

Dear Santa: all I want for Christmas is a and a



Indecision registers on little girl's face as she prepares her requests for St. Nick.

Photos by Ron Pozzer

By KRYSZYNA JONES

Children all over the world wait in apprehension for jolly ol' Santa Claus to make an appearance, whether it be here, in the States, Holland or Switzerland. Our merry friend does not always go by the name Santa however. He changes from land to land to fit traditional customs.

In Holland, a delightful annual event takes place Dec. 6 of each year known as the Feast of Sinterklaas. It also falls on St. Nicholas' Calendar Day. Sinterklaas does not own a sleigh, nor does he drive a team of reindeer but travels around on a milk-white steed with his servant Piet, a grinning fellow with a birch rod. When emptied his sack full of goodies is large enough to carry any naughty children.

Custom has it that the gentleman, who lives in Spain, records the behaviour of all children in a big red book. After mid-November he and faithful Piet mount the horse and the three board a steamship for Amsterdam harbour to kick off the St. Nicholas season.

While this is going on, Father Christmas accompanied by his wife Lucy

(representing St. Lucy whose feast day is Dec. 13) distribute gifts in parts of Switzerland. He is apparently garbed in the traditional Santa outfit while Lucy wears a round cap over her long braids, a laced bodice and fancy apron.

In the central area of Switzerland, St. Nicholas is represented in his bishop's regalia complete with mitre and crozier. On the saint's day, December 6, there takes place a magnificent parade in which white bearded masqueraders, clothed in white shirts carry huge three-foot mitre-shaped lanterns over their heads.

In certain Swiss villages, the men and boys go "Santacising." Some wear red traditional costumes with jingling bells, while others, dressed and masked as "ladies" wear enormous elaborated picture hats decorated with panoramas of Alpine scenes. The group then travels through the village sharing in everyone's festive joy.

Canada, with its international flavour, holds a little bit of every country's beliefs in its midst. As the saying goes, the more the merrier.



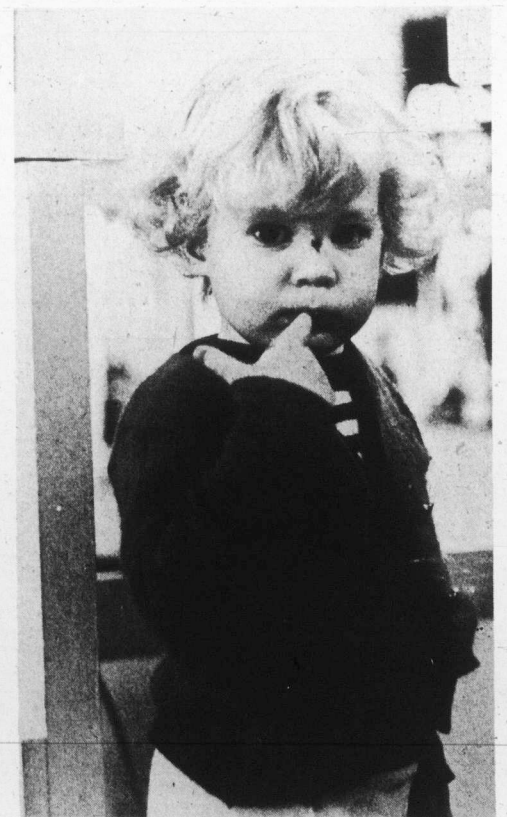
Now, all you have to do is go up, sit on his knee and tell him what you'd like for Christmas. Mother at Sheridan Mall tries unsuccessfully to convince son to make trip to Santa's knee.



Mmm, that tastes good. Prize for being a good girl in 1974 is a candycane.



Square One's Santa listens patiently to tiny visitor as he reels off Christmas requests.



Well, its either a train or a Big Jim. Wish I could make up my mind. Dubious youngsters goes through mental checklist before popping onto Santa's knee.

The Mississauga Times

People and Events
Business
Real Estate
Classified