

# *Fiery XMAS News Flash*

## DEAN SENDS X-MAS GREETINGS

### Eschewing makes a triumphant return!

**M**erry Christmas to you and yours. I hope this holiday season finds everyone to be happy and healthy.

As the Christmas season draws nigh it makes me take a moment to wonder just exactly why words such as 'nigh' fall in to disfavor. This of course leads directly to the more general concept of the evolution of language and what the heck Chaucer might have meant in *The Lawyer's Tale* by "The tyme is come; a knave child she beer", other than to be pretty sure he wasn't referring to a waitress delivering a tasty malted beverage. But I digress.

Yes, while language might evolve over time, rest assured this newsletter will not. I guarantee that not only will this Christmas newsletter continue to offer very little in the way of actual content, it will ramble from topic to topic in a manner that can only be described as chaotic and whose only goal is to apparently create two columns of text.

However, even I'm not enough of a scoundrel to completely disregard all proprieties of common courtesy so I suppose a few words of a "just what in the heck I have been up to" nature are in order. Oh sure, I'm enough of a scoundrel in many many ways, just not this particular one.

Work continues to be pretty busy as we still manage to launch a shuttle on occasion. I support about all of them these days with the last mission that I took off completely being STS-95, which flew in 1998. You might think to yourself, 'those slave drivers, shirley they can give Dean an occasional mission off', but alas, not only should you be chastised for using "shirley" in place of "surely" (something I would never stoop to do), but it really has been my own doing as I don't mind working 'em all. I look at them as being my own personal Pokemon - gotta work 'em all!

That work hasn't gone completely unnoticed as this year I was recently awarded a Silver Snoopy. It's an award that epitomizes the blah blah blah... Tell you what, the details of what's involved are available on the web if you're interested. But rest assured, it was an honor to get the award, which included a pin flown in space.



**THIS NEWSLETTER IS GUARANTEED  
TO FILL A PIECE OF PAPER, OR  
DOUBLE YOUR MONKEY BACK!**

Oddly enough, the pin they gave me as part of the award flew on mission 51-C, one that flew back while I was still in college. At least I think I was in college then. I do remember a lot of bowling, beer and pool. But there's also this sort of vague recollection of time spent in classrooms and in libraries studying. At least I think so.

Despite my best efforts, the year wasn't completely vacation-free. Angela and I decided to visit sunny Puerto Rico for an extended weekend stay this fall. Now you might ask yourself why anyone would visit there, and my answer would be that it had several things going for it. A semi-exotic locale (or so one might think), decent airfares, and no passport required. This last requirement is pretty important because some idiot, despite being 43 years old, tall, and balding has never gotten around to getting one. (I leave it to you to guess which of us I'm referring to). I'd talk about the trip, but the space I normally allot to writing about my travels was used up by an obscure reference to the *Canterbury Tales*. Sorry.

Even though I've had high-speed internet access of one form or another for the last couple of years, for some reason I still maintain that dang Compuserve page:

[http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Dean\\_Lenort/homepage.htm](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Dean_Lenort/homepage.htm)

I hope this holiday season is full of fun and cheer and I sincerely hope I'll take the effort to visit you all again soon. Oh yeah, Excelsior!, er, Eschewing! Dean