

village view

by Andrea Leonard

They're arriving by the dozen now, more coming every day. The brightly-wrapped box sitting on a chair in the lobby of the post office is bursting its seams.

Sometimes a whole family of youngsters arrive at once, herded into the building by a somewhat harried young mother, with lists of all sorts flying from her pockets and purse.

Letters to Santa are an important part of the season's activities, and giving Santa a hand is one way we adults become caught up in the Spirit of Christmas.

Because Santa's busier this year than he was last, and because last year was his busiest ever in all written history, it's gotten to the stage he's looking for more and more help at the local level, and that's how I happened to get a peek at some of his mail.

Letters to Santa from children up and down the Cape have somehow arrived at our Osterville substation.

A little girl writes, "Dear Santa, this is what I want for Chismas. Umbrella, stroller, Nugget the horse. Thank you very much. P.S.: I will leve milk and cookies on the tableble."

Another little girl assures Santa she's been a good girl all year long and hopes he'll bring a quick curl miss America and Ballerina Barbie. "Have a happy Mass" she writes, "and tell the raindear and Mrs. Clause I said Hi."

Both boys and girls sign their letters Love. One boy has his order in for a green machine, shoes with springs on the bottom, and a flashlight.

Another asks for a skate board, a leather jacket and legos for himself. "Or if you can't find them," he says, "give me a surprise." His sister wants Lincoln Logs and a bouncy ball and he says she is trying to be a good girl. They think Santa should surprise their baby brother, too.

Girls, more than boys, tend to start their letters with a concern for Santa's well-being, but they produce longer lists than their brothers.

One asks Santa, "How are you?" before launching into her dreams of gifts. "I want for christmas a calculator for me and grandmother, and a real alive hapster with a cage a camera a desk a calkboard with calk and colored calk. a telephone a dishwasher and dryer and doll clothes and bottles and lipstick and eiy shadow and some stuff for Mom and Dad. Tell all your elfs I say high and Mrs. Claws."

The boys come right to the point. "Dear Santa, This Christmas I'd like the games beat the eight ball connect four and headayke, for other toys I'd like a modle space 1999 monster makeup potery craft star trak cumunachatoers mach box bridge and highway set. That's the end. Merry Christmas."

Another writes, "Dear Santa, I would like the two doctor kits in schwartz. Love."

One little boy is apparently somewhat conscience-stricken since he begins with the assertion, "I am going to try to be good this year, so if you think I was good enough this year and decide to bring me presents, here is what I want."

And a little girl states confidently, "Dear Santa Claus, I have been a very good girl this year. Please bring me a yoyo, some books, a puzzle, a bag of oranges, a stuffed animal, some markers and some socks. Thank you very much. I will leave you something to eat and drink."

Most of the envelopes are addressed to Santa Claus, North Pole.

One envelope bears an afterthought message, "Can we be Pen Pals? Please write back."

Inside, the youngster says, "I don't want to be selfish but I want the biggest and easiest box of magic tricks, and the most is a Horse, if you can get me one."

One letter looks like this:

Dear
Santa
If I am
a good
Boy Pl
ease
Leave
at my
House
Evil
Knevil

Another says, "Dear Santa, please bring me a baby alive with a spoon and a bottle and a new baby carriage. Thank you." I had forgotten how all-powerful Santa really is!

Many of the children's letters contain enclosures. Most of

Dear Santa
I want a calculator?
anda record player.
anda Guitar, and a
teddy Bear. Hope
You Have a nice
Christmas

these are beautiful portraits of the jolly elf himself. Some, however, are illustrations of other symbols of the season.

Pictured are Christmas trees, decorated and surrounded with wrapped and ribboned gift boxes, and winter scenes with sleds speeding down snowy hills and with skaters gliding over frozen ponds.

Reindeer leap over housetops and draw sleighs well-laden with bulky-looking pouches and a be-sooted fellow with lots of white beard is dressed in a red suit in one rendering.

The pictures the children have sent are a form of expression that's more familiar to them than the written words they've labored over.

You can see the effort that's gone into their letters to Santa Claus; when the spelling is queer to our eye, it's entirely clear to our ear. And to make certain Santa really looks and really listens, the children send him pictures because they know, just as the Madison Avenue boys do, "One picture is worth a thousand words."

And children know something else, as well; no one — not even Santa Claus — can resist a picture of himself!

Talk about psychologists! Talk to kids . . . talk to kids at Christmastime. They're 'way ahead of the guys with the Ph.D.s and they're only six, going on seven. The age of innocence.

My foot.

Oh, yes, they still believe in Santa Claus. But don't believe for one moment they're innocent. How about this letter?

Dear Santa Claus, I want matchbox cars. Was Santa Claus Is Coming To Town true? I want you to write a letter



Dec. 5th 1976

Dear Santa
~~Chas~~ I want a
alive Kitten and I
Will take Care

Of it. and I want a
Chockolet Santa too, and
my own tape. and I
want a Book with blank
Pages so I can draw in it.
and I want a Doll from
Hawaii. and I want a
Dimond ring. and I
want a ~~Soft~~ Goldfish.
I can not have Enoy more
toys case I Have a
small House.

Hugs ☺ Love + XXX Kisses

back and say if it was, Okay?"

Of them all, though, I'm charmed by the child who has written not one, but two letters to St. Nick. His second begins "I love you. Just U. Forget about my first letter. All I want for Crishmas is Ricker Shay Race as Siderman set Mission to Gamma 6. 2 Rekords. Sand me a leter."

This guy KNOWS he's talking to a friend.

On my way back from the North Pole (where I went to help Santa answer his mail), I thought of YOU.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!