



Beard, Belly, and Boots

Santa vs. Santa

By Cassie Turzy

What makes Santa, Santa? Is it his beard, his cheery chuckle, his "Ho, Ho, Ho!" his Helpers, or his North Pole? For years Santa impersonators have been nurturing the dreams of youngsters during the holiday season.

It is tradition to hunt down Santa to give him a list of the desired items. Everyone has memories of sitting on Santa's lap.

"When I was younger I remember going to the castle in town to see Santa, or as I found out...my uncle. It's sad but true." said ACHS senior Phil Bednar.

“
Santa looked as if he was pulled off the set of "A Miracle on 34th Street."
 -Sara Raffone Shopper
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Santa is an essential part of commercialized Christmas. He is at the center of holiday publicity.

"Santa represents the greed of the holiday as opposed to the religious side, which has



Photos by Liz Whitehurst
Antioch youngster, Brian age 4, asked Santa for a guitar "with strings" for Christmas

red suit.

The Antioch Santa is most proud of his beard. The returning castle provides a real atmosphere that keeps kids coming back each year to the Antioch Santa.

The Antioch Santa enjoys the cheery atmosphere, but said the best part of the job "is inter-mingling with the children." He felt it is his position to spread, "good will and joy" during his term as Santa.

Woodfield provided a scene with big snowy trees surrounding Santa's home where he sat upon his sparkling glass chair. Mrs. Claus greets the waiting children with a warm smile. Bustling shoppers pass with a startled look upon their faces, amazed at the arctic atmosphere. Besides the North Pole the Santa was convincing North Pole and a Santa out of a movie.

Observer, Sara Raffone said, "Santa looked as if he was pulled off the set of *A Miracle on 34th Street*."

She spoke the truth because when asked about his occupation the Woodfield Santa said, "I am Santa! I remember visiting my grandpa when I was younger, awaiting to take his place."

This Santa was by far the best in appearance. His convincing personality accents his pleasantly plump belly filling the red suit proudly.

According to him, he doesn't have a best feature; this is true because the sum of all his characteristics makes him the best Santa.

been lost over the years." said Bednar.

It is vital to the survival of this Christmas spirit for Santa to be convincing. Santa's attributes must create an atmosphere to keep kids believing. The question is, what feature is most important?

"Definitely his beard, the beard makes or breaks the Santa." concluded Bednar

The Santa's at Gurnee Mills, the castle in Antioch, and Woodfield were all visited to find the best Santa in the area.

Gurnee's Santa was a disappointment. Though his helpers are intent upon spreading the holiday spirit his surroundings are lacking.

The Gurnee Santa has been in this business for a while and said, "I have enjoyed all 21 years of being Santa Clause."

He enjoys the presence of the children. The kids' reactions proved his success in authenticity. Sadly, this Santa pulls up the rear in the competition.

Santa's castle in Antioch hires a new Santa each day. This one was talked into it by his "helper." All appear to be as authentic as the original man in the



The Antioch Santa tries to spread "good will and joy" to the good boys and girls



Santa's Castle remains in his "Enchanted Castle" until December 21



What's on your list? **Toys!**



2003's Hottest Toys accompanied by flashbacks

By Cassie Turzy

"Tickle Me Elmo," Pokemon, Giga Pets, Furbies, What do all these things have in common? They have all been coveted toys during the holiday season. This year there are seven hot items on the lists of kids.

Yu-Gi-Oh cards, though popular last year are back this year. Trading cards and card games are a huge hit.

Care Bears have crawled out of hibernation this Christmas. They were first popular in the 80's and have returned to spread care, each with a symbolic task.

Beyblade battle tops are big. Kids can build custom tops and launch them at their opponents in battle stadiums.

Strawberry Shortcake is making Christmas a fruity play land. Another character from the

past revisits the season with cute dolls, clothes, backpacks, and more.

Bratz dolls give little girls the "passion for fashion". These bigheaded dolls such as Cloe, Jade, Yasmin, Meygan, and Dana are back to put a smile on the face of every family's little girl.

Lord of the Rings figurines are as big as the movie. With the final Lord of the Rings movie, *The Return of the King*, a box office hit everyone wants his or her own Frodo to take home.

Past or present, one will find stressed parents raging through malls to find popular toys for their loved ones.

Photos courtesy of : www.playalong.com, www.hasbro.com, www.playhouse.com, www.MGAentertainment.com, www.upperdeck.com