



Tom's Message Board



What I want for Christmas

As a kid I remember the excitement and almost painful anticipation for Christmas morning. My sisters and I would wait up all night (well, maybe we slept a little) listening for the sounds of the reindeer on the roof, then we would scramble to the living room to see what treasures awaited us under the brilliantly lit tree strewn with silver icicles! And treasures there were...baseball gloves, dolls, stuffed animals, games and easy bake ovens. Santa had truly read our letters.

As a father, it was with a different kind of excitement that I watched (and still do) my own daughter Abby anticipate Christmas morning to see what Santa had left on the front porch (that's another story...but yes we do have a beautifully decorated tree IN the house) for her. One year "black and pether shoes" (patent leather shoes), one year a stuffed horse and as she got older, a new bike. Santa had really come through again! Christmas morning for me now is about time with my "girls"...Sue, Abby, Lucy (pooch) and Eli (kitty), homemade apple strudel, hot chocolate, and the stockings that we fill for each other brimming with small gifts, chocolate, and silly expected and unexpected treats!

Over the years with my own family, other traditions have evolved like our *Holiday Year in Review* letter to family, friends, and relatives, recounting the highs, sometimes the lows, and acknowledging the many people and moments we're so grateful for. As a business owner for the last 20 years I also reflect on how fortunate I am to have such incredible people working with me and wonderful customers – without either I'd have no business. Santa has been very generous to me.

For this holiday, my 54th letter to Santa is short. *"Dear Santa: what I really want for Christmas this year, is to have our troops return home from Iraq an Afghanistan so they can be with their girls (and boys) too, and get back to enjoying their holiday traditions. With 30,000 more troops being deployed, you've got your work cut out for you...but I know you're up to the challenge! I can think of no better gift."*

On behalf of the entire Paw Print & Mail family, I wish you peace, a Merry Christmas and a Happy Hanukkah.

Tom Brassard
President