

# 'Yes, Virginia, There Is A Santa Claus,' And His Zip Code Number Is 99701

CHATHAM, N.Y. (UPI)—"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," but this year he may not answer your Christmas letter — unless you know his zip code number.

"What a ridiculous idea!" said Mrs. Virginia Douglas, the 74-year-old grandmother who was the original Santa Claus girl.

Mrs. Douglas was 2-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon when she wrote New York Sun editor

Francis Church in 1897. "Some of my friends say there is no Santa Claus. Please tell me the truth."

Church in his famous Christmas editorial replied: "He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist. How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus."

Mrs. Douglas said today she was shocked that the U.S. Post Office could demand not one, but two zip code numbers on letters written to Santa Claus at

the North Pole.

**Hard To Remember**

The letter writer not only has to know Santa's number but also his own—which may be even more difficult to remember.

The general New York City Post Office announced recently that children writing to Santa must know the zip code for the North Pole — 99701—and their own neighborhood zip codes in order to receive an answer.

"The North Pole has been

found for generations without a zip code," Mrs. Douglas said. "Mr. Church wouldn't approve of such a thing (the zip code)."

"It's such a heart-warming feeling to hear from Santa Claus," said Mrs. Douglas. "What will children think if he doesn't answer? It will only fortify disbelief in him."

"I realize they (the post office) have a difficult job, but some things should be beyond impersonal automation," said the retired New York City public school teacher.

**Sorry For Children**

"What a thing to do," she said. "Those sincere letters will probably end up in the dead letter office. I would have felt terrible if my letter had not been answered."

Mrs. Douglas now lives in this Columbia County village with her daughter who has seven children.

A spokesman for New York Postmaster Robert K. Christensen explained that the requirement for zip codes on letters to Santa was part of an educational campaign to get the public to make more general use of the five digit codes. The spokesman said the same sort of thing was going on all over the country.

# Chill Hits Montana And Idaho

By United Press International

Frigid Arctic air sent temperatures falling below zero in the highlands of Idaho and Montana today. Heavy snow warnings were posted and motorists were ordered to use chains while crossing mountain passes.

Heavy rains, meanwhile, drenched parts of Texas and the Northwest coast. Widespread rainfall all but ended the fire threat in Oklahoma's drought-dry fields and woods.

The Weather Bureau dropped cold wave warnings from Minnesota and Dakota forecasts but said it would be much colder in those states with cold wave temperatures in some sections.

Cold wave warnings remained in effect for Montana today and tonight and for northern Wyoming tonight. The heavy snow warnings were for the northern Idaho and Montana mountains during the day.

Winds up to 30 miles an hour were expected to cause drifting of snow in some areas east of the Continental Divide.

The temperature dipped to 3 degrees below zero at Cutbank, Mont., by midnight. Great Falls, Mont., and Lewistown, Mont., had 4 above and 6 above respectively at the same time.

# Controversy Boils Over Life-Like Lincoln Figure

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (UPI)—A controversy boiled today over whether a life-like Abraham Lincoln figure that sits, stands and talks and gestures is dignified and characteristic or "grotesque."

Walt Disney came to the land of Lincoln Tuesday to talk about the project, which will be the heart of the \$1 million Illinois exhibit at the New York World's Fair.

"He is going to speak to you," Disney said. "His voice

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is as close as we could get from actual descriptions of this great man. He will appear in a very dignified setting.

"While seated in a chair before speaking he will drop his head in thought, a characteristic Lincoln action," Disney said. "When he is introduced he will stand — putting his hands behind his back — as though deep in thought."

Disney said the Lincoln presentation would appear to audiences "as life-like as I am standing before you — perhaps more so." He said the figure even would tap its fingers on its chair while waiting to be introduced.

Disney's statements to newsmen were in answer to criticism the Lincoln figure would be "grotesque" and would resemble a carnival sideshow.

"It's almost as ghoulish as the idea to play a mock recording of the voices of the four presidents enshrined at Mt. Rushmore," one person said.

"The next thing they'll have Mousketeers giving guided tours of the White House," said another.

The Lincoln figure will be in a 12-minute presentation called "Great Moments with Mr. Lin-

coln," held in a 500-seat auditorium in the Illinois pavilion. An estimated 25,000 persons will see the show daily.

"I have more at stake in this than the state of Illinois," said Disney, a Chicago native. "I am staking my reputation on this — my integrity, I am not a carnival operator."

Disney and other Illinois officials did not elaborate on some of the details.

In this day of suave looks and sonorous tones — a politician's television tools — would they authentically reproduce Lincoln's crazy appearance and squeaky voice?

# Wallendas Slate Final 'Human Pyramid'

FORT WORTH, Tex. (UPI)—The Flying Wallendas, haunted by a possible "jinx" and memories of death on the high wire, today opened what may be the last performance of their famous "human pyramid."

This time it will be done with a net.

Today's performance, for underprivileged children at the 21st annual Fort Worth Shrine Circus, was to be the first public performance since the pyramid collapsed in Detroit Jan. 30, 1962, killing two members of the troupe and paralyzing another.

Karl Wallenda, 58, who origi-

nated the act in Germany in 1934, said Tuesday he did not want to talk about the Detroit accident. "It was bad, very bad," he said. "After the show, then I will talk about it."

Karl said as leader of the act, the decision to use a net for the Fort Worth performance was his.

"This time I am for the net," he said. "Should I be responsible for what happened in Detroit happening again people would sit in my face on the streets."

Karl saved himself in the Detroit accident by scissoring his legs around the wire as he fell.

He also grabbed the hand of his niece, Jana Shupp as she fell. Jana has since retired. Her husband, Dieter, 23, died in the fall.

Herman Wallenda, Karl's brother and at 62 the eldest member of the troupe, announced he will retire at the end of the circus in Fort Worth. He said he felt fit as ever but "if anything should happen to the act in the future I might be blamed."

Karl scoffed at the idea the troupe was accident prone and said one reason they would try the human pyramid again was "to show that we still can do it."

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