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(Continued on Page 6)



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Poor Will's Farmland News Almanack

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December 3 - 9

Poor Will's Almanack The Transition Time to Late Winter

The Thanksgiving, with its reliable bounty, its reunions, its hours of perfumed air, is over, and the raking, the planting of bulbs, and the digging of root crops are finished for the year. The freezer and pantry shelves are as full as they are going to be: What we have done, we have done; and what we have left undone, we have left undone.

Jane Kenyon

Record & Average Temperatures For The Farmland News Area (Toledo Stations)

December 4: Record High: 63 - 1953 Record Low: -1 - 1966 Average High: 39 Average Low: 24

December 5: Record High: 64 - 1982 Record Low: -2 - 1976 Average High: 39 Average Low: 24

December 6: Record High: 64 - 1879 Record Low: 0 - 1964 Average High: 38 Average Low: 23

December 7: Record High: 62 - 1951 Record Low: -2 - 1885 Average High: 38 Average Low: 23

December 8: Record High: 65 - 1966 Record Low: -7 - 1977 Average High: 38 Average Low: 23

December 9: Record High: 60 - 1952 Record Low: -5 - 1917 Average High: 37 Average Low: 22

The Moon in December

The Moon is full on December 5
The Moon enters its last quarter on December 14
The Moon is new on December 20
The Moon enters its second quarter on December 27

Sun Time

On December 2, the Sun reaches its earliest setting of the year in much of the Lower Midwest, and it continues to set at the same time for 12 days.

Star Time

Orion is the most obvious of all the star groups, and around him cluster some of the easiest stars to identify.

Leading Orion into winter is red Aldebaran, the eye of Taurus. In front of Taurus, the seven sisters of the Pleiades lie almost in the center of the sky.

Above the Hunter's raised arms, Capella is the largest light in Auriga. Above and behind Orion, Castor and Pollux, the brightest stars of Gemini mark the east.

Trailing along in the southeast is Sirius, the giant Dog Star.

Weather Trend

The high pressure system that typically arrives at the end of December's first week is a major pivot for severe weather throughout the states along the 40th Parallel.

A secondary front often increases the assault on your homestead between the 11th and the 13th.

Zeitgebers:

Events in Nature that Tell the Time of Year

When sunset reaches its earliest time of the year, the brittle leaves of the pear trees fall.

This is the time during which the second bloom of forsythia flowers ends, when witch hazel blossoms wither, and the last of the golden beeches, the willows, osage and oaks come down.

Even though this is one more week of endings, it is not a week of stasis. Spruces are growing new needles.

Caraway and henbit sometimes flower in the sun, and a dandelion or a periwinkle opens in scattered fields and lawns.

Fresh chickweed, which sprouted at the end of the summer, is blossoming in warm corners of the woods.

Catnip sometimes grows back beside thistle, moneywort, chickweed, wild geranium, leafcup, henbit and yarrow.

Farm and Garden Time

Try to complete harvest of corn, soybeans and sugar beets before the arrival of early winter, which normally storms in with the second December front, bringing the first taste of snow to the Border States and often a major blizzard to the North.

The Christmas tree harvest is well underway, and the last poinsettias have come north. In greenhouses and sunrooms, tomatoes sown in July will be getting ripe as December approaches.

Marigolds, zinnias, impatiens and other bedding plants saved from the cold may still be flowering.

Mind and Body Time

The danger of Seasonal Affective Disorder increases as the winter period of solar stability (December 5 - January 8) begins, keeping the days short and the amount of available sunlight.

Be out of doors as much as possible to maximize exposure to light.

The bright fluorescent lights of malls and shopping centers may also be helpful.

Creature Time

(for fishing, hunting, feeding, birchwatching):

Cold fronts that usually arrive around December 3 and 8 will be preceded by a dropping barometer, encouraging activity in fish and game.

Honeysuckle foliage continues to fall, opening up the undergrowth for hikers and hunters.

If you are bird watching, set out additional feeders for suet and fruit as well as for seeds and grains.

Keep track of the types of birds that arrive in your yard. Be ready for late and early migrants.

Journal

December 4, 1992: To the woods this afternoon, cloudy, 40 degrees, light breeze: Clover foliage keeping the paths green, with some dandelions, some plantain.

Wind in the dry grass, oak leaves rustling, distant crows intermittent, no other birds for the first miles.

Then the scream of a robin as though he were frightened or had been attacked.

Moss was still bright beside me, became the dominant green in the woods.

A few red raspberry leaves at the top of the hill, an occasional bank of honeysuckle berries.

Nettles, protected by wild roses, were growing back in the valley, a foot tall.

Top sweet gum seed balls were holding on, Teasel was dark in the dull goldenrod fields.

Osage fruits all yellow on the ground. Pale greens and pastels of the lichens.

Then the landscape down the valley: bands of grays and browns above a sky of light stratus clouds.

The trees black, pasture chartreuse: a cross section of the winter, veins of this time. Walnut hulls stained the wood purple.

Coming back, I saw a pair of flickers; they screeched then flew west off toward the river.

At my summer fishing hole, three tan moths, between half an inch and an inch wingspan, struggled through the cold. I cast my line out there: only one bite.

Today, the pieces of the last season become fragments of a new season, Early Winter, the first season of the new year.

Almanack Literature The Ohio Coon Dog Field Trials By Pete Jones, Lynn, IN

My life as a young boy was much different than the lives of most of my friends. Most of them spent Sunday in Sunday School and church. I spent my Sundays working at the Ohio Coon Dog Field Trials.

My dad built an electric generator with a gas engine for power. It would run his sound system in places where there was no electricity available.

My job was to climb trees and help place two large steel speakers in them. I would help string wire from the speakers to the sound systems. Dad could then make announcements about the trials or play music from a recorded player.

The trials were always held in the woods. Men would go about a mile away and drag a sack of coon manure over the ground. They would take the sack up to a tree where a coon would be tied to a lower limb.

The trial would be over when the first dog would tree the coon by looking up at the coon and barking at him.

The last good thing I remember about the Coon Dog Field Trials was our picnic lunch. It consisted of a pork chop sandwich with green onions, a cold six-ounce Coca Cola and custard pie. I cherish these memories.

FN

Things That Matter Most

For most of us our lives revolve around work, the daily newscast, politics, family, and friends - not necessarily in that order.

It is very difficult to escape events as they occur in the world around us.

With what is going on in eastern Europe and the middle east, sometimes our attention to important matters is thwarted due to these unwanted events occurring around the globe.

Well, my friends, Christmas is upon us and there's a definite need to relieve ourselves of the stressful things that garner far too much of our attention.

I don't have to tell anyone that Christmas is a season of peace, love, joy, and devotion to our Lord and Savior who came to earth as a human being and as an expression of God's unending love for us.

We need to step back from all the offending things and distractions that minimize our happiness at this time of year . . . yes we can do it.

Shut off the newscast, put up the cell phones, refrain from political

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

by Ron Bliss

discussions and concentrate on just what this season is about.

Plan on attending at least one serious Christmas event in your area, preferably one that is held at a local church.

If you don't attend church plan on going to church on the Sunday before Christmas, to listen and contemplate the Christmas message.

If you haven't been to church in a long while, now is the opportune time to start . . . you will be blessed.

This world is more than movies, pop tunes, video games and sports.

The world is filled with so much chaos and in turn, causes undue stress to millions of people.

God can relieve that stress, bring peace, and joy into your life and make you an entirely new person.

Man has taken the inherited world that God gave us and filled it with so much turmoil that we need

to return to the very basics to find the love, peace and joy that God intended for us.

Realize it or not, this world is not our final home.

God's promise for us is for bigger and better things.

If we are faithful and just, He will forgive our sins and we can spend an eternity in a Paradise He has prepared a place for us.

He came to us, a baby in a manger; extremely humble beginnings.

He came to us out of love.

This is Christmas.

It is not the tree, the ornaments, the wrappings, the gifts, the music, the food.

Certainly, we love all these things but often they get in the way of the true meaning of Christmas.

Children today are missing out on the real perspective of Christmas.

They believe it's about glitter, lights and gifts.

The only real and true gifts that we get at Christmas are those that we receive from God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Too many children today are not being raised in the church and they are missing so very much.

This year, each time you see a lighted Christmas tree consider it a Divine calling for you to come to church.

A calling to move closer to God through His Son, Jesus.

A calling for you to find more joy, happiness and peace than you have ever known.

Merry Christmas and may God add His blessings to your life.

Ron was born in McClure, Ohio, raised in Napoleon and has lived in Wauseon for the past 64 years. A Navy veteran, he worked in Quality Control at Campbell Soup Company for almost 37 years. He's been writing poems since he was in school and has self-published 21 books of poetry. FN

FARMLAND NEWS – A Gift That Lasts All Year!

Live For God Words of Inspiration By Pastor Gary Malone

Galatians. 5:9: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

Luke 13:20-21: And again he said, *Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?*

It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

All of us have experienced the use of leaven!

It is the final substance that gives bread the ability to rise and become the staff of life that it is.

Jesus used this example to explain the effect that the Kingdom of God has on anyone who comes into contact with it.

The impact of becoming fervent

for the Kingdom of God not only affects the one who comes into contact with it, but also all those who come into contact with that

person.

Talk of religion is empty without the influence that comes with the Kingdom of God!



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It is what gives every individual the ability to "rise" out of any situation he or she may find himself or herself in.

This is what the Apostle Paul was referring to in 2 Timothy. 3:5: *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

Jesus said in Matt. 5:13: *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?*

It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

The same can be said without the leaven of the Kingdom of God!

FN

Rabbit Hunting Can Be Good This Time Of Year

By choice, the bulk of my rabbit hunting is done in either January or February.

The deer seasons have come and gone and peace, once again, has come to the fields, fence rows and woodlots.

Once the guns have stopped booming, I pretty much have the woods to myself.

Why, you might ask?

Because there are not a lot of rabbit hunters anymore.

The reasons?

For one thing, most of the veteran hunters have reached the age where they just don't care whether they hunt rabbits any more, or not.

[I find the same to be true for squirrels].

Many of the youngsters are overly involved in sports or other activities that fill up their after school or weekend hours.

Plus, I don't think very many of them have been taught the fundamentals of rabbit hunting.

Then, there is this old bromide: "Aw, what's the use of getting out my hunting gear."

There ain't no place to hunt rabbits anymore, plus, there ain't no more rabbits".

These guys are wrong on both counts.

I will have to admit it's not as easy to find good hunting grounds... it takes some work.

Here are a few tips that might help.

1) Plan in advance.

Before the season begins in August or September, for example, is a good time to begin knocking on a few

Graybeard Outdoors

by ol' Graybeard

doors.

2) Make a good first impression.

Showing up in hunting clothes with a shotgun in hand is not conducive to establishing a good rapport with a landowner.

Wear some good casual clothes, volunteer your name and address, state clearly that you want to hunt small game such as rabbits, and perhaps squirrels, and tell how many people you are asking for.

If a landowner gives permission to one hunter and then six or seven show up on opening day, I can guarantee that your permission to hunt is going right into the dumpster.

I almost always hunt by myself or with one other person, and this is stated clearly on the permission slip.

3) Reward your benefactor.

After the season, offer to share some of your harvest, or drop off a gift card to a local restaurant at Christmas.

By doing this I have gotten to know some of my benefactors very well.

One or two have become long term friends.

4) Respect the property.

Trash, cigarette butts, beer cans, etc. left in the woods or fields are just going to tick someone off.

I lost a "honey hole"

a few years ago because some numb skulls shot up the place.

Don't be a numb skull and mess up a good spot to hunt.

5) Now, let's talk about the lack of rabbits.

I will admit that the numbers are not as great as they used to be.

When I was a kid during the 50's and 60's, it was no mean trick to kick rabbits out of fence rows.

So what?

Those numbers are no longer there and they probably never will be again.

As hunters we either need to accept this fact and adapt to it, or sit at home, watch television, and turn into a zombie,

There still are rabbits, you just need to put in some leg work to find them.

So, where are they?

They are in the same places they were in the 50's and 60's.

Look for existing fence rows, especially those that have grown up into weeds.

If you have a partner, one guy walks on one side, and you walk the other.

If one spot looks especially good, give it a kick and hope a rabbit runs out.

One caveat: Be sure to wear an orange hat and/or an orange vest.

Actually this is a good idea wherever you hunt.

SAFETY FIRST!!!

Ditch banks with high grass, old canal beds that are overgrown, and old, abandoned farmsteads, all can be good spots for rabbits.

One of the very best, however, is a loose brush pile.

Why loose? Because the rabbits can get in and out of it faster.

Old brush piles that have settled may not hold a single rabbit.

Or, they are so old that the rabbits have dug several holes underneath them.

The odds of running a

rabbit out of one of these is just about zilch.

A newer pile offers fairly safe habitat for a rabbit until a hunter kicks the pile.

And, that brings up another caveat: Be extremely careful while kicking the pile.

Just shaking the pile with one hand, while the other hand holds the shotgun in a safe direction makes a lot more sense than kicking it.

If there are two of you, then one guy puts down his gun and shakes the pile while the other hunter stands ready.

SAFETY FIRST!!!

As I look back over the years, I imagine that I have shot at more rabbits that were running out of brush piles than from any other form of habitat.

Notice that I said "shot at".

They aren't always easy to hit.

Speaking of shooting, what sort of firearm should you choose?

The obvious answer is to use the one that you have at hand.

I once hunted with a guy who was carrying a 12 gauge magnum pump with high-brass #4 shot.

I don't recall if he hit anything, but I hope he didn't.

There wouldn't have been much left.

The last I heard, the wooden stock on his gun had split.

No wonder.

If you have noticed in some of my articles, I don't have much use for the 410 shotgun.

However, I do think that it's a good rabbit gun for novice and veteran hunters.

The 410, the 20 and 16 gauges with #7-1/2 or #6 shot in low brass shells make some wonderful loads.

My favorites are a light weight 20 gauge o/u, and a vintage 16 gauge pump gun.

It doesn't take much lead to knock off a rabbit.

If you are a novice, I offer this advice: Shoot for the head not the tail.

That "cottontail" that is bouncing makes a tempting target, but hitting it usually results in a wounded and lost rabbit.

Try to master leading a moving target.

We have not talked about using a hunting dog.

Hunting with a good beagle or two is more fun than the law ought to allow.

This might be a good theme for a future article.

Good luck in your rabbit hunting.

John Bennett is an outdoor writer from Lima, Ohio. He's a retired educator and a historical reenactor. Graybeard is his "camp name." In addition, he's a husband, father and grandfather, as well as a four-season outdoorsman.

FN

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Colorful Tree Decorations from the past.



Retro print of downtown Lancaster, Ohio circa 1965.

CHRISTMAS JET (Continued From Page 1)

In one year, 2026, it will be 60 years since the Christmas jet was received.

My grandma, (my mom's mom), gifted a TWA toy passenger airliner as a Christmas present for my sister, Sharon, who was five years old at the time.

From my perspective as a child, this wasn't just any toy jet.

By the time I was old

enough to drive a real car, I had cases full of Matchbox, Hot Wheels, and Tootsie Toy cars.

Those were the cars you could put in your pocket.

I'm just now getting to the age of parting with these cars giving them to the grandkids so they can enjoy them as I did.

But, this jet was different; it was over 12 inches long and was over 3 inches high.

Plus, the wingspan was

14 inches from one wing to the other.

Powered with C size batteries, the lights on the wings would flash and at one time, it may have moved across the floor.

TWA, or Trans World Airlines, was one of the major airlines in its heyday.

Later in 2001 it merged into American Airlines.

This toy plane always fascinated me especially with the mystery behind it.

For starters, it was always kept in the crawl space attic.

It didn't leave that post until my parents sold their home in 2000!

My mom was very protective of the jet.

I think she thought it might be jinxed – it "spooked" her.

You see I wasn't born until October of 1967--almost a year after the Christmas of 1966.

My mom thought it was odd that grandma gifted my sister with such a gift... as a five-year-old girl?!

Besides the girl factor, it was probably more appropriate for a child a little older.

Today, a person probably can't think that, much less say it, but at that time and especially in my family, girls didn't play with those type of toys; they were "boy toys."

Three days after that Christmas my grandma died; I never got to meet her. My parents had been trying for another child for a while.

By the time I was born dad was 40 and mom was 33.

That was getting up in the years for those days.

I think most everyone



My wife, Molly colored this beautiful decoration.

thought they would just have one child.

Mom and Grandma

My mom had a frictional relationship with my grandma.

There were bad feelings going way back that I never fully understood nor was it explained.

All that was said by family members was "Mary (my grandmother) was that way."

Mom thought the plane was an eerie omen.

She thought that grandma knew I was on my way, but she knew she wasn't going to live that long.

Thus, the "mysterious Christmas jet" was a gift to me through a roundabout way to my sister.

Mom kept it secured in that attic for all of those years.

About the only time it was brought out was dur-

ing some special house cleaning event or when we pulled out the decorations for Christmas.

For as long as I can remember it was missing a piece of the tail section.

I'm not sure whatever happened to it.

Perhaps it was lost while playing and that was why mom thought it was best to lock it up and--preserve the mystery!

I was never sure if this arrangement was acceptable to my sister, after all it was her gift!

But back then, when parents put down the law – that was it.

The Jet

These days, I have the jet displayed in my home office in the box.

Why keep it in the box, you ask?

(Continued on Page 7)

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Tree Decorations from the early 21st Century.



My second favorite ornaments are the colorful pear shaped with sparkling glitter.



Handmade tree ornament with candles.

CHRISTMAS JET (Continued From Page 6)

I have the original box and with the retro 1960s look it's pretty cool in its own right!

However, even with fresh batteries, the lights still do not work.

I suppose there's something that could be done about that.

However, I think it is more than just the bulbs because I seem to recall it made a noise to replicate the sound of a real jet.

Perhaps another generation can take care of that?

It seems Charles Dickens tied in ghosts to Christmas with a Christmas Carol.

I suppose this is my version of a Christmas mystery of my grandma reaching out from the other side.

But my Christmas memories aren't all about ghosts.

Although I suppose my affection for watching the "Christmas Carol" at least every other year is from the family mystery.

Beautiful Ornaments

Throughout the years I've been fascinated by all of the sparkling lights and the various colors of ornaments of the season.

Seeing certain ones or going to places with certain smells triggers something that puts me back to the Christmas's in the early part of the 21st century and beyond!

One of these triggers is the traditional glass tree ornaments, which were "traditional" for my time as a child... I still even have a few.

We don't display them much because the size of our trees has decreased a lot since we have aged.

Perhaps my favorite one, which I have three left from my childhood, are ornaments with an angel playing a musical instrument in front of a pine tree with snow.

They are 3D ornaments with a groove inside the ornament where the angel

is standing trumpeting the good news of the birth of Christ.

The outside of the ornament has various bright colors.

My second favorite are multi-colored ornaments in the shape of a pear, with sparkling glitter borders along the designs.

Those two types of ornaments were special because they weren't judy the typical round shape.

I also recall some tin ornaments that were long twisted strips of red, green, silver, and gold that were to represent icicles.

Speaking of which, who remembers those made of foil?

I loved them!

They made a mess, but wow what a sparkling effect they added!

I know our cat, Fluffy, ate some and it was never a good result for her!

My collection also entails some that my sister used glitter to write her name on them.

I think I may have made one, but I can't find it.

However, I do have some that were made at Sunday School with paper, but there were others from grade school that I couldn't find.

Christmas Lights

Speaking of colored ornaments, do you prefer colored lights or white lights

on your tree?

What about on your house?

I have always been for colored lights...I love the red, green, white, blue, yellow, etc. mixed together.

However, as I have gotten older, I tend to favor basic white.

I feel the white is more in tradition with the original

(Continued on Page 8)

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Handmade tree ornaments...the center one was made by Al.



Lutheran Reformation tree ornament.

CHRISTMAS JET

(Continued From Page 7)

flame of candles clipped on trees.

When I heard they used to burn live candles on trees I couldn't believe it!

But it makes sense; that was all they had.

One of our ornaments

in my collection depicts a Christmas tree with candles.

The white lights also symbolize much more with the season, for starters the white snow of the season.

However, more importantly I think the white brilliance of the birth of Christ.

There is an analogy to

Christ in so many ways.

Obviously, as is often said, "Jesus is the reason for the season".

He was slain for ours sins as the sacrificial pure lamb.

His blood washes ours sins away and purifies like the white clean wool of a lamb.

And if that isn't enough of a reason, when I see the white glow on trees, I can hear the angels singing.

Just like those ornaments, on Christmas Eve, I can hear Silent Night being sung in a small village church just before midnight.

It takes me back to those special Christmas services.

I can see everyone quietly leaving, sharing Christmas greetings.

If we were lucky, our footsteps would "smoosh" on the steps of freshly fallen snow.

I can see the snowflakes falling down at an angle and glowing in the light of the streetlights.

I can hear the motors turn on and people scrape the snow off the car as the headlights project a beam into the snow.

The Magical Season

The build up to the season is something magical like out of The Christmas story.

Lancaster, Ohio, where I grew up, didn't have a multi-level department store.

However, there was a lady's clothing store that had two or three levels and the top level had a restaurant.

Mom would take us with her shopping.

It was a special treat to eat in that upstairs diner consisting of hamburgers, French fries, and a Coke!



Door hanger made by a family friend.

Across the street was the Kresge Department Store, which was later replaced by K Mart out in the "sprawl" like so many other towns.

Kresge was a magical place for a kid!

It was the closest thing to Ralphie's store in that movie.

Santa's house was on an adjacent lot with the city water fountain.

Kresge also featured a lunch counter, plus toys, toys, and more toys were featured!

And talk about chocolate and other candies!

They had a counter where a worker would serve you as you made your own specialized orders to your liking.

Not pre-packaged!

I remember my favorite was a chocolate round piece that had a star molded into it.

Another one was a round piece with white candy beads.

These were always purchased by mom for the holi-

days!

Stockings

Speaking of chocolates, our stocking stuffers consisted of candies and small toys.

I could always count on some toy cars.

Sometimes they would place a package of four or five hollow chocolate molded race cars.

They were wrapped in tin foil of various colors and racing numbers.

I liked to unwrap them "race" them on the table and having wrecks; the wrecks allowed me to justify eating the pieces!

Christmas Day

Christmas dinner wasn't a big spread., usually we had cold ham sliced with some rolls.

That was fine by me, because I really just wanted to play with my toys and watch Christmas specials.

Although Rudolph the

(Continued on Page 9)

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CHRISTMAS JET

(Continued From Page 8)

Red Nose Reindeer and others were shown a few weeks ahead of time I remember a Bob Hope movie called the *Lemon Drop Kid* that was set during Christmas.

I really loved him; he made me laugh until my stomach hurt!

I still watch it every now and then, It can be seen for free on YouTube.

I am sure by today's standards his acts are considered "corny."

Well too bad!

I think what is on today – be it TV, streaming videos, or real life, we need more "silly" laughs.

When I look back at the actual day it was kind of comical because it was like we were under "lock down."

We didn't go to anyone's house, nor did they come to see us.

It was just mom, dad, my sister, and I doing our thing and celebrating together.

We did see family, but that was reserved for other days such as New Year's Day or anytime in between Christmas and New Year's.

Special Memory

One of my special memories was visiting my cousins Mark and Lynn near Canal Winchester.

That was near my grandfather's farm that I have written about on some occasions.

It was magical with their fireplace burning as we had a meal and opened presents.

You know, as I have aged, I am thinking that perhaps

the whole country should be like the school systems.

Close down a few days before Christmas and not open until after New Year's.

I think a rest from the "rat race" of life every now and then is not a bad idea.

I have heard some European Countries work less hours than we do.

However, I'm not a fan of jumping on board with that just because someone else does.

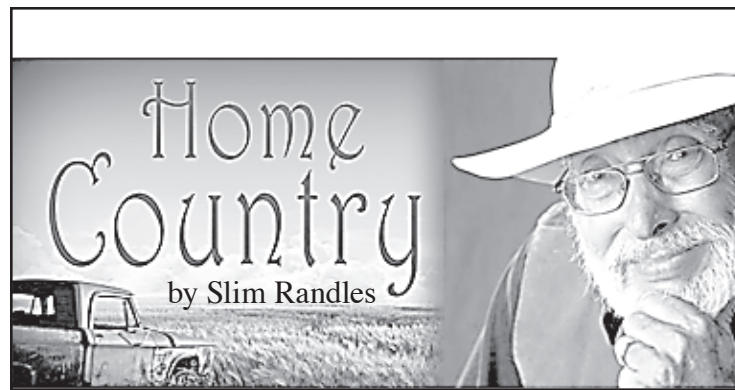
Our Puritan work ethic helped us to obtain the prosperity we have today, but as I age like Solomon in Ecclesiastes, I am starting to see the futility of constant running.

May This holiday season be with those you love, cherish the moments, and remember the reason for the season!

Farmland News would like to thank Al Beatty for sharing his story.

Al Beatty started delivering newspapers in Sherman's hometown of Lancaster, OH) and is now teaching accounting in the Hoosier state at Trine University.

Al Beatty and his wife Molly are grandparents to several and Al enjoys writing for fun." FN



It might have been the winter doldrums that did it.

You can never be sure of these things.

It's just that ... well, Doc is one of those guys who can't stand to see anyone bored.

He claims it's bad for their inner chemistry, and since he has more initials after his name than anyone else in town, we tend to listen to him.

When it happened, we in the inner circle of the *World Dilemma Think Tank* down at the Mule Barn truck stop thought back on what Doc had said a year ago when the temperature dropped, along with everyone's spirits.

"In weather like this," Doc pronounced, stirring sugar into his cup, "a real American would come up with a great hoax."

Those of us sitting at the philosophy counter that morning just nodded, even though we didn't have a clue.

No one wanted to admit it, you see.

When the *Valley Weekly Miracle* hit the street yesterday, we bought one to see how much the editor dared to print, as always, but there in the classifieds was this:

"LOST – One gray squirrel, fluffy tail, two years old. Answers to "Chipper." \$5.25 reward.

Call Doc."

The paper was passed down the counter and we all looked at Doc after we read it.

He was smirking as only Doc can smirk.

"Doc," Steve said, tentatively, "would this be the same imaginary squirrel that was kidnapped and

held for ransom last year?"

"The very same," Doc said.

"I named him Chipper."

"But he's imaginary, right?"

"The very best kind."

"Why?"

"Imaginary squirrels don't bite, don't have to be fed, and you never have to clean up after them," he said.

"And a real squirrel will eat the leg off a coffee table."

He grinned.

"Besides, I've always wanted an imaginary squirrel."

After we laughed, Dudley said, "And what if someone finds a squirrel and brings him to you?"

"Dudley," he said, "I figure it's worth \$5.25 to get a squirrel, which would be hibernating this time of year, of course, and then to turn it loose.

Besides, I'll make more money than that just stitching up the squirrel catcher's hand."

Brought to you by the tassel-eared Abert squirrels of the Kaibab in Arizona. They're fun to look at and don't have anything else to do.

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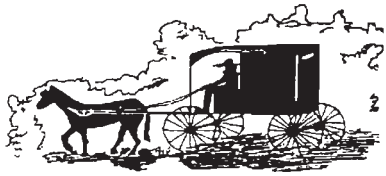
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The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



Unfortunately we did not receive an Amish Cook column this week so we are sharing some of our readers recipes and a helpful measurement chart.

Enjoy the recipes!
Happy Holidays!

Cherry Almond Pudding

- 2 large egg yolks
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- Pinch salt
- 2-1/4 cups 2% milk
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 cup sweet cherries (fresh or preserved)
- 1/2 cup blanched almonds

Place egg yolks and sugar in a medium heatproof bowl; beat until fluffy.

Place cornstarch and salt in a medium saucepan.

Whisk in a splash of milk until smooth, then add the remaining milk.

Cook over medium-high heat, stir continually 5-7 minutes until bubbly; on lower heat, cool a few minutes longer until thickened.

Remove from heat.

Whisk a few tablespoons of the hot milk mixture into bowl with egg yolks to temper, then slowly whisk in the remaining milk.

Return mixture to saucepan, gently boiling and stirring for 2 to 4 minutes until thickened.

Remove from heat; mix in butter and almond extract.

Transfer to an airtight container and chill in fridge for 4 hours.

When ready to serve, spoon into bowls and top with cherries and almonds.

For an even more decadent dessert, drizzle amaretto liquor over top.

Christine Smallman
Delta, Ohio

Santa's Cookies

- 1/4 cup butter – softened
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 10 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup Christmas M & M's
- 2 tablespoons chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons white chocolate chips
- 1/2 tablespoon Christmas sprinkles (jimmies, Christmas shapes etc.)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Add the butter, brown sugar and white sugar to a medium sized bowl.

Cream it all together for 1 to 2 minutes until it's light and creamy.

Add in the egg yolk and vanilla and stir it all together.

Add in the flour, salt and baking soda and stir it all together till you have a soft dough.

Add in the M & M's, chocolate chips, and sprinkles and fold them into the dough.

Scoop the dough into 8 even sized cookie dough balls (about 2 tablespoons each) and roll them into balls.

Place them on the cookie sheet.

Bake the cookies in the oven for 8 to 9 minutes until the edges are golden and the tops are set.

Let the cookies sit on the baking sheet for another 3 to 4 minutes, then transfer them carefully to a cooking rack to cool completely.

Lori Wachtman
Napoleon, Ohio

Recipe Of The Week

Chocolate Cookies

1 cup melted shortening
1/2 cup sugar
1-1/2 cups brown sugar
5 tablespoons cocoa
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt
2 beaten eggs
3 cups flour
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Mix all ingedients together.
Drop by teaspoonfuls onto cookie sheet.
Bake at 375 degrees for 10 minutes.
Note: this recipe is in memory of my sister, Carol Bernath

This Recipe of the Week is from Patricia McMahon, Napoleon, Ohio

Cooking Measurement Conversions

Teaspoon & Tablespoon Measures

- Dash or pinch = >1/8 tsp
- 1-1/2 tsp = 1/2 Tbsp
- 3 tsp = 1 Tbsp; 1/2 fl oz
- 4-1/2 tsp = 1-1/2 Tbsp
- 2 Tbsp = 1/8 C; 1 fl oz
- 4 Tbsp = 1/4 C; 2 fl oz
- 8 Tbsp = 1/2 C; 4 fl oz
- 12 Tbsp = 3/4 C; 6 fl oz
- 16 Tbsp = 1 C; 8 fl oz; 1/2 pt

Cup Measures

- 1/8 C = 2 Tbsp; 1 fl oz
- 1/4 C = 4 Tbsp; 2 fl oz
- 1/3 C = 5 Tbsp + 1 tsp
- 1/2 C = 8 Tbsp; 4 fl oz
- 2/3 C = 10 Tbsp + 2 tsp
- 3/4 C = 12 Tbsp; 6 fl oz
- 7/8 C = 3/4 C + 2 Tbsp
- 1 C = 16 Tbsp; 8 fl oz; 1/2 pt
- 2 C = 1 pt; 16 fl oz
- 4 C = 2 pt; 1 qt; 32 fl oz

Pints, Quarts, Gallons & Pounds

- 1/2 pt = 1 C; 8 fl oz
- 1 pt = 2 C; 16 fl oz
- 1 qt = 4 C; 32 fl oz
- 1 gal = 4 qt; 16 C
- 1/4 lbs = 4 oz
- 1/2 lbs = 8 oz
- 3/4 lbs = 12 oz
- 1 lbs = 16 oz

Metric Volume Conversions

- 1 ml = 1/5 tsp
- 5 ml = 1 tsp
- 15 ml = 1 Tbsp
- 60 ml = 1/4 C; 2 fl oz
- 80 ml = 1/3 C
- 125 ml = 1/2 C; 4 fl oz
- 160 ml = 2/3 C
- 180 ml = 3/4 C; 6 fl oz
- 250 ml = 1 C; 8 fl oz
- 375 ml = 1-1/2 C; 12 fl oz
- 500 ml = 2 C; 16 fl oz; 1 pt
- 700 ml = 3 C
- 950 ml = 4 C; 32 fl oz; 1 qt
- 1 L = 33.8 fl oz
- 3.8 L = 4 qt; 1 gal

Metric Weight Conversions

- 1 gr = 0.035 oz
- 100 gr = 3.5 oz
- 500 gr = 17.6 oz; 1.1 lbs
- 1 kg = 35 oz; 2.2 lbs

Cooking & Oven Temperature

- 0°C = 32°F
- 100°C = 212°F
- 120°C = 250°F
- 160°C = 320°F
- 180°C = 350°F
- 190°C = 375°F
- 205°C = 400°F
- 220°C = 425°F
- 230°C = 450°F

AUCTION ACTION

Live Public Auction 36+ Acres Woods & Tillable Land in Williams County Farmland

Thursday, December 18, 2025 @ 10:00 A.M.

Auction Location: Pioneer Community Center
100 N. Elm St., Pioneer – **not at farm!**

NOTE: A great opportunity to purchase over 36 acres of combined woods and tillable land at auction! Visit frechandsons.com for further info or call us for a buyer's info packet.



DESCRIPTION: Approx. 36.4 acres in total consists of approx 20 acres tillable, 15 acres woods and 1 acre ROW located on State Route 20, between County Roads 16 and 17, Sec. 26, Madison Twp. Williams Co., OH, North Central School District. Lies on the south side of State Route 20. Soil types are primarily Blount and Glynwood with some Bono and Pewamo. There are no buildings. **2025 TAXES: \$425.00 half (CAUV applies)**, Tax Parcel ID#092-260-00-002.000

TERMS: \$10,000 non-refundable deposit due sale day with balance due at closing within 45 days. Sold subject to seller's immediate confirmation. No buyer contingencies.

Sellers:

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962 Bales	406 Bales	498 Bales	785 Bales

Small Squares	Low	High
Straw.....	3.00	- 4.00
1st Grass.....	3.00	- 4.75
1st Alfalfa Grass.....	3.00	- 4.25
2nd Alfalfa Grass.....	7.00	- 7.50
3rd Alfalfa Grass.....	3.30	- 8.00
4th Alfalfa Grass.....	6.00	- 7.25
1st Alfalfa.....	4.50	- 6.00
4th Alfalfa.....	7.25	- 9.00
Clover.....	2.00	- 3.50

Round Bales	Low	High
Straw.....	18.00	- 26.50
1st Alfalfa.....	20.00	- 72.50
2nd Alfalfa.....	27.50	- 75.00
3rd Alfalfa.....	41.00	- 60.00
1st Alfalfa Grass.....	27.50	- 70.00
2nd Alfalfa Grass.....	24.00	- 70.00
3rd Alfalfa Grass.....	42.50	- 60.00
1st Grass.....	32.00	- 65.00
Cornstalks.....	16.00	- 17.00
Clover.....	55.00	- 60.00

Large Squares	Low	High
Straw.....	30.00	- 48.00
1st Alfalfa.....	42.50	- 97.50
2nd Alfalfa.....	65.00	- 105.00
3rd Alfalfa.....	70.00	- 70.00
4th Alfalfa.....	80.00	- 100.00
Clover.....	75.00	- 90.00

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