

Polar Express chugs through Lake-Noxen

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

First graders at the Lake-Noxen school took a special trip to the North Pole December 20.

They rode a magical train called "The Polar Express," received candy from elves, saw the reindeer and met Santa, all without leaving their school building.

"The Polar Express" has become a Christmas tradition for Lake-Noxen's first-graders, who each year hear the story of a child who rode the train to meet Santa on Christmas Eve and was given the first gift of Christmas—a magic silver bell.

Organized by teacher Susan Yogodzinski and her husband, John, the "trip" recreates the train ride in the story. The children wear their favorite bathrobes and sit passenger car style on chairs in the school's hallway while a large G-gauge train chugs merrily along a track set up around them.

This year the classes had prepared for the trip by drawing winter scenes which they might see from

the train windows, which were hung in the hallway to add to the atmosphere.

Inside Mrs. Lolly Larkins' classroom, children nervously checked the windows for any sign of the train.

"Is it here yet?" they asked her. Wearing a pretty lace-trimmed bathrobe, Marissa Brooks clutched her ticket tightly as she stood wide-eyed by Mrs. Larkins, nodding "yes" when asked if she was ready for the train.

Willie Barber was concerned that it might be very cold at the North Pole and his bathrobe wouldn't be warm enough.

"It's here! I heard it!" exclaimed Jon VanCampen as Yogodzinski blew his large wood train whistle in the hallway and imitated the "Tss-tss-tss!" hissing of the locomotive's brakes.

"Next stop-Lehman!" he called.

After reminding the children to keep their hands and feet inside, just like on the school bus, Yogodzinski blew his whistle again and shouted, "Next stop—the North Pole!"



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

SANTA'S ELVES—Santa's elves, sixth-graders Mandi Joleen Race and Carolyn Edwards, gave candy treats to Lake-Noxen first-graders during the first grade's annual Christmas program, The Polar Express.

Santa's secret

"I think I know how Santa does it," Matt Harrison said. "He waits until everyone in one state is asleep. Then he delivers all the presents there and looks for another state where everyone's asleep. Pretty soon he's done and everybody has their presents."

Elves (fifth-graders Mandi Joleen Race, Carolyn Edwards and Mandy Jean Race) gave each child a piece of candy while they sang "The wheels of the train go round and round."

When the train stopped at the North Pole, the students trooped into Santa's temporary headquarters in the music room to meet the reindeer and receive a special gift from Santa.

Elves scurried around, busily distributing gifts while the children learned that the story's main character, selected to receive Santa's first gift of Christmas, wanted only one silver bell from the reindeer's harness.

A silver bell was each first-grader's gift, a magic bell which can be heard only by those who truly believe in Santa Claus.

Too soon the Polar Express returned to Lake-Noxen station, and the children returned to class amid the tinkling of pretty silver bells.

Kyle Kozloski poked his head out into the hall for one last look at the train as Yogodzinski began to pack them for the trip home.

"I wanted to see if those are real presents," he said, pointing to the wrapped boxes on one of the cars.

Matt Harrison had more important things on his mind as he stood in his classroom's doorway.

"I think I know how Santa does it," he said. "He waits until everyone in one state is asleep. Then he delivers all the presents there and looks for another state where everyone's asleep. Pretty soon he's done and everybody has their presents."

Ducks

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it from my head and pieced it up," he said. "I kept cutting and piecing until it looked right."

The only necessary modification was the door, Ciccarelli said. The original was enlarged and two others added. The house even has a small front stoop to make it easier to enter the doors and a load of wheat hay inside for insulation.

DeArmitt set it up by the creek December 16 after his lunch break.

By 3:30, the ducks had followed the trail of bread crumbs almost to the doors and were checking out their new digs from a distance.

"Now that they have a winter home, I'm not worried," Mickus said, watching his feathered friends nibble bread crumbs.

When the ducks had first taken up residence by the creek in March, Mickus fed them cracked corn and kept an eye on them. The two pairs produced 10 chicks, half of which survived.

After one of the adults was killed on the road by a car, he trained them to stay away from the road by chasing them with a stick.

"People thought I was mean," he chuckled. "I just wanted them to learn to stay away so they wouldn't get hurt. It only took seven or eight times. Now they don't go near the road."

In September he quit feeding them to encourage them to fly south with their cousins. It didn't work. The mallards had become permanent township residents. "I was raised to respect ani-



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

SNACK TIME—Stanley Mickus feeds the small flock of mallard ducks who have made their home in the creek in front of ENCON on Lower Demunds Road in Dallas Township.

mals," Mickus said. "You have to understand how they think. Like today—we say it's cold out but to them it's nice."

This winter the ENCON workers will continue to watch their

new friends from the loading dock and the company lunch room, DeArmitt and Ciccarelli said.

"Animals bring a lot of love with them," Mickus said. "Look at these guys. We all chipped in to take

care of them and now people driving by are slowing down to enjoy looking at them. Sometimes families bring bags of bread crumbs for the children to feed them. Animals do lots of good for people."

Reunion committee to meet

West Side Tech's class of 1970 will hold a 25th year reunion meeting January 11 at 7 p.m. at West Side Tech.

All classmates are invited to attend. For further information call Michaeline Berish Swiryna at 675-0541

SV Fire Auxiliary reschedules meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Sweet Valley Fire Co. Ladies Auxiliary, has been rescheduled to January 9 at 7 p.m.

New members are welcome. Meetings are held in the Fire Hall, Main Road, Sweet Valley.

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Thanks from Trucksville firefighters

The Trucksville Volunteer Fire Co. would like to thank the following companies and businesses for their contributions to the annual children's Christmas party, held December 17: Russ Majors, Burger King, Back Mtn. Music Co., Commonwealth Phone Co., Trucksville Pharmacy, Rave's Nursery, Offset Paperback, McDonald's Restaurant, A.M. Pugh Associates, Checkerboard Inn, Yesterdays, Pritchards Ins., Acme Markets, Hill the Florist, Tele-Media, Metzgar Aluminum, Insalaco's, McCrory's, Pizza Perfect, and a special thank you to Santa Claus.

Doo-Wopp Society to meet Jan. 3

The N.E. Pennsylvania Doo-Wopp Society will hold its first meeting of 1995 on January 3, at Lispi's Lounge, Fox Hill Road, Plains, at 7 p.m. Members and non-members are all invited. Call Marsha at 696-4325 for more information.

Graduates from Kutztown

Dallas resident Eileen Murphy recently received a B.A. in psychology at Kutztown University's annual winter commencement December 17.

University President Dr. David McFarland presided at ceremonies in Keystone Hall.

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