

## — An Interview With Santa —

The Christmas season seems to bring out the kid in all of us. Perhaps it's because many childhood memories center around those special gifts we asked Santa for and woke up early on Christmas morning to find under the tree. For me, Christmas has always been one of my favorite holidays. I bet I'm not alone when it comes to remembering those special presents. For me there was my red bicycle, just like my older brother's, my Daisy BB gun, my doll house, my Cabbage Patch Kid, and I'll never forget Buster... my Pound Puppy.

Some of my fondest memories of Christmas are the presents from my grandparents. I don't remember them for the gifts themselves, but more for the way they were wrapped. The wrapping paper was always metallic and shiny with the bows and ribbons color coordinated to match. The gift tags always read: To Tonya, From Santa. I knew those presents were wrapped with extra care especially for us grandkids.

Then there were the nights trying to stay awake to catch a glimpse of Santa, even though I knew I was taking the risk of not getting presents in order to possibly see the jolly man in red. It never failed though... I never could stay

awake the whole night. I always wondered what he really looked like and if he enjoyed the milk and cookies I left for him. So, you can imagine my excitement when I recently got the opportunity to interview the man himself. The one, the only, Santa Claus! He was in town checking on the progress of several of his little helpers at Lee University who were wrapping



Tonya meets Santa

presents for Operation Christmas Child. I asked him the following:

**T:** Are you excited about the 2009 Christmas season?

**S:** Oh yeah, every year!

**T:** I know you've been making your list and checking it twice. Are there more naughty or nice children this year? **S:** There are more good children.

**T:** How does a child get off the naughty list? **S:** They

gotta be good, do things for their parents and don't fight with their brothers or sisters. I'm going to be watching. Every time they fight with their brothers or sisters, that's going to be a point against them. If they get too many points they may not get what they want for Christmas.

**T:** Exactly how do you visit the whole world in one night and deliver presents

to millions of children? **S:** One night a year I have magic dust. It's kept away in a secret hiding place, and on that night I sprinkle the reindeer, the sleigh and myself and we can travel all over the world in one night. The magic dust is only used that one night a year.

**T:** Are Rudolph and the rest of the reindeer in shape for the big flight? **S:** Yes, they've been resting all

summer long. Eating and resting.

**T:** What do think the most requested gift is going to be this year? **S:** I have a feeling it's going to be some kind of computer type game, but it's really hard to tell until I get out there and start talking to the kids.

**T:** Does the threat of the H1N1 virus scare you with the tremendous number of children you'll have sitting on your lap telling you their Christmas wishes?

**S:** It doesn't scare me but I do protect myself. I have had my flu shot. The only thing I have to watch for is every once in a while there's one child that wants to give you a hug and a kiss. I don't mind the hugs, but I have to be careful of the kisses.

**T:** For those children who are unable to send you a letter or visit you in person before Christmas, can you assure them their requests will be heard? **S:** Their requests will be heard because it doesn't always take a letter. We have a lot of elves and they can hear things and they travel around. So they do a lot of... undercover work you might say. They're the ones that help me keep the lists.

**T:** There have been a lot of movies made about you. Do you have a favorite?

**S:** Santa Claus with Tim Allen, that's one I really enjoy.

**T:** What about the songs?



By Tonya Brantley

**S:** Oh, I like them all!

**T:** What keeps you going after all these years? Have you ever thought of retiring? **S:** No. The kids keep me going. It's the kids. What would Christmas be without Santa?

**T:** Does the fact that the Polar Cap is melting have any significant effect on your facilities at the North Pole? **S:** No because I'm at the very top.

**T:** Do you still prefer milk and cookies? If so, what are your favorite cookies?

**S:** Yes I do, chocolate chip and skim milk or 2%. I have gotten better. I don't smoke a pipe any more either. I gave that up about 12 years ago and I tell the kids that when I read them the story 'Twas the night before Christmas.' When I come to that part, I always tell the kids I no longer smoke and that it was bad for me.

**T:** Is your sleigh equipped with any special equipment this year? **S:** The only special equipment is the magic dust. It has its own guidance system. I don't need a GPS. I have the reindeer that guide the way.

**T:** What do you say to the accusations that your reindeer ran over a certain elderly lady walking home on Christmas Eve?

**S:** It couldn't have been my

reindeer.

**T:** What is the last thing Mrs. Claus says to you before you head out on Christmas Eve? **S:** Drive careful, have fun, and I love you.

**T:** When I was a little girl you brought me a Pound Puppy, the exact one I asked for. Do you know if they still make those anymore, and if so can you bring me another one? **S:** I don't know, but I can look.

As you can imagine, there is no doubt I will ever forget my special interview with Santa. No matter where you are, no matter what you're doing, a moment with Santa always makes you feel young again. I can vouch for that.

Christmas memories, both old and new, are precious ones to cherish for a lifetime and pass on to future generations. This Christmas, enjoy the little things you did when you were young. Listen for Santa and try to catch a glimpse. Leave him milk and cookies and sing Christmas carols. Above all, enjoy this special time of year and have a very Merry Christmas!

Do you have Questions or Comments about Tonya's Tales? If so, e-mail Tonya at: [people4news@aol.com](mailto:people4news@aol.com)

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