



Red Suit Gazette

Unlock the World of Santa

The Brotherhood of the Direct Descendents of Santa

Volume 3, Issue 2 June 2010



Make marketing yourself



FUN!

By LOU KNEZEVICH

Much has been said about marketing yourself and there are quite a few people who will tell you they have all the answers. I don't have all the answers but I do have some practical and common sense approaches to help you.

Make it Fun

First and foremost you should make marketing yourself fun!

As I considered ways to market yourself I was struck with the thought that no amount of marketing is going to be successful unless you have the will and the desire to succeed. What I mean is; you need to find out what marketing tools you want to use, who you need to talk to and what you need to say.

Business Card

Marketing yourself is a year round job and you must be ready to take advantage of any opportunity to promote yourself. There are a number of ideas for you to use to promote yourself and one of the most important is a business card.

A business card must be impressionable and also convey a message using a minimum of words. In my opinion a photograph of you, preferably a head shot, should be on the front of the card. Work with a professional photographer to develop a pose which shows your warmth and smiling character. Wear your best costume. Avoid wearing a specialty costume such as bib coveralls etc., so the viewer doesn't form some quick

opinions that you would not fit into their party theme. Remember the public carries a Santa image in their minds which is the "Coke Cola" Santa dressed in a Red fur trimmed costume.

On the reverse of the card list your Santa name, types of events you participate in such as; House Parties, Corporate Events, etc. Your contact information should include a phone number for your cell phone (sleigh phone) and home phone (workshop), plus your e-mail address and Web site if you have one. You may wish to promote yourself with a catchy phrase or statement after your Santa name like, "Baltimore's Finest Santa." Choose a phrase people will identify with and will want to associate with.

Have your card printed professionally. Doing it on your home printer may save

See FUN pg. 2

In This Issue



- 1- Marketing Fun
By Lou Knezevich
- Santa; A footnote in history
By Bill McKee
- 5 - Hair & Beard Care
By Deborah Beeson
- 7 - First Year Santa
By Wes Bowles
- 8 - Thank You Gatlinburg!
By Bill McKee
- 12 - Santa Serving All Children
By Ray Wozniak
- 13 - Santa-America
- 14 - The March to Christmas
By Gary Casey
- 15 - Letter from Gatlinburg, Tenn.
- 16 - Letter from the River Terrace
- 17 - facebook - A Cautionary Tale
By Terry Hilderbrand
- 18 - In Memorial
- 19 - Classified/Posts

Santa A Footnote in History

By Bill McKee

"We must combine the toughness of the serpent and the softness of the dove, a tough mind and a tender heart."
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

From published reports we now know that Joe and Mary Moore, aka the Jolly Old Elf Inc., owe the city of Gatlinburg, Tenn., more

than \$69,000.00 and have defaulted on their promised payments to the city by June 15, 2010. And there are other vendors and individuals who have come forward and are owed money by the Moore's from both events. According to the Gatlinburg Department of Tourism, by late Friday, June 18, no payment had

been made by the Moores, aka, Jolly Old Elf Inc., as promised.

I live in a small, rural area and I was introduced to and mentored into the suit by an elderly gentleman who had been Santa in my region for 44 years. His life is lived as Santa from the heart. He taught (and still See SANTA FOOTNOTE pg.3

FUN from pg. 1

money but it may not impress clients because of the poor quality. I suggest you tell the printer to use a card stock with a glossy finish. The glossy finish enhances your picture and is an eye catcher. While you're at it buy yourself a nice business card holder. It will impress and show people you are a classy Santa.

Magnetic business cards are another way of self-promotion. I have given these out as refrigerator magnets and I know in my house I always need one more to keep something in view. It's a great way to be constantly in view so put your picture on 1/3 of the magnet and your name along with your contact information on the other 2/3. These may be more expensive than business cards, but if you use them selectively, I think they are a great investment.

Magnetic Car Signs

This is a great way to promote yourself to hundreds of people daily as you go about your routines in your car or truck. Most sign shops similar to "Signs by Tomorrow" or "Fast Signs" will help you design a sign for your door panels or across the back of the trunk. You can place your picture on the sign along with your contact information and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Santa Lou Knezevich

any special information you want people to know. It is also a great attention getter. Many people have pulled next to me, rolling down the back window so their child could wave at Santa.

Gift Wrap

Wrap your car or truck. This may not be for everyone but you may wish to have your vehicle completely wrapped in your advertisement. Since this is expensive make sure you use the proper information which will not be quickly outdated. This always stands out and is a definite attention getter wherever your

vehicle is, 365 days per year. Skip this one If you don't like being the center of attention!

Red

Santa's basic color is Red. One good way to be Santa 24/7-365 is to wear red wherever you go. If you maintain and keep your beard white, wear red apparel, then you are going to be noticed. You will be asked if you are a Santa. From that opening conversations may lead you to be hired for a house party, or maybe a day care center, or other jobs. Looking the part convinces the public that you are Santa. Many can imagine

you performing and entertaining their group of children of any age. During the off season I have received jobs from meeting people in restaurants and other places because I looked like Santa. How else can one continue their Santa role and have fun doing it.

Stickers

Every child loves stickers. I always carry "I met Santa Claus" stickers and give them to children and adults at every opportunity. I just love it when a child sees me as Santa while the parents seem to ignore me! When I give that child a sticker everyone seems to light up. Santa has brought some happy magic to everyone. This has also produced some Santa visits because the adults either want my business card or a way to contact me about a party. You never know when circumstances will produce the next visit for Santa. Just be prepared and remember, in the end; "It's all about the children."

By Lou Knezevich
'Georgia's Premier Santa'
"Zivili"
Celebrate Life
Santa Lou
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SANTA FOOTNOTE from pg. 1

teaches) me well, though his body is getting frail and weak, his mind is keen and tough as a serpent, with a heart of gold.

I had been portraying Santa for almost 10 years before I discovered there were organizations and gatherings for Santa. I learned of and attended the Red Suit Roundtable in Atlanta, Ga., in the winter of 2007. It was quite amazing to me to see so many who portray Santa all decked out in red, in one room.

It was not long before I was asked to take on the task of editing a publication for Santas. The first newsletter I helped edit and produce was the Red Suit Roundup, localized for Santas in the southeastern U.S. This publication soon evolved into the Jingle Press, produced for the entire Santa community and published by AORBS. The Jingle Press was established on firm footing with very knowledgeable authors and great graphics throughout. We were beginning to attract numerous submissions, share lots of knowledge and ideas.

When it became clear, during the early stages of the struggle to become the 'Supreme' Santa within AORBS, that the Jingle Press was being pressed to use the newsletter to back one Santa against another; I simply gave written notice to the board and walked away.

The war raged on. In some dark corners it rages on still.

When I accepted this task of editing and producing a newsletter, I never imagined it might require drawing on skills I had acquired working in a newsroom for 30 years. Nor did I have any desire or wish to. Through the magnifying lens of a photojournalist glass, I have seen the best and worst human beings can aspire to, and watched some fail. Even with that knowledge and understanding, I still had a overly trusting attitude to anyone who wears the red suit. No longer.

Along came the much heralded Celebrate Santa 2009 to be held in Gatlinburg, Tenn., and the hope it offered.

Celebrate Santa 2009 had the potential to offer some healing within the community by opening its arms and hearts to

all. The early promotions and posts made it clear by stating, 'everyone is welcome.' Unfortunately, doors were soon slammed shut on some and others shunned. Once the event began, an attempt was made to exert control over public areas, even a public street. The presence of the constant constable (hired security) kept the war front and center, always lurking close by, throughout and permeating the entire event. Everywhere I looked, there stood the constant constable, keeping the war in plain sight. The very first image I saw when I arrived in Gatlinburg in 2009, turning into my motel, was the constant constable's car parked at the curb, front and center, at the convention center.

I almost turned around and went back home.

Other than it being an attempted-closed event, most all else seemed to go well with CS'09 as far as most knew, including myself. However, some months later, word of problems with the Oath Plaques began to emerge. Joe Moore's much publicized words, calling it a 'bogus oath,' began a series of stories and documents which continue to come to light.

Beyond those documents and facts which have come to light, and the lack of communication from Joe and Mary Moore, aka Jolly Old Elf Inc., comes the troubling story of the Palm Tree Santas attending a Memorial Day parade in the Maggie Valley, N.C., area, just over the mountain, south of Gatlinburg, Tenn. The group, who were there to participate in the Memorial Day Parade, encountered a very angry float vendor and his resentment toward all Santas who had been in Gatlinburg. He stated that he never received the \$1,200.00 payment from the Moore's for rental of the floats for the 2010 Holly & Shamrock Parade.

Including the City of Gatlinburg, the River Terrace Resort and Convention Center, the vendor for the Oath Plaques and the float vendor (among others), a number of entities and individuals have now come forward saying the Moores still owe them money.

Stories have run in the local media around Gatlinburg and Knoxville, Tenn., so far. Other media and newsrooms are

already aware of the story. I have read posts by some of Santa's helpers stating that it doesn't harm them because they live so far from the area. And posts that say the general public is not aware of what has transpired.

CONSIDER

The best and worst possible advertising and PR for anything and anyone, is still word of mouth. It always has been and always will be!

The residents and shopkeepers in and around Gatlinburg are well aware of what has transpired. Stories are published in local media and people talk. And anyone doing business with the City of Gatlinburg (or any city or public entity) is doing very public business. The records of the Jolly Old Elf Inc. and their dealings with the City of Gatlinburg are a matter of public record.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the most visited National Park in the country, with more than 9 million visitors each year. Gatlinburg, Tenn., is the gateway, the doorway for those 9 million people from all across the country and around the world.

As everywhere, casual conversations take place in every shop, restaurant and street daily. The 9 million visitors are not deaf. In the stories being told, few would know specifics as to any particular Santa. The stories will be (and already are) that the Santas came to Gatlinburg and left owing the city and lots of vendors unknown tens of thousands of dollars. More than \$69,000.00 is owed to the city, alone. All Santas are already being held responsible by the general public and the media. The damage is already done.

The documents are available for all to see. I will not recount them here.

If you are not aware of what has been documented, I suggest a few sources to begin. First, if you haven't signed up for an account with ClausNet.com, do so. It cost you nothing and the site is filled with lots of stories, ideas, help and news events and items of interest to all Santas, Mrs. Claus, Elves, reindeer owners and

See **SANTA FOOTNOTE** pg.4

SANTA FOOTNOTE from pg. 3

anyone involved in the world of Santa Claus. For specific information and posts, including some documents, look under the 'Celebrate Santa' forum. Second, a timeline which appears pretty accurate can be found at; <http://defendingsanta.com/?p=157>.

Also, the local media in Gatlinburg, The Mountain Press, has two current stories and an editorial, here; http://www.themountainpress.com/view/full_story/7953888/article--Santas--Burg--still--at--impasse--festival--organizer--blames--city--for--inability--to--pay--off--debt--?instance=main_article, also here, http://mountainpress.uber.matchbin.net/view/full_story/7982079/article--Gatlinburg--won--t--forgive--Santa--debt--festival--still--owes--69-000-?, and an editorial can be found here, http://mountainpress.uber.matchbin.net/view/full_story/7989158/article--Editorial--Nothing--to--celebrate---city--right--to--pursue--collecting--debt--from--Celebrate--Santa--event-? The Knoxville TV station WBIR, has a video posted here, <http://www.wbir.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=124533&odysey=obinsite>.

I made several attempts to contact the Moores for this column, both through at least two different e-mail addresses and two different telephone numbers. No e-mail replies were ever received and no phone calls were answered or returned.

Whatever the final outcome and truths yet undiscovered or unknown, one thing is true. Either the community within the world of Santa Claus, the Realm of the North Pole, maintain order and correct action within its own house, or the court of public opinion will render judgement. Now, more than ever before, public opinion and judgement, right, wrong, true, false, or indifferent, becomes 'popular truth.' Some things now are made true because they are a popular belief. Even when something can be proven wrong with facts, the 'popular truth' overrides even documented facts.

One of my favorite syndicated columnist, Leonard Pitts, who writes for the Miami Herald, in a recent column defined how truth and facts have be-

come irrelevant. You may not agree with everything he writes in every column, but he is right on target in this one. It can be found online at this address, <http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/02/21/1492484/facts-no-longer-mean-what-they.html>.

'Popular truth' has become the harshest judge of all. Judge, jury and executioner.

That judgement could eventually render this powerful iconic image of Santa Claus, who has survived the centuries, to little more than a footnote in history. Impossible, or improbable you think? Perhaps in this current social climate where truth has become irrelevant it seems and only perceptions are true to the perceiving individual or group, Santa could become a novelty; and in time little more than an extended footnote in history.

We who are alive right now wearing the regalia of Santa, are the guardians of this powerful iconic image, passed down to us through the ages. How will we pass that on? Or will we allow this powerful icon to fade away, melting like ice at the North Pole, soon to be relegated to little more than a footnote in history?

Did the Moore's don the regalia for ego, money and power or self-interests? We do not know. But an ego in the world of Santa Claus can be a very dangerous and destructive force. In the quest to be the Supreme Santa and rule AORBS, egos played a large role. The ego may have played a shadowy role in what has come to light so far in the unfolding stories surrounding both Celebrate Santa gatherings.

There is no place for the ego in the Realm of the North Pole. An ego clouds the mind, blinds the spirit and prevents the heart from seeing the children, really seeing them, not merely looking at them.

The children always know whether you are just looking at them or if you really see them. They always know.

We have a choice today. We, each of us, has a choice every day, every morning when we wake (whatever time of day that may be for you). We have a choice whether to keep our own house clean and maintain order, or leave it to 'popular truth' to be judge, jury and executioner.

In the final analysis, the children are what matter. It is all about them. It is not about us at all.

Santa is, after all, 'the guardian of childhood dreams.' Each of us is the guardian of Santa.

I have a large bumper sticker attached to my passenger side dashboard, just above the glove compartment. It says, simply; 'What would Santa do?'

What indeed.

In addition to the violations of trusts documented, lies the violations of trusts within the very Realm of the North Pole. Fundamental trust has been violated within the Santa community by some who represent themselves as Santa, and Mrs. Claus.

What indeed.

*'Can you look out the window without your shadow getting in the way?'**

*Sarah McLachlan, singer, songwriter

Bill McKee, editor
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Santa@theSantaClaus.com

"We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people."

– Dr Martin Luther King Jr.



Your crowning glory

Keeping that beard and hair looking like Christmas every day

By DEBORAH BEESON

Santa is “the guardian of childhood dreams.” - You are the guardian of Santa. My name is Deborah Beeson. I have been a hairdresser for 20 years and a “Santa” hairdresser since 2002.

‘Tis the season for change, renewal and adaptation. Try a new style, product or look. Spring makes us feel young and willing to try new things. If you haven’t already tried your new best look, now is the time! Get ready for your season; a time that will be documented forever by each child that has their photo taken with you. It is time to take a good look in the mirror.

Some of you have a nice rosy tone naturally. Some of you might need a touch of makeup. Your skin and hair are just as important as your suit - you should take just as much care of them. Start a new routine with your skin. Protect your skin from the sun. Santa should have rosy cheeks but not from skin damage. Sun block, moisturizers and exfoliants are your friend. Swimming in chlorine pools can be a problem when you have white hair. If your hair is chemi-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Deborah and Denzil Beeson.

cally lightened it can be even worse. Red and green may be Christmas colors but not when it comes to Santa’s hair. Before you get into a chlorine pool get your hair wet with tap water Use the water inside or from a hose so your hair will absorb the non chlorine water. This will stop most of the absorption of the “color changing” chlorine water. For those of you

that enjoy outdoor activity remember the sun and wind can be harsh on chemically treated hair. Be sure to use a good conditioner.

Check out a new look that might add to your Santa. There is always something that we need to improve. Try a new shape for your beard or mustache. Now is the time! Don’t wait until the season is near. This is the

season for change! Take time to prepare. There are many things that add that little “extra” to each Santa.

A new suit, boots or hair style should be carefully selected and prepared in a timely manner. Simply styling your hair and beard or adding a little makeup can all be practiced and perfected. Try new things.

With color enhancing shampoos start by following the recommended time to leave in the hair before rinsing. If you feel you need it, leave the shampoo in longer the next time. Finding the right length of time to leave in the color shampoo for your hair should help you to avoid having that “Barney the Dinosaur” hair day.

Some of you have beautiful white or mostly white hair, some of you may need to lighten or whiten your hair. If you are going to try to whiten your own hair now is the time. Remember if there is a catastrophe then you need to have time to recover! It is better to have shorter hair or a shorter beard than usual than to have no hair or no beard at all. Equally as bad would be extreme breakage. When little Susie or Johnny tugs on your beard you don’t want it to be the wrong lasting impression!

See HAIR CARE pg. 5

HAIR CARE from pg. 4

Address hair breakage now. A great protein reconstructor or a great haircut - both are good choices. If worse comes to worse at least you have enough time to grow some hair back! Better to have short hair than surprise - no hair!

Hair grows an average of ½ inch per month. Fortunately (for most) the beard is the fastest growing hair on the body. To be safe I would strongly suggest you give yourself 4 months. Trying new chemicals any closer could prove devastating. The first thing you should do if there is a problem with a new chemical is to take a breath and

stay calm. If you panic and react without understanding the cause of the undesired result you could inadvertently make a bad situation worse!

Different brands can give different results. The time required for a product to give you the result you want may be different. One misread, incorrectly mixed, or poorly timed bleach or color application could result in a situation that could leave your hair fried, dyed and laid to the side.

When decolorizing and coloring hair it is imperative to first understand both the level and tone you are starting with and the level and tone you are wanting to achieve.

Understanding the color wheel will get you a long way in hair coloring and decolorizing.

Level is how light or dark your hair is on a scale of 1-10, tone is the underlying color. Minor mistakes can lead to major problems.

You need to have time to safely correct the color, seek professional help or accept the fact that it is only hair and you at least left enough time for some to grow back before your big events! Most of the worst color corrections we see are not "something went wrong" but are "something went wrong and then I thought I could fix things by adding this - now what?"

For the Santa that needs

a designer piece, proper application and the right product choices are important to consider and perfect now. Allergies and other skin reactions are not something you want right before photos!

Attention to details - that is what makes the difference in everything that we do. We should strive to improve always.

The only true gift you can give as Santa is yourself. More than anything - your Santa has to come from the heart.

By Deborah Beeson

clauscutter@gmail.com



First year Santa

By WES BOWLES

I had been thinking of becoming a Santa for several years after I retired and read in "The Kiplinger Letter" that real bearded Santa's could make \$10,000 a season. I luckily had a head start as I had a short white beard and a mustache.

When the economy tanked and our dividends shrunk, I began to let my beard grow in November 2008. I started surfing the Internet by goggling "Santa schools" and found one in Atlanta close to where our son lives. I registered for the weekend school that was being held in August 2009. I attended the school and tried to absorb the many hints and ideas that were presented. I took notes furiously. During one of the breaks, I met Santa Lou Knezevich and his wife, Loretta.

Santa Lou has been a real mentor and friend to me. I would recommend that all new Santa's try to find an experienced Santa who they can

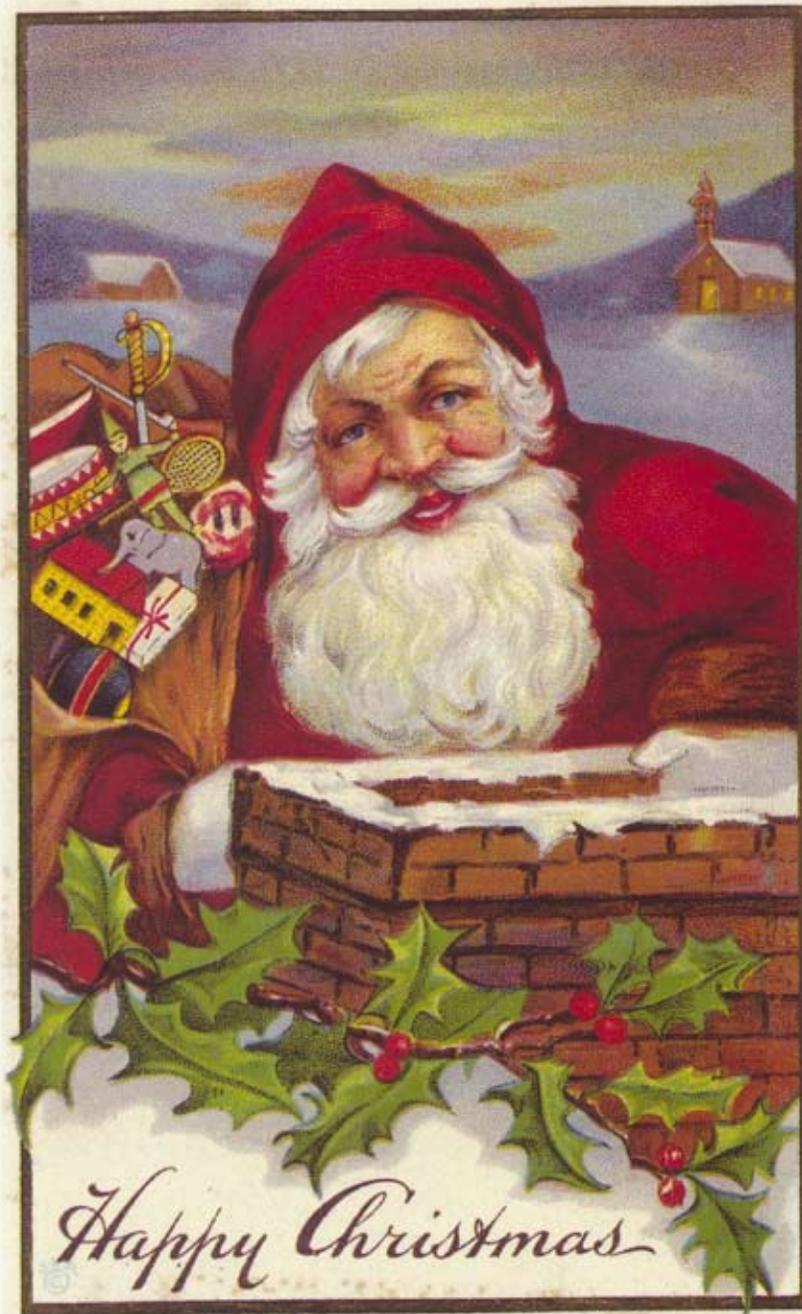
go to for questions and network with them. Whenever I was in doubt, I would e-mail Santa Lou and he always promptly answered.

Following school,

I went to a professional photographer and had my business cards made with my picture on the front. I purchased my Santa outfit in a costume shop in Atlanta; a friend gave me some

black leather cowboy boots and I added the white top trim.

I then started my marketing campaign and handed out my Santa business cards at "Business after



Hours," assisted living and long term care homes, nursery schools and everyone I met. You never know when you give out a card what will follow. Our golf club manager scanned my card and sent it to all club managers in the area. The next day I had a gated community recreation manager e-mail me to do their children's Christmas Party.

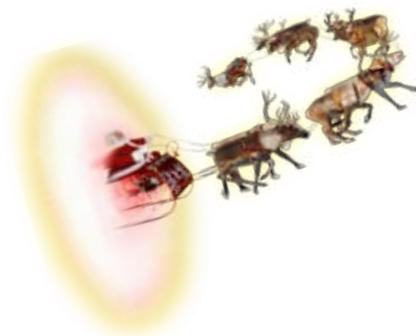
One of the highlights of my first season was when a grandmother at a children's brunch said, "My 11-year-old grandson said he knew Santa had many helpers but that you are the REAL one."

I feel that my stepping into my Santa persona has been a very enriching and humbling experience. I enjoyed every minute of the private parties, brunches and home visits. Thanks to all of those who assisted me in fulfilling my dream!

Santa Wes
SantaWes@aol.com
<http://www.SantaWes.com>

Thank You!

City of Gatlinburg, Tenn.
Gatlinburg Department of Tourism



BY BILL MCKEE

Santa Steve Darling rides on a camel in Gatlinburg, Tenn. He hails from Alice Springs in the Northern Territories of Australia. He, along with Bernadette Dimitrov, aka Mrs. Claus, arguably traveled the farthest to attend.

We would like to offer a special 'Thank You' to the City of Gatlinburg, Tenn., and the Gatlinburg Department of Tourism.

The city spared no expense, opening their arms and pocketbook to welcome Santa's helpers in March 2010, even though they had received no payment from Joe and Mary Moore, aka the Jolly Old Elf Inc. for 2010. The Moores currently owe the city a total of \$69,000 from CS 2009 and CS2010.

It appears there would have been no



CS 2010 without the City of Gatlinburg and the Department of Tourism stepping in at the last minute.

They learned only three days before the event was to begin that the Moores

did not have funds available to pay their promised debt, according to their letter.

Please see a letter from the city referencing non-payment by the Moores, on page 15, and a letter from Valerie DeVarso, General Manager, River Terrace Resort and Convention Center, which was the host hotel for CS 2010, on page 16.

Other creditors have also come forward saying they have not received payment.

See **MORE PHOTOS** pg 9, 10, 11



PHOTOS BY
BILL MCKEE



Thank You River Terrace Resort and Convention Center



The City of Gatlinburg, when informed by the Moores only three days prior to the opening of the event, that they did not have the funds available to make any payment on their debts to the city, decided that 'the show must go on.'

The costs to the city are immense.

Talk about Southern Hospitality, the City of Gatlinburg and the Gatlinburg Department of Tourism went way beyond Southern Hospitality to welcome Santa's helpers with open arms. The city was well aware of the rooms already booked, travel plans made and that some attendees had already arrived.



Santa

Breaking down language barriers Serving all children

By **RAYMOND WOZNIAK**

As a Santa relatively new to the brotherhood I have been impressed by the level of volunteerism I see among the group. I guess having a loving heart comes with the territory and is a requisite for a successful Santa.

Last season I was overloaded, as in addition to my usual Santa appearances I still operated a social service agency in the morning for Koreans and Vietnamese who are challenged in English, mostly older, first-generation immigrants.

Near Christmas I received a request to come to a Korean nursing home operated by the Catholic Church, but explained that I could only make it about 9 p.m., which is past the residents bedtime. I was asked to come anyway.

I arrived a few days before Christmas eve at the appointed time, and was met by the home's two nuns at the door in their formal attire, something I had not seen in my social work interactions during previous visits to the home. All the residents were asleep as I imagined they would be. The sisters had prepared a

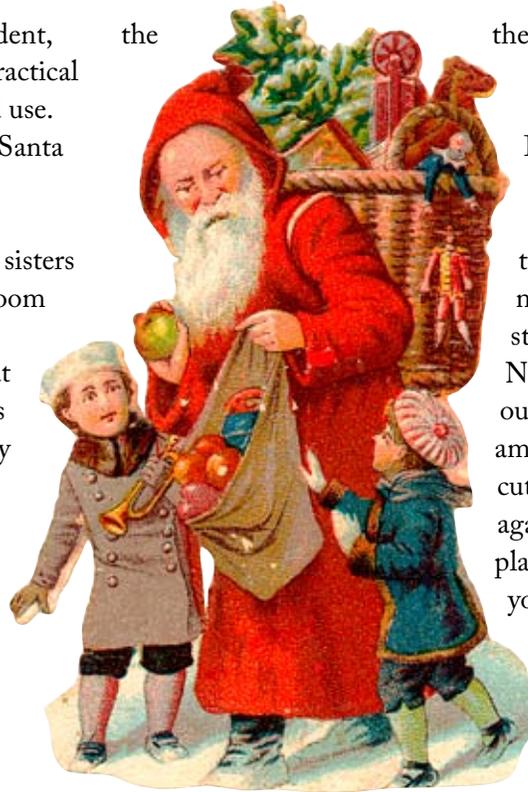
gift bag for each resident, mostly made up of practical items that they could use. I put them all in my Santa bag.

Suddenly the good sisters were running from room to room shouting in Korean to get up, that Santa was here! I was amazed at the alacrity with which oldsters that I knew as slow and halt groggily understood what was happening, and fairly jumped, for their age, out of bed.

I have been learning Korean for a long time, and knew what to say as I gave them their gifts. Several asked "Santa, how do you know Korean?" I replied (in Korean, of course) "Santa knows all languages." One elderly lady later told the sisters "He really was Santa Claus!" As they dug into their goody bags and bowed to Santa, I returned the grateful bows and left with a very full heart.

Last season I decided to learn to say Merry Christmas in as many languages as I could: Polish, Russian, Spanish, Mandarin. In addition, I learned how to ask

the



the genuine article.

One last observation. I cut my lengthy beard down to a half inch the day after Christmas so the kids at church would not ask why Santa was still in town. None did. Now that it is growing out again to some length I am beginning to get these cute little eye messages again from kids in various places that say "I recognize you." Although I have

been trying to channel Santa for many years, since I retired this is only my third year as a real-bearded Santa and I'm still getting used to being "on" all the time. In Florida last summer some kids on the beach asked me if Santa was on vacation. I don't know how others handle it, but I respond with a smiling nod, wink, or sometimes softly singing "I'm making a list, checking it twice ... Are you being good?" They all know the drill, and report stellar behavior. My own grown children are always surprised at such encounters, as they think of me as just their old dad. What fun!

Santa questions in Spanish: "Come in," "Sit down," "What is your name?," "Have you been good?," "What would you like for Christmas?" It was not that difficult, and came in very handy. Most Hispanic children can speak English, but the delighted smiles I received from the parents were worth the effort it took to learn, as were the astonished looks from the Chinese, Russian and Polish parents that I met. I was certain that, hearing them chat among themselves, these immigrant parents were wondering if I was not

Santa Ray Wozniak
bigheadxray@yahoo.com



For nine months, the nine-year-old Hurricane Katrina survivor did not speak. He and his mother rode out the killer storm in the attic of their home. His next-door neighbors were not so lucky and the young boy heard their screams as Katrina took the lives of his best friend and his friend's mother. When the mother and son moved to Mobile, they sought help for the boy's post traumatic stress. Week after week, month after month, the boy was silent during therapy sessions. A professional in the medical community called Santa-America for help. When Santa Ernest walked into the counselor's office, the young boy jumped up, flew across the room and hurled himself into Santa Ernest's embrace shouting, "Santa, I thought you were dead." The boy's mother and counselor wept as the boy told Santa Ernest about his nightmare experiences.



Santa-America Changes Families' Lives!

Founded in 2003 by Daphne resident, Ernest Berger, Santa-America is a national non-profit volunteer service organization that offers Santa visits to children and families in crisis...365 days a year! Santa nurtures children and their families by giving compassion during an emotionally stressful time of their life. Following the initial visit, the same Santa will continue to visit the family year after year, helping in their grief and bereavement. Santa's visits with children come from the medical community, hospice, and special needs educators. We build relationships with medical societies and alliances. As one of our initiatives, Santa America is conducting a clinical pilot study to reveal the value of Santa's love on chronically ill children.



Caring For Our Children

Santa-America is the leader in advancing the highest standards for its volunteers. We conduct rigorous national background checks and intensive training ... the same background check as a doctor or nurse.

Love, Hope & Joy Wrapped in a Warm Santa Hug for Special Children & Their Families 365 Days A Year!

How We Build Community



Santa-America volunteers unite generations and work together to build community through service to our children. The gifts

of Love, Hope & Joy transcend politics, culture, race and religion. These gifts are treasured universal values.

Gifts for Our Children

When we visit our special children, Santa-America gives gifts that symbolize Love, Hope and Joy. Our signature Santa Hugs™, sleigh bells, and our special book, *An Angel in the Sky*, continue to remind children and their families of their special visit with Santa.



For more information about Santa-America, visit Santa-America online at: www.Santa-America.org or contact our President, Santa Ernest Berger, at SantaErnest@santa-america.org. Don't miss the newsletter, Weeble Words, which can be found at: <http://www.santa-america.org/newsletters.htm>



Photos courtesy of Elizabeth McGonagle Graham, Lasting Memories Photography.

The March to December 25th

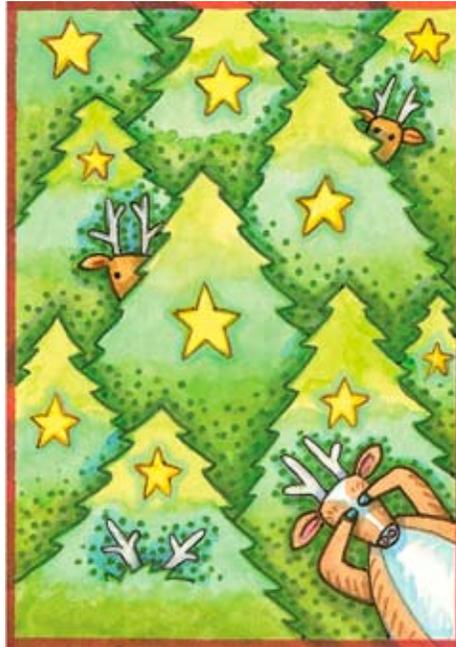
Send Christmas Cards

By GARY CASEY

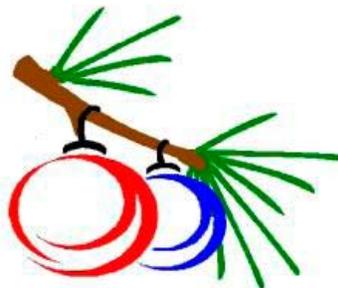
What is your next move on the March to December 25th? It is to go back to the last Season and wrap it up correctly. During the previous season you hopefully you were booked for a number of events as Santa. You may have included additional cast members such as Elves, Mrs. Claus, photographers, etc.

When you booked these events you also needed to make a Christmas Card just for the folks that hired you to be at each event. This includes all paid and non-paid events. What are you crazy? No I'm not crazy. I did this for 400 events this past season and you can do it for each event you have.

Here is a simple formula to accomplish this. First buy Christmas Cards. Where? At discount stores, online or wherever you can find them. Be sure to get cards with envelopes. Many places can also custom make the cards with your picture or whatever you want on them. Purchase cards based on your estimate of how many you will really need for the entire season. Do not put any date or year on the cards. That way if you over estimate and buy too many, you can use them another year. Buy stamps or order custom made business stamps. You can do that on www.Stamps.com, where, once again, you can have your image or whatever image you prefer printed on them. Now go get the events booked!



As you book events, make notes on all the information about the company or person having the event. As usual, mail whatever you are going to mail the client; a bill for the deposit or full amount paid before the event, a thank you letter, a letter to the person that is doing the event with a special information sheet that lets them know what you want to happen and expect to happen for them to have a successful party. You can easily



enclose four sheets of paper in a No.10 envelop for a standard rate of postage.

The next step is the Christmas Card. After completing all the other information do the Christmas Card. Write up the card with a note inside, address with your return address and the magical stamp. Seal it and place it somewhere safe so that it can be mailed on December 20 of that particular year. It must go out on December 20 to arrive on time.

One additional piece of information that can be mailed after Christmas, say around January 5, is a job performance evaluation questionnaire card and a thank you letter to every each and every person or group you did events for. The letters must go out on schedule. The post card should be printed up on your printer and mailed with the Thank You letter or you can contact the client on the phone by another person (not you) to ask a very short survey of 5 simple questions.

1. Was Santa on time?
2. Where cast members on time?
3. How was everyone's appearance?
4. Comments.
5. Would you like to book this event for this year?

That is it, short and sweet.

Keep the Home Fires Burning
Gary Casey
gwcasey@gmail.com

David Perella - Executive Director
Gatlinburg Department of Tourism
DavidP@ci.gatlinburg.tn.us

To Whom It May Concern

We were recently apprised of comments that have made regarding the recent Celebrate Santa Celebration in Gatlinburg, Tennessee and the Gatlinburg Convention Center's handling of the event.

Let me begin by addressing the comment that the Convention Center made significant changes in the price of services already ordered.

On March 10, 2010, we were informed that, despite numerous promises over the past year, funds were not available to settle the balance for the 2009 event, which had an outstanding balance of over 60% of the amount that was agreed to and billed. We were also informed at that time that funds were not available to pay any portion of the cost of the 2010 event and would not be available until later in the year. Our contract clearly states the terms of payment required and they were not followed.

We were left with two options. The first option would be to cancel the event due to non-compliance of the financial requirements of the contract. The second option, which was the one that was taken, was to allow the event to take place, which would dramatically increase the costs that the Convention Center would incur.

There really was only one option. We had 400 people coming to our community expecting to attend a Celebration and from our perspective "The Show Had To Go On". We did not feel that it would be fair to the people who paid their hard earned money to come to our City just to find out that the event wasn't going to take place.

The price changes that took place were a reduction in all fees for everything except food which were kept at the originally stated prices. The meeting planner asked that we serve the meal for the Ball, which we agreed to do even though no deposits were received to cover the cost. As of this date we have not received any deposits or payments for the 2010 event.

The other comment that was brought to our attention was that the parade route was changed at the last minute. The fact of the matter is that the parade route was changed back to the original parade route that had been agreed upon months prior to the event, which placed individuals that were in the parade gathering in a parking lot along the street rather than in the street. This allowed us to keep the traffic flowing in that area of the City.

We would like to thank those of you that were aware of the situation that we were placed in with this event and have defended the City.

To those individuals that attended the event and were dissatisfied, I would like to extend my sincere apologies. We tried to make the best of a bad situation.

We have met some wonderful people over the past two years through our dealings with this event and we hope those relationships continue into the future.

Sincerely,

David Perella
Executive Director
Gatlinburg Department of Tourism

4-22-10

To whom it may concern:

An article was printed in the Sevier County, Tenn., Mountain Press pertaining to the Celebrate Santa Convention that was held in Gatlinburg on March 13, 2010 to March 17, 2010.

After reading David Perella's letter concerning the lack of payment the City of Gatlinburg has experienced the past two years with Joe and Mary Moore, I felt the need to tell my story as well.

Misty Hull, Group Sales Manager, and I began working with Joe and Mary Moore early in 2009 putting together a contract for the 2010 Celebrate Santa Convention. River Terrace was chosen as the Host Property for the event and Misty and I worked diligently to put together a contract that not only gave the group excellent rates for their stay, but incorporated many extras such as allowing pets for this event, per their request. We opened, hired and trained full restaurant staff specifically for this event, per the Moore's request, even though it had been closed for the winter. We allowed use of meeting space and supplied cookies and drinks at no charge as a special treat to the Santa's.

Throughout 2009, Misty and I met with Joe and Mary Moore several times to discuss plans and changes in the schedule for the convention. The Fashion Show was added to our event schedule to be held at River Terrace rather than the Convention Center at the last minute, as well as the Evening with Nicholas of Myra.

In each of our meetings with the Moore's we were told to expect approximately 200 or more Santa's to eat breakfast and dinner each day in our restaurant, except the evening of the Jingle Bell Ball, therefore, staffing was at the maximum the entire week to ensure excellent service. The actual numbers for each meal were at 50 or less, which cost us thousands in payroll and food expenses for the week. The Moore's contracted the entire property of 204 rooms to be held for the Santa's as they said our property would be 100% booked for this event. In each conversation we had concerning the lack of reservations being made, the Moore's stated the Santa's are procrastinators and always wait until the last minute. Two weeks from the event date, we released the rooms to rent. We received half the revenue we were promised by the Moore's, resulting in approximately 27,000.00 loss.

To date, Joe and Mary Moore have not paid the monies owed to River Terrace for the Celebrate Santa Convention 2010. I have sent several emails and faxed the invoice to them and in return I have received a nasty email from Joe telling me it is not his fault I have made poor business decisions concerning this group. Every decision I made throughout the coordination of this event was to benefit the group and to make them feel special. My Team and I went above and beyond to ensure the Moore's and Santa's were happy and all ran smoothly for each of their events. Joe and Mary Moore need to step up and fulfill their responsibility of making sure all monies are paid on a contract River Terrace took very seriously and fulfilled with enthusiasm.

The only poor decision I made was trusting and believing Joe and Mary Moore when they told me to expect Television Media from all over the United States, hundreds of Santa's using our restaurant and our property to be 100% booked.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the Santa's and Mrs. Claus' who were a delight to spend the week with. My Team and I were very fortunate to have the opportunity to be a part of such a unique group. Several of the Santa's thanked us for taking such good care of them and that made everything we did worth while.

Sincerely,

Valerie DeVarso

General Manager

River Terrace Resort and Convention Center

240 River Road, Gatlinburg, TN 37738

facebook

A cautionary tale

by TERRY HILDERBRAND

I had been a member of facebook for some time. I had a lot of friends and contacts that were made up of fellow Santas. I have been known as Indiana Santa for more years than I can remember. It is my home state. My website is Indianasanta.com. No suprise there.

I went to check on a few messages on facebook and could not access my account. A message popped up that my account was deleted with a suggestion I read their rules again. I had no clue as to why it was removed as I just did not spend a lot of time on there and did not post many comments to others comments, etc. With all those who have fake information, nudity, showing drug use etc.. They removed me because of my name selection.

My facebook acctount was delteted by them as my ID was Indiana Santa I have gone by that ID for most of my time as Santa on the internet. You might pass it on for others to be careful or they may loose their accounts.

Here is the answer I received as to why it was cancelled:

*Hi,
Fake accounts are a violation of our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. Facebook requires users to provide their real first and last names. Impersonating anyone or anything is prohibited. Unfortunately, we will not be able to reactivate this account for any reason. This decision is final.*

*Thanks for your understanding,
Dominique
User Operations
Facebook*

MAY THE MAGIC OF SANTA BE WITH YOU
THROUGH THE YEAR

Terry Hilderbrand
<http://www.indianasanta.com>
Founder of Santa Claus Around The World



In Memorial

Connecticut's Mr. Christmas, Mervin Whipple, dies

KILLINGLY, Conn. – Mervin Whipple, known for decades as Connecticut's Mr. Christmas, has died. He was 81.

Whipple operated a well-known Christmas display at his home in Killingly for 35 years, adding new animations and more lights almost every year.

Whipple's Christmas Wonderland opened in 1967 with a nativity scene and 225 lights as a tribute to his step-

son Edmond, who died in an automobile accident.

When he closed the display on New Year's Day 2003, Whipple had approximately 112,000 lights and nearly 350 animations.

Whipple said he stopped putting up the lights because it was hard to find volunteers to maintain it, and he could no longer afford the \$19,000 electric bill.



Deanna Sorge dies

NewsandSentinel

Deanna Lea Starcher Sorge, 52, of Seymour, Tenn., passed away April 16, 2010, at the University of Knoxville Tennessee Medical Center.

She was born Dec. 2, 1957 in Parkersburg, a daughter of Janet Wright Starcher of Parkersburg and the late Foster Starcher.



Deanna worked as the Director of Sales & Marketing at the Thai Thani Restaurant at Pigeon Forge, Tenn. She was a member of Rotary International of Pigeon Forge and was a member of the National Tour Association and the National Bus Association.

In addition to her mother, she is survived by her husband, David Sorge of Seymour, Tenn.; one brother, Larry (Beth) Starcher of Parkersburg.

In addition to her father, she was preceded in death by a brother, Gregory Starcher, and her grandparents.

The Santa Clause

“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*



Polar Express Style Bells & more

These sand cast, solid Brass bells can be found online at Cat's Paw Web site. The bells pictured above are recent additions to Perry's inventory. For our readers who are familiar with my story 'The Bell on Christmas Eve,' this is my source of the small acorn bells which are very special to me.

I have purchased numerous bells from Perry and I can recommend his service, honesty and products very highly, without hesitation.

Contact Perry at:

Cat's Paw

<http://www.catspawdb.com/accessories.html>

donnajo@aye.net

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Masthead Artwork by Stephanie Suzanne Sentinella

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