A Contagious Christmas

Warning—The Center For Disease Control warns of a highly infectious disease spreading across the country, particularly amongst our juvenile population. The disease prompts children to act in bizarre ways, causing them to be courteous, helpful and quiet. The outbreak usually begins around the first week of November and can affect people of all ages. Because insurance does not cover the costs, treatment for this disease has already bankrupted several families and there is no known cure. The malady is caused by the fact that Jesus was born on a holiday.

Symptoms—If you have one or all of the following symptoms you may have already contracted the much dreaded disease known as “Christmas Spirit.” For some unknown reason, have you recently purchased an expensive gift for someone you don’t really like?

Are you doing things you normally wouldn’t do such as attending church or letting some dork at an office party kiss you just because you are standing under a parasitic plant? Have you strung lights on the outside of your house overloading the circuit and causing the lights to go off inside your home? Have your brought an evergreen tree into your home that you paid $125 for and then had to kneel down to put a star on the tiny thing? (This is known as getting “trimmed” by a tree.)

Have you caught yourself humming about partridges in pear trees and dreaming about silent nights? Are you eating foods that you normally can’t stomach, such as fruitcake, turkey, frankincense and myrrh? Did you, like the Secretary of the Treasury, Congress and our President, promise more than you could possibly deliver? (Also known as the Santa Syndrome.)

Treatment—Other than drinking copious amounts of spiked egg nog there is no known cure for the Christmas Spirit. Clinical findings do however indicate the following prescription might help get rid of the affliction. Lick envelopes for 175 Christmas cards and stand in line at the Post Office for three hours just to purchase the pretty stamps that your wife insists upon.

Get down on our knees and pray at your child’s school pageant that he doesn’t embarrass the family name in his role as Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer’s rear end. (And get over the fact that the teacher’s pet got the “leading” role as Rudolph’s front end.) On December 25, invite someone to dinner who is downtrodden, beaten and largely ignored by the world. This Christmas any Republican or Wall Street Investment banker will do. If you can find one who admits to it. Prognosis—By following these directions the Christmas Spirit should leave your body about 7:30 on Christmas Day after your third Christmas Dinner. (For some sufferers the disease actually hangs around until the credit card bills come due).

You’ll know you are well and the spirit has left your body when...

You realize you’ll be working the first six months of the New Year to pay for all the gifts you gave and all you got in return was a pair of fuzzy mauve slippers.

You go to the store to return the ugly slippers and you realize all the gifts you purchased just a week ago are now on sale for half of what you paid.

Or you discover that you sent out more Christmas cards than you received.

If you are a Christmas Spirit sufferer, cheer up and look at the bright side. Tell your in-laws that you have a serious communicable disease and maybe they won’t show up for the holidays this year.

May you and yours catch the Christmas spirit this holiday season.