A Christmas Tail
By Carla Everett, ICA Information Officer

The night before Christmas, Santa got such a fright….
When, through the darkness, Rudolph's nose glowed so bright.
Santa grabbed his gloves with unusual haste,
His chins and belly jiggled; there was no time to waste.

He rounded up Dancer, Prancer and the rest of the team
Corraling them safely and securely into quarantine.
For now Rudolph's nose glistened, sticky and warm,
Oh, my gosh--were tiny blisters startin' to form?

Was it a virus, a developin' disease?
Was Rudy contagious when he sneezed?
Could it be the dreaded foot-and-mouth?
For these deer, there could be no headin' south!

Quickly, Santa made his decision,
Tonight's delivery was under revision.
There'd be no pitter patter of reindeer feet,
But he'd find a way to deliver kids' treats.

While elves tossed gifts all in a pile,
Santa clutched his cell and started to dial,
He reported Rudy's nose so red,
It could be dangerous, it could be spread!

The vet must come to poke and prod,
Check those tiny feet that hadn't been shod…
The doc would make an examination,
Conduct tests, provide a scientific explanation!

But meanwhile, Santa must leave or be late
For this all-important, once-a-year date.
His flying deer, now under care of a pro,
The doc's conclusion, he soon would know.

Santa scrubbed his boots and hands,
He wouldn't haul germs to far-away lands.
So, even though his favorite reindeer is lame,
Santa must bring cheer, all the same.

Santa wouldn't cause children's tears,
He'll make appointed rounds, thanks to Goodyear!
Although this year his style has a crimp,
Santa will deliver---just from a blimp!

So, in the end, for Rudulph, it was just phlegm.
Allergies, a reaction to those holiday stems.
And his nose so sticky and red?
All those candy canes he was fed!

So all in all, it was a good night,
Despite Santa's terrible fright!
The reindeer are now asleep, all tucked in hay
and candy is hidden safely away!