

Festive fiascos common at our place

ANSWERS

PASCAL ENDUPAT OPPOSE
 APOLLO GOINAGE WHORLS
 REPAST HURRYUPANDWAIT
 POISON ATEIN TEE
 AMA ROO IVO DAMPNES
 RANKANDFILE SOREST
 ARKINS ROLLUPS ROW
 BILL BANS NIPANDTUCK
 SEEDINESS SPLATS TOA
 AMOS SHIEST SWEAT
 BEFRUITFULARDMULTIPLY
 LURES MESONS NEIN
 ORA GANAPE THEGREASE
 TOUCHANDGO ARID BLUR
 OAR SENTFOR SEAMAN
 CHARON RANTANDRAVE
 THETIMES AAR CII YES
 ARR SWARM THEFTS
 COMEOUTANDPLAY FIESTA
 IMAGES STOLEUP LOCKER
 TENORS HERESTO ENTICE

Although Christmas comes at the same time every year, I never fail to be surprised by its arrival.

When I first got married, the only things I could cook were boiled eggs and toast, so it took a lot of courage, not to say stupidity, to invite my mother, two of her friends and my brothers to dinner the Christmas after Mr. Wallethead and I were joined in connubial bliss.

I bought a turkey which was roughly the size of a small horse and called my mother, figuring she would know what to do with it. I followed her instructions with elaborate care and by 1 p.m., a delicious smell was wafting through the apartment. Lunch was ready, but the



Kate's Corner

Kate Gilderdale

designated eaters were nowhere to be seen.

By 2 p.m. the turkey was somewhat past its prime and everything else was, to put it mildly, well done. At 2.15, the doorbell rang to herald the arrival of our guests, but before I could steer them in the direction of the table, my spouse was taking orders for pre-prandial drinks. It was sometime after 3.30 before we actually sat down to eat.

I heaved the turkey out of the

oven and attempted to transfer it to the carving dish. It was so well cooked that most of the meat fell off en route and the resulting dish was more like turkey stew. The potatoes, on the other hand, were like bullets and the vegetables depressingly reminiscent of the unlovely school dinners of my youth.

A singularly unappetizing crust had formed over the bread sauce and the plum pudding, which I had completely forgotten about, had boiled dry, leaving me with a vat of brandy butter and nothing to accompany it.

For the next few years, until we crossed the pond, I wisely left my mother and mother-in-law to take it in turns to cook the turkey. By the time I got back to preparing the Christmas repast, my culinary acumen had run the gamut from rare pork chops to the occasional gourmet triumph and my roasting skills were showing a vast improvement. My next festive fiasco occurred five weeks

after our son was born. Malcolm was a bonny baby, whose idea of a good time was to sleep all day and cry all night. By the time Dec. 24, 1978 hove into view, Chateau Gilderdale was sadly lacking the customary ho ho ho of the season.

After a silent breakfast of slightly congealed poached eggs, we spent Christmas day with friends and returned in the early hours of the evening, only to fall asleep watching a Biblical epic starring - who else? - Charlton Heston and a cast of mad Roman chariot drivers. Dinner that year consisted of two tiny, shrivelled Cornish hens and a box of Uncle Ben's long grain and wild rice.

This year, I am as unprepared as ever. I didn't even get as far as buying cards, never mind sending them, but at least I know what's for dinner and how to cook it. And I've finally trained my children to sleep through the night.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to one and all.

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