



DORY'S DIARY

DOROTHY SWART FLESHMAN

Music for our flag

Yesterday, March 3, the calendar reminded us of the "Star Spangled Banner" being recognized as the U.S. national anthem in 1931. Oddly enough, I had just finished watching the movie "Mr. Smith goes to Washington" on a video tape with Jimmy Stewart and Jean Arthur as the leading characters. It had come out in 1939 when I was 13 years old, an impressionable age.

At that moment I was a patriot and felt I could stand for truth and justice against all wrongs. If Mr. Stewart could do it then there was no reason I couldn't stand beside him and see that justice was served.

Years later the movie was shown on television and taped for the message to be preserved.

Much of my present-day amusement is spent in watching old video shows on my screen. By the time I finish going through my collection, I start all over again.

Recently I watched "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" with Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur the main characters. It was very enjoyable just as I had seen it years ago, but a short time later the Mr. Smith movie came up and I questioned whether or not to watch another such movie. I almost fast-forwarded it to see the next movie on the tape but decided to go ahead and let the movie run.

The book from which the movie was made was written by Lewis R. Foster and was shown by Columbia Pictures Corp. on Oregon Public Broadcasting station in 1985. I was shaken by the movie in that all I had remembered was of Senator Smith retaining the floor of the Senate to get his point across on a bill he had submitted and talking for a long time.

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BETWEEN THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

Maple trees have many wonderful attributes

Maples are the only trees with opposite fan-lobed leaves native to the United States. They are of great value for shade, lumber, ornament, and sugar. The dry, double-winged fruit, known as "keys," are eaten by many birds and squirrels.

- The silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) has sap which is sweet, but not as sweet as the sugar maple. Its leaves are green above and whitened underneath. Fall color is usually yellow. Plant it for beauty, but away from buildings as it has notoriously brittle branches which break in storms. I planted three because of the deep-cut beauty of the leaves. You are supposed to be able to tell it from other maples because the twigs have an unpleasant odor when broken. Height is 60 to 75 feet with a 40- to 75-foot spread.

- The ash-leaf maple (*Acer negundo*), also called box elder. This is another tree with brittle wood and rapid growth. It also seeds readily, attracts box elder bugs, and suckers badly. It can reach a height of 60 feet.

There is a variety called *Acer negundo variegatum* which has leaves that are each cream, white, and green. It does not get as tall, and has large bunches of attractive white fruit.

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A Treat From The Middle East



J.B. Forbes/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Falafels are the balls made with chickpeas and the completed sandwich made with pita bread.

FANTASTIC FALAFEL

By Daniel Neman
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

I spent half of one youthful summer in the Middle East, working on an archaeological dig. Most weekends I went into the nearby town and gorged myself on the falafel sold by a local street vendor.

I learned two important lessons that summer. One was that the nitty-gritty part of archaeology absolutely bored me stiff and I needed to end any romantic dreams I had of choosing it for a career.

And the other was that falafel was absolutely amazing.

I'd had it before, but this was better. Maybe it was because I was in the part of the world where it was born. Maybe it was because the guy I was buying it from happened to make exceptionally good falafel.

Maybe it was because street food always tastes better on the street.

But for whatever reason, the falafel I got that summer remains for me the ideal version of the popular Middle Eastern treat.

Falafel are balls of spiced chickpeas that are fried and stuffed into pita with tomatoes and pickles, and drizzled with a condiment. It sounds pretty straightforward, but there are a thousand different variations.

The first source of alternative recipes is the part about spiced chickpeas. For one, in certain parts of the Middle East, fava beans are used in place of or mixed in with the chickpeas.



J.B. Forbes/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Z'hug is the green sauce used with falafels.

But of more concern are the spices. Most falafel you get in America has a decided greenish tint from all the parsley, cilantro, mint and scallions that are mixed into the mashed chickpeas, along with garlic, cumin, coriander seed, hot pepper and a host of other ingredients. Fava beans are also green.

To my palate, that is just too much going on. I like falafel because I like chickpeas, and the more flavors that compete with the chickpeas only wind up detracting from what I consider to be the purity of the falafel experience.

When I make falafel, I stick to the basics: chickpeas, onion, garlic, parsley and cumin (which maybe isn't exactly basic, but it blends well with the chickpeas). My falafel is brown, not green.

The other part of falafel that is subject to in-

numerable variations is the condiments with which it is served.

In America, we tend to use just one, tahini. But in the Land of Falafel, each falafel stand offers at least a half-dozen sauces to go in your pita. I remember particularly a bright red hot sauce, which I now know was harissa, the pride of North Africa. I also remember a curry sauce that I liked, but I can't remember enough about it now to try to reproduce it.

So I made a batch of harissa, which had the proper color and consistency, but somehow lacked the heat I was craving. So I added a few arbol peppers, which ratcheted up the heat level to exactly where I wanted it.

I also made z'hug, the famous green hot sauce from Yemen. This has a similar level of heat to harissa (I used serrano peppers, which are hot without being ridiculous), but a completely different flavor. Harissa is round and warm; z'hug is fresh and bright.

A brief reference in a cookbook reminded me that my favorite falafelmonger also had sauerkraut as a condiment, which I never tried at the time. But I could see how it would work; sauerkraut is essentially pickled cabbage, and pickled turnips and cucumbers are also part of a traditional falafel.

So I bought some, instead of making it myself, because there is no need to go crazy.

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