

## Jake Clausen

UUFR

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By Jane Elkin

When I was a teenager, I had pretty much stopped attending church at Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church in Bethesda, Maryland, although I would always go to the Christmas Eve service. The minister, Ken McLean, would give an update on his friend, Jake Clausen, on Christmas Eve. I can't remember the details of the Jake Clausen stories, except that sometimes they involved prisoners, because Ken was involved in prison ministries, but they were hilarious, and Ken McLean spoke directly to me. Ken got a lot of advice from Jake.

Recently, I told my family that I wanted to tell a Jake Clausen story to our little congregation, and I asked my family members if they could remember anything about the Jake Clausen stories which were a part of our Christmas Eve. I had them look over the first draft of my story.

My sister Annie, who is 46, said "Ken talked about knowing Jake in college and going home for Christmas with him and helping with Jake's family business. They used helicopters, and one year he had the M's: Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Missouri . . . The fun of the story was in the details. I don't remember

any particular message going with it - just the story of how Ken helped Jake each year”

My sister Katy, who is 50, said, “Nice touch about becoming Facebook friends with Jake.”

My mother said, “I, too, forget the message -- except that everyone pitches in and worked hard to make the holiday happen. I think that each time he mentioned the M states, I mentally plotted out the Maine to Maryland to Michigan to Minnesota route and lost the conclusion.

My brother Bobby, who is 33, said, “I just remember the story has to involve Foggy Oggy.”

So my family didn't really help much with my Jake Clausen Story, but I will tell it to you anyway.

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I don't know how I would have found Jake without the internet. I Googled “Jake Clausen,” and after a few searches, I found that he is still lives at the North Pole. I even found him on Facebook and I asked if I could be his friend, and he clicked “Yes,” so we started conversing. I said that we had a mutual friend, Ken McLean, from way back. He said that of course he remembered Ken and that after Ken's

wife died, that he and Ken had spent some time together. I said that it was well know that Ken always went to Jake for advice. I told him that Jefferson thinks that The UPS man is Santa Claus, and Jake reminded me that he has a contract with UPS and Fed Ex, but he asked me not to reveal that to my children.

I said,” Jake, I could use some of your advice, on a different topic.”

Jake said, “Well, it wouldn’t be ethical for me to give my professional advice away for free. The elves need to maintain a market for their professional services, and the professional association discourages charging below the market rate.”

He told me what the rate for his professional services, and I said that I could afford to pay him for fifteen minutes of his time.

So I said, “Jake, how do we get more families and children to join our little UU church down here on the Northern Neck? How can I give my children the magical UU experience that I had growing up? The UU candlelight service where we sung Christmas carols at the top of our lungs was the highlight of our Christmas Eve.”

“Describe the UUFR congregation.” Jake said.

I said, “Well, there are a lot of retirees. And the ones that aren’t retired are middle-aged, except for the redhead.”

“What about grandkids,” Jake asked?

“Oh, yes, I said there are a number of grandchildren we are starting to see annually, when they visit their grandparents here on the Northern Neck.”

We discussed the demographics a bit more, and he said, “Well, you need more of those rituals, like the one with the flowers and the one with the water, and you should have more services that are Appropriate for All Ages.”

Before I knew it, the fifteen minutes were up, and Jake had only helped me a little on the issue of how to make our church more inviting to families and children.

I had spent the entire RE budget on the 15 minutes. I told Jake that I would ask the Board of Stewards for more money in the RE budget next year so that I could get more counseling. I hope that the Board of Stewards approves my budget request. I hope Jake doesn't raise his rates too much.