

# Dinner Party of Ten

## 2019 Christmas

With Chef Deb Karnes

and Master Assistant Chay Karnes

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The **seventeenth** chapter of DP8/10-Christmas@Karnes unfolded on a pleasant late December evening. A rare Sunday called us, accommodating the busy calendars that had claimed our usual Saturday. Two feet of early December snow had almost melted before a sneaky few inches piled on, giving Chay a challenge to clear a track. Perhaps, the cars felt our anticipation, found the bare track, and muscled their ways to the top of the driveway.

The Christmas lights on both sides of the Weed Road valley dotted the darkness, with the Karneses' lights outdotted the others. The back door was filled by Chay and attendant Kalli who finally is getting used to this. (Sad to say: no cats this year.)

Although there was ample sitting place outside the kitchen area, it is there we congregated. The Adamses had returned, perhaps for their last Christmas, someone intimated; the Monteverds bemoaned the extra month of winter they endured; and we other six smiled and nodded our heads in feigned sympathy.

The immediate center of attention was **appetizers**, with the foot-and-a-half high Christmas tree festooning toothpicked chunks of salami, pepperoni, cheddar and Colby jack cheese, green olives, sweet petite gherkins, and grape tomatoes. 'Twas so well balanced that we quite cautiously snagged the first few morsels but then nearly stripped the tree clean.

Accompanying was the hot artichoke dip with peppers, celery, and crackers for dipping.

Somewhere in this midst, we Eight presented Deb and Chay with a **Resolution thanking and acknowledging their twenty years** of hospitality at Pine Meadow Lane and for the seventeen years of hosting Christmas.

**Course Two** presented the large bowl of salad greens, topped with blistered grapes, toasted slivered almonds, and fresh grated Parmesan cheese.

After guesses of what **Intermezzo** flavor Deb had created, a peach sorbet was tendered—a richer than



usual sorbet, with peaches frozen from this past summer. Farm to table, anyone?

#### Course Four

- Pork tenderloin, stuffed with mushrooms, bacon and provolone cheese
- Crispy smashed potatoes topped with Parmesan cheese
- Creamed spinach
- Brown sugar glazed carrots
- Crunchy Italian bread sticks flecked with herbs and Parmesan and Cheddar cheeses
- Applesauce

#### Drinks:

Mark had brought a couple bottles of MacGregor 2013 Pinot Noir Reserve, a good choice for the evening and a good showing from the Finger Lakes. Otherwise, beer, water, and soda complemented, while Ken was proffered his evening injections of coffee.

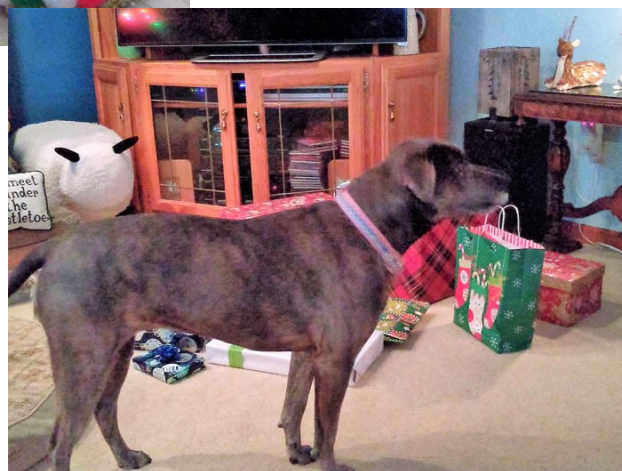




It was time to let dinner settle, head for the living room furniture and chairs, and anticipate the Santa-Thief Christmas gift exchange, as we have done for years. Chay's rules have stood in good stead since the beginning. After a sleepy start, the thieves were busy looking over the set of lap blankets, pottery brie bowl, tea/chest, specialty food box, phone chargers, solar charger, Yeti mug, home security camera, braided Americana mat and basket, and metal sign with wine. Merry Christmas!

By this time, most of dinner had settled, allowing consideration of **dessert**. With long and sharp knife in hand, Deb, carefully at first, crunched her way through the puff pastry cannoli cake – layers of a beautifully scenic cake that Deb reassured us we would never see again – a Royal PIA, if you catch the drift. Differences of texture and taste made for one of the most interesting cakes for DP8, and it soon evanesced to a few flakes and fragments of puff pastry.

And there was a plate of assorted cookies and candy. (a toast to Deb's new business – Deb's Sweet-er Side; I will not comment on the comments)



Although we had been in awe since the evening's beginning, it must now be revealed that **Deb K once again masterminded, with help from the capable and dependable Chay, the entire dinner!** We humbly and gratefully accepted this generosity of one our culinary highlights of the year.

Dinner was done, with an extension of afterglow of story-telling, reminiscing, and wishing well for the future. Before we disappeared into the darkness, we wished that 2020 be as kind, merciful, and eventful as can be and, when it is not, may we have the grace and strength and support to venture onward. **Thank you, Deb and Chay, for such magnanimous hospitality.**

