

Christmas Letter, 1981

Montgomery, Illinois
Christmas, 1981

Dear Friends and Relatives,

There's a crackle in the air, and cracks are forming in the furniture as winter slides sneakily around our house and empties our humidifier. Ah, winter! The piano goes out of tune, the gas bill skyrockets, and the cats get zapped on the ears when we try to pet them. The sun and the thermometer are both at lowest ebb, and the car either won't start or gets plastered with road salt if it does start.

How lucky it is that our most beautiful holiday comes at the beginning of our bleakest season. Without Christmas to abate our chagrin at the dog-freezing temperatures and the cow-covering snows, we might all move to Florida and cause it to sink into the sea. The beauty of Christmas is that even in the coldest of weather, it can glow warmly within us like a log in the fireplace. The wind won't blow it out, the snow won't quench it, and darkness only makes it glow more brightly.

And how fitting it is that the warmest person in the world, Santa Claus, is said to live at the coldest, uppermost spot on earth--the North Pole. When we let the Santa Claus spirit, which lives at the top of everyone's inner world, come down the chimney into our hearts, we experience a gift within us that we can share with everyone else. No one gives Santa Claus a gift, because Santa Claus *is* the gift. He is the personification of the Christ spirit that is struggling to be born in all of us, not externally in the crowded inn, but internally, in the quiet solitude of the stable.

May your Christmas be filled with warmth and mirth and beautiful gifts--but especially full of the Beautiful Gift.

Sincerely,
Alan Harris