

So, here we are again. Waiting. Waiting for Jesus and Santa to arrive on Christmas.



Waiting for Hanukkah, waiting for Kwanzaa, and waiting for a better, brighter, New Year. Pretty soon, we will be receiving the credit card bills we would rather wait for and never receive, piled on top of our property taxes due to the county on January 15.

The other day (and I don't know if it happened during a quiet walk, or while I was listening to an NPR news segment on the season's cooking traditions) the word simmer popped into my head and stayed there. I like the word. It is a fun word to say out loud because of the combination of the S and Mmmm sounds. And the word simmer harkens the idea of slowing down, even stewing just a bit. It is how I want to handle the month's build-up to Christmas. I want to slowly savor the sights and sounds of the holidays, and simmer in my expectation of Christmas morning.

But there is still this waiting thing. Waiting in grocery store checkout lines, waiting in department stores, and waiting on-line for the next screen shot to pop up as I cyber shop, trying to avoid waiting behind real-live shoppers in real long lines. Children will be waiting too. They wait for their chance to sit on Santa's lap and ask for the presents they hope to find under the tree on Christmas morning.

I entered this Christmas season troubled by many things – unemployment, health care, sickness, violence and war – our regular menu of nightly news. In the middle of one midnight clear, I had the idea that I would like to get in line, and wait for the chance to get on Santa's lap to tell him what I want for Christmas. Instead, (and probably a better alternative to a middle-aged woman climbing on some stranger's lap in a public place), I decided to write my Christmas letter to Santa a little early. I believe the post office is backing away from helping Santa answer his letters this year, (they are troubled by many things too) so I thought I would send it out via my column in The Lowcountry.

*Dear Santa,*

*I hope Mrs. Claus, your elves, and you had a great year. It's been a little rough below the North Pole, and so, maybe the first thing I'd like to ask is that if you have any influence on how Baby New Year is raised, make sure she takes lots of vitamins to grow healthy and strong, and teach her a few things about generosity and being jolly – the stuff you know so much about. Like you, I need to lose more than a few pounds. So for me, I would like to ask for the willpower to stick with an exercise and nutrition program next year. Maybe you could stick a few bucks in my stocking for Weight Watchers, or I could use the money for a personal trainer. I need all the help I can get.*

*I have been worrying about a lot of things this past year, and so many of the things I really want aren't for me, but for everyone.*

*I want peace on a healthier earth.*

*I want the dignity of work for men and women all over the world so that food and housing can be earned and enjoyed.*

*I want the sick to be cared for – properly.*

*I want thoughtful, wise, cooperative, and exemplary leadership.*

*I want every person, at any age, to have the opportunity to learn.*

*And I want every person instilled with a loving morality that transcends religion, because whatever Higher path we are following, at our core, we know the difference between right and wrong, love and hate, good and evil.*

*A couple of other things on my list:*

*I'd like to learn Spanish.*

*I want to finish writing that book I've been working on for a few years now.*

*I want to be a better daughter, wife, friend, sister, aunt, co-worker, and neighbor, and I want to be a better child in the eyes of God.*

*And I want to quit worrying and trust more.☐ The worrying isn't solving anything.*

*That's it.☐ That's my list.☐ For now.*

*Thanks Santa.*

*I know I have asked for an awful lot, and I don't mean to be greedy.☐ I have probably asked for too much, but I really believe that if you ask, you will receive.☐ I may not get the answer or gift I was expecting, but you have never really let me down.☐ Some of those dresses you left under the tree when I was a kid weren't always what I would have picked out for myself, but that reminds me of one more thing.☐ I would really like everyone to be warm and clothed.☐ Will you do that?*

*Anyway, be safe.☐ I know you'll have that Star to guide your reindeer and I'll be listening for your sleigh bells.*

*I love you,*

*Vivian*

Until Christmas, I'll just keep simmering in the expectation and longing of the season. I'll also be doing a little shopping and wrapping a few presents. Maybe, I'll print this letter and leave it for Santa beside a plate filled with my husband's homemade fudge and some carrots. One can always hope, right?

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