

## ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

Last Saturday night I talked with Santa at the Municipal Auditorium Christmas tree lighting ceremony. I've known Santa for many years, and those who don't believe in Santa don't know what they're missing. He's a great old guy. Many who came to the tree lighting sat on his lap, but I didn't. Old Saint Nick is still looking pretty spry, and there's that special twinkle in his eyes and he still has that natural bounce in his step.

I asked him how it was going. "Ho, ho, ho," he chuckled. "Great, Little Bobby." (He still calls me that, even after all these years.) "Ho ho ho! After talking to my sources around town, I hear you've been a good boy, and a bad boy. Ho ho ho! But I like you, Little Bobby. So tell me, what do you want for Christmas? And don't ask for another skate and bike park. I'm still trying to keep up with all those big kids and little kids for skateboards and bikes. My elves are tired with all the back orders. But thanks to Dax and Betsey at Greenline, Kevin at Earthspin, Renee at the Dirty 5 Thirty, and Tambara at FKO for helping us out. Ho ho ho!"

"Gosh, Santa," I replied. "I just happen to have a list for you. And I'm really going to try to be good next year - I'll make sure I get all the permits that I'm supposed to."

"Ho ho ho, Little Bobby. I've heard that before," said Santa. "I'll be watching you close next year. Now back to your list. Go easy on me. I'll do what I can, but it took me 12 years to help you get Riverbend Park. Ho ho ho!"

I began to read off the items on my Christmas wish list. "Well, Santa, the thing I really want most is park impact fees for the District. We've waited a long time for them."

"Gosh, Little Bobby," answered Santa. "That's a big one, but you do really deserve them."

"Next, we really need funding for the soccer fields at Riverbend Park. There are so many children who are involved in Oroville Youth Soccer and need a place to play."

"Ho ho ho!" Santa said with a jolly laugh. "I know - I've received so many letters from little boys and girls telling me how much they love soccer and want soccer balls for Christmas. And I've received letters from their moms and dads telling me how much they want to see Riverbend Park be the home for Oroville Youth soccer."

I continued on with my list. "And, Santa, we really need a veteran's memorial park to honor all those who fought for our freedom and gave their lives for our country and the whole world."

I thought I saw a tear in his eye as he answered, “Yes, Little Bobby. Oroville has waited too long for a veteran’s memorial park.”

He paused for a moment to wipe the tear from his eye and then asked, “Is that all? What about the Bedrock Park tennis courts? You know how much I love playing tennis in the off season.”

“Well, Santa,” I said thoughtfully, “Now that you mention it, the tennis courts really do need to be resurfaced and the lighting replaced. But if we get impact fees, we can make those kinds of new improvements.”

“Santa, I know this is a big list, but I really hope you can help us. You’ve always come through for me before, even when I forgot to leave out your milk and cookies.”

“Ho ho ho, Little Bobby,” Santa replied. “That is a big list, but I’ll see what I can do.

“Oh, and one more thing, Santa,” I said. “I really, really, really want a motorcycle. But, an i-Pod will do.”

All the kids got to sit with Santa and tell him what they wanted for Christmas. When I looked up a little later, I saw Santa pulling away from the roof of the Municipal Auditorium in his sleigh. I looked at the wide-eyed children and their smiles that stretched from ear to ear as they waved goodbye to him, and Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, and Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen. But do you recall, the most famous reindeer of all? (ba-bum-bum-bum) Rudolph, of course! And I realized that anything can happen if you really believe.

## FUN FACTS

1. The first state to recognize the Christmas holiday officially was Alabama.
2. If you received all of the gifts in the song “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” you would receive 364 presents.
3. Live Christmas trees can be recycled and used to make sand and soil erosion barriers, placed in ponds for fish shelter, and make great winter protection for perennial flowers.

## FRRPD TREASURE HUNT

Argh! It be dark and gloomy and the storm be upon us. But ahead I can see the land of gold. If ye want to find tha treasure, look for tha diamonds. Argh! But ye better be careful – there be deadlights upon ye, matey.

Fer more information about the FRRPD Treasure Hunt or fer a list of all the clues, talk to the scoundrels at the FRRPD office, at 533-2011.

#### RANDOM THOUGHTS

“Oh, Christmas isn't just a day, it's a frame of mind... and that's what's been changing. That's why I'm glad I'm here, maybe I can do something about it.” Kris Kringle in *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street*.

#### FRRPD UPCOMING EVENTS

Come to the Municipal Auditorium after the Christmas Light Parade on Saturday, Dec. 8 for hot chocolate, coffee, cider, and pictures with Santa.

Don't miss this year's White Christmas Talent Show, Saturday Dec. 15 at 5 PM at the Municipal Auditorium.

Join us for lunch with Santa, Dec. 15-16 and 22-23 from 10 AM-2PM at the Municipal Auditorium.

Ho ho ho! See you in the parks!