

# Mrs. Claus in Menopause? Yes, I can relate



GUEST COLUMNIST

Sue Cheeseaman

On Sunday afternoon I spent a few hours with a group of women – approximately 160 women between the ages of 40 and 500. Yes, 500 – this is not a misprint. The eldest of the group was Doris Claus, wife of Nicky Claus – Santa Claus to kids.

Doris is a woman who has reached “that certain age” when everything in

her body and in her life is going haywire. Mrs. Claus is in menopause.

And, to make matters worse, it's Christmas Eve and HER “To Do List” is getting bigger by the minute. There's no space left to pencil in additional things to do on her December calendar – she's using sticky notes. “Can you relate?” she asks the audience.

“Yes, I can,” I murmur to myself.

Several women are smiling and nodding their heads. They, too, can relate.

Poor Doris. She has to deal with so much “Christmas crap” as she refers to it. Baking cookies, shopping, wrapping presents, cooking a holiday meal. Yes, Doris, we can relate.

And those incessant phones keep ringing; each call signaling another crisis for Doris to handle. Her husband can't find HIS lists – the Naughty List and the Nice List. (He probably thinks Doris is a mind reader.) And, Doris must select a special gift for her mother-in-law ... “What do you get for a woman who is 1,000 years old and has everything?” Doris ponders.

I can relate to that dilemma.



Actress Susan Gayle Pynn as Doris Claus. A shoreline resident, Pynn has appeared in numerous productions at Amarante's Dinner Theatre and Ivoryton Playhouse.

Her shopaholic daughter, Sandy, is burning out her credit cards at the mall. She phones her mother at various intervals. Thank goodness for her cell phone.

Her son, Sonny, called to say he's coming home ... not only for Christmas but for good – his air conditioning business was not successful in the North Pole.

“He's a prince,” says Doris.

Audience: Can you relate? Many can.

Doris has to deal with another serious problem. Eddy, the supervising elf, phones to say the elves – 300 strong – are threatening to strike. They want dental coverage. Doris will have to call her cousin, Tooth Fairy, for advice on dental plans – add that to the To Do List.

Mrs. Claus's blood pressure is rising. She sings an appropriate song called, “Welcome to My World.”

Things aren't getting any better. More things are added to her To Do List ... Doris doesn't have a moment to herself; she longs for a “take me away Calgon soak in the tub.” No time for such a luxury ... “Welcome to my nightmare,” she says.

Yes, indeed, I can relate.

“Nick's the one with the high profile job around here,” she tells the audience. “But behind every successful man there's a woman ... and this woman feels like shoving him off a cliff.”

Yes, Doris, I can relate.

She looks for an on-line support group: women who love men who love elves. Well, I have to admit that I cannot relate to this one – unless the elves are transformed into golf balls.

The hilarity continues. Doris gets syncopated hot flashes. “Is it hot in here or is it me?” “I'm having a heat wave ... global warming.”

I can relate; the audience can relate to the sisterhood of menopausal madness. Then Doris asks, “Why is it called MENopause when WOMEN get it?”

Good question.

Doris Claus's cup runneth over with hysterical one-liners and amusing original songs. The actress portraying Doris Claus is Susan Gayle Pynn. A shoreline resident, Susan has appeared in numerous productions at Amarante's Dinner Theatre and Ivoryton Playhouse. She is perfectly cast in this delightfully hilarious one-woman show.

The creators of this merry madness are Kathleen Dahill and Patricia A. Souney. Kudos to three multi-talented women.

I'm still laughing.

*Editor's Note: Mrs. Claus in Menopause was presented at St. Therese Church hall on Saturday and Sunday. For booking info call (203) 453-5967 or (401) 348-6563.*

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