



The Guide

A Theatergoer's Resource

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The Santaland Diaries

By David Sedaris
 Based on the motion picture written by Jean Shepherd,
 Performed by Wade McCollum
 Directed by Wendy Knox

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About the Artists



David Sedaris David Sedaris was born December 26, 1956, in Johnson City, New York. He made his comic debut reading his *The SantaLand Diaries* on National Public Radio's Morning Edition. David and his sister, Amy Sedaris, have collaborated under the name The Talent Family and written several plays including *Stump the Host*, *Stitches*, *One Woman Shoe* (Obie Award), *Incident at Cobbler's Knob* and *The Book of Liz*. His best selling novels include *Barrel Fever* (1994), *Naked* (1997), *Holidays on Ice* (1997) and *Me Talk Pretty One Day* (2000). David Sedaris taught writing at the Art Institute of Chicago for two years and his essays appear regularly in *Esquire*. His original radio pieces can be heard on public radio's "This American Life". He was named Humorist of the Year 2001 by *Time* magazine and in September 2001, he became the third recipient of the Thurber Prize for American Humor.



Wade McCollum previously appeared at Portland Center Stage as Charlotte von Mahlsdorf in *I Am My Own Wife*, the title character in *Bat Boy: The Musical* and as Lancelot Gobbo in *Merchant of Venice*. Other Portland credits include Balladeer/Lee Harvey Oswald in *Assassins* (A.R.T.) and Hedwig in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (triangle! Productions). In the summer of 2005, Wade played Hedwig in L.A. to sold-out crowds, earning an L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award, a Backstage Garland Award for Best Actor and an Ovation Award for Best Musical. Wade has also worked with the Utah Shakespearean Festival, Willamette Repertory Theatre, PCPA TheatreFest, Oregon Cabaret Theatre and Idaho Repertory Theatre. Some of his favorite roles include Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Jake in *A Lie of the Mind*, Cousin Kevin in *Tommy and Jamie in The Last Five Years*. Wade is a graduate of The Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts in Santa Maria, CA. He is also Artistic Director and Co-founder of Insight Out Theatre Collective which produced Wade's original rock musical ONE in 2005. His first solo album, *Beauty is a Streetlight*, was released in July.

Macy's: Home of the World's Only One, True Santa

by Cynthia Kirk

Although department stores in other cities had had sidewalk Santas, in 1862 Macy's became the first store in New York with its own Santa, on site. Macy's lost no time in heightening the mystique around its Santa, billing itself in holiday advertising as the "Home of Santa," "Santa's Headquarters," etc. By the 1870s, Macy's toy department had tripled in size. The addition of mechanized holiday windows—another R.H. Macy innovation—added to the department store's Christmas allure.

By 1918, family visits to Macy's Santa had become so popular, that two Santas reigned in back-to-back thrones. In 1914, the store launched the Macy's Christmas Parade (the name was changed to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in 1932), its aim being to welcome Santa to town. Santa usually brought up the rear of the parade; once it reached the store, he leapt from his sleigh, climbed a ladder to the center of the store's mid-34th Street marquee, and dramatically unveiled the elaborate Christmas windows. The shopping season had officially begun!

Throughout the '20s and '30s, a special home—usually in the toy department—was created each Christmas for Santa and his elves. It was variously called Santa's Wonderland, North PoleLand, etc. Picture-taking of children with Santa began in the 1940s. With the huge popularity of the movie *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947), people from all over the world came to Macy's and the store became a holiday must-do, like Rockettes or Rockefeller Center.

In 1976, SantaLand became a permanent, year-round fixture on the eighth floor of the store. In 1997, it was rebuilt with a magic forest, a bakery, animated teddy bears, mechanical trees, a sleigh and, of course, Santa's house where elves escort each family to a private session with Santa. In 1978, 150,000 people toured SantaLand; by 1990, that number jumped to 300,000. One hundred eighty people – including 120 elves—work at SantaLand. Elf duties are diverse: in addition to SantaLand, their duties may include working the Christmas marionette theater, or performing in one of two strolling group of singers—the Dickens Quartet or Tree-O, triple singing Christmas trees.

In addition to David Sedaris, celebrity inhabitants of SantaLand include Monty Wooley (New Yorker writer and inspiration for *The Man Who Came to Dinner*), Santa 1944; and elves F. Murray Abraham (actor, *Amadeus*), Tammy Doring (actor, *TV's Popular*) and Tom Murphy (1998 Tony Award, Best Featured Actor, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*).

The overwhelming success of *The SantaLand Diaries*—article, NPR commentary and play—has only increased interest in SantaLand. And, perhaps more significantly according to Macy's, it actually changed its culture. Elves are now better paid, working conditions have improved and the true spirit of Christmas—not just toys and photos—is the first order of business.





How to be a Mall Santa Claus for Christmas Cash

Edited by Ingrid Van Valkenburg

1. It helps if you can develop a good Ho Ho Ho. Forget the nutty Australians. I know it sounds unnatural but you gotta do the Ho Ho ho thing. Kids expect to hear Ho Ho Ho, parents expect to hear Ho Ho Ho. So you go: Ho Ho Ho!
2. You have to know the names of the reindeer. Just try to get that popular Rudolph line down to get them in order and that'll help: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen. Some child will eventually ask their names.
3. You'll need to think fast on some other questions. I got asked: who is your mother? I fumbled a bit, but then said "Mrs. Claus. Not Mrs. Claus my wife, but Mrs Claus my mother." It worked.
4. Expect the occasional child who brings cookies or maybe oats for the reindeer. Just set them aside with appropriate comments. For cookies, just say you'll love to have them later with your milk. For the oats, just say the reindeer will love them, they love oats more than anything.
5. The child may not want to sit on your lap. Go with it. If they show reluctance, I tell them they can sit on my lap or just stand next to me, "whatever you want." Interestingly, most then jump into my lap.
6. Ask their name first. Use it once or twice if you can.
7. Expect some mumbling and soft voices. It isn't important you really hear clearly what they want since your response will always be the same. However, keep in mind that there will be kids who will bring you a written list or who will show you a magazine clipping showing what they want. Use that: examine the picture closely, ask if they have anything similar already, that sort of thing.
8. Do not promise them anything specific. Just say "I'll see what I can do. But whatever you get for Christmas, I'll make sure it's something you like."
9. Be ready to make adjustments to this advice depending on the circumstances, whether you are a guest at a children's party or in public with a line of kids ready to jump in your lap and provide their list.

Retrieved from: http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/458373/how_to_be_a_mall_santa_claus_for_christmas.html?cat=31

Santacon Guidelines

1. Santa does not make children cry. Really, if you see kids, don't do anything to freak them out. Give them a nice smile and possibly a gift of some kind (toys, candy etc). Parents and tourists are a different matter altogether - adjust based on their attitude.
2. Santa dresses for all occasions. It's December. Smart santas wear multiple costume layers. Dress to maximize merriment whether singing Christmas carols in the snow, or swinging from a stripper pole in a hot nightclub.
3. Santa doesn't whine! We will be outside a lot and commuting mainly on foot - bring enough "snacks" to keep your pie-hole filled until we get indoors.
4. Bring gifts: NAUGHTY gifts to give grown ups; NICE stuff to give kids. Throwing coal at people is discouraged no matter who they are. YES THAT INCLUDES POLITICIANS. But giving out coal might actually be appreciated.
5. Watching santa get drunk and rowdy is fun. Babysitting santa while he vomits in an alley is not. Don't be that santa.
6. Make sure you always pay for your beer and tip the bar staff. We want to be able to do this again so be polite and cultivate the goodwill of the local community.
7. Please pay for your drinks as soon as you get them. Santas get tired of waiting on other santas to clear their tab before being able to move on. This entire adventure should be cash only.
8. "No santa's left behind!" - Don't think only of #1. Santa is not inconsiderate of his fellow santas like that. Pick a few people you know and keep an eye out for them when it's time to move to the next location. If you don't see them, speak up so other santas know to wait a moment. Every santa should have at least 2-3 other santas they look out for and 2-3 that look out for them in turn.
9. Stay with the group. It's not just a case of "the more, the merrier" - Santa is safer with large numbers of fellow santas and what one santa can't achieve (or get away with) is a possibility for 50 or more!
10. Dress up! You don't have to dress exactly like Santa proper. In fact, unusual interpretations of Santa-ness are much appreciated, both by those we bring joy to - as well as your fellow santarchists! Elves, reindeer themes etc. are fine as well!
11. Please remember that this is all about having fun.



Most santas like to take their fun with a little alcohol which is fine. What is not fine, however, is getting completely sh#t-faced to the point that santas end up being abusive or violent. Remember that there is no "bail fund" for incarcerated santas and if you cross the line you'll be on your own.

12. Santa doesn't drink & drive and neither should you. If you're going to drink you must make sure that you can get safely home without driving yourself. Check public transport, carpool with a designated sober driver, make arrangements to sleep over at someone's place etc. Organizers sometimes try to coordinate transportation to get santas safely home. Check the message boards and groups for your local SantaCon to find out if this is being done in your area.
13. You MUST address everyone as "Santa."
14. You SHOULD "ho-ho-ho" like Santa.
15. You OUGHT to give out gifts like Santa.
16. You MIGHT want to drink like Santa
17. Santa doesn't talk to the press. Even "Ho-ho-ho" is too dangerous these days.
18. Santa doesn't get arrested—please read [more on this at the website] and then read these guidelines one more time.
19. If you have reached this rule, it means you didn't get locked into a loop reading the guidelines over and over again as per the previous rule. You are therefore intelligent enough to take part in SantaCon!
20. Have a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Retrieved from: <http://santacon.info/About.html>