

# Slipper's Soliloquies

## *The Joys of Christmas Past*



By Fred Slipper

The old saying is "Christmas is for kids," and I believe it. We enjoyed the Christmas season when our four children were growing up. Our daughter was only a month old for her first Christmas, so this one didn't mean too much to her, and I was overseas during her next two Christmases, so she was four before I really knew what Christmas with a child was. After I got home from the service our three boys were born, so from then on Christmas was fun. The year when each one finally had to realize the true facts about Santa Claus was kind of sad, as it meant they were growing out of a very happy phase of their lives.

This reminds me of my experiences with Santa Claus. My brother Armine was 12 years older than I and my sister Lorna 9 years older, so by the time I was old enough to know what Santa Claus was all about Armine was away to school and only came home on the holidays. In those days Hamilton High was accredited for advanced learning only for the freshman and sophomore years, so Lorna went her last two years in Sedro. In those days this meant living with a Sedro family, the Devons, during the school week, so I only saw her on week-ends.

So Christmas, when everyone was home for a number of days, was a big time for me. Our home in Hamilton had (and still has) large windows in the living room, facing west. As Christmas Eve drew near Mom and Dad, Armine and Lorna, would all tell me to watch out the window for Santa. I vividly recall the year Lorna asked me to go to her bedroom upstairs and help her carry some presents down. Innocently I went to help her, and while we were up there I heard a lot of noise down stairs, some one hollering "Hoo hoo, have a Merry Christmas," and on the way down the stairs I heard the front door slam. By the time I got there Dad said "Santa has just been here and didn't have time to stay as he had to get on to the rest of the homes on his route." I was crest fallen and vowed not to leave the living room next year if I had to wait all night. So the next year rolled around, and I'll be darned if I didn't bite again and was upstairs when Santa arrived. By then I was getting old enough to realize something might not be right about this Santa business, but I didn't want to give up my belief in him.

However, by the next year I sadly had to admit I knew the true facts about Santa, so no one even tried to get me to go upstairs. Such is the pain of growing up....

But now our four children have grown into four happily married couples and eight grandchildren, so now I can be Santa Claus. The old saying is "It is better to give than to receive," but this is kind of hard to explain to a child. Now that I am on the giving end instead of receiving, I am beginning to realize what it is all about.

**So a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of my readers.**