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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.

Girl Scouts again to sell spring bloomers

To the Editor:

I would like to thank the community for their continued support of the girls who are involved in Scouting in Vernonia. Your past purchases have made it possible for us to rent the camp lodge at Mountain-dale, as well as all of the "cookie" trips the girls have planned and taken.

The Vernonia Girl Scouts will once again be pre-selling flowering, potted tulips and hyacinths from VanderZanden Farms as a fund raiser for our spring camping trip. All Girl Scouts are selling them from December 1 through January 3, and they will be available for pick-up from WGS on Monday, February 13th from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

This is a great way to support Scouts while getting fresh

flowers for a loved one, teacher or friend near Valentine's Day. Remember, the bulbs can be planted in your yard and enjoyed for many years to come. These are the same beautiful varieties planted by our Scouts at the "Welcome to Vernonia" sign. The cost will be \$6 for a brightly wrapped, blooming pot of 5 tulips or 3 hyacinths. Orders can be placed with any Girl Scout and are greatly appreciated.

Girl Scouts is a program that instills leadership skills and a sense of responsibility to the girls' community as well as a place to have a whole lot of fun.

For further information on Girl Scouts please call 503-429-5709. Thank you again!

**Susan Ely
Vernonia**

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.

Mackenzie Carr is the new Miss Rodeo America

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stain resistant, waterproof coating. Carr has two white hats for this year, but admits to having many more, some in different colors, at home in her closet.

When she's not on the rodeo circuit, Carr loves to bake pies, play volleyball, and has been giving riding lessons to seven girls and one boy (all ages 7 to 10), plus a couple of older children.

"I'm so thankful for the support I've received from the whole town," Carr said at a special Welcome Home event, held at the high school on December 17. Delores Bellingham of the Vernonia Ridge Riders presented Carr with an honorary lifetime membership

in the riding club.

There was cake, punch, competition videos, autographs and lots of pictures with the new Miss Rodeo America. Young girls, in particular, were

Renters will get help from Merkley bill

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hands, they may lose their ability to have that long-term stability. This reform simply provides those individuals and families with more certainty that even if their rental unit is sold, they will still have a home," said Merkley.

Under current law, if an apartment building is being sold, rental assistance for that property can be extended for only one year under three af-

fecting federal programs. Banks are, therefore, unwilling to make loans to new owners to buy or improve the property, as there is little guarantee the building will continue to benefit from federal housing programs. And tenants suffer from a lack of stability.

When asked what she would say to her young fans, Carr answered, "Dream big and keep going, even if people say it

can't be done, stick with it and it can happen. If this can happen to a regular small town girl like me, anything is possible."

Merkley's language would allow for multi-year rent-assistance contracts, which provide more certainty for lenders, owners and tenants alike, with-

out any additional cost to taxpayers.

The language was included in the legislation funding the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Justice, State, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development for fiscal year 2012. The bill was passed by the House and the Senate the week of November 18 and was signed by President Obama on November 18.