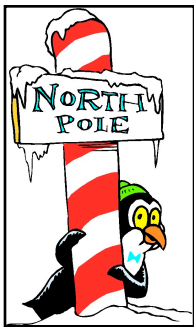


Cookie Chronicles

World News

Penguin Flu Paranoia

Christmasville copes with H7N7 outbreak



While the rest of the world has been fighting off swine flu, residents of Christmasville are facing an outbreak of H7N7 influenza. They're calling it Penguin Flu

because it arrived with a troupe of circus penguins who traveled up from Antarctica for a holiday show. A flu strain with high zoonotic potential, the H7N7 virus spread rapidly from the birds to reindeers and elves alike.

"We were hit pretty hard during November," said Hans Candle, chief of the Elves Guild. "At one point over 60% of the Toy Workshop Elves were home on sick leave. This was right in the middle of our busiest season, and it really impacted production quotas. Everyone has been working double time to make up for lost output."

North Pole Mayor Blitzen said, "At first we thought it was swine flu. We were surprised because most of the town got immunized against H1N1 early in the season as soon as vaccines

became available. Turns out it was a completely different flu strain. It just goes to show you can't be prepared for everything."

Dr. Ed, a local physician, said, "Fortunately, everyone in town seems to be making a full recovery. Only a few residents have gone to the hospital with symptoms of dehydration." Sleigh Team reindeer Comet spent a week at St. Nicks Animal Hospital but is back on his feet now. Dr. Ed said, "We're doing our best to control the spread of the virus with good hygiene practices. It's unlikely we'll have a vaccine this season. But we'll be okay as long as it doesn't mutate into a more virulent strain."

What about Santa Claus? Has the head Elf caught the flu yet? Will he have to say home this Christmas?

The penguin flu caught up with Santa and Anna Claus during the first wave of the outbreak, but they were only sick in bed for a few days. "Children shouldn't worry," said Mrs. Claus. "My advice to everyone to stay healthy this holiday season: Get your shots, wash your hands a lot, and be sure to go to bed early on Christmas eve."

Science News

The Large Hadron Collider returned to active status this November after completing repairs from a major September 2008 fault.

Like the LHC's speeding proton beams, many science fiction rumors have circulated in pop culture, including claims that the collider would produce an Earth-swallowing black hole, or that the universe itself was preventing the Higgs Boson from being discovered by LCH through a time-travel paradox.

However, these notions are far from the reality.

LHC physicist Emmett Brown said, "We hope to answer the most fundamental questions in physics, such as whether there are extra dimensions, why is gravity so much weaker than other fundamental forces of nature, and how do Santa and his reindeer travel faster than the speed of light on Christmas."



Special Report

CRASH INTERRUPTS KIDS GAME

The kids had no idea that their football game was about to be interrupted in a big way.

Transcript

"This is flight squad 1549," said Captain Clyde. "The trainees ran into birds. Harness took damage."

"You're near O'Hare," replied North Pole Flight Control. "We'll find a runway for you."

"We're unable. We may end up in the lake. What's that over to the right?"

"Waukegan Regional. OK, which runway would you like?"

"We're gonna be on that football field."

Lost Contact

At this point, North Pole Flight Control lost contact with Captain Clyde.

"It was the worst feeling," said Ace Winterberry, the elf controller who had been operating North Pole Flight Control that day. "We thought we had lost our best reindeer trainees."

The missing reindeers were part of Santa's flight school. They were on a training exercise on November 7, tracing Santa's

typical North American run, when they crashed.

"It took us an hour to locate the team," added Winterberry. "That was the longest hour of my life!"

Touchdown?

"I was just telling my friend Charlie here to kick a field goal," said Lucy van Pelt, "when I heard the sound of bells. And my brother Linus said, 'Isn't that Santa's sleigh?'"

"We got off the field lickety-split," said Charlie Brown, one of the kids in the game. "And suddenly they were skidding in front of us, and the sleigh smashed up behind them. My dog gave the reindeers water while we called for help."

"Thankfully, everyone survived with nothing worse than a few bruises," said Santa Claus. "The trainees were too upset to fly, so we took them home by helicopter."

"We owe our thanks to the quick thinking of Captain Clyde who stayed calm throughout the emergency and got his team down safely."



Celebrity Profile

Captain Clyde has never been the sort of reindeer who wanted to be in the limelight.

However, he became more famous than Santa's nine sleigh team members after he calmly coached his panicked students down onto a football field on a sunny November afternoon after they collided with a large flock of geese and lost control.

A flight trainer at Santa's reindeer school, Clyde has spent years teaching the next generation of sleigh team members. In 1965, Clyde briefly flirted with fame when he substituted for Rudolph on Santa's team when the red-nosed reindeer injured himself in a dance contest. However, Clyde was soon forgotten.

When asked what he thought the moment they hit the birds, Clyde replied, "It was the worst sickening, pit-of-your-stomach, falling-through-the-floor feeling I've ever felt in my life. I knew immediately it was very bad."

The Frosty Night Show

With Frosty the Snowman
Weeknights at 11:30



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