

Reflections

The holidays remind us to be thankful for the blessings we have - the past successes, our current challenges which help us to be stronger, the present opportunities and the future rewards we all seek. The closing of a year is a great time to structure our plans for the upcoming year to meet our goals or simply redefine them to meet our needs, so we can get the most out of life.

Reflecting on the past year, I have been fortunate to travel to all of the WPMA states and talk to many of our members about their business, and the successes and the challenges being faced by our industry. Some of these challenges are the high price of petroleum products, increased strains on credit, ever-changing federal and state regulations, and the numerous mergers and acquisitions. I believe challenges make us stronger and more efficient. They make us review what we are doing, and help us play at the top of our game to give us a competitive edge.

I think challenges are opportunities to grow, and we should be thankful we have them so we don't become too complacent, letting life pass us by. Life is a journey to enjoy with no defined destination but the one we envision. Too many times we focus on the end result (which is important because it meets our goals), but we tend to look back at the end and wonder how we got here, and how we missed out on the journey.

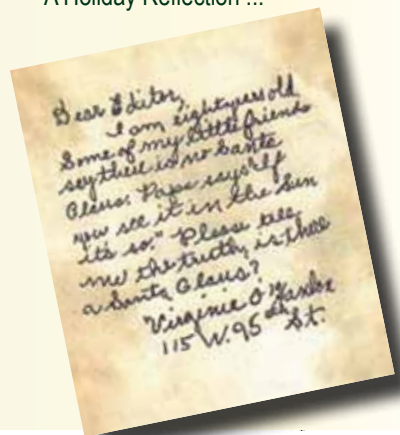
As the year draws to a close, our thoughts turn to those who have made our progress possible. At WPMA, the progress we have made this past year has come through the support of our great members. I have never seen an industry with such fierce competition, yet with such camaraderie between individuals as I have seen in the petroleum industry. Quite simply, WPMA members make the difference in our level of success. We may have a great trade show, we may have been successful in our lobbying efforts, and have grown our membership, but without members willing to give countless hours of service, the association would not be a success.

As I reflect on the past year, I hope we can all say that we are better off now than we were a year ago. The WPMA staff and I wish to express our appreciation for your goodwill, the very foundation of business success. In the spirit of friendship, we send you our hope for a continuing positive business relationship, and our best wishes for a pleasant holiday season.



*WPMA Executive Director,
Gene Inglesby*

A Holiday Reflection ...



Dear Virginia,

Your little friends are wrong.

They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's are little.

In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance, to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in chimneys on Christmas evening to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see.

Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond.

Is it real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God, he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Charles Dana
Editor

... from 1897