



1 Section Tuesday, January 27, 2026 Volume 67 Number 8

Winter Blues – The Winter Starkness

By Al Beatty

Christmas Cheers and Visits

Just a few days before Christmas I traveled to the office of Farmland News for my somewhat regular monthly visit.

However, this trip was a little special because I was giving my personal Christmas cheers to the staff of Dianne, Chris, and one of the new owners, Todd.

The office was buzzing with activity!

Todd was heading out to visit some accounts and Chris was on a call from Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur regarding the issues of the post office getting the paper to the subscribers in a timely manner.

At one point Dianne and I were so engrossed in a boisterous conversation about family, life, and the holidays, when Chris had to tell us to “pipe down” because of her call with the congresswoman.

Ooops!

When she finished the call, I gave her my sincere apologies, but I ask her, “Was that really the Congresswoman you were speaking to or a staff member?”

She replied “Yes, it was Congresswoman Kaptur!”

She added that she has known her for several years from her time at the University of Toledo.

Interesting indeed.

Let’s hope something can be resolved with the mailing issues.

A Delicious Lunch in a Welcoming Environment

By the time I left, I realized it was lunchtime.

Where to eat?

There are several nice eateries in downtown Archbold—not to mention Sauder Village!



The St Joseph River on a winter day.



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Poor Will's Farmland News Almanack

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January 28 - February 3

But now there are things to be heard if one is at all attentive. At noontime on a sunny day the dooryard sparrows begin to test a few phrases of remembered song....From the woodland the male cardinal whistles as though he really means it....True, these are slight matters, particularly on a day when the wind has a wire edge and the threat of more snow. But spring is the sum of many things, and weather is only one of them.

Hal Borland

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

The Weather in the Week Ahead

On January 31, the sun passes a declination of 17 degrees and 40 minutes, one fourth of its way to spring equinox.

Near this same day, a temperature pivot throws the entire northern and southern halves of the planet into reverse.

And average temperatures start to rise throughout the country.

Personal thermometers not only mark that process at home, but almost everywhere.

And no matter where the starting point, the interval – the rate of increase – is almost the same in every part of the United States:

During February, for example, the rise in averages at Columbus, Ohio is from 28 to 30 degrees.

That interval is matched by Houston's rise from 54 to 56, Memphis' 42 to 45, Juneau's 25 to 27, Denver's 29 to 32, San Francisco's 49 to 51, St Louis' 32 to 35, Chicago's 26 to 28. In western states more subject to the vast thaws sweeping up from the gulf, the jump is four to five degrees: Minneapolis averages move from 12 to 16 degrees, International Falls' from 3 to 7.

These seemingly minor changes measure distance and time as well as temperature.

If we actually can't see the days expanding by 90 seconds every 24 hours, even if we can't walk north now through green Louisiana, we still can know for certain that our Spring is underway everywhere north of the equator.

It will reach us when it should, and we will pick our daffodils in the middle of an ordered sequence that begins this January week along the southern beaches.

Natural Calendar

Cardinals, which sang only sporadically earlier in the month, have begun mating calls half an hour before dawn, doves, song sparrows and blue jays often joining their song. The first ma-

jor waves of robins and bluebirds cross the Ohio River.

On highways, roadkills attest to the increasing nighttime activities of skunks and opossums. constellations of the Dog Days are rising: Lyra and Cygnus.

Deep in the southeast, red Antares is glowing. Regulus leads Leo's Sickle into the west.

As January wanes, Orion moves more westerly in the mid evening, and to the upper left of that vast group of stars, past Castor and Pollux, the stars of Cancer follow.

After Cancer, and shaped like a sickle, comes Leo, easily found since Regulus, now the strongest star in the eastern sky, is its leading edge.

Early mornings in late January bring May's planting star, Arcturus, overhead. To the far east, the first dandelions can be flowering, snow crocus and henbit budding. Sometimes moss is growing on logs.

Sometimes tulip and grape hyacinth leaves are pushing out of the ground. Sometimes day lily foliage is up three inches, daffodil spears four to eight inches.

When the sun is strong enough for all of that to happen, then flies hatch to warm themselves on the south side of your house, their soft presence almost tipping the delicate scale of time

In the Field and Garden

Pruning is recommended for the next two weeks, as the moon wanes.

Depending on where you live, this may be the time to lime your soil.

Since lime reacts slowly with the ground, it should be worked in a few months before planting.

Lime can also be applied to the surface for no-till fields.

Inspect young trees for rodent damage throughout the winter.

Consider forage testing for your livestock soon if you suspect that quality is declining.

Some traditional supplements for your animals include a little whole barley, a teaspoon of molasses in a pint of milk, powdered slippery elm, calcium rich powdered willow bark, flaked oats, powdered seaweed, and mashed raw carrots.

As with any supplement, use in moderation, and keep track of any results you notice.

The major lambing and kidding season now starts throughout the region: more lambs and kids are born in the next eight weeks than in any other months.

Sap may be restless in the maples under the power of the full moon on January 10.

A light feeding in the morning, and a heavier feeding towards dark can provide your chickens with a little more heat as the mercury falls.

Egg production can be expected to decline when highs stay below 30 degrees, but warm water may help keep the hens laying a little.

Frost-seed crops like red clover in the pastures, and scatter grass seed over bare spots on the lawn.

Freezing and thawing plants the seeds.

Spray broad-leaved evergreens with anti-drying agent to prevent winterkill.

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

The Countdown to Spring

- One week until the skunk cabbage blooms in the wetlands and cardinals begin their spring mating calls.

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

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

- Four weeks to major pussy willow emerging season

- Five weeks to crocus season

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

- Seven weeks to daffodil time

- Eight weeks to the major wildflower bloom

- Nine weeks until the yellow blossoms of forsythia bushes appear

Journal

2006: After a very mild January, I took inventory at the beginning of Late Winter.

Snowdrops, some daffodils and hyacinths were up about an inch around the yard.

Snow crocus were two inches above the mulch, ready to bud.

Purple deadnettle, bittercress and chickweed were slowly spreading across the garden.

I found one new wild strawberry leaf, one new waterleaf sprout.

There was fresh growth on the Japanese honeysuckle, leaves dark violet, venturing out from the axils of their woody vines.

A few red nubs of peonies had appeared.

The foliage of the oak-leaf hydrangea had fallen in the past two weeks.

The Osage fruits had turned deep red-brown.

The berries of the euonymus were falling from their decaying, once protective sepals.

No pussy willow catkins were open yet; I cut a branch and brought it indoors, set it in a vase of warm water.

I walked beyond the Covered Bridge late in the afternoon with Bella, our border-collie-spaniel. The temperature was almost 60 degrees, the river high.

Garlic mustard was lush on the hillsides. In protected hollows, cushions of chickweed were deep March green.

Black walnut hulls were dark and collapsing, fell away at the touch of my heel.

Only a few box elder seeds were hanging from their branches, thinning now like the honeysuckle berries. Young poison hemlock was feathery and spreading. New ragwort and sweet rocket leaves were pushing up. Cautious skunk cabbage spears were just barely visible.

Even though I was a little disappointed at the slow progress of the plants during such a warm, month-long thaw, Bella had no reservations about the state of the landscape.

A far better observer than I, she took a differ-

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ALMANACK

(Continued From Page 2)

ent inventory, and she ran and ran for joy once we reached the bright meadows below the Vale.

ALMANACK LITERATURE***Things That Go Bump in the Night*****by Vickie Beyer
Barnes City, IA**

It was late spring about 10:00 p.m. one evening when I opened the back door to let the dog out.

That's when I heard a ewe fussing.

I decided to go check, so I grabbed a jacket and flashlight, and with the dog dutifully trailing, I went to see what was wrong...as if I didn't know.

The ewe was due to lamb any time.

Sure enough, she had a new lamb. I could only assume that a second would follow shortly.

I entered the shed, which was only about seven feet tall on the high side, sloping to five feet.

What with bedding and all, there wasn't much head room.

I moved the lamb into the corner, and the ewe turned around.

I lay my light on the ground, kneeled behind the ewe and proceeded to encourage the second lamb's arrival.

It didn't take much encouragement.

But just as I was about to get both feet together for the delivery, something small hit me on the head.

Then another thing hit, then something bigger hit me, then there were flying missiles everywhere, both large and small hitting me, bouncing off the ceiling and the ewe.

She was going wild. The dog was barking like crazy.

I was trying to duck and not lose hold of the lamb.

I didn't know whether to stay or run.

The barrage finally moved a little farther over in the shed.

I got the lamb delivered, and I picked up the flashlight.

The light had disoriented some birds in the rafters, and they had been flying around.

The cats that had followed the dog and me into the shed had been jumping after them.

It was wild for a little while, but the birds all finally got away, and mom and babies got some rest. FN

FARMLAND NEWS – A Gift That Lasts All Year!

Look and Think...Before You Leap

Stay The Course... For The Sake Of Others

Words of Inspiration

By Fr. Jerry Schetter

Aesop Fables were great tales told by an Ancient Greek storyteller.

One of his tales was about two frogs.

The story goes like this; there were two frogs living together in a land that had been ravaged by a long drought.

Finally, they came upon a well that had an abundance of fresh water in the bottom.

Well, one frog wanted to jump right in.

The other frog was a little more cautious saying "What if that water dries up, too; then we will have no water and be stuck on the bottom of a well we can't get out of."

The moral Aesop gives is... "Think twice before you leap."

We all know how it goes, when things sound good we want to jump in with both feet.

Sometimes there may be a sober note though.

Most likely, we have all heard of the Beatitudes from the Gospels.

They can sound like a sober note, but there is also an announcement of great "Blessing".

Do we know what we are jump-

ing into?

When we hear or read the Beatitudes the first thought should be to "stay the course".

Truth be told, all those who choose to follow Jesus are both blessed and persecuted.

The only way to enjoy the true refuge God offers, and to have nothing disturb us is precisely, to stir up ourselves and others to live as Jesus calls... for the "sake of others".

This kind of living that invites God's reign presents; invites, insults and persecution because it challenges selfishness and self-promotion.

Gospel living... is taking seri-

ously the Beatitudes, even though they may seem to turn upside down the usual relationships people have with each other and invites a new world order that is the presence of God's kingdom of heaven.

There are times we may feel that we need help.

So, the first three beatitudes address that because they are directed to the poor, the mourners, and the meek; those we see as needing the most help.

Like how the widow, orphan, and sojourners are used in Scripture.

Those are the ones who are seen completely dependent on God.

God's promise to bring them

blessing includes our own gospel living that changes our order.

No wonder it invites persecution!

But we also see some of them as those who have a lack.

Blessedness involves removing the lack.

The last four beatitudes address those who exercise the virtues that bring about: God's reign in this world of ours.

Yes, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers, and the righteous.

So, the blessedness here is directed to the doing of these virtues towards those who need God's help and protection... erasing the lack.

Our very living of the gospels schools us in the virtues needed for everyone to share in God's blessing.

Think of it as this... If we live this way we may be persecuted because the call of the gospel is too self-giving... not just on the part of a chosen few but on the part of all so that all can share equally in the good things God provides.

Yet precisely in this self-giving is the fullness of blessing revealed.

Ah, the goodness... "Your reward will be great in heaven." FN



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Good News To Start 2026, Looking Back On The Past 12 Months

"Stop rocking the boat."
Willard E. Crotty

My grandpa was a self made millionaire in the manufacturing business from Detroit.

Grandson of Irish immigrants, he grew upper and worked hard.

At age sixteen, he had the largest paper route in Detroit Michigan, delivering 400 newspapers every morning before school.

Later he was on the Notre Dame University boxing team and judged every one of Joe Lewis' Golden Gloves boxing matches in Detroit.

From his modest start as a salesman for Detroit Gasket Company, he went on to found his own manufacturing company and became the largest automotive gasket and sun visor manufacturing company in the world.

That little light that turns on by the mirror when you drop the passenger visor...You can thank Willard E. Crotty.

He was an extremely generous man and a huge influence on my character formation.

I learned countless life les-

sons from him that I use to this day.

During the late 1960's when the whole world seemed to be on fire about something, he had a huge box of buttons printed up and passed them out by the dozens.

They were red, white, and blue and had a simple four word message: *Stop Rocking The Boat.*

He was proud of what he had built and proud of the country that had given him to opportunity to be so successful.

He believed in positive thinking and wanted people to focus on the good that was going on and to stop complaining about everything they didn't like.

That seems like a great place to start here in 2026 when it seems like we are lurching from crisis to crisis every day, while both sides of the political spectrum compete to see who can scream

Good News In 2025

by Vern Brown

the loudest about the injustice of it all.

Here is a potpourri of really great changes that are going on every day that seem to get buried in the bad news everyone likes to dwell on.

Fentanyl deaths and overdoses in general have fallen off a cliff.

2023 saw 107,000 overdose deaths, 74,000 were fentanyl.

2025 saw 73,000 overdose deaths, 45,000 were fentanyl.

This 40% drop in fentanyl deaths is almost completely due to reduced supply coming over the border from Mexico and catching precursor chemicals coming in from China.

We are basically saving the entire Vietnam death toll every 24 months now and its still improving.

The southern border is closed and no one is trying to cross anymore.

Border apprehensions are down 96% from the previous administration averages.

And "got-aways" are reported at zero for the previous 3 months.

Illegal immigration is not a problem now, at least at the border.

Inflation is now under control. The greatly feared inflation spike from the new tariffs never materialized.

Prices have stabilized with some key price categories experiencing dramatic declines.

Unemployment is dropping as jobs open up.

A key feature of this realignment of the labor sector is that all new job creation is entirely in the private sector.

Even with the mass layoffs of government employees, the private sector is expanding rapidly and absorbing the laid off workers.

Economists know that growth in private sector jobs is true economic growth and bodes extremely well for future economic growth.

Growth in government jobs

is not economic growth.

Housing costs are also way down..

Nationally rents are down 1% over the past 12 months, with many markets reporting decreases approaching 20%.

Same with private homes.

Prices have stabilized, interest rates are down and houses are way more affordable for first time home buyers.

The American dream of owning a home is coming true for large swaths of American home buyers.

Gasoline prices are down 7% from the highs of 2024, and predicted to drop another 8% in 2026.

This 15% drop in gasoline price will have a huge ripple effect on all the other sectors of the economy, particularly food.

50% of food cost is due to transportation.

A big drop in gasoline and diesel prices will be reflected in lower food prices as it works its way through the food chain.

This is already being reflected in egg prices.

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The Sears & Roebuck Catalog, 1943

It was the first week of November 1943. Halloween was over a few days ago and I just took a bite out of a stale popcorn ball I got trick or treating.

Yuck.

I took it to the backyard and broke it up for the birds. I got four popcorn balls this year.

I had just started school in the first grade in September.

The mail came today and in it was the Christmas catalog from Sears, Roebuck and Company.

Wow.

It is sure a thick one this year.

Mom handed it to me and told me to be careful with it because others wanted to see it besides myself.

She said you can circle all the toys you like but do not tear any pages.

It was Friday, last day of the school week and Mom was fixing supper, so I crawled up on the couch and immediately went to the Christmas toy section.

I didn't have a pencil handy so all I did was look in amazement at all the toys available.

Lost in excitement, I didn't hear my sister yell in at me to come to the table for supper.

The next thing I knew, she was standing in front of me.

"Did you hear me, Mom said to go wash your hands and come to the supper table?"

I closed the Sears catalog and gently laid it on the sofa cushion as if it were the most valuable, precious book in the house.

I planned to continue my toy search after supper with pencil in hand.

Ah.

One of my favorite suppers, goulash.

And Mom made Fisheye Tapioca.

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

by Ron Bliss

Wow.

Love them both.

After supper it was my night to dry dishes, so the catalog had to wait.

By the time I was done with the dishes and after a bathroom visit I went to the living room to reconvene my catalog time, only to find it in the hands of my sister.

I complained to Mom that she had given me the catalog to look at the toys and now my sister won't give it to me.

Mom told me the next day was Saturday, and I could look at it all day.

Just let her have it for now.

Begrudgingly I turned on the radio but all that was on was the six o'clock news.

This is just not my day.

With nothing else to do I went out on the front porch and sat on the glider.

The mean neighbor boy who delivers our paper rode by on his bicycle.

He saw me sitting on the porch and hollered, "Hi dummy".

Smart Alec, I thought.

It was getting dark and too cold to be on the porch without my jacket, so I went back inside, still unhappy because I lost my catalog time to my sister.

My dad was reading the paper and listening to the radio.

It was one of those talent shows.

Not my favorite but I had nothing else to do so I stretched out on the couch and listened too.

I soon fell asleep and the next thing I knew Mom was shaking me and telling me it

was time to go to bed.

I had to share a bed with my brother, and he was already asleep.

Mom cautioned me not to wake him.

Saturday morning, I woke up.

There was heavy frost during the night, and the bedroom window was coated with an icy coating.

My brother was scratching his name in it with his fingernail.

I quickly got dressed in the cold bedroom and commenced to do the same.

After downing a quick bowl of Wheaties cereal, I crawled up in dad's easy chair with the Sears catalog.

I got dad's pencil off his table and began circling all the toys I liked.

Wow.

Oh boy.

I like that.

I probably circled thirty or more toys.

Even at my age I was smart enough to know I'd never get them, but it was fun to pretend.

We were poor and did not have lots of money to spend on nonessentials.

Later that day I gave the catalog to Mom and told her I circled all the toys I liked.

She said ok, and told me there was one dish of tapioca left if I wanted it.

I sure did.

Well, time flies.

Thanksgiving came and went.

December rolled around. School dismissed for Christmas recess.

I forgot all about the catalog and made frequent stops at the local hardware store and Firestone store to see their great toy selections.

Each time I reminded Mom of all the neat toys I had seen.

Christmas day had finally arrived. Mom, Dad, my sister and brothers and I all gathered around the Christmas tree.

We passed out gifts and

took turns opening them one at a time.

We usually had three gifts each but this year I had four.

When I opened my first one there were three pairs of socks.

When I got to my second one there were three pairs of underwear.

My third gift was a wooden truck I had seen at the Charles Co. and I liked it.

Everyone was done but I had one more gift and I was last.

It was a set of Tinker Toys. I had circled Tinker Toys in the Sears Catalog, but this was a smaller version of what I had seen.

All in all, I was pleased because I had more today than yesterday and I can tell you truthfully, I needed both the socks and underwear.

You should have seen the ones I was wearing.

As I think back over the

years, I can see how the wishes and wants of a small child change as one grows older.

Then all I wanted were toys.

As a teenager I just wanted to learn to drive and have a car.

As a married adult I wanted money, a better house and a new car.

As an octogenarian I want a closer relationship with my God. I want to enjoy the warm, loving companionship with my beautiful wife.

I want a world of peace and a country with less divisiveness and hatred.

I want a better world for my grandchildren and great grandchildren.

And, I don't need any more toys.

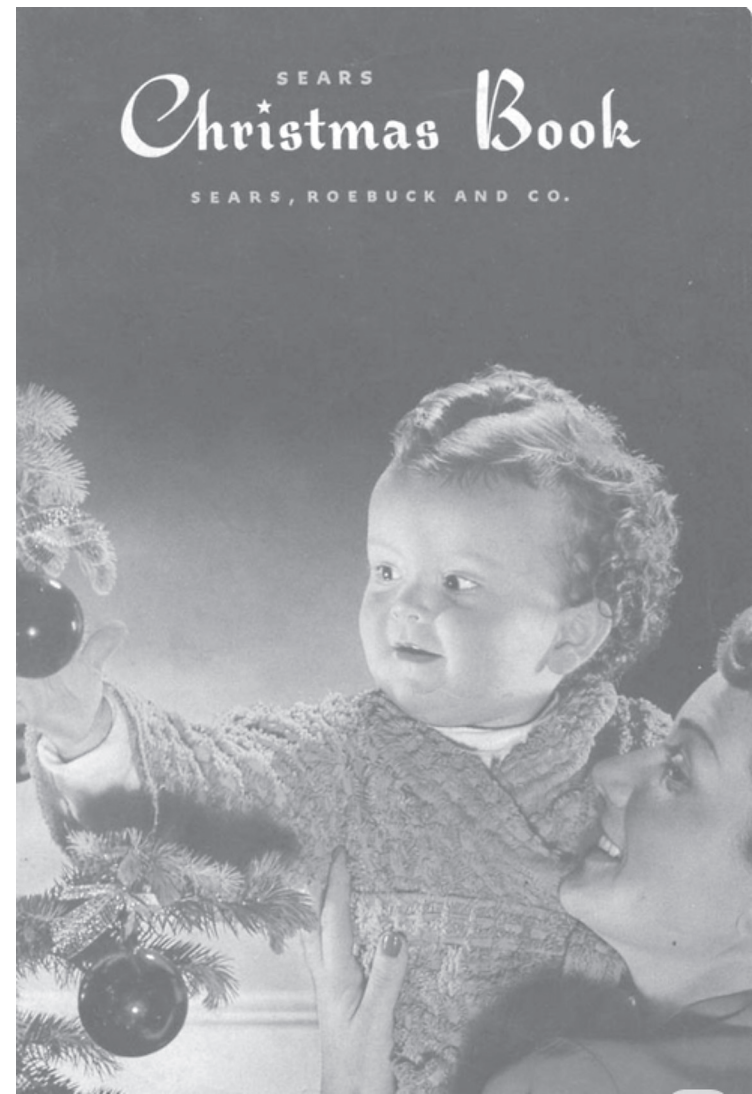
Ron was born in McClure, Ohio, raised in Napoleon and has lived in Wauseon for the past 64 years. A Navy veteran, he worked in Quality Control at Campbell Soup Company for almost 37 years. He's been writing poems since he was in school and has self-published 21 books of poetry. FN

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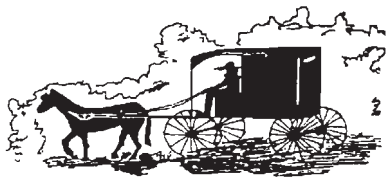
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The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



Life tends to become mundane, but then sometimes you shake your head and wonder...

In the wee hours of the morning, something unusual transpired, soon after I was summoned to my little daughter's side.

The night before, I had been in awe of how I could feel the presence of angels.

It was so peaceful and serene.

The reality of heaven made the natural things of this world seem so minute.

Even the best things of earth seemed to fade and pale.

Part of me wondered how I could ever go on with life on earth as it felt so tainted compared to the heavenly realm.

Then the thought hit me that as we journey on in the Lord, we are actually living in His holy presence even in our earthbound bodies!

Now in the stillness of the morning hour, I headed for the kitchen where I planned to fetch something for Hosanna's headache.

Just like that, a light flashed from behind me.

Instinctively, I turned to look behind me; there was no light and no apparent source of light—it was gone.

In my mind I can still see the shadow of my shoulders and head against the wall in the darkness of the kitchen.

There was nothing left to do but fetch the vitamin for Hosanna and realize that there is a God in heaven who really dwells with us,

who shines His light upon us even in the dark times.

The waking hours we spent together did not matter anymore.

Despite that precious touch from our Maker, I am human and I still get tested!

This afternoon as I thought of the children coming home from school, I wondered how things would go...

Somehow it looked big to me to keep things flowing smoothly.

It's also the time of day Daddy used to come in from the shop.

And you know how it is—there are no good options in life besides taking it a minute or second at a time.

Things flowed well and I enjoyed the children, but when the door opened at 4:00, a stab went through me.

No, it was not my husband—it was one of the boys who had been doing chores.

It hurt, but it was okay; God is still good.

Like the song Daniel used to sing, "*Bigger than any mountain that I can or cannot see...*"

You know how it is.

Sometimes we get so hung up or distracted with what is bothering us most that we forget to do what we can to lighten another one's load.

Children may be a good example of that.

Bickering seems to come so naturally!

"It was not my fault, and

it's my turn!"

Today I've been contemplating some good ways for them to get their focus off of what they feel they deserve and onto others' feelings.

Not sure that I've pulled it together in my head, but we'll keep working on it.

One simple thing the children enjoy is helping make blankets for those in need.

About once a month we'll gather with other folks from church and knot comforters.

There is work for all to do—from the little ones who can barely peer over the tables to the grandparents, there is a job for one and all.

Joshua enjoys using chalk to mark where the knots will go.

A large piece of cloth

Recipe Of The Week

20-Minute Homemade Bread

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted for brushing

Preheat oven to 400 degrees and grease a baking sheet or line it with parchment paper.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt until well combined.

Add the milk and vegetable oil to the dry ingredients, stirring until just combined; do not over mix, a few lumps are okay.

Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead gently for about 1 minute until it is smooth.

Shape the dough into a round loaf or divide it into smaller rolls and place them on the prepared baking sheet.

Brush the tops with melted butter for a golden finish.

Bake in 400 degree oven for 15-20 minutes or until bread is golden brown and sounds hollow when tapped on bottom.

Allow to cool slightly before slicing and serving.

This Recipe of the Week is from Mary Schroll, McComb, Ohio

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with holes is placed on top of the comforters and used as a pattern to mark where the knots should go.

One of my highlights from the last time was watching the first and second graders as they eagerly learned how to weave the needle up and down through the three layers of fabric and lining, then cut the yarn and tie the knots.

By 8:00, things begin to wind down as we get ready for what the boys look forward to the most—snack time!

Each family brings a finger food of their choice.

I'm amazed by the balanced variety that seems to be there each time—usually there will be fresh fruits, veggies, baked goods, salty snacks, and a variety of dips to go with various dishes.

This last time, one particular dip caught my eye.

I felt something like resistance, but then there was that choice to make.

Why should I reject it just because of the memory I had linked to it from having made it for Daniel?

I haven't made that dip since the day I served it to him 10 years ago.

I decided to try it, and yes, it tasted just like it did a decade ago.

Matter of fact, I went back for seconds.

You know, God knows

those moments.

He understands because He cares about the details!

Okay, I can't help but share it with you.

Pretzel Dip

Cream Cheese Layer:

- 8-oz cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped onions
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic salt

Sweet Layer:

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard

Topping:

- 3/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans

Cream Cheese Layer: Mix together cream cheese, onions, and garlic salt.

Spread about 1/2 inch thick on a nice serving plate.

Sweet Layer: Combine butter, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce, and mustard in a saucepan and heat until melted.

Do not boil.

Spread over top of cream cheese layer.

Top with chopped pecans.

Note: We like to dip with square pretzels.

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

FN

LOG CABIN

WORD SEARCH

WORDS

- ANTLERS
- AXE
- BEAR RUG
- CABIN
- CEDAR
- CHIMNEY
- CHINKING
- FIREPLACE
- HEARTH
- HOMESTEAD
- LANTERN
- LODGE
- LOFT
- LOGS
- MANTEL
- NOTCHING
- PANTRY
- PORCH
- RETREAT
- ROCKING CHAIR
- RUSTIC
- TIMBER
- WOOD PILE
- WOODSTOVE

K	P	P	H	H	E	Y	C	D	R	I	Y	Y	M	E	R	H	C	C	T
E	X	A	O	A	E	G	H	W	B	O	L	O	D	G	E	C	H	A	S
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U	P	E	R	E	K	M	X	C	M	D	H	W	E	Y	K	M	L	O	X

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

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U	P	E	R	E	K	M	X	C	M	D	H	W	E	Y	K	M	L	O	X

In the January 6 publication some of the pictures did not identify the persons correctly, due to miscommunication. We apologize for the mistake.



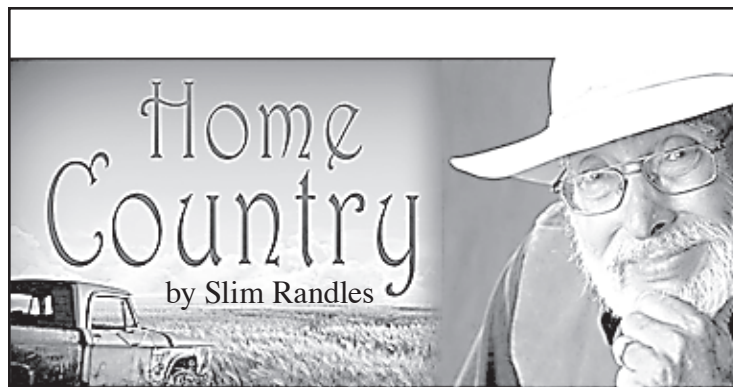
Steve Noffsinger with his creation.



Steve Noffsinger puts the final touches on this plane.



Steve Noffsinger is about to fly his plane.



It just happened, you know? One of those serendipitous coincidences that occur when planets line up or you foolishly store oily rags together.

It just ... happened. Ardis Richardson was looking through the *Soup 'R Market* for an egg beater for her mom.

Not the electric kind. The turn-the-handle kind. She picked one up and tried it out, causing the friendly little metallic whir that good egg beaters make.

What was serendipitous, however, was Anita Campbell not six feet away in the next

row thumping pumpkins.

As Anita thumped and Ardis whirred, they got in time with each other and Sarah McKinley was checking out kitchen timers and gave one a friendly ding.

This got the thumper and whirrer going even more enthusiastically and caused the market's owner, Annette George, to walk over to the three percussionists, grin, and pick up a brand-new stainless steel funnel, purse her lips, and begin to blow a blues tune on it.

It was okay, since she owned the store.

Annette, it turns out,

played trombone back in high school.

While she was bluesing and Anita was thumping and Sarah was dinging and Ardis was whirring, a kind of blissful harmony began and filled the vegetable aisle with music.

When they finally stopped, and between gales of laughter, Annette said she could put a regular trumpet mouthpiece in the funnel and get a better tone.

Anita said not to say anything to her husband, Dud, as he thought his accordion playing was the only music in the family.

They agreed to get together each Wednesday afternoon and practice until they got good enough for a concert.

But they never did.

Serendipity just ... happens ... in its own good time.

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FN



This is Jody Shaneyfelt, our club president. He is 100% in charge of building the entire race track and crawler course.



This is Nick Merrit, vice president of the club.

GOOD START (Continued From Page 4)

The previous administration made a poor decision to eradicate a large part of our national egg laying flock, which drove egg prices through the roof.

The flock has recovered and retail egg prices are down 60%.

Murder rates have dramatically decreased especially in cities where the national guard was deployed.

So far in 2026, our nation's capital has reported ZERO HOMICIDES for January.

This is unheard of given the past decades of skyrocketing murder rates in Washington, DC.

So as we start 2026 and hope for peace in our country, we can focus on some huge improvements in our national situation.

Probably would be a good idea to mention some of these great accomplishments and stop rocking the boat, as my Grandpa Crotty would say.

Vern Brown is a 6th generation farmer from Jonesville, Michigan. He resides on the family farm which was homesteaded by his family in 1835. His current projects are centered around export of live breeding cattle to Africa and Eastern Europe.

FN

WINTER (Continued From Page 1)

However, the cravings for a cup of coffee were getting to me, therefore my mind immediately turned to Tap Culture Coffee shop, which serves a tasty array of foods as well.

The problem was it is located on the other side of the railroad tracks.

As I have learned by now, there are often delays with long trains blocking the railroad crossing on State Route 66, also known as Defiance street in town.

I'm not sure why there are these long delays, but I suspect it has something with loading and unloading shipments at the various factories.

But remember, commerce is good and sometimes there are some sacrifices that need to be made... like the trains.

Fortunately, a kind Archbold lady once explained to me there's a way to get

around that by heading north on Defiance Street, turn east on Lutz Road, go past Fairlawn Retirement Community, proceed to the stop light and head south (right) where the railroad travels over that road to bypass the mess!

After making my adjustment, I arrived at my destination; it was a buzz with business.

I don't think I've seen it as busy as that day.

They featured a screen pulled down with a constant warm and bright flame of a fireplace; *my wife, Molly would have loved that.*

It appeared a few people were out for holiday visits, others were taking a break from shopping, and a few young people were working on laptops.

Perhaps assignments for high school, Northwest State Community College or some other institution?

I ordered a grilled turkey and cheese panini with a pickle spear and a bag of

chips with my coffee.

As usual, it was delicious in a warm and welcoming environment.

Time for the Somberness of the Winter Drive

As my midday break and feast were completed I headed back to Indiana taking my usual route of US 20A over to State Route 107 traveling through West Unity and Montpelier before turning on State Route 49 under the toll road.

My last turn was on US 20 heading west to Hoosier country.

While on my return trip on Route 107 I noticed something that caught my attention on the way over to Farmland News.

Even though I've seen it every time I head home... but since it was winter with the leaves down, and going at a somewhat slower pace with the holidays, I kept noticing my crossing over the St. Joseph River.

Since we relocated to

this area from Wilmington, Ohio, in 2022 I've noticed that it seems as though I am always crossing that river.

Rivers and Memories

I have always been captivated by rivers.

In the grand scheme of time, it wasn't all that long ago when the only efficient transportation was via waterways.

The railroads surpassed the waterways as the most efficient mode of transportation just less than 175 years ago.

Of course, since then railroads have been surpassed by other modes many times over.

Growing up, during the summers at my cousins and grandfathers farm, we were near Little Walnut Creek in Fairfield County, Ohio.

We were forbidden to go near it because as mom would say, "It got wild!"

However, there was a feeder creek that we called "Teen, Tiny Walnut Creek."

Of course, I don't think it really had a name.

We had many fun days by the creek, which included creating a dam to make a swim hole.

When I was not on the farm and living on the west side of Lancaster, Ohio, the Hocking River ran near our house.

I loved riding my bike along the riverbank.

It was so entertaining watching nature live along the bank.

At times, I also found it interesting to see some of the "junk" floating along.

Where did it come from? — Where is it going?

I even had a wild fantasy of taking a canoe to the Hocking River and flowing my way through Athens, to the Ohio River with the ultimate destination of New Orleans!

My interest in history and travel along the waterways led me to acquire

(Continued on Page 10)



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The tranquility of the river.

WINTER

(Continued From Page 9)

books covering the subject.

One book is set in our backyard and was titled *Maumee River 1835 A History of Pioneers, Indians, and Land Speculators* by Louis A. Simonis.

The book was published locally by Riverview Press in Defiance.

The book is filled with firsthand accounts from the journal of William C. Holgate covering the time period of May 16 to June 24, 1835.

Travels are covered from Utica, New York to Toledo,

through Defiance then on to Fort Wayne and Huntington, Indiana, and back to Defiance.

He gives a very vivid detail about being stuck up against other travelers...and the raw smells!

Rivers in Wintertime

Back to my travels on State Route 107, as I was driving over the St. Joseph at 50 miles an hour, it appeared there was some ice on the river.

I thought to myself how beautiful it was, even though it was an overcast day.

Have you noticed, that winter days are either overcast, a very depressing overcast, or a very bright sunny day?

When the sun is casting its bright beams, the snow-covered floor of the earth is like nothing else!

As I am home, in my writing nook watching the birds scurry around gathering seeds and nuts that they found, I am joined by a white breasted nuthatch, cardinals, sparrows, dark eyed juncos, and my favorite the bluejay!

Of course, there are an assortment of squirrels in on this feast as well.

The unclothed trees cast shadows on the white turf as Mr. Sun sends his warm and very welcome greeting.

Of course, those sunny days are often the coldest days!

As an earth science teacher once told me, "generally cloudy days provide more warmth because the clouds act as a natural blanket."

I never understood how we can fly planes through clouds and fog – this is nothing more than clouds on the ground that we drive

through.

However, it's true...that is such a dilemma to me.

I love those sunny days.

The overcast days and darkness bring me down.

At times, I do have big time depression!

The only good thing about the winter blues of darkness is I'm old enough now that time flies by so fast I can "laugh" at Old Man Winter and darkness because I know spring will be here soon!

That day traveling from Archbold on 107 was a dreary day and a little depressing.

As I crossed over the St. Joseph for my fourth and final time at the edge of Montpelier, it occurred to me that there was a large cemetery adjacent to the river.

I thought since it's the holidays, I'm in no rush.

Why not stop?

I am so very glad I did.

I was able to navigate to the outer lane of the cemetery that was along the riverbank and pull off for a view...And what a view of the river I had!

The river was only partially frozen.

The frozen part glistened with sliver ice and in spots it was were covered with powdery snow just like white powdery donuts.

Other sections of the river must have been warmer.

I'm not sure if that's how it works, but it must be because water was freely flowing downstream under the ice on its way to Fort Wayne where it joins the St. Mary's to form the Maumee River.

Various thoughts flowed through my mind.

Memories of my childhood along the Hocking River and along the creek

at my cousin's came back to me.

I became alive in the wintery environment of the St. Joseph River in winter.

The air swirled around and the sounds came back from those days.

As I stood and walked along the western bank of the St. Joseph I could hear little sounds on the other side. These were scurrying sounds, claw sounds.

As it turned out a squirrel was chasing another around the belly of a tree and up to the multiple barren arms of the tree.

The tree appeared craggy and dead.

However, it wasn't dead.

It was just asleep for the winter.

A few remnants of brown leaves clung to it.

But that tree and other bushes in the barren land were dressed in brown and invited a somber, if not a dark moody shadow over me.

Winter is hard for me for several reasons.

1) I can't sit on the deck with my wife.

2) I can't ride my bike.

3) I can't even reasonably get up and feed the bluejays in the morning because by the time the sun awakes, I have to be on campus for my university duties at Thunder Nation.

Of course, I could place the nuts out in the dark, but then there is the danger of slipping on the ice or stumbling in the snow in the cold darkness; I don't need that.

Brighter Days Ahead

As I walked along the

(Continued on Page 11)

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Reflections of the natural beauty of winter.



Spring is coming.

WINTER (Continued From Page 10)

riverbank, it occurred to me that even though I was visited with some melancholy... I was at a cemetery.

Everyone is dead at a cemetery just like the winter surroundings.

However, just like the trees that will bud in a few weeks, we too can look forward to that glorious day of life after death.

As I mulled over those thoughts, I pulled back on the road thanking God for the time to take in the win-

ter scene of the mixed environmental elements of:

- frozen water
- flowing water
- snow
- brown dried leaves
- wrinkly naked trees
- and more.

Had it been a “thriving alive” river bank of the summertime I wouldn’t have had the peek hole that I could see through from the road that nudged me to stop, to listen, to view and experience the beauty.

As the good book says in Ecclesiastes there is a season for all things.

It’s time to take the winter rest and prepare ourselves again--in just a few weeks brighter and warmer days will be here!

Farmland News would like to thank Al for sharing this 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 and his wife Molly are grandparents to several and he enjoys writing for fun.” FN

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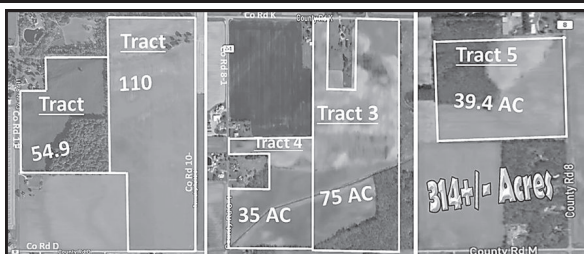
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TRACT #2: 54.908 Ac- Co. Rd. 11—Parcel #29-056964-02.000
Sec 28, T7N, R7E—York Twp, 38 tillable, 16 acres Woods & R/W. Primarily Mermill, Gilford Loam with some Tedrow. Over 1300' Frontage. Year Taxes \$2,070.34.

TRACT #3: 75 AC- Co. Rd. K—Parcel #20-041804-00.000
Sect 36 T8N, R7E—Pike Twp, 61.56 acres tillable, 11.9 acres woods, balance ditch & R/W. Mixture Mermill, Tedrow, Ottokee Soils. Over 900' Frontage. Some tile. Year Taxes \$3,305.88.

TRACT #4: 35.05 AC-Co. Rd. 8-1—Parcel #20-041744-00.000
Sec 35, T8N, R7E—Pike Twp, 33.44 Tillable, Balance Ditch & R/W. Primarily Mermill Loam, some tile, 957' Frontage. Year Taxes \$2,777.76.

TRACT #5: 39.4- Co Rd 8, N or M—Parcel #20-040224-00.000
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Farms located app. 2 miles SW of Hoytville or 5 miles North of McComb**

PARCEL #1: 40+/- Acres in the S 1/2 of the N 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Section 34 in Jackson Twp., Wood County, OH w/Frontage on Sands Rd. & Weston Rd., 100% Hoytville Silty Clay Loam Soils, Tile Maps, McComb School District, Est. R.E. Tax \$786.70 Per 1/2 Year

PARCEL #2: 89.74+/- Acres in the E 1/2 of the NW 1/4 of Section 2 in Pleasant Twp., Hancock County, OH w/Frontage on CR 5 Hancock/ Wood County Line Rd. and Twp. Rd. 126, Good Mixture of Soils including app. 62.8 Acres Hoytville Silty Clay Loam, app. 14.8 Acres Mermill, app. 7 Acres Nappanee, and app. 1.6 Acres Aurand Soils, Tile Maps, McComb School District, Est. R.E. Tax \$1,494.36 Per 1/2 Year,

PARCEL #3: 129.7+/- Acres the Combination of Parcels 1 & 2 as a Single Unit

"BOTH FARMS ARE BEING SURVEYED"
COLLECTIVE BIDDING METHOD USED ON COMBINATION PARCEL
"2026 Farming Rights Upon Closing"

FOR REAL ESTATE TERMS & CONDITIONS, FSA INFO OR SOIL MAPS
Contact: AARON SIEFKER 419-235-0789

Owners: THOMAS F. & ARLENE E. SAMSEL
Co-Trustees of the Samsel Trust
James Rode of Sunderman & Rode, Attorney for Sellers

Conducted By:

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