



WENDY SCHMIDT
BETWEEN THE ROWS

Welcome summer, and farewell to readers

Summer is good because annuals and perennials are all blooming. The grapes are growing like mad and then the fruit is here for jam and canning and preserving. Freezing produce is the easiest, but if the freezer or electricity quit, you are up a creek unless you have a friend with a freezer, or you can drop everything and can the produce to save it. Unless of course the freezer goes out on your vacation and is undiscovered before everything thaws.

Who wants to can all the vegetables and meat? Produce with low acid requires a pressure cooker and long canning times. It seems until COVID-19 came along (everyone isolated with too much time on their hands) preservation by canning has somewhat gone out of fashion.

Of course, some of us seem to have a “canning switch” embedded in our nature. When produce piles up, we hate to see food wasted, so we give produce away to save ourselves work then start canning whether we need it in the pantry or not. Then there are the realistic theories that there are tough times coming.

Fall is the time of harvest and colored leaves and great weather. Time to put the garden to bed for the winter. Walnuts, filberts, grapes, plums, late apples and burning leaves scent the air. Frost is nippy and woods and forests are wonderful for hikes (summer heat is gone).

Winter has become one of my favorite seasons. Using the produce to make soup, and cocoa after a chilly walk are memorable.

Spring is exhilarating with the garden and whole earth coming to life.

This seems a good time to stop writing my column. Time for you to stop hearing my opinions and let someone else have their chance to tell you their perspective and information they have that is different and new.

From time to time I may submit a guest column. If you have garden comments or questions, please write me at Schmidt.wendy1948@gmail.com or google either my name or “green garden column.” I do plan to have a website or blog when things start to slow down in autumn. I have enjoyed writing, thanks for reading!



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch/TNS

Maple bourbon popcorn.

Simple recipes that could become your go-to snack

By **DANIEL NEMAN**
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Any tortoise will tell you: Slow and steady wins the race.

When a new food fad comes racing down the pike, its floppy ears folded back and its cute little nose twitching, I usually step aside to let it zoom past me. I know that if I keep a steady pace, I’ll catch up to it in time.

Only then, as I chew thoughtfully on a piece of lettuce, will I determine whether the fad is worth my participation — even if the fad is over and the hares have gone on to the next hot chocolate bomb or baked feta pasta.

And that is how I have come to start making flavored popcorn.

Flavored popcorn was a thing maybe five years ago. People served it at parties. Bars offered it for free for a little while, and then they started selling it in little paper bags.

Tortoiselike, I bided my time. I knew I would eventually want to try making it myself one day.

That day is finally here. I made some flavored popcorn and I have only one question: What took me so long? This stuff is amazing. Does everybody know that? I’ve been eating it by the fistful.

Why did people stop making flavored popcorn and go on to other forgotten fads, such as unicorn ice cream, acai berries and rainbow bagels?

Eager to rectify the problem, I have recently been making more than my share of flavored popcorn. It’s time to get the fad going again.

I did my part by making nine different types. Sometimes I have more ambition than sense, but they all looked so good. And it turns out I was right: They all were indeed so good.

I began with the only one of the nine that I had made before. I’m calling it Spiced Popcorn, because the real name (Curry Popcorn) is also the name of another type that I made, and it fits that batch better.

Spiced Popcorn is amazing. The last time I made it, a videographer and I ate the entire batch before my wife could have a single kernel. I made it again now so she could finally try it.

It’s an unexpectedly complex dish, sharply assertive and piquant and curiously addictive. With a spice mix composed of cayenne and black peppers, cumin and turmeric, it packs a fair amount of heat, which I crave. If you don’t want it that hot, simply dial down the amount of cayenne and maybe black pepper.

But try it. It will soon become your go-to snack.

Or maybe your go-to snack will be Parmesan and Chipotle Popcorn, which hits your palate first with a salty shock of Parmesan cheese before yielding to the smoky warmth of the



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch/TNS

Black and white chocolate popcorn.

chipotle powder. All you need beyond that is a little salt and a lot of butter.

If a visitor from another country, or planet, asks for the meaning of the word “savory,” simply whip up a batch of Parmesan and Chipotle Popcorn. It is like a definition you can eat.

Perhaps it is natural, then, that my next few batches would be sweet.

The one that I kept going back to again and again (and again and again and again) was Peanut Butter Popcorn.

This variety reminds me of a Payday candy bar with a popcorn core. More than just peanut butter goes into it, of course, it is also flavored with honey, vanilla, peanuts and — because it is popcorn — butter.

This peanut-butter version was stickier than the others and tended to clump together, like a popcorn ball, but with flavor. I did not let that bother me; it simply led to more opportunities to lick my fingers.

If you like Payday bars, you

will love Peanut Butter Popcorn. Also, if you don’t like Payday bars.

The favorite choice of a teen-aged neighbor taste tester was Maple-Bourbon Popcorn (hers didn’t have much bourbon in it). It is easy to see why, and hard to dispute her.

Not only does it feature the absolutely classic combination of maple syrup, brown sugar, butter and a varying amount of bourbon, but it also has the most intriguing texture. I dried the mixture in the oven at a relatively low temperature to give it a satisfyingly crisp crunch.

Fans of cinnamon and sugar, which I assume is pretty much everyone, will want to try my Cinnamon Sugar Popcorn. I simply mixed together a batch of cinnamon-sugar, such as you would use for cinnamon toast, and sprinkled it over hot buttered popcorn.

And yes, it is just as amazing as you think it would be.

See **POPCORN**, page B2

La Grande building emerged from the ashes

By GINNY MAMMEN

The last building on this block, currently Red Cross Drug at 1123 Adams Ave. in La Grande, but known on the National Register of Historic Places as the Sommer Building at 1119 Adams, was constructed in 1891 by Aaron Sommer. It replaced a two-story wood-frame general store, built in the late 1880s, and destroyed by the fire of July 1891 which devastated many other downtown structures.

The new building, constructed by Sommer, was an imposing two-story structure of red brick with a Queen Anne-style decorative frieze and cornice. There were many windows on the second floor and large display windows on the Depot side of the lower level. The current building at the northwest corner of Adams and Depot bears no resemblance to the original.

The Sommer Building soon became a beehive of activity for downtown La Grande. A variety of businesses occupied the first floor. The 1893 Sanborn map indicates that a tailor, a jewelry shop, a dry goods and clothing shop, a meat market and a saloon were located on the first floor. The original tailor in the tailor shop is unknown but by 1885 this was the home of Paul Lederle and his daughter Pauline’s cleaning



Fred Hill Collection

Silverthorn and Mack’s, shown in this 1909 photo, is one of the many businesses that have occupied 1119 Adams Ave. in La Grande.

and tailoring business.

The other shops were J.H. McLaughlin’s jewelry store, Ash Brothers’ clothing store, Wallace and O’Toole’s meat market and an unknown saloon. By 1903 the jewelry shop was also gone and Paul and Pauline shared adjoining rooms with the Western Union Telegraph office.

The second floor housed offices for numerous medical and

legal services. Among them were Willard W. Hindman and John W. Knowles, both lawyers, and Dr. Fred E. Moore, an osteopath. Over the years they were joined by dentists J. L. and L. D. Reavis, and attorneys C. H. Finn and F. S. Ivanhoe and many others.

By 1910, O. E. Silverthorn’s Drug Store occupied the corner space of the first floor of the building where Ash Brothers’

store had been. Mr. Silverthorn offered much more than a cure for what ailed you. He carried multiple other items including razors, fountain pens, goldfish and Bibles, plus a “home remedy treatment for whiskey and beer habit.” And if that wasn’t enough he offered cantaloupe sundaes at his soda fountain that was open every night until 11 o’clock. In May of 1922, Glass Drugs

replaced Silverthorn’s Drug Store.

The Sommer building over the years has undergone a number of renovations. In September of 1922 The Observer reported that “The interior and front of the store have been completely renovated and present a modern, efficient and pleasing appearance.” Into this newly created space recently vacated by the Ash Brothers’, and offering clothing placing men of La Grande “on a par with the best dressed men of London and New York” was Westenhaver and Gilbert Mens’ Store, which had moved from 1309 Adams.

Some of the second floor occupants of that era were Drs. Ralston, Hill, Richardson, Woodell and two of my favorite people, Dr. Margaret and Dr. Joe Ingle.

Some time between 1922 and 1942 the building took on its current facade with the white bricks and a much more subtle cornice and frieze than the original.

The original Sommer Building was constructed following the fire of 1891. In May of 1966 fire struck again. This time the structure was saved.

The building provides the place, but the people provide the heart and soul. So who were some of these people?

See **BUILDING**, page B2