



Senior Moments

with Emma Edwards

Birthday cakes: the good, the bad, and the disgusting

Not so long ago, I went to the birthday party of a compatriot and there were 92 candles on his cake. Quite a flame!

Someone had a blow dryer plugged in nearby just in case it was needed (use on the low setting for birthday candles) along with a portable fire extinguisher. So, the question comes up, "Why do we blow candles out on birthday cakes?" How did that get started?

Years ago, people may have believed that the smoke from candles carried their wishes and prayers to gods who lived in the sky or maybe the smoke was thought to ward off evil spirits.

John Bacon, who has been writing for *USA Today* for more than three decades, wrote about a study from the Journal of Food Research that determined that blowing out candles over a sweet icing surface resulted in 1,400 percent more bacteria than icing spared the puff.

Another birthday tradition is to make a wish before blowing out the candles and, supposedly, if you tell someone your wish it won't come true.

Some believe that if you blow out all the candles in one breath your wish will come true and you'll have good luck throughout the year. Okay, I am a bit of a believer of that.

I have a favorite site you can access, www.wonderopolis.org, that surely will give you more things to wonder about, such as how to make candles. The website was started by the National Center for Family

Lies Learning in 2010 and has become one of the most popular educational sites today. The site will even show you how to make "trick" or "magic" candles.

For seniors, the threat of lingering or live bacteria is no laughing matter. I have a solution for those who are worried. Quietly scrape the icing off a slice before diving in.

And no, I am not a "germaphobe," but some things are just plain common sense. We can quietly do what we have to and maybe help someone else in the doing!

Since I am well into my eighth decade, am I really worried? Maybe. But not really.

In short, I really doubt it's a big health issue, just fun to ponder.

Paul Dawson, a professor of food safety at Clemson University and author of such a study told *The Atlantic*, "In reality, if you did this (ate cake after candles were blown out) 100,000 times, then the chance of getting sick would probably (still) be very minimal."

So, turn your brain off, relax, and just *enjoy* the cake. It is a party, after all.

Health district is having a party

Clatsop Care Health District celebrates 40 years of service to the community with a block party from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 12, on Franklin Avenue at 16th Street in Astoria.

The public is invited for free food, children's games, face-painting, live entertainment and more.

Clatsop Care Health District is a nonprofit municipality that provides services to seniors and those who need specialized care. It was formed after a group of community members placed the issue on a ballot in 1979.

Library offering ESL classes

Warrenton Community Library, in conjunction with Clatsop Community College, is offering a basic ESL (English as a second language) course.

Classes are free. Classes began Oct. 2 and are from 6 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays at the library, 160 S. Main Ave., through mid-December.

For more information, call 503-791-7408.

Auditions set for Scrooged in Astoria

Astor Street Opry Company will hold auditions for the annual holiday production

"Scrooged in Astoria" this weekend.

No experience is necessary. Open audition times are noon and 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 12, and at 6 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 13, in the playhouse, 129 W. Bond St., Astoria.

There are 21 characters (nine male and 12 female) ranges in age from 9 to 90.

Rehearsals begin Oct. 14 and run six weeks until opening night. The show runs the first three weeks of December.

Historian delves into Book of Dead

A lively look at Clatsop County's early coroner's reports is the subject of a talk at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 16, at the Astoria Public Library, 450 10th St.

McAndrew Burns, executive director of the Clatsop County Historical Society, presents "The Book of the Dead." Prepare for a grim look at the ways residents passed away from 1905-1909, Burns warns. The free interactive talk could get graphic and is not recommended for young children.

DAR's topic is area veterans

The Astoria chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution meets at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 16, at Astoria Golf and Country Club, 33445 Sunset Beach Road, Warrenton.

The program will focus on veterans and the Veterans Stand Down at Camp Rilea on Oct. 25.

Members and women interested in membership are invited to attend. For more information and reservations, contact registrar Sue Glen at 503-861-0574.

Filling Finnish food cravings

The Astoria Finnish Brotherhood Auxiliary invites the public to its annual Laksloa Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 17, at Suomi Hall, 244 W. Marine Drive, Astoria.

Doors open 15 minutes before the lunch. Tickets are \$15 per person for all you can eat. Included is a bake sale featuring Scandinavian treats.

Senior lunch menu

Monday, Oct. 14: Mexican pork lasagna, Spanish rice, broccoli, spinach salad, chocolate cake.

Thursday, Oct. 17: Shepherd's pie, mashed potatoes, green beans, navy bean soup, fruit pie.

The Warrenton senior lunch program is at noon (doors open at 10:30 a.m.) Mondays and Thursdays at Warrenton Community Center, 170 SW Third St. Suggested donation is \$6 for ages 55 and older; \$7 for those younger. For more information, call 503-861-3502.

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