

her table for one

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RUDOLPH'S BRINGING AMERICAN STUFF THIS YEAR

The elves tried folks, they really did. Under pressure by the Christmas, Inc. board of directors and stockholders, they slaved at shaving costs to boost profits. Santa, however, found his wages stuck at two cookies per delivery; but most of those were made with gluten from China so he's been sick since the last Christmas party. Not to worry though – since he doesn't have health insurance as an employee benefit, he'll be working through the holiday.

Comet and Cupid tried the latest diet craze and gobbled down dog food with China additives instead of organic reindeer food and were poisoned. Pursuant to company restructuring, the company announced it won't be "filling those slots."

Donner, Blitzen and Prancer had been experimenting with that same diet craze, but after what happened to Comet and Cupid, they hurried to brush their teeth to rid themselves of any remnants of the dangerous dog food. Alas, the toothpaste was made in China too. Services will be held the Thursday after New Year's so as not to dampen Christmas cheer and thus affect holiday revenues.

One new deer was hired to replace Donner, Blitzen and Prancer, and he will be doing the work of six (since all of the previous deer were pulling double-duty between sleigh-pulling and workshop maintenance). He

is an illegal immigrant from south of all the North Pole borders and so will be working for half-rations.

The company's annual report will duly list the payroll savings as soon as Mrs. Claus shows up with the exact figures. She was driving the reports to the home office, but her freshly bought made-in-China-but-American-branded tire blew, leaving her unharmed but stranded somewhere in Detroit. Thus far, she has been unable to find help with changing the tire as all the neighborhoods are deserted. Nothing but foreclosure signs for as far as the eye can see, she says.

Back at Santa's workshop, the elves are working around the clock to repack all the lead-painted imported toys from China into American labeled boxes. Since they are salaried, the company is spared paying time-and-a-half.

Meanwhile, Rudolph's very bright brain detected more than one Grinch trying to steal Christmas from far more than just one Whoville village. He rushed to his computer and pulled up the names of every U.S.-based company that makes completely American goods on Web sites including www.shopforamerica.com, www.howtobuyamerican.com and www.usmadetoy.com. Google rose to the occasion, as did Yahoo, and searched the world over for American-made stock.

Meanwhile, Santa dashed from store to store checking the labels on goods galore. He found Harry David (www.harryanddavid.com) had all-American sweets – each a wondrous treat! No gluten in sight! He found Target has, on average, more American-made goods than all of the other discount store giants combined.

But Santa had to look hard because some labels confuse. There were goods with American brand names but no American workmanship behind them, while foreign names like Toyota and BMW produce full-American wares. It occurred to him in a flash to ask the Chamber of Commerce for a list of manufacturers, large and small, that produce goods in the area and that he visited them all.

Once Santa and Rudolph were done with their ordeal they asked FedEx and UPS to carry the gifts far and wide to, indeed, circle the globe in just one night's time.

On Christmas morn, all were amazed to see Americans living in their homes again – the foreclosure signs since recycled. They found tires that rolled for miles undeterred; toothpaste that killed only decay; a toys that gave meaning to play.

The people all prospered and sang their delight – and finally remembered the reason for that one special night!

