

Cookie Chronicles

WORLD NEWS

Novice for Nine

Santa's sleigh team underwent a major reorganization this year. The reindeer team will be introducing a permanent rotating reindeer-in-training post to fill the ninth sleigh team position each year.

"The team make-up has been more than a little chaotic recently," explained Team Leader Prancer. "We decided to take actions to help stabilize the group. The constant change was making it hard to do our job well."

Santa flew with the same team for many years, making them a household name: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, and Rudolph.

"Before Rudolph, Santa always flew with his eight star reindeer. Donner was team leader as well as sleigh point reindeer," explained Comet, thirty year sleigh team veteran. "The team leader handles all of the organizational functions for the team such as organizing reindeer games and recruiting. It's a separate job from point reindeer who navigates for the team, like the head bird in a flock of geese flying in V-formation."

When Rudolph joined the team to light Santa's way, he took over as sleigh point reindeer, but Donner retained his position as team leader until he retired in 1996. Then Blitzen was fired the same year after causing a crash during a practice run over New York, and the team briefly resorted to substitutes until Rudolph's son Lightning joined as a permanent replacement. Rudolph's accident and disappearance in 2005 produced further changes as Donner temporarily returned and reindeer Windstorm joined.

"The novice slot was Santa's idea," explained Blitzen, now North Pole Mayor. "Chet, one of our younger reindeers, saved the day when he helped Santa Claus resolve a major workshop problem. Everyone wanted to see the youngster on the team as a reward. Santa suggested we reserve the ninth member for a trainee each year. It might be a bit like being the dwarf planet Pluto playing with the big boys, but we all felt it could be the opportunity of a lifetime for some youngster."

The new program promises big rewards for young reindeer vying for one of the coveted permanent positions. "They don't open up very often," explained Rudolph. "I should know. This way, we can recruit new talent all the time, preparing back-ups in case of the unexpected." (Continued, see *Novice*)



BIG ACHE FOR THE TOOTH FAIRY SERVICE

Tooth Fairy Trouble

The Tooth Fairy Service has had another year of troubles following in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. However, this year's difficulties revolve around the eye of a financial scandal, unlike than the weather-related disruptions of 2005.

A special Board meeting in October announced an internal audit of the Tooth Fairy Service books and initiated a Special Committee to investigate certain irregularities by two former officers in connection with accounting.

Though the officers remain unnamed, rumors swirl around former vice president and general counsel Anna-mel Dent, who retired in January, and CFO Marilyn Molar, who departed quietly in June.

Dental Analyst Bartholomew Bicuspid reviewed the implications. "It's terrible to see another accounting scandal rock such a venerable old institution as the Tooth Fairy Service. However, the investigators cleared the Tooth Fairy herself of any wrong-doing, so we should all have confidence that the organization will continue in spite of these problems."

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ENTERTAINMENT

Tarnished Garland

Jay Garland, the Christmasville sensation who stole everyone's heart when he debuted as a teenager in *Icicle Nights*, has tarnished his nice-boy-next-door image during a confrontation with Christmasville police.

According to Spritz Snow, the spokesman for the North Pole Police Department, officers pulled Garland over for erratic sleigh driving a mile from Santa's Workshop. "The officer arrested him for driving under the influence of too many cookies. While in police custody, Mr. Garland launched into an obscenity-laced tirade against elves." Witnesses quoted him saying, "The elves are responsible for all of the lost mail, lost luggage, and lost socks in the world."

Hans Candle, chief of the Elves' Guild, called for a boycott of Garland's latest cinematic endeavor, *The Glitter Boys*, which opened on Christmas Eve. "This is yet another example of despicable behavior by a Christmasville superstar. We should make a lesson of Mr. Garland. He is a dreadful ambassador for our town."

Garland pleaded no contest to the charge of cookie-crazed driving and has voluntarily joined a twelve step program to control his cookie addiction. He also issued an apology to the entire Elf community, saying his words were hurtful and disrespectful.

In spite of Garland's misbehavior, early box office returns on *The Glitter Boys* have been excellent, promising to follow in the footsteps of his blockbusters *Home is Where the Holly is* and *Plum Pudding in Paris*.

(*Novice*, continued)

Rudolph, who took the season off to recover from his harrowing experiences the last two years, plans to rejoin as point reindeer next Christmas. He is currently preparing to publish a book about his accident and how he ended up with amnesia in the San Diego Zoo.

This year's team consisted of Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Lightning, Windstorm, and Chet. Chet will not be a returning member. When Rudolph flies again next year, his colleagues will draw lots to decide who takes a year off to allow a novice to fly as the ninth reindeer.