



VOLUME 1  
ISSUE 2

## Jingle Press

### Invoking "The Santa Clause"

By Santa Jac Grimes

"In putting on this suit and entering the sleigh, the wearer waives any and all rights to previous identity, real or implied, and fully accepts the duties and responsibilities of Santa Claus until such time that wearer becomes unable to do so either by accident or design." – (The "Santa Clause" from the movie The Santa Clause)

When this wording came out in The Kringle Kronicle last month, I read the article and didn't give it too much more thought. That is until Liz, who was reading over my shoulder, said "wow that's so true." "What is?" I said. "The Santa Clause. That really applies to you. Go back and re-read it." So I did.

She was right. The "Santa Clause" not only applies to me, it applies to anyone that puts on the suit and enters the sleigh. I read 'entering the sleigh' as a metaphor for the work we do as Santa, and not just at Christmas.

Many of you were Santa when the movie came out in 1994. I was not. You movie aficionados can feel free to correct me, but to my knowledge, it was the first movie to put forward the concept that while "Santa Claus" the idea or spirit is eternal, "Santa Claus" the person can change. This is significant for the work we do because it makes us a real person not just a legend. It also makes us accessible in ways as never before.

My 5 year old friend Emily told her mother just before Christmas last year that she knew I was the real Santa Claus. I asked her how Emily could think that because she knows where I live and has been to my house. She hadn't even seen me in my suit yet. She thinks I'm the real guy in the same way Scott Calvin becomes the real Santa in the movie. I live in Jamestown and commute to the North Pole.

When The Rotary Club member "Santa" in a cheap suit and not so well designed designer beard passed by in the Jamestown Parade, she even told members of her scout troop, "That's not the real Santa! The real Santa's a friend of my mom's and I've been to his house." Ah, from the mouth of babes.

The "Santa Clause" is what was printed on the card, in very tiny print, that Scott Calvin picked up when Santa fell off his roof in the movie. After what he thinks is a dream of flying reindeer and visiting the

North Pole he discovers that his life is no longer his own. The Santafication process begins and not only does Scott's physical appearance change his outlook changes as well.

I often think of the scene when he is sitting on a bench in a park and a line of kids form to visit with him. How many of you can say the same thing have happened to you? It seems that no matter what I'm wearing if a child approaches me and I take time to talk with him or her, all of a sudden there's a crowd. It seems to give permission for other children, and adults too, that may have been too shy to initiate contact to approach me. I've become so popular at the water park that I have to look for remote areas to relax. And they still find me! (But I'm not complaining.)

Scott had a hard time in the movie of letting go of the old persona and accepting his new reality. You see even though he was in the toy business and had a young son, he didn't really believe in Santa. Do you?

Recent events in our organization have led me to believe that the Santafication process has not really finished for some of you. I suppose that if you want to "play" Santa then the Clause does not apply to you. I'm finding that always, that's right I said always, being above reproach and constantly the center of attention is indeed a heavy burden. It's also one I'm willing to accept because I have an opportunity to spread the joy and magic of Christmas year round.

If, on the other hand, you consider that you are a true descendant of St. Nicholas, are in possession of the spirit of and really believe in Santa then you are subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the "Santa Clause." When you walk out the door, and that includes electronically, you agree to this statement: "... the wearer waives any and all rights to previous identity, real or implied, and fully accepts the duties and responsibilities of Santa Claus..." Powerful stuff!

I don't mean to sound preachy here but as I stated in a previous newsletter, you represent me and all our brothers that willing put on the suit and enter the sleigh. If the toy bag is too heavy then grab your snow globe and say, "I wish I had never been Santa Claus at all." That will enact the "Escape Clause" and you can trim or shave your beard, stop bleaching, sell your suit on ebay and return to your normal life. The choice is yours. Do you believe in Santa Claus?

As Always,  
Santa Jac Grimes, RBS, BSC

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*Welcome to the expanded edition of the Jingle Press.* The Red Suit Roundup is being folded inside, becoming one section of the issue, with each region having its own section. The Jingle Press needs volunteers. I know there are talented writers, who have much to contribute, to help make this newsletter one sought out by Santas everywhere.

Inside this issue you will find columnist, Santa Al Horton, with 'Christmas In July' and Santa Lou Knezevich with 'Mirror, mirror.' Santa Jac Grimes offers two articles this time. He submitted a very timely piece titled, 'Invoking the Santa Clause.' He also gives us a glimpse into the recent Long Leaf Pine Gathering in North Carolina.

Please welcome Cindylu Thomas with the premier of a regular series she calls, 'Taming the BEAST.' This is one I am sure will become very popular, very quickly, generating emails and letters. Cindylu is a professional beautician, as she continues her education, staying current with product developments. She has volunteered to share what she has learned in an effort to help all Santas grow, groom and maintain a beautiful countenance. Please take note! As Cindylu says, and all others with the knowledge tell

us, what works for one, may not work for another. She offers what she has learned as suggestions, to be considered on YOUR part with great CAUTION! She offers no guarantees, as the application of her suggestions is ultimately up to the individual applying them. It is your choice, and as many have already learned, CAUTION is always the keyword when maintaining hair and beard.

With sadness, we acknowledge Santa Tim stepping down from the presidency of AORBS. I can only say, in my conversations and e-mails with Santa Tim, he has been very professional and personable, giving his time and knowledge willingly in the promotion of the organization. Santa Tim, thank you.

My only words here on the recent state of AORBS affairs, will be to say, READ "Invoking the Santa Clause" by Santa Jac Grimes. Then, re-read it. Print out a copy of the 'Clause' and tape it where you can see it every day. These are not reindeer games we play. Choosing to put on the suit comes with great responsibility beyond the ordinary, every moment of every day. The times in which we live are very critical and our intent, actions and words are key. Santa's focus is on the children, all children around the world of all ages, through the Spirit of Christmas. Period.

[Santa@TheSantaClaus.com](mailto:Santa@TheSantaClaus.com)

#### **SPECIAL NOTE:**

Insurance information can be found on the internet. Go to: <http://www.RedSuitRoundtable.com>, click on 'AORBS INFO' link below the photo, near the middle. On the next page which loads, you will see the link to: 'Liability Insurance' (It is a PDF file - you can right-click or command-click (mac) to download the pdf file to print out. NOTE: It does state on the form: "specifically designed for US based members")

He's beginning to look a lot like Santa Claus! The CVB President of Overland Park, Jerry Cook, is continuing to grow his beard as agreed if the convention was to come to Overland Park, KS.



The Jingle Press is published by AORBS.

**For questions or comments** please contact *Gary Casey*, Publisher or *Bill McKee*, Editor.

**Submission of articles and images** can be made to the Editor at: [Santa@TheSantaClaus.com](mailto:Santa@TheSantaClaus.com) or [Bill@Earthdancer.org](mailto:Bill@Earthdancer.org) All materials copyright AORBS.

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### **The Long Leaf Pine Santa Gathering 2007**

By Santa Jac Grimes, RBS, BSC

Nestled among the long leaf pines and stately oaks in the woods of piedmont North Carolina is a magical Castle. It is a beautiful place with fun activities. You can attend a party or festival, pan for gems and even get married in this wondrous place. But in late November the magic really starts. Elves move Santa's home from the North Pole and transform historic Castle McCulloch into Christmas Castle.

Thirty-two Santas, Mrs. Clauses and various elves descended on Castle McCulloch on Saturday July 28, 2007 to celebrate Christmas in July at the 1st annual Long Leaf Pine Santa Gathering. The Castle's staff members were gracious hosts.

The event actually started the night before when Santas and their guests parked their sleighs and literally took over the main dining room of Golden Corral in Greensboro NC. The other diners, especially the kids, could not get over seeing 15 Santas in one place. Santas and their guests had plenty of time for fellowship, swapping stories and of course, posing for pictures.

Saturday morning they met at Castle McCulloch. Santa Cliff had arranged for goodies from The Sweet Shoppe and donuts and coffee from Krispy Krème.

### **Taming the BEAST**

By *Cindylu Thomas*

You and I will be entering into the world of caring for the 'BEAST.' You may be wondering what on earth I could be talking about. Well, gentlemen (and ladies too, involved in this endeavor) it is TIME to talk about it; very likely past time, to tell you the truth.

Some of you know me, many don't, but by the time you're finished reading this, I hope you will have more insight as to where our journey is going over the next several months. Now you're REALLY scratching your head (or your beard) aren't you?

#### **A Little History**

I am Cindylu Thomas, otherwise known as Mrs. Claus to Santa Charlie of Alabaster, Alabama. I have had the distinct 'honor' of being Santa Charlie's groomer, in addition to being the chief cook, bottle washer and all those other things that go with being his wife and Mrs. Claus. Charlie has had a beard ever since I can remember (at least 36 years). I never gave it much thought through most of those years, other than the

(Santas like to eat!) After trumpeter Elf Jae Grimes called them to their seats with a solo of "Santa Claus is Coming to Town", each Santa had an opportunity to introduce himself and tell a little about his work as Santa. Most of them also introduced their Mrs. Claus and conveyed how they work together.

The Castle's Marketing Director Denisa Harvey, gave a presentation about the history and operation of Castle McCulloch and showed a video of Christmas Castle.

AORBS SE Director, Gary Casey, brought Santas up to date on what was happening on the board and plans for the 2008 International Santa Conference in Overland Park, KS.

Soon the whole entourage was off to Carter Brothers BBQ in High Point for some North Carolina hospitality and cuisine. If there's one thing Santas love to do, it's eat!

Santas Cliff Snider and Jac Grimes were the event's hosts and are already planning for next year's Long Leaf Pine Santa Gathering.

To view local news stories of the event, go to: <http://www.hpe.com> and click on back issue dated 7/29/2007. There are 2 stories.

one time he cut it completely off and I nearly went into cardiac arrest thinking some unknown man had broken into our house. When I saw his hairless face it was quite a shock, I must confess. After a few nights waking up in the middle of the night, frightened in my sleep induced state that there was some other man in my bed, I finally told him I would be eternally grateful if he would just grow it back again. He eagerly agreed, as by then he had cut his face with that dreaded razor more times than he could count. It was a reminder to him why he had grown the beard in the first place.

His beard started off a bright red. Through the years it started dying, little by little, to the point it became more than half gray. (That's what gray hair is, by the way. Dead hair.) As such, it poses many of its own unique problems. There is also a huge difference between facial hair and scalp hair. Each responds to chemicals differently. What works on your hair won't necessarily work on your beard, or at best, works differently. Through the coming months we'll explore these differences.





Gary Casey, Southeast Regional Director

Hi Santas,

I hope you enjoy these newsletters. They have been a combined effort of some very special people, giving lots of volunteer time and hard work. My message to all members of the Southeast Region, and all members of AORBS, is that more helpers would make them even better. Send your articles to Bill at: AORBSSEnews@earthdancer.org and be part of the team. This is your newsletter and it requires your input. I see many Santas posting to the message boards. I would like to see some of that energy translated into articles and stories to add to the Red Suit Roundup and/or the Jingle Press.

The efforts to produce these newsletters are by Santas and Mrs. Claus. They are also ordinary folks that care very deeply about children and how to bring them joy. Their intent is not to spoil, promise things that can't be delivered or deceive. They simply listen and acknowledge the words that children pass on to them and share that knowledge with others.

All children have hopes, dreams, desires and faith that Santa can make a difference in their lives. Shining thru at every need and request is Santa's wish. Santa Claus does make a difference around the world; North, South, East or West, on all the continents, transcending nationalities, religions and creeds that inhabit this home we call Earth. Santa is always there, trying to help people in whatever way he can, spreading love and joy. As this season draws near, please keep in mind that the children ARE what it is all about. All children of all ages matter.

Cont'd from Taming the Beast

Some years ago, when Charlie determined portraying Santa was his calling, we entered this marvelous journey together. It became my calling, as well, as Mrs. Claus. We were committed, and began our education in Santaclausology. Suddenly we were faced with the 'BEAST'.

Up to that point, I had never become involved with the care and upkeep of a beard. It did not take long when I started noticing a lot of split ends and hair that had just broken off. After further investigation, I found the culprit. Charlie and his shampooing habits were causing the problem.

Gentlemen, when washing your hair and beard, do not tackle it as though you were wrestling a bear. Be gentle, using your fingertips ... NOT FINGERNAILS ... to massage shampoo into the scalp and face. Work the shampoo in thoroughly and then bring it out to the ends of the hair and beard. Shampoo with warm water, not hot. Heat of any kind is damaging to hair, but especially damaging to the beard. Apply the same gentle rules when using conditioners and always leave the conditioner on for at least a few minutes, giving it time to be absorbed into the follicles of the hair and beard. I suggest when you first get into the shower, wash your hair and beard, condition and leave the conditioner in while you wash the rest of your body. Make rinsing the conditioner out the last thing you do before getting out of the shower.

Now you know what I'm referring to as the "BEAST." Of course it's the beard, and it IS a beast to try and tame for so many of you. In this column I will offer knowledge I have acquired and suggestions on taming your beast, and how to do it on a shoestring budget. We'll be looking at various shampoos, conditioners, etc. We will discuss split ends, styling, brushes, combs, the bleaching process, coloring process and all those neat things that are so elusive to so many of you.

Please understand that while I don't profess to be an expert, I do have a background in this field of endeavor, having attended a top rated beauty school. I became a professional beautician. I decided to make it my career, however, my legs had other ideas and couldn't hold up to the rigors of being on them all day long. I had to abandon that career. I have kept up with changes, new products and procedures through the years. After all, I am a woman and we women, or at least most of us, do like to look our best. We're geared that way. You gentlemen aren't for the most part. UNTIL you decided to become Santa, that is.

Each of you have your stories of how it all happened. Having made that decision, you find yourselves learning things you never dreamed of. It was a

delight to hear many of those stories at the 2006 convention in Branson MO. I also had the occasion to observe many, many 'BEASTS.' Some beards were very handsome, some were OK, some were rather pitiful and there were a select 'few' that were just downright embarrassing. Having become

Charlie's groomer and then seeing those disasters at the convention, I decided it was time to take action. I gave myself a complete refresher course on 'Beardology'. The good news is: You don't have to be rich to have a rich looking beard!

Please understand, what works well for one may not work as well for another. I'll offer suggestions, with lots of information on products and their use, but ONLY YOU will be able to determine what works best for YOU. I make NO guarantees, only suggestions.

Lets take just a minute to talk about those 'embarrassing beasts' that showed up at the convention.

Gentlemen, if you don't intend to portray Santa year round, that's fine, but please don't portray one of those men we mothers warn our children to stay away from by just ignoring how you look 10 months of the year! Go to your local Barber shop or Salon and have that beard cut back to an inch long or shave it off altogether and start re-growing it, taking care through the year to keep it neatly trimmed. For you Santas that do portray Santa all year long, I cannot stress the importance of keeping your beard neatly groomed, in good condition and keeping your roots bleached out periodically. As most of you probably know, kids will identify you through the whole year as being Santa, so be the best looking one you can be while you're at it. It's not only is the right thing to do, but you may pick up several bookings along the way for the next Christmas season. People always rely on that first impression in determining whether they want to hire you or not. Speaking from personal experience, you never know who's path you may cross, anywhere, anytime.

Now that we have come this far, next issue we will discuss shampoos and conditioners. I will try to cover affordable ones, pricey ones, deep conditioners, light conditioners and various shampoos that will work wonders for your 'BEAST.'

I am humbled to be a part of this publication and hope you fellows, and those lucky enough to have a Mrs. Claus to help, will enjoy taking the journey to becoming a Stunning Santa with me. I invite each of you to share your experiences along this journey and I will try and answer any questions you may have. I welcome your questions and will feature some of them, along with my answers, in each issue. Just e-mail me at Bamasanta@aol.com.

Cindylu



START PLANNING NOW TO ATTEND

The Discover Santa 2008 International Conference



# IN SEARCH OF A HOST

by Nicholas Trolli, AORBS EVP

It is hard to believe that it is mid August already, with summer waning and frost soon to be on the pumpkin. Right on its heels comes the hanging of the green and, for us lucky gentlemen, time to don our red and white suits to the delight of children (of all ages) everywhere.

My summer has been very busy as we searched for, and then evaluated cities to host the Discover Santa 2008 International Conference. It was very exciting to be a part of the team visiting the final five choices. Our hosts were very gracious, keeping us busy from morning to night, as they showed off their town.

In St. Louis there was a sparkling arch and a whispering arch. Their Union Station, which had once been the hub of commerce, from the east to the west and back again, is once again a bustling location. The Hyatt has taken over the space, restored it and now occupies it, along with a large public shopping mall. Entering the Hyatt, one is astounded by the beauty. There is gold brocade and looming statues decorating the large hall.

On either side of the entrance is an alcove, separated by some 20 feet, which forms an arch overhead. It is known as the whispering arch. If someone were to stand in each alcove, each person could hear the other speak very clearly, even in the faintest whisper. It is most interesting that this effect was discovered when they were refurbishing the station. One of the workers whispered an expletive under his breath, and another worker on the other opposite side heard him clearly. It was coined the whispering arch and is now well-known by this name.

St. Louis, deemed the gateway to the West, is known worldwide by the towering steel Arch that sits along the Mississippi river. It shines brightly throughout the day and sparkles in the moonlight. The Arch is always visible while in the city, and one can always find their bearing using the Arch as their guide. St. Louis is a city of arches, truly a tribute to what man can achieve.

Wicked is the word that comes to mind when I think of Columbus, Ohio. Upon our arrival there we were whisked away to the Ohio Theatre. This was a treat in itself. Built in 1928 in a highly ornate mixture of architectural styles, the theatre served as a 3000 seat movie palace for many years. The Ohio Theatre was saved from the wrecking ball and is perhaps the most impressive restoration project in central Ohio. The theatre is now home to the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, the Ballet Met and hosts touring Broadway shows. We indulged in a spectacular live performance of the touring Broadway hit musical, Wicked! The show is the Wizard of OZ, from the perspective of the wicked witch.

There could be no mistake that Columbus aimed to impress. Columbus was sweet on Santa, and everyday brought new delights. We toured the German Village, a 19th century neighborhood, where we were introduced to Schmidt's Fudge Haus. The owner and his employees had donned antlers and red blinking noses. While we feasted on sweets the Nutcracker and Sugarplum Fairy danced onto the scene. The Ballet Met was there to greet Santa too.

It was back to the airport following this whirlwind tour. Our next stop proved to be the shining star, the city earning the honor to host The Discover Santa 2008 International Conference.

... To be continued.



At the Organizational meeting held for AORBS on Thursday August 16, 2007 the following volunteers were appointed to an interim seat on the AORBS Board of Directors. These gentlemen stepped up to serve their brethren Santas and are to be commended for their service. We are still in need of additional BOD members to serve as the Secretary and as the Director of the North Central Region. Additionally we are still in need of volunteers for all areas concerning the convention, conference, trade show and parade. If interested in serving in any of these areas please contact the AORBS President.



## My Brothers in Red,

It is an extreme honor to serve you as interim President of the Amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas. Let us look forward to a future that exemplifies our ideal of being an organization where 'real bearded' and principled gentlemen can forge ahead in the spirit of brotherhood.

We must hold true to the task of modeling ourselves after Saint Nicholas, by whose secular model, Santa Claus, we live our lives in service daily, through our appearance and actions. Our only intent and purpose should be to perpetuate the spirit of unselfish love and giving through the structure of this fraternal organization.

Let us build a brotherhood that imbues our members -- our brothers -- with the skills and resources which will enable them to be a true and faithful representative of Saint Nicholas, not only during the Christmas season, but every day of the year.

The Amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas is an International, educational and fraternal organization of real bearded gentlemen, who are dedicated to the Joy of BEING Santa.

Our organization was born when ten men, who were portraying Santa in a commercial for a German catalog company, desired to meet with each other again over lunch to share stories and ideas. This became an annual tradition and has continued and grown to more than 700 dues paying members.

As we look to the future, I hope to hear from each of you. I want to know your desires and concerns, and you can feel free to write or call me at any time. As the interim president, I shall do everything within my power to move this organization forward -- improving and expanding our communications, our website and our efforts to bring the joy of Christmas felt by Saint Nicholas to everyone we come in contact with.

We are a brotherhood molded in the image of Saint Nicholas. As such we have already started expanding our efforts to welcome those who share our beliefs and dreams, but who are not eminently as qualified to fill the role of Saint Nicholas. As we share our beliefs, we shall also share our organization with our wives, our helpmates; those who cannot experience the unique joy of being a real bearded Santa, but are an essential part of our portrayal of Santa.

Our dream of being a gathering of jolly old souls celebrating the Christmas season as exemplified by Saint Nicholas will become a reality -- with your help and your input. Bear with us as we strive to take the Amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas to even greater heights.

May the spirit of Saint Nicholas be with us all as we start to move forward into a brighter, better and stronger organization of brothers united in principles and ideals.

At your service,  
Nicholas



## AORBS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Executive Committee

President	<i>Nicholas Trolli</i>
Vice President	<i>Jeff Germann</i>
Treasurer	<i>Ken Vergauwen</i>
Secretary	<i>Paul Naggy pro tem</i>

### Regional Directors

North Central	
Northeast	<i>Paul Naggy</i>
Pacific	<i>Christian Martens</i>
Rocky Mountain	<i>Paul Raines</i>
South Central	<i>Charlie Thomas</i>
Southeast	<i>Gary Casey</i>

### Emeritus Officers

Founder Emeritus *Tom Hartsfield*



## Report from the Board of Directors

Friendship, Camaraderie and Fellowship are the principles upon which AORBS was founded. These are the principles upon which we should continue to build our organization. Being aware of these principles and understanding a need to return AORBS to its core foundation, the Board of Directors voted to eliminate the requirement for a background check to be a member. Appreciating that AORBS is not a booking agency and neither endorses, nor promotes any one Santa, we see no need to require background checks.

However, if you are a private party Santa, it is a good idea to have a background check completed and then use it as a marketing tool with your potential customers. If you are working for a photo company or a booking agent, it is customary for them to pay for, and have the background check performed by the vendor of their choice.

Additionally, the board is completing the incorporation of our organization. We are drafting bylaws to be ratified by the membership, establishing a bank account, securing our websites from sabotage and establishing an election policy for our upcoming election.

The Board of Directors has been established to serve the membership and we are diligently working to do so.

On behalf of **AORBS Board of Directors,**

Nicholas  
President



# Kringle's Wisdom

Christmas In July  
By Kris Kringle  
Aka Santa Al

It is a wonderful time of year (and I'm not talking about December and Christmas). I am talking about the month of July. This is the time I have the opportunity to promote myself, and help those in need at the same time.

In July, 2006, I was lucky to be invited to participate in three charity events. One was in Washington DC, one in Alexandria VA, and one in Atlanta. I gave away Teddy bears to approximately 65 children at a special camp in Atlanta. That was terrific. Following those events, I received several requests for visits that December. This year, in addition to several charity events, I was asked by a friend, and restaurant/club owner, to participate in a promotional "Christmas in July" event for him.

For anyone never having worked a room full of people, this could be a shock. This one was strictly an adult party at the club, which included pictures with Santa and/or his elves (who were provided and quite attractive). The promotion must have worked because the place was crowded.

After I arrived, I found I was to be a judge for a Mrs. Claus contest. That was fun and exciting, but I did ask the owner to not take any pictures of the Mrs. Clauses that included me in them. It was more a risqué Mrs. Claus contest. If I had known this ahead of time, I would not have agreed to attend. Though I did enjoy the event, and made lots of contacts with potential clients for Santa visits, I just hope that my picture does not make it on to the internet with any of those scantily clad ladies.



## *This is the lesson for today gentlemen ...*

1. Be totally aware of what is supposed to happen at any event you are attending. Make sure you don't enter into any agreement that could compromise you or your image.
2. It is alright to attend adult parties as long as you have control of the situation. This means never let yourself get photographed with someone in a manner you wouldn't want any child, or the parents of any child to see.
3. No matter how much business you think you may acquire from adult parties held at bars/clubs, it hurts your reputation more than it helps.
4. If you ever do find yourself at an event like this, avoid the pictures, try to make friends with someone who will help you control the situation, and never, I repeat, never let yourself be pulled into playing the games at these types of events.

I have found myself in the past enjoying most adult parties. These are usually company parties,

or promotional events for a company. I have made a conscious effort (after this year's experience) to keep myself away from parties that are held in a bar club, or other social settings that is normally used for entertaining.

Now if you really want to have fun with Christmas in July, and really promote yourself, here are a few ideas I used when I first started attending these events:

1. Contact the local Chamber of Commerce. They either know of an event, or might even be willing to name a July event and have you there. (Do not charge if they allow you to pass out your business cards and will supply you with an unlimited amount of water.)
2. Contact the local Police and Fire Department. They do a lot of charity work and they might want to fit you in. Again, do not try to charge them for this service.
3. The last folks I approach are all the Private clubs like the Shriner's, Moose, American Legion, VFW, Eagles, and many more. Usually they perform charity work and would be more than happy to include you.

I have enjoyed my part in July festivals even though there were times that I felt like I was losing more water weight than I was taking in. It did get hot on several occasions. You will need to know if they want a traditional Santa or if you can dress down in a Santa Hawaiian print shirt, red shorts and suspenders or however you feel comfortable being cool. Most of these places would love to have a "REAL-BEARD SANTA" with them. It gives them more recognition and if they can state that you volunteered to help their cause, they will get even more points with their mother organization.

In a college town, I stay away from most activities. The kids just have too much time on their hands and they come up with some very strange and unique ways to amuse and abuse themselves. Unsupervised, they drink too much, and start way to early in the day and then get crazy and try to do crazy stunts. I found that just not going there was the safest bet.

You will want to stay away from pre-schools and nursery/daycare centers. You will not get any benefit from doing anything in July with them. They are great during the cooler months, but I found that if heat stroke would strike, that would be the place. They are a lot of work and I found that I received no extra benefits during the Christmas season.

One place that I would like to try one time is a mall in July. I haven't gone out looking yet, but I think that might be something to look into. If you are around a mall that likes to dress up for each season, you might want to approach them. I also was asked to help announce at the children's fashion show sponsored by one of the major stores in a fairly large mall. That was a treat. I wore several different Santa outfits through the 2 hours of the show and was told I was a hit with the folks. Working with the children was terrific, but I found that the adults were the most interested in me.

All in all, I would highly recommend you begin promoting yourself for Christmas in July and get into the charity spirit early.

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by Lou Knezevich

"Mirror, mirror on the wall; what Santa takes the best picture of them all?" Now of course you all replied, "I do!"

I was going through my "Things to Do List" when I saw my notation about taking photographs. We Santa's are one of the most photographed personalities in the world but for some of us, being photographed doesn't come easily.

Taking good Santa photographs is the ability to master a few simple techniques. Another benefit is that you may be able to expand your Santa season and develop an additional revenue stream. If you are photogenic you can find professional photographers who will hire you or you may wish to exchange your services for professional photographs. Another benefit is starting your season early as most photographers like to do their Christmas photo shoots in November and a few of these may just buy you that new costume you've been eyeing.

Judging by the many bland photos and "Deer-in-the-headlights" stares I see posted on the internet, I think we better start with some tips on how to smile. In fact Santas, we need to practice how to smile a lot, and how to encourage a memorable photograph.

The first thing you must master is how to relax. When you're tense or trying too hard, it's not going to look natural. Let's start with this exercise. Open your mouth slightly; relaxing, slowly breathe in and out about six times. Do it again but as you breathe in and out part your lips wider and wider showing your teeth until you have a wide smile. You will, with a bit of practice, hold that smile and eventually it will come very naturally. You'll also find your facial muscles will have a certain kind of "feeling," when you are giving your best smile. If you're a mall Santa, at a photo shoot or a house visit, you'll need to call upon that "feeling" to continually take a great photo. You can start practicing and perfecting your smile whenever you look into the mirror or put one next to your computer and smile back at that handsome Santa.

There may be a correctable reason why you don't smile. My own example is; for years I did not smile due to poor teeth. I had a few gaps and I was embarrassed by my appearance. I then had some dental work done which corrected my poorly appearing teeth. I began to smile and now I have no fear of showing my teeth. If you need dental work it will be worth your investment not only for your Santa portrayal but for your personal life too.

Now that you have that heavenly smile you may need to mind your eye blinking. Blinking results in those closed eye shots that aren't very flattering. I try to block out the photographers "one, two, three!" In venerably my eyes want to close on the count of

three so I have to fight that instinct. I get around this by telling myself not to blink and to hold the pose. I don't look directly into the camera lens unless the photographer requests me too. I try to profile my face looking at the child or a slight turn in their direction or to either side of the camera shutter. Don't be afraid to encourage the child to pose as the photographer instructs. Remember; the photograph highlights the child and a good photographer is going to wait for the right moment so you will need to hold a "pose" and a "smile" for long periods of time.

To be a popular subject and in demand by professional photographers you will need to come up with poses not usually done by other Santa's. Before I start a photo shoot I discuss with the photographer what is expected of me, where I should be on the set and any special circumstances concerning their clients. I also go over any special poses, props or "Signals" to each other for "Special shots." I have listed below some examples of "Special shots" but I encourage you to invest in some preparation time which goes a long way producing great photos.

"Santa's got a Secret" I sit the child on my right knee. After some conversation and photos I ask the child if I can tell them a secret. Their head faces the camera or I'll maneuver them so their face and mine are towards the camera but I don't look at the camera. I cup my hand near their left ear and say, "I want you to smile the biggest smile ever when I tell you this secret." "Are you ready?" "You are going to have one of the best Christmases you ever had." or "Look at the camera and smile real big when I tell you this secret." "Be sure to look under the tree on Christmas morning for some neat surprises." This gives the photographer some time to snap away and to catch some great poses.

"Tell me Your Secret" This is a variation of the "Santa Secret" except I ask the child to whisper in my ear the one most important gift they want for Christmas. I usually have a hand signal for the photographer so they know what I'm trying to do. I've gotten some of the best pictures this way and I can hear the oohs and ahs of the parents when the shutter snaps.

Often there are children who are very affectionate to Santa and allow opportunity to pose some very friendly pictures. I pose these children in a number of ways. Some I wrap my arms around (I make sure my hands are proper and showing) the child and ask them or pose their hands over my coat sleeve. This pose also allows me to have my head next to the child's almost cheek to cheek. We can also look at each other and I have an opportunity to show expressions such as; surprised, whimsical or questioning. Sometimes I ask the child to "Give Santa a hug" and this produces a spontaneous picture which again brings out the oohs and ahs.

Babies are a scream, well some times they really scream and there isn't much you can do to stop them. When they are cooperating there are a few poses that are sure to be Grandma's favorites. I made some gold colored "S's" which fit across the instep of my boots. If the baby is old enough to support themselves I put them between my legs so the pose is from my knees to the floor. This is one of the cutest pictures to see a baby between Santa's boots. Another pose is to hold the baby in my arms, holding it high enough so they are looking over my shoulder. The photographer is behind me and frames the shot of baby's face my Santa hat and white hair. In both of these shots my face is not

seen but my costume and accessory's make no mistake about who's in the picture.

I always feel badly for the child whose parents are insistent they must take a picture with Santa. The poor child is frightened, with fear on their face and tears running down their cheeks. Of course the parents are insuring there will be no picture by threatening "Santa isn't going to bring you any toys unless you take a picture with him." Well folks, it's been my experience that this photo opportunity is not going to happen. There isn't much you can do in these situations and I never try to force a photograph when a child is traumatized. Sometimes when an upset child won't sit in my lap I can salvage a photo opportunity by asking the parents to hold the child in front of them facing the camera. As the child calms down I will quietly come up behind the parents for a "Family Picture." I try to add something "Extra" by posing with my finger across my lips, a surprised look or outstretched hands with my gloves at the shoulders of the parents. It may not be the picture the parents hoped for but it will be a lasting memory of a visit to Santa.

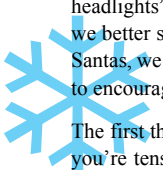
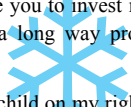
Adults love to pose with Santa and you should encourage them at every opportunity. When I pose with a lady regardless of age or even a man I have a little patter to break the ice. I'll stand right next to the person and in a hushed tone say, "I need to tell you something before we take this picture." Of course the person just can't imagine what it could be. Then I say; in my best Santa voice and pointing my fore finger at them; "There's one condition you need to know about when taking a picture with Santa." Usually this statement makes the person wonder and have a serious expression on their face. Then I say with a big smile; "You've got to act like you really like me." Maybe it's because the request is so simple plus everyone likes Santa but an immediate response is a smile, hug, laugh or kiss upon my cheek and "Flash" a great picture is snapped.

Ok Santa's, "Mirror, Mirror on the wall now; who's the Santa who takes the best picture of them all?"

"I do!"

"Zivili" Celebrate Life Santa Lou

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# Profiles: Profiles: Profiles:

Get to know your fellow Santas. Make new friends & contacts.



**Name:** Santa Jim  
**Age:** 69  
**Location:** Lilburn, GA  
**Email:** slaymj@aol.com

I first became Santa after I retired in 2002. I became Santa because everywhere we went, children thought I was the real thing because of my beard. I volunteer as Santa at churches and some charity events, as well as pre-schools and private parties. Working with children is a wonderful experience. Their eyes always light up when they see Santa.

I'm David Z. Eakin, 67 years old, living in Orlando, Florida. My website is SantaAndMore.com, E-mail is santa@santaandmore.com. I also use my blog, DavidZEakin.blogspot.com, as an alternate web site.

In 1992 I was working at a radio station in the small town of Sebring, Florida, and had let my hair and beard grow long. It was only half white but, with the help of a can of white hairspray, I was asked to be Santa on the station's Christmas cards. Shortly thereafter they asked me to be Santa at a promotional event, which was my first experience with kids as Santa. I was then asked by the downtown merchants association to be Santa for a day at their Santa house. I was on a roll! Then, via a newsletter, I connected with an advertising agency from Oslo, Norway. They needed a Florida Santa for an ad campaign for FinnAir, the Finnish airline. After that, through the same newsletter (The Florida Bluesheet) I auditioned to be Santa at the Disney World Downtown Marketplace. I got that gig, too, and kept it for eight years. In the meantime, I secured an agent and was subsequently booked (over the next 15 years) for such clients as Coca Cola, Time Warner, Home Shopping Network and many more. I also appeared on two network TV shows, Nickelodeon's All That and the Kenan & Kel shows. I've made many personal appearances and worked at several malls in the Orlando area. My wife, Sherry, has also appeared with me as Mrs. Santa a few times. Charity work has included visits to hospitals, blood drives and reading to children at libraries.

I'm always stumped when asked about my favorite stories of being Santa. All the memories seem to



merge into one big memory of all the children I've seen over the years. In spite of the usual frustrations, it has always been a positive experience. To see the smiles, to hear the laughter, to get the hugs has been the most wonderful thing.

I have a regular job at Medieval Times Dinner Show in Kissimmee, Florida, which limits my activities as a mall Santa. I'm still able to do commercial work and make visits to kids in hospitals and schools. I'm having so much fun working it doesn't look like I'm ever going to be able to retire. Its just as well, I guess, I go a little crazy if I have two days off in a row.

If I have any advice for other Santas, I guess it would be this: love what you do, stay in good shape and have a good agent.



**Name:** James A. Watson  
**Santa Name:** Santa "Jim"  
**Address:** 4841 Shady Rest Drive  
Powder Springs, Georgia 30127  
**E-mail:** Jimdude@bellsouth.net

**How:** I had the idea to become Santa about 7 years ago. I asked my wife to create the Santa Suit. She made me only one, thinking I would do this for only a little while. It has become my heart and life-long journey. My wife, Pam has joined me and now we enjoy sharing the Spirit of Christmas together.

**What:** We appear at businesses, charities, churches, private parties, and home visits.

**Favorite Story:** I really don't have a favorite story. Every Santa experience is equally rewarding and memorable to me.

**Hint:** Be prepared. You never know when out in public when the next opportunity comes along where you are identified as Santa.

Say to yourself, "How do I want to be remembered by the Children?"





# Profiles:



As Christmas came around that year, my Methodist Youth Fellowship group decided to provide a Christmas party for a mission church in our town and they asked for a volunteer to be Santa Claus. People had always made fun of me for being overweight, so almost as a joke, I was elected to be Santa. Deep down inside though, somehow I felt like the fake beard and suit would cover up the hurting person inside, and that if I could bring happiness to others, then maybe that would fulfill the loneliness that I was hurting from.

So, for Christmas of 1962, I put on my first Santa Claus suit and made my "grand entrance" at the Beddington Street Mission in High Point, North Carolina carrying a hand-cut cedar Christmas tree on my back and a big bag of toys for the children. The rest of the members of the youth group followed and we made our own decorations with the children of construction paper link chains to decorate the tree with. Santa passed out presents to all of the children while the other youth group members served refreshments. Little did I know that qualifying to be Santa because of my size was the beginning of a lifelong ministry.

I had been given a mission for my life, even though I didn't realize it at the time and in the process God had chosen a most unlikely person to be His messenger of unconditional love and acceptance through a fat kid dressed up like Santa Claus. God had chosen, just like He did in the Bible, a common, ordinary person to do an extraordinary job. Accepting the challenge and the mission was going to be up to me.

## *Fast Forward From 1962*

Thus began my unexpected career as Santa Claus. The 45 years since I first put on the red-and-whites have been a remarkable ride. Most of those years, I didn't have a clue about what I was doing. I just knew that I enjoyed dressing up as Santa and making other people happy. Along the way, I heard about the fantastic Santa Claus Schools that are available to us and I began attending and learning from the presenters as well as the other Santas.

Several years ago, I decided that if I was really going to "BE" Santa instead of "PLAY" Santa, I needed to go to an expert for advice. Santa Ed Butchart, from Stone Mountain, Georgia, became my Santa mentor and has since become one of my closest friends. He and his wife Annie welcomed me into their home and into their hearts and gave me a glimpse of what "living life as Santa Claus" could be. Their love for each other and the folks that they ministered to was a real inspiration to me and I will always be indebted to both of them for their guidance. I would recommend that each of us choose a "Santa Mentor" that we respect and would like to emulate. It helps us to remain humble!

Since I still have to work a "regular job," most of my Santa work has to be confined to the Christmas season. Fortunately my employer is cooperative with my schedule but I still have to be very creative in my time management. For that reason, I have to stay fairly close to my home in High Point, NC and most of my work is done with local photographers and private clients. Last year, I was fortunate to be chosen as Santa for Christmas Castle, a spectacular Christmas event in Jamestown, NC featuring 50 costumed characters, music, lights and drama on the grounds of Castle McCulloch. Last year we hosted over 14,000 visitors and are expecting even larger crowds this year as the event becomes better known.

Since 1998, I have been honored to have my portrait painted as Santa by a number of very talented and nationally known artists. Each year two or three new paintings are produced into limited-edition reproductions that are sold in galleries. As a result there are now more than twenty likenesses of me done by seven different artists available around the country. My wife and I have a retail art gallery where all of these images are for sale and we regularly appear at area Christmas shows and art fairs. Some of the art images have been reproduced on decorative accessories, Christmas cards and ornaments as well.

This year, I am excited to announce that a lifelong dream of mine will be realized with the publishing of my first book, "Cliff Kringle's Chronicles." The book will feature twenty-five stories like the one at the beginning of this article, and will chronicle the years that I have been Santa. The books will be available this fall and can be purchased through my website at [www.cliffkringle.net](http://www.cliffkringle.net).

As I enter my 60th year next month, I am more excited about my career as Santa Claus than ever before. My prayer is that my book and appearances will afford me the opportunity to meet even more folks and share with them "the Real reason for the Season." I believe that is my mission in life and I am eagerly anticipating new and exciting opportunities to accomplish that goal.

***Santa Cliff Snider***  
(a.k.a. Robert Clifton Snider, Jr., "Cliff Kringle" and "Poppy Claus")

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## **SANTA RECEIVES HIS MISSION**

My dad loved Christmas! It was his favorite time of the year. He loved the music and the Christmas Carols and the lights and the food and decorating the house for the holidays. We didn't have a big house, so there wasn't a lot of decorating that we could do, but every year Dad would have a Christmas photo taken that he would then print at his print shop for the family. I remember that people would be so impressed to receive a custom Christmas card before color cards became so popular or personal photo cards. I remember one particular card that was a photo of my brother and me sitting in front of our fireplace with a plastic Santa Claus between us.

On Labor Day weekend of 1962, my dad and his brother made a trip to Camp Lejeune Marine Base to pick up his brother's two sons who had just gotten out of the Marine Corps. I remember Dad talking to me the morning before he left about how he really didn't want to be gone from us for the holiday weekend, but his brother wanted him to ride along. Dad couldn't drive, he never had, but he felt that he could at least keep his brother company. So with reluctance he bid us, "good bye." That was the last time I would see him, because on the return trip, all four of the men were killed in a head-on collision when a truck hit them after passing another vehicle. I wasn't even able to see him again because they all had closed casket funerals due to the severity of their injuries.

I guess my childhood ended on that Labor Day weekend. I realized I was the "man of the house" now, being the older brother, and that I would have to take care of my mother and my little brother.





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*Sheraton Hotel* - <http://www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/overview/index.html?propertyID=1400>

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**Gerald Cook** *President* Overland Park CVB last time you will see face like this he promised to grow beard and become Santa if they got to host the Convention



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