

FISHERMEN'S VOICE

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News & Comment for and by the Fishermen of Maine

FREE

A Curmudgeon's Christmas

Thanksgiving's next week. Good holiday. See some of the family. Big comfort food dinner. Maybe slip in some cole slaw and major jam for the rolls. Eat indecently. Have a few bloodys to get ready for the after cleanup. Love the leftovers. Ah yes, two-handed turkey sandwiches on thick white bread with slices of cold stuffing, mayo, and cranberry sauce. Compulsory to be eaten over the sink. Then turkey soup and turkey hash. Freeze the bone broth for another day. Good holiday. Upon us quickly and leaves with a good glow of soporific haze. Kind of camouflages or numbs a person to the arrival of that male-dreaded season, Christmas. That time of the year most certainly concocted by a woman whose design was to sentence men to a one month term of miserability.

Even now, 36 days to go, my hands start to sweat and a slight headache inches to the forehead. Dread starts to flow. Can already hear in my mind "the music". Will soon hear it on every radio station, in each and all stores, in restaurants that find an overwhelming need to play "it" that thankfully are peaceful for the remaining eleven months.

Just knowing six totes of decorations lay waiting on the basement shelves to be humped up the stairs one at a time, emptied of xmas trinkadoos all to be hung, set, placed, plugged or wrapped in the way all over the house stirs me toward deep depression. I, who suffer from advanced EADD (extreme attention deficit disorder) combined with wicked "CRS" will succumb to complaints of "just one more time" forgetting immediately the proper branch height of the tree and how many Santas go on which shelf. Arthritis is already niggling as I imaging stringing outdoor lights in a stinging blizzard and then unstringing, repacking and down the stairs with everything in reverse while counting the days till my new knee installation.

Memories from seasons past crowd in. The cute young blonde "up and coming" at L.L. Bean checkout with two carts of multisized same style fleece sweaters (one for every member). Large lady at mall parking lot repeatedly slamming car trunk overflowing with Xmas packages. Xmas tree morning with paper flying with each succeeding gift. Less meaningful than the last. The forced smile of enthusiasm as I wonder what in thunder I'll do with another cookbook, this one on "East Indian Islamic Cuisine".

And right up there, hovering for first place one that sends a chill of fearful dread. Christmas shopping. Annual fate far worse than cleaning the grill. Agonizing over what to buy, will they like it? Will it fit? Pay too much or not enough. Feel like a piker. Perhaps give all the grandbabies a cell phone. But they don't want to talk when I call them. Haven't gotten any pictures from last year's cameras. Maybe gift certificates—too

impersonal. Cards with cash. Card will be lost and they'll forget who sent it. Maybe a picture of Grump with his pockets inside out. Wouldn't believe it but good for a laugh.

Let's not forget the Christmas cocktail parties. "Didn't we just have this conversation two nights ago?" "Oh Agnes, I thought this canapé recipe was June's" Overbrandied eggnog, oh too sweet thin punch, bacon wrapped scallops, cream cheese with an undefinable something on crackers that break before you bite. Cold feet in thin socks and leather shoes, Pants that shrink after the third week and then...we have to reciprocate. And smile.

Wish I could hibernate with a friendly bear and just wake up for New Year's Eve.

For Christmas morning, featuring a warm coffee cake prepared the day before and baked in the morning to issue forth great smells from the kitchen while attacking the presents.

Overnight Crunch Coffee Cake

2 cups sifted flour	1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda	1/2 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder	2/3 cup margarine or butter
1 teaspoon cinnamon	1 cup buttermilk or sour milk
1 teaspoon salt	2 eggs

Cream margarine (pref. butter) and sugars until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time beating well. Add dry ingredients and spices sifted together alternately with buttermilk. Spread in greased and floured 13 x 9 x 2 pan.

Cover with the following topping:

1/2 cup brown sugar	1/2 cup chopped walnuts or pecans
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon	1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Combine ingredients. Sprinkle over batter in pan. Refrigerate overnight or for 8 hours. Bake in 350 degree oven for 45 minutes or until done. Cut in squares and serve warm.

My sincere best wishes for the holidays. Good roads and fair winds.

Lee S. Wilbur