



NUTRITION: IT'S ALL GOOD

ANN BLOOM

Appreciating our teachers

The first week of May (May 2-8) was National Teacher Appreciation Week. Next to being a parent, teaching is the hardest job a person will ever love.

Teachers spend long hours grading papers, preparing lessons and setting up their classrooms so their students can have the best learning environment and educational experience possible. This is time spent away from their families. They spend their own money on supplies because school budgets, cut to the bone, cannot afford to pay for the “extras” that make learning fun, both for the student and the teacher. In most, if not all, cases they are not reimbursed for these purchases.

Not everyone can be a teacher. It takes five years of education, in most places, to start as a first year teacher and then the teacher faces the looming prospect of years of college loan repayment.

Teachers are fearless. It takes a certain caliber of person to not be overcome by the thundering silence that follows a question asked of a room full of seventh-graders, who look as though they have just heard an ancient language for the first time.

Teachers cannot be afraid of blood, either, or other bodily fluids; scraped knees are par for the course. They cannot be daunted when someone small stands in front of them and announces they feel sick, and then proceeds to prove it on the teacher's shoe.

Dedication, thy teacher it is your middle name. How many teachers have spent weekends, and late nights preparing their classrooms for the fall classes (raise your hands, now)? It is a myth, too, that teachers get three months of “vacation” in the summer. Summers are spent taking classes to maintain their certification and credentials. Again, this is at their own expense.

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BETWEEN THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

All hail the dandelion

There are dandelions rioting in the grass! They put on quite a show for such a humble plant.

This is the time of year to pick several gallon jars of big yellow blossoms and start a batch of dandelion wine. It's medicinal. Dandelion wine, flowers, leaves and roots are beneficial to liver and kidneys, with antioxidants that are known for helping our health.

To cook the greens, wash them thoroughly in lukewarm water, removing old, discolored or badly broken leaves. Cut off roots and tough stems and wash again, lifting the leaves out of the water to allow any sand to settle in the pan. Then sprinkle with a little salt. Cook the greens with just enough water to steam them in the tightly covered pot.

When barely tender, drain the water and chop them fine. I save the water as it has nutrients in it.

Combine the greens with meat or other vegetables. The foods which complement and best reduce the apparent bitterness of dandelion greens are olive oil, garlic, pork, pork fat or bacon, eggs, vinegar or lemon juice, cheese and bread, plus optional salt and pepper.

Combining dandelions with other ingredients can enhance your enjoyment of them. Try a sweet-and-sour dressing. Add vinegar and brown sugar to hot bacon fat. Pour this over raw or steamed dandelion leaves just before serving.

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Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post Dispatch-TNS

Campfire French Toast, made on the grill.

BEYOND BURGERS AND HOT DOGS

■ Campfires can be used to make all sorts of scrumptious dishes

Daniel Neman

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The last time my Boy Scout troop went on a campout, we ate steak.

I was startled. I was shocked. I didn't know you could do that on a campout. Before that, most of our previous experiences around a campfire somehow involved Spam. We also had a memorable night in which we ate hamburgers with the ground beef stretched by adding bread, which our troop leader informed us was to add flavor.

Our troop leader's name, incidentally, was Norman Bates. Despite sharing a name with the notorious psycho in “Psycho,” he was a nice guy. He was so nice, he bought steak for our last campout.

So perhaps my concept of eating around a campfire has been skewed. I always thought it meant Spam, with occasional sightings of hamburger and, on the rarest of occasions, steak.

But apparently things have changed in 50

years. Now, some people drive to a campsite in campers equipped with all the comforts of a four-star hotel. Others' tastes have expanded beyond the bounds of hot dogs, hamburgers and Spam to encompass dishes with more creativity in their cooking.

I recently camped out in the wilds of St. Louis' Tower Grove East neighborhood, where I encountered exotic wildlife (squirrels) and experienced the mysterious sounds of nature (the friendly barking of the dogs next door, Florence and Moby).

I also cooked up a mess of chow around the old campfire, which I guess would technically be called a “grill.” But still, the recipes will work for campfires, too.

I began, as one does, with breakfast. I made Campfire French Toast, which just may be the best French toast ever. And that's not just because you get the faintest hint of smoke in your toast (OK, you can't really taste it at all, because it's wrapped in foil), but it's also because the recipe is so stunning. And rich.

Usually, you use whole milk to make French toast, but it can be a hassle to bring milk with you on a camping trip. It's so much easier just to use a can of evaporated milk, which, I see now, has more calories — even nonfat evaporated milk.

But you could use regular milk and still be impressed by this superlative dish, because it also calls for a fair amount of cinnamon and vanilla, plus a bit of maple syrup right in the dipping mixture. These are the magic ingredients that make any French toast better, especially when paired with multigrain bread.

I used the same loaf of bread to make Bacon, Egg and Avocado Toast. Or that's what I would have made if I had remembered the egg. As it was, I made Bacon and Avocado Toast. And that was excellent, too, because of certain irrefutable fact: Bacon tastes better when it's cooked over a fire.

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Remembering one of La Grande's grand hotels

By Ginny Mammen

Across Chestnut at 1101 Adams Ave. once stood the magnificent Hotel Foley, also known as the Foley House. At the time it was constructed for Jerome E. Foley it was said to be the “best arranged hotels within the State of Oregon.”

Built in 1891-1892 at a cost of \$40,000, it contained 77 rooms, plus sample rooms, offices, etc. It had all the modern conveniences — steam heat, hot and cold water in every room, and electric lights. And to include it into the best-appointed hotel category, it was furnished with high-grade furniture and carpets and each room was supplied with a bath, lavatory, and closet. There was a large dining room and a bar and billiards room.

This was a bustling place. Many travelers, both long and short term, stayed here over the years. As was the custom in those days, names and various



Fred Hill Collection

The Hotel Foley in La Grande.

information about those who were registered were printed in the newspaper. There were people from Baker, Joseph, Elgin, Echo, and Weiser and as far away as British Columbia. There were doctors, lawyers, merchants, cattle and sheep buyers,

and sawmill workers.

There were some who registered in as residents for weeks or months at a time such as Dr. Derrin who came, more than once, for a month at a time, to “offer cures for most any thing using his electric treatment

for everything from neuralgia, crossed eyes, catarrh, rheumatism, liver and kidney trouble, granulated eyelids, epilepsy, and constipation.” As a great come-on he advertised that he reduced his fee to one-half price while in La Grande.

And then there were the traveling salesmen, such as S. Atiyea with his oriental rugs, who set up their wares for a period of time in the sample rooms for locals to see what they had to offer. It was in 1917 that the most famous guests, who registered in just as “ordinary citizens,” were Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Marshall who just happened to be the vice president of the United States and his wife.

Meetings, concerts, business meetings and other activities were going on every day at the Foley, but occasionally there was a bit of a ruckus or tomfoolery that kept the citizens on their toes.

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