

Another Perspective

Written by Lori Pankonin, The Imperial Republican

Santa creates interesting emotions

Ho! Ho! Ho!

Such is the language of one jolly bearded guy who wears a red suit with white fur around the cuffs and collar. You find him here, there and everywhere this time of year.

Years ago . . . decades ago, my mom bought a life-sized Santa to greet those who entered the newspaper office. He sat in front of the front door at night and turned many heads with his real life look.

Good old Santa rotated amongst our four newspaper offices from year to year, creating stories to go in the memory banks. My brother-in-law drove a right-hand-drive car as a rural letter carrier. Imagine the trips down the highway when Santa was perched in the front seat on what is typically the driver's side.

Saint Nick caused some double takes from other vehicles on his transports to different towns.

One year the all-gal Grant staff managed to move Mr. Santa to the bed of their boss. Imagine her exclamation when she came home late at night to find such a creature under her covers. Yikes!

Yes, Santa became the brunt of many jokes. Another year, one of the Wauneta staff continually expressed how Santa spooked her when she walked in the office. Arrangements were made for the community Santa to replace the stuffed model one day. So Kerry walked in the door, again making a comment about her not-so-favorite figure when Santa jumped at her.

Now that could seriously jolt the heart. It was meant as a joke but I can only imagine how it

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about crossed the line of whether it was funny or not.

Another vision I have of our stuffed Santa is the time I found him leaning back on a chair with a hat over his face, legs propped up on the desk. It was indeed snooze time after another year-end progress issue of the paper was printed.

I'll have to say I don't recall children wanting to jump up on his lap. Rather, they kept a distance and expressed caution.

Isn't that a rather common reaction from children with this guy who's built up to be so great? We attempt to protect youngsters from strangers and scary situations, yet we expect them to be thrilled at sitting on the lap of this big hairy stranger. Then we walk away to take a picture. Go figure.

My grandson was but a toddler when he was with me at the office months after Christmas. He acted frightened and was looking around cautiously. He pointed out that there was the chair Santa sat on. Where was Santa?

Oh my gosh. That was indeed the chair that we used for Santa. He had obviously paid very close attention to the detail of this particular holiday figure.

Much like our own lives, this stuffed Santa has aged. Yes, he's seen his better years. In fact, he stayed in the storeroom this year, rather hunched over. I'm sure he could come around with some attention, some new stuffing, some work on the plaster hands.

Actually, that's a pretty true life situation for all of us. Age starts being nasty if we don't focus on maintenance and improvements.

We enjoyed family time at the home of my brother and his family over Thanksgiving. Santa was appearing downtown that Friday night. How exciting for the kids! Or not.

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Three-year-old Tayvin had absolutely no interest in going. “He scares me,” she exclaimed and no suggestion of making a request for a present changed her mind.

Austin, on the other hand, was eager to make a visit. His mom had told him she did not want him to get a certain electronic game. She wouldn't have to worry about it if he asked Santa.

I was quite impressed that he took heed to his mother's wishes. But he became quite stressed as we waited in line to talk to Santa. “What am I going to ask for?” he exclaimed.

My sister told him how sometimes when her son doesn't know what to ask for, he asks for a surprise. And that's just what Austin told Santa he wanted. A surprise.

Even though Jesus is the real reason for the season, it is fun to watch the sparkle that Santa can create. One of my favorite Christmas ceramic figurines was one I saw in a mountain shop years ago. It portrayed Santa who removed his hat and knelt with a bowed head by the manger where the baby Jesus slept.

And I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight, “Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.”

Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas!