



DORY'S DIARY

DOROTHY SWART FLESHMAN

Long live the local newspaper

Every time we get a big snowfall, my backyard becomes filled with flocks of at least five kinds of birds, including red-breasted robins. They peck here and there as the snow falls from tree branches and then go next door to eat out of the feeders. The returning birds are dependable with spring.

It makes me think of the dedication of newspaper folk because of the latest slowdown forced upon our own papers and those who keep it going.

Newspaper business has always held a sense of excitement for me and even to this day of great change I can't let go of the feeling it imparts. I welcome and cheer on our various newspapers in being well-recognized by so many awards by the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association (ONPA) competition over the years. It brings memories to mind again about the early days and I wax on with remembrance.

When I was employed in the early days by The Observer and again by the weekly Eastern Oregon Review there were some sublimities that may have contributed to the heartbeat speeding-up and the existing build-up of anticipation that grew up with me.

Perhaps the portrayal of newsrooms in movies and television shows contributed to it just as cowboy shows and family living series distorted to a degree as to how life was really lived, but my interest in the news and writing media came almost before it and lasted long after the phase was passed over as to the truth of such coverage.

Beyond my reading of the daily paper or delivering it responsibly to each house along my route came the knowledge of the dedicated labor it took to follow the daily grind in beating the deadline.

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BETWEEN THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

Ignore the snow and think of summer and butterflies

It has been a long siege of intermittent snow events this winter. For me the novelty of snow is totally over. I want to think and write about care-free summer things, and for a time ignore winter like it isn't here.

When butterflies flutter around the yard, it is difficult to tell them apart from flowers or colored autumn leaves. Butterflies add movement, color, and interest to our landscape.

I found an article about the migration of monarch butterflies from Anastasia Becker, UMC integrated pest management.

Overwintering monarchs are long lived for a butterfly and may reach the ripe old age of 8 months. About five months are spent at the Mexican sites, and during the last three to four weeks of the overwintering period, mating occurs.

Mated females are ready to start laying eggs on milkweed plants in the southern states on their journey north, usually beginning the second week of March.

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Wild Rice Soup



Minnesota wild rice soup

Dennis Becker-Lisa Golden Schroeder/TNS

WILD ABOUT RICE

Rick Nelson

Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

The Star Tribune published its first wild rice soup recipe on Dec. 17, 1975.

In the intervening years, more than 60 iterations have followed, which probably makes wild rice soup, in all its variations, the most-published recipe in the history of the Taste section.

Taste debuted in the Minneapolis Star on Oct. 1, 1969 — it was one of the country's first newspaper food sections — and to mark this 50th anniversary year, we will occasionally dig into its 2,500-plus past issues.

Let's start with wild rice, which makes sense because it's the state's official grain — a designation that dates to 1977. Wild rice soup has surely earned its place as Minnesota's unofficial-but-should-be-official dish. Especially since it's basically a wild rice hot dish, and nothing is more quintessentially Minnesotan than that.

Many of those 60-plus wild rice soup recipes appeared in the section's former Restaurant Requests column, a decades-long feature where readers asked Taste staffers to diligently track down recipes of dishes encountered at favorite restaurants. (The column disappeared when chefs' recipes grew too complicated and/or elaborate to replicate for home cooks.)

Over the years, the Rosewood Room, Nigel's, the Sunshine Factory, King's Inn, the Decathlon Club, the Sky Room and other long-gone restaurants all shared their wild rice soup secrets.

Byerly's may have done more than any other enterprise to cement the soup's popularity. Not only was the supermarket's recipe published in Taste on a half-dozen occasions — the first being in 1980, shortly after the

store started selling a heat-and-serve version — but a 1985 story noted that the company was producing 40,000 gallons of wild rice soup each year for its restaurants, deli counters and freezer sections.

Wild rice, by the way, isn't actually rice. It's the seed of a grass that thrives in marshes and paddies in northern Minnesota, which means that, botanically, it isn't really a grain.

"In this context, we call it one," said Julie Miller Jones, professor of nutrition at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, in a 2005 Taste story. "Foods are grains if they look, quack and act like grains. Wild rice has all the nutritional properties of a grain."

BEST OF THE BEST

We've stitched together elements from many of those Taste recipes to create what we think is a timeless version of wild rice soup, one where the star ingredient's appealing virtues take center stage. Flexibility is one of this formula's strongest selling points.

Minnesota Wild Rice Soup

Serves 6 to 8

Note: To toast almonds, place nuts in a dry skillet over medium heat, and cook, stirring (or shaking the pan frequently) until they just begin to release their fragrance, about 2 to 3 minutes.

- 1 cup raw wild rice
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 1/2 cups sliced cremini mushrooms
- 2 large or 3 small carrots, peeled and diced
- 3 ribs celery, diced
- 2 bay leaves

- 6 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 2 cups chopped or pulled roasted chicken, skin and bones removed
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons white wine (or 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar)
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon freshly chopped thyme leaves
- 2 tablespoons freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds, toasted (see Note)

To prepare wild rice: When cooked, wild rice generally triples in volume. Varieties differ, so follow cooking instructions on package. Place 1 cup wild rice in a fine-mesh strainer and rinse under hot tap water for 30 seconds. Add rinsed wild rice to 3 cups water in a saucepan over high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer until rice has absorbed the liquid and is tender, 15 to 20 minutes for hand-harvested wild rice, about 60 minutes for commercially harvested wild rice. Remove from heat and reserve.

To prepare soup: In a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, melt butter. Add onion and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add mushrooms, carrots and celery, and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes.

Add bay leaves and chicken stock. Increase heat to high, bring to a boil, then decrease heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes. Add cooked wild rice, chicken, cream, white wine (or white wine vinegar), salt, pepper and thyme. Stir, and cook until warmed through, about 5 minutes.

Remove bay leaves. Taste and adjust seasonings as necessary. Ladle into bowls, garnish with parsley and almonds, and serve hot.

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