



Just in time for Christmas

by

Algie H. Mabry, Jr.

One day at my Christmas job, Santa brought down to my station a cargo of presents. Being an employee of Santa's Gift Wrap is fun, despite all the Ben Gay and Absorbine Jr. that has been rubbed on my fingers due to the cramps after wrapping millions and millions of presents.

After seeing the sizes of some of the gifts, I questioned Santa if he was serious about having some of them wrapped.

"Will a large red bow do?" I asked Santa.

"No," he said with a gleam, "these presents are for special people and they deserve a nice gift wrapped box."

Oodles and oodles of words ran through my mind when I thought of the boxes I would need to wrap some of the peculiar, but cute presents. If I wanted to keep my job as the Official Gift Wrapper for Santa Claus, then it was my duty to do as Santa requested.

"Here's the list," said Santa as he shoved tobacco into his pipe. "Please use the best decorative paper you have."

"Well Santa," I sighed, wishing he would not tell me how to do my job, "who do you think these people are?"

"Just do a good job as you have done so in the past," praised Santa, while exiting the door.

"A-l-r-i-g-h-t," I exclaimed agreeably as I opened the envelope which contained the list.

"After wrapping," the instructions read, "these gifts are to be delivered to Elizabeth City State University in N.C. before everyone goes home on Dec. 16th. I know it is rushing you a bit, but I know you will not let me down. Joyfully yours, Santa."

I thought I was dreaming. Santa really trusted me to do this job. I wondered whether it was because of my affiliation with ECSU. I took this job as an honor and placed pride in each roll of paper I selected to wrap the gifts in.

I became tickled as I scanned the list. Some of the gifts were quite humorous. At the bottom of the list, Santa had written a special note. I was to inform him

when I was finished with my task because he had one more surprise present to be wrapped. Putting away the idleness, I quickly began my task.

I did not have a box in stock for Chancellor Jenkins and his family's gift. Their gift was so big that I had to make a box myself. Dr. Jenkins must have been a good person to deserve

this gift from Santa I thought, as I placed the yellow bow on the purple-foiled wrapped box.

"It's not everyday Santa just gives Mercedes-Benzes away," I grunted while attempting to push the box aside.

After that present which came close to taking all of my energy, I thought I would wrap something small. The smallest gift I could find was a check that Santa had written. Resorting to just placing it in a decorative envelope, I

leaped for joy when I reviewed the check and saw who and what it was for. Santa had endorsed a check in the amount of 1.5 million dollars to Butler Hall for renovations. He even asked that a chimney be built so that he won't have to spend his time trying to crawl through the cracks of the wall.

The next present I chose to wrap was for a pretty young lady. I agreed with Santa that this present was for a special person and it deserved the best. Ever since the night of Coronation, Santa has grown fond of Miss ECSU 83-84. I made sure that each piece of tape was placed neatly and that each corner was creased to its fullest, as I wrapped the video of Coronation 1983 that Santa had recorded. Apparently, he must have wanted it to be an everlasting memory for Inez and wanted her to always think of that special occasion.

Carefully placing Miss ECSU's present aside, I had to wipe tears from my eyes. The thought of Santa wanting Inez to remember her dream come true was too touching. After I pulled myself together, the next gift I wrapped, which required me to make another box, was a new dishwasher. I tried to figure out who on campus was in need of a dishwasher and finally it came to me. Once again I had to agree with Santa on his selection of this present which was well needed. The cafeteria was in for a surprise on Christmas morning!

About this time my fingers began going through their usual routine. They all ACHED! I could not stop my job because the

next present I had to wrap was for Dr. Anne Henderson. I speculated as I handled the porcelain Mamma Smurf doll. I even wondered if she would think of it as a bribe if I wrapped it in Smurf Christmas Gift Wrap.

Now down to only three more presents, I found strength to continue my job. Making 4.90 an hour as a gift wrapper was not all that bad! Aware of the circumstances of the Band, once again I leaped for joy but even higher when I saw their present. One by one, one after another, I put the best uniforms ever designed into a box that resembled a storage closet. I thought I would never find a bow large and long enough to go on the box that was adorned with musical notes.

My job now was sort of like a space rocket countdown. I was on my next to the last present when Santa called from his mansion.

"Are you still wrapping?" asked Santa, who had just returned from taking pictures with the children at some local Children's Home.

"Are you crazy?" I threw back to him over the phone, "I only have two more to wrap and could be finished if I did not have to chat on the telephone."

"Just call when you're through," chuckled Santa, who is never aware of what goes into gift wrapping, "but don't forget the special gift."

"Shaga," I screamed as I hung the phone up so that I could get back to my job. Every year Santa comes up with these same old games. It is sort of like a tradition between Santa and me.

Never in a day have I had to wrap an entire room. I heard about painting a room, rearranging a room, or decorating a room, but never wrapping a room. Santa must have been out of his mind, but as a dedicated worker I did my job. Santa had combined all the needed equipment that the COMPASS has so long been in the need of into a nice package.

"Finally, the last present," I shouted as I calculated the number of hours I spent wrapping the presents.

Mrs. Claus is employed part-time as an interior decorator, and I guess that it was her interest in furniture that sparked this gift from Santa. From now on, the lobby rooms of the apartments in the New Complex were to be furnished with Victorian furniture. I was amazed when I forgot to pull one of the price tags off of the leg of the love seat and saw its value as I placed it in a box. Santa spent a pretty good penny for that furniture. I was through. It had been done.

After taking a breather, I called Santa.

"Hello Santa," I chuckled, "this is the number one gift wrapper in all the world. I have completed your orders and am waiting for your approval. Also, when you find time, will you bring the other surprise present down so that I can do such an excellent job as I have done the rest?" You could not tell me anything; I knew that my gift wrapping was the best.

Before I could hardly hang up the phone, Santa had arrived and was pleased with the gifts that I had wrapped for him. Santa pulled out of his red velvet jacket the surprise present that I was to wrap. It really surprised me because I was expecting something out of the ordinary like the rest of the gifts. This present was for the entire ECSU University Family so I knew I had to do a great job. It was a 24 karat gold plaque with "Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year" engraved on it.

Recollecting and hoping that everyone will enjoy their Christmas presents, Santa and myself sat down and fixed ourselves a nice relaxing drink. About to be full of the Christmas spirits, the only thing we both could say was "Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year To All!"



Valerie-- The Parachuter

by James N. Howard, Jr.



Valerie Watson

photo by R.J. Walker



Valerie Watson, 22, is the first woman parachutist in the ECSU Army ROTC Program. A Sociology major with a minor in Criminal Justice, Watson is a Second Lieutenant in the ROTC Program. She joined the program in 1982 and enjoys working with the Army. There is only one other parachutist in the Cadet Corps.

Valerie has won a variety of awards: Science Award, Academic Achievement Award, Advanced Course in Physical Fitness Award, Advance Camp Physical Fitness Award and Parachute Badge.

Valerie decided to pursue the Cadet field because she said, "It is a challenge and something different and I love challenges and adventures."

When Valerie graduates from ECSU she plans to continue in the Army as a Second Lieutenant. She hopes to make the Army her career.

She said, "I really enjoy working in ROTC. Lots of students do not realize the opportunity that they have with ROTC and they're wasting time by not giving it a try."

Valerie said, "Yes, I get scared a little before I jump out; it something that I feel I have to do since I volunteered to do it."

The Cadet Program obviously requires a great deal of courage and you have to know what you want. Valerie said, "I am glad that I chose ROTC and if I had a chance I wouldn't change my mind."

"The main thing to remember when in the air is to keep your feet and knees together to prevent breaking your legs. You have to keep your mind on what you are doing and you cannot be scared," said Valerie.

The Cadet Program is a volunteer program and the parachuters do not get paid. The program could be better if we had more people involved. Anyone interested in an "Advantage" with the ROTC Program should contact Sgt. Greene in the ROTC building.

Congratulations

All CIAA

Marching Vikings

Christmas 1983

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On the yard...

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