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Feliz Navidad in October?

by BRIAN LOCKHART

I entered my local grocery store last week for the usual purchases, and there greeting me in the foyer of the store was a large Santa Claus type figure surrounded by Christmas trees and other assorted nonsense.

Yes, it was October ? that fun fall month of changing leaves, unpredictable temperatures, and the World Series playoffs.

Yet, there it was ? a Christmas display.

It turns out the entire store was shifting into Christmas gear with holiday displays being set up all over the place.

I approached one woman who works there that I know fairly well and am friendly with, and asked her how her day was going.

She showed me box of Christmas ornaments she was supposed to be putting in a display. She said she thought it was ridiculous that she was told to start doing the whole Christmas thing when it wasn't even Halloween yet.

Apparently she had questioned as to why she was given Christmas ornaments in October and was told it ?came from corporate' and that ?corporate' had told them to make the switch.

Sometimes I think the term ?corporate' refers to one guy who makes bad decisions, but is sur-rounded by VP's and underlings who give the thumbs up because they are too afraid to say something contrary to a stupid idea.

Several days later we had our annual Halloween day in town where businesses hand out candy. It was absurd to see groups of kids and their parents in costume trick or treating while standing next to a display off elves holding packages of fruit cake.

I understand some businesses bank their whole year on the couple of months leading up to the holiday season, but a grocery store does not fall into that category of retail.

When Charlie Brown spoke of the commercialization of Christmas, I'm pretty sure this is what he was talking about.

There is another important date coming up that should be recognized before businesses switch to Christmas mode.

November 11, isn't a holiday in the traditional sense. It is not recognized as a statutory holiday.

You won't get the day off and people don't reserve the day to go to the cottage or plan a fes-tive party in the backyard gazebo.

Remembrance Day possibly should be a statutory holiday, but the general thinking is that the date should be recognized because you want to recognize it ? not because the government stamps it in some legislation.

The people who turn out at the local cenotaphs are there because they want to be a part of the ceremony that remembers the fallen and those that went off to war and were never heard from again.

They want to remember the sacrifice of those that fought and did return to lead productive lives.

Many of them are still with us although their numbers are dwindling, along with a new genera-tion who did their part in Afghanistan.

At those ceremonies I see older people, veterans, and legion members. I see young families who bring their children so they know what it is all about. There are groups of cadets, Boy Scouts and Brownie groups and other local kids clubs that turn out.

I see banners being put up locally with the likeness of a soldier and a brief description of ser-vice. Those banners are inspired by and provided by local families and the Legions.

I already have my poppy. I got it from a volunteer manning the entrance of the same grocery story that is already trying to jam Christmas down our throats.

Remembrance Day isn't a day to celebrate war, and it is not a day to celebrate victory on a bat-tlefield.

In our Canadian way of thinking, I don't think you'll find a cenotaph anywhere across the coun-try with a statue of a soldier celebrating victory. They are always posed in a moment of reflec-tion.

It is a day to remember young men who stepped up to do a duty when it was needed most.

While the Christmas season may be the time of year where the dollars flow and retailers cele-brate the fact that you feel the need to buy Uncle Elmer a bottle of Old Spice, waiting another week to allow Remembrance the dignity and recognition it deserves before putting up the wreaths and piping in Feliz Navidad over the store stereo system won't harm the bottom line.