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FOR CHRISTMAS
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WILMINGTON, N. C.

Glad Thoughts
at
Christmas
BEST WISHES FOR A GLORIOUS HOLIDAY
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SANTA LEGEND REACHES PEAK

Professional Actor Finds Kids Are Not His Gig Problem

By SAUL PETT
AP Newsfeatures Writer
NEW YORK, Dec. 25 (AP) — The Santa Claus legend was being carried to new heights this year by Dave Ballard, a king-sized Kris Kringle, who stands 7 feet 7 inches, weighs 350 pounds and has dark thoughts about the state of American wit.

Ballard, a professional Broadway giant, played Claus at a Merry Christmas land exposition in New York and, since the show attracted mostly kids, it offered no special problems.

But adults were something else again.

At 42, Dave has accumulated considerable patience, but his resistance was a little thin after a lifetime of hearing such original



AIRLINER TRAGEDY — Among several tragic accidents to airliners during 1947 was this crash of a UAL plane taking off from LaGuardia Field, N. Y., May 29, in which 43 died.

Greetings

To all our friends we wish the merriest of Merry Christmases and the happiest of Happy New Years.

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gems as "Raining up there, Bud?" or: "H'ya, Shorty," or: "Where'd 'ya get the stilts, Mac?"

"Nobody is ever original," says Dave.

On the street or in an elevator, a complete stranger will edge up to the blond, ruddy giant, breathe in deeply and ask a series of questions with the hushed excitement of a man about to discover the secret of life. Such inquiries elicit this data on Ballard.

Neck size, 18 1/2; shoe, 15; chest 52; waist, 48; no, he doesn't eat an extraordinary amount — breakfast is usually two glasses of milk and a sweet — lunch is light or skipped and dinner is frequently a good-sized steak; yes, his bed is custom-built, 10 feet long; yes, his health is good; no, he's not especially athletic; yes, in the movies, he always tries to get the last row back and a seat on the aisle so nobody's view will be blocked and he'll have room for his legs.

And then there's the parlor psychologist who, at every party or gathering, approaches Dave with a solemn expression of the deepest kind of understanding, maneuvers him into a corner and then sends forth prying fingers into the Ballard subconscious. This usually brings the following:

Yes, he enjoys life, maybe more than most, judging by all the unhappy faces around; no, he's not married; yes, he'd like to be; of course, he hopes she's tall; no, he doesn't feel especially cheated by fate; sure, he's un-

happy at times, mostly when he's not working; yes, he's been abnormally large most of his life—he was almost six feet at 10; no, really, honest he says, there are no deep psychic scars, absolutely.

Dave Ballard was born in Commerce, Texas, weighing 10 pounds. None of his family is abnormally large. He went through high school, had a couple of years at Austin college until lack of money forced his departure and then went to work.

All of his employers have hired him for his size. Dave doesn't mind as long as the pay is good. He's been a haberdashery clerk, film extra, movie doorman, part of a vaudeville act, a giant in Billy Rose's "Jumbo," a blue genie in an ill-fated musical, and for various promotional and publicity stunts he's circulated in public places and at cocktail parties, Keystone cop, as Gullivan and an American Indian.

Dave shares a Manhattan apartment with a married couple. Whenever possible, he cooks his meals, not because he likes to cook, but because he likes to eat. He likes the movies, some radio programs, all sports (to watch) and an occasional book. He says he has about three dates a month. He takes a drink now and then and once he had seven cocktails and they didn't even create a buzz, so he figured it would be too expensive to carry the research futher.

Drunks make Dave Nervous. They're always trying to pick fights or get a rise out of him some way to prop up their own complexes. Recently a bar fly started swinging at him.

"I held him off at arm's length," Dave recalls. "He just swung himself out."

Ballard would like to earn a living as an actor but he's realistic. "There aren't many parts for a fellow my size," he says, "although guys are always threatening to write plays just for me—you know, deep psychological studies of the tragedy of being a giant."

As far as he knows, there are only two men in the United States bigger than he is: Jack Earle, 8 feet, 6 inches, a liquor salesman, and Harry Hite, 7 feet, 11 inches, a vaudeville performer.

Dave Ballard's chief concern in life is prosaic—he worries about money.

Christmas GREETINGS

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ONE STORY FIREHOUSE

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—First the smoke-eating fire horses vanished, then firemen's red suspenders. The latest sentimental casualty around two local firehouses is the traditional brass pole.

The buildings, both outmoded, will be replaced by one-story, up-to-date structure which even will contain blowers to dry the wet garb of fire-fighters.

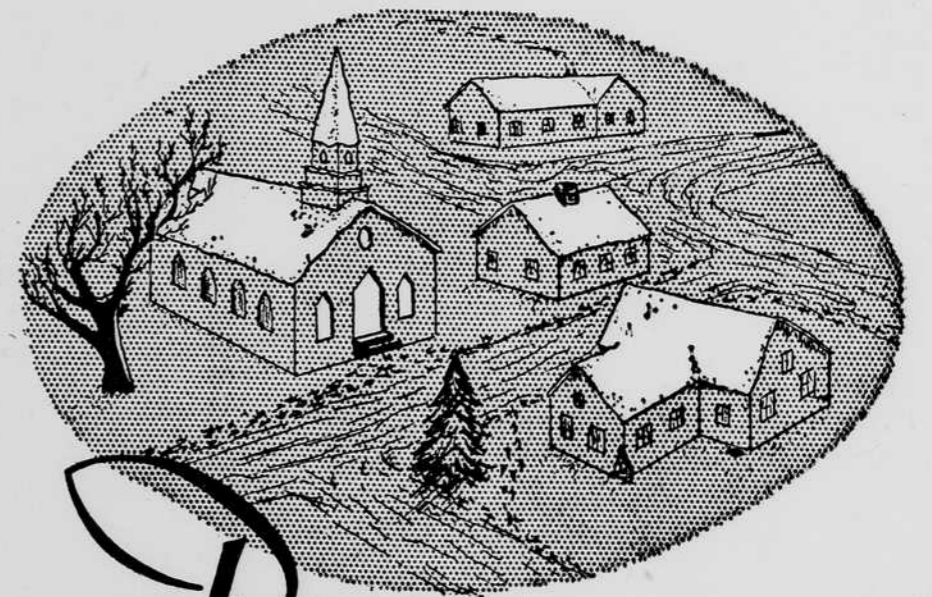
The absence of a second floor will eliminate the need for poles to slide down.

Greetings of the SEASON

We want you to know we are thinking of you and your families at this happy holiday and wishing many good things for each of you.

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ALL THAT IS CHRISTMAS



PEACE on earth... home... worship
freedom... friendships... loved ones... happy
children... the thoughtfulness of those about us
... let's preserve all that is Christmas and what
Christmas really means for all the days to come. And
may all these blessings be yours to enjoy.

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