



1 Section Tuesday, January 13, 2026 Volume 67 Number 6

Happy Healthy New Year!



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A good mix of helping others, yourself, family and friends

By Christine Smallman

New Years Resolutions

New Year's resolutions are personal promises made at the start of the year to improve oneself by adopting good habits, changing bad behaviors, or achieving goals, with common themes being health (exercise, diet),

personal growth (learning, reading), finances (saving money, debt), and relationships (family, friends).

To succeed, experts suggest a person should make their goals — specific, realistic, small, and actionable, focusing on “approach goals” (like “eat fruit”) over “avoidance goals” (like

“stop junk food”) and tracking progress.

Are you aiming to sleep better, eat healthier, scroll less and/or generally upgrade your life starting on Jan. 1

Join the club — it's several thousand years old.

New Year's resolutions are a key part of how many

people observe the holiday, as much of an annual tradition as the Time Square ball drop or a midnight champagne toast.

The concept of taking stock and vowing to do better in the new year actually dates back centuries,

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Poor Will's Farmland News Almanack

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January 14 -20

Early this morning crows flew westward over the prairie, cawing in the fresh, temperate air, their voices as always filling the morning with the promise of spring.

August Derleth, A Countryman's Journal

Phases of the Bedding Plant Moon And the Tufted Titmouse Moon

January 4: The Bedding Plant Moon is full.
January 11: The Moon enters its last quarter.
January 19: The Tufted Titmouse Moon is new.
January 26: : The Moon enters its second quarter

Weather Trends

The heating season in the Lower Midwest typically lasts from the middle of October through the middle of April, depending on the character of the year.

The cold is created by approximately 37 major cold fronts passing through the region between the third week of October and the third week of April.

By the beginning of the New Year, 17 of those fronts have normally arrived, almost half the season.

Chances for highs in the 30s or 40s, on the other hand, are about 50 percent, and for chilly teens or 20s about 20 percent.

Bone-cold afternoons in the single digits fill out the remaining five percent.

Not only that, we are still in the middle of the period (which lasts from January 9 through the 22) most likely to bring below-zero mornings. Just what are the chances for such cold?

About 15 percent per morning.

The Countdown to Spring

- One weeks until owls and foxes mate and the Big Dipper's Merak and Dubhe, pointers for the North Star, are positioned east-west after dark

- Two and a half weeks until the traditional January Thaw time and blue jays give their bell-like mating call.

Bluebirds return from their brief vacation in the South.

- Three weeks until cardinals start to sing before dawn.

Flies and cabbage butterflies sometimes hatch on indoor plants.

- Four weeks until doves join the cardinals, and maple sap is running

- Four and a half weeks until the first red-winged blackbirds arrive in the wetlands

- Five weeks to the very first snowdrop bloom and the official start of early spring

- Six weeks to major pussy willow emerging season

- Seven weeks to crocus season in town and snow trillium season in the woods

- Eight weeks to the beginning of the morning robin chorus before sunrise

- Nine weeks to daffodil time

- Ten weeks to the major wildflower bloom

In the Field and Garden

Test a sample of old seeds for germination. Order supplies for February lawn and pasture seeding.

Have supplies ready for the birthing of lambs and kids.

Keeping animals in poorly ventilated barns can lead to disease and can encourage parasites. Make sure their housing provides the necessary mix of good ventilation but adequate heat.

Don't forget that the spring ethnic markets include demand from not only Middle Eastern immigrants and Muslims but from people who have roots in the Caribbean (including Haitian and Jamaican populations), Latin America, and Africa.

Estimates of Muslims in the United States point to eight million people. Consumers with Hispanic or Caribbean backgrounds exceed twenty million.

Prepare for the seeding of broccoli, cabbage and kale after new moon. And get ready for the January thaw. Check perennials; cover them with extra mulch if they are sprouting early.

Christmas cacti - a common seasonal flower - can be saved and propagated during the warmer months. You can turn one cactus into a lucrative business if you're willing to work at it for a few years!

Prepare landscaping, garden, and field maps, including plans for double cropping, intercropping, and companion planting.

Do your mid-winter pruning and other wood cutting. Spread manure as conditions permit. Test farm and garden soil as soon as possible.

Avoid giving greens to your outside rabbits when the temperature remains below freezing.

Journal

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet....A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind.

Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

Early almanacs came of age in modern, scientific times. They were the first popular documents to espouse the radical, sense-defying beliefs of the new astronomy. "The world is round," those almanackers said. "Contrary to what our eyes seem to tell us, earth is not the level, stationary center of the universe.

We are inhabitants of an insignificant asteroid which is spinning at soul-splitting speed through infinite space for all eternity."

Almanacs were partial to other kinds of bizarre information.

Not only did they provide astronomical pronouncements, such as the above, with statistics to support their assertions, they sought out the most sensational and peculiar news items.

They were the check-out counter tabloids of their times. They printed exceptions when other

genres printed rules.

Novelty was absolute. And quantity was far more important than quality; if a man had lived to be one hundred and fifteen, almanackers cared little whether or not he had had a good life.

How many times or how long something was supposed to have happened was considered more noteworthy than other characteristics of the event itself.

The obsession for the uncommon soon perverted even the simple pleasures of gardening.

That someone should have grown a tomato was hardly worthy of mention; tomatoes were easy givens in the equations of horticulture.

That someone should have grown a record breaking bememeth tomato was always something else again.

Such values have survived to this very day. In my capacity as Poor Will, I once was called to the house of a woman who had probably grown the fattest tomato of the season in all of Yellow Springs.

Unfortunately, however, my visit was delayed several days, and when I arrived, the prize had decayed to an unpleasant smelling olive green mass, an amorphous wad of mush.

But the lady had preserved it for me anyway in a plastic bag.

She pulled it from the refrigerator, and held it up for me to see. "It's not what it was," she admitted, but she showed me a piece of paper on which were written its impressive former circumference and weight.

The idea of the great tomato transcended its demise. The bag of foul-smelling flesh and seeds was of more significance than some small, sweet red specimens which lay before us on the table, flushed and firm in the prime of their edible lives.

Early almanacs flourished not only because of their exploitation of the outlandish, and their glorification of the oversized, but because they appealed to authority of data in itself.

Feathered with easily understood tables of weight and measures, the almanacker's nest held eggs of surprising and less ordinary dimensions: predictions about the risings and settings of planets, the arrival of comets and occultations and eclipses of the sun and moon.

And most of the readers, never matching the events with the supposed times, were comforted simply to believe that the turning of the firmament could be measured.

When I was just learning how to calculate moonrise and moonset, I discovered that the information printed in my metropolitan daily paper was completely wrong.

I called to inform the editors of their error; they apologized, but added that no one had ever complained about the problem before. For as far back as

I cared to check in the newspaper archives, moonrise and moonset had been miscalculated. Half a million readers had never cared enough to match the data with the occurrence.

Or maybe if someone had tried, he or she had given up in frustration, attributing the problem

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ALMANACK

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to personal incompetence.

It is not enough to reason that all data is somewhat arbitrary, and that the world spins on assumptions and creeds that may or may not really and truly be valid.

Such naivete is the almanacker's profit. It is the naivete that embraces size over taste, numbers over experience.

Personal observation and existential fortitude are the only antidotes for such spiritual torpor.

And the first step on the journey to intellectual liberation is to have enough courage to say what your senses have told you since you were born: that the world is flat.

Explorers may sail west in order to go east; rockets may go to the moon; satellites may send us electrical impulses which many interpret to be pictures of a "round" earth.

You believe their messages at the risk of losing your soul. A healthy scepticism toward vicarious science will keep you from living in a place in which the sun and moon rise only on charts, where distance is measured by the speed of light, and where circumference is the equivalent of flavor.

lent of flavor.

A flat world is accessible to everyone, and it offers challenge enough. When you have come to its edge, having found your way by the stars you can name from the closed dome above, there will be time enough for other notions.

ALMANACK LITERATURE

Sunshine: The Car-Chasin' Sheep

By Nancy Minor
Bergheim, Texas

I don't run a rescue ranch for unwanted or abandoned sheep (although my husband would disagree with that statement).

However, one day several years ago, I received a call from a friend that intrigued me.

"Do you want a free sheep?" my friend asked.

Suspecting a trick, I played along and said, "Sure."

"Well, come out to my place. There's a ewe that some neighbors abandoned and she's running out in the road and chasing cars.

Animal Control won't take her, and she's going to get hit if you don't come out and get her."

Half-suspecting it was all a big joke, I hitched up the trailer and jumped in the truck to go out and

see the car-chasing sheep.

I was about a half a mile down the dirt road leading to my friend's house when she suddenly appeared out of some bushes.

Trotting up toward the truck, she stood in the road as if waiting for me to pick her up.

I was amazed and stopped the truck, opening the door to get out to get a better look at her.

She was a mature Rambouillet ewe with dirty, matted wool and so fat she couldn't walk...she waddled.

As soon as I opened the door to the truck, she tried to climb into the cab, but because of her obesity and the height of the truck, she couldn't get her legs up.

I slipped a halter over her head, and led her around to the trailer, where she hopped in.

I continued down the road to my friend's house, hoping to get more information on this strange ewe.

We live in an area that has become very popular, where city people think it is cool to move to the country.

After a few years of hysterical living, they get fed up and move back to the city, leaving behind unwanted memories and unwanted animals.

That is how Sunshine, the Ram-

bouillet ewe, came to be chasing cars.

She was kept as a cute pet in a small pen, fed God knows what (probably dry dog food), and never got any exercise.

When her people moved away, they abandoned her, fat and miserable, to fend for herself.

What they did not know is that Sunshine, being a sheep, was going to try to find her people, because they were the only flock she had ever known.

Poor Sunshine took about a year to adjust to being a sheep again.

Slowly she got used to our flock, made friends and began to enjoy rambling out to the field to stretch her legs.

She lost weight, and with regular shearing, she was more comfortable in the hot Texas summer weather.

Sunshine's proudest moment was the day she delivered her first lamb.

I've seen a lot of new mommas lovingly lick and talk to their lambs, but Sunshine was beside herself with for her baby.

She was a wonderful mother and now this year, is a grandmother.

When I drive through the field now, she never comes near the truck. Sunshine has become a sheep again and has found her flock. FN

New Year's Spectacle

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

by Ron Bliss

It was New Year's Eve and my loving wife was in the upstairs bathroom doing those things that only women understand.

We didn't plan on going out to celebrate the coming of the new year.

Fact is, we haven't gone out on New Year's Eve for more decades than I can remember.

However, I do know it has been more than fifty years.

I decided to walk out and take a seat in our sunroom.

With windows all around it gives me a great perspective on the back of our lot.

All was silent and totally dark, but with the aid of our yard lights I could see quite well.

Lights from the neighboring houses played on the stillness of this night and none of the feral cats I feed everyday were visible.

In fact, all was quiet and peaceful.

Then, I noticed some movement out of the corner of my eye.

Walking across my lawn was a donkey, carrying a woman garbed in strange clothing.

Walking beside the animal was a man, dressed in similar attire.

Woah! How on earth had I missed it previously.

There in the corner of my yard was a cave or a stable of some sort.

They were headed directly to-

wards it.

Just inside was a small but very obvious feeding trough or, I guess you would call it a manger.

The couple with the donkey went in and now I could see a few other animals as well.

Wow, all of this is taking place in my backyard.

How great is that?

For a short while everything became obscured – when the scene finally cleared, I could see someone bending over and laying the baby in the feeding trough.

The first thing I thought of was that was not a proper place for a child to be bedded down.

I was startled, when suddenly a bright light appeared.

I sure wishes my wife were down here to see all of this.

I would have called her, but I didn't want to miss what was going on.

The bright light was a star that had camped immediately above us and quite clearly, I could hear a chorus of voices singing praises.

The sound seemed to be coming from the sky.

I listened intently.

They were saying, "*Glory to God in the highest Heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rest.*"

More people were coming into my backyard.

Men, carrying long poles with crooks on the end, obviously they were shepherds.

They must have left their flocks to attend to what was going on in my yard.

I was elated to be able to see all of this unfold in my own backyard.

At this point my wife entered the room and asked me what was happening.

I'm not sure I told her and we watched together as the scene progressed.

It seemed like an eternity had gone by when the scene changed.

Three individuals in strange but expensive looking garments came walking by.

They had a royal appearance and all three were carrying objects which they placed at the feet of the couple.

It appeared they were gifts for the

baby.

By now all of you have surmised this story is a bit of fiction on my part.

It just did not occur as I have described.

Perhaps in my mind it did but not in my backyard.

The point I wish to make by the presentation of this story is that Christmas and the story of the Christ Child does not end on December 25th...it lasts 365 days a year.

Just like Easter, it never ends.

The two most important occasions of the year.

The coming of the baby Jesus who grew and lived a perfect, sinless life.

And his decision to willingly take up the cross and die in our place.

Absolving us of sin through faith and obedience.

May Christmas and Easter live in your hearts the entire year.

May God bless you always.

Give Him your all.

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

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Birthstone Brouhaha

My Two Cents Worth

by Ivy Lane

From the time I was kid and continuing into adulthood, calendars were given away free during the month of December.

Fuel companies, gas stations, insurance companies and banks would wish a Happy New Year to their customers and hand them a calendar.

In mid-December, I mentioned to my friend, "I've never purchased a calendar in my life, there sure is a lack of free calendars available."

I guess I actually might have to buy one this year."

I had forgotten all about that conversation until a few days before Christmas, I opened an envelope left on my porch.

Inside were two adorable beagle puppies gracing the cover of a 2026 calendar and each month featured a different picture of puppies.

This giver knows my love of dogs and my preference for paper calendars over modern technology.

After oohing and aahing over the puppies, I looked for a notation of birthstones in the margins.

Ever since the family birthstone brouhaha, it's been my habit to watch for any changes in the official birthstones.

Like most modern calen-

dars there was none.

It appears that birthstones are no longer worthy of being noted on calendars as they were in the past.

Also in the past was the argument I witnessed between my grandmother and her sister, aka, Aunt Nan.

Both women were born in March... twenty-three years apart.

Grandma was the oldest, and Aunt Nan was the youngest in a family of nine children.

One winter evening, the sisters were playing Scrabble at our house.

Mother admired Aunt Nan's new ring as her slender fingers placed a word on the Scrabble board.

"It's an aquamarine, my birthstone," said Aunt Nan proudly.

Grandma objected instantly!!

"Bloodstone is the March stone," she firmly declared with a note of annoyance in her voice.

A lot of changes can happen in the 23 year time span between the sisters' March birthdays.

And, a change of the of-

ficial birthstone for March was the cause of this "birthstone brouhaha".

The argument grew heated because both women were certain that they were right... one would not give in to the other.

Grandma insisted bloodstone was the stone for March.

Aunt Nan raised her voice an octave each time she repeated that aquamarine held that honor.

Bloodstone had been the official March birthstone since 1912.

In 1952, aquamarine became the official birthstone for March replacing the bloodstone.

The change was made by the National Association of Jewelers.

However, neither Grandma nor Aunt Nan knew this at the time of their argument.

A search in an encyclopedia, (if we had been rich enough to own a set), might have told the history of the March birthstone and would have shown that both women were correct.

Instead, Mother consulted the calendar, circa 1966.

There in the margin for the month of March aquamarine was named as the birthstone.

Aunt Nan said "I told you so."

Grandma was miffed.

With no way to prove her claim about bloodstones, Grandma accepted defeat and stated, "I am going home!"

Of course, the sisters had arrived together.

"Someone else can take Nan home," Grandma said as the door closed loudly behind her.

It didn't help that none of us, except Grandma, were old enough to have ever heard of a bloodstone.

"She's a mixed-up-old-lady," was the consensus among us after Grandma left.

Surely a stone with such an ugly name, if it even existed, would never be considered as a birthstone.

From the time Grandma was a young girl (she was 13 in 1912), she had been told the bloodstone was her March birthstone—and it was, until 1952.

When the sneaky jewelers changed bloodstone to aquamarine, Grandma was busy raising a family and running a farm.

Evidently she didn't pay attention to the notations in the margin of calendars after 1952.

In the ages before jewelry stores capitalized on birthstones, the twelve gemstones appearing on the breastplate of the High Priest of the Israelites de-

scribed in the book of Exodus, were thought to have mystic powers.

I suppose you only knew this if you were Jewish or until jewelry stores paid calendar makers to publicize the power of wearing birthstones.

If Grandma were still alive, I'd apologize to her for thinking she was a mixed-up old lady.

There IS such a thing as a bloodstone.

It's a dark green gem with bright red splatters said to resemble the blood dripping from Jesus while on the cross.

Today, bloodstone is mostly mined in India.

Years ago, bloodstone was crushed into a powder used as an aphrodisiac.

Wearing of bloodstones was thought to control bleeding, reduce inflammation, and promote healing of wounds.

Athletes believed the wearing of bloodstone gave them strength.

Bloodstones cured heart, liver, and stomach diseases.

I read that the aquamarine protects the wearer from ocean dangers and was treasured by mermaids.

With all that the bloodstone can do versus what aquamarine can do, I understand why Grandma favored the bloodstone as her March birthstone.

Ivy Lane is the pen name of a writer who lives in northwestern Ohio and wishes to remain anonymous. FN



Aquamarine



Bloodstone

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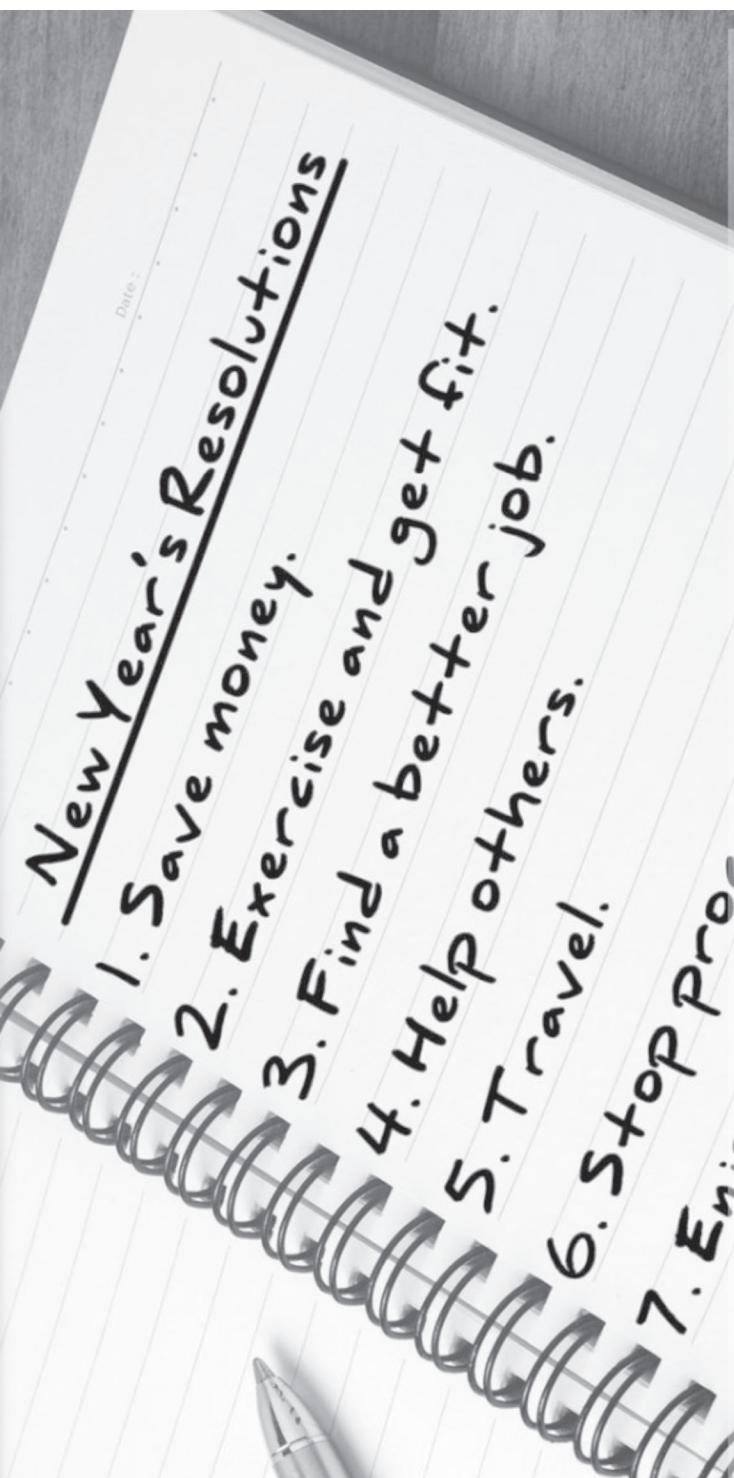
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Some of the top New Year resolutions that begin in most everyone's resolution list.

NEW YEAR (Continued From Page 1)

though there wasn't always a specific name for it.

The word "resolution" entered English from Latin in the late 14th century, originally defined as the STEM-coded "process of reducing things into simpler forms."

Over time, it broadened into more figurative meanings, like solving conflicts and remaining steadfast.

By the 19th century, it had also come to signify an expression of intent - including the new year ahead.

The Inside Track

My cousin, John has been a health and wellness coach and trainer for over 25 years and he shared some great tips with me for this feature story.

John hails from Ann Arbor, Michigan and The University of Michigan Hospital.

He shared the following information: Health and fitness experts are professionals just like personal trainers, exercise physiologists, and wellness coaches, often found online as influencers. These experts guide individuals in exercise, nutrition, and overall well-being through personalized programs, fitness apps, or content aiming to improve health, build strength, and manage conditions.

According to John there are all types of experts.

- Personal Trainers: Design and oversee exercise programs, often working in gyms or privately.

- Exercise Physiologists: Helps people with health conditions manage their physical activity.

- Health Coaches/Influencers: Provide broad wellness guidance with recipes, and workout motivation via social media and other online apps.

Key Figures & Platforms

- Celebrity Trainers: Work with high-profile clients.

- Online Personalities: Mobility and yoga specialists, functional strength specialists and wellness gurus.

How They Help

- Customize Plans: Tailored workouts and nutrition for specific goals.

- Motivation & Accountability: Keeping clients consistent and positive.

- Education: Teaching proper form, nutrition, and holistic wellness.

To find an expert, consider your goals: for structured training - a certified trainer or physiologist; for broad wellness inspiration - popular influencers.

Health and Fitness

According to John, "Some of the most popular New Year's resolutions focus on Health and Fitness."

Common health and fitness resolutions focus on establishing regular exercise, improving nutrition, increasing hydration, getting better sleep, and boosting mental well-being, with popular goals such as strength training, trying new classes, walking more, meal prepping, and reducing indulgences.

These are all best achieved with specific, small, and enjoyable steps rather than overwhelming tasks emphasizing consistency and self-compassion.

Six Popular Health & Fitness Resolutions

1) **Exercise:** Build muscle, get fit, walk more, try a new class (yoga, dance), train for a race (5K), increase flexibility.

2) **Nutrition:** Eat healthier and double up on vegetables and some fruit, track

sugar, mindful eating, meal prep.

3) **Hydration:** Drink more water.

4) **Sleep:** Get more quality sleep.

5) **Mental Health:** Reduce stress, spend time outdoors, practice self-care and adjust your attitude.

6) **Habits:** Reduce alcohol/smoking, get regular doctor check-ups.

Mental, Emotional and Personal Growth

Personal growth resolutions focus on self-improvement, encompassing areas such as: "mental well-being" (mindfulness, gratitude, limiting screen time).

Physical health and learning: physical health (exercise, better sleep, nutrition), career development (new skills, networking, work-life balance).

Relationships focus on (active listening, quality time, expressing appreciation), and learning (hobbies, new languages, reading).

Key strategies include: setting clear, achievable goals, establishing routines, practicing self-kindness, and reflecting on progress regularly to foster lasting change.

- *Practice Mindfulness & Gratitude:* Meditate, journal, or simply list things you're thankful for daily.

- *Limit Screen Time:* Schedule tech-free times or

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10 New Year's Resolutions for Stress Relief



Stress resolutions need to be addressed and alleviated to create a stress free environment.

NEW YEAR

(Continued From Page 6)

use apps to reduce digital distractions.

Develop Emotional Intelligence: Improve self-awareness and empathy.

Learn to say NO: Set boundaries to prevent feeling overwhelmed, be calm.

Start a bucket list and accomplish something on the list within a comfortable time frame.

Common Financial Resolutions

Popular financial resolutions for the year often center on saving more money, paying down debt, and spending less...these goals help build overall financial resilience and security.

Create or Revamp a Budget Regularly: Assess your income and expenses to understand where your money is going.

A popular method is the 50/30/20 budget guideline, which allocates 50% of your take-home pay for needs, 30% for wants, and 20% for savings and debt repayment.

Pay Off High-Interest Debt: Prioritize eliminating high-interest debts, such as credit card balances, which can be a significant drain on your finances.

- Explore Strategies: Such as the debt “snowball” or “avalanche” methods to tackle multiple debts efficiently.

- Have An Emergency Fund: Aim to set aside enough money to cover three to six months’ worth of essential living expenses in case of unexpected events like job loss or medical emergencies.

Start with a smaller, achievable goal like saving \$1,000.

- Increase Retirement Savings: Take advantage of employer 401(k) matches—often referred to as “free money”—by contributing at least enough to get the full match.

Consider increasing your contribution rate by even 1% if possible to grow your nest egg over time.

- Automate Financial Tasks: Lean into automation for savings, investments, and bill payments to

reduce procrastination and emotional decision-making. Setting up automatic transfers to savings accounts makes saving consistent and easier to maintain.

- Review and Update Protection Planning: Conduct an annual audit of your insurance coverage (health, auto, home, life) to ensure you have the right protection for your current life stage.

It’s also a good time to establish or update an estate plan, including wills and beneficiary information.

- Increase Income: Explore ways to boost your take-home pay, such as negotiating a raise, finding a higher-paying job, or starting a side job.

Lifestyle and Fun

Travel more, try new

(Continued on Page 8)

HEADING SOUTH?

If you’re heading to warmer weather for the winter, don’t forget to send your **complete** name address and telephone number, at least 2 weeks in advance to:

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MONEY RESOLUTIONS FOR 2022

1. Plan early for big spends
2. Allocate a day every month to check your finances
3. Avoid Buy-Now-Pay-Later schemes
4. Review your credit report twice a year
5. Get health insurance

Money resolution are good to plan before Christmas and shopping take placed.

mental health resolutions

crazyheadcomics



Mental Health Resolutions certainly start the new year on a good note.

Self-Care New Year's Resolutions

★ Unfollow creators or pages that bring you down.	Create routines in your life that focus on what you need.	Take deep breaths, laugh, and meditate more often.
Focus on adding more of something or doing less of something.	Commit to at least one act of self-care each day.	Declutter your life in physical and emotional ways.
Do something that's good for your mental health every day.	Surround yourself with a loving and accepting community.	★ Focus on making rest a priority in your life.

Self-care resolutions need to be addressed and followed to make the most of your standard of living.



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The Best New Year Resolution You Must Make —to Love Yourself!

Love yourself is one of the most valuable resolution you can held near and dear to your heart.

NEW YEAR

(Continued From Page 7)

restaurants, explore local areas, create monthly challenges.

Fun lifestyle resolutions focus on enjoyable habits such as: exploring new hobbies (pottery, dancing), trying new restaurants monthly, taking spontaneous trips, spending more time in nature, hosting gatherings, or starting a “joy list” for daily happiness.

This will help you be sustainable by keeping goals small and incorporating activities you genuinely like, such as taking real lunch breaks or learning one new thing weekly.

Tips for Sticking to Your

Resolutions

According to John, your goals need to be; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely.

Start Small: Break big goals into tiny, manageable steps to build momentum.

Be Specific: Instead of “exercise more,” try “walk 30 minutes, three times a week”.

Track Progress: Monitor your efforts and celebrate small wins.

Be Kind to Yourself: If you slip, don’t quit; just get back on track.

Plan Ahead: Schedule activities (like gym time or therapy) in advance.

Reward your small wins and acknowledge and celebrate milestones along the way to stay motivated.

Seek Support: Consider

working with a financial advisor or using an accountability partner, like a trusted friend or family member.

Spend more time with family/friends, reconnect with old friends, be more empathetic, set boundaries.

Good luck with your resolutions.

Farmland News would like to thank John Lawson from Ann Arbor, Michigan for sharing his expertise and starting our readers out with helpful tips for a Happy New Year.

Christine M. Smallman and her husband, Terry, live on a small hobby farm outside of Delta, Ohio. She has enjoyed a rich and diverse career in the field of education. She enjoys gardening, reading, painting, writing, and camping. She is a firm believer in the teachings of Khalil Gabril: Do what you love and love what you do - and you will never work a day in your life.

FN

5 steps to make your new year resolutions your NEXT YEAR REALITY.

Number 1: REVIEW YOUR YEAR.
TAKE IN THE GOOD.

NOTICE THE BLESSINGS.
and USE THE LESSONS.

Number 2: Do you KNOW
where you’re going?

Number 3: Change Your Identity.
Change how you see yourself.

Number 4: IMPROVE your circle.

Number 5: BELIEVE. Believe it is possible.
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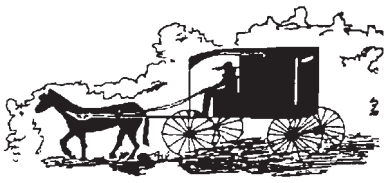


“FARMLAND NEWS”

Makes A Great Gift Idea

The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



A Good Week

It's been a good week—a full one, packed with children, ideas, ideals, spills, tears, and much laughter.

Christmas vacation had all of us excited with the possibilities of what could be done as a family over the course of a week off from school.

I relished the more leisurely mornings for a change: no school, no lunch buckets, no homework!

Not only that, on evenings spent with church family, the children are impressed with the idea of not having to be the first ones going home to get the five school children off to bed in a timely manner.

Sleeping in is something I was never that good at though—if it's not children up with the sun to wake me, I still tend to wake up early, but then that gives me some time with the One who watches over us each night.

I debated as I contemplated various options for what our goals would be for the week.

You know that stale feeling of just doing what you want day after day—soon you find that you don't want anything anymore.

Yesterday I told the children that we do have some cleaning I'd like to get whisked off the list, but we also want to have some fun projects and I'll need their input.

Passing out yellow sticky notes, I told them to each write down what they would like to do as a family.

From the oldest to the youngest they jotted down what they had in mind, then tossed the papers into a mug where I mixed them up.

It was a lazy morning, so I told them to all get dressed before we drew the first slip of paper to see what it said.

It was interesting to see what they came up with.

I couldn't help but grin over a few of them.

Let's just say there was a young boy's desk that got organized, thanks to his siblings and mother for chipping in and helping clean and organize!

Joshua chose one of his favorite games, UNO.

Julia's paper said, "Make cut-out cookies," so that's what we did.

In the end there were indoor and outdoor activities done and no one seemed to mind that there were only a few swipes of cleaning done for the day—it'll wait for tomorrow, right?!

In the evening we were invited to the little country store up the gravel road to join the youth and several families, where we took along calculators and clipboards to help take inventory.

The evening passed swiftly as we counted, calculated, and jotted numbers.

Afterward we were served a yummy meal of chicken tender sandwiches, potato salad, angel food cake dessert, and whipped ice cream.

The rest of our days were spent doing the normal things to keep a family afloat plus some deep

cleaning such as washing off walls and ceilings.

I told them that if we manage to do a room a week, we'll be close to done with the upstairs by the time school is back in session.

Some were more enthusiastic than others, but truth be told, none of them would feel good about being left out, either.

I tell my boys I want them to learn to do all aspects of housework well—as my mother would say, "That makes good men!"

We'd all hasten to add that it takes much more than being able to keep a house to be a good husband or father, yet how well I remember those days when my time and energy didn't reach to all corners of the house and my husband would kick in and do what needed to be done.

This morning as I'm getting to chat with you, my morning bird, Jesse, grabbed the wall mop and proceeded to start washing off the ceiling in the office.

It's something how memories are triggered as events of today remind me of what was in the past.

Shortly before Daniel went to heaven he said he would wash off our kitchen ceiling.

I knew it would be a major job with farm flies having left their spots, plus all that goes with eight people in the kitchen every day.

I can still see the look on his face when he finished.

He admitted it had been a rather big job.

Recipe Of The Week

Pulled Meat Sandwiches

1 boneless pork shoulder or beef brisket, skin and excess fat removed (about 3 to 4 lbs.)

12-oz. can root beer

1 onion, halved

2 cups barbeque sauce

Salt and pepper to taste

Place meat in slow cooker

Add root beer and onions.

Cover and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours, or until meat is tender.

Remove meat and set aside to cool slightly.

Discard cooking liquid.

Shred meat and return to slow cooker.

Stir in barbeque sauce.

Cover and cook on low for an additional 1 hour to allow the sauce to soak into the meat.

Serve hot on sandwich buns.

This Recipe of the Week is from Lori Wachtman, Napoleon, Ohio

I was delighted with a clean kitchen ceiling and a husband who not only helped but also knew the effort it took!

Now that he's not here anymore I decided we'll do it together.

Since the children all enjoy playing Dutch Blitz these days, I incorporated that with scrubbing the ceiling.

After each game the children each got a little job to do, with the oldest helping wash off the kitchen ceiling, a section at a time!

I still felt the empty spot he left, yet as we did it together, there was a sense of healing.

Now as we turn a new leaf into a new year, I'll wrap up with my key verse for 2026.

It is Jeremiah 29:11: *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."*

No set of circumstances is beyond the reach of our Creator—if He has our 'yes,' He also has us covered.

Lastly, we enjoyed these cappuccino muffin bars Julia made on school vacation.

The coffee flavor adds a unique twist to ordinary baking.

We like them best in mini muffin style.

Cappuccino Muffin Bars

2 cups flour

3/4 cup sugar

2-1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons instant coffee

1 cup milk
1/2 cup butter, melted
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup mini chocolate chips

Frosting:

(1) 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 teaspoon instant coffee granules
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups powdered sugar
2 tablespoons milk
1/2 cup mini chocolate chips

In a bowl dissolve coffee in milk until dissolved.

Add butter, egg and vanilla; mix well.

Combine dry ingredients and mix with liquid just until moistened.

Fold in chocolate chips. Spread into a greased 9x13 inch pan.

Bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes.

Cool and spread with frosting.

Yummy!

Can also be baked in muffin pans.

Frosting:

Mix coffee granules and milk.

Add cream cheese and other ingredients and spread.

Readers may write Gloria with culinary or cultural questions at: Gloria Yoder, 10510 E. 350th Avenue, Flat Rock, IL 62427.

FN

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Feed Your Game Day Crowd With Smoked Chicken Wings



Sports fans across the globe tune in when the National Football League hosts its annual championship game each winter. Super Bowl Sunday has become an unofficial holiday in the United States, where fans ranging from the diehard to the casual to those simply tuning in for the commercials and half-time show gather to enjoy a few fun-filled hours. Seasoned party hosts know that food features as prominently as football and fun come Super Bowl Sunday. Guests may expect a few staples, including chicken wings. With that in mind, hosts can impress their guests by serving up this recipe for "Virgil's Smoked Chicken Wings With Blue Cheese Dip" from Neal Corman's "Virgil's Barbecue Road Trip Cookbook" (St. Martin's Press).

Virgil's Smoked Chicken Wings With Blue Cheese Dip

Serves 4

Blue Cheese Dip

- 2 cups blue cheese crumbles, divided
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons hot sauce
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 cup finely chopped scallions
- 1/4 cup finely chopped celery

Marinade

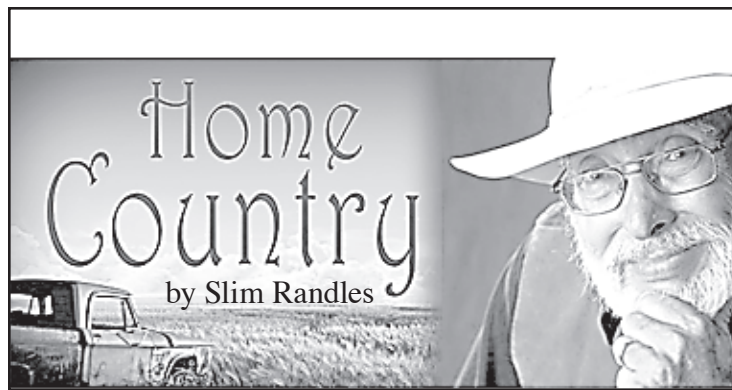
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup hot sauce
- 4 tablespoons Virgil's Dry Rub (see below)
- 4 tablespoons granulated garlic
- 4 tablespoons granulated onion
- Juice of 1/2 lemon

Wings

- 8 large chicken wings
- 1/2 cup Virgil's Dry Rub (see below)

Sauce

- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch



Down at the sale barn Saturday, the think tank had coagulated there with coffees to go to celebrate life.

Doc and Dud had their dogs with them, while Bert and Dewey and Steve went stag.

Dud tried to start a conversation, but the loud-speaker soon drove them outside, where they arrayed themselves on dropped tailgates and waited to hear what Dud had in mind.

"I thought about it a lot," Dud said, "and I wondered what the favorite part of my job was, and wondered if you fellas ever gave that any thought, too."

They nodded.

Yes, by mutual consent a worthy subject.

"With me," Dud continued, "it wasn't so much my job as it was my hobby.

You know, writing that

book.

I'm claiming it as the best part of my job, anyway."

The assembled were still waiting to read "Murder in the Soggy Bottoms," as it had yet to see print, and was really a work in progress.

Then Bert picked up the conversation thread.

"Of course I'm retired now," he said, "but when I was running the pawn shop, my favorite part of the job happened when a customer found something in there he really needed and ended up paying much less for it than he thought he'd have to."

Doc laughed "And you made more on it than you thought you would, too,"

Bert grinned and nodded. "Yep.

That was good too.

And you, Dewey?"

Our accident-prone pha-

- 4 tablespoons white vinegar
- 3/4 cup hot sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

To make the dip: Combine 1 cup of the blue cheese, mayonnaise, buttermilk, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and salt in the bowl of a food processor; blend on low until smooth.

Remove to a medium mixing bowl and fold in the rest of the blue cheese, scallions and celery, being sure to break up the larger blue cheese crumbles.

Place in a covered container and refrigerate overnight.

Mix all the marinade ingredients in a large mixing bowl.

Place the wings in a large container with a lid and pour the mixture over the wings.

Toss until the wings are thoroughly coated; cover and refrigerate for 2 days.

Preheat the grill or smoker to 245 F.

Spread out the wings on

a sheet pan and wipe away any excess marinade.

Sprinkle liberally with the dry rub, coating the wings all over.

Position the wings on the grill away from the direct heat of the coals or burners, and add hickory to the smoker or hickory chips on the coals or gas burners.

Cook the wings for about 3 hours, flipping every 30 minutes (their internal temperature should be about 165 F when cooked).

While the wings are cooking, cut the butter for the sauce into 1-inch cubes and refrigerate.

Whisk the cornstarch into the white vinegar in a small bowl.

In a medium sauté pan over medium heat, bring the hot sauce to a simmer and whisk in the thickened vinegar.

Return to a simmer, cook for 1 minute, and remove from the heat.

Add the cayenne and slowly whisk in the cold butter.

raoh of fertilizer got a serious look on his face.

He finally said, "The best part of the fertilizer business is seeing the difference it makes in the flower gardens around town.

Now maybe it's just my imagination, but I kinda like to take a little credit for a prettier town."

"You deserve it, Dewey."

Doc said kindly.

"Well now ... with me it's a little different.

I have doctoring skills, of course, and it's good when I can help someone, but these days the most satisfying part of my job is to check someone out thoroughly and find there's absolutely nothing wrong with them.

Now that's special."

They all looked over at the tall cowboy, Steve.

"Digging postholes," he said.

"What?" they said.

"You know," he said, "the favorite part of my job."

"Digging postholes?"

"Sure," he said, grinning.

"It's the only part of my job where I start at the top end work down.

Brought to you by "A Cowboy's Bucket List." Available online and from Rio Grande Press.

Keep warm until serving.

Remove the wings from the smoker or grill and put half of them into a bowl, cover with the sauce, and toss.

Repeat with the remaining wings and serve on a platter, with the blue cheese dip on the side.

Virgil's Dry Rub

Makes 5 to 5-1/2 cups

- 2-1/2 cups sweet paprika
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup Texas-style chili powder
- 1/2 cup minced onion
- 1/2 cup granulated garlic
- 1/4 cup dried parsley flakes
- 6 tablespoons kosher salt

Combine all of the ingredients in a medium bowl and whisk together until completely incorporated.

Transfer to a covered bowl with a tight-fitting lid.

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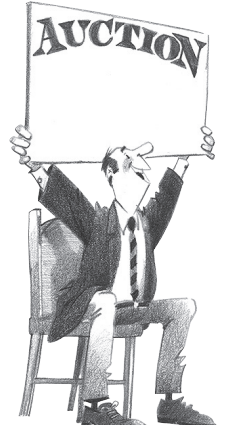


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