



TONYA'S TALES

By Tonya Brantley

“Once considered by many to be the World’s greatest supply chain, Santa’s Workshop has fallen victim to the global economic crisis and has filed for bankruptcy.

Earlier this year, the company laid off thousands of Santa’s little helpers and cut nearly seventy five percent of its workforce at it’s headquarters in the North Pole.

A major factor contributing to the closure is demand for manufacturing and distributing handmade toys has decreased significantly over the past few years due to a much larger demand for high tech devices and electronics such as cell phones, ipods, game consoles and computers.

Santa’s Workshop will lay off it’s entire workforce of over 35,000 and close the doors to it’s three million square foot facility after the 2008 Christmas season.”

If the preceding was true, many of us probably wouldn’t be surprised, considering that on almost a daily basis now, we hear in the news that company after company are laying off their employees and closing down.

So far, the total number of job losses in 2008 in the United States is nearly 1.2 million and the unemployment rate is the highest its been in over a decade. This means that this Christmas, many families are having to cut back on the amount of

money they spend. For many, this means fewer presents under the Christmas tree and possibly some disappointed children who will wake up early on Christmas morning to see what Santa brought them, only to find that what they asked for isn’t there.

Unfortunately, Christmas has become a stress for some and a financial hardship for others, especially this year. And a lot of us forget that Christmas isn’t solely about giving and receiving presents.

When you think back to Christmases past, what do you remember most?

There are certain presents I do remember getting when I was a little girl, like those special toys that I still have, Buster my Pound Puppy and Megan my Cabbage Patch Kid doll. (Do they still make those?)

I even remember certain

presents my dad got too. As far back as I can remember, my dad always got a beautifully wrapped present filled with socks, underwear and tee shirts. Wait a minute... doesn’t everybody get socks and underwear for Christmas?

Then there are the presents that I will treasure forever, Christmastime memories and traditions with my family.

Memories of spending the night at my in-laws house on Christmas Eve and waking up to the voices of my young niece and nephews yelling, “Santa came!” And having my picture taken with them with red Christmas bows on our heads. Also, when they left milk and cookies for Santa then discovered on Christmas morning a plate with one half eaten cookie and an empty glass with a thank you note on which Santa’s handwriting looked suspiciously like Dad’s. I also will never forget my niece and nephews singing happy birthday to Jesus, complete with birthday cake and party hats.

I remember the Christmas when my brother and I woke up to my dad filming us with our family’s first camcorder. And each Christmas my parent’s cats playing in the wrapping paper, boxes, ribbons and bows from unwrapped gifts.

I remember those special ornaments. And cherished

memories of waiting for my MeeMaw and PeePaw Brantley to pull up our driveway in their big white car to spend Christmas with us.

I’ll never forget going to my MeeMaw Lawson’s house on Christmas when she was handing out the presents. Only in the South will you hear, “This one is your’n, and this one is your’n’ses.” MeeMaw Lawson sure did have a way with words, one word in particular that I’ll keep to myself. That was definitely a Christmas full of laughter. I, like many of you, have wonderful and precious family memories.

What would Christmas be without traditions? I play Christmas songs on the piano while my mom puts the finishing touches on Christmas dinner. It’s a tradition for us to eat a lot! Those traditional enormous feasts my mom cooks each year could feed an army. Turkey, ham, dressing, potatoes, corn, green bean casserole, rolls, and so much more. Then there are the deserts; pecan pie, pumpkin pie, fudge, cookies and cakes.

One tradition I look forward to every year is my mom making her famous chocolate covered peanut butter ball candies and my dad pretending that there aren’t any left because he ate them all, knowing that my mom would always put several back in a Christmas

container just for me and my brother. It wouldn’t be Christmas without those around!

Overall, I remember spending time together with the people that matter most to me. The best gift of all wasn’t the presents from my family, it was the presence of my family.

The simple act of spending quality time with relatives and friends isn’t just something you should do during the holidays, but for many of us, it may be the only opportunity we get. Even if you live a great distance away, all it takes is a phone call. In this e-mail, instant messaging and text messaging world we live in, quality time and communication with family and friends is often limited.

Take time this Christmas season to spend quality time with your loved ones. Time spent together builds memories we keep.

Make memories that will last a lifetime. Start a new tradition. Enjoy each other’s company. Often, we take for granted those times spent together.

You never know if this will be the last Christmas that you get to spend with that special someone, so make the most of it.

Do you have questions or comments about Tonya’s Tales? If so, e-mail Tonya at: people4news@aol.com.

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