

Santa Went Thataway

...A Tale for Young Adults and Old Kids...

By IRMA N. DAVIS
Staff Writer

One December evening about seven years ago, Santa Claus was sitting in his easy chair watching a snow-plow commercial on television when he suddenly sat up and said, "Oh, my gosh, I haven't talked to Fastus this year!"

"Fastus!" he called.
"Coming, Boss," said a wee, small voice, and just like that a wee small elf bobbed up on top of the TV set.
"Fastus," said Santa, "we've got to check the sleigh. Are the runners oiled for Christmas Eve?"
"Sure, Boss," said Fastus. "By the way, I've got an idea."

"No, you don't," interrupted Santa, "none of your ideas. Last year you talked me into putting a motor on the sleigh and look what happened. We ran out of gas right over Tallahassee."

"Well, that was your fault," said the elf, "you kept going into overdrive when we crossed the Rockies. I kept telling you. Overdrive isn't for going over mountains."

"Harumph!" snorted Santa, "what about that time you tied jumping beans on Donder and Blitzen? I had the hiccups all during Christmas dinner."

"Well," said Fastus, "I guess that idea wasn't so good. But this year I've a really good idea. Instead of using that old route why don't you follow the expressways?"

"Nope," said Santa, "the old ways are good enough for me."

But Fastus kept coaxing and coaxing and coaxing. And that's why, seven years ago, on Christmas Eve, Santa got lost.

FOR AFTER THE REINDEER were hitched and the toys all loaded, Santa sat in the driver's seat and off they went—over the expressways, of course.

When they got near the Saskatchewan interchange, Santa remembered a little girl who lived on a side road so over and under and around the cloverleaf he steered the sleigh and down the chimney of the little girl's house.

When they were back in the air again, Santa couldn't find the expressway. He drove this way and that and finally he saw a gas station where he could get a map.

But as anyone knows, gas stations don't have fireplaces and they don't have chimneys so Santa had to come all the way 'round to the front—right by the gas pumps—and show himself and his reindeer.

NOW THE GAS STATION owner was so glad to see Santa that he just talked and talked and finally he said the expressway was just north of the third beacon over Kennebunkport, Maine and Santa said, "thanks, my good man," and took off again.

But when he got over Kennebunkport, the moon had gone behind a cloud and not one single reindeer knew which way was north.

"Oh, dear," said Santa, "I've got so many places to visit yet. I wish I hadn't listened to Fastus and his new-fangled ideas."

All of a sudden, Comet jingled his bells, one, two, three times, which means "turn left" and there right ahead of them was another cloverleaf.

It wasn't the same cloverleaf, of course, but Santa said, "We may as well take it. It will go someplace where there are girls and boys and stockfngs."

But when the sleigh was nearing the cloverleaf it almost hit a flight of ducks—who should have been further south anyway—and of course the sleigh went right by the interchange and onto the outerchange.

You know what? They were lost again.

JUST THEN a very late witch, left over from Halloween, passed overhead and Santa yelled, "Where are we?"

And the witch yelled right back, "Alas and alack, you must turn back. Don't you know this is Mackinac?"

"Well, that's all right," said Santa, "we haven't been there yet, though we've been to a lot of places I DON'T know."

Then Vixen said, "Let's stop and ask for directions." (She was a lady reindeer.)

"Not on your life," said Cupid. (He was a man reindeer.)

"Now don't fight," said Santa, "we can't ask directions and keep showing ourselves anyway. It's against the rules."

"Maybe we'll see a scout car," moaned Donder who was getting very dizzy.

"I see some lights," said Vixen, "right down below us." Down zoomed the sleigh.

"WELL, I NEVER," said Santa Claus. "Would you look at that sock—biggest one I ever saw. And outdoors, too, way up high on a pole."

"How silly can you get?" snorted Blitzen.

Well, Santa sort of slowed the sleigh up and leaned way out and somehow filled the sock with toys, even though the wind was blowing it in all directions.

All of a sudden Vixen squealed in a most unladylike manner.

"I know where we are, I know where we are."

"Where?" everybody yelled.

"We're over Idlewild Airport and that was a wind sock Santa filled."

"Hee! Hee! Ho! Ho! Ha! Ha!" laughed all the reindeer. And Santa laughed the hardest of all.

WHEN HE HAD wiped the laughter tears out of his eyes, Santa turned on the two-way radio—putting that in the sleigh was the only good idea Fastus had ever had—and called the airport for directions.

After all, airports know the best routes.

As a matter of fact, the airport told him the best way 'round the world was the way he had always gone.

Before he left, Santa took the wind sock filled with toys and dropped it down the Idlewild chimney. In place of the wind sock he left a big red and white Christmas stocking.

There are some pilots—who have been good all year—who insist that that same red stocking is up there every Christmas Eve. Other people never see it.

ANYWAY, THAT'S HOW Santa Claus got lost one year and also why he got home so late that Christmas morning.

If you're wondering what happened to old Fastus, well Santa sent him to Idlewild to learn a thing or two. He flunked out of the control tower and the baggage department so they sent him home.

Trouble is, now he wants Santa to deliver toys by jet.

Santa just smiles and says, "You can put that idea in your wind sock and smoke it, Fastus. I can get 'round faster and better in my sleigh."

And he can.

He Leads 2 Lives at Local Store

By DENI SCANLON
Staff Writer

EDITOR'S NOTE: To protect the innocent (those who readily ingest reports on the "prime sinister of the Arctic"), every attempt will be made to reveal details of this interview in words of four letters or more. It's about you-know-who and the fellow who makes him come to life at Jacobson's Toyland.

Who knows more about toys than a good old St. Nick? Good old Gaylord Harrison! The 23-year-old stock man at Jacobson's toy department is a natural for the job that requires knowledge of storing and stocking shelves with all sorts of play-
apment.

The 6-ft. 2½-in. 220-lb. congenial - happy - fellow - with - a - low-rumbling - laugh - and - a - love-for - kids is also a natural for another seasonal occupation. (Are you following?)

He has an added qualification. He's daddy to Diana Lynn, 2½; John Allen, 1½; and Mark Timothy, 2 mo. Obviously, squirming damp-bottom kids delight him.

HARRISON ENJOYS his usual work at Jacobson's. Whenever the saleswomen can't understand a child's description of the very thing they have to have right then — the clerk's call for Gay. He practically always comes strutting out of the back room with "that's it."

JUST A FEW weeks ago, Har-

ison began to prepare for his first crack at a "special assignment." He is taking over for Tom Sawyer (cross-my-heart no fib).

Sawyer, as Harrison puts it, "likes kids but he was more nervous than they were."

Maybe it's because Sawyer has donned the North Pole nomad's robe three years running and is ready to give up the deers and the deers.

HARRISON, however, is looking forward to the big event.

He will meet the tots from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday on the first floor in Jacobson's Student Shop at Woodward and Whitts.

There will be a special mailbox for direct delivery to the North

Pole and there'll be a candy cane tree — one goody for each of the little people.

Between 1 and 2 p.m., Harrison will be out to lunch while Santa feeds his reindeer. (Got it?)

HARRISON IS UNABLE to say what the situation will really be like until he's lived through it. (And there's some doubt.)

He has observed the occasion in the past however.

"We have a good time when this deal is going on," he commented.

"There's no trouble — except for the Dinkies. (They're very small toys.) We had to dig a few of them from little kids' pockets. I don't know why it's the only thing that's lifted. Guess it's 'cause they're dinky."

ACCORDING TO Harrison, most of the children who appear for the event are from five to eight years old.

"I'm mixed up about the one to five. They pull beards. Last year Tom had to hold on with his teeth."

"Then there are wise guys who come to harass."

Harrison is determined to make his presentation as authentic as possible. He has even located high black boots that are more realistic than the ones that come with the rented ensemble.

AS THE interview concluded, one last question was asked: "Can you name the reindeer?"

"Holy cow, I can't," he said zipping to a shelf of books to bone up for the big test.