



BOB’S
THOUGHTS

BOB BAUM

A friendly bunch from Down Under

Welcome to part two of my travelogue chronicling the two big vacations my wife and I spent in the early 2000s. Two weeks ago, I told you about our 2004 trip to Athens, Rome and Crete. Now let’s go back four years to 2000, when we survived Y2K (remember that hysteria) and were able to spend two weeks in Australia in advance of my assignment covering track and field at the Sydney Olympics. Of the seven Summer Olympics I covered, Sydney was my favorite. The people are so friendly, the crowds were fabulous and everything went off so smoothly. We flew nonstop from Los Angeles, a 16-hour flight. It’s not the longest commercial flight but it’s up there. We wobbled off the plane, checked in to the Sydney Marriott, walked across Hyde Park to a Starbucks, went back to the room and collapsed for at least the next 16 hours. Sydney is a beautiful city. We walked along the water’s edge past the iconic opera house and dined atop the Sydney Tower with a gorgeous view of the city. The buffet offered kangaroo, but we chose against it. They’re too cute. I have the same problem with lamb.

See **Friendly** / Page 3B



DORY’S DIARY

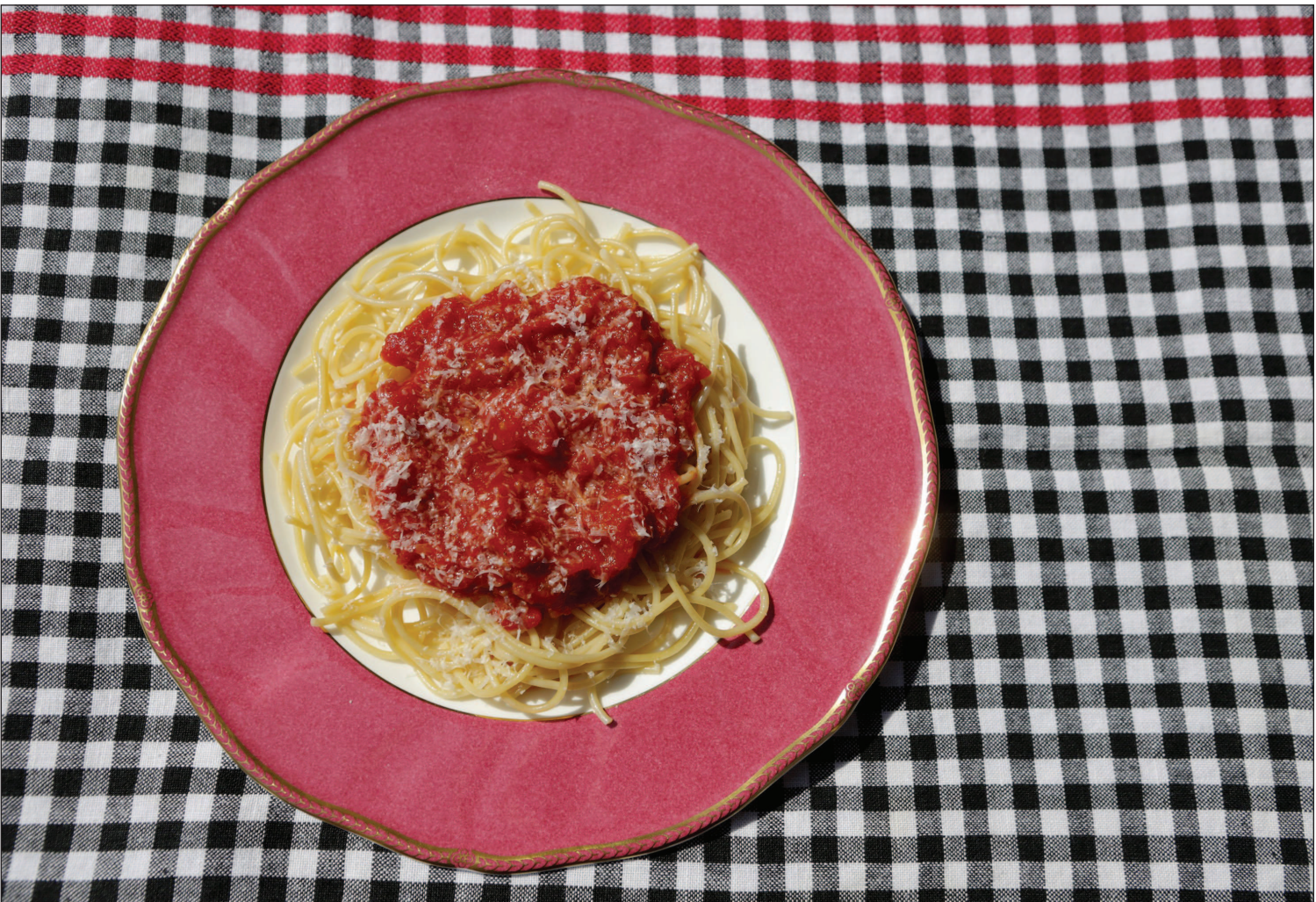
DOROTHY SWART
FLESHMAN

Dishtowel holes and a lesson about dealing with tough times

To those who have been asking, may I use this way of thanking you for your concern and to assure you that I am doing just fine. My fractured foot is now back in my own shoe and I am doing well with the coronavirus outbreak so far — staying home and being looked after by loved ones, friends and neighbors. How fortunate am I when I thought I was all alone in the world. I have to admit that I did smile somewhat when it became known that the first thing to leave the store shelves were the packages of toilet tissue depleted until management was forced to curtail the amount taken so as to make provisions available to all and not just a few. Let’s not be too hard on those folks we thought were hoarding, for they were just making certain their families would be provided for in the long run, something we would all want to do to protect our own. Now we are looking out for our neighbors and friends and that’s a good thing in times like this. I had thought I would like to relate how things were when I was barely old enough to do as told and yet not understand the seriousness of the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II that followed. Since we lived out in the country we had an outhouse, the little building quite a distance from the house that served as a substitute bathroom but without plumbing.

See **Dory** / Page 3B

Self-Quaranting Is Encouraging People To Take Up Cooking



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Easy spaghetti sauce

EASY RECIPES FOR NEW COOKS

By Daniel Neman
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

In these viral days, we are witnessing the collision of two forces having one somewhat happy result. People suddenly have loads of enforced time to stay at home. And people who eat out for every meal have fewer options to do so. The result? People who have never cooked before are, one hopes, giving some thought to cooking. We’re talking about people who are absolute beginners, people who have never before even turned on a stove. We thought we would turn our attention this week to those folks, to beginning cooks who don’t know a spatula from a rolling pin. I made four simple, basic recipes that are easy to re-create and hard to mess up. They don’t have many ingredients. They don’t have many steps. And each one introduces the first-time cook to a different, easy-to-master technique that can be used in countless other recipes. Most important of all, each one makes a meal that is hearty and satisfying. Even when your cooking skills improve — and they will — you’ll want to return to them over and over again. The four techniques are simmering, roasting, braising and searing.

Simmering

Simmering is cooking a liquid at a relatively high temperature, but not so high that it boils. When a liquid simmers, small bubbles rise to the surface. Simmering nicely takes care of two desirable actions while the food cooks: Some of the water in the liquid evaporates, which intensifies the taste of the liquid that is left and often thickens it; and the flavors of the ingredients in the liquid have the chance to blend together harmoniously. I made a very simple tomato sauce that takes full advantage of these actions. Not only is the sauce easy, it also has a bright, pure flavor that I crave. To be honest, it is my go-to sauce for pasta, and I usually don’t embellish it in any way. I use canned whole tomatoes, which I crush with my hands, but you could also use canned crushed tomatoes, pureed tomatoes or diced tomatoes (do not use stewed tomatoes or tomato sauce). The hand-crushed tomatoes yield a lovely chunky and rustic sauce, but you’ll get the same great flavor from any of the varieties. Canned diced tomatoes won’t break down as much in the sauce, and they will remain a little firmer than the other varieties.

Roasting

Roasting is cooking meat or vegetables in

the oven (or over a flame, technically) in an uncovered pot with no liquid. The meat or vegetables are cooked entirely and evenly by the dry heat of the air around them. I roasted a hunk of pork — it happened to be a sirloin, but that doesn’t really matter. The best cuts for roasting are the ones that aren’t put to better use in other ways, such as chops and ribs. A lot of people like to roast a pork loin because it is of a fairly uniform size, so it cooks all at the same time. Do not confuse it with a tenderloin, which will dry out very quickly if you overcook it at all. I cooked my roast in a classic preparation, with sauerkraut and apples. It’s also very easy — just the three ingredients, plus salt and pepper. And yet, the flavors blend together in a most miraculous way, with the sweetness of the pork and the apples playing off the salty tanginess of the sauerkraut. It is comfort food that is unusually comforting.

Braising

Braising is cooking meat (and occasionally vegetables) in a small-to-medium amount of liquid in a covered pot or pan. The food is cooked with a wet heat, and is ideal for using with large pieces of fairly tough meat. A long, slow braise at a low temperature will make it tender and moist.

See **New Cooks** / Page 2B

Hitting the sweet spot for spring planting

It’s late, I know, but I’m just now starting my tomato seeds in cups in the windowsill. It took all the willpower I had to hold off, but every year I start the seeds too early. Then of course the plants get spindly and weak and start poorly, but eventually catch up. At the coast, my mom’s cousin already set his tomatoes out in the garden. Obviously they are more temperate and have a longer season. Our garden season is plenty long enough for me. By the end of the summer we’ll all be ready for the gardening and canning and watering to be done with. Now, I’m ready to start the short time of wholehearted commitment. Due to the small size of my yard, I have to decide what to grow and what is acceptable



BETWEEN THE ROWS
WENDY SCHMIDT

Think of growing some of your own fresh produce. Fresh raw peas are like candy. Lettuce can be decorative in a shady section of flower bed — and in salads. Carrot foliage would be a nice, lacy addition to any landscape. Some varieties of tomatoes and strawberries do well in patio planters or hanging baskets.

Garden chores

- Flower stalks should be removed from rhubarb plants if they develop.
- Keep your hoe sharp! Don’t allow weeds to get an early start in your garden.

to buy from the store considering the quality of what’s available. Freshness matters, and sometimes canned or frozen are nowhere near equal to fresh. If you have garden questions or comments, please write to greengardencolumn@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading!

- Break off rims from peat pots when transplanting seedlings, otherwise they act as a wick to draw moisture away from the roots.
- Plant bare-root or potted fruits as soon as the soil can be worked.
- Remove tree wraps from fruit trees now.
- Blemish-free fruits unmarred by insect or disease injury can rarely be produced without relying on regular applications of insecticides and fungicides. Consult Oregon State University Extension for information specific to your tree varieties.
- Prune peaches, nectarines, cherries and plums just prior to them blooming.
- A white interior latex paint may be brushed on the trunks of newly planted fruit trees to prevent sunburn. This will gradually weather off.