

Inside
Letters to Santa
by Tillamook County
2nd & 3rd Graders



Season's
Greetings
2021

Tillamook
Headlight Herald





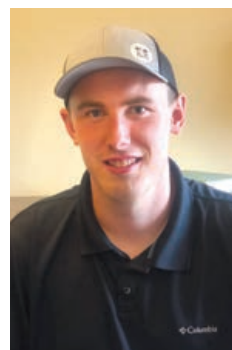
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H64463

This year we asked second and third graders at South Prairie School to send us their letters to Santa so we could get them to the North Pole in time for Christmas and Santa's visit to Tillamook.

Dear Santa

For Christmas I want a puppy because a puppies are cute and I have a dog and my dog like other dog and puppy. I want a book . Alex C.

Dear Santa,

Can I get a mophed because i want to rind around. Can I get a puppy because my dog is lonely, an xbox one because I don't have one and new shoes because I don't have any really. Jeanns because I don't have much.

Stella

Dear Santa,

I really want a Santa pop-jot and butter-fix Rainbow high doll house and doll. I want a LOL and I want a doll hours and an apple watch.

Anhikape

Dear Santa,

I want glow in the dark makeup because I a scared of the dark. And I want glow in the dark art because I can play in the dark.

Cheyenne

Dear Santa

I want a iPhone and I want a PS5 and a puppy.

Maite

Dear Santa

I want V-Bucks 800 nite. I want a PS5, a bike, biscuit's, a phone.

David

Dear Santa

I went Fgteev books and Fgteev toys and a German She Pard Baby because I don't have any of them. I have wanted them for a long time.

Keyleigh

Dear Santa

For Christmas I wont a computer to play games. I also want a part of my dream gaming setup because I like to game. I also want V Bucks-1000 so I can buy the battle pass.

Liam

Dear Santa,

I want bucks 1000 fortnight PS5 little dog.

Logan

I want a PS5 because most stores are out of stock. And I want a iPhone 11 or 12 because I don't have a phone. And I want some Vbucks because i don't have that much. This is what I want for Christmas.

Gage

Dear Santa

I rely want my own makeup because glow in the dark mackup.I wot to luck PeDe gagingres because eve wunsan

Letters

Continued on page 3

Letters

Continued from page 2

I am rite please Santa Clos
Olivia

Dear Santa
I really want a Nintendo switch
please 2021 and I want mario
kart 8 Delux with it. One reason
I would like to have a Nintendo
switch is because, I could really
have fun with it! Another reason
is because I could play with my
sis! Please \$ Thank you !!!
Alice D.

Dear Santa
I really want for Christmas is a
mountie-bite that is teal and a
water bottle that is teal because I

don't really have that much water
bottles so I wood like one and
a phone and a computer. thank
you.
Brooklyn

Dear Santa,
I really want a baseball cards for
my brother I know that he hasn't
been the best but he loves me and
I love him to. And I also really
want glitter for my mom because
she loves crafts a lot also some
new clothes for my Dad because
he has holes in his clothes. Also
a posit for my BFF Lucina, also
maybe a sketch book. Thank you i
know it is a lot
Taylor

Dear Santa
I want a tennis mario game for
Christmas and a big butterfly

posit. I also want a phone for
school. I want all of those things
because it would be so cool if I
could have them
Laciana

Dear Santa
I want a PS5 please because I
don't have any and can you make
me a jack for it and a fortnit gift
please
Alex

Dear Santa
I want a PS5 another one because
I has a lot of games and I want
a nether games and an =XBox
series
Sloan

Dear Santa
What I wold like for Christmas
is a iPhone 12 and a computer,

more cloths I would like. And
I would like elf on the shelf to
come to my house.
You are the best.
Aannette

Dear Santa
I think I have been working really
hard on math and stuff and I was
thinking I could get legos, cars
and traks, okdales nintendo and
the lego harry potter clock tower.
Thank you
Max

Dear Santa
It is Easton, how are you and
Thank you for the scooter. I have

Letters

Continued on page 4



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Holidays*
from
our family to yours!

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Letters

Continued from page 3

been good most all year. I have been treeing to be good all year. I'm proud of how gook I am at reading I am working on being kind.

Love Easton

Dear Santa
It's Braden again. I have been good in creating and math. I want rokitleg and a phone and a hrt gun
Love Braden

Dear Santa,
Im Masen. how do you get through the dor. Thank you for the rest lastyer because I have ben

good because I have ben good at math and I have ben good at writing. I am proud of my family. I'm working on school.
Masen

Dear Santa,
It's Adrienne,. how have you ben last years. I know this year I've been kinda good. Ive been wok very bad at math this year id like a Ken doll, chelsea doll and barbie doll.

Love Adrienne

Dear Santa,
How do you deliver gifts to kids last year. I got legos and a gum ball musheen. I'm on the nice list because I help my sister cause she can't see. I'm proud of new friends, I can do my math. I'm

working on doing by writing.
Oren

Dear Santa,
I'm Colin. how do you make so many toys in thet many days? I want a four wheeler, I'm on the nice list because I helped my dad. I'm working on is math this year, I would like hot cheetos for Christmas.
Colin

Dear Santa,
I want for christmas a big barbe home and legos.
Gresia

Dear Santa
i would like a phone and a computer. Why? because I have worked super hard in school. Like a cull days ago In math I was tired and wanted to stop but I did not I finish it so I could do art. My teacher said if we did not finish math we can not do art.

Dear Santa
For Christmas I want a model of the solar system and a toy rocket ship also a asternout costume. Why, because I swept the floor for my mom and did the dishes this year helped my baby sister and I gonna do the dishes this are but not the knives.
Alfredo

Dear Santa,
I think I desrv presents because I have try my best like wen I do not understand math. and I have dry my best in Schoooooool!!!!!!
Olarabelle

Dear Santa,
i would like a new pet bunny and

I deserve it because I helped a poor man who needed money.
Aabrey

Dear Santa,
I am Lucero. I want a hult bouord I disrv it because I am writing you at school. I am working hard on writing and raidn and math. I have been working on not to get mad at sum kids on my bus.
Lucero

Dear Santa,
I would like a golden retreivr because I think I werekt reel hard on school with doing plus and takeaways. I also want a new phone because I think I have ben doing by best on reeding.
Lexie

Dear Santa,
I want a hot wheels track and a chrome book.
Beau

Dear Santa,
For Christmas I want an dog and a kitten
Piper

Dear Santa,
I want a hamster and mini Brands shop with toy mini brands. I also want a VR head set
Paige

Dear Santa,
I want a PS5 and a contooller
Vinny

Dear Santa,
I want a Lego Star Wars and a

Letters

Continued on page 5

Wishing You
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CHRISTMAS

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Letters

Continued from page 4

nintendo switch.
Jase

Dear Santa,
I love toys, I had 100 toys but we got rid of some. I want a treasure X toy I had one but my did took it and it was my first one.
Rtty

Dear Santa,
For Christmas I want a puppy and an iPhone. i want a Tesla Kasllen

Dear Santa,
I want a baby dog and switch and pretty tstickers, nice pens and nice stuff, any stuff.
Shayla

Dear Santa,
I want a new tablet. A mega. New backpack, more stickers an Childrens book
Iris

Dear Santa,
I want a dog and Hi Santa and a Ppton and a hamster and roller skates and RodLx Pls
Keira

Dear Santa,
I want a baby cat and want a box of donuts and a studhnum exulto.
Mayine

Dear Santa,
What I want for Christmas is...
A VR headset, a costume of a

calico cat with a mask but it covers your entire head, a ton of Pokémon cards, a ton of cute stuffed animals and a ton of Roux a cat, a puppy a horse and all cute animals.
Sydney

Dear Santa,
Can I please have a Santa hat? And a robot for may mom and I was good.
Henry

Dear Santa,
I have been good this year. I would like rainbow high secret diary and barbie plane.
Anna

Dear Santa,
I wantt a barbe and a scion bok

and a Santa hat. And an rainbow high and a pokémon pies and a Ken Barbe please.
Natalie

Dear Santa,
I ant a nintendo game card. A fox hoodie, rainbow high dolls. A art book, squishy, Hello Kitty Plushys.
Bellina

Dear Santa,
This year I have been good. Could I please get \$1,000 roux gift card and a winter dress, headband and pants and a huge candy cane. Plus a hair set and games fro my nintendo switch
Giada A.

Dear Santa,

have been good this year, I would like a redo collection pack.
Kaleb

Dear Santa,
I want a monroe plush big sonic.
Eddie

Dear Santa,
I have been good. I ant a santa hat please and a board game and clothes and boot please and paper and carrel please and book all kind like bad kitty christmas snowman
Bianco

Letters

Continued on page 6

Dr. Tracy Solis, DVM Dr. Jennifer Witt, DVM
Dr. Mark Witt, DVM

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Christmas Eve &
Christmas Day

Letters

Continued from page 5

Dear Santa,
I know that I have already written you. I'm just asking how everuhings going so how are the elves doing, Rudolfs's nose still glows? Please write a letter back and put it under my tree
Thanks, xoxo

Dear Santa
How is Dasher and Dancer.
Can you get me a hover board and a VR headset with controllers. Please and thank you.
Jensen

Dear Santa
I love to make sum cookies for you Santa, I love you.
Jay

Dear Santa,
Can I please have an Xbox I will love it. So please can I have Playdough?
Danika

Dear Santa,
I love you so much. I am going to make you sum cooked. What is your verve cookies? just send it cad to me. Love Charlie. Love Santa see you on Christmas s
Eve Ho Ho Ho.
Callie B.

Dear Santa
I want an automatic nerf gun

for Christmas. I'm the best in the class at math. I know yxy its 16 and $16+16=32$ and $32 \times 3=96$ and $1020 \times 2=2040$ and $2040 \times 3=6060$ and 8010 decided by $1046.46 = i$ don't know. That one but I'm good at math.
Cody

Dear Santa,
I really like by elf snowball. He hides in funny places. Yesterday he was on the wreath on the laundry room door. He is funny,
Love Peter
Dear Santa,
I've tried to be good all year. I've eaten almost all of my dinner and I think I've been good and I've nice to people and my elf been keeping a good

eye on me I thing? But? I've been really wanting a juver-bord so I aded a huver-bord and I really wanting that really bad so can you get me that for Christmas!
Love, Sierra

Dear Santa,
I have ben good. I wish for Pokemon cards.
Colt

Dear Santa,
Santa Love me Santa hat is Red, I love Santa to Love to Santa, love
Kaythlan

Letters

Continued on page 7

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staff and volunteers wish you a
very merry holiday season and a
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Letters

Continued from page 6

Dear Santa,
I've been good this year and
I want a pair of sneakers for
Christmas. Santa I've been really
good.
Jolene

Dear Santa,
Santa you are the best. Thank you
for the press, I love you
Jack-Tillamook

Dear Santa,
I have been so good I hope you
come.
Orie

Dear Santa,
Can you come to my house is
it snowing can you bring me a
shake Ples. How are the randar
doing
Ryder

Dear Santa,
I hop that one day I will get a
nutter puppy.
You're frend
Avery T.

Dear Santa,
It's Logan M. I nevr rot to you So

today is the day. I hope you take
care of and fede the reindeer.
Logan

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas. the thing I
want a tell u, books, pet the cat
books and I want this to be send
to the north pole.
Lalla

Dear Santa,
I hop you have a mis Christmas.
Thank you for the presents. Last
yer. I love you Santa, I hop you
fil up my stoking and my dogs to
and my cats to. I love you I hop
you make it.
Elizabeth

Dear Santa,
I want a XBoS and gaming chair.
Danny

Dear Santa,
What I want for Christmas is
a cup of arianna grande and a
sweater of arianna grande.
Kevin

Dear Santa,
Thank you for Chrtmas. I hop
you on I us find this yier. I hop
you give me lots of prisints. Can I
have a fight for Christmas.
Love Natalie

Dear Santa,
Want for christmas is three balls
a pink hat and a stuffy cakapiler.
Kaylee

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas, I bet you and
the elves are busy this year. I
want a puppy. I bet Rudolph is so
happy for the big sleigh ride on
the night of the 24th.
Hayla

Dear Santa, I would like 9X
Shot rife nerf gun, also I would
lie to see rudolph the red nose
reindeer.
Skyler

Dear Santa,
Merry Christmas! I love Super
Mario 3D World + Bowser's Fury,
a telescope. a globe.
Aytiden

Dear Santa,
I don't want a present I want to
have the best Christmas and a
snow glob because I ben a good
sister. Oh and tell Jack Frost to
make it snow.
Payton

Dear Santa,
I won't a OXUlis For Christmas. i
have been a gud boy and aI have

dun my chores.
Bryson

Dear Santa,
I want a loch and a tablet. I think
I dererv it because I ben going
gook in school and doing my
home worke.
Josephine

Dear Santa, I love you so much
please for Christmas can I have
slime I know it might make a
mess but it's may dream.
thank you
Cynthia

Dear Santa,
I think I deserve weather ball set,
because I am a good little brother
and I am a hard worker and I am
doing good in school. and I am
nice and I'm a good kid. the end
Mason

'TIS THE SEASON FOR

Gratitude

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The history of Christmas stockings

Just when the excitement of opening presents abates after the last of the packages under the Christmas tree have been torn open, children and adults alike may discover that there are more treats to be had nestled inside of stockings hung on the mantle.

The hanging of Christmas stockings is a tradition with an extensive history. Several legends attribute the hanging of stockings to different people or events. Here is a look at some of the stories that have made Christmas stockings so popular.

St. Nicholas Day

Rather than hanging stockings on Christmas, many countries cel-

brate Saint Nicholas Day on December 6, and this is when stockings are proudly left out for treats. The small, inexpensive trinkets are later unwrapped and enjoyed on Christmas Day.

Dutch heritage

One tradition says that, in 16th century Holland, children kept their clogs filled with straw in front of the hearth for Santa's reindeer to find. They also left treats for Santa Claus. In return, Santa would leave gifts in the clogs. Over time, stockings were swapped out for clogs.

Merchant's family story

A popular tale tells



the story of a merchant, his wife and three daughters. After the wife falls ill and dies, the man becomes devastated and squanders all of his wealth on frivolous things to mask his sadness. When it comes time for the daughters to

marry, the man does not have money for a dowry. St. Nicholas hears of the plight and knows the man would be too proud to accept charity. Therefore, St. Nicholas anonymously tosses three bags of gold coins down the chimney. The man's daughters had

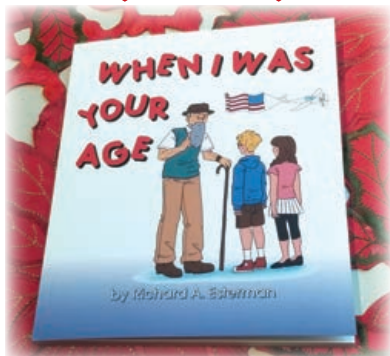
done the laundry prior and left their stockings hanging by the fireplace to dry. The gold landed in the stockings, thus starting the Christmas stocking tradition.

Italian good witch

One stocking story does not attribute the

tradition to Santa, but to a kind-hearted Italian witch named "La Befana." La Befana arrives on a broomstick the night of January 5 and fills the stockings of good children with sweet treats and toys. Bad children are awarded lumps of coal. La Befana is also credited with being the old woman who the wise men ask for directions to Christ's manger in the Christ child's story. After turning down an offer to accompany them, La Befana later carried gifts in search of Christ.

Christmas stockings have become part of holiday traditions, and this beloved tradition has its own unique history.



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How to create a durable gingerbread house

Gingerbread cookies and houses are one of the many symbols of the holiday season, alongside Christmas trees and twinkling lights. In fact, few confections symbolize the holidays more so than gingerbread.

Many a child (or a child at heart) has spent hours carefully trying to create decorative gingerbread houses. Although gingerbread recipes span various cultures, gingerbread houses originated in 16th century Germany. The fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel" helped solidify the popularity of gingerbread, which became part of Christmas traditions.

Even though gingerbread houses can be fun to make, there's no denying it can be exacting work — especially for those who strive for perfection. Prepackaged kits attempt to take some of the guesswork out of the equation, but those who are crafting from scratch can employ these tips as they build their gingerbread houses.

- Go for form and not flavor. Few gingerbread houses ever get eaten, so focus on finding a dough that will bake up rock hard as opposed to one that tastes good.

- Get the right icing texture. Pastry artist Catherine Beddall says royal icing is the preferred "glue" to adhere gingerbread pieces. Beddall says icing should be thick like peanut butter and not runny.

- Mind the dough. Do not roll out the gingerbread dough too thin or it may become brittle after being cooked. Always cut out shapes before the gingerbread is baked. Let the baked pieces sit overnight

to cool completely before using them to build.

- Patience is key. Allow the icing to dry for at least a couple of hours after adhering each piece and before moving and handling the house, says Beddall. Work in stages so that individual items can be decorated and allowed to dry. Then the walls can be put together, followed by the roof pieces.

- Kids likely will need help. Children may not have the patience or steadiness to handle complete gingerbread construction. They can decorate the separate pieces of the house while the components are laying flat, which is easier for kids. Adults can do the main assembly later on.

- Utilize a template. Free-handing may not be easy. Cut out templates using cardboard or posterboard for various gingerbread pieces.

One of the most important tips is to have fun. Don't take gingerbread house making too seriously as a novice. Rather, enjoy the experience and the centuries-old tradition.



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Christmas carol spotlight: Jingle Bells

Holiday cheer is front and center in communities across the globe during the holiday season. This year, celebrants can make this joyous season even more special by singing some of their favorite holiday songs.

“Jingle Bells” is a popular holiday tune that many celebrants might be surprised to learn is more than 150 years old. Written by New England native James Lord Pierpont, “Jingle Bells” was originally published in 1857 under the title “One-Horse Open Sleigh.” Only after a friend of Pierpont’s referred to the song as a “merry little jingle” did the name “Jingle Bells” take.

“Jingle Bells”
(Extended version)

*Dashing through the
snow
In a one-horse open
sleigh
O’er the fields we go
Laughing all the way*

*Bells on bobtail ring
Making spirits bright
What fun it is to ride
and sing
A sleighing song to-
night! Oh,*

*Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to
ride
In a one-horse open
sleigh. Hey!*

*Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to
ride
In a one-horse open
sleigh.*



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or.us/solid-waste](http://www.co.tillamook.or.us/solid-waste)

H64629

*A day or two ago
I thought I'd take a
ride
And soon, Miss
Fanny Bright
Was seated by my
side,
The horse was lean
and lank
Misfortune seemed
his lot
He got into a drifted
bank
And then we got
upshot.*

*Jingle bells, jingle
bells
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to
ride
In a one-horse open
sleigh. Hey!*

*Jingle bells, jingle
bells
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to
ride
In a one-horse open
sleigh.*

*A day or two ago,
The story I must tell
I went out on the
snow,
And on my back I fell;
A gent was riding by
In a one-horse open
sleigh,
He laughed as there I
sprawling lie,
But quickly drove
away.*

*Jingle bells, jingle
bells
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to
ride
In a one-horse open
sleigh.*

*Jingle bells, jingle
bells
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to
ride
In a one-horse open
sleigh.*

*Now the ground is
white
Go it while you're*

*young,
Take the girls tonight
and sing this sleigh-
ing song;
Just get a bobtailed
Two forty as his speed
Hitch him to an open
sleigh
And crack! you'll
take the lead.*

*Jingle bells, jingle
bells
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to
ride
In a one-horse open
sleigh.*

*Jingle bells, jingle
bells
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to
ride
In a one-horse open
sleigh.*

Lyrics written by
James Lord Pierpont
Lyrics courtesy of
Digital Music News

Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus



In 1897, Dr. Philip O'Hanlon, a coroner's assistant on Manhattan's Upper West Side, was asked by his then eight-year-old daughter, Virginia O'Hanlon (1889–1971), whether Santa Claus really existed.

O'Hanlon suggested she write to The Sun, a prominent New York City newspaper at the time, assuring her that "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." He unwittingly gave one of the paper's editors, Francis Pharcellus Church, an opportunity to rise above the simple question and address the philosophical issues behind it.

Church was a war correspondent during the American Civil War, a time that saw great suffering and a corresponding lack of hope and faith in much of society. Although the paper ran the editorial in the seventh place on the page, below even one on the newly invented "chainless bicycle," its message was very moving to many people who read it. More than a century later it remains the most reprinted editorial ever to run in any newspaper in the English language.

"Is There a Santa Claus?" reprinted from the September 21, 1897, edition of The New York Sun:

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of The Sun:

*Dear Editor—
I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?*

*Virginia O'Hanlon
115 West Ninety Fifth Street*

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as



Virginia O'Hanlon

measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence.

We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see

*Dear Editor,
I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says if you see it in The Sun it's so. Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?
Virginia O'Hanlon
115 W. 95 St.*



Francis Pharcellus Church

what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! He lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Is There a Santa Claus?

We take pleasure in answering at once and thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of THE SUN:

"DEAR EDITOR: I am 8 years old.
"Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.
"Papa says 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.'
"Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?
" VIRGINIA O'HANLON.
" 115 WEST NINETY-FIFTH STREET."

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, VIRGINIA, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, VIRGINIA, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Tips for baking better Christmas cookies

Cookies and other baked treats are everywhere come the holiday season. It's not uncommon to give cookies as gifts or arrive at holiday gatherings with cakes and other decadent desserts.

Cookies are a classic holiday treat, and some families even build entire traditions around baking Christmas cookies.

Novice bakers making cookies for the first time may be a little overwhelmed when perusing recipes. Baking is a science, and sometimes it takes practice to get the results just right. However, there are some tips that can help yield better, buttery bounties.

Handle butter with care

Butter can make or break a cookie recipe, as butter is often the glue that holds the cookie together. Therefore, it is key to follow the directions carefully regarding how to handle butter. Smithsonian.com says to leave butter at room temperature for 30 to 60 minutes to properly soften it. This takes patience, but fiddling with butter too much can damage its delectable integrity. While purists may say butter is best, margarine may be acceptable if it has a high fat content; otherwise, cookies may spread

out and flatten.

When it comes time to cream the butter with sugar, be sure to do so thoroughly to incorporate air into the butter and remove the grainy texture of the sugar.

Measure flour properly

Measuring flour the right way can ensure cookies come out right. The Cooking Channel says to spoon the flour lightly into a dry measuring cup, then level it off with a knife. Do not dip the measuring cup into the flour or tap the knife against the cup. This will pack too much flour into the measuring cup and result in dry, tough cookies.

Slow down the eggs

Add eggs one at a time to make sure each will emulsify properly with the fat in the butter. Adding eggs en masse may cause the emulsification to fail.

Chill out

Follow recipes that call for chilling cookie dough carefully. This process is important for making sliced and shaped cookies. By chilling, the dough becomes more malleable for rolling and even slicing.

Use a bottom rack

Too much heat may compromise cookie integrity. The food experts at Delish say to try moving cookies onto a lower rack in the oven if they aren't retaining their shape when baked. Put an empty cookie sheet on the top rack. That

will block the cookies from the most intense heat that rises to the top of the oven.

Mastering cookies takes a little patience and some trial and error. Once bakers get their feet wet, Christmas-cookie-baking becomes even more special.

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