

Ho Ho For Who???

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How is it possible that Christmas has come around again? For some of us this is the first year we have to endure without our child, for myself it's the third year I have contemplated wringing Santa's neck, throwing reindeers into my open fire and directing large shopping centres to put tinsel where it was never intended. But, like all other public celebrations it can be so very hard to deal with the fact that our special person isn't here to wake us with screams of delight – even if it is at 4 in the morning!

So what do we do? I guess we could hide ourselves away, investing in large reels of hessian, growing extreme lengths of facial hair and reappearing at some stage in January, or we can find ways of celebrating. Here are some suggestions that might not cost as much as 50 metres of hessian and a bag of bic razors.

- Decorate a star or Christmas ornament, put a photo on it, and place it proudly on the tree where everyone can see it (including those friends and family who think we should just 'forget'
- Donate some money to a favourite charity in honour of your child
- Release a balloon or several balloons according to the age your child would be at Christmas this year
- Send out Christmas cards – including a significant logo (I always add a star)
- Buy a special toy that can be added to a special memory box. If you haven't already got a memory box – maybe you could buy a chest, paint it and start putting in special memory items
- When opening presents put on a special piece of music
 - name a star after your child. Go to www.starregistry.com
- Do something special for a needy child – from your child
- Visit a special place – the cemetery, the train station, fairy land etc.

Christmas can be seen as yet another opportunity to publicly or privately acknowledge our child while showing that he or she is a part of a very loving family. Of course you could ignore any suggestions and head straight to a material outlet, buy up hessian, and when on the way back pop into a large shopping centre and head for the Customer Service Department. Hey, we need to keep all options open!

Have a safe Christmas, and through the sadness allow yourself to smile.