

DP10 Christmas 2018 @ Karnes

The sixteenth DP8/10-Christmas@Karnes wrote another chapter as savory and delectable and sociable as the best of the first fifteen chapters. And weather again favored easy travel – not a speck of snow in the air or on the ground—not Christmasy but more easily navigable.

A triangle of blue lights on a small white pine greeted us halfway up Pine Meadow Lane, and the rest of display was visible once we turned up the driveway. Chay had set up lights before a cast's limitations. (Those in the know know the cast reference.)

Kallie needed his minute or two to greet people, with even Kiki making a rare appearance. We admired the tree, placed presents under the tree, and then moseyed over to the islands where appetizers and libations awaited. We milled around, intermingling, offering to help out the chef if needed, milled around more for an hour until the repeated call to the table finally lured us.

Once again, food competed to be the obvious star for the night. The list for the evening:

Appetizers:

- shrimp in honey garlic sauce
- vegetable tray of celery, baby carrots, red pepper – accompanied by a veggie dip

Second course

- lasagna Bolognese, with beef pork and chorizo

Third course

- mixed salad of romaine, kalamata olives and shaved parmesan, to be topped with a roasted red pepper dressing

Fourth course / Intermezzo

- grapefruit sorbet, with pulp

Fifth course / Entrée:

- a platter of beef tenderloin (with second platter waiting in the wings), over ten pounds
- French onion au jus

Sides:

- twice baked potato casserole with cheese, bacon, sour cream, scallions, with butter, of course
- roasted vegetables – carrots, mushroom caps, asparagus, pearl onion, red pepper
- homemade cranberry sauce
- pull-apart garlic-butter and Asiago cheese bread





Later, Dessert:

- cookie tray – a dozen, or more, types of Christmas/holiday types
- chocolate raspberry Charlotte royale! outside layer - jelly roll of dark chocolate cake and chocolate ganache lined with more chocolate ganache; inside - white chocolate raspberry mousse

Liquids:

- Punch – citrus–orange-lemonade-cranberry with frozen citrus as garnish, seltzer for fizz, “vodka for fun”
- choices of red and sparkling wine
- beer
- coffee and tea



And “**Young Ms Karnes**” even outdid herself, if that was imaginable after the last couple of years. Every single dish, yes, everyone, was prepared by... Deb K! She insisted, we complied and brought wine, and we all enjoyed one of our culinary highlights of the year.

At the risk of unintentional slight to the non-mentioned, I draw attention to:

- the bread: if offered earlier, we would have been sated and not eaten anything else
- the visual of the platter of beef
- the lasagna as an earlier course, a right-sized portion
- pulp/crystal mix of the sorbet
- the royale cake, which Deb said looked like the picture, tasted good, fortunately, “considering the time it took to make”



Food is the physical manifestation of our pleasure of the group. Less tangible, although it feels tangible at times, is the camaraderie fostered by all the crossings of life we have shared with each other. As time passes, we have learned to **savor these moments**.



Whether it was milling and chatting with different formations of groups, listening to a good tale, the banter across the table, wishing Deb the real Happy Birthday (two days earlier, and, nah, not a big number, well, maybe), re-telling and expanding on old stories and news, laughing at pleasant tales, reminiscing over sixteen years of DP8 and other longer relationships, it all is both a reinforcement of life lived well and also a therapeutic balm for the challenges that life tosses our ways.



Back to the table. We took our self-assigned seats, an arrangement that has been in effect since the beginning. Chay and Ken occupied the ends, with the Teators and Notars on the interior side, the Adamses, Kriss, and Deb on the exterior side. (Someone could really mess us up by taking a different seat! ha)



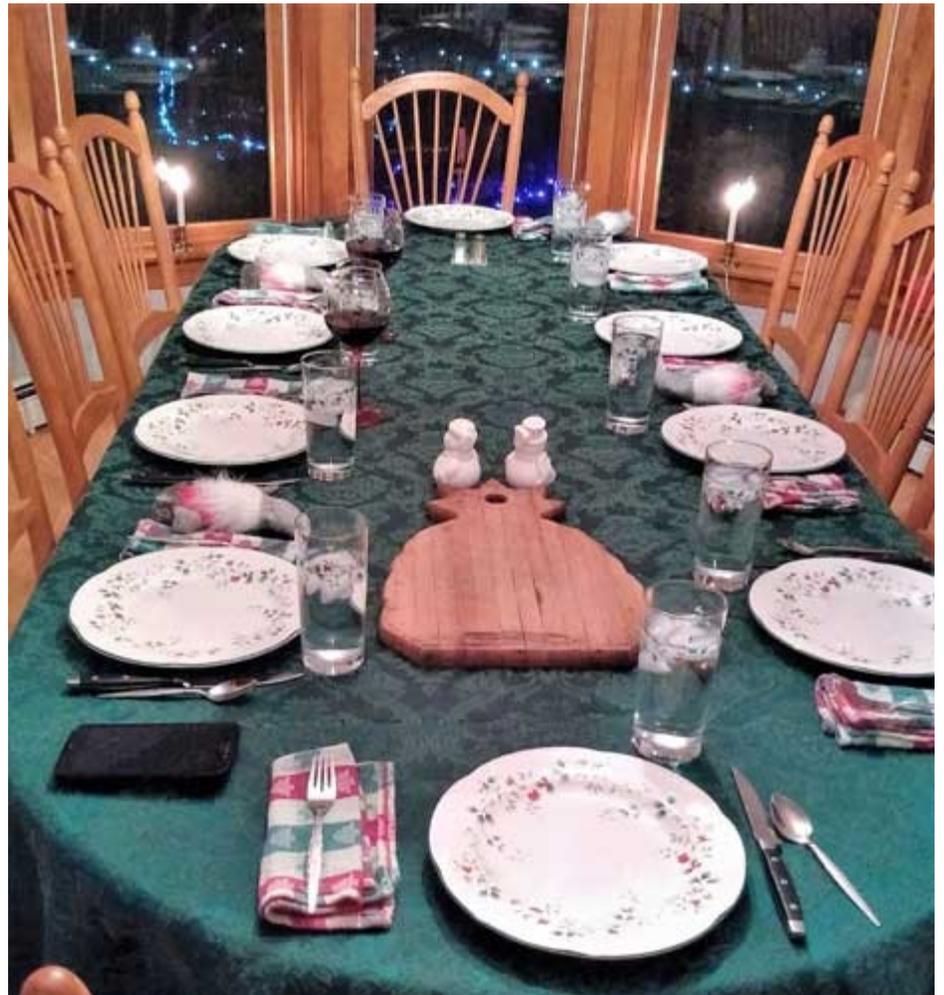
A Binetsky bowl, cutting board, ice cream maker, Tile, Echo Dot, bird house, and more were revealed, examined, and generally did not stay with the original selector. Lots of Christmas spirit with a sprinkle of near malevolence! Judy maintained her master thief status.



Deb presented a favor for each couple, a tradition of hers. This year's was a stuffed man/elf/creature, peasant-dressed, with a tunic that Judy examined both sides of. ha

We continued the chatting while, when necessary, the hosts departed to prepare delivery of the next course. Offers to help were gratefully accepted, considering the circumstances.

We lingered after the main course for some time, and then the call came to gather in the living room for our Bad Santa Gift Exchange. Rules were rehashed, numbers distributed, and knavery commenced.



And when enough laughter had passed, we headed back to the dessert table. Topics of the evening included: details of the cast and of the bandage, Deb K's unquiet start of retirement, winter plans, the start of medical talk ending with the much-wished-for fill of sex talk, the snowbirds joining the FL residents, and a host of other filler that are our lives' contents.

The clock neared 11, and once again, we contemplated the specialness of an event that stands out on our calendars. **Thank you, Deb and Chay**, for such generosity and hospitality, and Deb K especially for the stellar efforts under trying circumstances.

Goodbye soon, 2018! We wish that 2019 be as kind and eventful as can be and, when it is not, may we have the grace and strength and support to venture onward.

PS: Because I write this after intervening events, I cannot not mention the passing of Deb K's mom on Christmas Day. Lots of thoughts and feelings, which I leave untouched for this account.

