

# **FISHERMEN'S VOICE**

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*News & Comment for and by the Fishermen of Maine*

**FREE**

## **New Knee**

One of AJ's closest friends called. "Word is Lee's going for a new knee and this place (Naples, FL) is knee capital of the world. Latest technologies and sunny days to recuperate. Come on down."

Hard combination to pass up. Maine in winter is slippery. Since the tender age of 19 when the knives in astute judgment had removed all cartilage in right knee after a roughhousing accident, I'd lived with some level of pain. Condition aided of course by skiing accidents, running, and jumping around boats. Now, working more than two hours at a time was followed by laydown or sitting. Time for the orthopedic man to do his work.

AJ, in her always efficient travel search, plugged into e-info, found us an apartment, had it checked out and within three months on a Wednesday noon the anesthetist said to me, "In three minutes I'm going to give you the effect of 100 martinis, enjoy." And he did just that. In two and a half hours I'd slept off the effects and married a brandy new composite created appendage joint. Wow!

Still have to take a breath once in a while. Hard to believe how smooth something as traumatic can take place. I had called the orthopedic surgeon's office to be answered by a smiling voice that slipped me immediately to the "Chiefess" in charge of scheduling who, within minutes booked me for Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of January. Fine with me until AJ and nurse friends with horror visions and tales abounding clued me in to naiveté. Think of Friday cars on the assembly line and unmanned hospitals on weekends "with you, Lee, left to fend for yourself." Surrendered, re-skeded for the next Wednesday. There was peace in the village once again.

The world came into focus just as gurney bed and I, replete with drip bags and IVs rounded the door to the controlled hysteria of a twenty bed recovery room. What a hoot. Gurneys rolling in and out, one guy trying to pull his IV needles out. Another tried to punch out the nurse. Wanted out of bed, now. Patients babbling away, all as the effects of anesthesia wore off. Quickly learned that to get a nurse, had to memorize the name. By the time I left I knew most and where from. Word came in I had a destination bed. Ten minutes later, no go.

Patient didn't want to leave. Odd, but humorous. AJ was allowed in, asked about my dinner plans. I allowed chicken soup and a double martini would do well. Chicken soup one, martini zero. By 9:30 the troops rolled me onto a bed, fifth floor. Fortunate. Only one bad hit of pain due in part to my misunderstanding of pain levels and trying to figure which button for nurse and which for morphine. Finally kept pushing both.

Next day out of bed. Start walking out to hall and back. Torture techs showed up with continuous motion machine to start knee moving and ligaments stretching. Two hours, two times a day. All the time "just a few more degrees of bend." Food was planned bad. Survived on peanut butter crackers and AJ's home cooking. Nurses were great, but; twelve hour shifts and never the same. Time I'd get names memorized they were gone. Scores of faces each day. Three AM visits each night to draw blood and again at 5:30 for life signs and the flow started. Scrub clads checking on scrubs .... "What do you do?" .... "Oh, I'm so and so and I'm the ....." Often made no sense whatsoever. There's a reason why medical costs are out of control.

There has followed several weeks of physical therapy. Time on a "torture rack" (continuous motion machine) that flexed the knee for seemed like hours each day. PT nurse who would bend my knee to the limit, aaarghh, then want five more degrees. I've had chiropractic for out of whack hips and spine, massage for twisted leg muscles and a bad report card from the Doc for insufficient flexion (I remember report cards). Good days and not so good. Today I rode my bike for the first time. Skiing's not far behind.

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This elegant casserole is from the repertoire of the eminent Lorraine Dubais, a great friend who holds the enviable position of appraiser in Southwest Florida. A virtually recession proof occupation.

### **Spinach-Feta Casserole**

#### *Rice Layer:*

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 1/2 cups sliced onions  
1/2 tablespoon chopped garlic  
2 1/2 cups water  
1 cup rice (Basmati White or Brown Rice)  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper  
1/2 cup raisins  
1/3 cup slivered almonds  
1 teaspoon dried dill

1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill

#### *Spinach Layer:*

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 1/2 cups diced onions  
1/2 tablespoon chopped garlic  
1 lb. 8 oz. frozen spinach, thawed, excess water drained  
2 cups diced fresh tomatoes  
1 1/2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper

1 pound feta cheese, crumbled

1 medium tomato, sliced

In a separate skillet, heat oil and sauté onions and garlic for 3-5 minutes or until translucent. Stir in spinach, diced tomatoes, lemon juice, salt, black pepper and mix together. Heat this mixture until warm. Turn off heat and add feta cheese.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a 9 x 12 inch baking pan, spread the rice mixture on the bottom and layer the spinach mixture on top. Garnish with the sliced tomato and warm in oven for 10 minutes. Serves 6-8.

Fair winds and good roads.

*Lee S. Wilbur*