

THE GEMINI PRESENTS THE GEORGETOWN SENIOR'S CENTRE CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

A holiday visit from the Jolly Old Man, himself

BY ELINOR SAMUEL
Special to The Gemini

As a family, my husband, Les, and our two younger daughters, Rowena and Janice and I took part in a neighbourhood Christmas party.

Our daughters, aged ten and nine, respectively, having realized Santa was just the spirit of Christmas, were

recruited as elves to be Santa's helpers at this party.

Leading up to the day of the party, parents of the children dropped off gifts at the host's house. They were then put into Santa's sack, so each child would receive a gift from Santa at the party.

My husband was asked to be Santa, which he accepted with great pleasure. He was a

natural - jovial with a natural love of children.

As the guests arrived, the children were escorted to the recreation room in the lower part of the house and were kept amused by Santa's helpers. Rowena and Janice were now feeling the importance of their responsibility on this occasion. There was great anticipation in the air.

Les and I joined the adults at the party and stayed long enough to register our presence. Then we quietly left and drove home to affect the transformation to this larger than life persona - Santa Claus. Les kept in touch with the party very frequently by walkie-talkie to let the children know the progress Santa was making and when he could be expected to arrive.

Finally, all dressed, the sack of toys in the trunk of the car, we took off around the corner to the next street where the party was taking place. I let Les out of the car about a half a block from the party so that he would arrive fresh from the frosty night, and would look hale and hearty with his even rosier cheeks.

Alas, when I let him out of the car I took off - toys and

all in the trunk of the car. Les was distraught! So he proceeded to run after the car banging on the trunk yelling, "My toys! My toys!"

I realized what had happened and stopped. After some giggling and apologies, Les, still on the walkie-talkie, arrived at the party to a roaring welcome.

Santa was seated on a large chair with his sack of toys beside him.

A sea of eager faces watched his every move. The children gravitated towards this great man hardly believing that they were actually in his presence. Some rushed forward, eyes as wide as saucers, others, a little more hesitant, while others were completely overwhelmed and dissolved into tears.

Santa took each child by the hand. He talked to them

about their wishes for Christmas, and what they wanted Santa to bring them.

After each visit Santa dug deep into his bag of toys and found a gift with their very own name on it. The awe and wonder on each precious face was unfathomable! How did he know?

Very gently receiving their gift from Santa, they quickly went over to their parents' side to share in the opening.

As the presents were being opened, there were lots of squeals of laughter and delight, with paper and ribbons tossed every which way.

Suddenly Santa quietly stood up and waved a cheery good-bye to everyone. As quickly as he had come, he was gone, but what an afterglow he left.

There was a silent sigh of satisfaction from everyone.

Santa's Coming Early

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AWAY IN A MANGER: Youths gathered to pet animals at Maple Aveune Baptist Church, Friday. The animals were part of a live nativity scene. (Jamie Harrison photo)

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