

Rare full moon on Christmas

By Blaine Friedlander, Washington Post

As Santa Claus makes his annual toy-distribution trip around the world, he will be guided Christmas Eve by Rudolph's nose – of course – and the light of a brilliant moon. It is the first Christmas full moon since 1977, and just the ninth in the course of U.S. history.

The pudgy Christmas moon rises 99 percent illuminated on Dec. 24, serving as all-night lunar lantern for Santa and his reindeer team. On Dec. 25, the moon officially becomes full at 6:11am, just one hour before it sets. The full moon then rises again at 5:32pm on Christmas evening.

There were only three Christmas full moons in all of the 20th century: 1901, 1920 and 1977.

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