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## Wishbones for everyone

**By Rebekah Schilperoort**

Friday, November 18, 2005

Thanks to Ken Ahroni, everybody can rest easy when it comes to deciding who gets to crack the wishbone this holiday season.

In fact, the West Seattle native has made it possible to rest your wishes on these bird bones every day of the year, if that is your desire.

Ahroni is the inventor of the Lucky Break Wishbone.

He promotes his product as a 99.9 percent realistic, but synthetic, replica of the V-shaped bone found in turkeys and other birds, often cracked in two on Thanksgiving Day by hopeful wishers.

"Why at traditional Thanksgiving meals, when there is a bounty of food, is there but one lonely wishbone?" Ahroni writes on the company's Web site.

After 25 years as president of World Master's Inc., a consulting firm specializing in the development of new products within the seasonal lighting industry, Ahroni felt it was the right time to pick up on an original idea he had years earlier.

"I felt it was time for a change, and I needed a break, a lucky break," he said.

His birthday just happens to fall on the day after Thanksgiving, and for as long as he can remember his family always celebrated both occasions simultaneously.

Having to share his birthday with everyone who sat around the Thanksgiving table helped Ahroni sprout the idea of wishbones for all a few years ago.

"I realized that there are just never enough wishbones to go around," Ahroni recalled. "So I figured there had to be a way to solve the wishbone shortage."

As in many families across America, he remembers endless fights between his siblings as to who would be lucky enough to take a crack at the lone wishbone.

"It's sort of an anti-climactic event too," he said. "You never get to break it on Thanksgiving Day because it has to dry out, and that can take days."

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As the founder and the president of the Lucky Break Corp., Ahroni oversees a nine-person staff as well as production, marketing and distribution for his product that has quickly gone international, selling to both Canada and, ironically, Turkey.

"We're producing over 20,000 Wishbones a day now, and operating two shifts, five days a week," he said.

Incorporated in June of 2004, the corporation sells to a myriad of local stores as well, including Thriftway in West Seattle. The product can be found in almost 30 states.

The most challenging aspect of developing the wishbone was making the product look and feel realistic, said Ahroni. In his previous business, he had worked with the goal to develop durable and safe plastics for the seasonal lighting industry. With Lucky Break Wishbone, he had to work to make a synthetic product that would be sure to break.

"I began experimenting with a number of plastics and ultimately developed a plastic that replicates the snapping of an authentic dried turkey wishbone," he said. "It's sort of like a cooking recipe; you need a little more salt until you get it just right."

He is also proud that all aspects of his product are produced in the United States.

"One of the points in my business plan was that this new business should support the efforts of workers here in America," he said.

He hopes his already growing and profitable business will expand even more, reaching out to different types of markets.

"People that like to celebrate every kind of holiday are our target customer," he said. He calls the plastic wishbones a "caterer's dream come true" and "vegetarians love them because they are guilt free."

"Businesses are always looking for something new and unique to offer their clients," he said.

Lucky Break Wishbones seem to be packaged and marketed as a game. But the rules are simple, and actually date back to 322 B.C.

The tradition of two people pulling on each side of the bone, with the person getting the larger part said to have his wish granted, was actually brought to England by the Romans. Later on the English carried it to America.

And in the same way that tradition became part of American culture, Ahroni predicts Lucky Break Wishbones will also find their way into American customs.

"This is no pet rock fad," he said. "I've worked very hard, and I think I've had a few lucky breaks myself. I attribute some of my success to that luck, but I have made some smart moves and some lucky ones."

But beware. A disclaimer on the back of the package reads, "Lucky Break Wishbone Corp. makes no guarantee that our product will make your wishes come true. (But they might.)"

Lucky Wishbone Corp. is located on 4400 S.W. Roxbury Place. Call toll free 1-866-LUCKY-WISH, or 933-8700.