

Red Suit Gazette

Unlock the World of Santa



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The Brotherhood of the Direct Descendents of Santa



How I Became Santa

By Santa Somerville Mike

I am sure that there are lots of reasons that each of us have decided to portray the most famous persona ever, "SANTA."

I had the opportunity to share "The reason I became Santa" with several Santas and their wives recently. I told this story during dinner at the Olive Garden, following the Santa Claus

Academy in Atlanta, Ga.

This story always reminds me of what life is really about.

It takes place in 1991 in a small town in West Tennessee. Collierville, Tn., to be exact.

I was working as a carriage driver for my attorney (who is a friend) as reimbursement for legal services rendered. When Christmas time came around that year we came up with the idea to offer "Carriage Rides with Santa" in Collierville.

We bought a fairly nice Santa suit and

decorated the horse drawn carriage. We charged \$10 per trip, which took customers for a ride with Santa around the town square.

See BECOMING SANTA, Pg 2



Illustration by J. P. Davis, 1890

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From the Heart of Santa Claus

The Journey Within

By Bill McKee
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From the recesses of my earliest memories, echoing down through time, I find myself lying in the cool grass beneath swaying, glittering green-leaved trees. The summer breeze, caressing the trees, carries to my ear melodies and spoken thoughts, words of wisdom and songs of praise.

The sounds come drifting out from the small, white country church, through opened windows cooling the Sunday crowd from the summer's heat. And the words "even the least of these" makes perfect sense to me. I am surrounded by them. Immersed in them.

See HEART pg. 10

BECOMING SANTA cont.

I quickly found it was a lot of fun. We began using a two-way communications system to enable Santa to have a little insight and knowledge before the ride. With this 'inside' information we made believers out of many small, and not so small children.

Back in those days I was kind of a rough and tumble guy.



One afternoon, as the sun was setting, with a cool brisk wind blowing, "It Happened."

As one group of children disembarked the carriage, I looked over to the next group, calling each by name, inviting the riders up into the carriage. As I did, my eye caught a glimpse of what I thought was a small girl in a stroller. She was with a family consisting of two boys (about 5- and 6-years old), her in the stroller, and their parents. Well, the boys

climbed in the carriage with me and off we went around the square. We talked about all their wonderful Christmas dreams and wishes. They told me how good they had been, and we talked and laughed about all kinds of Santa and children things.

When we arrived back at the stop I noticed the girl in the stroller again. At that point I could tell that she had an affliction of some sorts. I did not know at the time that she had Cerebral Palsy and that she was 21-years-old. She was looking right at me with the biggest smile I have ever seen. I don't know why, but I asked her parents if they could lift her up to me. They picked her up and helped me sit her in my lap, safely on my knee.

I knew immediately she was very excited. Her smile stretched across her face from ear-to-ear. I told the carriage driver that this was a free trip and we took off for a ride around the square. All I knew, or could think of to do, was to rub her cheek with my finger and tell her how much Santa loves her. I told her what a positive difference she makes in the lives of everyone she comes in contact with. I did not know it at the time but she was changing my life more than I could have ever imagined.

The ride came to an end. Her parents carefully put her back into the stroller and headed off on their way. However, the thoughts of that small young lady remained on my mind.

The next afternoon, we continued the carriage rides, bringing Christmas Joy to countless children. Near the end of one ride, I looked over and saw the young lady's parents standing there by themselves. There was a tear in the mother's eye. I invited them up into the carriage with me and asked the driver to take us around the square so we could talk.

They proceeded to tell me what a difference they had seen in their daughter. After the carriage ride they saw very visible, positive changes in her. They wanted to know what I had told her.

I told them what I had done, talking to her and just rubbing her cheek with my finger, and telling her what a wonderful influence she was on others. As I told them, I was having a hard time trying to hold back my tears. At the end of the ride, we hugged and they departed.

Now, there is not one single time when I put on my Santa suit that I don't think about that nameless, small lady which the good Lord allowed to come into my life and open my heart to the Heart of Santa Claus.

I will always remember what Christmas is about because of her.

Mike White
Santa Somerville Mike
Somerville, Tennessee
<http://www.realsanta4u.com/index2.html>

Look For Our Special Christmas Edition Coming December 1



Don't Miss It!

In Search of Santa's Suit



by Lou Knezevich

Last issue, we began the search for a new suit. We explored styles, materials and fabrics, quality, wearability, choices and personal preferences.

Now we will look more closely at an often overlooked item; trousers. We will also examine boot cuffs, along with overall costume care and upkeep.

I have not mentioned costume trousers in this series until now. Most trousers that you purchase will have either elastic or a draw string around the waist. Do Not depend on either one to keep your pants up!

I learned a valuable lesson one time when I had to change at a performance site. I had forgotten my suspenders.

To make matters worse, the pants were already too big, and the elastic waist band was of little help. I walked around all night with my elbows tucked into my hips holding up my pants. As you can imagine this was not a fun evening.

Suspenders are highly recommended. You can purchase a pair of bright red, 2-inch suspenders at your local Wal-Mart for under \$7.00. I bought a pair for each of my costumes. Now I don't have to remember to include suspenders each time I switch costumes.

If you have read any of my prior articles you should know I am a firm believer in wearing gloves almost every time you are in costume. Another "Sticking Point" for me is boot cuffs.

In my opinion the boot cuff trim should not be sewn to the bottom of your costume trousers. Sewing it to the trouser bottom puts the cuff height at the top of your instep. That is too low, which gives the appearance of pants which are worn by Mimes or Clowns. I know some of you buy 12-inch high boots so the cuff will be low. However, if you put elastic in a 4-inch wide cuff you can wear them with a very presentable look.

A pocket in costume pants for keys, a handkerchief and anything else you might need to carry is almost a necessity.

Good costumes are expensive to purchase. If you have one custom made for you the cost goes up proportionately. When you make an investment in costumes you need to take proper care of your wardrobe.

Most of us perspire heavily when wearing the full costume; even those with cool vests.

Never take your jacket off and just toss it on your car seat, on the bedroom floor, or a chair. If your jacket will be off until you arrive home or at your next destination ... hang it on a good wooden or molded plastic hanger. Doing this lets the fabric relax and you won't have bad wrinkles develop. Be very careful if you use a metal hanger. Rust spots on the metal transfers to a damp fabric easily, and most of them aren't strong enough to support a heavy jacket.

There is a trick to hanging your jacket and lined trousers. Turn them inside-out so the damp fabric 'air dries.' When the costume is dry and before the next wearing, spray it with Fabreeze, or use this in combination with a hand steamer. Taking a few minutes to do this will freshen it up and extend the time before its next trip to the dry cleaners.

Do Not attempt to remove spots unless you know exactly what you are doing. Leave these things for the dry cleaner.



With some Tender Loving Care from you, your costumes should give you years of dependable, quality service.

"Zivili" Celebrate Life"
Santa Lou
Santalou@bellsouth.net
<http://www.Santa-Lou.com>

What Do You Do As Santa?



By Kris Kringle

One thing that really boggles my mind is to hear those wearing the red suit tell me they don't do anything special in their performance as Santa. We are all performers. That means we are all actors. If you don't believe that, try to get a judge to change your name to Santa Claus.

We portray this jolly old elf when wearing the red suit and when we are just out in public view. This is not something we have done all our lives. It is something we choose to do. We are actors portraying a part. In our case it is a fictitious character who brings joy and happiness to children all over the world.

All right! Now that we have determined we are actors, let's pretend we are going on an audition for a part in a local play, Broadway play, commercial, TV show, or even a movie. If we went in dressed to the hilt, displaying our best Santa appearance and just said 'here I am,' what do you think the casting director would do? Well, I have seen it, and it is not pretty. If you want an acting job, you need to be able to act! Period!

Now what does this have to do with being Santa you ask? Think about it. Santa must be an actor. The better ones get the best jobs. This translates to ... if you are just showing up, giving out

gifts and talking to the children, you are not as impressive as you may think you are. Santas should have the gift of gab and tell a good story or two.

For example; if asked where are the reindeer? Some would answer they are at the North Pole in the snow, they are at the airport, they are at a farm up the road, etc. These are one sentence replies. You will sound more impressive if you make up a story.

Here is an idea on which you could build. Begin with some comment that acknowledges the question asked. "Funny you should ask about them. Just this morning I was talking to Blitzen asking if she wanted to join me on my rounds today. She declined stating that the team was in training. Blitzen said if they didn't keep in shape and practice the intricate teamwork needed for Christmas Eve, then some children might not receive their toys on time. They are back at the workshop training, training, and training. I know everyone wants their gifts on time, don't you?"

With this type of answer, you not only answer the child's question, but you are telling a story and creating something new for their imagination. Didn't you imagine the reindeer working out and performing synchronized flying acrobatics? If you can imagine that, think what the children might be thinking. Their imagination is far more vivid than ours.

Telling stories is an art in itself. I suggest you take a course in effective storytelling, or at least take a story writing course. Then you must practice and rehearse constantly. The more you practice, the better you will get and the presentation becomes easier and more natural.

Storytelling is not the only entertainment ability you should have in your bag. I know Santas that sing. If you don't have a voice or ability, you could again take a class and learn the basics. Or perhaps you play an instrument. Other things you could do include magic and making balloon animals. You could also learn some games to teach the children and then show them how to play them. Playing games with the children will endear you with both the children and their parents.

Try a variation of Simon Says; Santa

Says. You really have to prepare and think about what you are going to do and try not to mess up. Practice with this game so you get it down pat first.

How about a visual story? Take the story from the scout handbook or make up one of your own. This type of story includes the children by having them participating in the story. You can have them give you input to your story, or have them perform a visual activity while you are telling a story. Example; if you tell a story about a house, have the children make a gesture to simulate a roof, etc. Having the children make up the story as you go is very difficult, unless you control their input by asking the children for a color, instead of asking them what is next. I enjoy asking 'what is next' since that changes the story every time. I usually am able to lead the children into telling me something close to what I want by asking specific questions, or guiding the story. I use words and phrases such as; "in a time long, long ago there was a" Here the children can create a person, place or thing as the story begins.

If you prefer to read a story, I suggest you memorize the story first. At least be very familiar with it and practice it until you can read it naturally. Add emphasis through voice inflection, volume changes, pitch changes, etc. You should also add animation with your eyes, hands, and body movements. Again practice, practice, practice.

Can you now see how a Santa with all these talents would be requested and sought out more than one without them? However, having all these talents and being able to pull them off flawlessly, will not make you a top Santa. The most important thing, which will almost guarantee return visits and recommendations to others, is the ability to know when and where to use the talents you have.

It is now October so time is short. If you are a Santa who feels that just your presence is good enough, I thank you. I'll be glad to take the visits you don't get. For all new Santas, I suggest strongly finding another Santa you can

See Kringle's Wisdom next page

Kringle's Wisdom cont.

with whom you can work with and practice. You should also think about joining an organization or attending a gathering of Santas. You will find that Santas discuss and share everything under the sun. The more you learn, the better you can present yourself.

This article is not intended to be the complete answer to all your questions. It is offered to spark your imagination and help you jump start something new.

October is also the time to complete last minute repairs and alterations on your wardrobe. You also need to do your last minute advertising and double check your calendar. Make sure all your accounting spreadsheets, logs, and receipt trackers are in place. If you don't think about everything



now, you will probably already be behind when you begin your season. There is a reason Santa is making his list and checking it twice!

Make yourself familiar with the new toys out this year and complete your last minute research.

First, foremost and always, plan to have fun and enjoy all aspects of the season. If you are having fun, the children are also having fun. The energy will fill the room.

Keep your spirits high and the smile on your face higher, for the twinkle in your eye is a clear sign that you enjoy what you do.

Kris Kringle
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The Inner Voice

The original meaning of the word "vocation" means "the voice within." Many cultures have ceremonies and rituals as to how to get in touch with this voice.

While this voice tends to emerge during our adolescence, it can speak to us at any stage of our life. The Huichol Indians tell us that there are two kinds of human beings. Those who listen to their inner-voice and those who ignore it.

The ones who listen to their inner-voice move in harmony with the flow of life, which is represented by a magical deer, "hicuri." They also drink from the magical waters of "teacata", the place of wisdom. This is the invisible river from which the Monarch butterflies drink in order to find their way in their migration from Canada to Mexico. This is also the water that the salmon drinks in order to find his way from rivers to the sea and back to their birthplace. To know without being taught.

The Huichol Indians tell us that when we ignore our inner-voice we become ghosts of ourselves. Our mind is in one place, but our heart is somewhere else. Then, since we have lost our integrity, we become "beings of duality", and we enter the world of restlessness and perpetual want.

But no matter what we do, and how much we may ignore our inner-voice, our heart never gives up on us. The Mayas tell us that within it lives a Quetzal, the bird of life, and the Quetzal goes on talking to us. The voice becomes more clear during the night, as we sleep and dream. It becomes clear also when we take time to be in silence, when we fast, or when we spend time in solitude. At times it may even assault us when we deal with pain or suffer a breakdown.

Our sickness may be an attempt of our heart to straighten our life.

When we are rooted in our hearts, our faces bear no duality, no concealment. Mexicans call a face with a heart "rostro" because the face is rooted in nature and in truth.

However, when the face is not connected to the heart, it cannot be a "rostro", and it is called "cara". In English we only have one word for both of them, "Face", although, there is a world of difference between them. If you happen to have a rostro, keep shining brightly in this world. And if you happen to have a cara, your heart is out there calling for you. They say that when you find your voice the whole Universe sings. Make the Universe sing!



*"Winter Sports - Coasting in the Country," by Granville Perkins
From Harper's Weekly, Feb. 17, 1877.*

Taming The Beast

"Tis The Season"

Article 5

By Cindylu Thomas

Editor's Note: Previous articles can be found online at:

<http://www.santasgazette.com/santa-articles/beard-hair.html>



Gentlemen and Mrs. Clauses;

Here we are starting yet another new month.

Labor Day signifies to most the ending of summer and soon cooler weather. That feeling of fall will soon be in the air, the leaves changing color and time to start preparing for the upcoming winter months. With that comes the realization that the Christmas Season, for many of us, will begin in about 60 days. That's 60 (Six-o) days, folks! Are you starting to think of things to do to start preparing for the Season?

One of the most important things to start thinking about, gentlemen, is your beard. Now is the time to take a good look at it and see what needs to be done to get in shape for the season. Now is the time to get back to your intensive grooming regime toward getting that beard and hair ready for the rigors of the

season. When it's showtime, you want to be looking your very best for all those that you will be seeing and those thousands of photos that will be taken and ultimately end up on somebody's refrigerator or mantle.

You are what you see and there's always room for improvement.

It's easy to get lazy during the spring and summer months and not take as good care of your beard and hair as you should, after all, it's the off-season and no photos are being taken, there's no mall to sit in, no photo company. But then, before we know it, summer is over and it's 60 days before the season starts. Many of you Mall Santas are already under contract by now and know exactly when your season will start.

It's time to stock up on all the shampoos, conditioners, mustache wax, mousse, sprays, spritz's, rinses, gels, etc. for the season. Review your shampooing and conditioning routine and get those appointments made with your beautician, if you use one, for bleaching & styling appointments. If you do your own bleaching, now is the time to purchase those bleaching kits you'll need to make it through the season without having to take what little precious spare time you might have to go shopping. You lucky fellows that don't have to bleach your hair and beard should be taking a good look at the condition and shape your beard is in and take whatever steps you need to, to get it shaped up and properly conditioned. Get rid of those 'frizzies', wild hairs that seem to have a mind of their own, and scraggles. What ARE scraggles, you ask? Scraggles are what I call those beard ends that go every which way and are not the same length as the rest of your beard they're usually longer, but you hang onto them hoping the rest of your beard will catch up one day.

There's one product that I don't think I've mentioned much about that does

more to make a well groomed beard look absolutely spectacular. When you have finished with your shampooing, conditioning, styling, combing & grooming and have sprayed your beard a bit with hairspray, let it get good and dry and then spray some Hask Pure Shine Spray-On Luminator. It will give your beard a shine you won't believe and it makes your beard have a sparkling effect under bright lights. It adds a lot to your photos. Be careful, though and don't overdo it. The spray covers a wide range so about 3-4 sprays from one side of your beard to the other should be quite enough. This is one product that more is NOT better. Give the product a try and let me know what you think. I love the stuff and use it on my hair, too. sometimes, depending on what type of event we are doing.

As a precautionary measure, after you have finished spraying with the luminator, check your face, neck and head (especially you bald Santas) and make sure none of it got in those areas. There are some things that are better left Un-luminated.... if you know what I mean! Bald is beautiful, but extremely shiny bald is NOT beautiful.

Well, that's a wrap for this article. I hope you found some useful information here and we'll chat again one more time before the Christmas Season starts.

Many Blessings to you all,
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More Than 60 In Attendance At The Santa Claus Academy!

The Red Suit Gazette

Jillian's in Atlanta, Ga., was the site for two days of interactive learning as The Santa Claus Academy offered two courses, known as Prancer and Vixen, for more than 60 students.

Santas and Mrs. Claus' enjoyed the theater-like setting of Jillian's. The large visual screen offered comfortable viewing of course materials, which were presented on a stage setting. This environment enhanced the details of the instructor's subjects. The setting allowed everyone the ability to view and participate in the presentations and interactions easily. It also made this participation and interaction with every one in attendance, more of a professional, and theatrical experience. This gave students more of a feeling of being in a real-life, Christmas setting.

During each morning break, attendees were treated to fruit snacks. With a mixture of new and seasoned Santas, each break was an informative, educational, networking experience. This was the perfect opportunity for the 1st year Santas to mingle and talk with the most experienced Santas. They were able to hear of unique experiences from others and special tips not taught in any Santa school.

There was also a delicious luncheon each day, fit to satisfy the most discriminating Santa's palate.

Participatory interaction heightened the learning experience, as everyone practiced making balloon animals, vocalizing using voice exercises and practicing hearty Ho Ho Ho's. Students also demonstrated improvisational skills using several exercises designed to get the creative juices flowing and their minds thinking. All attendees were very active throughout the weekend, asking questions and contributing their experiences, which added to the course material. This interaction enhanced the subject being taught, elevating it to a new level of understanding. Some of the subjects covered included information for all students, from the 1st year rookie to the 30-year plus professional Claus.



One of the special features of this fall's Academy was a break-out session exclusively for Mrs. Claus.

See Santa Claus Academy next page

Santa Claus Academy cont.



Mrs. Claus was well represented, with many attendees, who enjoyed sharing experiences, tips and special Mrs. Claus inside information. Because of the enthusiastic response The Santa Claus Academy had from the participants, the school will make this part of its curriculum. In the future, an exclusive Mrs. Claus and Santa Helpers Course will be taught. This will include all entry level courses and information. It will be taught by a professional and active Mrs. Claus's and will be open to all costumed and non-costumed Mrs. Claus,' Elves and Santa helpers.

Just before the graduation ceremonies instructors presented explanations and details covering the various Santa organizations. The instructors also detailed meetings and gatherings which can be found around the country, such as; Celebrate Santa, Santa-America.org, The Brotherhood of the Direct Descendants of Santa, Santa Atlanta and many others. A formal graduation ceremony capped off the two day event, graduating happy faced and well versed Santas.

Mr. and Mrs. Claus and all Helpers and attendees, also spent three evenings dining at various restaurants in the area. Here everyone relaxed and got to know each other better.

The feedback from students was very enthusiastic. They praised the subjects and materials presented by the instructors, whom also received glowing reviews.

Everyone seemed to have a wonderful and educational weekend. Many left with renewed Spirits and eager to become a better Santa. New ideas, thoughts and experiences were shared by all participants.

The most common comment overheard, as the facilities emptied, was "I can't wait for the next one. I will certainly be there!"

The Santa Claus Academy is innovative, informative and setting the standard for Santa instruction.

Check out the Santa Claus Academy at: <http://www.SantaClausAcademy.com>

HEART cont.

Though I was much too young to be able to define what I inherently understood (or explain it), I didn't need to because I was a part of it.



Lying there, I was completely immersed in the flow of life around me, from the grasshoppers and various insects crawling, to the birds and butterflies buoyant on the currents of air. I am part of the trees, grass, plants and hawks spiraling in the heavens. I AM. I carry within me, inherently, the boundless energy of life.

As I grew, leaving childhood things behind, my interests moved in other directions. But my thoughts and eye never strayed far from what I saw in childhood. The lessons I learned were true, I just knew this. During my teenage years I began to see the world change. It was not that it changed, only that I had a clearer view as my perspective shifted and expanded far beyond the small farm community where I grew up. What I had been taught as a child, I had thought all people lived this every day. What I witnessed were words spoken one day a week, but lives lived differently daily.

I somehow lost (as most do) my simple childhood's innocent understanding of the world as a unified, connected whole.

Over the years I walked many roads and viewed the world from many points of view. Along most of the roads, I only ventured a short way, as the fallacy and the disharmony became evident to me.

I found myself searching out those who might possibly hold some knowledge of how to reconnect with that life lived in harmony. Life that I knew inherently and lived as a child.

Along the way I met a few who seemed to see and feel. They offered a book to read, or thought to share, or direction to peer.

Each glimpse I had back into the life lived in harmony within myself and the world around me, made me even hungrier to learn more.

Reading 'The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge' by Carlos Castaneda, nearly 40 years ago, opened a doorway back, and forward. Eventually.

I wanted to meet a Shaman.

One day, about 20 years later, I did. He was a Shaman and Priest.

And he is grandfather Christmas.

We sat and talked. And I listened for hours as this man spoke words of wisdom and understanding, telling truths I had known all my life. Truths I had never heard anyone put into words before. Some I had met had hinted at it, offering glimpses and glances at bits and pieces, but never such a unified whole. Things so clearly and concisely spoken I had never heard before.

See HEART next page

HEART cont.

These words spoken, giving direct insight into an understanding of Love, transcending race, class, tribe, country, religion or any boundary, and the knowledge of the Sacredness of all life, few others had even hinted at. And I began to understand more fully what Dr. Martin Luther King meant when he spoke of Love and justice, when I was a young teenager so very many years before.

Through a doorway, thrown open before me, I connected with that teenager listening to Dr. King's words and witnessing his deeds. And I reconnected to the child within and that deep understanding of the Love I knew as a child. A child whose Love was boundlessly shared and lived with all around me. I connected with that child laying in the grass outside that little country church, immersed in the boundless life around me. I could share once again.

And I reconnected to life all around me daily.

One fall day, during these years and journeys, an older gentleman called me and asked me to fill in as Santa for him that upcoming Christmas season. He said he was physically no longer able. That was more than 10 years ago now. His guidance, which continues still, has been keen and sure. His heart IS Santa's heart.

And during Christmas 2006, on the Road to Damascus, my life was forever altered.

Bill McKee
<http://www.BrothersClaus.com>

Coming in the Special Christmas Issue:

'The Bell on Christmas Eve,
Transformational Encounters Along the Road to Damascus'



When you ask 'How are you?' Do you hear the reply?



I got to thinking one day about all those women on the Titanic who passed up dessert at dinner that fateful night in an effort to cut back. From then on, I've tried to be a little more flexible.

How many women out there will eat at home because their husband didn't suggest going out to dinner until after something had been thawed? Does the word 'refrigeration' mean nothing to you?

How often have your kids dropped in to talk and sat in silence while you watched 'Jeopardy' on television?

I cannot count the times I called my sister and said, 'How about going to lunch in a half hour?' She would gas up and stammer, 'I can't, I have clothes on the line. My hair is dirty. I wish I had known yesterday. I had a late breakfast. It looks like rain.' And my personal favorite: 'It's Monday.' She died a few years ago. We never did have lunch together.

Because we cram so much into our lives, we tend to schedule our headaches. We live on a sparse diet of promises we make to ourselves when all the conditions are perfect!

We'll go back and visit the grandparents when we get the baby toilet-trained. We'll entertain when we replace the living-room carpet. We'll go on a second honeymoon when we get two more kids out of college.

Life has a way of accelerating as we get older. The days get shorter, and the list of promises to ourselves gets longer. One morning, we awaken, and all we have to show for our lives is a litany of 'I'm going to,' 'I plan on,' and 'Someday, when things are settled down a bit.'

When anyone calls my 'seize the moment' friend, she is open to adventure and available for trips. She keeps an open mind on new ideas. Her enthusiasm for life is contagious. You talk with her for five minutes, and you're ready to trade your bad feet for a pair of roller blades and skip an elevator for a bungee cord.

My lips have not touched ice cream in 10 years. I love ice cream. It's just that I might as well apply it directly to my stomach with a spatula and eliminate the digestive process. The other day, I stopped the car and bought a triple-decker. If my car had hit an iceberg on the way home, I would have died happy.

Now ... go on and have a nice day. Do something you WANT to ... not something on your SHOULD DO list. If you were going to die soon and had only one phone call you could make, who would you call and what would you say? And why are you waiting?

Have you ever watched kids playing on a merry-go-round or listened to the rain lapping on the ground? Ever followed a butterfly's erratic flight or gazed at the sun into the fading night? Do you run through each day on the fly? When you ask 'How are you?' Do you hear the reply?

When the day is done, do you lie in your bed with the next hundred chores running through your head? Ever told your child, 'We'll do it tomorrow.' And in your haste, not see his sorrow? Ever lost touch? Let a good friendship die? Just call to say 'Hi?'

When you worry and hurry through your day, it is like an unopened gift ... Thrown away. Life is not a race. Take it slower. Hear the music before the song is over.

Editor's Note: I do not know the origin of this piece. It was sent to me by a very good friend, and brother, Rick.

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Masthead Artwork by Stephanie Suzanne Sentinella

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