

CHRISTMAS CANCELLED?!?

Santa grounded as sleigh licence confiscated

The world stood shocked today as it was announced that billions of presents, as well as incalculable festive cheer, would go undelivered due to Santa Claus being unable to drive his big shiny red sleigh all around the world in just one night, as he has does for countless Christmases past.



Santa, who split from his wife Doreen Claus in 1998 after 115 years of marriage, had been paying maintenance for their three children, aged eternally four, five and nine, through the Infant Cash Enterprise, the Laplandic equivalent of the Child Support Agency. However, as Mr Claus has failed to make payment on more than one occasion in the second half of 2008, ICE has exercised its power to confiscate his sleigh operator's licence – leaving huge stockpiles of toys, games and sweets in limbo and Santa with no means to make a living. It is also unclear what the consequences will be for Santa's reindeer team, Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Blitzen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and the other one.

my cashflow tends to reflect that. With the credit crunch, the price of wooden trains and bouncy balls has risen sharply, so I'd had to delay a few maintenance payments. Doreen understood, but the next thing I know, there's a letter from ICE saying that my sleigh licence has been revoked and that's that. I don't know what I'm going to do – there aren't that many other jobs up here at the North Pole

and none that don't involve sleighing. I feel so sorry for the kids."

A spokesman for the Department of All Things Special & Magical said that the Christmas distribution responsibilities would be put out to tender, but that it did not expect any deliveries to be made until "the end of February or March. 2011, that is."

THE REAL STORY

The story above is, of course, a joke. However, what is not a joke is that thousands of children will be unfairly denied the opportunity to spend what should be one of the most wonderful times of the year, with one of their parents and countless other family members. It is not a joke that there are inherent problems within our family justice system, as well other agencies, which keep parents and children apart

unnecessarily. It is not a joke that to restrict a child's loving relationship with a parent is still accepted by society. It is not a joke that Families Need Fathers will keep working and fighting, day after day, year after year, until this is put right.

All we want for Christmas is for everyone to recognise, from Westminster to Warminster, that both parents matter.

Professor Geraint Melon of King's College London has estimated that up to **TEN BILLION** tears could be shed as a result, and also pointed to the "tragic waste" of up to **900 MILLION** mince pies, carrots and glasses of sherry.

Mr Claus told the Pole Star, "Obviously the Christmas thing is a lucrative job but it's a once-a-year gig and

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM FAMILIES NEED FATHERS.



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From the front page

'12 year fight' father let down again

McKenzie has learned that Dominic Cole and his daughter, whose tragic story was featured in McKenzies 78 and 79, has once again been let down by the family courts.

Dominic's fight to re-establish contact with his daughter has spanned more than twelve years - the vast majority of her life - and was described in the Court of Appeal as a "public scandal". Lord Justice Ward clearly acknowledged the "drip, drip, drip of venom" from Dominic's ex-wife which had "corrupted the girl and turned her viciously against her father" and left her believing that her father had sexually abused her, despite repeated investigations showing Dominic to be entirely innocent.

However, the alienation had been so persistent for so many years and the hostility so embedded that Lord Justice Ward concluded that he had no means by which he could re-establish the relationship between Dominic and his daughter, now fourteen years old. The only glimmer of hope that LJ Ward could offer was to ask that the copy of his judgment, which clearly stated Dominic's innocence and outlined his persistent efforts to be a fa-

ther to his daughter, be sent to his daughter's solicitor. The solicitor was to ensure the girl was made aware of its contents and to report back to the judge.

The judgment was passed down in May 2008. In November, Dominic contacted his daughter's solicitor, only to be told they had not received a copy of the

judgment from the High Court. Only when Dominic wrote to the High Court explaining the order of the judgment was a copy of it sent to the solicitor. Almost a month later, Dominic has yet to receive a reply.

McKenzie has followed Dominic's case for over a year and we are appalled that your court has once again fallen short for Dominic and his daughter. At the Court of Appeal in

May, it seemed that LJ Ward had recognised the evident injustice and its terrible consequences. Although he could not repair the damage done, he at least acknowledged the failure of the court and offered a small sanction which could one day help restore a father and daughter's relationship. However, somewhere along the way, even that has failed to come to fruition. McKenzie will keep you updated on Dominic's story in future issues.



Families Need Fathers Chair Charles Kenyon talks to the press at the opening of the Thames Valley group's new support and information centre in Reading. See page 11 for full report.

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Self-help

The FNF Self-help forum sees a huge traffic of emails of support and advice (an average of 878 posts per month during 2007) between members on a variety of issues. The emails reproduced below may have been edited for content and privacy.

Broken order action

Can anyone tell me what I have to do to get my ex out of my house? I have a court order for contact, but she won't let me see the children. I have to see them every week, but she won't let me. I have to see them every week, but she won't let me. I have to see them every week, but she won't let me.

I don't know your full circumstances but the quickest way to get your ex-partner back into court is to apply for a Contact and Dispute Order.

1. Apply to the court by filling in a C10 form - explaining the circumstances and the urgency.

2. Write a letter to the court, addressed to the judge who last dealt with your children's case - again explain the circumstances and urgency.

The C2 route is technically more correct by I have found that both methods are successful. The C2 should cost you £80, but some courts charge £175 for a C2. A letter of course is much cheaper.

The court usually responds to either of these approaches by listing a directions hearing. You would then have various options at the directions hearing e.g. insist on a penal notice (it doesn't always work) or if it seems really serious ask for the case to be transferred to a higher court where the judges have more powers of enforcement.
Ron

Dealing with the ex

Does anyone out there know the secrets to communicating with 'the ex'? I have been to court to get contact

with my kids, but handovers and life

Bill

Over the years, I have said very little to my ex and I have tried to not interfere in any way with how ex and my daughter do things. Yes, they do things that I do not approve of, but I have to ignore it. If the ex has a go at me at handovers I walk away.

I would second this - we went through a phase of getting constant abuse from my partners ex - she sent nasty letters and was abusive to my son, as well as all the verbal at collection times and rambling phone messages. We ignored it, hard as it was, and I have never ever given her the satisfaction of responding. She soon got bored.

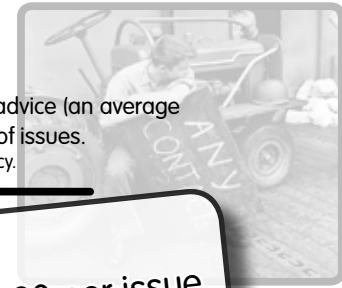
It is hard but ignoring it and not reacting really is the best thing - these people want a reaction and relish the thought of winding you up. Don't give her the satisfaction.

Amanda

Your son is being fed these words - they are not his. Yes, he may be angry that you no longer live there so the trick is to reassure him every time that you have not left him but his mum. Tell him over and over you love and miss him, make him feel confident and special

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Alison

Who has parental responsibility over her?

Parental Responsibility continues until the child reaches the age of 18, regardless of any Residence or Contact arrangements, court ordered or otherwise.

Who has parental responsibility over her?

Kalpesh

Technically you and Mum would need to sign the form - although the college may have arrangements for circumstances where one person with PR is not available.

I would get your daughter's mum to sign for the simple fact that you are demonstrating to your daughter that her mum is still important. Your daughter has made her decision to live with you (well done) and to now not involve her mum in her education - even just signing a form - doesn't sit well with me.

Oliver

PLEASE NOTE - THE FNF FORUM IS CHANGING. IN NOVEMBER WE'LL BE MOVING ONTO OUR BRAND NEW SYSTEM, BUT YOU CAN GET YOURSELF SIGNED UP NOW - TURN TO PAGE 6 TO FIND OUT HOW.