

OPEN LETTER FROM SANTA

By Fred Hobbs

Each Christmas I get letters from millions of boys and girls from all over the world. They ask for presents of all types...toys, bicycles, dolls, doll houses, new electronic gadgets, sleds, skates, a puppy, maybe a new baby brother or sister, the list is endless.

The elves, Mrs. Claus and I do the best we can to fulfill these requests, but it is getting more and more difficult. That is why I am writing this open letter, not to the children, but to the adults of the world. I need your help!

The process of delivering Christmas gifts to good little children used to be fairly simple. We would get our requests through the mail that the reindeer would deliver on the sleigh piled high with letters. But recently the North Pole Post Office announced it was closing on Saturdays from now on. Elmer, the elf that supervises the pick up of all of our mail says he often has to wait hours to find an available clerk, no matter what the day. He says some folks say it's so slow it ought to be called "snail mail". Consequently, the elves have to work under extremely tight deadlines to get the work done.

Orlo, the elves' union steward is threatening a slow down or even a work stoppage if the situation doesn't improve. He says it's a global economy now and my workshop has to adjust to the times through new technologies.

And, there is another global issue. I have noticed as we've been flying the past few Christmases that the moon on the breast of the new fallen snow now leaves less of a luster of daylight below. That's because there is less snow. And most experts say the cause is global warming. Will the day come when the sleigh only works up in the air and not on the ground?

I've listed just a few of the problems I face today. It appears, though, that I am going to have to deal with a number of 21st century conditions if I am to continue making my appointed rounds without disappointing moppets all over the world.

Knowing we operate world-wide, I always thought we were doing just fine in serving all the youngsters for all these years. But, I guess I was just old fashioned. I promise to adjust to the world of computers, satellites and global positioning devices.

I hate to bring it up, but while the problems and conditions I have cited certainly need to be addressed, I have personal issues, as well. Mrs. Claus keeps reminding me that I'm not getting any younger. Part of my contract with the world's kids is to keep my round tummy and my distinctive ho-ho laugh. The wife tells me I need to lose weight and that my laugh doesn't sound quite so sincere anymore. And, I have no one with which to discuss a salary increase. The unique position I hold prevents me from ever

being replaced, and I am pleased that almost everybody agrees that is fortunate for all concerned. Therefore, regardless of the difficulties involved, I pledge to continue my traditional work of bringing joy to the world's children.

That said, I repeat my entreaty stated at the beginning of this letter. I need your help this Christmas and Christmases in the future. Stop having wars. Behave like the adults you are and, especially to you world and national leaders, don't get involved in anymore scandals. Stop cheating. Stop lying. Don't be so greedy. I know I'm a Pollyanna (that's a requirement of my job), but please do your part to help me give everyone a better world this Christmas and Christmases to come. Please! Merry Christmas.

Sincerely, S. Claus