

# Cookie Chronicles

## NORTH POLE

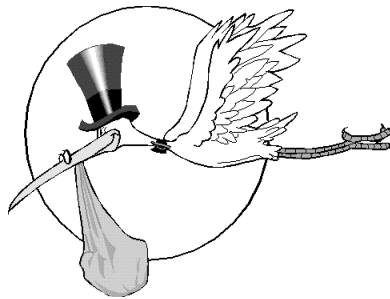
### Son Joins Team

**L**ast year's sudden departure of Blitzen left a vacancy on Santa's famous reindeer team. The North Pole has just announced that the permanent replacement will be none other than Lightning, the son of the team leader, Rudolph. "I'm very pleased with our new team member," explained Santa Claus. "Lightning was a top flyer in reindeer school, and I welcome the added bonus he brings with his shiny nose." As it turns out, Lightning takes after his father in looks and bears the same neon bright nose. Edwinna Bell, Sleigh Maintenance Manager, said, "With air travel getting worse we can definitely use the extra visibility. Just last year Santa had a near collision with a 747 coming out of London Heathrow Airport. We do everything we can to ensure the big guy's safety, and nothing seems to work as well as those reindeer noses. They're brighter than a good set of headlights."

Not everyone was positive about the latest change to Santa's team. In an interview with Barbara Walters, Blitzen said, "I'm not really surprised about this. It's turning into a regular family business. There were plenty of other qualified bucks who would have been better suited to the job, but old Donner pulled some strings again to get his grandson added to the team. This stuff about needing the extra light is nonsense." One analyst agreed. Velma Dinkley of the Wall Street Journal said, "While Blitzen may have spoken out of bitterness over his lost position, there may also be an element of truth to his comments. Santa's sleigh now sports running lights as well as a new radar system. The added light from Lightning's nose may not actually amount to much."

### Cookies & Milk Proven to Lower Stress

At a convention in Paris last month, scientists announced a striking correlation between the moderate consumption of cookies and milk and the lowering of stress levels. Up to now only anecdotal evidence had linked the two. But the new study involving 10,000 volunteers provided more concrete evidence.



## NEW YEAR BRINGS TWINS!

When Mrs. New Year went in for a routine prenatal exam this fall, her doctor surprised her with the news: Twins! This year is going to be an exceptionally bountiful year for the New Year family. This unprecedented event has the father almost speechless with pride. Old Man New Year said, "I'm so excited! We're counting down the days, hours, minutes and seconds!"

Authorities at the National Calendar Institute are unsure what to make of this unusual news. Rusty Sundial, public spokesman for the Institute, said, "We're a little baffled by this news. We're trying to decide if we'll divide the new year between the twins or run some sort of annual rotation. Believe it or not, this is the first time this has ever happened."

According to the study, the ideal dosage averaged at three servings per week, and best results occurred when cookies and milk were consumed together.

The head investigator on the project, Henry Sugar, originally got the idea from Santa Claus. Mr. Sugar said, "For years Santa Claus has been telling his friends about how milk and cookies help him cope with the last minute holiday rushes. And Santa Claus should know. He's rushed off his feet for months in preparation for the big day, and when it finally arrives, he has to visit millions of children on one night. It stands to reason that the cookies and milk would provide a little extra energy to fight off stress as well as a pleasant reminder of quieter times. We just decided it was time to see if there was anything more to it."

Mr. Sugar next plans to study whether different kinds of cookies and milk have any variations in effect.

## WINTER UPDATE

### Frostgate: Ginger Spice Gets Mr. Ice

**W**inter may be coming late this year. Former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell and Jack Frost were spotted together in the Bahamas earlier this month in romantic circumstances. Mr. Frost appears to be neglecting his winterizing duties and authorities are concerned that there may not be a white Christmas anywhere this year.

Daphne Blake of the Washington Weather Institute explained, "We've been reaching record temperatures around the world. At first we thought it was just another sign of global warming, but then we found out that Jack Frost was simply off duty. He's in charge of setting the cooling trends, making snow and ice, and controlling the winter winds. Without him, we'll be burdened with rainy weather all winter. It's going to be a disaster for drought and flood control, not to mention the effect it will have on the winter retail and tourist markets."

Emma, wife of Jack Frost, refused to comment, but neighbor Ezmeralda Snow had this to say, "The Frosts' marriage has been on the rocks for a while. Emma kept nagging Jack to stop working so much, and I guess he finally snapped, but not in the way she wanted."

Frosty the Snowman, longtime friend of the Frost family, said, "I've been trying to get them to go into counseling. Jack needs a break from the stress. I suggested he ought to find a partner to unload some of the duties, and he really seemed to go for that idea. I just hope they manage to work things out soon. Without the Christmas snow, I'll be stuck up here at the North Pole all winter and won't be able to visit any of my friends down South."

According to Tia Star, head of the snowflake manufacturer's guild, Mr. Frost's agent may be scouting a suitable partner. "I saw him interviewing the Snow Queen last week."

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