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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.

Thankful for the help of local businesses

To the Editor:

The Vernonia High School Costa Rica trip students would like to thank all the businesses that generously donated to our Discount Card fundraiser: Sentry Market, New Hong Kong Restaurant, VHS Balloon Company, Agalis, Cornerstone Naturals, The Clever Cricket, Napa Auto, Café 47, True Value Hardware, Blue House Café, Black Bear Café, Cedar Mist Studios, Spiralz Salon, Creatures and Flowers, and Mariolino's.

The cards are \$10 and offer great discounts to the participating businesses. They are available from Mrs. Willard at VHS, the Vernonia School District office, during VHS home games, or by contacting one of the Costa Rica trip students. Without our community's help, the trip would not be possible.

Thank you for supporting our local businesses and contributing to a life-shaping experience for these young people that will include a home stay with a Costa Rican family, community service projects, Spanish classes, and excursions to see rainforests, volcanoes and beaches. Muchas Gracias!

Ashlee Archer, Rowan Cheney, Jessica Cox, Nathan Fleck, Sarah Miller and Teri Willard (VHS Spanish Teacher and trip Chaperone)

Parade, tree lighting, band warmed us all

To the Editor:

Thanks to all who braved a very cold night to come out for the lighted parade and the lighting of the Christmas Tree.

Though there was a small amount of parade entries, those that did participate were

lit up really well.

Ray Cota took the first place trophy for the best entry.

The band concert put on by the National Guard unit out of Vancouver was excellent, and was well received by those who attended. It was a nice way to end the evening.

We also want to thank Mike's Tree Farm for donating our beautiful Christmas Tree, Vernonia Realty for once again allowing us to use their vacant lot and electricity, and a big thank you to the members of the Christian Church who helped with decorating the tree and downtown. It was all very much appreciated.

If any of you out there are interested in helping, we will be taking the Christmas decorations down on January 2nd.

**DeLoris Webb
 Vernonia Pride**

Climate change real, cap and trade needed

To the Editor:

While many Republicans are predicting an increase in energy costs if we pass the cap and trade legislation, they are missing the big picture. The legislation will save exponentially more money than it will cost, as was seen with the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments.

Predicted to cost \$5.7 billion, the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, which used a cap and trade market system, turned out to cost just \$1.6 billion to cut more than 4 million tons of sulfur dioxide. But savings in health care costs were found to be as much as \$70 billion dollars, according to a 2003 EPA study. That is a savings of 43 dollars for every dollar spent.

With many scientists warning that climate change threatens the lives of billions of people this century, and could accelerate out of control unless we cap and reduce emissions very fast, the savings will likely be vastly greater with investments in reducing greenhouse

gas emissions.

Many larger cities in the United States have unsafe air pollution that is increasing with the temperatures that are a precursor to smog. By switching from dirty coal to clean solar and wind energy, air pollution will be reduced significantly.

Burning coal kills an estimated 24,000 people each year in the United States from particulate air pollution according to the American Lung Association. This is equivalent to eight September 11, 2001 terrorist attack deaths every year. But these people are separated around the country, dying in hospital wards along with an estimated 38,200 non-fatal heart attack victims and 554,000 asthma sufferers whose illness was caused by burning coal, according to the ALA.

People do not see the deaths in one dramatic event, and are not mobilized to action as happened with the September 11 attacks. But they are real, as is the threat of climate change to our national security that prompted the U.S. Pentagon to call global warming a greater risk to national security than terrorism in a 2004 report.

And that is just burning coal. The cap and trade legislation will also reduce the burning of oil, and cut down on the 700 billion dollars that we spend every year to buy petroleum from other countries. Electric cars and trains charged with solar and wind generated energy will be pollution-free.

Having seen the impacts of climate change in the Arctic, and studied the horrific predictions if we continue on our current path, I implore citizens to get behind the cap and trade legislation. The science proving climate change is the most documented of any issue in history. We must take action, before it is too late.

**Chad Kister
 Nelsonville, Ohio**

Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters with personal attacks on private citizens. Preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

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

NOTICE

The INDEPENDENT publishes on the first and third Thursday of each month. There are five Thursdays in December, so the next issue will be published January 7, 2010. The deadline for that issue is Monday, January 4.