

Elf Frank: Happy October greetings, I'm Elf Frank Myrrh of North Pole Radio News. We welcome you to this episode of the North Pole Podcast. Elf Crash Murphy is here in studio with me as we finally get a chance to sit down and just talk a little bit about the very eventful year we are having at the North Pole. Crash, it seems we have been trying to do this episode for months now.

Elf Crash: I know, Frank. But the news has been relentless. You have to be setting a record for the number of radio news reports you're putting out this year.

Elf Frank: It's not just me, Crash. We've got other North Pole Radio News elves doing stories and I don't remember a time when they've done that in October and September before.

Elf Crash: I think that's good though, Frank. It's nice to see these elves working and chasing down the news. I hope everyone gets to know their voices before we take to the air for Tracking Santa this year.

Elf Frank: Crash, I have to wonder what our big radio show is going to look like this year with everything that is going on.

Elf Crash: I do too, Frank. I also wonder that when that program blasts out to 160 countries and billions of listeners on December 23rd what the story will be.

Elf Frank: I do too and that's really what we want to talk about on this episode Crash. I know we're getting a lot of early season listeners to North Pole Radio News and that the usual spike in traffic at SantaUpdate.com is happening but really there's so much going on that I feel we need a good summary of not only what has happened but also what believers in Santa can expect in the weeks ahead.

Elf Crash: Yes, we're having a different year and I really think that is going to be felt a lot in November, Frank.

Elf Frank: Well, where do we begin? How do we describe the challenges Santa and the North Pole are facing this year.

Elf Crash: They just announced that Elf Bernard is going to be in North Pole Chat on November 2nd, and he's by far the best one to tell that story, Frank.

Elf Frank: They did? Wow, I can't believe Bernard agreed to that.

Elf Crash: I know, right? That was my reaction, too. I wonder if Santa had something to do with that.

Elf Frank: Yeah, he's just not one to do interviews. Who is going to interview him?

Elf Crash: You are.

Elf Frank: I am? Hahaha. Was someone going to tell me?

Elf Crash: This news just came out.

Elf Frank: Okay, that's great. I'd love that opportunity. For those of you just joining us this year and trying to catch up on everything here's the long and the short of it: there's a crisis in Santa's workshop. The North Pole has had issues getting what they need to make toys this year and they have fallen seriously behind. There's been a big effort in recent weeks to catch them up and they are making good progress. How's that for a summary?

Elf Crash: Pretty good, Frank. That just about nails it. I think it is important that we point out how significant of a problem this is and what the potential outcomes for Christmas are this year.

Elf Frank: The problem seems pretty simple enough to understand, Crash. Just how far behind is the workshop and what remains to be done to catch them up?

Elf Crash: The news this weeks says the workshop is 99 days behind. The problem is that Santa launches from the North Pole in about 67 days or so.

Elf Frank: Whoa. So...that's a big problem.

Elf Crash: It is. But I think it is wise to point out that when this was all revealed a little more than a month ago the workshop was better than 150 days behind...so they have made up better than 50 days in about a month and it appears the effort is picking up speed.

Elf Frank: Doing some quick math in my head here, if they keep up that pace, a month from now when it is mid-November they will be maybe about 65 days behind and in two months, at mid-December, they'll be maybe 20 to 25 days behind. That's pretty good, eh?

Elf Crash: Yeah, it's an improvement. But two months from now, around the 16th-17th of December it'll be a week until Santa launches. Do you see the problem now?

Elf Frank: I do. So, let's talk options that remain. Say we get to December 22nd and the workshop is still a couple of weeks behind. What happens? Does Santa not launch on December 23rd?

Elf Crash: Maybe.

Elf Frank: So he would delay going until...when?

Elf Crash: Until he can deliver, I think. Here's the deal. All the experts have been projecting this out and they know right now, that Santa will be able to deliver to Sectors 1,2 and 3 like normal. They are confident of that. Santa could launch on time and go to those areas, better than half the world, Frank, and nobody would see any difference. The problem is with Sectors 4 and 5.

Elf Frank: What's the problem?

Elf Crash: There's no toys for them. Even in the best case scenario that is known right now, if Santa launches on time he gets to those sectors with an empty sleigh.

Elf Frank: That's crazy terrible, Crash.

Elf Crash: So, we look now at alternatives. And right now, sitting in October, things still look a little stark.

Elf Frank: Explain.

Elf Crash: Well, Santa launches on December 23rd, late in the evening, just as December 24th dawns on Sector 1 and he takes off like normal to deliver. While he's on his way the North Pole and the workshop keep working. They have all the wish lists. They have Santa's orders. They keep pumping it all out, sending it straight from the North Pole closer to places in Sectors 4 and 5. That's cutting corners but I can tell you right now that's exactly what they are going to do.

Elf Frank: Crash, this exposes a little bit some of the more confidential things about how Santa does it every year. The world is too big, there's no way everything made at the North Pole for Santa to deliver can fit on the sleigh at one time. You're saying the North Pole stages stuff – does Santa pick it up while he's on his way? How does all that work?

Elf Crash: Through STSs, Frank?

Elf Frank: What's that?

Elf Crash: Sleigh to Sleigh transfers. Operation Airlift that you talk about every year on the Tracking Santa Around the World Radio show coordinates sleigh to sleigh transfers. Those sleighs and not a small number of elves work all the time Santa is in flight to replenish his sleigh. And they do it through sleigh to sleigh transfers. We don't usually talk about those because they are boring and routine.

Elf Frank: Ok, normal for elves like you but not really newsworthy on a usual basis?

Elf Crash: Right.

Elf Frank: Ok, so Santa will just get the stuff as he usually does through STSs – what's wrong with that plan?

Elf Crash: On a normal year the payload on an STS is easy. But this isn't a normal year. If the workshop is still putting out huge amounts of stuff on December 24th heading into Sectors 4 and 5 there's no way what they bring is going to FIT on Santa's sleigh even if they do last second sleigh to sleigh transfers.

Elf Frank: So you're saying the real problem then is exactly the same problem we have now – not enough stuff for the vast number of believers in Sectors 4 and 5 in the right place at the right time in order for Santa to deliver there on schedule? Is that it?

Elf Crash: That's it.

Elf Frank: Wow. What is Santa going to do?

Elf Crash: That's a magic question and I'm not in any position to pretend to know how to answer that, Frank. I know Santa's working on a lot of creative ideas with Flight Command to mitigate this whole thing, Frank. But I am not sure of any details yet.

Elf Frank: Creative ideas? What does that mean?

Elf Crash: Outside the box thinking, Frank. If the problem is too much stuff for just Santa's sleigh then naturally they are kicking around the idea of maybe multiple sleighs.

Elf Frank: Multiple sleighs. Sounds good. But how does Santa fly multiple sleighs and land them at the same time.

Elf Crash: He can't, Frank. He's just one guy.

Elf Frank: So you're saying...multiple Santas?

Elf Crash: No, I'm not saying that. There's only one Santa. But what about, um, deputy Santas?

Elf Frank: Wait, wut?

Elf Crash: This is outside the box, Frank. But what if Santa uses other elves to help him deliver? Would that work?

Elf Frank: You mean someone else besides Santa going down chimneys, eating cookies and stuffing stockings?

Elf Crash: They're talking about it, Frank.

Elf Frank: No way. Where are they going to find elves who can even do that, Crash?

Elf Crash: Well, what are you doing Christmas Eve, Frank?

Elf Frank: Oh c'mon. I'll be on the radio anyway. Can regular elves, like you and me, really be pressed into that kind of service?

Elf Crash: That's the million dollar question, Frank. Now look, I'm not saying all this is going to happen. I am saying Santa is considering everything right now to solve this problem. All options are on the table.

Elf Frank: So no hard decisions have been made even though we know, for a fact, we know that there's no way Santa's workshop is going to be finished by the time of Santa's launch.

Elf Crash: No hard decisions have been made. And no, we don't know that Santa's workshop will still be behind when Santa launches. We're two months out now. That's why YOUR job is the hotseat right now. The news is as much a part of the news as news gets right now.

Elf Frank: Wait, wut? You lost me?

Elf Crash: I'm saying what happens between now and December 23rd is the real big story. It will determine what happens once Santa launches. The only thing that is certain, and Santa has said it over and over in the meetings I have been in, is one thing, Frank.

Elf Frank: What's the certain thing?

Elf Crash: Santa has said there is no way he's not launching on time. He's adamant about it. So Santa will launch as normal and everything else will adjust around that.

Elf Frank: So...if he doesn't have toys for Sector 5, what do believers there get?

Elf Crash: There's plenty of socks and underwear, Frank.

Elf Frank: No. Don't say that.

Elf Crash: So then we have to solve that workshop problem, Frank. And YOU get to tell that story over the next two months.

Elf Frank: Ok, Crash. No pressure. Thanks for that overall picture of the situation and some of the things Santa is thinking over to solve this. And thanks for listening to this episode of the North Pole Podcast. We hope you join us frequently for breaking news as this story continues to unfold. On behalf of Elf Crash, North Pole Radio News and everyone at the

North Pole, this is Elf Frank Myrrh signing off for SantaUpdate.com on the Kringle Radio Network.