

CHIPS

by David Koteen

Cherries and Pits

I ran into Donna at the store. "Hi," I said. She said nothing. She was staring at the cherries. Her hand involuntarily swung out, picked up a cherry and brought it towards her mouth; but her lips didn't separate. The cherry sat there, wedged between her right hand and lips. I had just finished my Sunday morning run—about 6 miles—and was invigoratingly eyeing the wonderful summer fruits I was soon to be eating. Brunch, you know. I find it difficult to eat apples in July; they don't fit, like corn on the cob for Christmas. Now watermelon and cantaloupe, split open, displaying their sumptuous flesh. . . .

But not today. On my return back among the fresh produce I found Donna just as I had left her. A strange way to diet, I thought. Being my normal tactful self I inquired, "Donna, why are you standing there not eating that cherry?"

"Oh, David! I didn't recognize you. I was picking cherries in the back yard of the house where I grew up. It was a huge Bing tree that my Grandfather had planted—maybe 60 or 70 years ago. My Mom warned my sister and me every day to wait until they ripened but we never did. We'd climb up in that tree and swing and leap and shinny around trying to discover a few reddish ones; or pink at least. The only thing that saved our bellies from green cherries was our neighbor's strawberry patch. They came on before the cherries. My sister and I had a rope we hung from an oak limb. We could pull ourselves over the fence with it. We thought we were pretty clever—one of us standing guard while the other ate. Now I figure they knew all along."

"I'm glad you were only daydreaming and not stuck forever with that cherry against your lips."

"The trouble is I can't buy these cherries," she said despondently.

"Upset your stomach?"

"No. My sense of morality. \$1.99 for one measly pound of cherries! It gets my dander up! I bet we picked 3 or 4 hundred pounds off that one tree. I remember seeing the rows of jars my Mom and Grandma canned."

"Now I know your problem. I have exactly the same feeling about lettuce, especially head lettuce. You pay for the distribution, not the lettuce or cherries. For half a buck worth of seeds you can grow 50 lettuces. Of course, you got to grow them. When you buy one from California, the lettuce costs the same or less but you pay for everything else."

"You mean like shipping and distribution?"

"Shipping, distribution, tractors, fuel, taxes, labor harvesting, sorting, packing, fertilizers. . . ."

"Not to mention everything up at this end—store rent and salaries and what-have-you."

"That's it. In every lettuce leaf, you eat a little bit of the whole kit 'n' caboodle."

"You know, when I grew up we never had lettuce in the winter. Only in the spring and fall. We ate kale and a couple of other greens in the winter. I only want all this stuff—(Donna made a sweep with her hand, taking in at least the produce section)—because it's in front of my face when I come in here."

"Yea, I hear you. But it comes down to living in town and making choices; what you do and what you don't do; what you eat and don't eat."

"Sometimes convenience is not so convenient."

"Say, Donna. How about this? Let's cruise out River Road and see what we can buy stuff out there for. I know at least we can pick a few cherries. These Bings look kind of pale anyway. Lamberts are better to my way of thinking: dark purple and more meaty and so sweet."

And that is just what we did. We took our carts and moved down the aisle unloading each fruit and vegetable and marking down the price on the outside of my small bag of bagels which I intended to buy no matter how cheaply they grew out in Santa Clara.

Although we were well-intended and although Donna no longer looked catatonic, and although I felt good for not buying head lettuce in the middle of July, we only drove a few miles. As far as the first sign for U-pick cherries. We picked Lamberts first because I insisted on it—and because they really are the best—then we picked a bucket of Montmorency because Donna said she was going to bake me the best cherry pie I had ever eaten. Then, because they were so beautiful, we picked a couple of buckets of Royal Anne's. All in all we got 85 pounds for which the farmer charged us 30 centers per. I just wanted a few pounds of Lamberts to eat which was fine with Donna; she was going to can the rest. Instead of following through with our plans to compare prices, we went swimming.

The next night I stopped by Prince Puckler's for a pint of French Vanilla on my way over to Donna's, where she and I, with two spoons only, engulfed, bite by bite, one delectable cherry pie.

MUSIC



Motherlode

Motherlode, a dynamic band with sweet passionate singing and tight harmonies, will be performing in Eugene at the River Road Women's Club on August 10 at 8 pm. Motherlode has been delighting audiences in the Pacific Northwest for the last four years and are now on tour to celebrate the release of their first album, *Dance the Afternoon Away*. The four women in Motherlode perform everything from vintage folk and pop standards to sensitive original songs using a rich blend of instruments, including cello, flute, mandolin, banjo, bass, and harmonica as well as guitar. For Nan Collie, one of the members of Motherlode, this concert will be a kind of homecoming: Nan grew up in the Eugene area and her interest in music has its roots in her family and school experiences here. Tickets for the show are available at Mother Kali's bookstore.

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Weekly Eye Opener

by Larry Deckman

(Taken from the book, *Felton and Fowler's Best, Worst, and Most Unusual*): "In 1971, Hans and Erna W., a Swiss couple vacationing in Hong Kong stopped to eat at a Chinese restaurant there and asked the headwaiter to take their pet poodle, Rosa, into the kitchen and find it something to eat. The waiter misunderstood their request, however, and the couple was aghast when Rosa was brought to their table done to a turn in a round-bottomed frying pan, marinated in sweet-and-sour sauce, and garnished with Chinese vegetables. The meal was left uneaten and the couple were treated for shock."

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