

OPINION

GUEST EDITORIAL

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

The following letter is perhaps the most famous example of a child wanting to know if Santa Claus is real.

Letter to the editor
The New York Sun, 1897

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?

— Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia:

Your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds.

All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless 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.

I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark.

John 12:46



RIVERS
CAGLE CARTOONS



LETTER to the EDITOR

Misinformation to blame for COVID deaths in Trump areas

Here is something to think about as we enter the winter months, with the potential for an uptick in COVID-19 and the variants of delta and omicron. This information was updated as of Dec. 5, 2021, and heard on NPR's "Morning Edition." The print article (link below) was headlined "Pro-Trump counties now have far higher COVID death rates. Misinformation is to blame."

Since May 2021, people living in counties that voted heavily for Donald Trump during the last presidential election have been nearly three times as likely to die from COVID-19 as those who live in areas that went for now-President Biden. That's according to a new analysis by NPR that examines how political polarization and misinformation are driving a significant share of the deaths in the pandemic.

The trend was robust, even when controlling for age, which is the primary demographic risk of COVID-19 mortal-

ity. The data also reveal a major contributing factor to the death rate difference: The higher the vote share for Trump, the lower the vaccination rate.

The analysis only looked at the geographic location of COVID-19 deaths. The exact political views of each person taken by the disease remains unknowable. But the strength of the association, combined with polling information about vaccination, strongly suggests that Republicans are being disproportionately affected.

Misinformation appears to be a major factor in the lagging vaccination rates. The Kaiser Family Foundation's polling shows Republicans are far more likely to believe false statements about COVID-19 and vaccines. A full 94% of Republicans think one or more false statements about COVID-19 and vaccines might be true, and 46% believe four or more statements might be true. By contrast, only 14% of Democrats believe four or more false statements about the disease.

The full report, found on NPR.org, can be accessed at: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/12/05/1059828993/data-vac->

cine-misinformation-trump-counties-covid-death-rate

Dan and Jan Blair Joseph

New meaning for Christmas

All infants born into a family, regardless of what kind of family, are meant to bring joy to its world. If joy is the response as the child grows it feels valued. But if the situation into which it is born does not feel joy the child grows to feel inconsequential, or worse.

This is the meaning of Christmas for me. I like to think of Christmas as a collective birthday where we share gifts and let each other know the joys of knowing and valuing one another. It doesn't really matter if one celebrates the literal birth of Jesus or the meaning of birth generally. Everyone who sees value in others can celebrate it no matter what belief system one embraces.

The gift of Christmas is life itself in those around us.

Don Scully Joseph

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infringe on the rights of private citizens. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published.

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