

A Letter to the Editor:

Dear Editor,

Its that time of the year again when it's up in the attic I go. Like a child waiting for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve with great anticipation, I frantically search for my Christmas display pieces with thousands of feet of lighting I use to decorate the outside of my home each year.

As I fight with the cobwebs and the intense heat of the attic, my eyes fix upon my favorite mentor standing over in the corner, propped up by only a small red and white mailbox with the words "Santa's Mail."

As I draw nearer, I notice that the heat has been exceptionally hard on his painted surface. His face has more lines than the years before and his six-foot plywood body is starting to bend at the waist. His shoes are splitting and fading with age.

As I gently move my good friend, I also notice the bags of mail addressed to Santa from the years past. As I view the bags of letters, a deep inner feeling overcomes me.

I start to drift back to the years before when after playing Santa for the children I would bring Santa's mail into the house and place it on top of my antique desk. With quill pen and ink ready to go I would sit down long after the family retired for the night and begin to open each letter. With the first letter in hand the long night would begin, as i will not stop until each and every letter received has a response.

It has been known to into the wee hours of the morning, for not all letters are as simple as "Hey Santa, give me a car, boat, Game Boy and some other good stuff, and oh, ya, I love you."

Many children ask for things that are out my reach and force me to search deeps inside myself to find just the right words in response.

Like the letter I received from an 8-year old girl who wrote, "Dear Santa, I cry a lot, my baby brother died. I wish for you to give all my toys to him in heaven. Love..." On her letter she drew a Christmas tree with lights and a makeshift coffin with a cross on it. After many hours and many more tears, I wrote in response. "Even Santa Claus cries sometimes," and "Yes, I will do my best to do what I can for you. Love, Santa"

The following year this same young lady came up to me while I was again playing Santa and thanked me for giving her brother toys in heaven. I must ask myself, "Was I right or wrong?" In my heart I believe I was right to respond in the way I did.

On the average, I receive up to a thousand-plus letters on December for Santa. There are so many such as this one, that force me to reach deep within myself. I often wonder if I have to reach deep within myself, how far must these young children reach within themselves to ask Santa for help, not for presents, but for understanding and love.

I am very fortunate to be loved by so many, whether I am playing Santa or just walking down the street.

Whenever I feel that I am getting too big for my britches, I take a trip to the attic where i keep those oh so special letters.

So take some time out this year, spend some time with your children. It will be a gift more valuable than anything money can buy.

Bruce McGuy
San Jose