

Bob's Corner

Food has always been a tasty topic to my mind, so to speak. Can't remember my first meal, but my mother used to tell me that I obviously enjoyed eating.

I enjoy cooking, although I don't do it often. I'm not one of those guys who thinks that dumping a can of chili con carne in a bag of Fritos passes for cooking. No, I'd heat the chili first, and put the chips in a bowl. Come on, let's be civilized.

My family still recalls (likes to tell the story to embarrass me) of the time in Escondido, Calif. when I made bread pudding. Jan was in cosmetology school, and the kids and I were Home Alone. I had seen her make bread pudding and figured it was a task I could handle. Plus I hoped that she'd be surprised. She was.

I did almost everything right: Only left out one ingredient. Oh, and it was hot -- you know, one of those Escondido 106-degree summer days -- so Old Milwaukee was one of the ingredients that I used to keep cool. And somehow I left out sugar from the pudding.

We tried for a couple days to sweeten the concoction. Used honey, sugar, molasses. Didn't work. Ended up dumping the stuff. It was my first and last bread pudding excursion.

In the fourth grade at Kit Carson Elementary School in San Diego, I about lost it one day during lunch. Because I was a mostly unconscious child, I thought that I was being served cole slaw, a dish I enjoy. But when I took a big bite, it turned out to be cold sauerkraut, a dish I don't enjoy. It was a mighty struggle to gag it down, but I managed. However, I developed an aversion to sauerkraut that continues to this day.

As a struggling, Tenderfoot charter member of National City Boy Scout Troop 899 I cooked fish. It was at a summer camp in a remote, somewhat primitive area in the eastern section of San Diego County. There was no mess hall; each troop did its own cooking. I was sure that I could prepare fish. Something went wrong.

When the Scoutmaster tried to eat his hunk of shriveled "fish," he said that it tasted like burned potato chips. For some reason I was never on the cook schedule again.

When I was maybe 11 I decided to do some cooking in the backyard of my parent's home, where they allowed me to live. Thought I'd rough it and heat a can of pork and beans. Now, no one ever told me -- and you might think that I should have known -- but it never struck me that the can should be opened first. I just stuck it in a fire I built and waited. Fortunately, I had wandered off a short distance to admire my cactus garden when the beans blew. Whew, I could have been marked for life. It was kind of exciting though. However, my dad didn't appreciate the exploded beans along the back of the house. Some people have no sense of humor.

As a young guy, I worked for a caterer in San Diego for a time. After watching food prep in the company kitchen I usually had pie and coffee for dinner. And during a luau I was serving salads. Guy held out his plate, and I dished up three different salads. He got a funny look on his face and glared at me. I asked him if he wanted some more Loma-Loma (tuna salad), but he gritted his teeth, and said, "No, but I would like it if you would remove what you just served off my thumb." So I did, but I was never asked to work another luau. I don't know why these situations turn out the way they do.

I'd tell you more, but I'm heading out for a dish of bread pudding.

Do not speak of repulsive matters at table.

- Amy Vanderbilt -

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Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact, are strictly those of the letter-writers.)

Typed, double-spaced letters written solely to this newspaper are considered for publication. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and legible also can be considered.

Cards of thanks are not accepted as letters.

Foreign policy From Kristine Strohl Cave Junction

Ward Churchill, professor of ethics at University of Colorado, recently wrote an essay that has shocked the media. It compares the victims of 9/11 to "Little Eichmanns," the monetary strategist for Hitler's Third Reich.

With a firestorm reverberating across the conservative press, Churchill has repeatedly been called everything from traitor to terrorist, even though he was pointing out extremely serious flaws in our international policies; our incessant need to control, inflict pain, and run the politics of foreign countries under the guise of democracy.

Our arrogance controls our foreign policy, feeding the fires of hatred toward us, which leaves many baffled. Or does it?

All too often, Americans think of themselves as the great providers/protectors. True? Yet our leaders have masqueraded our true identity, performing heinous acts in order to extend the powers of corporate America. How will we continue to ignore/support these atrocities?

As President Bush preaches that we are envied and hated because we are free and "democratic," he never mentions our fallacious foreign policy, or our ruthlessness, including torture and murders of hundreds of thousands of innocent people -- a shameful history not exclusively Republican.

America's foreign policy is coming home to roost, and we have to contend with real nightmares.

So, are we going to suffer the consequences of terrorists or blowback? Who is really responsible for 9/11?

Isn't our motto, "Do unto others as you would have done to you?" Or is it, "What goes around comes around"?

'Kerby warning' From Jeff Christensen Cave Junction

Kerby citizens should be warned that they are about to do business with an untrustworthy entity: the city of Cave Junction.

If someone tries to get Kerby residents to connect to Cave Junction water, they should not walk, but run, in the opposite direction.

I am one of six households south of Cave Junction that just received official notice that our water will be cut off on or before May 1. With less than a two-month warning, the city will be removing a vital service it has provided to this residence nearly 30 years.

And even though we have been paying an extra \$10 a month for this service, the city says that it owes us nothing because we live outside the city limits. We were not even offered so much as a refund of the original connection fee, however much that was.

And we don't know how much that was because Charles J. Polk, city recorder extraordinaire, is a very busy man. So busy in

fact, that he doesn't have time to look up the records that the original owners of this property and the city entered into when water first was provided.

I requested those records from him personally more than three months ago, and have yet to see anything. So, people should think twice about doing any kind of business with the city of Cave Junction, as any service it provides will be at its convenience only.

'Fascist administration' From Josiah Dean Cave Junction

I am compelled to respond to William Reid's letter ("Illinois Valley News," March 2.) He was responding to an earlier letter ("I.V. News," Feb. 23) implying that the current administration is fascist.

Reid attempted to show Catherine Austin's errors, but chose not to dispute any of her assertions. For each of Austin's claims, Reid accepted the assertion and either offered excuses of why it was true, or simply stated that the problem had happened before.

After reading Reid's letter, I find myself convinced that we have the most fascist administration in our nation's history.

Reid pointed out that our human rights and nationalist hysteria are as bad as they were leading into World War II. Labor suppression and cronyism are the worst we've seen in more than 80 years.

According to Reid, the intrusion of religion into our government has not been this bad since George Washington.

Regarding the media, he used an example of how Dan Rather was held accountable for putting forward questionable information. How many people have lost their jobs because of the questionable information that took us to war? Condi Rice got a promotion; George Tenet got a medal.

Reid is correct when he says that our nation's history is scattered with problems. It seems that we have not learned from past mistakes.

Our current administration has the unique distinction of repeating many of the worst problems from the last 230 years of American history all at once.

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