

Buford's



Christmas Adventure 2014

Buford's Christmas Adventure 2014

© 2014 by Russ Franzen

The Christmas season was just over the horizon. All over Toledo, ornaments overtook the Halloween decorations like a kudzu invasion. Buford knew the season was coming when he passed the neighborhood barber shop and detected a nip in the hair.

Buford looked forward to his yearly talks with Santa. It was easier in years past when he could just walk down the street to see the Jolly Old Elf at his houses in Lapeer and Plymouth. So, like he has for the past few years, Buford took his annual trip to Santa's regional office in Frankenmuth.

"Hi, Alf," Buford greeted the little elf at the reception desk.

"Buford," he said, "I have a message for you. Santa won't be stopping by the office today. Apparently, the NSA has asked for an emergency meeting about using the Elf on the Shelf Brigade during the off season. He asked if you'd like to go to the North Pole office instead."

"OboyOBoyOBoyOboy!" Buford squealed. "I love visiting him there! The only thing better is if I could work there!"

"Well," Alf said, "There *are* some open jobs at Headquarters. I'll let them know you're coming and you can interview for something."

"ThankyouThankyouThankyou," Buford said enthusiastically.

Buford stepped outside and onto the Polar Express Express that whisked him off to the North Pole quicker than you could say something quickly. And there to greet him when he stepped off the train was Santa himself.

"Ho-Ho-Hello, Buford!" Santa greeted him warmly, which was good because it was pretty cold up at the S. Claus North Pole Complex.

"Hi, Santa," Buford said. "Alf said I might get a job here."

"We'll see," Santa told him as they walked back to the executive offices. "I have a meeting to go to, but I've set up an interview for you with our Elf Resources director."

So Santa chatted as he walked Buford to the office. He then said good bye and Buford stepped inside. He was greeted by an elf wearing a business suit and seated behind a desk. He pointed to a chair and said, "Please sit down. Do you have a resume?"

"I had a consomme on the railway when we were about half-way," the little pig said.

"Thanks, Santa," mumbled the elf. Then he straightened himself up in the chair and looked at Buford.

“So tell me...do you have any experience with Christmas jobs?”

“Just one job,” Buford said. “I was working at The Lights Before Christmas at the Toledo Zoo.”

“What did you do there?”

“They put me in charge of the Hot Chocolate. I was just about finished drinking it all when the boss came in, threw her arms up and yelled something and started chasing me. I never played that game before but it was fun. We ran all around the zoo!

It was fun until I tripped over the power cords. That made the whole zoo go dark. I thought I would use the down time wisely, so I painted the zebra's black stripes a festive holiday red so that it looked like a candy cane. The director wasn't in a festive mood when he saw that and he sent me home.”

The elf set his pencil down. “We might have an opening in the Office of Gift Giving. What experience do you have in giving gifts?”

“Well, I wanted to get Russ a guitar, but the guy said if I got it there would be strings attached. I didn't think that was a good deal.”

The elf folded his hands and nodded his head.

“Then I thought I would get him a capo.”

“How did that go?” the elf asked.

“I found out that the mob is touchy when word gets out that you want to get the capo. Did you know that they really *do* make cement overshoes?”

The elf, hands folded, shook his head.

Buford continued.

“Well, I heard a commercial that said I could name a star after someone, so I tried to get that for Russ.”

“That was a nice thought,” the elf said.

“I thought so, too,” Buford said. “So I tried to get George Clooney named after Russ. All I got was a restraining order.”

The elf looked silently at the little pink pig.

“I probably would have had better luck with Steve Buscemi.”

“Well, Buford,” the elf said, “It seems I made a mistake. There's no opening in that office. However, we just reorganized the old Office of Misfit Toys and we might have something there. It's now called The Office of Re-gifting. The marketing guys say that has a better ring to it. Would you be interested?”

“What do they do?” he asked.

“Come on, I'll show you,” the elf said. “It's right through this door.”

They walked through a big wooden door and Buford looked up at stacks and stacks and stacks of...

“Fruitcake?”

“Yes,” explained the elf, a hint of pride in his voice. “Fruitcake is traditionally the most re-gifted item of the Christmas season. Some of these have been in circulation for decades.”

“What happens if somebody actually eats one?” Buford asked.

“They have our sympathies.”

Buford looked around the canyon of candied fruit bricks and thought about having a job surrounded by cakes he could not eat. He walked toward the door.

“I guess this job's not for me,” he said to the elf. “But thank you for the interview.”

Just as he stepped outside, Santa was there to walk him back to the train. Buford told him about the interview and why he didn't take the job.

As he was stepping onto the train, Santa asked “Do you have all of your shopping done?”

“Almost,” he said. “I finally decided what to get Russ. A watch!”

“That sounds like a very nice gift,” Santa said. “What made you think of that?”

Well,” Buford said. “You know what they say...there's no present like the time.”

#

#

#

Buford B. Pig, my daughter's stuffed pig, has been having adventures for over 20 years. Many of those adventures I have chronicled. Many, I try to forget. Buford isn't easily forgotten, though. In August of this year, Ruth had a plumber come in to fix something or other. As he passed by the china cabinet in the dining room, he stopped and stared at the little pink pig, who stared back at him from inside the cabinet. "That looks like Buford," the man said. "That is Buford," Ruth replied. The man was excited. He was from Plymouth and he used to read my columns in the Crier and the Journal about the little pink pig. The last of those columns ran over eleven years ago, so the guy has a pretty good memory.

