

## Times Change Even in Santa Claus Job; Geiger Counters, Bikes Popular Items

Editor's note: One of the world's great diplomats goes to work every year about this time and labors until Christmas Eve, dispensing his diplomacy to anxious children and their parents. He is the department store Santa Claus. Here are some views on the job as told by a man who has been playing Santa more than 29 years.

By SANTA CLAUS of MACY'S  
Written for United Press  
New York — (U.P.) — Times do change, even in the Santa Claus business.

What, for instance, are you going to say when a little nipper sits on your knee and calmly asks for a Geiger counter? It takes a bit of quick thinking now and then, I'll tell you.

We get a few requests for Geiger counters nowadays but the universal request to a department store Santa—the one Christmas want that heads the list every year—is, "Santa, I want a bicycle."

Both boys and girls want bikes, and even kids two and three years old ask for them, with side wheels to hold them up.

Now, it's obvious, a lot of the time, that the parents can't afford a bike. Then comes the well-known Santa Claus diplomacy. How to please the kids and the parents both? How to

get off the hook? Each situation is different. It always depends on what the people look like, how they act. I sometimes say, "Well, I'll do the best I can—I'll see you Christmas, etc."

**Problem Parents**  
Ninety per cent of the children who come to see Santa Claus are charming. But the parents are a definite pain in the neck. They urge the kids on, hurry them, get them to crying sometimes.

You don't have any trouble with the children when they're left to be themselves. Oh, of course, a lot of them clutch your beard—but you learn to grab

them before they can pull it off. Incidentally, here in New York the nicest kids that come through our lines, as to manners, deportment, lack of hysteria, even to neat dress, are the Negro kids. They're ladies and gentlemen, even at the age of two or three.

We get all kinds of ill children visiting us. Spastic cases, polio. I've been through a couple of wars and seen some people shot up, but I got the biggest shock of my life right here, the other day.

You know, when a kid comes up to you, you put your hands out and grab his arms. This little four-year-old had no arms. Just

two little false arms, with hooks on them, made for his size.

### Little Story

I'll finish this up by telling a little story, a true story that happened to me a few years ago. A nice-looking kid but quite old—about 11. I guess—came in and gave me his list and then said: "Santa Claus, what time are you going home? I've got something to ask you for Christmas that I can't ask you now."

I met him when the store closed and he said: "I need something for Christmas that I don't think even Santa Claus could give me. I'd like to have my father home for Christmas."

He and my mother are separated, and she's taking care of us kids, all right, but I'd like him home."

Well I got the father's name and address and I went home and typed him a letter and signed it "Santa Claus." The ending of the story isn't dramatic but it's kind of nice. Three or four days after New Year's I got a package at home, forwarded from Macy's—a big fruit cake, and on top of it a photo of this man and his wife and two kids at the Christmas party. On the back was "Thank you, Santa Claus," and the kid's name.

### Rep. Russell Mack Stricken in Texas

Aberdeen — (U.P.) — Rep. Russell V. Mack, 64, Hoquiam, is reported resting comfortably in a Tyler, Tex., hospital after being stricken with bronchial pneumonia and a slight heart

attack Sunday. Dr. Ken Wilson, Mack's physician at the Medical Center hospital at Tyler, said Mack possibly may leave the hospital "in a week or 10 days if he does as well as he's doing now."

Dead line for Sunday Classified at noon Saturday.



**SHOCKED BY SHOOTING**—J. G. Apel, Mrs. John Warren and Mrs. Raymond LaPrade, father, daughter and sister of Mrs. Mary Calhoun, sit in shock and despair at Dallas, Tex., after Mrs. Calhoun and her three children were slain by Buford Calhoun, her estranged husband and father of the children. Calhoun, an ex-convict, shot and cut the throats of Pamela Sue and Patricia Lou, three-month-old twins, and Bobby Lynn, a 17-month-old son. Bobby Lynn was sleeping beside his mother at the time. Calhoun also seriously wounded his son-in-law, John Warren, 19. He then fled and later attempted to shoot it out with a police officer and was killed.

## Quotes From the News

By UNITED PRESS

New Delhi, India—A statement by Soviet leaders Nikita S. Khrushchev and Nikolai A. Bulganin on Western newsmen, whom they termed by implication as "dogs," in questioning Communist intentions:

"But we Soviet people do not suffer from lack of coolness. Dogs are barking. But the caravan goes on—and we calmly pass by these writings. People rightly say, 'What is dirty will not stick to what is clean.'"

New York—Showman Billy Rose on his proposal to solve New York's traffic problem by turning Central Park into a vast parking lot:

"What's so sacred about Central Park? It's just a hangout for bums, rapists and murderers."

Washington—Rep. Kenneth B. Keating (R-N.Y.) on a Democratic proposal that congress provide a special attorney to fight a \$3,534,000 suit by the Dixon-Yates interests:

"It is inconceivable that Congress will vote to scrap the Constitution by adopting this political motivated suggestion."

Albany—Gov. Averell Harriman in reply to a remark attributed to President Eisenhower that the New York governor is a "Park Avenue Truman."

"I am always glad to have my name associated with that of former President Truman."

Norman, Okla.—Football Coach Bud Wilkinson of Oklahoma whose team led the nation in ranking, scoring, rushing yards gained, and total yards gained and is matched with Maryland in the Orange Bowl:

"I think all the advantages are with Maryland. The best defensive team will win in any case, and I have a feeling Maryland is a far superior defensive team than ours."

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