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A Christmas list in November is just wrong

By Ted Brown

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A Ted Bit

At this time of the year, I develop writer's block. Every year, the most difficult literary composition I must sit down and create is that dreaded Christmas list.

The pressure began early this year, in November, when I received an email from Maggie, a.k.a. Daughter Number Three.

The email, with the subject Maggie and Oliver's Christmas Lists, arrived Nov. 4, stating:

Here you go just some ideas we really don't need anything ;) Now I expect some (lists) in return!!!

Thanks!!!

She always tacks on those multiple exclamation marks just to annoy me, I'm sure.

And where was her hubby Jeff's list? Hmm, I'm seeing a double standard here.

For the most part, I can ignore a request for a Christmas list dated Nov. 4 without too much effort. I've been doing that for years.

But Nov. 8, I received another email, this time from Jenn, Daughter Number Four.

She attached her Christmas list in response to Maggie's request, complete with the proper sizes for clothes, etc. She went one better she included her fiancé Chris's Christmas list as well!

Okay, distributing a Christmas list during the first week of November is simply wrong. There really ought to be a law against it.

Hiding in the barn, I hoped they might not notice I hadn't yet composed the said list, but a day or two later, another email arrived.

We haven't received a list from Dad yet one emailed.

But the email exchanges went viral in a couple days. One daughter would send an email to the others saying, "Take that so and so item off her list I bought it for her last night."

It's a very helpless feeling to be a 65-year-old male, who needs absolutely nothing, and is surrounded by four daughters who are so into Christmas and asking for a gift list.

I tried. I really, truly, over the moon tried my very best to come up with a list. God only knows

how hard I tried!

1. Blue jeans
2. Dress shirts
3. Black socks.

I was done.

Then comes the final stab to my heart.

I'm so ahead of the game this year, emailed one of my daughters, I'm well on the way to being finished shopping. But we haven't seen your list yet Dad.

I've noticed the lists have become a little more corporate with the years.

Years ago, when Jenn was a little girl, her list was more of a work of art than a simple utilitarian Christmas list.

I even kept it one year. It was beautiful.

Adorned with Christmas clip art, red and green lettering and all the trimmings. Hell, it almost smelled like turkey cooking.

With it was the message:

I am following the trend and sending you my Christmas list, hopefully those of you who have not sent one yet will follow suit, you know who you are Merry Christmas! Only 32 days

And the next day would be 31 days and so on.

It was cute at first.

Back to the present. Since Maggie started the ball rolling Nov. 4, and Jenn soon after, I've also received lists from Daughters One and Two (Lindsay and Mary Ann,) as well as lists from three grandsons, (okay, Oliver's was sent by his mom; his handwriting isn't quite legible yet.)

My sons-in-law have finally sent their lists, and The Sidekick even threw together a list.

Geez, I'm surprised Hamish the dog hasn't written one!

By now, it's become a conspiracy: them vs. me.

And naturally, if I haven't composed a list, well you can pretty much guess where I stand when it comes to shopping.

Only 17 days, and counting...

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