

Letters

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

(This timeless classic is 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 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 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 the 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.

Thanks for supporting food for pets, too

To The Editor:

To the wonderful people of Vernonia!

Thank you so much for the tremendous response to the raffle for the dog basket benefiting

the Pet Food Division of Vernonia Cares. We made \$164 at the Christmas Bazaar. The winner of the basket full of dog goodies was Val Mack. Kathleen Pennington was the winner of the "pamper yourself" basket donated by Kathy Larsen.

The basket was filled with goodies donated by local people. Eileen Williams gave a certificate for an animal communication and a phone consultation for training. Mosquito Lodge Lavender a certificate for beautiful jewelry, Vernonia's Voice a year's subscription, The Independent a year's subscription, and Columbia County Animal Control a microchip. Also making donations were Tobie Finzel and Chailey's Choice.

A special thank you to The First Friday Group for sponsoring the raffle and Tobie for selling tickets.

When you're filling your bag to donate to Vernonia Cares, please don't forget to add a can or two of pet food. They get hungry, too. Thank you again for your tremendous response!

Carol Davis
Vernonia

view, we will see buildings, a dramatic increase in traffic on our narrow dirt road, and a parking lot.

When the application for the zone change was first submitted by Mr. Bero, we were surprised that we learned about it from the neighborhood, rather than Mr. Bero himself. The neighbor closest to our home told us Mr. Bero told her what he planned to do with his recently purchased property and when our neighbor asked whether he had to go through a process to be approved, he told her it didn't matter because it was already a "done deal". He told her he wouldn't tell her what she could do on her property and no one could tell him what he could do on his. She was stunned silent by his confidence and wondered what he knew that we didn't.

The neighbor next to her had researched with the county extensively before purchasing their retirement property because they wanted to be sure the surrounding property could not be built on. The planning department at Columbia County told them Primary Forest was the single most difficult zoning to change. Now, the planning department is recommending approval. The prior owner of the Bero property was not allowed to sub-divide his property. What suddenly changed?

Next to those neighbors is an animal rescue that operates a dog boarding business out of the home. Their property extends to the other side of the road and an easement agreement exists between that property and Bero's, set-forth in the early fifties for private and residential use. Those neighbors have never been approached by anyone regarding the use of their easement for commercial business.

Our neighbors have all rallied together. We are concerned about numerous things, including the reduction in value of our properties that would be sitting across from an industrial

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Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library



Personal beliefs and family traditions dictate to a large extent the way we celebrate this special holiday season. The library has books, music and videos to add to your enjoyment of the season. Books such as *Mary and the Baby Jesus*, *Christmas in the Old West*, *The Christmas Sweater*, *The Mitford Snowmen*, *The Christmas Train*, *Christmas in My Heart*, *In the Month of Kislev: A Story for Hanukkah*, and *The Seven Days of Kwanzaa* may be found in the library.

Some of my favorites are the charming parodies of Clement Moore's *The Night Before Christmas*. These include *The Cajun Night Before Christmas*, *The Teachers'....*, *The Principal's....*, *The Librarian's*, *Trucker's....*, *Ozark....*, *Redneck....*, *Texas*, and *Pennsylvania Dutch....* Illustrated by the acclaimed, James Rice, these books tell Moore's story, with humor and appropriate dialect as reindeer are replaced by alligators, longhorns, hound dogs, cows, or whatever might fit the theme. For example, the Pennsylvania Dutch version reads:

Then off to the vindow ve ran in the dark,
Kicked the dog accidental—he started to bark.

Ven ve looked through the vindow, coming in through the gate,
It vasn't vun moo-er ve saw—it vas *eight*.

From the Texas version comes:

His eyes were both squinty
And his skin was like leather
From too much exposure
To the raw Texas weather.

The library's CD collection includes holiday selections by Elvis Presley, Kenny Rogers, The Statler Brothers, Anne Murray, Josh Groban, and Bing Crosby.

Videos include *White Christmas*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Christmas in Connecticut*, *One Magic Christmas*, and *A Holiday to Remember* as well as *A Christmas Story*, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, and *The Polar Express*, which will be the three featured movies shown during December. Dates and times for these movies will be December 18 at 7:00 p.m., December 20 at 4:00 p.m., and December 23 at 7:00 p.m.

Whether you find laughter in a Christmas dinner consisting of duck (with its head attached) as did Ralphie's family in *A Christmas Story*, find new meaning in the nativity story as told by Barbara Robinson in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, or find significance in the ringing of a bell (*The Polar Express* or *It's a Wonderful Life*), remember the library is a good source to help you enjoy this season in ways that bring special meaning to your life.

Vernonia Public Library: 701 Weed Ave.

Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Tues., Thur. 1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Sat. 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Preschool Story Time: Mondays, 10:30 a.m. when school is in session.

Phone: 503-429-1818

Concerns of airport neighbors are valid

To The Editor:

I've lived in my home on Airport Way for over thirty years. My husband and I consider ourselves Vernonians and we would also like to think of ourselves as good neighbors. We love our property and our home, which we expect to live in for the rest of our lives. We live across from the end of the Vernonia Airport and we've never had any problems but now, we find ourselves embroiled in the proposal made by Tim and Michelle Bero, to rezone their (Primary Forest) PF-76 property to Airport Industrial and build an airplane manufacturing business in an industrial park. The proposed industrial park will sit across from our home and, in place of the beautiful forested land we currently

Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters that include personal attacks on private citizens. Because of space limitations, preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number.