

# Christmas traditions

Some many moons ago, my wife decided to extend the Christmas season by just a little bit. Not to overwhelm the season, but to take the "I want" stage out of oldest child. We had the advent calendars, but they just seemed to bring on that inner consumer that my oldest daughter was (is???)

My wife decided to celebrate St. Nicholas Day. We told the story of St. Nicholas and how he eventually became known as Santa Clause. We also told how he gave to the people in need, not everyone. I like to think that this got more of the spirit of giving in our girls, but I never asked them. Anyway early on Dec 6 we would investigate our Christmas Stockings. The very first gifts of the season.

As parents we would put in a small gift that would take some attention away from the other getting. There would be fruit, candy and a Christmas Ornament from Grandma.

We carried on this tradition for many years. I know at least two of the girls (maybe 3) still celebrate the day. I hope it is the spirit of giving, not getting.

This is the 6th Christmas Season without my lovely wife by my side. A time mixed with dark thoughts and bright lights. With only my youngest at home, this may be one of the last time St. Nicholas visits this house. The traditions are changing as life changes.

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# On the way to the show.

It started off so well. I was leaving just a bit early so I could get some gas and other necessities. Oops, a mile from home I noticed that I forgot my boots. Important item for the play, so I had to turn around.

Back out for the second time, still early, but without as much leeway, I heard a funny noise from my truck when I turned a corner. Thinking I had something stuck, I got out and noticed that my tire was flat. ARRGH.

No problem, I have AAA... I called my daughter to say I would not be able to pick her up and got out my AAA card to call for service. Dang it expired in November. Why don't I remember the bill. I must have missed it.

Not to worry I can change a tire. Oops no flashlight, I couldn't find the jack!!! I couldn't see to change the tire. The countdown to the play was running fast. Call my daughter to pick me up!! Slowly move the truck to a safe location. And hope nobody tows the truck away before I could get the tire changed.

Show turned out well tonight. My oldest and youngest daughters were in attendance. As much as I love having friends in the audience, it is special when I get to entertain my family. Unfortunately, I was not able to spend as much time with them as I would have liked. I still had a tire to change.

Found a light, a jack and the lug wrench. A few chilly minutes later the temporary spare was in place. I was ready to go home for a cup of warm tea.

Tomorrow is another day, and I will have to see if I can find someplace to get some tires before the 2:30 show. So now I know what Santa is getting me for Christmas. I don't recall asking for that.

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# The Holiday Season Can Now Begin

I have seen *Miracle on 34th Street*... not the 1947 classic, not the made for TV redux, nor the most recent big screen treatment. Tonight, I treated my sister and her two little angels to a live production. I absolutely **LOVED IT!** The entire cast was magnificent... from the smallest child, to the briefest cameo, to the big guy himself. The set was a stroke of genius. The entire production flew by. Everything that makes the classic film such a treasure was in place along with a few added bits that were pure delights.

Since purchasing the tickets on-line Tuesday, I had been overwhelmed by shrieks of anticipation by a certain 6 and 4 year-old. Finally, the night arrived and I treated everyone to McDonald's before going to the theatre. A miracle in itself was that the girls actually were done eating BEFORE the time I said we had to head out.

During the show, Sydney was on my lap the whole time and was totally enthralled by the magic on stage. Alyssa, on the other hand, was asleep before intermission. After going down to the "confession" stand (as the 6 year old calls it), Sydney began to share her M&Ms with Megan and I. How cute was that? And on the other side of me, Alyssa was again sawing logs.

After the show in the reception line, I told the girls to go sit on Santa's lap but they wouldn't... until I apparently moved down the line. I didn't see it.. I saw some fans in the audience who asked why I was not on stage and I put in a plug for a little show coming up in a mere 5 days. **I CANNOT**

**WAIT!!!!**

Once again... brilliant job one and all. You created the Christmas spirit in everyone in the audience and made us all believe. **BRAVO!** My favorite part as it is in the movie... I just love the little Dutch girl who hasn't a friend but sits on Santa's lap and they begin singing a song from her native land.

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## Miracle Squared

Our weekend began with the likes of a Christmas play to which we took our two oldest daughters. The play was Miracle on 34th Street, and we were a little up in the air about bringing our 5-year-old because we want to milk the Santa thing as long as possible – we didn't want to put ideas in her head about 'not believing'. But when it came time to go, we felt too badly to leave her behind, so we had a nice half-family outing without the little ones who wouldn't have been able to sit through the entire show.

At the play, I was really having a great time. We ran into more than a few friends, and the seasonal cheer of the almost sold-out audience emitted a wonderful family feel. The first act of the show was thoroughly enjoyable; everything was so cozy and Christmas-y, and I couldn't wait to see how Kringle finally proved himself to be authentic (I haven't seen either version of the movie). Unfortunately, some unnecessary drama taking place at intermission almost ruined the entire show for me. I was so upset that I could barely pay attention to the second act. But as I sat and seethed – and I don't think I've ever been so angry while literally just stuck sitting in the middle of a crowd with no where to go and no way to vent – I

began to come to terms with the situation and to actually feel sorry for the person who'd completely overblown a simple misunderstanding and hurt my feelings with her unbecoming actions. How incredibly sad that her negative attitude cast a cloud over what must have been such hard work by so many to pull off a show of this magnitude. During the second act, I was thinking about what I was going to say in my blog to vent about it, but now that a few hours have passed, I really don't need to share all of the ugly details. As if by miracle, I am completely at peace with the situation – I'm usually not the type to just get over something without hashing it out with the person. The bottom line is, I truly believe I handled the situation the best way I knew how, and I'm going to pray that the other person can find peace as well.

So all that's left that needs to be said is, congratulations to those of you who were involved in Miracle on 34th Street; everyone that I know who was involved and who reads this blog did a really super job! Keep up the great work, and best wishes for the success of the rest of the run of your show!

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## **Family Time**

This morning, Mom and Dad and I went to pay our respects at the funeral home. None of us could go last night so we went for the gathering before they processed to the church. We KNEW that the rather small church would not hold many people and with 10 children, 38 grandchildren, and who knows how many great grandchildren, there would not be many places available for other than very immediate family members. I was hoping to catch Britt there but she must have been running late.

After, we returned to watch Elizabeth play basketball. A riot

watching the young girls begin to develop. Autumn was great although she missed a shot and her mother yelled "**USE THE BACKBOARD!**" Yep, definitely her father's daughter ☐ . I thing Elizabeth did more sliding across the slippery floor. More than once, she got the ball and OOPS... whistle blows and traveling called.

I was also asked if I would like to get tickets to *Wicked* coming in April. Of course... most musicals are worth at least a try.

And tonight, I am taking my sister and two young ladies to see the [Santa Claus](#) play. They have been asking, and asking about it and finally it is almost here. I must say that I am pretty excited myself.

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## That's IT!

I've **had** it with my sleep problems! I don't usually have trouble falling asleep, but that's probably because I don't even start trying until midnight or later. Sometimes I do have trouble falling asleep, and even if I can fall asleep easily, I usually do not stay asleep all night. Not that I remember any of the several or many times I wake up each night; I'm usually in a stupor where I'll say things that don't make sense or say not-so-nice things to the dog or anyone else who happens to be in my way. The main problem is that I wake up in the morning feeling terribly under-rested, never ready to start the day, and the problem has been getting steadily worse in recent weeks. I rarely get headaches, but because of the stress of my horrible week compounded by the not sleeping, my head has been throbbing all week (the extremely loud live band at youth group did NOT help!). I've

tried going to bed earlier, I've tried limiting my food and drink intake at night, I've tried taking naps when time allows (which is rare), and I've tried taking melatonin (an herb found naturally in the body that helps promote sleep), but nothing is helping. I just can't take it anymore; it's impossible to make my long busy days of caring for 4 small children enjoyable when I feel so tired all the time. My husband stayed awake for a little bit and listened to me sleep last night, and he said that there were times when I stopped breathing, which is a symptom of sleep apnea. So, as much as I hate to do it and don't even really have the time for it, I've made an appointment with the local sleep specialist who just happens to be our children's pediatrician. We'll see what he says next week, but chances are that I'll get sent over to the sleep center for a sleep study – YUCK. Just what I want to be: a lab rat; the subject of a study who has to find a way to fall asleep in a room with a bunch of people watching and while hooked up to all kinds of machines. This is just about one of the last things I want to do, but it shows how incredibly desperate I am to finally get a good night's rest. If they can actually help me, feeling well-rested is going to be an amazing yet totally foreign feeling! If it doesn't help me, I'm back where I started but with one less option AND having missed out on a fun night with my family ☐

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## **New Baby!**

Made you look! Did you think I was going to say we were awaiting the arrival of our 5th child?

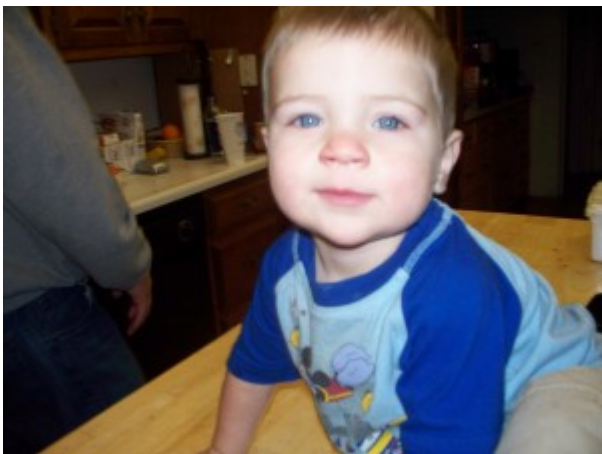
No such luck – probably wouldn't declare it for the first time on a blog anyway. I just wanted to share my son's first

professional haircut that made everyone joke about him being a different baby – although “toddler” is a much more appropriate word here than “baby” – my son is all over the place, and the haircut made him look SO MUCH older! He’s really cute with the haircut, but why do they grow up so fast!?! These pictures were taken only 4 days apart.

BEFORE:



AFTER:



# Toboggan... t-o-b-o-g-g-a-n

Just found out that my nephew, Joshua came in second place in his school's spelling bee putting him on the next step to the National Bee. As you might have guessed, he misspelled toboggan. As his father so eloquently pointed out, Joshua did not inherit his spelling and grammar skills from him. Definitely his math and computer knowledge.

I just am curious as to when they started taking the top two finalists on to the next level. I would have progressed not only my 8th grade year but at least my 5th grade year when the champion and I went back and forth until I finally incorrectly spelled *illegible*. My sixth grade year, I had an unfortunate slip of the tongue when I put a *g* in pajamas (still remember that). I do not remember how far I got my 7th grade year nor do I remember the word I won on my 8th grade year... go figure.

Anyway... good luck Joshua in January.

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## New Edition

Ok... play on words. [\*It's a Wonderful Life\*](#) is about to get even cuter. I know that this has been planned for a while, but tomorrow night will be a rehearsal for a children's choir that will perform prior to curtain time... if there are any eavesdroppers who have elementary-jr. high students who would be interested (6pm at the Huber Opera House. Now if we get 100 kids there, we know who to blame ☹). I think this is a brilliant move! It will not only provide LIVE pre-show entertainment, but will hopefully fill even more seats. I have already been approached by people in E-town about what show I am in this Christmas (if any). I immediately exclaim

that I am the sinister Mr. Potter (not to be confused with the boy wizard). Many people from the numerous churches in town (so many for a town this size... long story that I will not get into) have apparently been making plans to get groups together. Nothing on my own church, but who knows. I had at least 3 customers today who are making plans!

We also have an extremely gifted artist in the cast. Our own George Bailey has produced at least one painting depicting a scene from the show that I am assuming will be on display and signed pieces will be available for purchase.

I cannot tell you how excited I am to be part of this GREAT show and the fun and wonderful cast and the director and [producer](#) ain't bad neither ☐

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## **Ish a show, now get outa my way.**

[A Miracle on 34th Street](#) opens this Friday and we definitely have a show to come and see. This was not always apparent by the number of people we had drop out and then had multiple recasting of the actors involved. My first entrance in the show was to be as the Drunken Santa who gets fired from the parade. While I still play that role, I have another part in the opening scene.

We have a great cast, wonderful crew and excellent director. I get to be on stage with a few of my favorite people to work with. We have new faces and quite a few young faces. Be sure to get your reservations early. I've heard them talk about it on the local station and I only listen to about 20 minutes in the morning.

I get the evening off tonight, so I get to get some of the things done that have been waiting for just such a moment. Short post, but I will be busy soon.

Come see a show...