



A Most Unusual Newspaper

**Special Christmas Eve Edition**

**CLAUSNET GAZETTE**  
News From The Santa Claus Network

December 24, 2009

**Merry Christmas!**



"For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."

- Isaiah 9:6



# SANTA'S VILLAGE The Pixie Press

Published quarterly by the animals and Pixies, is the official publication of SANTA'S HELPERS CLUB of Santa's Village.



OFFICIAL BADGE

"All children wearing the badge are club members in good standing, even when sitting, and may let friends and well-behaved adults share their reading privileges of the Pixie Press."



## EXTRA LATE DEVELOPMENTS IN MYSTERY TOY MYSTERY: *case solved just before press time*

By Hunt, Peck, and Inky, too

An amazing confession has cleared up the baffling mystery which has been baffling everyone in such a baffling way ... so bafflingly! "I did it," said Humpty Dumpty in an exclusive interview with the Pixie Press.

Egg-shaped Humpty Dumpty stated here today that he has always wanted to work in the Mill Wheel Toy Factory, so he sneaked in late at night, hoping to demonstrate his abilities by making some very fine and unusual toy.



"But I'm so clumsy I kept falling off every workbench," Humpty Dumpty today admitted. "I guess that's why my ... er ... toy turned out so extra unusual ... the square wheels and everything."

Your editors can report that all has turned out happily, however, because Santa is sure that Humpty Dumpty's "toy" is good for something. With a few alterations and only twenty-six more parts ... it will make applesauce ... the hard way ... out of grapefruit!

## About Our Christmas Eve Edition

It's Christmas Eve and we decided to create a little bit of yesteryear magic with the use of the original template from Santa's Village's Pixie Press Newspaper – The Pixie Press! The Pixie Press was the official newspaper of the Santa's Village chain of theme parks from 1955 through 1980. Special thanks to Phil Wenz for supplying the inspiration and the artwork!

### In this issue...

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## A WORD ABOUT THE EDITORS ...us, that is!



**HUNT** ... Foremost duck teletype and wire service editor in newspaper world. I bring you all the news from far-flung places like the North Pole, The Enchanted Forest ... and the duck pond ... of course.

**PECK** ... The only society reporter in the business ... who is also a chicken. On my sizzling typewriter, I peck out the facts without fuss and feathers. Who can spare them? Remember, I am a chicken.



**INKY** ... Outstanding ... I rarely sit ... reindeer editor, publisher and pressman. My printing press pours out copies of our Pixie Press so you may have this unique reminder of your visit to Santa's Village, and your friends can read of the countless activities we have here.

## An interview with Santa's daughter



Mrs. Pat Koch

Our special guest for first ever this Christmas Eve edition of the ClausNet Gazette is none other than the daughter of Santa Claus himself...Mrs. Pat Koch! Her father is none other than the legendary Santa Claus, the late Jim Yellig. Santa Jim of course is known as the REAL Santa Claus from Santa Claus, Indiana.

Patricia A. Koch was born in 1931 to Jim and Isabella Yellig of Mariah Hill, Indiana. At age 19, after graduating high school, she joined the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in St. Louis. For ten years she was a nurse with the Daughters of Charity in St. Louis, New Orleans, and Chicago.

In 1960, she left the religious order. In December of that year, she married W.A. "Bill" Koch, whose family owned Santa Claus Land in the nearby town of Santa Claus. Over the next six years, the couple had five children.

As her children grew, Mrs. Koch became more involved with the park. Her dedication to the park's atmosphere has helped earn the family operation, now called Holiday World & Splashin' Safari, the titles of the World's Friendliest Park (1998-2008) and the World's Cleanest Park (2000-2009). As Director of Values, Mrs. Koch works with the park's 80 full-time and 2,000 seasonal employees.

Mrs. Koch continues to be deeply involved in her faith. She was a major force in raising funds to construct St. Nicholas Church in Santa Claus. She also worked with the Catholic Foundation of Southwest Indiana in helping to start the Wisdom Program, designed to help senior citizens continue to be contributing members of society. She is also involved in projects with the Sisters of Saint Benedict at the Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand.

In 2002, Mrs. Koch received her Master's Degree in Pastoral Ministry from Loyola University. In 2006, she opened the Santa Claus Museum, dedicated to telling the story of the town, the post office and her family's park. That year she also co-authored a pictorial history book, called "Holiday World," in celebration of the park's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary season.

Each December, Mrs. Koch heads up the Santa's Elves program, a volunteer project designed to ensure that every child's Letter to Santa mailed to the town's famous post office receives a personal reply. In 2008, the Santa's Elves mailed more than 30,000 letters to children around the world.

A grandmother to 13, Mrs. Koch is especially devoted to her children's children, who live in Indiana and Florida.

We had the opportunity to speak with Mrs. Koch and here is what she had to say...

**ClausNet:** Thank you so much for speaking with us! With the long and colorful history of Santa Claus, Indiana, what parts of that history stand out for you the most?

**Pat Koch:** The parts of the history of Santa Claus, Indiana, that stand out for me the most are that there has always been an effort to answer the letters that children send to the Santa Claus Post Office. This effort shows the caring of the people who live here.

**ClausNet:** Your father, Jim Yellig, became world famous for his portrayal of Santa. What was he like as a dad and family man?

**Pat Koch:** Jim Yellig was a great dad. He was happy, intelligent, loving, and caring. Most of all he taught me by example how to live a life of service to others. He never lost his childlike sense of awe.

**ClausNet:** Though your father received most of the attention for being Santa, your mother Bella played an important role as well. What was some of the things she did?

**Pat Koch:** My mother was a great cook. She was one of the reasons he kept his portly appearance. She also took good care of his Santa Suits. Many times she traveled with him to parades and appearances.

**ClausNet:** What was Christmas like in your house growing up?

**Pat Koch:** Christmas at my house when I was growing up was exciting and fun. Mom and Dad managed to keep my brother and me "believing" for a long time. I remember noises and a knock at the door which I was told was Santa stopping by. We also attended Midnight Mass and I remember that as being very beautiful.

**ClausNet:** What is your most memorable experience of Santa while growing up?

**Pat Koch:** There are so many memorable experiences of Santa as I was growing up that it is difficult to choose one experience. I remember Santa coming to Mariah Hill Grade School and asking "the little girl with the brown curls" to sing a song. I remember my dad being gone on snowy nights because he was "making children happy." One memory is that Santa could speak German and since we live in a German area that was really special.

**ClausNet:** You have carried on the tradition of answering Santa letters from children that send them to the Santa Claus post office. Tell us about your experiences and some of the letters that have been received.

**Pat Koch:** My experiences with answering Santa letters are many. I started helping my dad when I was about 12 years old. I remember him bringing letters home and my mother worrying about ink getting on the tablecloth. I remember that Dad worked hard with American Legion Posts to help children that needed help. He tried to make every letter personal. It was a ministry for him and it is the reason I continue doing it today. Many letters are sad now because children are not living with their parents or want to live with mom. Many of the letters still tell Santa to help all the children. Just yesterday I read a letter in which the boy called Santa "Mr. C."

**ClausNet:** Do you have a favorite Christmas movie? What is your favorite Christmas song?

**Pat Koch:** My favorite Christmas movie is "Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street" and my favorite Christmas song is "Stille Nacht," which is "Silent Night" in German.



Mr. and Mrs. Bill Koch on their wedding day 1960. Pat's parents, Isabelle and Santa Jim congratulate the couple.

**ClausNet:** What keeps you busy when you are not involved with your work? Do you have a hobby? Do you work with any charities?

**Pat Koch:** My hobbies are reading serious books, quilting, playing violin, and serving on various committees and boards.

I serve on boards with the Benedictine Sisters at Ferdinand, the Diocesan Strategic Plan Committee, Saint Nicholas Church Strategic Plan Committee, Southwestern Indiana Regional Council on Aging, Colon Cancer Research Committee, and some others. I love spending time with my thirteen grandchildren!



**ClausNet:** What is it like to live in Santa Claus, Indiana?

**Pat Koch:** It is fun and exciting to live in Santa Claus, Indiana. I take for granted that people will smile when I give my address. It is still a small town where everyone knows everyone else.

It is usually more exciting from October through December in the town. During the summer months, it is a huge tourist attraction because of Holiday World being located here.



Pat Koch with the Santa Jim Yellig exhibit in the Santa Claus Museum

**ClausNet:** The Santa Claus Oath was dedicated to you father and Santa Charles W. Howard. Since the dedication ceremony in October 2008, the Oath has been signed by over 2,000 Santas worldwide. What do you think you father would think about all this?

**Pat Koch:** My dad would have loved all of this exciting development. He loved to see progress and innovation. He would be proud of how the Oath has developed.

**ClausNet:** What was the last book that you read?

**Pat Koch:** The last book that I read was "A Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church." I am of the Catholic faith and it is the autobiography of an Archbishop who was very intelligent and forward thinking. Before that I read Henri Nouwen's book "The Story of the Prodigal Son" which I found very inspiring.

**ClausNet:** As Santa's daughter, what advice can you give to a Santa or Mrs. Claus that have small children and don't know about their parent's alter ego?

**Pat Koch:** I would advise Santa or Mrs. Claus to allow their children to "believe" as long as possible. It is important that children have faith in things they can't see or feel and Santa is one of those Magical things. One of my favorite sayings is "Life is too short not to believe in Santa Claus." How true!

**ClausNet:** Thank you Mrs. Koch for taking the time to share with our readers some of your wonderful experiences and advice.

*Special thanks to Phil Wenz for arranging this interview with Mrs. Koch and to Mrs. Paula Werne, Public Relations Director at Holiday World, for supplying photographs for use in this article.*

For more information on Santa Claus, Indiana please visit the Spencer County Indiana and Visitors Bureau at [www.legendaryplaces.org](http://www.legendaryplaces.org)



Santa Claus, Indiana Post Office

## A little girl's famous question

Francis P. Church's editorial, "Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus" was an immediate sensation, and became one of the most famous editorials ever written. It first appeared in the *The New York Sun* in 1897, over a hundred years ago, and was reprinted annually until 1949 when the paper went out of business.

Thirty-six years after her letter was printed, Virginia O'Hanlon recalled the events that prompted her letter: "Quite naturally I believed in Santa Claus, for he had never disappointed me. But when less fortunate little boys and girls said there wasn't any Santa Claus, I was filled with doubts. I asked my father, and he was a little evasive on the subject.

"It was a habit in our family that whenever any doubts came up as to how to pronounce a word or some question of historical fact was in doubt, we wrote to the Question and Answer column in *The Sun*. Father would always say, 'If you see it in the *The Sun*, it's so,' and that settled the matter.

"Well, I'm just going to write *The Sun* and find out the real truth," I said to father.

"He said, 'Go ahead, Virginia. I'm sure *The Sun* will give you the right answer, as it always does.' "

And so Virginia sat down and wrote her parents' favorite newspaper.

Her letter found its way into the hands of a veteran editor, Francis P. Church. Son of a Baptist minister, Church had covered the Civil War for *The New York Times* and had worked on the *The New York Sun* for 20 years, more recently as an anonymous editorial writer.

Church, a sardonic man, had for his personal motto, "Endeavour to clear your mind of cant." When controversial subjects had to be tackled on the editorial page, especially those dealing with theology, the assignments were usually given to Church.

Now, he had in his hands a little girl's letter on a most controversial matter, and he was burdened with the responsibility of answering it.

"Is there a Santa Claus?" the childish scrawl in the letter asked. At once, Church knew that there was no avoiding the question. He must answer, and he must answer truthfully. And so he turned to his desk, and he began his reply which was to become one of the most memorable editorials in newspaper history.

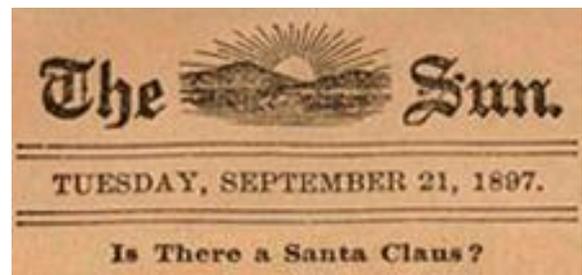
Church married shortly after the editorial appeared. He died in April, 1906, leaving no children.

Virginia O'Hanlon went on to graduate from Hunter College with a Bachelor of Arts degree at age 21. The following year she received her Master's from Columbia, and in 1912 she began teaching in the New York City school system, later becoming a principal.

After 47 years, she retired as an educator. Throughout her life she received a steady stream of mail about her Santa Claus letter, and to each reply she attached an attractive printed copy of the Church editorial.

Virginia O'Hanlon Douglas died on May 13, 1971, at the age of 81, in a nursing home in Valatie, N.Y.

SOURCE: *People's Almanac*, pp. 1358-9.



Virginia O'Hanlon



Francis P. Church

## Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of *The Sun*:

*Dear 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*

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.



Santa Claus, circa 1895

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 childlike 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 or even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, 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 lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

- Francis P. Church, 1897



## The Santa Claus Oath

This past year, the Traveling Santa Claus Oath Ceremony went to 35 cities in the United States and to four other countries; Canada, Denmark, Great Britain and Australia.

The Santa Claus Oath Book now has over 2,000 signatures worldwide. The 2,000<sup>th</sup> signature was recorded by Santa Dan Lundeen of the Minnesota Santa on November 1, 2009.

### **2010 Oath Ceremonies confirmed dates:**

- Lone Star Santas – January 2010
- FORBS & IOS Luncheon – January 2010
- Midwest Santa – February 2010
- International Santa Jamboree – July 2010
- International University of Santa Claus – Dates Pending 2010



Those who have not yet signed the Oath, may contact [santaclausoath@msn.com](mailto:santaclausoath@msn.com) for information on how to be a part of this historical document.

Thanks to all the Santa Claus Oath Committee members for all their hard work this past year. It is truly appreciated.

Special thanks to Santa Jerry Owens and Santa Gary Isaacson, co-chairmen of the Santa Claus Oath Committee, for all their support and to Michael Rielly for his technical support on the Oath slide show presentation.

-Phillip L. Wenz



## Santa Voices of the Past

...But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

- St. Nicholas, 1822

From "A Visit from St. Nicholas" by Clement C. Moore (July 15, 1779 – July 10, 1863)

According to tradition and legend, Moore wrote "A Visit from St. Nicholas" (also known as "The Night Before Christmas") in 1822 for his children on Christmas Eve, though his name wasn't linked with the poem until 1834.



## In Memory



The year 2009 saw  
the passing of some  
friends and family.  
We remember them  
this Christmas in

our prayers and thoughts.

John Hubenig (1943-2009)  
Santa from Calgary, AB Canada  
Passed on March 1, 2009

Gale Howard Bergeman (1928-2009)  
Daughter of legendary  
Santa Claus Charles W. Howard  
Passed on July 31, 2009

Dennis Wendling (1940-2009)  
Santa from Nokomis, Illinois  
Passed on August 27, 2009

Paul Podamsky (1940-2009)  
Santa from Hanover Park, Illinois  
Passed on September 10, 2009

Don Mcardle (1932-2009)  
Santa from Palm Harbor, Florida  
Passed on May 3, 2009

ClausNet member Philip D. Gurganus wrote a very touching and fitting poem shortly after the passing of Santa Dennis Wendling in September.

The poem was used at the grave site rites at Dennis' funeral. A framed plaque of the poem with Dennis' image was presented to the family on behalf of Midwest SANTA and ClausNet.

The poem is a fitting tribute to all our departed friends. ClausNet encourages all Santa groups, meetings, conventions, and gatherings to contact Santa Philip D. Gurganus for the use of this wonderful poem if the need ever arises.

## The Final Sleigh Ride

He could not remember a time when the reindeer flew with such strength and speed  
He could not recall a moment in which his suit shown so bright  
He felt an energy he had not felt in many a year  
The moon was getting brighter as he rode on into the night

A misty fog swirled and danced around the hooves of the deer  
The clouds parted before them as they made their way  
He looked around and saw nothing but stars for as far as he could see  
Just he and the reindeer and a shiny golden sleigh

He had no concept of how long they had traveled or what path they flew  
He could not say when he first noticed the gate  
As he approached, he was astounded by its size and splendor  
He had never in his lifetime seen anything so beautiful and ornate

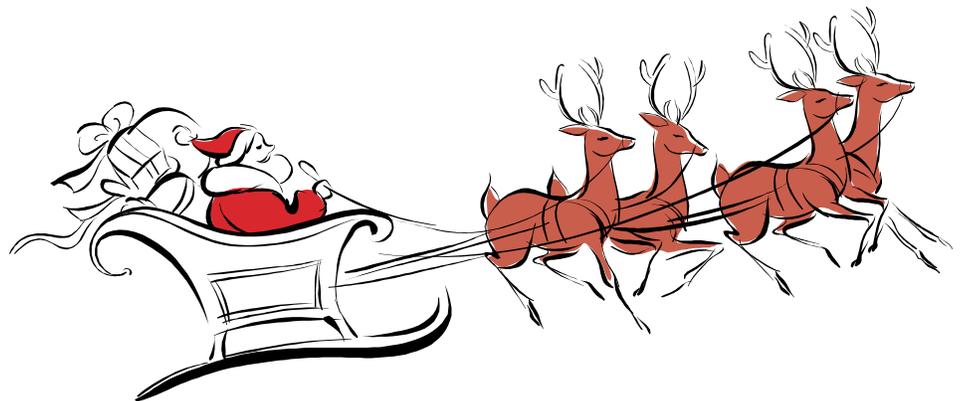
He stepped from the sleigh and with reins in hand, he walked up to the gate  
The instant he touched it his heart overflowed and tears of joy filled his eyes  
The gate was made of silver and pearl, and the path was covered in gold  
He had reached the end of his journey, the land of cloudless skies

He stood in silence as the gate slowly opened, hesitating before he entered  
He felt a gentle hand take the reins and lead the reindeer away  
He set down his big red bag and left it outside the gate, never to be used again  
Taking off his big boots he placed them with the bag, they too outside shall stay

He entered inside and was met by friends and loved ones who had passed before  
The Angels replaced his red suit with a beautiful robe of white  
They sang as he made his way among them, in awe of such splendor  
As the crowd began to part, he was nearly blinded by the light

As his eyes began to focus, he felt a hand take his to welcome and to lead him  
He turned and looked into eyes more kind and loving than any he had ever seen  
As that hand held his in a firm warm grip, he felt the scars in the man's hands  
A gentle voice whispered "Welcome my son, come, it's time to open your gifts."

-Philip D. Gurganus



## Did You Know?

The role of Kris Kringle in the 1947 movie "Miracle on 34th Street" was originally offered to actor Cecil Kellaway, who turned it down. The role eventually went to Edmund Gwenn, who happened to be his cousin. Kellaway eventually played Santa as he donned the red suit in the ABC-TV series "Bewitched" in 1964. The episode was called "A Vision of Sugar Plums" which featured child star Bill Mumy.

In the late 1940's Jim Yellig wrote a small handbook for aspiring St. Nicks called, "It's Fun to be a Real Santa!" The book closed with a chapter called, "Those Little Extras that Will Change a Good Santa Claus into an Excellent Santa Claus". And I quote, "Know the religious aspects of the Holiday and what it means to the various religious faiths. Know a few short stories either religious or Christmas that you can tell the children if you get the time. Know the names of the reindeer so that you can call them off without a second thought. Bring Mrs. Santa Claus into the picture every now and then as being home making cookies, cakes, and candies and refer to your elves that are busy making the toys that you will deliver on Christmas Eve. And a fitting close that a superb Santa Claus might use not only for children but for adults as well would be as follows: "Love your God, your Church, and your Neighbors. Be kind to the little children. Be generous to the poor. Be helpful, respectful and show consideration to aged and the needy, then Santa Claus will always keep your name in his good book!" End of quote.

Most everyone has heard about Charles W. Howard's Santa career, but did you know as a young boy he was given a coping saw. As a young man his woodworking skills eventually lead him to make handcrafted toys and the Medina Toy Company. Howard was also a window display designer and builder, created and sold his own ice cream and was a talented actor on local stages in western New York State. Dedicated to his hometown of Albion, Howard also put forth extensive efforts to help publicize local farmers from Medina county (NY) at local and state fairs by making the world's largest apple pie and building a replica of Niagara Falls using apple juice.

Before he became Miller & Rhoads department store's famous Santa, Bill Strother was a stunt man. He was discovered by actor and comedian Harold Lloyd. Strother had an act where he used to scale buildings as a human fly. This act became the entire inspiration for one of Lloyd's best films "Safety Last."

Robert Lewis May was the creator of Rudolph the red nosed reindeer. May graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Dartmouth College in 1926. He then went on to join Montgomery Ward in Chicago where he created Rudolph in 1939 as an assignment for the company. The retailer had been buying and giving away coloring books for Christmas every year and it was decided that creating their own book would save money. Over 2.4 million copies of Rudolph's story were distributed by Montgomery Ward in its first year. Because May had created Rudolph as an employee, he did not own the license. However, in 1947, he was able to convince the company's corporate president, Sewell Avery to turn over the copyright to him.

Peoria, Illinois has the longest running Santa Claus Parade in the North America and perhaps the world. The 122nd Parade was held in November 2009. The first parade in 1887 consisted of boats and derricks coming down the Illinois River as part of construction of the new bridge. In 1888, the city held the parade through town, celebrating the completion of the new Upper Free Bridge. The following December, Schipper and Block Department Store sponsored a parade that followed the same route and featured many marchers. Various attractions in the parade through the years include fireworks, circus wagons, a calliope, live reindeer and numerous floats. The parade was first televised in 1958.

It is rumored...

Santa Claus made his first visit to a dry goods store, J.W. Parkinson's in Philadelphia on December 24, 1841.

In December 1890, a department store owner named James Edgar of Brockton, Massachusetts dressed up as Santa Claus based on an 1863 illustration of Santa by artist Thomas Nast. Edgar was the world's first known department store Santa and the concept of a live Santa quickly spread around the country.

Research by Phillip L. Wenz

## The First Christmas

"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about the child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen which were just as they had been told."

- Luke 2:1-17

## What Happened on December 24?

### Friday 24, 2004:

The 2004 Christmas Eve Snowstorm delivers an extremely unusual snowfall to the southern US.

### Wednesday 24, 1997:

The Dominican Republic becomes a member of the Berne Convention copyright treaty.

### Thursday 24, 1987:

Japanese legendary rock band BOØWY declares their breakup at the Shibuya Kokaido.

### Monday 24, 1979:

1979 - The first European Ariane rocket is launched.

### Wednesday 24, 1969:

Curt Flood writes to Bowie K. Kuhn, the Commissioner of Baseball, asking to be declared a free agent.

### Tuesday 24, 1968:

1968 - The crew of Apollo 8 enters into orbit around the Moon, becoming the first humans to do so.

### Thursday 24, 1953:

NBC's Dragnet becomes the first network-sponsored television program

### Friday 24, 1943:

US General Dwight D. Eisenhower becomes the supreme Allied commander

### Thursday 24, 1914:

World War I: The "Christmas truce" begins

### Monday 24, 1906:

The first radio program, consisting of a poetry reading, a violin solo, and a speech, is broadcast.

### Sunday 24, 1865:

Several US Civil War Confederate veterans form the Ku Klux Klan

### Thursday 24, 1818:

"Silent Night" composed by Franz Xavier Gruber

### Wednesday 24, 1777:

Kiritimati, also called Christmas Island, was discovered by James Cook.

### Tuesday 24, 1715:

Swedish troops occupy Norway

### Friday 24, 1515:

Thomas Wolsey is named the English Lord Chancellor

### Thursday 24, 640:

John IV becomes Pope



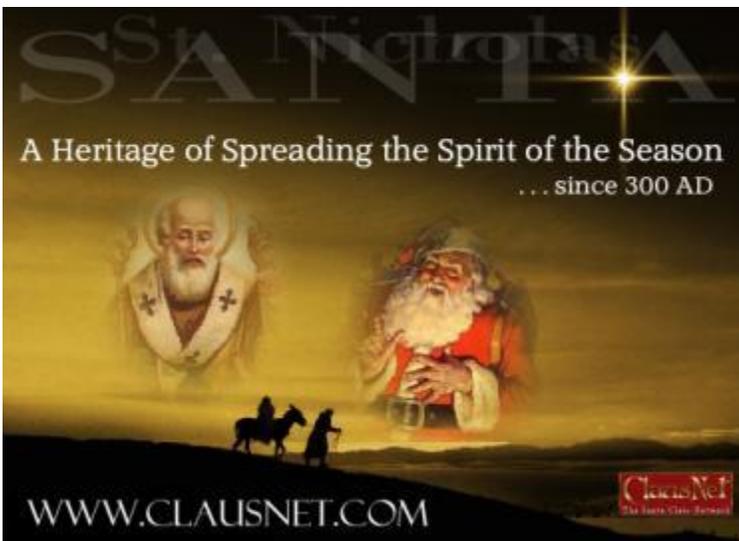
## ClausNet 2009 – A Year In Review

What a year! In 2009 we held several contests and events and several of us even managed to get together for some food and fun! This past year we welcomed a few new members to ClausNet too! Between January 1 and December 24, over 350 people joined ClausNet!

With almost 800 registered members and over 1,000 visitors a day, ClausNet has become the largest online resource and social network for the Santa Claus community. "Community" is the key word. There are many Santa Claus groups, organizations, and websites, but what separates ClausNet is the commitment to building and strengthening this community.

The staff and I have work very hard to keep ClausNet fresh, fun, and informative! It takes a lot of time and effort to keep ClausNet running smoothly and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for all their hard work. I would especially like to thank Phil Wenz and Jeff Westover for all their hard work behind the scenes; without it none of this would be possible.

So here are a few highlights of events and happenings from this past year...



"A Proud Heratage", by SCSmall

### Wallpaper Contest Winner

This past year ClausNet held its first annual desktop background contest. The winning background was a very fitting and emotional entry entitled "A Proud Heritage."

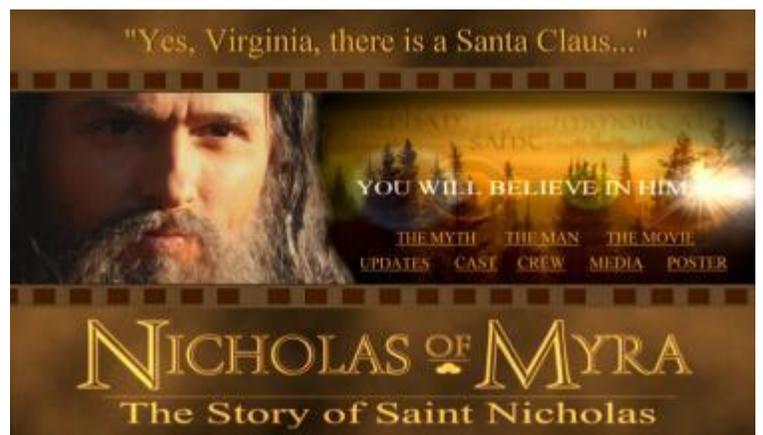
Designed by SC Small, the background is a fitting reminder of the humble beginnings of the Santa Claus Legend.

ClausNet would like to thank SC Small for his winning entry and all those who designed backgrounds for the contest. With so many great entries it was hard for our members to choose. We will be having more contests like this in the upcoming year.

### Promote the Nicholas of Myra Movie

Santa groups, organizations and individuals would you like to participate in grassroots promotion for the new [Nicholas of Myra movie](http://www.saintnicholasofmyramovie.com)? (For example: e-mail, blogging, website links, banner ads, church and organization outreach. It's easy and anyone can do it. Just sign up at: [www.saintnicholasofmyramovie.com](http://www.saintnicholasofmyramovie.com))

ClausNet supports this important and inspirational movie about the life of the devout Bishop by day and an anonymous gift-bearer by night.



Matthew Mesler as *Nicholas of Myra* (photo by Jeffrey T. Barnes)

## Gatherings



March 2009 saw over 600 Santas and Mrs. Clauses attend The Celebrate Santa Convention in Gatlinburg, Tennessee



Several ClausNet Members meet in Midland Michigan at the Charles W, Howard Santa Claus School



Victor Nevada's Santa Claus School in Calgary, Alberta, Canada

## ClausNet Featured Members of 2009

<b>January</b>	Santa Edson
<b>February</b>	Jana Banana
<b>March</b>	Santa Steve
<b>April</b>	Santa Craig
<b>May</b>	Santa Dutch
<b>June</b>	Double R Reindeer Ranch Rick and Roberta
<b>July</b>	Cindylu
<b>August</b>	Kriss Kringle
<b>September</b>	FrSanta
<b>October</b>	Santa Everett
<b>November</b>	Laffo
<b>December</b>	Santa Bob Elkin  SC Small  Santa Felix

Each month, our **Featured Member** section profiles one ClausNet member. Members are chosen totally at random by the ClausNet staff.

Once selected as Featured Member of the Month, we interview the candidate and post the interview here. This is a great way to get to know your fellow ClausNet members!





## ClausNet Gazette

In 2009, we launched the ClausNet Gazette, the official newsletter of ClausNet! Each month we publish a brand new issue jammed packed with the latest news, information, events, happenings, contests.

Subscribers to the ClausNet Gazette include: Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, Elves, Reindeer Owners and Breeders, Suppliers, and Santa Helpers and our mailing list continues to grow! The ClausNet Gazette goes out to over 2,300 in boxes!

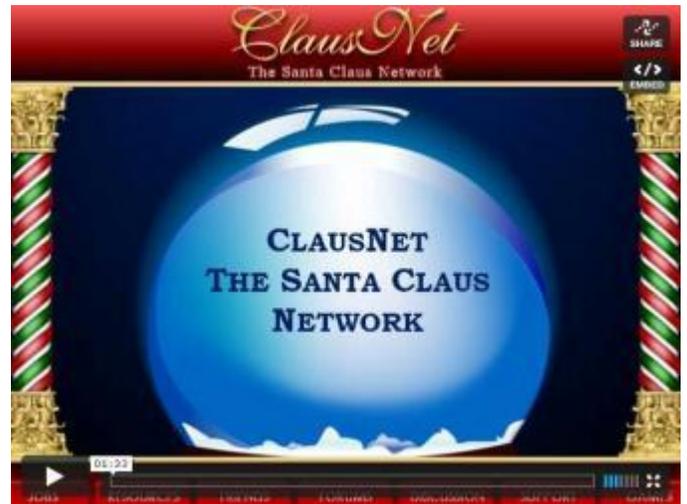
If you know someone who might be interested in receiving the ClausNet Gazette, feel free to pass it on!

## ClausNetMedia Channels

This year, ClausNet launched the ClausNetMedia Channels on YouTube and Vimeo. [Welcome to ClausNet](#) and [ClausNet: The Santa Claus Network](#) are the first of several original videos planned for the ClausNetMedia Channel.



Welcome to ClausNet video on YouTube



The Santa Claus Network on Vimeo

Members can also post promotional videos for their Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus business on the ClausNetMedia Channel.



Feel free to subscribe to the ClausNetMedia Channels on [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo](#); and check back often for new videos!

If you would like to post your own promotional video on our YouTube channel, contact us and we'll be happy to help!

## About ClausNet

ClausNet is the world's premier Santa Claus Network and the largest Santa, Mrs. Claus, and helpers social group anywhere! Here you will find members from every Santa organization in the world, coming together to build a community of friendship, trust, and fellowship.

Together we build unity and common bond for men and women dedicated to the faithful portrayal of Santa Claus (Father Christmas, Père Noël, Kris Kringle, Sinterklas, Baba Noel, Grandfather Frost, Joulupukki...), Mrs. Claus, and all others who devote their time to bringing the magic of Christmas to children and adults throughout the world!

ClausNet.com is the largest resource and social network for Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, Elves, Reindeer Handlers, and Santa helpers for the purposes of sharing stories, advice, news, and information.

Most importantly, ClausNet is bringing people together to build friendships that help spread happiness to the true believers of Santa Claus -- the child inside all of us.



Wishing you and yours a  
Very Merry Christmas  
and a Blessed New Year!

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year filled with joy and happiness!

Thank you for making ClausNet the world's premier Santa Claus Network and the largest resource and online community for Santa, Mrs. Claus, Elves, Reindeer Handlers, and Santa Helpers! I am honored to call you my friends.

And it is through the friendships we build here on ClausNet where the true spirit of Saint Nicholas is seen -- in our smiles when we meet, the handshakes we give, and the cheer in our voices.

May God bless you and your families!

*Michael*

### Join Us!

Help us bring the joy of Christmas to children and adults throughout the world!

Registration is free! [Come join us!](#)

### Contact Us

[forums@ClausNet.com](mailto:forums@ClausNet.com)

[www.ClausNet.com](http://www.ClausNet.com)

[YouTube.com/ClausNetMedia](http://YouTube.com/ClausNetMedia)

[Vimeo.com/ClausNetMedia](http://Vimeo.com/ClausNetMedia)

[Twitter.com/ClausNet](http://Twitter.com/ClausNet)