



1 Section Tuesday, February 17, 2026 Volume 67 Number 11

Counting Chickens

By Al Beatty

Meet Jayde

In my capacity serving as one of the assistant professors of accounting at Trine University, I've had the pleasure of meeting people from all over the tri-state area and sometimes around the world.

I find it fascinating to hear about the different backgrounds of the students as I help them plan their career path and with the technical aspects of accounting.

Late in 2022 and early 2023, I recall meeting with Jayde Ramos from Wauseon, Ohio and her mother as she was weighing her decision for further education.

I never know if a student has decided to enroll at Trine until I see them in the fall or sometimes over the summer at a SOAR Event, (Student Orientation And Registration).

At SOAR, students receive their student ID, parking pass, housing information--and find out what classes they are enrolled in.

We meet with the student and their parents, go over their schedule and make any changes.

This meeting is exciting for everyone involved and perhaps unsettling for some students not to mention the parents.

During the summer I met again with Jayde and



Kids 1939: I am the smallest one in the photo.

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Poor Will's Farmland News Almanack

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February 18 - 24

*The bud stands for all things,
even for those things that don't flower;
for everything flowers, from within,
of self-blessing;
though sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness,
to put a hand on its brow
of the flower
and retell it in words and in touch
it is lovely
until it flowers again from within,
of self-blessing;*

Galway Kinnell, "Saint Francis and the Sow"

Phases of the Tufted Titmouse moon And the Red-Winged Blackbird Moon

February 1: The Tufted Titmouse Moon is full.
February 9: The Moon enters its final quarter.
February 17: The Red-winged Blackbird Moon is new.
February 24: The Moon enters its second quarter.

Weather Trends

The third quarter in February is statistically one of the most exciting of the entire year. Chances of highs in the 20s or below remain low at 20 percent during the first part of the week, and then, for the first time since late November, fall to almost nothing by the end of the week. Chances of highs in the 40s or above climb to 80 percent by the 20th, and then between the 18th and the 23rd, chances of highs in the 50s or 60s reaches an average of 35 percent per day, the first time that has happened since December 10th. And in one of the most radical weather changes of the year, the weekly chances of an afternoon in the 60s swell from last week's one in ten to five in ten.

Although below-zero temperatures can occur at this time of the year, February's third quarter is the second-last period of Early Spring in which such cold might be expected (March's first week is the very last). Even the fifth high-pressure system of the month, which passes through around the 20th, is typically a mild one. There is a 30 percent chance of precipitation on most days this week. The 20th is the day least likely to be wet, bringing just a 20 percent chance of rain or snow. The likelihood for clouds is high: 60 percent of the days offer no sun at all. The average amount of snowfall for this week is ordinarily the lowest of the month.

Natural Calendar

The first week of Early Spring is often mild, bringing the first flowers into bloom, but the snow and cold waves of the year's first months may have delayed or covered many of the obvious signs of change. For guidance about the progress of the season, the groundhog is a fickle prophet, rarely emerging to prognosticate so early. Other creatures, however, take up the slack, most notably the skunk.

Skunks wander lawns and streets throughout

the year, but their body clocks bring them out most frequently during their mating time of Late Winter and Early Spring. Even the most casual observer cannot miss their announcement that winter is almost over. By about the tenth week of the year, the mating cycle of the skunk comes to a close, its odor ceding to visual and auditory markers of the new season: the robin chorus before dawn, emerging pussy willows, rising daffodil spears, blooming snowdrops and aconites.

By this time in February, Procyon, the largest star of Canis Minor, replaces the Dog Star due south near 10:00 p.m. Above it, the twins of Gemini, Castor and Pollux tell of Early Spring. To their right, Orion and the Milky Way have shifted deep into the west, and the Big Dipper has moved well into the northeastern sky - up from its low December and January position - and its pointers, the outside stars of the dipper, are easily found. And by midnight, the first stars of middle summer's Hercules appear in the northeast.

In the Field and Garden

As the moon wanes, tuck a few radish, beet, and turnip seeds into the garden. The waning moon is good for root crops, and when the weather warms up a few weeks from now, you may have the first sprouts in the county.

Think about ordering roses, hawthorn, raspberry, tansy, hollyhock, peppermint, thyme and chamomile, all herbs that fight abortion in your flock and herd (and, of course, in humans too).

Spray fruit trees with dormant oil when high temperatures climb into the 40s and freezing temperatures are expected to stay away for 24 to 48 hours.

If you hear spring peepers (they sound like "peep - peep") or wood frogs (they sound like a flock of ducks), then you really know it's almost time to let the livestock out to the driest, greenest piece of ground. On the other hand, if you hear a flock of ducks, that should mean that the wood frogs will soon be calling.

If you need a guard animal for your goats, consider getting a cow. If raised with goats, a single cow will think it's a goat and will keep dogs and coyotes from threatening the herd.

Don't let your pigs - especially your piglets and weaner pigs - get caught in late-winter drafts. Wind chill can kill a young pig.

The Countdown to Spring

- Less than a week until the first red-winged blackbirds arrive, and skunks prowl the nights
- A week and a half to the first snowdrop bloom and the official start of early spring - a time when maple sap season can begin at any moment
- Two weeks to major pussy willow emerging season and the time during which salamanders mate in the warm rains
- Three weeks to crocus season and owl hatchling time and woodcock mating time
- Four and a half weeks to the beginning of the morning robin chorus before sunrise. At the same time, sand hill cranes assemble for migration in Nebraska
- Five weeks to daffodil season and silver maple blooming season and the first golden gold-

finches

- Eight weeks to tulip season and the first wave of blooming woodland wildflowers and the first butterflies

- Nine weeks until golden forsythia bloom and skunk cabbage sends out its first leaves

Journal

Journal: The Archipelago of Early Spring

All that I had dreamed was true, is true.
The earth is fair, more fair
Than I had known or imagined.

Harlan Hubbard

In the early spring of the Ohio Valley, islands of new life emerge from the waves of warmth and cold that move across the landscape. Within these islands, often separated from each other by broad expanses of chilling winds, weeks of gray skies, sometimes only narrowly divided by a night of frost, the season reveals its stunning topography.

Early spring is an archipelago of forms rising out of February's great sea, and like ephemeral atolls, the events of this temporal, mottled continent multiply, swell, and recede to alter the face of our habitat with an inexorable beauty. The geography of early spring is fixed in shape and order but not in time. The archipelago of winter's end is fluid, what chronologists call a "floating sequence," a sequence the dates of which are relatively well known in relation to one another but not in relation to when exactly they will occur on the brittle Gregorian calendar.

Observation and memory, however, easily decipher the secret code of the floating sequence, uncover the fluid terrain from which fauna and flora materialize, and spread a map of promise across the seemingly uncharted expanse of winter. In Yellow Springs, early spring fills the six weeks between the middle of February and the end March. This month and a half links the deep cold with the lushness of April, and it is made up of constellations of color, motion and sound, and musters of new sprouts and leaves, birds, insects, mammals and fishes. In the South, this season can arrive in the middle of the year's first weeks; along the Canadian border, it comes in May. Wherever the floating sequence begins, it follows something of the order below; no matter where it takes place, the following landmarks are only fragments of a far greater ferment.

Starting with the major thaw of February's third week, the first cluster of spring's appearance takes the form of snowdrops and aconites flowering together in the warmest micro-climates beside the prophetic hellebores and Chinese witch hazels of late January.

Within a few days, snow crocus and iris reticulata complete this island of time at the chilliest edge of spring.

A parallel cluster rises from the swamps: the skunk cabbage blossoms at Jacoby. In alleyways and lawns, common chickweed, dandelions and hen bit complement the cabbage. Above them all, red-winged blackbirds stake out different limits.

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ALMANACK

(Continued From Page 2)

After Snowdrop Winter (between February 23rd and 27th), ducks and geese follow the lead of the blackbirds, marking ownership of the more favorable river sites for nesting. Migrant robins join the sizeable flocks that overwintered in the Glen.

Past the seasons of the snowdrops and aconites, mid-season crocuses initiate more complex configurations that lead to fat pussy willows, bright blue squills, delicate yellow jonquils, then to the full-size daffodils, then to purple grape hyacinths, then to pale wood hyacinths and pushkinias.

Towering on the horizon, silver maples and the red maples and box elders prepare to fruit.

To these outcroppings come the pollen seekers: the honeybees and carpenter bees. Other creatures follow. Mosquitoes and newborn wolf spiders look for prey.

The mounds of ants rise from winter's prairie. In rivers and ponds, water striders mate. Earthworms come out of hiding, lie together in the mild night rains. It is salamander season in the slime and snake basking season in the sun. Spring peepers peep.

Then the root and insect eaters become active, joining the beavers that have been cutting trees and eating bark since January. Groundhogs dig up the hillsides.

Opossums, skunks, raccoons come seek their mates and sustenance. Turkey vultures circle the roads looking for road kill. Wild turkeys start to call.

The first woodcocks spiral in the woods. In the village, the tufted titmouse spirals, too.

When pussy willows are at their peak, new configurations take shape, adding multiple pathways to all the recent temporal spaces. Into the world of pussy willows come the white magnolias in town, snow trillium along the Little Miami, spring beauties on the college green.

Across the bottomland, soft touch-me-nots sprout, coveted ramps push up their medicinal foliage to pace the stalks of daylilies, rhubarb and precocious bleeding hearts.

When pollen covers the pussy willows, then honeysuckle, mock orange, privet, wild multiflora roses, lilac, black raspberry and coralberry leaves break out from their buds, a signal for cornus mas and lungwort to flower and for mourning cloak butterflies and cabbage moths to navigate the channels of equinox.

A few days later come the question-mark and tortoise-shell butterflies and then the white-spotted skippers.

In the last few days of March when the pussy willow catkins start to fall, the archipelago of early spring becomes a dense maze of islets unimaginable at the end of February.

In the trees, the finches turn gold. In ponds, the toads are singing. Calves and lambs appear in the fields. Carp are frolicking in the rivers. Young opossums come out to play.

Wasps crawl from their winter crevices.

In the garden, the early tulips unfold. Star of Holland comes in beneath the bright forsythia.

Buckeyes unravel along Grinnell Road. Plums bloom on Xenia Avenue.

And just as skunk cabbage starts to produce its foliage at Jacoby, the first tremendous mass of wildflowers suddenly opens all at once on the farthest and mildest border of the early spring archipelago: inflorescence of periwinkle, hepatica, violet cress, harbinger of spring, bloodroot, Dutchman's britches, bittercress, twinleaf and Virginia bluebell leading now into the endlessly intricate paradise of April.

ALMANACK LITERATURE

*Never Kid One Another!***A True Story**

by Eleanor Yeager, Sylvania, OH

My brother Albert married Elizabeth in 1938. Whenever my husband Ray would talk to Elizabeth, they always ended up saying, "If I ever go first, I'll take you with me."

It was a stormy night, July 12, 1966.

Ray got home late. After dinner, he sat in the living room, had a heart attack and passed on.

The next night, July 13, 1966, at Reeb's Funeral Home, my sister-in-law Elizabeth was greeting everyone good night. She put her hand on my son Ernest's shoulder, and then died right there.

They took her to Nivel's Funeral Home. It was hard on everyone, going back and forth to the different funeral homes to see their loved ones.

So please do not kid around, because what you say does come true!

Follow the advance of Early Spring every day with Bill Felker's A Daybook for February, available on Amazon. FN

What About The Other Half?

Words of Inspiration

By Pastor James Mann

A statistic we often see is the claim that nearly one half of all marriages fail.

That most certainly is a tragic number as failed marriages often create heartaches that last for many years and even generations to the families involved. Jesus' teaching would indicate divorce was not God's intent.

In Matthew 19:3-6 He teaches: "Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: 'Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?'"

"Haven't you read the Scriptures?" Jesus replied.

"They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female.'"

And he said, 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together."

While there are some marriages

that should end, we must agree the fifty percent number is rather high.

Several years ago, I read an article claiming when bank people are trained to look for counterfeit money, they are shown genuine bills over and over and over, so when something counterfeit comes up they recognize it right away- it's not the "real thing".

Perhaps we should take a hint from those tactics and question why we focus on the half of the mar-

riages that fail and not the half that succeed.

We have much to learn from those who keep their commitments made in marriage.

During the many marriage renewals I have been blessed to officiate, I often remind those couples their original marriage vows included the promises to endure and share all the trials of life together, the good and the bad; the poverty and wealth; joy and sorrow; sick-

ness and health.

When questioned, there is a unanimous agreement they have experienced all of those situations and emotions in their married lives.

By uniting the strengths God has blessed onto each of those individuals, with the Lord's help nothing can separate them one from another.

Do you ever question how to succeed in marriage?

Focus on the ones that make it, not the ones that fail.

We have much to learn from their experiences.

Philippians 4:8 declares: "And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing.

Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable.

Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise."

Celebrate marriage!

Rejoice as those years roll by with one anniversary after another!

Thank God for the gift of love he has granted you in each other. FN



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I Think We're Alone Now

My Two Cents Worth

by Ivy Lane

Tom and Myrtle Smith were my dad's neighbors when he was growing up.

He always spoke fondly of them and remembered sneaking over to their house to ask for a hunk of ring bologna and a green onion.

Mrs. Smith expanded on Dad's recollection sharing he was around 5-8 years old at the time of his craving for green onions and bologna.

It especially surprised her that a little kid his age liked onions.

She would watch him trot back down the road to go home with an onion in one hand and bologna in the other; first taking a bite of one and then a bite of the other until both was consumed before he reached home.

After smelling onion on his breath, his mother would scold him for "begging."

Dad lived with The Smiths during his senior year of high school, 1949-1950.

He and his mother disagreed about what kind of school clothes she allowed him to wear.

One day, after yet another argument about clothing, Dad ran away from home—to the Smiths' house about a quarter mile up the road.

After graduation, he joined the army and he was not impressed with the wardrobe Uncle Sam provided either.

Nor was he impressed with the free trip to Korea.

My dad was just one of several people who found a temporary home with the Smiths.

I knew several of them during the 1960s.

Charlie worked at the factory with Mr. Smith, however, Charlie's wife emptied their bank account

and then disappeared.

He lived with the Smiths until he recovered financially.

I liked being invited for supper because after the meal, Charlie performed card tricks.

Charlie was still living with the Smiths when Earl moved in—he was a friend from church.

Earl was old and cranky. He didn't talk much, least of all to a kid like me. Mrs. Smith said Earl had cancer and no family to take care of him in his last days. During this time a young migrant couple with the last name Gomez stayed with the Smiths, too.

In the 1980s, while helping Mrs. Smith research her family tree, I was astonished by the parade of people who lived with the Smiths even before my dad, Charlie, Earl and the Gomez couple!!

I commented that they never seemed to be alone.

"Not very often," answered Mrs. Smith.

As Mrs. Smith grew older, she was eager to talk about her life and I was eager to listen.

It's the family stories that give color to the black and white dates of genealogy.

I encouraged her to write it all down.

From the beginning of their marriage in 1927, the Smiths had live-in company almost continuously.

After the ceremony, Mr. Smith's two-year-old nephew went home with them right from the church.

Mr. Smith's sister was an unwed mother and not capable of taking care of her son, Clarence.

However, Mr. Smith's tender heart would not allow his sister to put Clarence up for adoption.

So, Clarence lived with the Smiths until he was ten years old.

During that time both of Mrs. Smith's grandfathers came to live with her, though not at the same time.

Each of them died at her house surrounded by love.

Also in that ten year period, two children were born to the Smiths.

Shortly after the grandfathers passed away, Clarence's mother married and returned for her son, however, he was a frequent weekend visitor.

Before the house had a chance to feel empty, Mr. Smiths' mother needed a place to live. She was recently widowed for the second time and not well herself. So, she made her last home on this earth with her son and daughter-in-law.

Mrs. Smith thought it was the late 1940s when Noel, the homosexual man lived with them.

He'd been turned away from several rental properties and had come very discouraged.

The Smiths believed it to be divine intervention that Noel and Mr. Smith pulled

into the service station at the same time.

To the total stranger on the other side of the gas pump, Mr. Smith said, "You can stay at our place until you find something".

Mrs. Smith recalled Noel's green thumb and how their vegetable and flower gardens had thrived the four years he lived there.

Mrs. Smith said, "It was after the war", when their son's teenaged friend, Joe, moved in.

Joe's father was physically abusive, so the Smiths offered him a place to spend the night.

That turned into two years until Joe was old enough to join the Navy.

Anita and her toddler daughter came to live with them in 1950 after my dad had left for the army.

Anita was Mrs. Smith's cousin who was in the middle of a bitter divorce.

The 1960s brought Char-

lie, Earl, and the Gomez's who had a baby while they lived with the Smiths. Those were the last guests at "The Smith Homeless Shelter", as my dad jokingly called it.

In 1977, for their 50th wedding anniversary, Tom and Myrtle's children gifted them with a honeymoon trip; the honeymoon they didn't get back in 1927 when Clarence, the nephew, made them an instant family; followed by a steady stream of house guests who needed shelter more than the Smiths needed privacy.

Their home was a sanctuary for those who had nowhere else to go.

The Smiths could not have loaned you money... they hardly ever had any to spare.

But, they could give you a seat at the table and a peaceful place to lay your head for as long as you needed it.

They were some very special people.

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

FN



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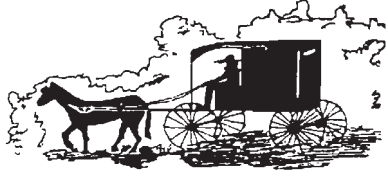
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The Amish Cook

by Gloria Yoder



The Changing Family

So my six children are all in school.

Yes, that's right, Julia is having fun packing six lunches each morning.

Joshua goes to kindergarten, which is three days a week for three weeks.

Currently I am doing some homeschooling in the forenoon, then by noon they are all gone—that equals an empty house.

In a way it could be sad. On the other hand, I feel so much joy as I see them growing up.

As my mother released me to grow up and become my own person, so I want to do for all our little ones growing big.

So that means no more babies, no more toddlers around the house.

Ages 5–14 keeps things interesting.

They are all old enough to hold their own opinions and share ideas.

They are able to team up together and make a difference where they go, or bicker and also make a difference where they go!

On that first morning as they all bundled up to go, it hit me that our children make up a third of the school children in our little country school.

Now that is sobering.

It made an impression on all of us that it is important to note what we think and what we do.

As a mother, as much as I love them and would not want to do without any of them, I admit I have struggled with times of feeling overwhelmed in providing for them all.

But as we heard on Sunday, we do have the privilege of living an abundant life.

If I am not living an abundant life, I am most likely so taken with things that weigh me down that I have not yet shared it with another and allowed them to speak into my life and together go to Jesus.

Yes, I have my times I wonder if I can go on.

Then recently I shared with a few others how there seems to be a thousand things I idealize in family life, but am only able to reach a handful of those goals.

The advice was simple and practical: make a list of at least some of those things, then prioritize what you will focus on first.

The rest of those nine hundred, ninety-some will wait til the time is right, and they will not be there to taunt you.

As I went to make the list, there was a sense of re-

Recipe Of The Week

Soft Orange Sugar Winter Bakery Cookies

1 cup butter
1 cup sugar
1 large egg
2-1/4 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
Zest of 1 orange

Cream butter and sugar until fluffy.
Beat in egg and orange zest.
Stir in flour and baking soda.
Scoop soft dough balls
Space evenly on baking sheet.
Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes until tender.

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

lief; I could now see it, and it would be waiting there for me til tomorrow, next summer, next year, or whenever the time would be right to tackle the next goal.

Well, okay, my tablet didn't reach a thousand, but the list keeps growing.

Without really thinking about it, I sense myself veering more toward some of those goals, now that I wrote them out.

While the children love the feeling of accomplishing a goal or joining in on a family project of helping others or simply practicing polite manners, they also get tired of it at times—like this morning when I was asked, "Mom, why are you so hard on me?!"

Before the youngster left for his walk to school, I asked if that was the case or if I was just waiting til he was ready to comply with what he was told to do.

With a grin he admitted the latter.

I think of God. I twist and tug and pull and wonder why He is so hard on me.

Is that the case, or is He simply patiently allowing what is best for now?

From the cabin window where I'm relishing the quiet, I watch the four horses graze in the meadow, a few birds soar above the pond.

I glance over the chestnut grove where I look forward to work in once warm weather is here.

So much is so perfect, but then I think of this summer and wonder how well I will be able to manage the house and the children seven days a week.

I have a choice to make. What will it be?

Will I twist God's arm and tell Him I don't have the capability, or will I take today and breathe in His very presence in the moment?

A cardinal sings outside the window.

It draws my mind to the One who created me in the first place.

Yes, I'll take today and trust grace to be there for the morrow.

As His Word promised, we will not be given more than He gives grace to walk through.

Let's embrace the journey, for this too, we have Jesus!

The children and I plan to make Dad's favorite ice cream pie next week.

Enjoy some for yourself!

Ice Cream Pie

2 cups Rice Krispies
1 tablespoon melted butter

1/2 cup marshmallow crème

2-3 cups vanilla ice cream

1-1/2 cups fruit glaze or pie filling of your choice

Melt butter in marshmallow crème.

Add Rice Krispies and mix together.

Pat into a 8" pie pan, covering the bottom and sides.

Next put 4 cups of vanilla ice cream in the crust and freeze.

Top with fruit glaze or pie filling before serving.

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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"Do You Ever Wonder?"

This past spring, I became aware of a group here in Ohio that wants to get rid of all real estate property taxes in Ohio.

At face value, that sounded like a really nice fix to the literal explosion of property tax costs in the last couple of years.

Forty to Fifty+ dollars an acre in property taxes are owed before farmers can even turn a wheel to start a cropping season.

It really hit home back in September, when at a local elevator appreciation night, there was a farmer who partially ruined the night, by passing around a petition for people attending to sign, to get the elimination of all real estate taxes eliminated in the state of Ohio, via a constitutional amendment to the Ohio constitution.

He never offered us a chance to sign his petition, we must have been too small fry of farmers for his liking, but that's when I started to re-educate myself on the Ohio property tax system.

I actually learned first about it way back when I went to get my school principal license, and had to take a course on "School Finance".

The course covered how school funding started in

Tales From The South Side Of Napoleon

by Sam Hatcher

Ohio, and how it has transformed to today's present funding mess, with words such as:

- Millage
- appraised value
- CAUV
- DeRolf Decision
- Millage floor
- Levies
- Triennial update

and the like were presented to us eager future school administrators.

The Ohio General Assembly has not helped solve the issue either, by constantly "kicking the can" down the road, and thereby prolonging the issue, instead of solving the issue.

You ever wonder what would happen by eliminating real estate property taxes...

How does one fund local schools?

How does one keep their county roads and township roads built and maintained?

How does one have sheriff, fire and EMS services and law protection?

How does one even get buried in a township cemetery, since with no proper-

ty tax revenue, all of these entities; county, townships, sheriff departments, fire departments, EMS services, and schools, would essentially out of business?

I wonder if that goofy farmer who passed around that petition back in September ever thought about that scenario!

Does he have a fleet of snowplows to plow and salt winter roads, crews to pave and patch county and township roads in the summer, a fleet of ambulances to haul sick people to the hospital, and monies to keep the schools up and running?

He might - after all he is tighter than bark on a tree, and inherited most of his wealth - but seriously, how can any, sane person, who doesn't live in the three "C"'s of Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, eliminate real estate property taxes, and expect the same public services that are currently provided?

One person suggested raising the sales tax - great idea if one lives in the three "C"'s, after all, that would create enough money to replace the property tax revenue.

Has anybody ever thought about how that would work in the rest of Ohio's counties though?

Raise the Ohio sales tax to 18% (which is a number that has actually been floated around), and if I live in a border county of say Defiance, Paulding, Fulton, Williams or Lucas, and I need a different washer and dryer, I can drive to Indiana or Michigan for my purchase, and pay only 7.5% sales tax on my major purchases, as opposed to the 18% I would pay by buying in Ohio.

Yes, one should indeed wonder what the future holds if the amendment to the Ohio constitution passes eliminating real estate property taxes.

Maybe these crazies need to actually shovel some cold

I cannot even imagine the life of the average Ohioan should this amendment pass.

Stricter term limits for state legislators needs to pass to remove the mossbacks who won't solve the tax problem, as opposed to playing musical chairs to get re-elected.

Then legislators can be put in place who will actually solve the tax problem, instead of kicking that proverbial can down the road.

Sam Hatcher is a freelance writer who grew up on a farm south of Napoleon and still farms there with his brother. He now lives near Cecil and has retired from teaching at Paulding High School. FN



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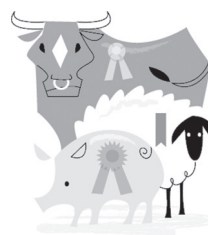
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The chicks outside on a warm night.

CHICKS

(Continued From Page 1)

her mother to finalize her schedule for fall and make sure she had everything she needed.

I could tell that Jayde was excited to attend and eager to learn!

I don't have all of the accounting students in my classes because some of the classes are taught by other

professors.

However, I've enjoyed seeing Jayde grow in the classes I had with her enrolled.

She isn't afraid to ask questions when she doesn't understand something, and she often reads ahead and puts some thought into the topic before class.

These last few years, Jayde has grown professionally and personally at Trine.

This spring, at the age of 21 she will be working at an internship at DOZ Accounting in Carmel, Indiana, during the upcoming "busy season."

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This type of business structure is often conducted through various forms of partnerships.

Partnership accounting, especially when it comes to taxes under Internal Revenue Code section K, is one of the most complex in the entire tax code.

I am confident that Jayde will thrive in this endeavor!

This spring, she will also be starting her MBA program at Trine

Hobbies

For an accounting student and coming from a small town, Jayde has a unique hobby and passion...she raises chickens, she loves her chickens and baby chicks!

While I taught at Wilmington College in Wilmington, Ohio, the Agriculture program was the largest major.

I often had AG students take accounting as a required class, or they were pursuing dual majors in Agriculture and Accounting.

They were dedicated students; with a fantastic work ethic and that came from an early age with involvement in their local 4H programs.

In contrast to most of the 4-H and ag students from the past, Jayde lives in town and didn't participate in 4H, FFA, nor did any family live on a farm.

Her interest in chickens came about from seeing the chicks for sale the TSC in Wauseon where she works.



It's time to eat!

She fell in love with them, so she bought some to raise.

Currently, Jayde now has approximately 30 chickens.

I asked her, "Do you have names for them?"

Her reply was, "Yes for a few of them have names - Lily, Martha, Rose, and Roosty."

I asked her if the chickens produce eggs and she enthusiastically answered "they produce several!"

I assumed that this had

turned into a part-time business venture, however, she informed me "I do not sell many of the eggs."

Instead, I give them to family, friends, and people in need."

Memories

The more I spoke with Jayde about her chickens the more fascinated I became.

There was a time in the

(Continued on Page 12)

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CHICKS

(Continued From Page 11)

1970s when I spent several summers at my cousin's and grandfather's farm that was adjacent to it.

They weren't large spreads of agriculture production.

My uncle was a police officer in the Columbus Police Department, and my aunt was a nurse, however they did raise some chickens.

They had one rooster, which we called Jonesy and every morning, he did his "crow."

I recall a vivid, although in some ways gruesome memory of when my uncle would chop off the heads of some of the chickens to be processed.

I was fascinated by how their bodies still flopped and danced around a few moments after their head was severed.

Speaking with Jayde, brought back all of these memories pertaining to raising chickens and those two family farms.

I remember a time when we had extra squash from the garden that was going bad.

The order was given for us to throw the squash in with the chickens.

I so not recall if that was something they would eat or they just wanted us to get rid them in the field where



The chicks are having some down time.

the chickens roamed.

Since that field and ample room, we kids decided it would be fun to "bomb" them and watch them jump out of the way of the squash.

I suppose that wasn't a smart or humane thing to do, but when you are 8 or 9 years old, it seemed like a fun activity then.

Sadly, those chickens all perished in the blizzard of 1978 never to be replaced.

My mom and aunt had their fill of being "part time farmers" each summer.

However, it was very memorable for us while it lasted.

Egg Colors

Over the summer I have

been cooking more with fresh products from our local farmers market.

While I've been obtaining the meat, I have also been gathering eggs and fixing them in a variety of ways. One thing that peaks my interest is the variety of colors of eggs.

My parents were basic "black and white" people, purchasing white eggs.

Unfortunately, I can't recall the eggs that were laid by my cousins chickens.

But any color other than white or brown just seemed odd.

What a treat...they seemed to be better quality!

Maybe it was because they were cage free and not due to the the color.

However, now when I go to the farmers market I notice all sorts of color choices: white, brown, green, and blue!

Ask the Expert

I asked Jayde about the color of eggs – her reply was it depends on the chicken.

1) Leghorn chickens (I automatically thought of the cartoon character Foghorn Leghorn) produce white eggs.

2) Bantam produce small tan colored eggs.



Some of the chicks sit on Jayde's shoulder.

Research

As I was contemplating this article, I realized I am far from an expert or even a novice at raising chickens.

Being "old school" I realized I should do some research at the library on the

- 3) Americana - blue eggs.
- 4) Safire Sky - green eggs.
- 5) Black Sex-Link - brown eggs;
- 6) Isa Brown, - Rhode Island Reds.

You can see Jayde's affection for and connection the chickens have with her in some of the pictures.

(Continued on Page 13)

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CHICKS

(Continued From Page 12)

subject.

One book I found was Background Chickens: A Guide for Beginners by Michelle Templin.

Michelle cites several reasons folks have backyard chickens.

One is "Chickens make for an amusing, interactive, and rewarding pet.

They are very sociable and will provide hours of entertainment with their backyard antics.

This is evidenced by the photo of Jayde with her chickens.

In the chapter covering some basic terms I discovered something that contradicts a saying that's been used in the past.

Often young men would classify women of the fairer sex as "chicks."

In reality a "chick" is a chicken from one day old up to seven weeks old and are "unsexed", as the author states it.

In other words, they are too young to tell if they are a male (rooster) or female (hen) when they mature.

I also found out that males under 12 months are classified as cockerels and over that age cocks.

Hens who are not old enough to lay eggs are called pullets and after that Point of Lay (POL), basically another term for adult hen.

A bantam, which Jayde has in her family of chickens, is not a breed persay... just a smaller version of the breed.

Michelle compares this to the way they say, "miniature poodles."

I have mentioned in past

articles when frying bacon, eggs are a great compliment to any breakfast meal.

Actually, they are delicious anytime!

Raising Chickens in Town

Housing your chickens, especially in a municipal setting, provides some extra challenges.

A few years ago, I started hearing about "free range" and "cage free" chickens, those were terms I had not heard in the past.

The first time I heard it was at a Toastmasters International meeting in Columbus.

At this meeting one of the speakers was advocating buying eggs marked "cage free" because the chickens were treated humanely.

Although they cost more, she said it was the "right thing" to do.

Honestly, usually I just grabbed the basic and cheapest egg cartons.

So at some point I decided to give cage free eggs a try.

I don't know what it is, but I swear they are tastier!

Perhaps a happy chicken produces a better egg?

If you live in an urban setting "full free range" is probably not an option.

Thus, the suggested option is to have some sort of enclosure that gives the chickens limited movement in the yard.

For chickens just like other creatures, water is an important part of their health... keep them hydrated!

One popular method is using a gravity driven drinker where you place water in a plastic cylindrical device.

This is topped off with a part that has extended rims you screw on, then you flip the device over.

Water feeds as much as it can immediately through gravity and as the chickens drink the water flows down.

You usually see these at farm supply stores where the container that holds the water is frosted white and the bottom rim part that the chickens drink from is red or green.

As for a coop common sense dictates it should be safe and lockable.

However, various critters such as foxes can dig in under the coop!

This can be addressed in a few ways.

1) Dig a trench around the coop that is 12 inches deep and 4 inches wide and filling with concrete or bricks.

2) Meshing skirting, this is ideal for movable coops.

A mesh skirt needs to be 16 inches deep.

You can also put mesh on the chicken coop floor, but that presents problems when the chicken's instinct kicks in to scratch the floor.

3) One last solution mentioned in Backyard Chickens by Michelle Templin is an electric fence.

Another book I came across was The Joy of Keeping Chickens: The Ultimate Guide to Raising Poultry for Fun or Profit by Jennifer Megyesi.

I didn't focus on this book because it didn't cover the urban aspect like Jayde has with her chickens.

However, it lists the contact information for state resources of our tri-state area.

Lastly, another more in-depth book is Stoery's Guide to Raising Chickens: Care, Feeding, Facilities by Gail Damerow.

I encourage you to seek out whatever resource you



Jayde spending some time with the chicks.

like if you are interested in raising chickens like Jayde has been doing.

Al Beatty started delivering newspapers in Sherman's hometown of Lan-

caster, 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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Pack Pecans Into Every Cookie Bite



It's common to indulge in sweet treats a little more often once the holiday season arrives.

Halloween kicks off people's tendency to consume more desserts and candies, and Thanksgiving, and later Chanukah and Christmas, may round out the year on a sugary note.

Desserts can be made a bit healthier with the right ingredients.

Nuts certainly can pack nutrition into each sweet bite.

This recipe for "Pecan Cream Cheese Cookies" feature pecans prominently.

With only 4 grams of carbohydrates per serving, pecans fit into plant-based diets, a keto diet, a Mediterranean diet, and other healthy eating plans.

One serving of pecans contains 18 grams of unsaturated fat, including oleic acid, making them heart-healthy, according to the American Heart Association.

Enjoy this recipe, courtesy of the American Pecan Promotion Board.

Pecan Cream Cheese Cookies

Yield: Around 24 cookies

1 cup pecan pieces
1/2 cup pecan meal
2-1/3 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon kosher salt
4 ounces cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1-1/4 cup sugar

1-1/2 tablespoons vanilla extract

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour and salt, set aside.

Using an electric mixer, cream together the cream cheese and butter until well combined.

Mix in the sugar and vanilla. Reduce the speed to low and gradually mix in the flour.

Mix in the pecan pieces. Roughly divide the dough in half. Wrap each portion in plastic wrap or parchment paper, forming the dough into a log about 2 inches wide.

Wrap well and freeze until firm, about 2 hours or overnight.

When ready to bake, pre-heat the oven to 350 F.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.

Unwrap one log and carefully roll the outside in the pecan meal, coating it well.

Slice the log into 1/4-inch rounds and place them on the prepared baking sheet.

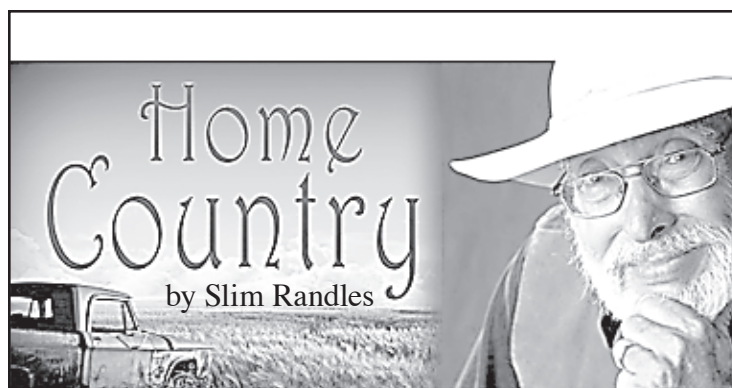
Bake for 18 to 20 minutes or until the middle is just set and the cookies are just starting to turn light brown on the edges.

Cool the cookies on wire racks.

Work in batches until all of the dough has been used.

Store the cookies in an airtight container.

Metro Creative Connection



It was Doc's idea, of course.

That's what made it sing. That's why it took off in gales of laughter and fun.

He knew we needed the money for the children in our area who might be without warm clothes this winter, so he brainstormed among himself and came up with the golf tournament.

He went to Delbert McLain, who is our local chamber of commerce.

Delbert's eyes lit up at the suggestion, but then suddenly clouded over with doubt.

"But Doc," Delbert said, "we don't have a golf course."

"Leave that to me, Delbert me lad.

Leave that entirely to me."

And so our medical leprechaun talked to two farmers whose land adjoined each other, and after they quit laughing, they agreed.

Doc rounded up Dud and Herb Collins and laid out an 18-hole golf course in about an hour.

They used steel t-posts for flags (with bandanas tied to the top) and dug a hole with a shovel.

They put smaller flags at the tee-off spots, and there you go!

An 18-hole golf course

that was one hundred percent hazard.

No fairway, just hazard.

Rocks and trees and Lewis Creek and the occasional cactus and yucca.

Doc figures if you make it around all 18 holes without encountering a poisonous snake, you should get bonus points.

"This course," said Doc, "is so bad, everyone will want to play, because everyone will have a terrific excuse for having a terrible game."

The cattle were moved to safer locations before the tournament began, and enough money was raised to keep the kids warm this winter.

"Life," said Doc, "should be ridiculous and fun.

So let's do this again next fall."

Brought to you by Saddle Up, A Cowboy Guide to Writing by Slim Randles. On the internet and from Rio Grande Publishing in Albuquerque. FN

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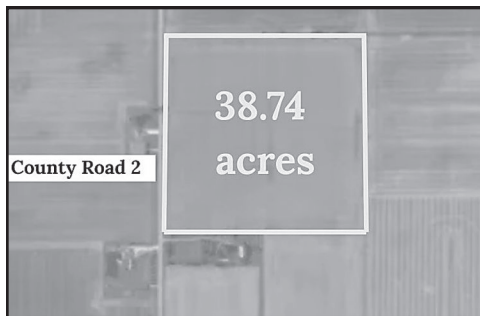
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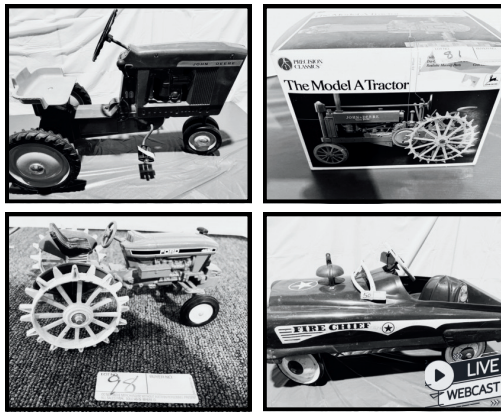
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AUCTION ACTION

LIVE PUBLIC AUCTION

Saturday, March 14, 2026 @ 9:30am
07586 County Road J, Montpelier, Ohio 43543

(east of Edon 4.5 miles on Road J, to Road 7.50 intersection)

Vehicles: (Sells At Approx 12 Noon): 2015 Toyota Prius Model PRI in good condition; 2006 Chevrolet Impala LS in good condition; 1986 Honda Elite 150 Scooter; 1988 Chevrolet Van for parts

Tractors & Attachments-Equipment (Sells At Approx 12 Noon): IH Farmall 806 Diesel tractor with cab; IH Farmall 656 Gas tractor with 2200 loader; IH Farmall 560 parts tractor; (2) Case SC vintage tractors; (3) John Deere 318 Garden tractors; John Deere 6600 Diesel combine w/ 216 grain head (parts machine); New Idea model 5409 rotary disc mower; Glenco Soil Saver 9 shank disc chisel; 8' John Deere RWA wheel disc; 18' IH model 475 tandem offset disc; IH semi mount 5 bottom plow; Brillion 12' culti-mulcher; J & M Gravity wagon; (2) Kill Bros. Gravity wagons; 20' & 12' field cultivators; IH 5100 Soybean Special end wheel drill; 4' pull type finish mower; IH pull type 9' sickle mower; Running gears; John Deere 5 bottom & 3bottom plows; Case 2 bottom plows; 6 row crop cultivator; Ford Hay baler; 8' Brillion packer; FG 550 fertilizer spreader; 14' flat wagon; (2) JD snow blowers; 6 row crop cultivator; 6' box scraper; Running gears; Many more Misc pieces of older farm equipment.

Misc & Shop: Ford tractor suitcase weights; (4) sets IH axle weights; Scorpion 340 Whip & Scorpion 440 TKX Whip snowmobiles; Meyer 14' Aluminum boat; Air compressors & shop tools. More details coming soon.

Antiques & Primitives from the house & Barn:

More detailed list coming soon

For information contact Bert Brown 419-212-0851

For pictures & details go to: www.aabrownauctions.com

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LIVE PUBLIC LAND AUCTION

Thursday, March 19, 2026 @ 6:00pm

59 Acre Farm @ 7586 Co. Rd. J, Montpelier, Ohio

Offered in 3 Separate Tracts:

Tract 1: Older brick home and barns on 2 acre corner lot
Tract 2: Approx. 33 acres with 25.5 ac. tillable ground & 7 ac. woods

Tract 3: Approx. 24 acres with 16.5 tillable ground & 7 ac. Woods

**5.9 acres with home and farm buildings
@ 6540 Co Rd J, Edon Ohio**

Offered in 2 separate tracts

Tract 4: Older Country 3 bedroom home on 3.23 acres

Tract 5: Large barn and pole barns on 2.70 acres

We will be offering these tracts via the multi-parcel method, allowing you to purchase an individual tract, combination of tracts, or the entire property.

**Auction conducted @ Florence Twp Firehall,
324 S. Michigan, Edon Ohio**

Terms: 10% non-refundable deposit day of sale on parcels of land, \$5000 non-refundable deposit day of sale on parcels with buildings & homes. Balance due on or before 45 days at closing & full possession. Cropping privileges awarded when deposit is paid.

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Brian Kaiser, Attorney for the Estate

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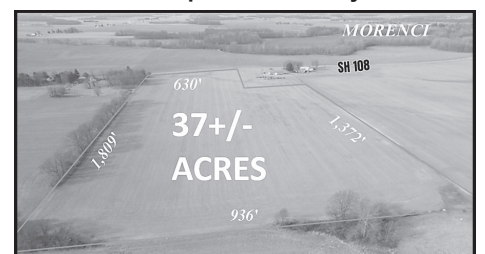
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