

Letters

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

(from the Editorial Page of *The New York Sun*, written by Francis P. Church, September 21, 1897)

To the 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
New York

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the scepticism of a sceptical 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 child-like 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 you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, *but* that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a 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.

Thankful for all who make lives better

To the Editor:

The holiday season gives all of us an opportunity to send greetings and best wishes to family and friends. It also offers us time to reflect on the sacrifices made and the losses endured by our fellow countrymen as they work to bring about peace in the world. We have much to be thankful for, particularly the opportunity to live in freedom as Americans and to live in a violence free environment. Each day, I appreciate more and more our peacekeepers, and advocates whose diligence and dedication have made it possible for all of us to continue to enjoy that freedom and peace.

As you celebrate your own holiday traditions, please take a moment to reflect on the contributions our community has made in supporting the cause of human freedom. With your extraordinary support, our network of services for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and for persons facing other crises has provided a deepened appreciation and understanding of the cultures we live in, embraced the differences of our neighbors, and developed the qualities necessary to be caring and responsible citizens in a violence free environment.

Many agencies have played a major role in our accomplishments in educating the community about Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault issues in Columbia County, and I am deeply grateful to all of you who have made the progress of our mission possible by strengthening services to victims of Do-

mestic Violence and Sexual Assault. In this spirit, I want to say thank you and best wishes for the holiday season.

Vickie J. Hagan
Executive Director
Columbia County
Women's Resource Center

Newcomer is glad to make Vernonia home

To the Editor:

I would like to say, "Thank you" to the folks from Vernonia and surrounding area who made the scenic Coast Range trek to Farmwoman's Nursery for the Christmas in the Country Bazaar antique and craft show, November 21-23, also to Mrs. Poetter and her hard-working staff, Ron, Shawn and Tracy for the fantastic job they did in putting together a fun event. The fragrance of fresh wreaths, and homemade pastries were too much to resist, as was the nice selection of items for sale.

Although new to Vernonia, I was made to feel right at home by everyone I met. My family and I are glad to be home in Vernonia.

Sincerely,
Paula Hanson
Vernonia

Kindness made her Christmas complete

To the Editor:

I would like to thank the woman who turned my money order in at the Post Office. I was frantic because it was a Christmas gift for my grandchildren.

I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am. It made my Christmas complete.

Thank you and warm wishes.
Debra Curtis
Vernonia

Group benefits from generous donation

To the Editor:

The Vernonia Columbia Community Mental Health staff thanks Randy Parrow of Sentry Market who generously donated a turkey to our Clean and Sober November get together.

These functions are an important benefit to this community and we appreciate it very much. We had a great time.

CCMH Staff
Vernonia

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library



This is such a very special season and each year as it approaches I find myself wanting to express just the "right" message to readers of this column. It would seem that with all of the written material in the library from fictional short stories, magazines, children's books, poems, and inspirational messages, the "right" words would appear. In previous years I've written about the meaning of holiday traditions and legends, included a special poem, or favorite part of a book. This year I picked up a little book entitled, *The Joy of Christmas*. This is an older book with beautiful colored pictures accompanied by writings (poems, words from songs, etc.). Several pages have pictures of candles that brought to mind memories of my mother—a very dedicated elementary school teacher. She also was quite talented artistically and after retiring from teaching volunteered weekly in a fourth grade classroom where she taught watercolors to the students. Each December for as long as I can remember, the project was a wonderful picture of three candles. Each student handwrote a poem about candles and their meaning and the end result was a gift for the parents. Even though the sample and the stages of painting were always the same, each finished picture was beautiful and unique, reflecting the differences of each child. I especially remember these paintings because my job each year was to lightly make the measured lines in which the poem was written. (That's exactly how artistic I was.) I do not have a copy of that poem but pictures of Christmas candles always make me remember those days—my mother's dedication and the pleasure she received while giving to these students and their families. So, I guess this year I would just like to wish that each of you may give that you may receive—in whatever

way your lifestyle or belief leads and also to remember that the differences of each individual have the potential for making beautiful, unique impressions in this world.

Thanks to The St. Helens Bookshop, a variety of materials are available in the library for purchase (adoption) as holiday gifts for the library. The prices are visible by each item and reflect 20 percent savings over retail prices.

The Friends of the Library spent this past Saturday at Barnes & Noble, wrapping gift books as a fundraiser. Barnes & Noble offers this activity to nonprofit organizations throughout the holiday season. They provide the supplies and the organization just provides a donation container for shoppers to make donations if they so wish. This is a great fundraiser and it's fun. The next meeting of The Friends will be Tuesday, January 6, 2004, in the library at 7:00 p.m. The beginning of the year is the time to renew memberships in this organization and new members are always welcomed.

The best book that I've recently read is *The Keeper's Son* by Homer Hickam. This historical novel is based on German submarine attacks on the Eastern coast of the United States during World War II. It fictionalizes an island called Killakeet and its citizens who are targeted for destruction by one of the submarines and defended only by one ill-equipped Coast Guard boat and crew. This novel combines humor, romance and suspense and the author has promised that this is the first in a series. Be watching for the next one by Homer Hickam, who is the author of *Rocket Boys*, from which the movie *October Sky* was made.

Happy Holidays to each of you!

Vernonia Public Library: 701 Weed Ave.
Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.;
Tues., Thur. 2 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Sat. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Preschool Story Time: Mondays, 10:00
a.m., when school is in session.
Phone: (503) 429-1818