



humanity in motion

PRESS RELEASE
7 December 2007

rotary in London/district 1130
district governor Colin Mathews

From the Communications Committee

No Prezzies for “Elf & Safety” Killjoys!

Santa Claus, from the Rotary Club of Halesowen and Rowley Regis, has been in the news – even as far as India!

There seems to be a host of problems with the sleigh not being safe enough for Santa to ride on during his rounds of the West Midlands in the United Kingdom this Christmas. Health and Safety officers (not from the Health and Safety Executive or the Health and Safety Commission) are concerned with the possibility of Santa falling out of his sleigh whilst being towed by a Landrover at 5mph (8.04672 kph).

Barry Wheeler, Club President said, “Every year we have made sure Santa gets to go through the town and wave to the children. It just seemed ridiculous, especially because he doesn't ride on the sleigh that often.

“He is more likely to injure himself getting in and out of the sleigh than actually falling out of it.”

Despite the fact that the club has been organising Santa's visit for more than 20 years, a massive increase in insurance costs was threatened unless a fully approved harness was fitted to the sleigh.

“We're going to try to make the belt as discreet as possible”, said President Barry. “The sleigh ride through the towns starts in December, and starts Christmas off for so many people. It would have been such a shame to see it cancelled.”

Santa Claus has an even harder time in Ontario, Canada! In Ontario, if Santa were caught on a roof 6ft (1.8288m) above ground level, he would have to be wearing a fall protection harness with an approved lifeline securely fastened to a point such as the chimney. He would then be asked to dig into his wallet to produce his harness training ticket (which must be up to date). If he intends to descend the chimney, he needs to produce an up to date confined spaces ticket. The inspector might then begin filling a form for risk assessment on the chimney -- that could take until the end of January to clear. In the meantime he would have to display the gifts he intends to deliver, some of which might be confiscated and sent for analysis for hazards such as lead content in the paint etc. Whilst this is being processed, 2 inspectors from the humane society would have to be sent for to check-out the working conditions of the reindeer !

t: 0207486 0632 f: 020 7935 2587 e: secretary@rotaryinlondon.org
a: 6 york gate, london NW14QG w: www.rotaryinlondon.org



humanity in motion

Your reporter has sent an email to the stable at Santa's Grotto, but all we can report so far is "No Comment" from Rudolph. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donder and Blitzen have referred us to their agent for a comment at the appropriate time!

Joking apart, the people of Alnwick in Northumberland are less fortunate than many. Their Christmas street parade, where the children used to walk through the town with Santa's Sleigh, has been cancelled for this year. A spokesman for Alnwick District Council was reported as saying, "We always try to help with community projects, but regrettably this is out of our hands."

To all Rotarians in London, we wish you a healthy and safe Christmas, and hope that you are inventive enough to ensure that the children of London enjoy this festive time of year.

The District Communications Committee

prcomm@rotaryinlondon.org