

DID YOU KNOW???

SANTA'S ELVES INSURE ORDER, SAFETY

Did you ever wonder how Santa is able to make his world rounds on Christmas Eve – so many miles, so many stops in so little time? I sure did. So, a few weeks ago I contacted Santa's head Elf and requested an interview. Luckily, my request was granted.

Interview day was set; I found a flight from Montreal to the North Pole on Icelandic Airlines, and off I went. When I arrived, I was met by Elf Emma for a sleigh ride to Elf Headquarters, which is right next to Santa's Workshop. I was then introduced to Head Elf, Enretta. Because it was so close to Christmas, I was informed she could only give me 30 minutes of her time.

My first question of Elf Enretta was how Santa makes all his rounds in such a short time. Her answer was that it's all in the preparation. Planning starts before Thanksgiving, laying out the location of all the houses with kids that Santa must stop at, and beginning at the International Date Line and working his way around the globe in the same direction that night advances. This way Santa gets to everyone's house while they are still asleep. Before departing the North Pole on his journey, packing the sleigh properly is also very important. The first presents loaded into the sleigh must be the last ones to be delivered – there's no time to dig around in the sleigh for the right present.

I then inquired how Santa travels so far without ever getting into a crash. Again, Elf Enretta said it's paying attention to details – knowing where to rest the reindeer, where to stop for a quick snack, how to avoid bad weather. So, a lot of time goes into planning the right route for Santa.

Also, the Elves make sure Rudolph is ready for the long trip with his red nose, which he can blink in case Santa needs the right-of-way. Lights in good working order for Santa's sleigh are also important for when Santa is on the roof or on the ground. And, securing Santa's load of presents is equally important – if a present fell off the sleigh while high in the sky, it could hurt someone.

As I was busy interviewing Head Elf, Enretta, I thought we could learn a few lessons from her and her staff of elves. Maybe we don't have as far to travel as Santa, but if we plan ahead, we could be much more efficient. We might not have to make so many trips in our cars. If we reduce car trips, we save on the cost of fuel and also reduce pollution in the world from burning fossil fuels.

Another thought is that if we really plan our day, we just might have time to walk for an errand or two, again saving fuel and reducing pollution – and walking or biking is giving us physical fitness benefits as well.

I thought of what Elf Enretta said about safety. We need to secure our cargo so it doesn't fall out of our pickups, or so loose objects don't hurt occupants in our vehicles.

I guess we, as drivers, are just too complacent. We should pay a lot more attention to safety details than we do. If we did, perhaps we could reduce the 35,000 fatalities we incur each year. We need to learn the rules of the road, like the Elves know the rules of reindeer-pulled sleighs. And, we need to get rid of those distractions that take our eyes and minds away from the task of driving. If we did better, we might make it for another Christmas or two. Have a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe 2016.