

One of the most famous newspaper editorials of all time has to do with Christmas. It first appeared September 21, 1897, in the pages of a leading newspaper of the day, the New York Sun.

Virginia O'Hanlon, eight years old, was torn between the doubts placed in her mind by playmates and her own sincere belief that each Christmas a jolly old man came to help spread joy through the world. To settle the matter, she posed the question to the editor of the Sun.

Francis Pharacellus Church replied as follows:

"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: dam 8 years old Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claw. Papa saysolf you su it in its bun its so."

> Virginia O'Hanlon 115 West 95th Strate

"Virginia, your little friends are wrong, They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensive 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.

Pleas tell me the buty is there a Santa Clares?

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

"Not belive 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 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 faries 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 what makes "the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, not even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside the curtain and veiw and picture the supernatural beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else more 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."





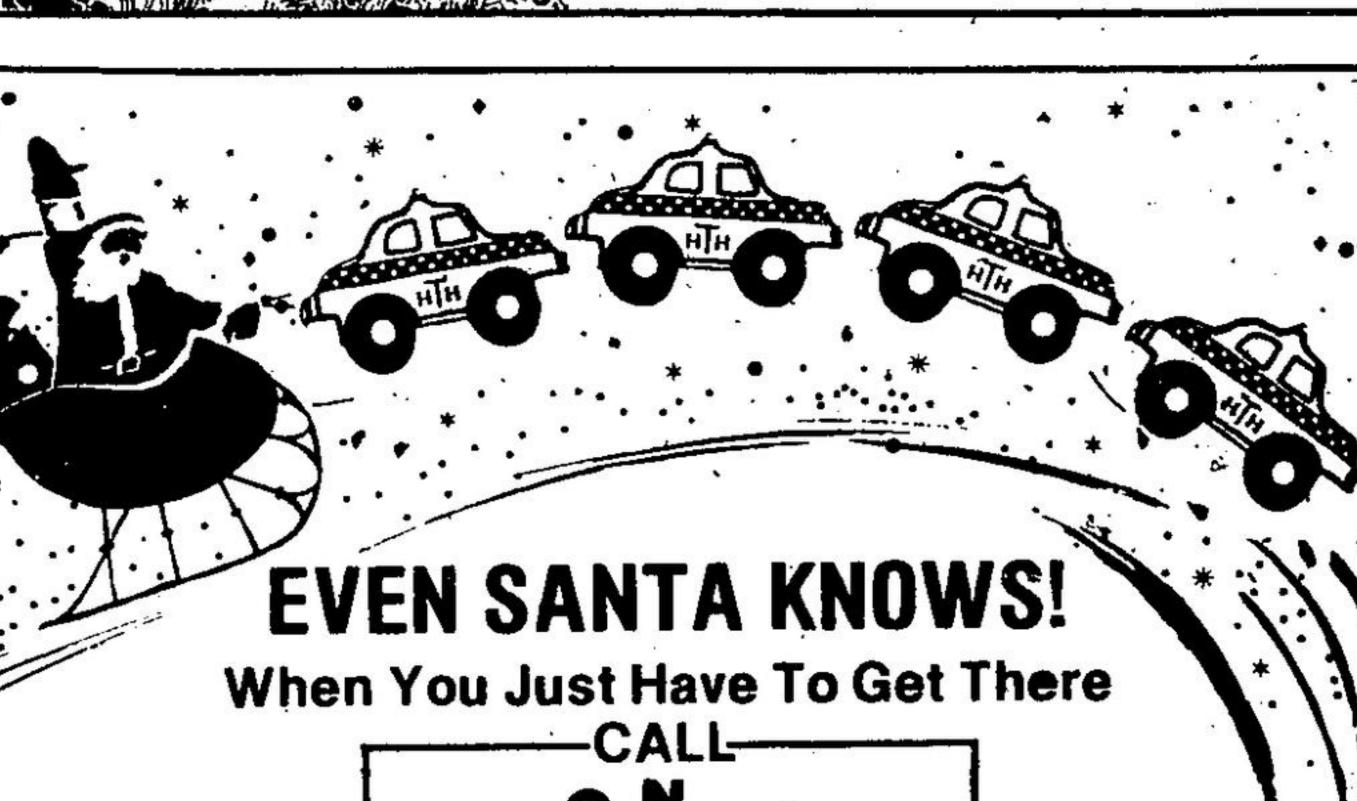
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