



# A Day in the Life of a (Mall) Elf

By JENNIFER RUFO  
Staff writer

Wow, another Christmas season is here. I get up at 6 a.m. and put on all my "elfness," like the cute, little shoes, and the cute, little hat with the jingles in the top. Oh, and can't forget the sparkles.

Before I leave, I put some lotion on my cute, little pointy ears that the kids love to pull on so much. It's as bad, if not worse, as them pulling on Santa's snowy white beard.

Speaking of the Big Guy, I'm running late on the first day back in public. No time for breakfast, but I will grab a cup of coffee.

Ok, after getting stuck in horrific traffic I am finally at the mall. My huge overcoat hides everything but the shoes that no one can miss.

I quickly slip into the back entrance and am immediately greeted by the boss himself, Santa. He excuses my tardiness with the twinkle in his eye.

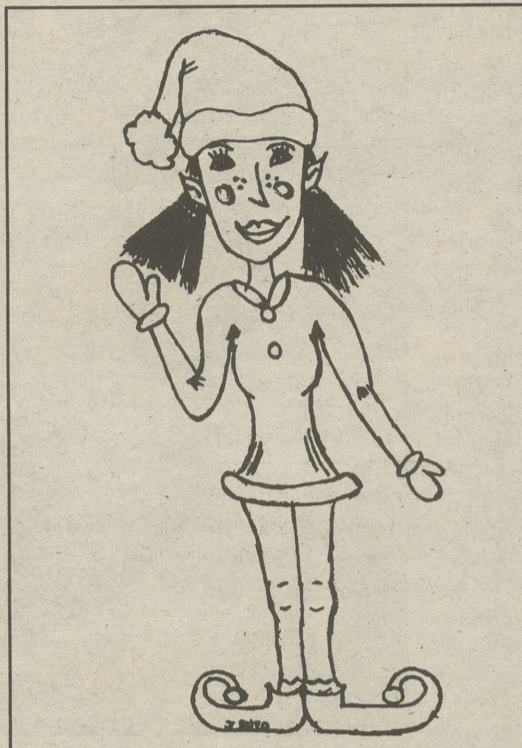
"Ready to go?" he asks me, with a twinge of excitement in his voice. His excitement is contagious as I feel it rising in my stomach. Or maybe that is the lack of breakfast.

As I follow behind Santa, I am happy to realize that he did not mention what happened last night in the workshop.

This annoying person who goes way to far with the whole elf thing got into a paint fight with me as we were painting some toys. We got in trouble for wasting precious paint (apparently there's a shortage) and disturbing the reindeer, including the one with the big, red nose.

Anyway, the kids are already lined up in the center court of the mall and they all become hushed with awe as Santa waves at them and says his classic "Ho, Ho, Ho!" I smile at the first little boy in line who looks to be about three years old.

"This way to Santa!" I cheerfully say and all of a sudden the kid starts to cry. The frazzled mother gives me a tense smile and ushers her child over to Santa who is waiting in his huge chair. Santa works his magic and the boy stops



crying.

The other elf that works the malls with me takes the picture quickly before the boy decides to change his mind about his mood. Sure enough, when the kid's turn to sit on Santa's lap is over, he starts crying again. I look at the line. One down and about fifty to go.

Next in line is a girl of about six years of age. "Are those ears really real?" she asks me.

"Oh yes, definitely!" I say as convincingly as I can before she tries to see for herself. Thank goodness Santa calls her over before she gets a chance to take a mighty tug on them. Most people don't realize that curious six-year olds are only a few inches shorter than most elves and can reach our precious ears with ease.

As the day wears on, I wear down. There are cute kids, smart kids, curious kids, baby kids, cranky kids, and any kind of kids you can think of. They all come to see Santa and tell them what they want for Christmas.

As we are about to leave for the day, one last little girl runs up to me, clutching a teddy bear. I don't see any parent or guardian of hers around.

"Can I see Santa?" she pleads in half-baby talk. Her eyes are filled with tears. I look around for the Big Guy and realize he already left.

Instead of endangering the magic of Santa in this little girl's imagination and dreams, I say, "Well, um, I'm Santa, what can I do for you?" I beckon for her to come over and sit in my lap as I sit in the big chair.

"Santa," she says, her voice trembling, "Santa has a beard and a big fat tummy."

Thinking fast, I say, "Well, I don't have a fat tummy yet because I haven't gone to all the little children's houses to eat what they leave for me at their chimneys. Have you been a good little girl this year? What would you like for Christmas?" She seemed to buy it.

"I want my mommy back." She says, about to cry. "I lost her in the mall."

"Hmm...what is your name?"

"Jessie."

I take Jessie by the hand and lead her towards the fake, plastic reindeer to keep her occupied while I figure out what to do. What do you do with a lost kid?

Just then, a frantic mother hurries over. She hugs Jessie and Jessie looks relieved.

"Thank you Santa!" Jessie cries, and gives me a great, big hug.

I smile at her and watch as the happy pair stroll away. The feeling that came over me was of great happiness for having helped the little girl. She thought I made her wish come true for Christmas.

Regardless of the circumstances, I felt special for the first time as an elf. I eagerly packed up my things and left the mall. I hurried my way to Santa's workshop with a little pep in my step, anxious to make every child's Christmas that much more special because I had the power to do it. Maybe someday I can become a real Santa.



## Yule Tide Pain in the @\$\$: Top 10 gifts to give

By GERRY DUNGAN  
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You sit humming Silent Night to yourself by the warm fireplace, and your kitty is asleep purring on your lap.

Through the frosted windows you see the snow quietly drifting from the peaceful heavens and are reminded of holidays past with all the avuncular friends and family who've warmed your heart with Christmas cheer and gifts.

Then it hits you, like a snowball in the face.

There is less than four weeks till Christmas and you don't know what to get anybody!

Well, have no fear, the Lion's Eye Top Ten Gift Ideas (for good little boys and girls) is here!

Ladies, ever wonder what sort of things guys want? Well, seek no further.

### For the guys

10. Imitation Oakley sunglasses (only \$5) - Smile real

big, they won't say anything.

9. Electric Massager - Because your nails are more precious than his aching shoulders.

8. Watch - So they can't use the poor excuse of not knowing what time it was.

7. Sports Merchandise - Hint: Jordan plays for the Wizards now.

6. Play Station 2 - Whatever happened to Super Nintendo?

5. Dangerous and High-Powered Tools - Make Tim Allen eat his heart out.

4. Cologne - It's less embarrassing than deodorant.

3. DVD player - Plus the hundreds of DVDs to replace his entire VHS collection.

2. Entire collection of

Godfather on DVD - It's a

guy thing.

1. A very warm

"hello" under the mistletoe.

ga for.



Now, for you fellas who are totally clueless, here's a couple of gift-giving ideas your lady friend(s) might go ga-

### For the gals

10. Perfume - Nothing says I love you more than something from eau de toilet.

9. Stress Balls - Just remember, she'll be thinking of you when she uses them.

8. Clothing - One perfect sweater and you're set for life. But take no chances, use with

number 3.

7. Cute Stuffed Animal - Squeeze it and if the stuffing doesn't come out, it's a keeper.

6. Bath and Body Works - Mecca of the women's gift stores.

5. Jewelry - They'll even adore the quarter machine stuff. But you better use with #3.

4. Anything from Victoria's Secret - Just make sure it's the right size (wink, wink, nudge, nudge!)

3. Roses - The "Sean Connery" of women's gifts. Particularly white and red for the holidays.

2. An adorable little puppy - Need I say more?

1. A very warm "hello" under the mistletoe (Best if used with # 3.

