

Two of Santa's Reindeer Flee in Texas (Really)

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This is the VOA Special English Agriculture Report.

Two of Santa's reindeer -- Comet and Dancer -- got loose on a busy roadway in Texas just days before Christmas. Think we're joking? It happened halfway between Houston and Galveston. Reporter Deborah Wrigley from TV station KTRK picks up the story about the two runaway reindeer and their owner.

DEBORAH WRIGLEY: "His name is Joe Moorman. But his occupation is Santa Claus, from the beard to the reindeer, five tiny ones."

JOE MOORMAN: "This is Prancer, that is Blitzen and that is Donder."

Joe Moorman is a professional Santa Claus, also known as Father Christmas or Saint Nicholas or Kris Kringle. But unlike many other Santas, this one really does travel in a sleigh pulled by reindeer -- except when he has to transport them.

Last Wednesday the back door of the trailer opened as he was driving them to an elementary school. Comet and Dancer escaped onto Interstate-45 -- not exactly the North Pole. Another driver alerted Santa.



KTRK

Professional Santa Joe Moorman with his reindeer

JOE MOORMAN: "Someone pulled up beside us, actually, and blew the horn and was waving and all that, and told us we had some animals loose. Well, my heart did not do too well."

The morning traffic was heavy but slow with people on their way to work. Drivers called the police, who thought they were joking. Yes, there really were reindeer in the road. Then, says reporter Deborah Wrigley, Santa found that he had some helpers.

DEBORAH WRIGLEY: "People stopped traffic, got out of their cars."

One woman took off her shoes and ran after the reindeer. A man followed. But the reindeer themselves were the ones who ended the chase. They found a park

and stopped to eat. Joe Moorman says he was more shaken than they were. Santa and his reindeer were able to visit the schoolchildren as promised.

JOE MOORMAN: "God was with the reindeer, you know. And he takes care of fools and things that cannot take care of themselves."

The Reindeer Owners and Breeders Association says reindeer are easy to train to pull a cart or sleigh. Greg Finstad at the University of Alaska Fairbanks says reindeer "like people and are pleasant to have around." He says reindeer management is not very difficult. That's good, since he also says -- and children might want to cover their ears for this part -- reindeer is a basic meat in the cold climate of Alaska.

And that's the VOA Special English Agriculture Report, written by Jerilyn Watson. You can [watch Deborah Wrigley's story](#) about Comet and Dancer at voaspecialenglish.com. Of course, had Rudolph been there, he could have stood as a traffic light.

(MUSIC: "Rudolph the Red-Nose Reindeer"/Gene Autry)

I'm Bob Doughty.