

December 13, 2016 KIWASSEE SMOKE SIGNALS KIWANIS [www.kiwassee.org](http://www.kiwassee.org)  
Chair: Honerkamp Invocation: Snoddy Editor: Stevens Song: Winegardner

### CALENDAR

**Wed, 12/14: 5:00pm-6:30pm**, AKtion Club Holiday Party, Midland Public School Admin Bldg, rooms A&B, join us! (M Briggs)  
**Sat, 12/17**: Last day to return product to store, keep your inventory lean and mean! (Rajewski/Jellum/Burmester)  
**Tues, 12/20**: Kiwassee Christmas Lunch, doors open at 11:30. (Honerkamp/Snoddy)  
**Thur, 12/22**: Last day of sales, Nut House closes

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Martha Briggs**: Don't forget the AKtion Club Holiday Party tomorrow, 12/14, 5-6:30pm, MPS Administration Building. Five Kiwanians attended the 12/1 ARC luncheon. Colleen Dolan, member of AKtion Club and President of ARC, was highlighted.  
**Al Burmester**: Only 1 more week of nut hut hours. Help clean out the store!  
**Dick Jellum**: If you have a special order, contact Dick or Jim. BUY! SELL!  
**Brian Goodwill**: Sign up for providing Invocations when the list goes around. OH NO! We are behind Rotary and Lions in Red Kettle donations this year!!! The Kettle will be at the Holiday party next week.  
**Bruce Rayce**: Marci Post of Midland Parks & Rec needs some help with the Santa Calling project this year. Calls will be made Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. "Santa" and "Mrs. Claus" callers are needed.  
**Ray Senesac**: We are going to revive a tradition of recognizing, once a month, the members who joined in that month: November, Dave Winegardner, 2008; December Andy Thompson and Kim Clark, 2015, Roger Moll, 2012, Fred Honerkamp, 2011, and Art Ledbetter, 1983..33 years!! Congratulations to all!  
**Doug Snoddy**: Senior Youth meeting right after the general meeting today.  
**Betsy Sullivan**: Our Eastlawn Holiday party with the children earned pictures and a mention in the school newsletter. Think Golf Outing! Mark your calendars for 7/17 at Snow Snake in Harrison. Details to follow.  
**Aaron Oberlin**: He is collecting nut and candy money in Bill Krueger's absence.  
**Fred Honerkamp**: 103 folks have signed up for the Holiday luncheon! You must sign up if you want the lobster and filet mignon!  
**Guests**: Judy Unrath, Michigan Division 19 Lt. Governor, asked us if anyone is interested in the Lt. Governor position next year. Other guests: Theron Unrath, Judy's husband, Mercia Foster, K-Kids Michigan District Administrator, Larry and Ellie Schroeder, guests of Roger Moll, Glen Isenhardt, Alex Rapanos' guest, and Alan Tolcher, Brian Goodwill's guest.  
**Member News**: December birthday holders were serenaded with "Happy Birthday" by the Club.

### TOM VALENT, THE BEST SANTA CLAUS

Everybody is busy at this time of year, especially anyone portraying Santa Claus. But Tom Valent, voted the world's best Santa Claus by his Santa Claus "Best of the World" peers in Iceland, took time to tell us about his love of portraying the big man in red.

Tom, whose "day job" is being CEO of Gerace Construction, has been portraying Santa for 41 years. Gerace Construction rebuilt and expanded the original temporary Santa House in Midland in 1986. The Charles W Howard Santa Claus School, started in 1937 by Charles W Howard, came to Midland in 1987. The internationally known School is now a non-profit organization with Tom as Dean. Two hundred Santa trainees attended the School this October, and 100 were turned away. Classes have outgrown even the thrice-expanded Santa House and have been moved to the Midland Center for the Arts. Students (Twenty five percent were Mrs. Claus trainees this year.) meet for 40 hours in 3.5 days, have numerous field trips and 3 banquets. They learn about the latest toys children may want, practice singing Christmas songs, exercise and dance to exemplify the "lively and quick" description of Santa Claus, learn basic sign language, ride on the Huckleberry Railroad, practice their ho-ho-hos, learn interview techniques, and hear the history and traditions of Christmas. Repeat Santas (and there are many each year) are given a different program from these basics.

"A Visit from Saint Nicholas", commonly known as "The Night Before Christmas", is the definitive description of Santa Claus's appearance and behavior. Santa, according to Tom Valent, is the very Spirit of Christmas, must represent all that is good and giving, must be pure in thoughts and actions at all times, and must never make promises to a child, in spite of any heart-wrenching requests. Tom's goal is to make the children believe in Santa Claus and know that Santa loves them unconditionally (whether naughty or nice). He asks what they are giving their parents and siblings for Christmas to encourage that spirit of giving.

Facts from Santa Claus: The colorful Northern Lights make buzzing, crackling noises. Santa School students come from all over the world...Norway, Sweden, Hawaii, and Canada were represented this year. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is 77 years old. Santa's original 8 reindeer are all females for two reasons: 1)They are not afraid to ask for directions. 2)Male reindeer lose their antlers in November. Ninety Santas have already enrolled for the 2017 School session. Reindeer are the only members of the deer family to be domesticated. Tom's wife really is named Holly. For more information and to watch some interesting media clips about the Santa Claus School, go to the website at SantaClausSchool.com.