rudolph to Blitzen, had to be a girl. We should've known. ONLY women would be able to drag a fat man in a red velvet suit all around the world in one night and not get lost. *Keep Peace in your Heart.*
Santa Somerville Mike

Cont'd

13th Founder's Luncheon

By **Santa Nellie Burke** OC Chapter,
President So. Calif. State Director

The Orange County Chapter of AORBS will host the 13th Annual Founder's Luncheon on Sunday, January 20th, 2008 at the Knott's Berry Farm Resort Hotel.

The first luncheon was held on the third Sunday of January, 1995. Ten Santas got together for lunch to talk about a commercial they had made together in August, 1994. Don't you wish you could have been at that luncheon and listen to the comments about their commercial making experience? This historic occasion was the beginning of AORBS as we know it today.

AORBS has grown due to the interest and joy of being a Real Bearded Santa and the opportunity to be in a brotherhood of gentlemen sharing the same philosophy of being kind and bringing joy to one and all.

In July our chapter was asked to secure a venue for the upcoming Founder's Luncheon. Fortunately, we have a former mayor of Buena Park, currently serving on the City Council, who has many contacts and helped provide us with what we needed. Following completion of this assignment, we were then asked to organize and arrange the entire event. Being asked so nicely, we agreed to work as a group to make this the best reunion luncheon ever.

In order to communicate information about the luncheon to the members we put together a web site. Here we have made it easy to download the registration form to be filled out and mailed to our registration committee. We would like to thank Santa Kevin Scott, Mrs. Ginny Claus, and Elf Adam for their diligent work on getting the site together. It can be found at: www.oc-aorbs.com where you will find a link to the luncheon information page.

We also looked at a better photo book for those Santas wishing to purchase a "Memory Book" of the event. We have secured a professional photographer to take head shots and group shots. He will also be shooting video which can be purchased separately. You will have an opportunity to purchase pictures for your use, including that professional photo you were looking for to put on your web site, business card or brochure.

The Knott's Berry Farm Resort Hotel is a beautiful facility with lots of room for Santa's needs. They are the host hotel for the luncheon and are offering rooms at a reduced rate. Your reservations can be made directly with the hotel reservation desk. This information can be found on our web site noted above. When making your reservations, tell them you are with AORBS for the discounted rate.

We already have commitments from some vendors and agents who will attend the luncheon. If you know of, or would like to be a vendor, please contact me at: santanelle@mac.com. This luncheon is a culmination of our busy season bringing joy to many boys and girls, young and old.

We, the Orange County Chapter of AORBS, hope that you will be part of the 13th Annual Founder's Luncheon to be held at the birthplace of this great organization.

Every year I leave the luncheon with a renewed joy of being Santa. I am sure other Santas share that enthusiasm.

By **Santa Nellie** (Nelson Burke)
"Practice the Spirit Daily"

Cont'd from RU Ready

it doesn't come apart during the season.

Try the suit on and see how you look with your new hairstylist or bleach job, or even just see what you look like in your wardrobe. Have you gained or lost weight? How do the additions you made to your wardrobe look? Do you have current pictures of yourself? Do you know what the new toys are and what the popular toys are? If you don't know the answer, you had better check it out. The kids will surely be asking about them. You will need to know what they do and the age limit for each. Do they need batteries or parental supervision? Are you ready for the questions children are going to ask you? Are you prepared for the parents? What would you say to a child who complained you didn't bring them what they asked for last year?

You need to prepare yourself now. You can't plan for every situation, but you can be better prepared. Ask yourself some difficult questions that children may pose to you. Not the easy ones like where do you live, and do you live there year round, or maybe they want to know what the reindeer eat. Have you ever thought about the questions of how you get into their house. What can you say to the children that won't make them paranoid or scare them. How do you get down the chimney; what if they don't have a chimney; how do all the gifts fit and how do you carry them all?

Parents can also pose some interesting and difficult questions. For instance, they may ask you about private parties in the presence of the child. They may even ask your price in front of the child. What do you do or say then? How about the parent who keeps talking for the child? What do you do?

This time of year is my busiest because I am out researching toys and talking to lots of children. I even gather a few local children and have them help me research the toys; asking me lots of difficult questions. Each year this gives me additional insight and new information. I use whatever means I can to be prepared.

If you didn't start in July, you are at a disadvantage. I like having things planned out ahead of time. I make sure and mark out time on my calendar during the month of December for personal time. This allows me to gain my sanity back and have a short breather during the busy season. I suggest you create your own personalized checklist. If you would like to share some of the things you have learned, this is a great venue. Hopefully this will get you started if you haven't already. I am always glad to share what I have learned and assist those who are looking to better themselves and want to present a better image. Like anything else in this world, the more you practice, the better you get. Remember, you are not just representing yourself, you are representing all Santas everywhere and the image of Santa that are on the minds of everyone everywhere.

Al "Santa" Horton santastime@gmail.com

Southeast Salutations and felicitations from the State Director of the Virginias (VA&WV)

I thought it might be best if we State Directors began to introduce ourselves to the membership, and there would be no better place than in the Jingle Press!

First of all, my wife Carolyn and I are Mr. and Mrs. Claus year-round, like many of you!

Our primary charities are <http://www.Santa-America.org> and <http://www.OperationTroopAid.org>.

I was a small Santa in 1989, but now we do home and business Christmas parties. I am looking to do print and commercial work as well and of course what Santa wouldn't love to do a parade! We do have four commercial accounts where we stroll in open-air shopping centers and greet shoppers and their children, giving out small candy canes to all we meet.

In addition to several traditional combinations, we can appear in pool, beach, or cruise wear, casual or business attire, or evening gown and tuxedo combinations! We are ready for any event, any season! We even have 68 inch red and white umbrellas! Not only do we have to turn business away every year, our commercial work funds all of our charity work which we do year-round.

I have been a theatre professional since 1972 and upon the Throne of Saint Nicholas since 1979! Time flies when you are having fun!

I served under Ronald Reagan's administration in U.S. Air Force Intelligence as a crypto-logic linguist. I am pretty rusty, but I have learned many languages (13) over the years. Around the same time, Carolyn served in the U.S. Army as a Hawk missile mechanic. She is very handy with maintenance and helping make improvements to the sleigh!

I have had a real beard since 2000. My early years were as a designer bearded Santa. Carolyn became a Mrs. Claus when I grew my beard. We are also employed full-time in non-Santa industries.

As far as activity here in the Virginias, we are planning a gathering of Santas sometime in February or March in Fredricksburg, Virginia. Currently we are looking at two historic bed and breakfasts, one of which may be our center of operations. It is my hope to serve our Virginian brothers as a conduit, to help them achieve their goals if I can, and facilitate contact with AORBS as a whole.

I look forward to many great discussions on ElfNET! I seek to learn as much as I can, and share what I know!

Santa Paul Sheehan



from the President's Desk

It's been an interesting busy 2 months as we prepare for the convention/conference. Wow it's mid October and Christmas is just around the corner. ARE YOU READY? Do you have everything you need for your suit? Your marketing materials should be out and your boots shined.

Last week I was fortunate enough to attend the Santa Claus Academy in Atlanta. Gary Casey founder and owner of Santa Atlanta the largest Santa Claus business in the USA, has teamed up with several Santas and developed a new interactive training experience for the Santas to learn. This course is alive and fresh this is not a boring lecture series that you are falling asleep. They have included a segment where you wear your suit and a panel of instructors offers suggestions to improve your appearance.

So what is the number one thing Santas talk about? Hair care or should I say beard care to be exact. Not to worry they have it covered. They'll tell you everything you need to know right down to the art of bleaching your own hair.

There is even a professional to teach you make up tips that will make your appearance pop in photographs. You won't be sleeping in this class they have called in the U.S. Special Forces to get you ship shape. Between Class segments they have you up learning low impact exercises for a healthier Santa. You'll even learn simple exercises you can do while sitting in your throne chair waiting for children.

All in all I found the course very exciting, no need to pout you'll have your chance to go to the Academy. Just after the New Year you can expect to hear more on the locations and dates for The Santa Claus Academy. They'll be coming to your area soon.

While all the regions have been having events The Northeast Region has been underserved. You may not of known it but the Northeast area has been lacking a Director for a while. But that has been remedied recently Charlie Allen from Connecticut has been chosen to be the Regional Director. He has hit the ground running and we can expect exciting things ahead. Be prepared to raise your hand and volunteer as he'll be looking for state directors in the region. If your interested please drop him an email to have yourself considered. We are also still in need of a Secretary on the Board. So any one interested please contact me and we'll consider you for the spot.

As I write this message I am on an airplane (the reindeer are resting for the big night) in route to Overland Park, Kansas. Jeff Germann, Bob Elkin, Tom Irving, Bruce Long are also in route to Overland Park where we'll meet Steve Miner, David Mattson and John Scheuch. We have meetings planned all week to finalize the plans for Discover Santa 2008. We'll be meeting with City Officials and potential sponsors. It should prove to be an exciting week. We anticipate wrapping up the final details of the convention and having the information to you by early to mid November.

I'm also happy to report that the membership elf reports adding another 73 members to our ranks. When I return I fully expect that the Board of Directors will be able to approve the By-laws and the Election procedures at their final BOD meeting for the year. Things are going well and AORBS continues to grow.

Well as I close let me remind you that soon we will shut down AORBS so that we can get on with the business of Christmas. May your Christmas be joyous and bright and your New Year prosperous. Merry Christmas and I'll see you in 2008.

Nicholas
President



by Papa Santa

The Caribbean Princess left port in Ft. Lauderdale Florida on 16 September, 2007, for what she thought was a routine 7 day Western Caribbean Cruise. However, little did the passengers and crew know, the Princess had been boarded and taken over by 32 Real Bearded Santas from the Amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas.

Everywhere on the ship, from the dining rooms to the pool, to the comedian's stand-up show, Santa was the center of attention. Passengers who brought their cameras expecting to get pictures of sand and surf filled up their cameras with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Many of them saying they had to have a picture with Santa to take back home to their kids and grandkids, with plans to make them behave; because they know Santa so well, they vacationed with him.

The 32 Santas, every one of them a member of AORBS. The highlight of the cruise was when thirty-three Santas met at the Atrium, for their group photo. That's right, 32 Real Bearded Santas from AORBS began the cruise, but 33 Real Bearded Santas from AORBS finished the cruise.

One of the passengers, who just happened to be on the ship at that time, had already been a Santa for 4 years. He sports a real beard. Santa Tom Petry was so taken in by all the fun the AORBS Santas had, he had to join in.

He wasn't the only one who enjoyed having Santa on the ship. When we all filed into the Atrium for the group photo, passengers were everywhere with their cameras to get pictures of the people who made their cruise a once-in-a-lifetime memory.

As steel drums played Christmas music with a Caribbean twist, hundreds of passengers lined the railings and stairways to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus and get their picture with him and the missus.

This was the the culmination following a week of adventures ashore; bumming on beaches which included Santa standing and posing in shorts and sandals for photos with passengers. Wherever Santa went to play, swim or shop, he was the star of the moment.

In Cozumel, he was greeted with shouts of "Ho Ho Ho, Santa!," by the Mexican locals. He was also called "Papa Noel." In Jamaica, everyone called him "Moses."

Santa had a very busy week. Not only did he shop and bum around on beaches, Santa and Mrs. Claus went snorkeling over the second largest reef in the world. He took a trip in a

Santa takes a Sea Cruise



Passengers throng to get a photo of the Santas as they assembled in the Atrium for a group photo.



Papa Santa poses with Jonaye from Georgia.

Photo opps everywhere you turned.



Santas and Mrs. Clauses enjoy fellowship and dancing while on the cruise.



Santa takes a Sea Cruise

submarine, rode on a banana boat, sailed on catamarans, swam with Stingrays and climbed a waterfall in Jamaica.

And Santa ate. There was food around the clock; hamburgers at midnight, ice cream in the afternoon, 24 hour buffet lines and formal dining as well. No matter where Santa ate, or when, he always had to put his fork down to pose for pictures. One can only wonder how Santa put on an extra 7-10 lbs. By all accounts, that is what a cruise ship will add to the average person. Santa managed to do as well, even with all the family photographers asking him to pose for their cameras.

Papa Santa

Real Bearded Santa - Professional Suit - Twinkle in His Eye!
Celebrating the Reason for Christmas, All Year Long

santa@papasanta.net
www.papasanta.com

Jeff Germann
 417-766-4671
 Vice President
 Amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas

Letter received from a passenger on the cruise ship:

So Many Santas
 Tuesday, 25 Sept., 2007

We just returned home from a cruise on the Caribbean Princess which included 32 Santas, plus nearly as many Mrs. Clauses. We sure had fun talking with and taking photos. We couldn't get over how creative some of their "everyday" Santa attire is! My 88 year old father really enjoyed having his picture taken with some of the jolly gentlemen.

And gentlemen they are! All were very accommodating about having their pictures taken and talking with everyone. It definitely put an interesting spin on the cruise!

Patricia Schultz
 Newfane NY



I'm the Santa on the left. The passenger next to me with a cane is 88-years-old, Richard Boyd of Newfane, NY. The gentleman in the dark blazer, is Don. The comedian on the ship teased Don about having a "Santa Starter Kit."



This is Papa Santa at the comedy show.

I think the comedian laughed harder at us than we laughed at him! (and he WAS funny!) This was the best cruise we have ever taken (this was our 5th cruise). We are planning another with the Santas for 2009. Maybe we could plan a cruise for the off-year, alternating with the convention. The pictures just don't show the fantastic time we had. We had so many people come up to us and tell us that "we MADE the cruise for them". I actually have email addresses from passengers who want us to inform them of the next cruise so they could also book it. One woman said she wants to take her whole family to see all the Santas on the next cruise. I had to promise that I would keep her informed. All I could say is, you had to be there. We met some fantastic friends and learned a lot. It is mind-boggling to imagine the number of countries that the pictures of Santa and Mrs. Claus will be sent to. They will be all over the world. IT WAS AWESOME. Santa Mike and Mrs. Claus "A Visit From Santa" www.AVisitFromSanta.net West Seneca, New York

Some of the Santas and their wives pose for a photo with a member of the cruise staff.





Palm Tree Santas

The members of AORBS in the state of Florida have adopted the moniker of "Palm Tree Santa's." We invite you to look at our own state website, created by Santa Jim Williams, <http://www.palmtreesantas.com>. We are asking all of our Florida members to send information to Santa Jim at santa@tamantas.com. We would like to have all our Florida members listed, including a picture, your website address and/or your contact information.

We had a very successful gathering and lunch on August 28, with 23 in attendance. We dined at the new Grillsmiths in Tampa, a culinary delight. We swapped stories until around 3 p.m.

and then adjourned for a photo. Unfortunately, a few of our members had to leave early and missed the photo. We had members travel from Ft. Meyers in the south to Gainesville in north to share lunch and join in the festivities; a testament to just how much FUN we all have at these get-togethers!

In September we hosted the IUSC workshop. In attendance were 35 Santas and Mrs. Clauses. The greatest part to most, was it gave us the opportunity to party, Santa style! On Friday night before the workshop, many of us gathered at Joe's Crab House for some good eats and great fellowship. Saturday night following the workshop, several of us descended on Cody's Road House. It was 6 p.m. on a busy Saturday night.



Thank goodness I had made preliminary contact with Matt, the manager. Within a few minutes, they made room at a couple of big tables for all of us. I don't have to tell anyone what a hit we were with the huge restaurant crowd!

Our next gathering will be on the first or second Saturday in January, 2008. We haven't finalized plans, but are calling this our "Celebrate Our Season" luncheon. We will all gather together and swap stories about the glorious couple of months just ahead that belong to us, the Santas, Mrs. Clauses and the Elves. The Magic of Christmas!

Santa Bob Elkin,
Florida State Director

Labor Day Parade

By *Santa* Clarence Gillispie

I had forgotten both my gloves and belt, but the show had to go on. Being the time of year it was, the Labor Day Parade, I don't think anyone noticed. We were having too much fun! Maybe another Santa in the crowd noticed. The weather was also very wierd and unusual for that time of year. It was around 90 degrees and I nearly passed out. The firemen brought me more water and I keep going. I handed out a bushel basket of Hersey Kisses to the happy crowd in my Cowboy/Country Santa regalia.



Santa Clarence
SantaClarence@gmail.com



Kringle's Wisdom

So You Want To BE Santa Claus

By Kris Kringle

The other day I was approached by a young man asking me what he needed to do to be able to play Santa. I started going through my standard speech about being jolly and really enjoying the activity and being energized by the children around you when it struck me. I could talk to him for hours and probably just scratch the surface of things to know and pass on. I stopped and asked him what type of information he was looking for. This was how the conversation went ... Do you have to be a certain height? No. Do you need to be fat or large? Again, no. Do you have to grow a real beard? Well it helps, but no, you don't need a real beard to be Santa. This conversation continued like this until he was satisfied and we had covered things from outfit costs, through where to appear. I was not at all satisfied with the information he left with and wished I could have given him more. I guess I did satisfy his curiosity though. This prompted me to write down a brief outline of what I felt a first-time Santa-to-BE should know. This seemed to be a mistake, as I spent the better part of 2 hours writing a list of 127 important tidbits of

information that needed to be passed on. I set this aside to give the old brain a rest. Two days later I revised this list to 57 important facts that a first time Santa should know but, still not right. It was shorter, but not very comprehensive. Sometimes I would prefer one topic on the list, then another and then another. Soon the list grew, exceeding my original list. Once again I sat down and tried to reduce the size. Finally I just gave up, leaving almost 150 items on this list. However, I have broken this list into different headings/sections. One topic is the knowledge that you need to know so you won't spoil the magic of Christmas for the Children. This is a very magical time of year and it is our responsibility to keep the magic we are entrusted with alive for all. Another section I call animation. This includes the movement, voice and posture, so we don't scare the young ones and to be able to represent the Jolly Ole Elf properly. The next section has to do with physical preparation and appearance. This deals with body odor and condition of Santa's hair, beard and suit. Then there is the topic which has to do with the different outfits Santa wears and the different manifestations of the Spirit of Christmas. Other topics to cover are the ethics of Santa; ones approach to health and safety for both you, the Santa, and the folks around you. I am asking all Santas out there to help me with this project. If you wouldn't mind being a part of my next article, just eMail your thoughts and ideas to santastime@gmail.com. I will combine them all into a single, comprehensive list and publish it for all to have. This will help give

us all some guidelines which are truly useful. If it is large enough, I might make it into a pamphlet which could be distributed to all. If you have any questions, thoughts or bits of information you would like researched and shared with others, please feel free to use me as the conduit. I would also love to start running pictures of various Santa attire so others can see and help generate more ideas. Keep that twinkle in your eye, And that jovial laugh in your heart ... the children enjoy this as much as we do. Al "Santa" Horton santastime@gmail.com



Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.

Eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote a letter to the editor of New York's Sun, and the quick response was printed as an unsigned editorial Sept. 21, 1897. The work of veteran newsman Francis Pharcellus Church has since become history's most reprinted newspaper editorial, appearing in part or whole in dozens of languages in books, movies, and other editorials, and on posters and stamps.

"DEAR EDITOR: I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.' Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?"

Signed, *Virginia O'Hanlon*
115 WEST NINETY-FIFTH STREET

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except [what] 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 world 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 may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil 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, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Surgeon Ousters Elves

I had a humorous incident happen to me while being in the operation room recently that I would like to share.

I was diagnosed with Spinal Stenosis, requiring surgery. My doctor was aware of my being a professional, full-bearded Santa and promised to get me back in shape for the Christmas season.

As I was being wheeled into the operating room, I noticed that the doctor was dressed in Blue and a number of assistants were dressed in Green.

I heard the doctor say in a loud voice: "OK, all of you Elves, get out of my operating room!"

The whole staff in the operating room burst into laughter. It was nice to know that my surgeon has a sense of humor and that the presence of Santa Claus can bring out laughter even in an operating room.

The operation was a success and I am able to stand up straight. I can even sleep in a bed now after seven months of sleeping in an office chair with my head on a table.

Santa Charles Allen
Rocky Hill, CT



by Lou Knezevich

Soon we will be donning the "Red Suits" with eager anticipation of a new holiday season. For some of us it will mean revisiting the joy we see in a child's eyes as they tell us their Christmas wishes. For those first-timers this will be a magical journey into the mystical world of Santa Claus.

With the season approaching I was going over my "Things To Do List" when I saw my notation about "Fix the zipper in the Santa jacket" and "Don't leave home without it." I'm passing on some tips because I'm sure we have all had some costume problems or we have forgotten something needed for our Santa Claus portrayal. I'm hopeful passing on these tips will help you avoid some possible problems. We strive so hard to look the part and never think what may go wrong to spoil how we look or mar our performance.

Every Santa needs to heed the motto "Be prepared," especially when it comes to the things you may need to "Be prepared."

The first item of business on my list in early October is to inventory all costumes and accessories. I check each costume for wear and make any repairs, such as tightening up buttons, sewing any loose ends, polishing my boots or maybe sending an item to the cleaners.

I also list and check each accessory so I know I have each piece for that particular costume. I now have a pair of red suspenders for each costume because I learned a lesson the hard way. At one of my jobs I changed into my costume at the location and found, to my dismay, I had forgotten my suspenders. My costume trousers were way too big around the waist and the elastic was well used, so I sat a lot and walked with my elbows tight against my hips. I was very uncomfortable for the entire evening fearing my pants would fall down! I vowed that would not happen again. The next day

I bought a pair of suspenders for each costume. I make sure I have gloves, glasses, belts and boots for each costume. I interchange boots between costumes, so I am sure to note that on my list so I do not forget them if I will be changing at the site.

I type and print out, from my computer, the costume inventory. I include a line next to each item where I can put a check mark as I pack and double-check my list the night before the event. I find this system works very well, especially if I have multiple jobs which require costume changes. I also like using the list to help keep from forgetting items, especially when I'm rushed to do things.

My other notation on my "Things to Do List" is "Don't leave home without it."

Now you're probably thinking I'm going to talk about a wallet sized piece of plastic that makes spending easy and paying difficult. Not so. I was thinking about something that may save the day which is my "Santa Survival Kit."

I have for the past few year put together a number of item's to help me out in an emergency. I've listed some of the essential items but my list is flexible and changes as I encounter new or unexpected situations. Some item's are just in case I need them for an emergency (Safety pins) and others because they are used on a regular basis. (Cell phone)

I put these items in a tote bag and carry them in the car with me but a small suitcase or bag would do just fine. I try to plan for the unforeseen and to have things in one place where I can find them quickly.

Santa Survival Kit:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Aleve | Kleenex |
| Appointment book | Map Quest directions |
| Baby Wipes | Pen & paper tablet |
| Band-Aids | Safety pins (2) |
| Bottled water | Scissors (sm pair) |
| Breath strips or mints | Sewing kit |
| Business cards | Small mirror |
| Cell phone | Two pair of clean white gloves |
| Deodorant | Wind-up recharging flashlight |
| Drinking straws | \$5.00 & 5 - \$1.00 bills |
| Eye glass cleaner | 4 quarters, or more |
| Hair brush | Hand wipes |
| Hair spray (small can) | |

The money in the Survival Kit is for toll booths, valet tips and to pay for Santa's, on the way home, "Mac attack" at the drive thru. Scissors are a must to trim that one hair sticking out of your beard or some stray thread on your costume. You should always have spare toiletries such as deodorant, hair spray, after shave, breath mints, hand wipes and a sewing kit for emergency repairs. You probably can add or subtract items, but the point is to be prepared for unforeseen situations.

We don't want to disappoint any child or grown up by having something go wrong to mar our performance. When we're in a rush to make an appointment is usually when we put a tear in a costume or break a zipper. These unfortunate circumstances happen when we least expect them. We are less than prepared to handle them unless we prepare a "Santa Survival Kit."

This is the last article for this year and I look forward to resuming after the Santa Season. I've enjoyed sharing idea's with you and I hope you have found some helpful hints to enhance your Santa experience. I'll be checking my list for some new ideas and things to do for our next issue. If you have a question or idea for a column, please contact me at my email address or contact our editor.

To all of my Red Suit Brothers; I send my most sincere wishes for a Merry Christmas and Joyous New Year.

Santa Lou
"Georgia's Premier Santa" (sm)
Santalou@bellsouth.net
www.Santa-Lou.com



The Jingle Press is published by the Amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas.

For questions or comments please contact Santa Nicholas Trolli, Sr., Santa Gary Casey, Publisher or Santa Bill McKee, Editor. Submission of articles and images can be made to the editor at: AORBSNews@TheSantaClaus.com or Santa@TheSantaClaus.com
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Taming the Beast - Lesson 1 - Shampoos & Conditioners

By Cindylu Thomas

Greetings to All,

Before we get started, many thanks to all the e-mails and calls I've gotten from so many of you and your kind comments. It's always good to hear from you, so keep the e-mails/calls coming. I'll be conducting a class in Santa Gary's Santa Claus Academy in Atlanta on October 6, 2007 and would love to meet some of you ladies and gentlemen! (By the time you read this, we will have returned home)

Can it be October already? It's hard to believe but it's time to start getting serious about the 2007 Christmas Season and all the Joy and Wonder the season brings to all. Whether you are a Santa at a mall with your Mrs. being your set manager, or if you're going solo, or prefer to do the private parties, etc, the season is the same. It is magical and full of laughter, joy and giving of oneself for the good of all humanity. Preparing for the season can be quite stressful in itself so we sure don't need hair and beard problems plaguing us and adding further stress to the season, so let's talk about that for a little while..

Now is a good time to stock up on your shampoo's, conditioners, deep conditioning conditioners and your bleaching products. There will be no time to be running to the store to get these things. If you have a professional taking care of your hair and beard, get those appointments made now. Your beautician, if she has a lot of Santa's to take care of, will be just as busy as you and you may not be able to get an appointment. And fellows, if you've never done your own bleaching before, now is NOT the time to start. There is NO room for error this time of the year. Experiment all you wish right after the New Year. Most of you will have plenty of time to correct any 'mistakes' and not ruin your season.

Now, lets talk about shampoo's and conditioners. Before you bleach, your hair needs to be in good/excellent condition. The only way for that to happen is to use the gentle everyday shampoos with moisturizer and conditioners on a regular basis ... like, every day. (Ok, at least every OTHER day, for sure.)

If you have plenty of money, check out the Nioxin product line. You can find a lot of good stuff there, but it IS expensive and I'm not entirely convinced their products do any better than the more reasonably priced products you can purchase at a beauty store such as Sally's Beauty World or Wal-mart/Target. You CAN look like a million bucks without spending a million. Trust me on this.

One of my most favorite products I recommend for deep conditioning is Cowboy Magic Demineralizer/Conditioner. I'm happy to report that it can now be purchased online at a somewhat lower price than perhaps locally, but,

as is usually the case, shipping charges ruin a good thing. Still, purchasing online remains a bit cheaper than at your local 'tack shop' which is the only other place you can purchase Cowboy Magic. Here's the link to the Website:

<http://www.animalworldnetwork.com/cowboyproducts.html>

Yes, this product is used on horses manes and tails, but it is also approved for human use and does a wonderful job. I recommend using it at least once a week to keep the buildup from building up on your beard which eventually makes it dull. The good news is that you only use a small amount, about the size of a nickel, in the palm of your hand for your hair and another nickel size amount for your beard. So, whereas it might be a little on the pricey side, a bottle will last you a very long time. Follow the directions for use and you will be astounded by the results you get. I also suggest you leave the conditioner in your beard a minute or two longer than in your hair, as your beard is so porous it needs a little extra time for the minerals to completely soak in.

If you missed my first article which covered the 'art' of shampooing, please refer to it to learn how to shampoo your hair and beard. Hint: NO fingernails are involved, and 'gentle' is the key word to always remember when working with your hair and beard. (It can be found online at <http://www.AORBSantas.com>)

Cowboy Magic also offers a Rosewater Shampoo that is quite gentle and good for use every day. For those of you that have some serious issues with your hair and beard getting tangled up, I highly recommend the Cowboy Magic Detangler, but beware, THAT product IS rather pricey. Not as pricey as Nioxin products, but still more than I prefer to pay. It is worth it though, so I bite the frugal bullet and buy it while I grimace. When I see how well it works, I always smile and think how nice it is to actually get your moneys worth out of a product.

For everyday conditioning (and yes, gentlemen, you should condition daily) I really like the effect Dove conditioners have. The Dove shampoos are quite good as well, especially the Cool Moisture Cucumber & Green Tea Scent Shampoo and Conditioner. They not only cleanse and condition well, they leave a really nice scent to your hair and beard. When using these products, first thing you need to do when you get in the shower is wash your hair and beard thoroughly and then apply the conditioner to your beard and hair and leave it in to perform it's magic while you wash the rest of your body. The last thing to do before exiting the shower is rinse the conditioner out. All conditioners, with the exception of Cowboy Magic, should be left in the hair and beard for at least 5 minutes. Cowboy Magic, 2 minutes or so. Once a month, take some time out to use a hot oil conditioner on your beard and the hair as

well if you feel the need. Remember, beards and your scalp hair are two different beasts that you need to do different things to tame. The beard, in most instances the most unruly of the two, although there are some Santas that have let their hair grow out so long it has taken on a completely different life of its own. Whether you wear your hair short, medium length, or long though, in order to maintain control, it does need a regime of conditioning each day. If circumstances are such that you find it not possible to shampoo and condition one day, there are some good 'leave-in' conditioners on the market. Pantene makes a good one in spray bottle that you just spray on your dry beard, work it in, and just leave it in to keep the conditioning action going.

Pantene makes some great products too, especially the Pro-V product line. You may want to try using the Pantene Restoratives Time Renewal Replenishing Mask for your deep conditioning instead of the Cowboy Magic first. It's much less expensive and does a great job too. I also have had good results using the Pantene Restoratives Breakage Defense Shampoo. It works really well on those split ends and strengthens the beard hair especially.

Gentlemen, please don't expect any of these products to work miracles on damaged beards overnight. If you have stressed your hair and beard from over bleaching or overlapping bleach and have serious breakage and thinning hair and beard, NO product will work overnight. With continued and intensive use of the aforementioned products, you will see visible results in a couple weeks or so. Once you start seeing those results, don't consider the problem solved and quit using them. You will need to continue using these products, or similar products for as long as you intend to portray Santa. As I said in my previous article, what works for one, may not work for another, so with these shampoos and conditioners, try them all if you aren't satisfied with just the one that you choose. I really don't think there are any 'bad' conditioners, just some that are better than others. There IS one out there that will work best for YOU!

One last word about conditioning, there is NO such thing as too much conditioning. It has never happened and never will happen. So guys, condition, condition, condition and let me know how you're doing!

The next Jingle Press should be published around the middle of February, 2008. I want to personally wish each and every one of you the very best Season ever! Have fun, see a lot of kids, spread the Joy of the Magical Season called Christmas and above all, STAY HEALTHY!

Until next time,
Cindylu

Bamasanta@aol.com A Gathering In Texas
Santa Charlie Thomas AKA - BamaSanta

Report of Texas AORBS Meeting Santa Charlie Thomas AKA – BamaSanta

Dear Santa Charlie,

On Friday, September 28, 2007 a small contingency of the Texas AORBS group met in Brenham, TX for a day of education and lots of good cheer. The event was put together rather hastily, however it worked very well and all proclaimed it a success.

We started out by meeting at Santa Mike's place of business about ten-thirty in the morning. It's a large two story building (over 18,000 square feet) that houses 'Time Well Spent,' which primarily offers after school personal development programs. It does not stop there. McSanta, as he is well known in the area, gave the group a thorough tour of the facility. There are large modern classrooms, computer rooms and event rental spaces; craft and study rooms; soundproof singing and instrument practice rooms; a gymnasium with a balcony track for walking or jogging (ahem, we walked). There is also an outdoor ball court with tennis, volleyball and basketball as well as a putting green. And it's designed and built to be handicap accessible.

The facility is about four years old and has been very well received by the community, young and old alike. Church services are held there, a dance school holds scheduled classes and several local groups and clubs meet there regularly. It's a truly wonderful place that only a Santa could conceive for the good of the community.

From there we caravanned to lunch at the local Applebee's restaurant. The restaurant was filling up with the Friday lunch crowd and reservations are not allowed as per corporate policy. However, someone just happened to stop by the previous evening and drop a hint that Santa would be visiting the next day. The manager, Gary, was quick to arrange for table seating for our party of nine when we arrived.

The entrance of five very obvious Santas caused quite a stir at the nearly-packed restaurant. You must realize that Brenham is a rather small and conservative town. Things like this are certainly not seen in the ordinary day to day life of your average Brenhamian. Once over their initial shock, several patrons asked if we were brothers. The response was, of course, yes. We took turns explaining that we are fraternal brothers and that we all belong to the Amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas. From there, conversations continued, explaining to customers and staff about AORBS, the length and breadth of the International membership, our upcoming 2008 convention at Overland Park and answering the general and usual Santa questions. Throughout the day we were all able to share stories and helpful tips with each other. Until a few years ago I would have never have imagined discussing hair care products, styling and which was better; dying, painting or bleaching, with several other grown men,



never mind in public! What a hoot! We were all having such a great time that we decided this needed to be done again soon. We felt that we should spend a little more time on the business of Santas educating Santas. After all, a two hour lunch just wasn't long enough to do the subject justice.

With some reluctance at having to break up the table and the great time we were having, we were consoled by knowing what was awaiting us next. Once more we saddled up our caravan and started off down the road to the highlight of the day, a tour of the Bluebell Creamery. (By the way, Mr. Applebee, sorry about bumping the light pole you cleverly hid in the bushes, and, hummm, I'll have that shrub that snagged to my bumper back to you tomorrow, OK?)

Bluebell Creamery is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year. When booking the tour in advance, it was learned that all of the tours were heavily booked on the day of our get-together. However, thanks to a wonderful lady named Barbara, we were "squeezed" into a tour with a large group of college students on a Business Major field-day trip. And what a field day we had. Several of the students expressed surprise that the Santa business went beyond retail stores for decorations, mall Santas and Christmas tree lots. There were also lots of younger children that thrilled at the sight of Santa enjoying his time off. Some of them were a bit confused at first because of the multiple Santas. It seemed that each of them, using their own criteria, picked which of us was the real Santa.

Just before our tour started, we were met by a young lady from the Brenham Press. She was assigned to tour with us, take pictures and garner facts about AORBS and the attending Santas. During our tour, the hostess, a young college student named Kelly, made certain that the Santas all stood side by side looking through the large windows down to the factory floor and waved to the workers. Word spread fast below and soon all of the ice cream makers were looking up and smiling and waving back. The disruption only caused a few minor problems on the line. No harm done, just a lot of happy folks with a story to tell their children when they

returned home that day. At one point during our tour, McSanta related to Kelly and all in the tour, how the very popular Cookies and Cream version of ice cream came to fruition at the Bluebell Creamery. A very interesting and funny story enjoyed by all.

At the end of the factory tour, we adjourned to the Tasting Room, where they normally give away a very large scoop of ice cream. The visitors may choose from over fifty flavors. One Santa was heard to moan: 'how can anyone choose only one from so many great choices?' Word went around that those in the Santa tour could have as much of any, and all flavors they wanted. And also, that all in the Tasting Room were included! It was truly a great time with a lot of visiting and children, young and old, sitting on Santa's knee for picture taking and sharing their wishes and wants for this coming Christmas. All of the Santas had commitments to attend to elsewhere after the tour, but we all delayed our departure for as long as possible. It was very difficult to leave so many happy, charming and just truly wonderful people.

If anyone would like to explore some of the interesting things we saw at Bluebell Creamery, go to <http://www.bluebell.com/Default.aspx>.

We intend to repeat the Bluebell Creamery tour again next year. The dates, times and places will be set up much further in advance and placed on the Elf Net, so that as many Santas and their guests as possible will be able to attend. Since tours are only available Monday through Friday, we'll aim for the most suitable day to accommodate the largest group.

My sincerest gratitude goes to all who attended our first gathering and made it such a very happy day. From Brenham, McSanta Mike McIntyre, with special thanks for his tour and media assistance; from Porter, Santa Dale Bianche; from Cypress Santa Jim and Mrs. Madge Fletcher; from Brookshire Santa Reid and Mrs. Florence Fletcher along with grandson Elf Keith; and my number one supporter Susan.

Love to you all,
Santa Gene Clayton
Texas AORBS Director

A Sharing of Knowledge

A long-time Santa looks back, and forward

By Bill McKee

It was 1954. I was four years old. The Geneva Accords ended the war in Vietnam, for the time being. First Lady Mamie Eisenhower christened the nation's first atomic-powered submarine, the "Nautilus." Senator Joe McCarthy finally went too far in his Communist witch-hunt. A team from Harvard Medical School successfully completed the first kidney transplant operation, and the US Supreme Court, in the case of *Brown v. the Board of Education*, ruled that segregation was unconstitutional.

Damascus, Va., needed to find Santa Claus.

Vernon Waters answered the call. Born Wesley Vernon Arthur Waters, Sr., 4 April, 1923, he invested 44-years bringing joy to the hearts of children of all ages throughout Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee. Vernon, as he is known, accepted, understood and still lives 'The Santa Clause.' (1) His life was, and is, an investment in children everywhere.

When he began, he and his wife, Sarah Gladys Forrester Waters, whom he lovingly calls Gladys, had two young boys. At first she did not understand why he was investing so much time in this Santa endeavor, especially with children so young at home. Soon, she began to understand, supporting him "110%," said Waters. "She always helped me get dressed and made sure I was where I needed to be, and on time," he went on to say. However, having the two young boys at home, he had to be very careful and just 'appear.' They will have been married 61 years this December and have two sons, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

People began to ask him every year if he was going to play Santa? His answer was always the same. "I told people that I don't 'play' Santa," he said, "when I am in the suit and children see me, I am Santa. If you stop and think about who you are, you realize, I've got to be the best I can possibly be."

As the official Santa for Damascus, Waters, dressed in Santa's finest regalia, entered town the first Saturday each December. He usually appeared on one of the town's fire trucks. There were a couple of years when he arrived in a sleigh pulled by real reindeer. What a treat this must have been for the entire town. He also began the tradition in Damascus of Santa coming to town every Saturday following the parade, visiting businesses, the elderly, sick and those in special need, leading into Christmas Day.

For Vernon (and many other Santas) it is not just a suit he put on during the holidays. Santa permeated every aspect of his life, every day throughout the year. "You can't be a part-time Santa," said Waters.

When asked what Santa meant to him, he said, "A child is the most innocent of anything, and they never forget their first experiences." "When I saw the joy and the sparkle in the eyes of the children, I began to understand the heart of Santa Claus," said Waters. "When children get excited it shows all over. They can't help it," he said. "Santa should never disappoint a child, because children carry disappointment with them all their lives." "And they never forget their first experiences with Santa," said Waters.

When he was very young an uncle came to visit one Christmas and no one knew he was coming. "He had acquired a suit from somewhere and walked in the door shortly after supper time, as Santa," said Waters. "Of course, I had never imagined Santa coming when I was awake, and I was very surprised," he said. "He walked straight in and grabbed me. It absolutely scared me to death," Waters said.

Being Santa brought its own rewards, and sometimes even physical pain. Waters recalled one incident when a very large lady came to see Santa. "She weighed at least 350 lbs.," he said, "and of course Santa can never refuse a request for a photo on his knee." "Well, she hugged me, she told me stories, she rambled on and on, and was bound and determined I was going home with her," said Waters. "About an hour later, when she finally left, my legs were numb," he said, "I couldn't move my legs or even stand up." On another occasion, a very good friend of Santa's, Rev. Bill Hinton, had called and asked if Santa could possibly make it to Pulaski, Va., that coming Sunday. "It was one of the most remarkable experiences of my life," said Waters. "The children were so excited that Santa had made a very unexpected visit. The parents were so happy to see their children so happy. All of the adults began to pick up on their excitement and before I knew it, everyone was laughing, talking, having their photo made with Santa and almost literally dancing in the Spirit of Christmas," he said. "I am so grateful to have been part of that experience." "It was not me, but every single person there became a part of everything that was going on," Waters said. How do you explain this phenomena, I asked. "Being Santa is about giving without any need or want of

return," he said. "It is impossible to give more than you receive, if you give it with a free heart." "What I received, just by being a part of that day, goes beyond words," he said. "I can't explain it, because unless you have been Santa, there are not words for it," Waters said.

Never having met a stranger and having seen much of life, in and out of the suit, he understands something of the imperfection of human beings. "Of course you are going to make mistakes," he said, "but a mistake ceases to be a mistake if you learn from it. It then becomes a stepping stone."

Following Christmas 1997, he knew he might not be able to continue in his life's work as Santa. Having brought joy, laughter, love and kindness to untold numbers of children of all ages; visiting the sick and shut-in, his body would not allow him to go on. "The hardest thing I have ever done in my life was to give up putting on the suit as Santa," said Waters. "Hardly a day goes by that I don't think about it." "I will be 85-years-old this coming April (2008) and I still believe in Santa Claus," he said. "Santa Claus lives in your heart."

When asked what he wanted for Christmas this year, he replied simply, "Just to be here." "I just want to be here to see my children, my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren."

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He can sometimes be spotted, if you watch closely, as he passes by on his way to and fro traveling through Damascus, where he still lives. Though his body can sometimes slow his journey, his heart is as big as the world. And he knows the hearts of children everywhere.

Believe In Christmas
Santa Bill McKee
Santa@TheSantaClaus.com

For Your Information:
Cards and letters are always welcome.
They will reach him at:

Vernon Waters
Box 311
Damascus, VA 24346

(1) The Santa Clause: "In putting on this suit and entering the sleigh, the wearer waives any and all rights to previous identity, real or implied, and fully accepts the duties and responsibilities of Santa Claus until such time that wearer becomes unable to do so either by accident or design."



The “Professional” Santa

By Santa Jac Grimes, RBS, MSC

When people ask me if or where I “play Santa” my usual response is to ask them what they do for a living. I then ask them if they “play” teacher, doctor, police officer. You get the idea. I do not “play” Santa! I am a “Professional” Santa. But what does the term “Professional” mean?

When most of us were growing up, the term professional, at least as far as amateur sports went, meant that you got paid for what you do. That definition is, I think, too simple in most instances and certainly for Santa. If you apply the paid, not paid standard that would mean that the guy that is a clown the rest of the year and “dresses up” as Santa for parties during the holidays is a professional and a Santa like Father David Shoemaker that does it strictly for charity is not. As we say in the south, “that dog just won’t hunt!”

Those of you that attended my workshop in Branson (Starting Your Own Business) know that I have a strong belief in being a professional in all I do. But what is a Pro and how does it relate to being Santa?

Do You Believe?

For me it all starts with a belief (mission) statement for my Santa business: “This I Believe – I can bring the joy and “magic” of the Christmas season to children and adults, year round, through an accurate and professional portrayal of Santa Claus.”

I try to filter all my Santa activities through my belief statement. In other words, if the event or activity doesn’t fit, I pass. If I were offered an acting gig where they wanted a chain saw wielding psychopathic Santa for a horror movie, I’d pass without thought. Even if it involved a lot of money, I wouldn’t do it because that wouldn’t bring joy or magic to the people watching the movie. If on the other hand it was just a white bearded chain saw wielding

psychopathic killer, I might consider it. I also would not be a “Bad Santa” for an adult party even if it paid well. These instances just don’t fit the way I see Santa.

If you have a strong religious component to your Santa portrayal, it should be in your belief statement. You should also know when it is appropriate to share your religious beliefs with kids and when it is not. In a local mall one Santa was fond of having the kids sing “Happy Birthday Jesus” with him. I don’t know the circumstances but I do know he is no longer there. In our multicultural society, that may not be appropriate for a mall setting. Then again at your mall it may be encouraged. I would suggest checking with mall and photo company management in advance.

If a strictly secular Santa setting (schools, adult parties, so forth) doesn’t “feel” right to your portrayal of Santa, you may want to pass on those events. Put your efforts and focus on churches and places where a spiritual Santa is not only welcomed but also embraced.

Be the Best

The one thing I vividly remember growing up is my father saying, “be the best at whatever you do. I don’t care if you’re a trash collector, just be a great one.” That helped me formulate my feelings toward being professional in all aspects of my life, especially my business dealings. I have come up with a few points that I find in common with the professionals I have met and admired.

A professional is:

(a) Serious about their avocation, Santa is a whimsical character. The best Santas I have met in person, and online, are very serious about being Santa. They have invested (as they are able) in a good suit, real boots and belt, and work on an authentic Santa look even when they are going to the grocery store. You never want to “play” Santa; you need to “be” Santa.

(b) Well trained I will admit it was a stretch for me to afford to go to Branson for the convention and then attend school in Atlanta just a month later. It was, however, important for me to be able to learn from other Santas. I use both those events in my credentials and it’s made my Santa resume look better. I also learned some things at both events that have changed my thinking about how to be and sell Santa. There are several schools available for Santa. Find one and go. The one I’m really excited about is the Santa Academy based in Atlanta. Santa Gary Casey and a team of instructors are putting together a great program. For more information contact Santa Gary at: gwc Casey@santaatlanta.com Just as important are Santa gatherings. There’s the Founder’s Luncheon on the West Coast and the Red Suit Roundtable on the East Coast. There’s also a variety of regional gatherings throughout the year. If one comes to your area, go meet the other men who share this passion. I always learn something up I can

use at these events. Speaking of Santa events, don’t forget the Discover Santa Conference in Oakland Park KS next July. Santa John Shager and I are planning some truly outstanding workshops to help you be a professional.

(c) A student of their industry When I was a Management Consultant, I could look at your watch and tell you the time. (An old joke) I subscribed to every industry publication available and was a shameless idea thief. If I saw a program that worked well in one client’s store I borrowed it for the next client. I do that with Santa. I read every post on the Elf Net Board. You guys loan me ideas all the time. Do your homework. It will pay off.

(d) The very best they can be at what they do!! I always see posts saying, “I want to be the best Santa I can.” That’s me! ‘Nuff said.

(e) Keep a healthy balance A professional Santa needs to keep a healthy balance between their business life and their personal life. If I did one thing wrong during the 2006 season, it was working 7 days a week multiple shifts. That left no time for celebrating the family traditions that brought me to be Santa in the first place. In my pre-Santa career, I loved my job as a Management Consultant. I got to travel all over the country, meet people and earn a good living. I also flew out on Monday, back in on Friday, and lost touch with my kids. I woke up one morning in Sheboygan WI and realized that everything I really cared about was 1,500 miles away, and I was alone. That ended that career. It’s not about choosing family over career. You just need to keep the two in balance.

(f) Being Professional is NOT about Money I challenge you to reread the preceding diatribe and find one instance where I mention that you must be paid to be a professional Santa. Payment is the least important sign of a pro, however, I’m sure you know I do have thoughts about payment. After all we do have to buy reindeer food and a real Santa belt isn’t cheap. If you are doing a charity event that YOU want to do, do it free. The payment will reside in your heart. If you are doing a promotional event that will put you before people that can afford to hire Santa, then offer that free. (Parades, tree lighting, speaker’s bureau, etc.) Do make sure to have plenty of business cards with you. If someone is making money through Santa’s appearance, they should pay you, and pay you well. That’s about it for this month. I wish the very best for you this year and for all the new Santas, welcome. It really is an exciting ride.

As Always,

Santa Jac Grimes, RBS, BSC
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336-886-8230 Toy Shoppe
336-259-7235 Sleigh Phone

P.S. If you bought the 2006 Convention CD “Starting Your Own Business” and would like the Power Point slide show that goes with it, email me privately and I’ll send it to you.



Profiles: Profiles: Profiles:

Get to know your fellow Santas. Make new friends & contacts.



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941.722.5996 cell 941.518.7064
www.SantaFlorida.com



1967 seems such a long time ago. I guess 40 years is a long time, except for Santa. During that period I married, had two sons, worked several jobs which included being a roofer, bartender, florist, restaurant manager, salesman for NCR one of the longer periods, that was 10 years and started a company with my wife Donna named after our two sons Chrishawn Associates Inc. For 25 years we created original fine art and accessories which we wholesaled to the furniture, interior design and architectural trade. 9/11 forced us into semi-retirement. Today our new company Caso Studios, LLC, my wife is management and I am labor, allows me to continue my artistic endeavors selling my art thru. www.CasoStudios.com and of course and with great pleasure, fun, and every positive adjective you can think pursuing my entertainment spirit as Santa Claus.

My Santa experiences began in 1967 with the Walnut Creek Jaycees. I was single, rotund and could 'HO, HO, HO!' better than anyone in the organization, so I got to be Santa. I rode in the Christmas Parade, handed out presents at our Jaycee Community Christmas Party, and answered the phone several nights prior to Christmas listening to gift requests. The most fun of all was visiting 10 homes in the wee hours of Christmas Eve. I lived for this each Christmas for 5 years, until I became a father.

We jump forward to 2004 and a meeting at our American Legion Post where I was asked by the president of Auxiliary if I would play Santa for

their children's Christmas Party. I jumped at the opportunity. The party was incredible and seeing the eyes of the children as Santa entered the room re-kindled all the positive memories of years past. I was reborn.

Out of many wonderful memories, the following top my list:

It was in 1968, my third year of donning the Red Suit for the Walnut Creek Jaycees. For the last three years we had been holding a raffle at our Annual Christmas Party for a visit by Santa on Christmas Eve. Beginning at around 10 PM during the night, I would visit the homes of 10 raffle winners who would wake their children and sneak a peak of the Jolly Old Man placing presents under the tree, or allow the children to sit and have cookies with Santa while the parents would take pictures before going back to bed. On one special occasion it was Jim Campbell, one of my best friends, who won the raffle for his family with two boys, one 7 the other 9. The younger is still a believer but the other, absolutely sure Santa was dad. I showed up, if my memory serves, about 1 AM, Jim had cleaned out the fireplace and suggested that I scrunch in, (not easy for my jolly size), and back out when he tapped the wall in the hallway indicating that they were just around the corner. Hearing the tap I slowly backed out onto the edge of the raised hearth, searched for a place to place my foot on the floor and stood up. Still not facing the room which was dimly lit, I dusted off my suit and pulled the bag Jim had placed in the fireplace onto the edge of the hearth and turned around to survey the surroundings. The first thing was to check out the tree. Then I pulled the bag next to a chair and side table arranged with cookies and milk and sat down to partake of the sweet repast. Then came another tap on the wall indicating they were returning to bed. I got up, shuffled around, pulled out a few presents from the bag and placed them under the tree. With Jim's prearranged signal I met him at the front door afterwards. Now here is the great part. Jim told me he woke the boys and told them someone was in the front room. They jumped out of bed and Jim had to contain them or they just would have run into the room. He reminded them that they were not to really see Santa, so they were to be very quiet and just take a peek. Creeping down the hall to where the living room was, they stopped right before entering. As Jim and the boys stood in the shadow of the hall watching Santa come out of the fireplace, he held them close to him, one hand resting on the shoulder of each boy. As I turned into the room Jim said the older boy's heart leapt from his chest with such force he felt the beat in the palm of his hand, and continued to beat with excitement until they turned to go back to bed. The younger boy was excited but pretty calm, considering he expected Santa would be there. The next morning after opening presents and settling down for breakfast and conversation of events, the boys didn't have a word to say about Santa's visit,

but the older boy the next Christmas had nothing to say derogatory about Santa either, as a matter of fact he never visited the question of Santa not being real again.

On another visit by Santa, this time to the Hugh Corum family, there was a completely different response to Santa's visit. Hugh and his Wife Tish had 4 children ranging in age from 6 months to 8 years, the older children, Hugh Jr, Rose, and Sandra, 8, 7 and 3 respectively, all believed in Santa. Santa showed up about 1 AM, but this time rather than the quiet observation of Santa from a hiding place, Santa was invited to sit on the sofa with the entire family all sitting or standing around him. There was Mom and Dad, both Hugh's and Tish's parents, a great grandmother, a couple of aunts and uncles and a neighbor or two. The Corum's loved having family around. And after getting settled Hugh went into the bedrooms to wake the kids, not too spy on Santa but join the gathering. And did they join! About 15 seconds after leaving the room I heard shrieks of joy and shouts of Santa! Santa! Each word getting louder and louder! Then as if a dam broke I was inundated with yells and cheers and kisses and laughter and hugs, it went on for what seemed forever, but finally Tish started calming them down and explaining Santa had other little boys and girls to see tonight, so they should give me a hug and kiss and get back in bed so Santa could unload his sleigh and finish his rounds. Surprise! Behold! They each bid me goodnight and never taking their eyes of me, trotted back to bed. For the next three years I somehow ended up at the Corum's and the Jaycees ended up with more presents for less fortunate kids. And I, of course, will carry these memories with me forever.

If we could retain the innocence of childhood throughout our lives, oh what joy the world we could conceive!

Both Jim Campbell and Hugh Corum passed well before any of us expected. I am a better Santa for their friendship, generosity and love.

My worst fear as Santa is remembering all the facts of Santa. I worry that some child will be disappointed with my answer to his or her question. I can't sing either, which makes me sad because I love to sing. Unfortunately, this Santa can't carry a tune.

Hints on being the best Santa you can be? SMILE WITH ALL THE LOVE YOU CAN MUSTER and as Santa Bob Tampa says, "Collect those Smiles" I find the brightest smiles come from those you give Santa visits too. This year I will participate in Christmas parties for the Boys and Girls Club of Palmetto and the American Legion Children's Christmas Party. My hope is to visit several Hospice facilities in our area. This is my first year seeking gigs for Santa and at the moment I am back making cold calls like my old sales days. I am distributing Post Cards advertising Santa Home Visits and Santa Walk-A-Rounds, that's visiting restaurants and greeting all the patrons.

Profiles:



Name: Daniel Nease
Santa Name: Santa Danny
Age: 44
Location: Concord, NC USA
Web Site: www.SantaDanny.com
eMail: dnease21@juno.com

I am a relatively new Santa, having portrayed the Jolly Gentleman for the past two Christmas seasons.

Two years ago my wife's Girl Scout troop needed a Santa for their upcoming "Supper with Santa." They asked me if I would consider doing it. I told them that I would and I absolutely fell in love with being Santa.

This past Christmas season I was hired by Blue Baboons Funtime Events to be their Santa. Through them I had the chance to be Santa and get paid for it. That truly is "having your cake and eating it too!" I continue to work for them on weekends. I drive their "Trackless Train" and do other things for them when I am needed.

This Christmas Season, along with my work for Blue Baboons, I plan to continue my work with the Girl Scouts as well as working with several assisted living facilities and retirement communities in the Charlotte, NC area.

I really look forward to this Christmas Season; it truly will be the best Christmas ever!

As for my Santa Knowledge, I do not have much to pass along, as I am still very much in the learning stage. I will say this; even though it should go without saying, you have to love kids. Beyond that, the only advice I can give is: Be yourself! Don't try to be some stereotypical version of Santa. Be yourself and make Santa your own. Kids will pick up on that and respond positively to it.

My name is Richard McLean. I am known as Santa Rick in Durham NC. I am 42-years-old. I have been Santa since I was 17; totaling 25 years, now.

The following September I called a local mall and asked about Santa positions. I was only 17, but had a large body after years of playing football. I had an interview with the seasonal manager and was hired. I was very excited, but then, I was chosen to be the lead Santa following our first meeting. Little did I know then I would be coming in on a helicopter from a local TV station.

When I was ready, the pilot talked with me, asking me how much I weighed. I told him 315 pounds and he said 'Damn.' I said what's wrong and he went on to explain that we would have to fly at a steeper angle. This was 1981 and the helicopter was just a 2-seater, glass bubble machine. I had practiced my deep Ho Ho Ho for arrival. After we landed and I got out of the helicopter, my voice was about three octaves higher, and I had to use the bath terribly. I took a deep breath and successfully made the opening. That was my beginning, which has led to 25 years of portraying Santa. I quit this mall in 1996 after seeing some set managers lack of understanding of Santas personality. However, I am proud to have made it possible for handicapped individuals to visit Santa by my third year; and to have made the mall aware of the need for Santa to wear glasses.

I have been fortunate to have been interviewed for TV, Santa for photo shoots for print and for company ads. I have also appeared at parties for charities, such as the Methodist home for children, along with parties for major corporations such as Sony North America.

What I find most enjoyable now, is to see that 9-to-12-year-old child, who just does not believe anymore. However, after seeing my beard, poking my belly, seeing my watch and the nose glow bright red, they sometimes get that one or two more years of believing.

Santa Rick
kriskringlesanta@earthlink.net



We are Jim and Blue Davis

We appear at Holiday parties, traveling to home or office. We love children and Santa's beard is real! Mrs Claus always accompanies Santa to lend a hand with the gift giving and to sing some Christmas Carols.

We appear as either the traditional Santa Claus or as Father Christmas wearing long red robes and Mrs Claus adorned in Victorian Hoop Skirts and Bells!

Mrs Claus' sleigh phone: 501-581-6092
OR write to us at 1santajim@comcast.net

*Happy Christmas to all,
Love Santa & Mrs. Claus*



Santa Oliver (Ollie) Sharman, AORBS
Charlotte, NC

Email: ollie_sharman@mindspring.com

I began my Santa career in 2005 after attending the University of Santa Claus at Santa Atlanta. I've portrayed Santa for many charity events, churches, scout troops, some private parties and home visits. This fall I have lined up several photo sessions at local veterinarians to have Santa's picture taken with pets. Proceeds will go to the Humane Society's shelter.

I love being Santa year 'round. The responses I get from children AND adults. The kid's eyes open wide and sparkle when they see me. If I give a little wink or a wave, they smile widely and their eyes beam. It's wonderful!

Santa Ollie



Profiles:

My name is **John Johnson**, *Santa John* - and I have been Santa Claus for as long as I can remember.

Well, maybe not in the traditional way as I am today, but I dressed as Santa at the young age of six when my mother placed my baby sister, Amy, on my knee for a photo. I think I've been Santa (in some way) ever since. And now, at the ripe old age of 30, I am a real-bearded Santa Claus. Santa has always been a very special part of my life since I was a very little boy. I cannot remember a time when I did not love him and want to be him. Many years later, I have learned that none of us can "be" Santa without being us; using that same special loving spirit that Saint Nicholas so long ago was able to share. As the Kringle proverb states, "Santa begins in the heart."

All of my Santa work and affiliations are very special to me. Each one allows me the chance to share with other special people who revere the same love of children and Santa, as I. I am a proud member of AORBS. I deeply believe in its cause and positive influence for all that want to be part of the true Christmas Spirit. I am also a proud member of the Royal Order of Santa Claus in the Santa Claus Registry. I am the official Secret Santa Foundation Santa Claus for Kanawha, Boone, and Lincoln counties in West Virginia, where I live. I have begun a special Christmas Eve delivery mission for the needy children in my hometown as well, collecting new and slightly used toys all the year to fill the workshop. In this way, I have many Elves to thank. Though I maintain a very busy commercial Santa calendar, I spend much time volunteering in schools, nursing homes, local businesses, and in the homes of needy children, bringing love and cheer to everyone. I share the true meaning of Christmas and take the duty of being Santa Claus very seriously. Being Santa is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done in my life and I continually strive to improve my "image" every year. I look forward to many, many more years of

Profiles:

learned many things over the last four years. They include three years working in malls and one year at Dolly Parton's "Dixie Stampede" in Orlando. The more I learn and work to be Santa, the better I like it.

One of my dreams is to be Santa in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Santacereley,
Santa Hal

being the Man in the Big Red Suit.

I work for a very prominent financial group when I am not in the workshop. Every coworker calls me Santa everywhere I turn. Each one is very supportive and they even consider themselves Elves. I am also a licensed minister of the Gospel, and preach when I can. I have found that this is also a help in my Christmas work, as I deem it a ministry given to me by Jesus Christ to help, and to keep alive the hopes of children, while showing them the love of Jesus through Santa. I am also a story teller and an old-time musician. Yes, Santa does keep busy. However, the Christmas Mission is our main concern, and the very hub of it is my wife, Mrs. (Michelle) Claus. She is responsible for keeping this Santa moving forward and for keeping him on track. I can't think of what this Santa would be without her. She appears with me whenever possible and the children seem to appreciate her as much as they do me (I tend to give her crying babies, Ho, Ho, Ho!). Together, we continue with the cause of Claus by bringing smiles to all. We know that the "magic of Christmas lies in your heart" and we strive to show that magic to everyone we come in contact with.

I can be reached at my email address, WVSantaClaus77@aol.com. I would love to hear from all of you. It is an honor to be in this Amalgamated Order with people of such high integrity who also share the love of Christmas and the love of Santa. The true reason for Santa is the children, and Mrs. Claus and I hold that thought very dear in our lives, as I know all should, and do. Thanks for counting me as one of your august number. Merry Christmas to all ... *may God bless each of you!*

Santa John

P.S. I look forward to this next convention and in meeting my brothers in red!



In 1939, I was a little kid. I was taken to see "The Wizard of Oz." I loved it! The flying monkeys scared the heck out of me, however. The next day my dad took me to my 1st Thanksgiving Day Parade; the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

I was enchanted by the big balloon characters from "The Wizard of Oz." Then here comes Santa Claus! Suddenly, I was overcome with fear for him. He was so near the flying monkeys! He was brave though. He never looked back to see if they were going to grab him. What a guy!

My name is James Hal Kemp. My Santa name is simply, Santa Hal. I am 72 years old.

My father is Hal Kemp. He was a well known band leader. He had the No.1 band in the country in 1935. During 1938 and 1939, he had the No.1 sweet music band in the country. Overall, his band was No.3 during these years, led by Benny Goodman & Tommy Dorsey. He died in 1940.

After finishing high school I joined the U.S. Air Force and served for 3-1/2 years. Following my discharge, two friends and I opened a singles bar. It was called "Malacys" and located in New York City. The year was 1957.

I sold my share in 1965 and headed west. I worked in both Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. I performed different jobs, from food and beverage manager, to Lounge training supervisor. Eventually I moved to Florida.

About 5 years ago I observed a Mall Santa who seemed a little grumpy. After seeing him a few more times I saw nothing had changed. I knew I could be a lot jollier than he. So, I decided to become Santa.

I found I was pretty good at portraying this jolly old gentleman known as Santa. I have



My name is Stephen M. Fish, aka *"Truckin' Santa,"* and I am fifty years old.

I was born and raised in Georgia, the oldest of four children. For me, growing up in a small town was a treat. Our parents were very active in the Boys and Girls Club, which instilled in me the need to give my time to others. I graduated high school and then joined the Marines. Upon being Honorably Discharged, I returned to my home to settle down, where I still reside.

Profiles:

I became both a Corrections Officer and a Father in the same year. My family is my greatest joy. Janice, my loving wife and I have seven children and seven grandchildren, with another grandchild on the way. I am the favorite uncle to many nieces and nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews. As my family is now stretched from coast to coast my current job comes in handy.

Upon retiring from the correctional facility I became a truck driver. My wife shares this avocation with me. It was while we were driving on the long hauls that I quit shaving. In my previous jobs I was required to be clean shaven. I looked forward to taking a break. Was I ever surprised when my mustache and beard grew out white! My hair was still dark brown, but quickly changing. Men's hair in my family have a tendency to turn white at a very early age. It did not take long before I had a full beard and white hair.

Santa for me, started with the other truckers. On the highways, as we passed trucks, the radio would come alive with the chatter, 'did

I just see Santa?', or, 'Santa, did you trade in the Reindeer?' I began to pay more attention to what other people would say or do. The children were really excited when I would pass them.

They would whisper or yell, mommy, I just saw Santa Claus!, or, is that Santa Claus? Some kids would follow me just to see what I was doing or where I was going. I have received many wish list, because I am a natural looking Santa Claus.

My family tells their children that if they are naughty Uncle Steve will tell Santa, being he is one of Santa's helpers. It works every time. I enjoy Christmas and seeing the joy children have seeing Santa. The smiles on their faces are priceless. Christmas is the time of year for family, so my wife and I stay home in Georgia, instead of on the road. "Remember, the Magic of Christmas lives in the Heart."

Santa Services are available for Parades, Schools, Day Care Centers, Hospitals, Company Parties, Churches and Business.

Photo packages available upon request. I can be contacted at santaservices@bellsouth.net. Visit my website at www.SantaServices.com

Santa Stephen M. Fish,
"Truckin' Santa"



My first opportunity to be Santa came at my church when one of the members suggested to the pastor that I would make a perfect Santa for the Christmas program. When the pastor told me this, I wasn't quite sure how to take it. Were they trying to tell me something? Had I reached that stage and or girth in my life where I looked like a Santa persona?

I thought, well, so be it, even though I had just trimmed my beard. There were fourteen kids to deal with. I was very nervous since it was the first time I had ever tried anything like this.

Profiles:

I could still remember the time I tried to play my first solo on the saxophone and dropped my horn. It was a disaster. Now, every time I do something for the first time, I get nervous and fearful something will go wrong.

I was doing just fine until the pastor's twelve year old son, John, sat on my lap and asked, "O.K. Santa, How come you have labels and brand names on toys if your elves make all the toys? Huh? Huh?" All the little kids were waiting for and answer ... and still are, I suppose.

Shortly after that episode, and much thought, I asked my wife to search the internet and see if there was a Santa school or some kind of class that would help me be a better Santa before next year. That search lead me to AORBS and the convention in Branson MO.

I attended the convention and in one of the workshops got the answer to John's question. It came from one of the speakers as we played the game of "Stump Santa." A Santa with many years experience responded quickly, saying that "I now use some labels because the population has increased so much since I first started giving gifts many, many years ago. I had to upgrade, computerize, and out-source to keep up with the demands and not overwork my elves." Why couldn't I think of that? I learned a lot and had a great time. I became a full-time member and went to another workshop with Santa Tim in Atlanta.

I began receiving e-mails from several Santas and Santa related sites. Last year I was interviewed for a mall Santa position in Orlando FL. I really needed to learn more about the interview, so I made an appointment. To my surprise I got the job. Though I was still a bit nervous, it didn't take long for me to relax so that I could really enjoy time with the kids.

One day, looking over the mall, I spotted three skateboarders, pointing and giggling. I knew trouble was on its way. Sure enough, two of them pushed the other one toward me and he sprawled out all over me and chidingly asked, "Santa, how much they paying you?" This time I was ready. "Well", I said. "Up to this minute I was being paid too much, but now I'm not so sure." A perplexed look and scoffing from his friends returned him to the skateboard.

Overall I had a wonderful experience going from fourteen kids to over fourteen hundred in one year. I got to sing and play my saxophone on stage as well. Now they call me the "Saxy Singing Santa of Festival Bay". I even applied for the Santa job with the Marie Osmond Christmas Show, "The Magic of Christmas." I'm totally committed to this "Santa Thing," as my adopted teenage daughter from Russia calls it. Next year, I hope to have her and Mrs. Claus totally involved as well. That would be great!

Santa Frank Miller
Age 61
441 South Bauer Road
Lecanto, FL 34461
ran@gowebco.com

Profiles:

It seems like only yesterday that I made the decision to retire early.

My life in the fast lane, professional world did not allow the growth of a full beard. Once the retirement plan was in place, I started growing my beard. One Christmas season I was in a mall and stopped to talk to Santa. At the time my beard was mostly gray-to-white with some dark spots. Santa wanted to know if I ever portray Santa. I informed him that I did not feel I had the right appearance, having the spotty beard. As this was a slow time at the mall, Santa offered me some advice on taking care of the hair color. It is amazing what a can of white hair spray can do.

Following that, a good friend asked if I could be Santa and host their Christmas party. With a rental uniform in hand and a jolly Ho Ho Ho, I was on the way. I had a ball. The children and adults both were great. A few of the mothers even had tears in their eyes, as did Santa. I was hooked.

A search of the internet and a few eMails later,

I was asked to be Santa in a major mall.

That was four years ago and I am looking forward to this season more with each passing day. I will be in the same mall for a third year. I love watching the children grow up and I really enjoy being able to give something back. Christmas is a magic time for Mrs. Claus and I again.

We have been married for 50 years. We have two children and four grandchildren. Having sold our house, we live full time in an RV. We have traveled the forty-eight contiguous United States, a little of Mexico and Canada. I am sixty-six years old. August finds us in South Carolina. September we will be in Indiana, followed by our arrival in Alabama during October. Christmas we will spend in Florida. Life for us is good.

**Santa Paul Odom
and Mrs. (Linda) Claus**



Name, *Steve Modrich*
Santa Name: **Santa M**
Age: 67

Location: Fort Myers, Florida

Web Site: None yet

eMail Address: Pennycdv2@gmail.com

The Beginning of a New Career

The church was crowded with the residents of our retirement community. We had all come to listen to the president of the community give his quarterly report. As he completed his speech and everyone was getting up to leave, a woman hurried over and stood directly in front of me. "I want you to be in our Christmas

play," she said. "You would make a perfect Santa." (I do have a generous white beard and I am quite portly in stature) She went on to introduce herself as Charlotte Heimann, and to tell me that she was directing a Christmas play that year in our community's theater, where playwrights pen and perform original works. Charlotte said that as soon as she had laid eyes on me, she had decided to incorporate Santa Claus into her Christmas play. I politely told her that I didn't play Santa Claus, had never been on a stage before and didn't want to be in a play. I thanked her for the compliment and turned to leave. Charlotte however, was not to be dismissed so lightly and planted herself, along with her walker, directly in my path. Again, she stated that I simply had to be in the play. She wanted me to be her Santa Claus, and wouldn't I please reconsider. I told her, again, that I couldn't do it and began to walk around her. As I moved to my left, she moved to her right, staying directly in front of me. This dance went on for several long seconds. Finally, I relented and said that I would attend the next play reading session to see if I could read the script, convincingly, as Santa.

That Thursday, my wife and I both attended. The play had, indeed, been adapted to incorporate Santa Claus, even though the play was religious in nature. Santa's part included a beautiful poem, supposedly written by the big guy himself. Everyone in the room where the reading took place agreed that I did a good job of reading for the part, and that I definitely looked the part as well. With so much encouragement, I finally agreed to be in the play.

Of course, I would need a Santa costume, so we went on a search. The best place turned out to be the Internet. We purchased a costume which would be shipped out immediately. When it arrived three days later, I put it on and it was almost magical for me to see myself transformed into jolly old St. Nicholas.

The play was a success. The reading of Santa's prayer was the hit of the evening. After the play, I was congratulated and applauded by all our neighbors and friends. I believe that was the very beginning of my new life as Santa Claus.

Since then, I have appeared at children and adult parties, sat for photo shoots at a television station and visits with Santa in the Bass Pro Shop in Fort Myers FL and other mall settings. I have also made several charitable appearances. My wife and I have appear annually at our community's Christmas celebrations. I have had to purchase another Santa suit as some days I have multiple appearances to make.

I learn new things each and every time I appear as Santa. I see things that I could do to improve the experience for the children as well as their parents and guardians, and myself.

My greatest desire as Santa is that I want to continue doing this as long as I can. This is a very rewarding endeavor.

My worst fear is that I imagine some child will come up to me and kick my shins, shouting, "You didn't bring me what I wanted for Christmas."



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This is a truly stunning suit. Everywhere I went I had everyone touching the fur, very cool.

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Santa Claus Suits (2 ea.)
Basic design is 1939 Hayden Sunbloom suit.
Very plush cotton velvet
Fur is pleated white mink (faux)

Suits made for Santa at 315-350 pounds.
Then I lost 125 lbs.!

Jacket: Size 54-6 Portly
No fur down the front, 2 1/2 inch fur neck w/ hidden snap, 6" fur around cuffs
7" fur around bottom edge
Two pockets w/snap behind belt space (belt NOT included)
5 buttons, fully lined in a 'Holly pattern'

Pants: 50 to a 56 waist with a 30" inseam.
Pants have a drawstring space buttons for suspenders, Fully lined. One rt. hand pocket.
5" fur around each pant leg

Hat: Size 7 5/8 to 7 3/4, Fully lined
22" from pom-pom to bottom of fur.

Jacket lining

Sleeve lining detail

Love, Santa
www.santaclausnp.com
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