



OPINION

Offbeat Oregon History

For Milwaukie gas station owner, buying bomber was a wild adventure

BY FINN J.D. JOHN
For the Sentinel

It was the summer of 1947, and Art Lacey was in serious trouble.

He was about 50 feet above an Oklahoma airfield, at the controls of the biggest airplane he'd ever flown — a four-engined B-17G Flying Fortress, one of hundreds of the heavy bombers that the government was selling as surplus in the wake of the Second World War. This one was his; he had just bought it for \$13,000. But now the landing gear was stuck in the retracted position, and it looked like he was about to crash it.

This wouldn't have been such a big deal if it weren't for his "co-pilot." Art, not wanting to bother with getting someone to tag along with him, had brought a dressmaker's mannequin borrowed from a friend, dressed it in flight gear and propped it up in the seat to fool the airfield manager into thinking there were two guys in the cockpit. After crashing the plane and 'fessing up to this bit of deception, Art knew he would be in a less-than-optimal bargaining position vis-à-vis the defect in the plane he'd bought.

Still, that was all in the future. For now, the number-one goal was to not die in a giant fireball following a botched attempt at a gear-up landing. He lined the plane up as best he could with the runway and prepared to do his best.

Art's whole crazy scheme had its genesis when he first learned about the surplus B-17s. They were super-cheap, selling for not much above their scrap value, because there just weren't very many practical civilian uses for an obsolete heavy bomber. Art, already a successful Milwaukie businessman, had started stewing over how he might take advantage of the low prices on the big warbirds. The more he thought about it, the cooler he thought it would look to have one of them perched above the gas pumps at his gas station on McLoughlin Boulevard. The wings could serve as a roof over the pumps, and there would be room for a lot of them. And best of all, it wouldn't cost that much more than a stick-built structure of

similar size.

According to Art's daughter, Punky Scott, in an interview with KATU-TV Channel 2 News, the scheme he developed remained just a scheme until someone put money on the line. At his birthday party, he shared his vision of a "Bomber Gas Station" with a friend, who laughingly told him he was dreaming. Art promptly put up a \$5 bet, which was just as promptly accepted, and just like that the whole crazy dream was turned into a serious plan.

Art immediately turned to a friend who, Punky suggested, was well connected with the dark side of Portland business — untaxed liquor, gambling, pinball machines, that sort of thing. "Got any money on you?" he asked. "I need \$15,000."

"And the guy had it on him," Punky said in her interview. "I don't know how that translates into today's money, but it's got to be a lot."

It is \$15,000 in 1947 is the equivalent of \$160,000 today — a pretty impressive wad for "walking-around money."

Loaded down with this borrowed loot, Art made the journey to Oklahoma to buy his B-17. He had \$13,000 for the plane and \$2,000 for fuel and miscellaneous expenses on the way back.

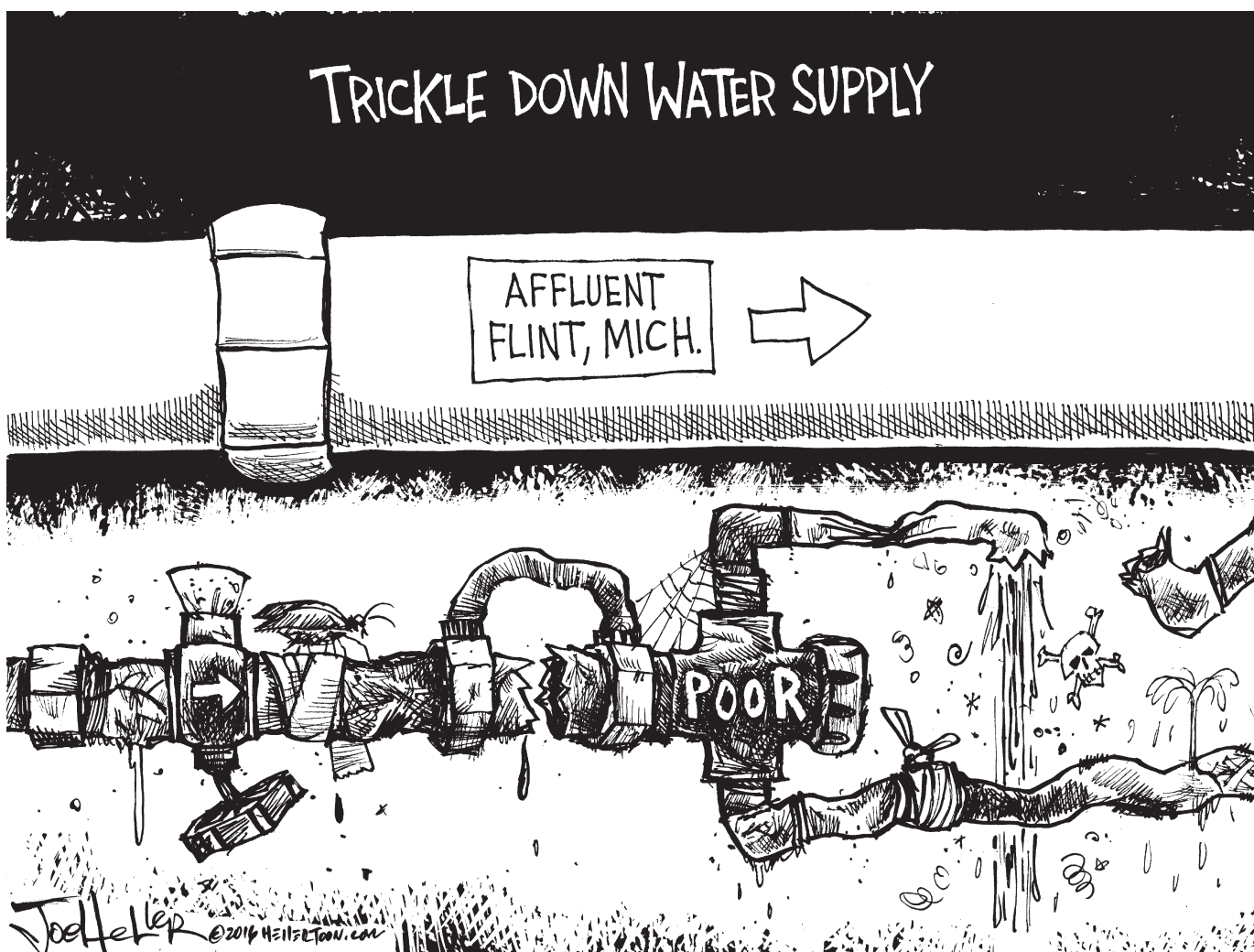
Trouble started immediately upon arrival. After selling him the plane, the manager told him to bring his co-pilot the following day and he'd have the bird gassed up and ready. But Art hadn't realized he'd need a co-pilot, so he hadn't brought one.

He also hadn't given much thought to the fact that he'd never flown a four-engine bomber in his life. He was a skilled private pilot of single-engine planes, but this was very different.

Still, Art was determined to have his plane. So he returned the next day with the borrowed mannequin, strapped it into the copilot's seat, breezed into the manager's office and walked out ready to fly home.

Hoping to familiarize himself with the big aircraft a bit before he started flying it for real, he started

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Why Cottage Grove is not like Flint

Cottage Grove has no lead service water lines, though some homes have lead solder to join copper pipes

BY RICHARD MEYERS
Cottage Grove City Manager

You have no doubt seen and heard a great deal of coverage in the news lately concerning the water crisis in Flint, Michigan caused by lead in the water system. Housing in Flint is of an age where there are numerous service lines that may be made of lead. This was done originally because lead pipe is very flexible and lasts virtually forever. However, there needs to be an active corrosion control program constantly in-place to keep the lead from corroding and mixing with the water.

In Cottage Grove, we have no lead service lines. The

only threat to our customers from lead in the City's drinking water is from older brass plumbing fixtures and/or faucets and also, from the use of leaded solder that was used to join together copper pipes within a home's internal plumbing system. This leaded solder threat is limited to homes that were constructed after 1982 and up to the time when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) outlawed the use of leaded solder beginning in 1986. Homes that were constructed during this time period could have leaded solder in the internal copper plumbing system. Cottage Grove staff has identified 25 homes within the City that were built during this time period and, several others that were built around this time period.

To control the possibility of lead mixing with the water, the water production staff maintains an active corrosion control program, which keeps the pH of the drinking water above seven but below nine.

This keeps the water from corroding lead from the leaded solder and allowing it to mix with the water. In addition, water production staff is required by EPA to collect a water sample from at least 20 houses built during this time period and test for the presence of lead and copper in the water, currently every three years. Homeowners are instructed and encouraged to run their water until it is very cold before drinking or cooking with the water. The problem with lead occurs when water sits in contact with the leaded solder for long periods of time. In any circumstance, it is generally a good practice before drinking or cooking with the water for everyone to run their water for 30 seconds to one minute when the water has been sitting in the pipes for several hours and up to two minutes if the water has not been used for a few days or more.

The City of Cottage Grove also has a few older water mains (dating from the

1940s–1950s) that have leaded joints. However, the water moving in the mains does not come in direct contact with the leaded joints. These leaded joints are replaced as they are uncovered as part of on-going maintenance and replacement efforts. The City of Cottage Grove Water Department takes the safety of consumers' water very seriously. Each year, the City publishes a Consumer Confidence Report that details the operation of the water department and lists test results for known contaminants.

You can view the Consumer Confidence Report on the City's web page at www.cottagegrove.org or, call (541) 942-3349 and one will be mailed to you. Another good source of information for water consumers can also be found at www.drinktap.org.

This article first appeared in the City of Cottage Grove's Friday Update publication on Jan. 29.

Do vegetables lose nutritional value when we cook them?

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD
For the Sentinel

Every day, we should eat a combination of raw and cooked vegetables, because the effects of cooking are different depending on which nutrients we're talking about.

Cooking modifies the physical and chemical properties of foods. It causes deg-



radation or leaching of certain nutrients and phytochemicals but also softens cell walls and other food matrix components, facilitating the extraction and absorption of others.

Many nutrients are damaged by heat, light or oxygen. Vitamin C appears to be the nutrient most vulnerable to cooking; about 30 percent of vitamin C in leafy greens is destroyed by cooking (if cooking water is consumed, as in cooking a soup). Other nutrients degraded by heat are folate, other B vitamins, and phenol antioxidants. Minerals and fat-soluble vita-

mins (A, D, E and K) are more stable in heated conditions.

Cruciferous vegetables contain valuable nutrients called glucosinolates, which are converted to cancer-fighting isothiocyanates (ITCs) when the plant cells are broken up by chopping or chewing. Importantly, heat inactivates the enzyme (myrosinase) that drives this conversion, so chopping (preferably blending) these vegetables before cooking them is important. Blending the raw greens and then adding them to a soup of stew is most conserving of ITCs. After that, steaming—compared to stir-frying, boiling and microwaving—resulted in the smallest glucosinolate losses in broccoli, but the less it is cooked the better. Remember though that the myrosinase is deactivated by heat, so in order to produce more isothiocyanates from the remaining glucosinolates after cooking, eat some raw cruciferous with that meal or add some raw cruciferous (such as shredded cabbage) to the cooked greens.

Carotenoids, such as alpha-carotene, beta-carotene and lycopene are not only heat-stable but actually more absorbable once foods are cooked. Carotenoids are inside the plant cells,

embedded in the matrix of the food, and some of the cellular structure must be mechanically disrupted (such as by blending or heating) to make the carotenoids extractable by the digestive system. Vitamin E fractions from plant foods have also been reported to be more bioaccessible after heating. A study on raw foodists found that lycopene status was low without eating any cooked foods. Fat intake in that study was associated with better plasma carotenoid status—adding fat is a way to improve carotenoid absorption from raw vegetables. One study measured alpha-carotene, beta-carotene and lycopene in the blood after subjects ate salads topped with fat-free dressing, or dressings containing either six or 28 grams of fat. Carotenoid absorption was negligible from the salad with fat-free dressing and high from the fat-containing dressings. Salad dressings made by blending nuts and seeds (instead of using oil) are the healthiest.

Some nutrient loss occurs when fresh foods are stored. Produce that has been shipped a long distance will likely have less nutritional value than the same produce bought locally. Frozen vegetables do have low-

er levels of vitamin C, thiamin, riboflavin and niacin loss due to the blanching step of the freezing process. However, once the food is frozen, nutrient losses due to storage slow down substantially. Plus, frozen vegetables are picked fresh and frozen soon after, preserving a large proportion of the nutrients. For frozen fruits, there is minimal loss of polyphenol antioxidants (such as flavonoids) because fruits are not blanched before they are frozen.

Sometimes nutrients are not destroyed by heat but can be lost in the cooking water if boiling or steaming—this is why soups are a good cooking method for vegetables, as long as the vegetables are not overcooked. Remember to avoid high-heat dry cooking and browning to prevent the formation of acrylamide—a possible carcinogen formed in cooked starchy foods. A good general guideline to maximize nutrient quantity and variety is to eat a large variety of raw and gently cooked vegetables—large daily salads plus vegetable-bean soups or stews, or vegetables cooked in a wok with water or steamed for only 10 minutes.

Remember—Eat a large green salad, containing a vari-

ety of raw vegetables, with a nut and seed based dressing at least once a day.

Suggested healthy cooking methods for vegetables

Steam greens in a wok alternating covering and stirring.

Steam greens in a steamer for 10 minutes or less

Half artichokes up the middle and steam for 18–20 minutes

Boil sweet potatoes, cook carrots and parsnips in soups and stews

Bake hard squashes at a low oven temperature (325° F) for one hour

Wok or steam mushrooms, or add to soups and stews

Puree raw cruciferous greens, shallots and onions before adding to soups and stews

Dr. Fuhrman is a #1 New York Times best-selling author and a family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. Visit his informative website at DrFuhrman.com. Submit your questions and comments about this column directly to newsquestions@drfuhrman.com.

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