

Prairie Times

Since 1991

Unexpected guests

Trisha Faye

Thanksgiving without family isn’t much fun. With family in three different states, and retail jobs that don’t allow for days off over this most frantic of shopping weekends, we’ve gotten used to quieter, subdued holiday celebrations.

Now when I think of Thanksgiving, I recall our Thanksgiving three years ago when five furry kittens joined our household in one weekend. It gave new meaning to unexpected guests for Thanksgiving. My better half was working the night shift and got off work at 7 am. I’d put a turkey in the oven on low all night and had everything ready for an early morning preparation. We’d eat early, by ten, so they could sleep and be back at work later that evening. Because as everyone knows, now Black Friday begins on Thanksgiving afternoon, not early Friday mornings anymore.

A bang of the front door, followed by running stomps through the house, jerked me from my sound sleep to a foggy awareness much earlier than I wanted. The next thing I knew, the rude awakener was sitting on the side of the bed, holding a wrapped up wad. “There’s a kitten. It was drowning.”

Texas had a rainy Thanksgiving that year and the small sliver of eco-consciousness that lives in me had decided to collect the rain water from the eaves. A five-gallon bucket sat out front, collecting this precious resource I would use for watering plants. Unfortunately, a young black kitten, four to five weeks old, must have fallen from the half brick ledge that runs around the house... right into the bucket, and it couldn’t get out.

As the kitten rescuer arrived home early that morning and stepped onto the porch, they heard the frantic cries of the poor distressed thing scrambling for its life. After he saved the kitten, the first thing I did was empty the bucket of water. And we named the little black fur ball Lucky.

We didn’t have to share any turkey with her. She was too young. Her Thanksgiving meal was kitten formula and a warm, dry bed. Rain continued to fall throughout the day. The next morning the cat rescuer found another small black creature sitting in the feral cat’s food dish on the front porch. The little boy, named Shadow, joined his sister in the new adoptee’s cage. (Several years ago we learned the hard way to temporarily isolate any new ones in the house to avoid bringing an unwanted illness in with them.)

I was okay with two. Two is good. They can keep each other company. Alas, later that afternoon the cat rescuer appeared holding a fluffy gray tabby kitten. Because of the blood running down the rescuer’s hand, we named him Nippers. That one took a little more effort to ‘rescue.’ The mite had run to the fence, but couldn’t climb it. He became trapped between two fence panels. A hand reached in to grab him... and the kitten fought back. (Although, now he’s a little love bug, so I think he’s forgiven us.)

We were up to three new guests in the space of two days. Enough is enough. “That’s it!” I exclaimed loudly. “No more cats until we have a bigger house.” The cat rescuer was close to getting fired.

Laughter was not the response I expected. I put on my stern face. “I’m serious. No more. We have



enough. No more cats until we have more room.”

Rain continued falling. By Sunday evening, the cat rescuer was tucked in bed and asleep, wiped out from the Black Friday fun at work. It was late, almost eleven, and I let the dogs out back for their last trip of the night before I headed towards sleepy-land too. As I let the dogs in, I heard a strange noise. I grabbed a flashlight and went to check it out. The backyard was a huge puddle after our days of rain. I left my slippers on the porch and rolled up my pajama bottoms. I went out, shining the flashlight back and forth to find the source of the odd sounds. Walking along the back of the house were two tiny ones, even smaller than the three new kittens inside the house. Two little gray tabbies, the one in the lead crying at the top of his lungs, were looking for mama. At eleven o’clock at night! The one following was even tinier, its little legs barely making it through the puddle it traipsed through.

I grabbed soon-to-be-named Marbles and Puddles, tucked them in the bottom edge of my sweatshirt, and plodded through the lake back to the porch. This time it was my turn to walk into the bedroom with a wet, bedraggled bundle. For this meal, I had to eat crow instead of turkey. As I walked up to the bed, I muttered, “Uh.... honey... you know that thing about ‘no more cats’...?” ♦

MY “T- LIST” Richard Kerns

Everybody makes a Christmas list of gifts for family and friends and lists for Christmas dinners and Holiday parties.

Most people make them for other holiday gatherings like Easter, Fourth of July, St. Patrick’s Day, Halloween, and Birthdays.

Then there are the everyday kind like shopping lists, “To Do” lists, call lists, appointment lists, housecleaning lists, yard work lists, social calendar lists, school activity lists, family sports lists, and the all important, on the job, work list. I could go on and on about the different types of lists.

One you might overlook is a Thanksgiving List. I’m not talking about a shopping list (that’s useful, so you don’t forget “pumpkin pie spice”) but a list of the many things you’re thankful for. It could start with the four “F’s”—Family, Friends, Food, and Freedom. It could continue with items like health, jobs, car, house, clothes, education, pets, electronics, appliances, or travel opportunities. It might also become endless.

I find my life experiences a little more important when I list what I’m thankful for. I have put together a Thanksgiving list (I call it my “T-List”). It includes

the following items. Some may be in the general category, but most will be in a more specific type category. Overall, there’s two group lists of things in my life I give thanks for having experienced. I could have listed several more, but these are the most important.

Most Thankful Lifetime List: Good childhood/family, a lifetime in Colorado, music-singing/guitar, fishing, running/exercise, daughter/grandkids, travel -US/Europe, Church/faith, writing/reading, financially ok, school career-kids/staff parents, best friends, and sports as a sports fan.

Most Thankful Foods List: Burgers/brats, potato salad, apple pie, pizza, Mexican food, maple doughnuts, milky ways, black licorice, oatmeal raisin cookies, and peanut butter sandwiches.

On Thanksgiving, I encourage everyone to remind themselves of all they are thankful for and make an annual “T-List.” Better yet, keep a pad or notebook handy and write things down for a monthly, weekly, or even a daily “T-List.” At the end of the month, you’ll be surprised at all your blessings. ♦



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FROM THE EDITOR

CHARITY BISHOP

ALL DEAD

This month, as I was gearing up to put this magazine together, my computer screen went black.

My trusty old (not *that* old, geez) computer died on me. We tried CPR and various resurrection techniques, even a Frankenstein-like removal and insertion of new body parts, to no avail. It wasn’t just *mostly* dead, as Miracle Max says in *The Princess Bride*, it was *all* dead.
Fortunately, the byproduct of being an often anxious person means I’m calm when everything falls apart. (Weird, but true.) I save the freaking out for *later*, like the time a car almost sideswiped me in Parker and I calmly drove to my destination, shut off the ignition, and then said aloud to an empty vehicle, “I ALMOST GOT SMASHED, THEY ALMOST HIT ME!” Or the time when driving in a blizzard, I could not see in the whiteout conditions. I was fine all the way to the restaurant, then wobbled inside and sat down. Hard.

But back to this particular disaster. Once we had determined my computer was “all dead,” had given up the ghost, had died without so much as a “thank you for all your fine care and the fancy *Doctor Who* desktop wallpapers over the years,” and I had my meltdown at home in private so no one would see it (what *hadn’t* I backed up lately?!), I was grateful.
Now, you might think that’s odd. After all, my computer of so many expensive moving parts had just wheezed its last. But think of it this way.
It happened early in the week, rather than later. It happened *before* most of my work e-mails came in, which meant I did not lose any of them. It happened *before* I had made massive changes to the *Prairie Times* files, so I did not have to do them over again. It happened *after* I had cleaned up this month’s stories and backed them up—remarkably, because I do not always remember to do that, but I had the random thought the day before that I should back up all three major files.

So really, it could have been worse. I could have spent a day moving ads around, polishing the layout, editing the stories on the screen, adding images—and had my computer die, losing hours of work, before I could save any of it at the end of the day. Instead, it happened at a “convenient” (rather than “dire”) hour. One can call it providential, one can call it good luck, or one can call it seeing the glass half full. But I’m thankful it happened *now* instead of *later*.
November is often a busy time, full of family, friends, and the distant relative you wish would forget your e-mail address. (Don’t look at me like that. You know who I’m talking about.) The last week of the month becomes a commercial rush of shopping for Christmas gifts and taking advantage of “Black Friday” Deals. The highlight of this time is, or at least it should be, Thanksgiving, a day when we remember the many ways God has blessed us, or our friends and family have blessed us. It’s hard sometimes, if you have had misfortune, to find things to be grateful for, but there is always something.
I am thankful to live in Colorado, where we get four seasons. I enjoy each one—the winter snow, the spring rains, the summer wheat, and the autumn leaves.
I am thankful for my family. Though we sometimes bicker and see things in different ways, they enrich my life with their love, laughter, and our shared enjoyment of animals.
I am thankful for my pets. Without them, my life would be dull, but their antics provide me with daily joy.



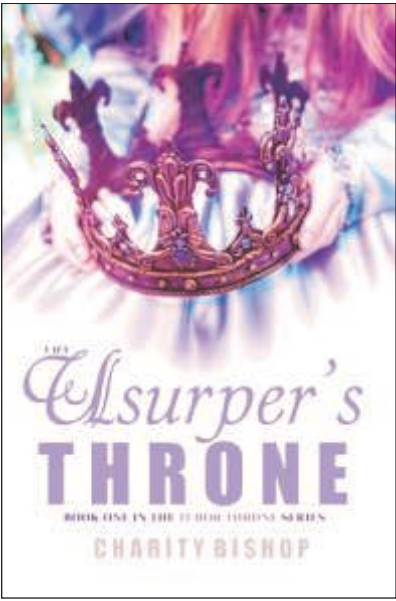
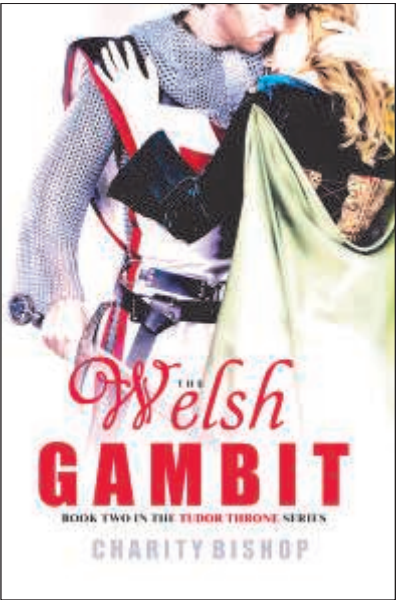
I am thankful for my friends. They have filled my months with many hours of laughter and fun.
I am thankful to work for the *Prairie Times*. I am blessed to have a job I enjoy that makes others happy, and which allows me to write to my heart’s content.
I am thankful to be a writer. It’s a gift that keeps giving me more... more friends, more adventures, more blessings and I never even have to leave my desk.
I am thankful *for* our writers. In the fifteen years I have served as editor, our writers have entertained me, made me cry, made me laugh, taught me lessons, and some of them have even become my dearest friends.
I am thankful for our advertisers. Without them, you would not receive the *Prairie Times* each month. (I hope you patronize them and thank them for advertising!)
I am thankful for local businesses. It blesses me to walk into a store where the people know me by name and to know my money is supporting a local family.
I am thankful for local events. The last few months, I have attended many tea parties and craft fairs. The last event I went to was the May Farms 20’s Murder Mystery Dinner, just before Halloween. Myself and a group of my friends dressed up as gangsters and flappers and had an absolute blast. So I’m grateful for the chance to have a fun night “out” without having to drive into Denver for it!
I am thankful for the hard work our local Elbert County government does for us, for the roads they grade so I can get out, and for the work the commissioners do on our behalf. It’s a thankless job but they are willing to do it.
I am thankful to live in America, which gives me with the freedom to enjoy these blessings. And I am grateful our Founders had the courage to “hang together,” though they could have all hanged separately! Without their vision for America, I would live in a far different country.
I am thankful for the freedom of religion, which allows me to choose what I believe and not have to conform to anyone else’s religious standards.
I am thankful for the right to express my views, because you know what? I express them a lot!
And I am thankful for those who honor the truth, whomever and wherever they may be.
I am thankful for our readers, who support our local advertisers, and help me keep a job I love.
And I am thankful for the chance to share with you all the wonderful advertisers and stories we have this month.
I hope you have a Thanksgiving full of blessings. ♦

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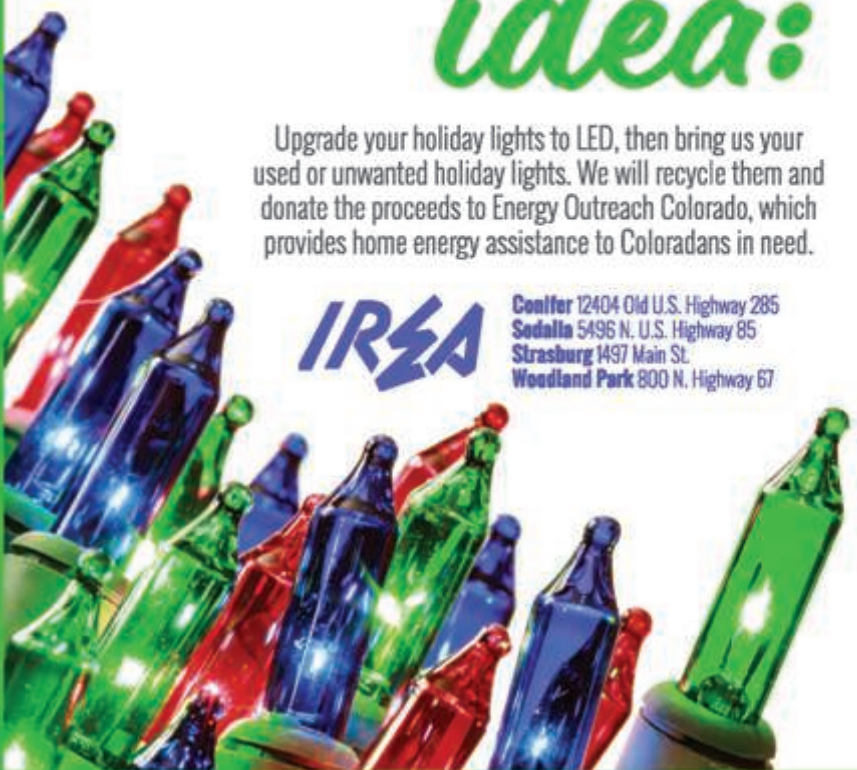


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Letters

Long distances from your loved ones can be difficult. It's so for Em in California and her younger sister Freda in Colorado in the 1950s.

Since long-distance phone calls are expensive, even if you *can* hear the person on the other end of the line, they write letters instead. Em schedules time to write Freda on Mondays, believing a weekend gives her more news to share. Her ritual never differs. She arises and takes the Bobbie pins out of her hair. She slept on them to create pin curls. She uses a soft, pink brush to comb the tight curls into loose waves in her fine hair. It helps her tease her hair into a style out of a movie magazine. Em takes a second to apply a shade of pink lipstick.

Next, she puts the clothes in the Sears washing machine with a drop of Clorox, a dash of soap from the Tide box, and blue fabric softer for her husband Jack's white shirts.

Her breakfast consists of a cup of black coffee with a teaspoon of white sugar and a little cream alongside a hot round bowl of oatmeal from the big Quaker Oats box bought with the twenty-five cents-off coupon from the Sunday paper.

Once the Sears bell goes off, she reaches in and removes one shirt at a time as not to tear the material or have a button pop off. Em loads the shirts into her white cloth cart and wheels it the clothesline. She carries two big Folgers coffee cans, one full of hot water and soap with a green terry cloth, and the other with water. She washes the dirt off the line and rinses them before pinning up the clothes. She hangs the shirts a half inch apart for room to dry, her mind racing with thoughts to write Freda.

A neighbor waves her over to the fence and hands her a warm loaf of banana bread, protected with wax paper with a bright bow on the top. "I love your hair," Barbara says with a smile. "It looks right out of *Star* magazine!"

Em eats a big juicy red apple for lunch and sits down to write her letter using a blue pen on white paper.

Dear Freda,
We have nothing but sunshine in Vallejo. Jack's shirts are hanging on the line with wooden cloth pins. To get stains out of white shirts, use Clorox with a little Tide soap. Seeing them flap on the line makes me proud to take care of my family.

I watched the Ed Sullivan Show last night after 60 Minutes. This week he said, "Let's give a big hand to Elvis



Presley" and a young man appeared onstage with hair down the side of his face! I hear it's called sideburns! He brought a tan guitar with him and sang "Love me Tender." He swayed so much, I've nicknamed him the "hip mover"! Woman screamed over him. It may have been the love song that did it. Ed Sullivan liked the applause he received. Women liked him so much, they're running to the record stores to buy his song!

She mentions Barbara, the banana bread, and her new hairstyle, ads a bit about her birthday, and signs it. She licks and applies a stamp and carries it to the front door when her friendly mailman arrives.

On Wednesday in Arvada, Freda wakes up happy. She expects a letter from her sister today. She walks out into the garden to pick a bouquet of roses. She carries her cutting tool in the pocket of the apron Em made her. She snips the yellow and pink roses off on long stems, then arranges them in a white vase on the wooden table. It adds beauty to the big kitchen. Freda decides to celebrate her sister's letter with chocolate chip cookies.

She bakes them for ten minutes in a hot oven, lets them cool, and slips them into a tin container ready to serve with tea. Freda places a china cup and saucer on the tablecloth with a sugar bowl, spoon, cloth napkin, and a tea bag. Freda becomes anxious watching the clock tick, waiting for the sound of gravel under the tires of the heavy mail truck. She peers out the window in the living room when she hears it arrive and watches him deliver mail to her neighbors. Freda lets him shove her mail into the box and drive away before she yanks open the front door.

Freda races down the front steps to open her mailbox, elated to see her sister's letter. It amazes her it arrived so soon from so far away, for only the

cost of a stamp. Careful not to tear the envelope, Freda carries it inside to make a cup of hot tea. She slices it open with a letter and the various coupons her sister included scatter across the table. She reads it with delight while nursing a cup of tea and savoring bites of cookies. These two delightful women were my aunts, and they wrote one another for years, Em preserving their letters in a beautiful box. Freda passed away many years ago, but Em joined her in May of this year.

I'm sure Freda welcomed her home. ♦

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It's Autumn, Please Pass the Candy Corn!

Christine Collier

What's the first thing you think of after tasting a fistful of candy corn? Crazy sweet!

A heaping tri-colored handful has one hundred and forty calories. It's fat free, so that's not too bad. Remember this as you reach in the candy dish for more.

People seem to have strong feelings about this candy. Either they hate it with a passion or else love it and must have it at least once a year. It's been around forever. It isn't the best candy in the world but it reminds us of the fall, trick or treating, and school Halloween parties.

National Candy Corn day is October 30th. You might call it the *Peeps of Fall* candy. Thirty-five million pounds are sold each year. However, candy corn isn't around just in the fall anymore. You can buy it year around! Candy sellers know a good thing!

They make *Indian Corn* around Thanksgiving which features a chocolate brown wide end, orange center, and a pointed white tip. Eastern Canada makes a blackberry cobbler candy corn during the fall which I have never seen for sale in our area.



They call the Christmas version with red and green colors *Reindeer Corn*; Valentine's Day brings red with pink centers and dubbed *Cupid Corn*. Independence Day brings a blue end, white center, and red tip version named *Freedom Corn*. Don't forget *Bunny Corn* at Easter in different pastel colors.

"Chicken Feed" was the original name of this classic candy. It is most often found in the United States and Canada. They made it by hand when production first started. Workers cooked sugar, corn syrup and other ingredients into a slurry in large kettles, and poured the warm mixture into cornstarch trays impressed with the kernel shape. Today it is all done by machines. The corn has three colors, a broad yellow end, a tapered orange center, and a pointed white tip, which mimics the appearance of corn kernels. Each is three times the actual size of a real kernel.

Wunderlee Candy Company first produced it in the 1880s. Gorlitz Confectionary Company (Jelly Belly) then took over and marketed it to a rural society. Some old advertisements had a large crowing rooster with candy corn lying around on the ground with the words, *Something Worth Crowing For*.

What's your opinion? Love it or hate it? ♦



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God Provided What Mom Needed

Laurence Washington

Mom is coming home from the hospital on her birthday. That fact convinces me, without exception, that God has always gives us what we need. Not necessarily what we want, but what we *need*.

I’m putting the cart before the horse. I’ll backtrack. It all started when we transported Mom home from University Hospital after passing a gallstone—an event we all thought was a heart attack. What a relief. No heart attack. Since Mom is 93, my sister and I opted to use an ambulance instead of trying to wrangle, position and insert our fragile mother in and out of my SUV or my sister’s little gold sports car. Why should we have all the fun? Let the pros do it. Right?

With my sister at the pharmacy getting Mom’s new prescription filled, I met the transport service at Mom’s house to supervise her unloading. The driver and his partner didn’t want to navigate the steep steps at the front door so they asked if they could go through the garage.

“Not a problem,” I said.

After placing Mom into their movable chair, the Pros discovered they couldn’t get past my Mustang parked in the garage. The battery was dead, and it was blocking the door into the house. So it was up the steps, which to their surprise, went off without a hitch. Then we faced the next obstacle—Mom’s elevator chair that ascends up a steep staircase.

The Pros moved Mom from the transport chair into the elevator chair. That’s when Murphy’s Law went into full swing. It wouldn’t start. Five minutes later, after changing the remote’s batteries, violently shaking it and taking turns pressing buttons, we discovered, after a phone call to my sister stuck in a line at the pharmacy, a depressed reset little red button under the chair. Button pressed, away Mom went.

Mom’s trusty walker/chair awaited her at the top of the staircase. With a little help, Mom walked into her bedroom, sat on the bed, and promptly had a stroke. The Pros called the paramedics, who upon arriving within minutes, assessed the situation and announced they were taking Mom to the nearest hospital. They shot down my suggestion of taking Mom back to University Hospital, where they are familiar with her medical history.

“No. We’re taking your mother to the Medical Center of Aurora on South Potomac,” said a paramedic. It was a done deal.

The doctors did a CAT Scan and diagnosed a blood clot in a vein going to her brain. Even though a bad thunderstorm was forming outside, the doctors said they had to get Mom to the Swedish Hospital where they specialized in stroke victims “ASAP!” because the position of her blood clot was fatal.

I signed a few papers.

They bundled Mom into a waiting helicopter outside the ER, which became airborne within minutes. The doctors sucked out the blood clot before I could arrive 40 minutes later by car. It had paralyzed Mom on her right side. She couldn’t talk when the stroke hit. When I arrived at Swedish ICU, Mom was awake in bed, talking away to beat the band. She could move her right arm, hand and leg.

“I want to go home,” she said.

Mom’s doctor shook his head. “I can’t go for that. No can do.”

Mom stayed in the hospital for a week, fussing with the doctors, nurses, staff and anyone who would listen. She had such a steady stream of visitors I came close to selling tickets and taking reservations. I learned in all the excitement you don’t realize blessings when they are happening, or at least I didn’t. It took several days for me to process what had happened.

It occurred to me the good Lord gave Mom everything she needed. She needed health professionals to be at her bedside the moment the stroke hit. They were there—delayed from a quick drop off courtesy of a car in the garage that wouldn’t start. The elevator chair mysteriously would not operate, causing them to stick around another twenty minutes.

If things had gone according to plan, the ambulance drivers would have been down the road when Mom had the stroke. I would have been there alone, not sure what to do. As everyone knows, with strokes, time is paramount.

Let’s not forget the paramedics, who didn’t listen to me and took Mom to Aurora South instead of trekking across heavy rush hour traffic miles away to University Hospital. God bless them. At the hospital, Mom needed the doctors to make a correct diagnosis and bundle her off into a helicopter flown by pilots who were not afraid to fly into an approaching thunderstorm.

I believe in coincidence and dumb luck, but there were too many coincidences and lucky breaks in what happened for there not to have been divine intervention. That same divine intervention erased Mom’s memory of the stroke. She just remembers sitting down on her bed. I thought for sure she’d remember the helicopter ride. I wanted to hear about that.

And now, Mom is coming home from the hospital on her birthday. I don’t doubt the good Lord knew that was the incentive she needed to get well again. ♦



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Thanksgiving, Then & Now

Hazel Spangenberg

My family always observed Thanksgiving, but in a somewhat different manner than we do today. The menu has changed very little; however the manner in which it is prepared today is greatly changed. Yes!

We always had a turkey, but we never purchased it at a meat market. It was never pre-dressed either. My parents drove outside the city limits to a turkey farm and selected the bird of their choice. Getting it home without injury was no small chore. I always wondered why we were so careful to not injure it when it was due to die the next day. After my brother or my father killed it, Mamma scalded it and picked the feathers and cleaned the bird.

Nobody dreamed of buying any of the food already prepared. The pumpkin, mince meat and pecan pies were baked from scratch in our large, adequate kitchen. Electric refrigerators weren't a part of our equipment either, in the early days of my childhood. We had a huge oak ice box which held as much as 100 pounds of ice. A horse drawn ice wagon delivered that commodity. The driver brought the big chunk of ice, clamped in red painted ice tongs, to our ice box near the kitchen door. Each resident had a diamond shaped ice card denoting how much ice should be brought in. The card was placed in the front window of our home.

The menu for our Thanksgiving dinner was about the same as today. It consisted of roast turkey, wonderful dressing made from corn bread, dried white bread, celery, onions and either water chestnuts or mushrooms or both. We also prepared candied yams, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, giblet gravy and small dinner rolls.

My granddaughter did my shopping for me last week. When I told her to get me a carton of whipping cream, she said, "What do you do with whipping cream, Grandma?"

I told her it was to be whipped for our pies. She said, "Oh, I didn't know you could do that. We buy Dream Whip."

When I was a child, we dressed in our very best if we were attending a Thanksgiving dinner. Today, that is all changed. At my Thanksgiving dinner this year, three of the female guests wore dress slacks or jeans while the other three wore long skirts and a lovely blouses or beaded sweaters. Three of the male guests wore blue jeans and sport shirts, while the other three wore suit trousers and semi-dress shirts. The modern trend is leaning toward more informality. Maybe this is due to the fact that great amounts of wine are now served before dinner, causing the conversation to be more jovial and relaxed.

I like most of the changes which have gradually taken place over the years since I was a child more than 80 years ago. The food is just as delicious (without the backbreaking work) and the family that gathers is just as precious.

Enjoy your family this Thanksgiving season as you enjoy the turkey together. ♦



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The West of Yester-Year

Less and More Than the Legend: Wyatt Earp

Rachel Kovaciny

Recently, I visited the National Firearms Museum for the first time. They've got some amazing pieces of history, like a carbine brought over on the *Mayflower*.

Several firearms used by Annie Oakley. The rifle Teddy Roosevelt used during the Battle of San Juan Hill. In one case, they have a piece of paper with writing all over it. It's nicely framed, with a picture above it and a little placard below explaining just what it is.

It's a summons for someone to appear in court on a particular date, with a handwritten notation that it's been served properly. A notation written and signed by Wyatt Earp.

The western history buff I am, I got goose-bumps when I saw it. Wyatt Earp had signed the paper I was standing in front of! I stood there looking at it with my own two eyes. Not at a picture of it in a book, but the actual document. I've got goose-bumps again just remembering it.

We all know who Wyatt Earp is, right? He's like Old West royalty. If you're like me, you grew up watching multiple movies based on his life. From *My Darling Clementine* (1946) to *Gunfight at the OK Corral* (1957) to *Hour of the Gun* (1967) to *Tombstone* (1993) and the eponymous *Wyatt Earp* (1994), everyone can find a variation of Wyatt Earp to suit their own particular tastes. Earnest, stern, flawed, fierce, or weary—they're all out there.

But what of the real Wyatt Earp? What do you know of him?

The real Wyatt Earp seems to have been both less and more than the legend that grew up around him. Less superhuman and more flawed, really. He himself contributed to the legendary perception of him, which has clouded the reality over the years. Still, despite the mythologizing, we know quite a few things about him for certain.

He was tall, about six feet in height, which made him half a foot taller than the average American man in the 1800s. He was physically imposing, strong and tough, no stranger to brawling. His close friend Bat Masterson wrote, "Wyatt could scrap with his fists, and had often taken all the fight out of bad men, as they were called, with no other weapons than those provided by nature."

He took his first law-enforcement position at twenty-one, when he replaced his own father as a constable in Lamar, Missouri. (I believe the summons I saw at the museum dates from this time.) He didn't gain fame as a lawman until he served as a city marshal in Dodge City on and off in the 1870s.

We know that, while pursuing a fugitive, he met up with a wandering gambler called Doc Holliday. Holliday made his way to Dodge City not long after, and saved Wyatt Earp's life during a barroom fracas. They became fast friends. Wyatt also befriended brothers James and Bat Masterson there, who also served as lawmen in Dodge City.

At the end of the 1870s, Wyatt and his brother James headed for Tombstone, Arizona, a booming silver-mining town. Their brother Virgil was the deputy U.S. marshal for the



territory around Tombstone, but Wyatt and James intended to open a saloon and gambling house. Doc Holliday joined the venture. Wyatt's brothers Morgan and Warren Earp followed them to Tombstone.

A group of outlaws and thieves referred to as The Cowboys were causing mayhem in the area. Virgil Earp deputized his brothers Wyatt and Morgan, and together they tried to put an end to the troubles. This led to what we refer to as the "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral," though it really took place in an empty lot near the corral.

The feud raged on after that gunfight until Virgil was crippled and Morgan was murdered. At that point, Wyatt took the law into his own hands to seek justice for his brother's death. He formed a posse of friends and relatives, including his brothers James and Warren, his friend Doc Holliday, and several others. Together, they hunted down all four of the remaining perpetrators.

Wyatt was not wounded once during the feud and its ensuing violence, though reportedly his hat, coat, and even trousers boasted bullet holes after several of the gun battles. This only added to the mythological aura that swirled around him. Though he had many other jobs and served as a lawman in many other places across the western frontier, Wyatt's time as a lawman in Tombstone with his brothers became the defining moment everyone associates with him.

After leaving Tombstone, Wyatt and his common-law wife Josephine roamed the west, finally settling in Los Angeles, where Wyatt worked as an unpaid consultant on early western films. He made friends with many early filmmakers, including director John Ford. One young prop boy who encountered Wyatt several times on the sets of various films later said he based his own on-screen cowboy behavior on his observations of Earp during this time. Known by his given name of Marion Morrison he would later rise to fame under the stage name John Wayne.

Several fiction-filled biographies of Wyatt Earp came out during his declining years, and he tried collaborating on a true account of his life with his friend John Flood, but it was a resounding failure. Wyatt died in California in 1929 at age 80. He was the last survivor of the O.K. Corral shootout to die, and only his sister Adelia remained of the eight Earp children.

Much of what we know about Wyatt Earp comes from that collaboration with John Flood and from friends like Bat Masterson who tried to tell the truth as they saw it about a man they admired. By now, almost a hundred years after he died, what we imagine about him may seem more real than the truth. Such is the way for all legends, I suppose. The truth is interesting, but maybe it's the myth that gives us goose-bumps. ♦



The "Dodge City Peace Commission", June 10, 1883; (L to R) standing: William H. Harris, Luke Short, Bat Masterson, William F. Petillon; seated: Charlie Bassett, Wyatt Earp, Michael Francis "Frank" McLean, and Cornelius "Neil" Brown

An Interview with Rachel Kovaciny

By Charity Bishop

Imagining the Old West

You may have noticed our “West of Yester-Year” column each month, which features historical figures, events, and tidbits from the old west. Previous articles highlighted the rise of soda pop, how barbed wire changed the west, and the real meaning of the term “dance hall girl” (it’s not what you think).

Since you’ve probably already read her terrific article on Wyatt Earp, it’s time to meet the woman behind the words.

Rachel says she has her dad to thank for her love of the old west. “He adores western movies and TV shows, as he grew up in the ‘60s when cowboys ruled both big and small screens,” she says. “I grew up right when VHS movies got popular. My family would rent movies from the local video store a couple times a month. We almost always got a western for my dad and something else for my mom. I reveled in the movies of John Wayne, James Stewart, Glenn Ford, Roy Rogers, Alan Ladd, and so many others.”

She read a scattered sampling of Zane Grey and Louis L’Amour as a teen and in her early adulthood, but only recently started reading western novels. What drew her to western history was, “I love learning about how people lived in days gone by. The day-to-day details of the past are one of my favorite things to read about. I ended up taking so many history classes in college, just because I enjoyed them, that I got a minor in history almost unintentionally!”

As a youngster, she got biographies of famous historical figures from the library: Daniel Boone, Kit Carson, Annie Oakley, James Bowie, Davy Crockett, Wyatt Earp, Blackbeard the Pirate, Benjamin Franklin, and more. She also read her grandfather’s big Time/Life books about the real history of the old west. “They led me to realize the movies rarely reflected the truth about the west,” Rachel says. While she still enjoys cowboy flicks, she also loves finding out about the things that really happened to real people during those few decades we think of as the Old West.

What Rachel loves most about westerns is, “How absolutely *at home* I feel when reading, watching, and writing them. I love how open and filled with possibilities that period of our history was. Anyone could move west and change their life. Anyone could become something or someone new. That time period provides endless opportunities for very different people to meet, clash, blend, change. Those provide conflict, and conflict drives stories.”

Naturally, as a writer, Rachel soon turned to writing westerns rather than just reading them. She started young, too. “My parents have, somewhere, a little story I pounded out on my mom’s old manual typewriter when I was about six years old. It’s a retelling of the Christmassy part of *Five Little Peppers and How They Grew* mixed with the Christmassy part of *Little Women*, with the names changed. And it’s only two paragraphs long. But it was a start.”

When she was fourteen, she discovered she hated chemistry and didn’t want to be a veterinarian after all. “I was at that age,” she says, “where people kept asking me what I wanted to be when I grew up. While I steadfastly refused to ever ‘grow up,’ I recognized the need for an adult occupation. And an answer to that

endlessly recurring question. I’d scribbled a few stories over the years, but I settled down to write more seriously then and there. I’ve never stopped.”

In 2012, she wrote a young adult western. “Within the first few chapters,” she says, “I knew I never wanted to write anything else. It’d been years since I wrote a western, but I felt at home in that setting.” About that same time, fairy tale retellings got popular. She considered retelling “The Twelve Dancing Princesses” as a western. “Because westerns are the American mythology,” she says, “fairy tales lend themselves naturally to being retold as westerns. They both use many of the same archetypes, tropes, and storytelling devices.” But she couldn’t get the idea to gel, so she left it in her mental basket of unused ideas.

In 2015, she entered the Rooglewood Press competition for retellings of the fairy tale “Sleeping Beauty” with a western version called “The Man on the Buckskin Horse.” It won the contest. She worked with professional editors to ready her story for publication in their *Five Magic Spindles* collection. “The editors encouraged me to use the audience I’d gain through that book to branch out and write more western retellings of fairy tales,” Rachel says. So she did! She wrote a western version of “Little Red Riding Hood” called *Cloaked*, released in 2017. She also got her idea for a “Twelve Dancing Princesses” western to coalesce and released it under the title *Dancing and Doughnuts* this summer.

Rachel is already busy collecting ideas for her next western novel. “I’m researching the Exoduster migration of African-Americans heading west to start new lives in the 1870s,” she says. “This is preparation for writing a ‘Snow White’ retelling.” She’s also in the process of writing two short stories that will be part of her Once Upon a Western collection—one takes place after *Cloaked*, and one takes place just before *Dancing and Doughnuts*. She’ll release those for free when they’re finished.

Rachel calls her husband “Cowboy,” even though he isn’t one. They have three kids she homeschools. She also teaches Sunday school and Vacation Bible School, sings in the church choir, and co-leads a homeschool co-op group. “I love reading, writing, blogging, watching movies, crocheting, baking, photography, wrapping Christmas presents, and going barefoot.” And then she adds, with a grin, “In my spare time, I sleep.” ♦



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Note: Ghostwinds Code of the West (Cody) is a 5 year old grullo colored miniature gelding. Cody came to Blessing Way Mini Ranch in 2013 as a weanling colt. We call him our mini mustang because of his color and body build. We love that he has a bald white face and one blue eye. The photograph is of Cody as a cute weanling.

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The Coffee That Won The West

Dear Little Horse Detective-Ghostwinds Code of the West (Cody), I found this 3”x 5” card showing a map of Wyoming in a box of my grandfather’s things. What is it? —Justin (age 14)

Justin, this beautifully illustrated card is an Arbuckle Brothers Ariosa Coffee Trading card, Wyoming” #98—dated 1890. Arbuckles’ included one of 50 trading cards in each one of their one pound coffee packages. Not only were they Arbuckles’ Coffee advertisements, they helped to educate coffee drinkers about each State or Territory. They are highly collectible even today. Arbuckles’ Ariosa Coffee became known as “The Coffee That Won The West.”

In the West, Arbuckles’ became synonymous for coffee, similar to how Levis were for jeans and Stetson for cowboy hats. John Arbuckle developed and patented in 1868 an innovation in the taste, preservation, and packaging of roasted coffee beans. He coated the roasted coffee beans with an egg and a sugar glaze. This coating helped preserve the coffee’s flavor and aroma.

They considered John Arbuckle a marketing whiz in the late 1800s. He not only used the 3”x 5” United States trading cards, like your grandfather’s Wyoming card, as an

advertising collectible, he included coupons in the coffee packages. Customers could redeem them for handkerchiefs, razors, scissors, even wedding rings. He also included a special candy treat, a peppermint stick.

Chuckwagon cooks would often use

the stick candy to bribe the ranch cowboys into grinding the coffee or to do other chores.

Interesting enough you can still purchase Arbuckles’ Ariosa Coffee in a one-pound bag with a peppermint stick at www.arbucklecoffee.com.

Justin, your trading card might have even more value since there is a Wyoming connection to the Arbuckle brothers. The Arbuckle Coffee Company purchased the PO Ranch in 1891, one year after Wyoming became a state. They bought the ranch from M.E. Post who was a prominent Wyoming Territory politician and

rancher. When John Arbuckle died in 1912, his wife became the ranch administrator.

I thought I would share with you an interesting tidbit I found while researching about coffee in the Wild West. Some early Native American Indian attacks might have been motivated by their desire for coffee. The Lakota (Sioux) called coffee “Kazuta Sapa” or “black medicine.” It is a Hollywood myth that Native Americans only craved alcohol. They prized coffee beans and often used them for trading between various tribes and the American Fur Company.

Sincerely Yours, Cody,
Little Horse Detective.



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Please submit questions to The Detectives of The Little Horse Detective Agency. They enjoy uncovering the truth about various historical people, unique places, actual historical events, and unusual objects as they relate to Colorado and Wild West History. Email your questions for the little horses to their human assistant, Theresa, at BlessingWayMinis@aol.com.



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GOD BLESS AMERICA

On Armistice Day, November 11, 1938, the twentieth anniversary of the end of World War I, Kate Smith introduced America to Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America.”

Composer Irving Berlin was born in Siberia in 1888. At age five, he moved with his family to New York City. In 1918, a few months before the end of the First World War, he was drafted into the Army and stationed at Long Island’s Camp Upton in Yaphank, NY. Because all the soldiers hated reveille, in an effort to entertain them, Berlin wrote the song, “Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning.”

The commanding officer of Camp Upton recognized Berlin’s talents and asked him to write and produce a fundraising benefit for a new visitors’ center at the base. He entitled his show *Yip, Yip, Yaphank*. During planning stages, he wrote what he called “God Bless America,” but set it aside as it didn’t seem to fit with the other songs.

Meanwhile, Kathryn Elizabeth Smith had pursued a career in music, song and dance. Ted Collins, the recording manager for Columbia Phonograph Company, offered to record her voice. At first they made records of Kate Smith singing her favorite songs. On her 21st birthday, May 1, 1931, she went on the air with her own radio program, *The Kate Smith Show*.

In the fall of 1938, as war was again threatening Europe, Irving Berlin wanted to write a song to express his gratitude to America for the opportunities it had given him. Coincidentally, Ted Collins contacted him for a patriotic song. He worked on what he called “Thanks America,” but didn’t like it. He started another called “Let’s Talk About Liberty,” but didn’t get very far with that. Then he remembered the song he had written for his *Yip, Yip Yaphank* production, “God Bless America.” As he read it through, he realized it needed revision. “*Stand beside her and guide her to the right.*” He wondered if the public might consider that a call to the political right so he changed it to “*Through the night with the light from above.*” Once he had it together, he needed someone to sing it.



Ted Collins already had someone in mind. When Kate Smith read “God Bless America,” she wasn’t sure about it. In her autobiography, *Upon My Lips A Song*, she wrote that she loved the song and its simple, effective lyrics, but feared the public might not accept it, as “too patriotic.” Ted said, “Look, Kathryn, America needs a song right now. And I honestly think people expect you to come up with one.”

That convinced her. As Kate Smith went on the air the twentieth anniversary of end of World War I, November 11, 1938, she declared, “As I stand before the microphone and sing it with all my heart, I’ll be thinking of our veterans and I’ll be praying with every breath I draw that we shall never have another war.”

When Kate Smith sang it as written, “*that we’re far from there,*” Berlin knew it needed another revision. He changed it to “*Let us all be grateful for a land so fair*” when he published it as sheet music in March 1939. “God Bless America” caught on like wildfire. Within a few months movements sprang up to replace “The Star Spangled Banner” with “God Bless America” as the national anthem. There was a request to Congress, demanding a bill to make the song the new national anthem. Ted went to Washington to ask that this not be done.

November 11, 2018, will be the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. Today in our fight against terrorism, let us “raise our voices in a solemn prayer” and continue to say and sing GOD BLESS AMERICA. ♦

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AS YOU AGE, DO YOU MATURE?

Bill Rupert

As I age (mature?) I look around and realize I’ve learned a lot, but maturity, or act of living long, has put a satirical twist on my thinking. I’m not sure some of the things I’ve learned are worth repeating.

As I age, I’ve become kinder to, and less critical of, myself. I’ve become my own friend.

I’ve seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

I’ve learned that you cannot make someone love you. All you can do is stalk them and hope they panic and give in.

Whose business is it if I choose to read, or play on the computer until 3am or sleep till noon? I will dance by myself to those wonderful old tunes of the 50s, 60s and 70s, and if I, at the same time, wish to cry over a lost loved one, I will.

I know I am getting forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And, eventually, I remember the important things.

I’ve learned no matter how much I care, some people are just not worth worrying about.

I’ve learned it takes years to build up trust, and it only takes suspicion, not proof, to destroy it!

I’ve learned you can get by on charm for about fifteen minutes. After that, you had better know what you’re talking about.

I’ve learned that you shouldn’t compare yourself to others. They’re usually more screwed up than you think.

I’ve learned that you can keep on vomiting long after you think you’re finished.

I’ve learned we are responsible for what we do, unless we’re celebrities.

I’ve learned no matter how hot and steamy a relationship is, the passion fades, and there had better be a lot of money to take its place.

I’ve learned that 90% of the time, when something isn’t working in your house, one of your kids did it.

I’ve learned the people you care most about in life are taken from you too soon, and all the less important ones just never go away.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when

someone’s beloved pet gets hit by a car? But broken hearts give us strength, and understanding, and compassion. A heart never broken, is pristine and sterile, and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turning gray and to have my once youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don’t question myself anymore. I’ve earned the right to be wrong.

I’ve asked myself how I really feel about easing into maturity. I guess I’ll have to admit, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I’m still here, I will not waste time worrying about what could have been, or what will be. Que sera sera! ♦



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Can I Buy All My Gifts Locally?



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Prairie Rose Boutique & Salon
286 Main St Elizabeth 303-646-2552
Women & Kids Apparel
Tue-Fri 11-5; Sat 10-4

This boutique has a variety of unique
clothing items as well as a hair salon.
There are all kinds of choices
for great gifts here!

Randy's Antiques & Art
221B Main St. Elizabeth
Tues-Sat: 10-5
303-907-7266 721-343-7266

Shop here if you have a friend who
likes photography, old signs, or wants
a signed copy of a picture. See him
early, if you want something specific.

Prickly Pear Antiques
Antiques & Home Decor
244 Main St Elizabeth
303-646-1505 Open Wed – Sat

This store full of cute things. Signs,
holiday decor, antique and country
style items, knick knacks. Someone
you know needs a gift from this shop!

Skadoodles Too!
(across from Casey Jones Park)
4062 Hwy 86, Elizabeth M-Sat 11-5
303-646-0402 Women's Fashions &
Accessories/ Gifts/ Decor

This clothing store caters to women of all
shapes and sizes. Their personal service
will help you find what works best FOR
you and ON you. Give that to a friend!

The Carriage Shoppes
Antiques & Collectibles
392 Main St. Elizabeth
M-Sat 10-5 303-646-4672

This shop is filled with interesting
items from a variety of vendors.
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display in November!

Small Town Stores Along I-70

Barnyard Boutique
(across from G. Bank)
Unique Gifts & Clothing
56551 E. Colfax Strasburg
303-345-4460
M-F 9-6; Sat 9-5

This store features lots of
items that you or your friend
will enjoy. From animal faces
on socks, to whimsical knick
knacks, to stylish clothing;
lots to see!

Ladybug Landing
(red store west edge of Byers)
251 W. Hwy 40 Byers
Gifts, Decor, Farmhouse
303-564-9851
W-Sat 11-4; Sun 11-2

Deena has a great knack for
picking items that are fun,
unique, and delightful to
browse. Take a group of
friends or a gift list with you!
New location soon!

Chateau V. Boutique
Women's Clothing/Accessories
56620 E. Colfax *(just west of Hardware)* Strasburg
719-760-2928 T-F 10-5 Sat 10-3

Do you have a young friend who likes pretty things?
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item your friend would enjoy.

O'Malley's Mercantile
Clothes, Purses, Accessories, Home Decor
1600 Hudson Mile Rd Watkins, 303-261-7743
Mon-Fri 8-7 Sat 8-4

This great store has everything you want for animals and
lots of gift ideas for your friends who love "country."

The Gift Shop
56781 E. Colfax Avenue Strasburg
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Mon-Sat

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Out East

Main Street Mamas'
Antiques & Uniques
Coffee Bar & Smoothies
327 4th St (Main St)
Hugo 719-743-2525
M-F10-5; Sat10-2

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except for the coffee bar
and smoothies. You will
love wondering through
this building with it's
circular staircases to the
upper level.

Maye G's Place
Unique Books, Dolls,
Collectibles
501 Third Ave, Hugo
719-743-2325 /
719-740-2601 9-6 M-Sat.

This store has very
reasonable prices, copper
tea pots, handmade items.
Be sure to visit with
Maye G. Her store is a
must see in Hugo.

Tina's Trinkets & Treasures
Eclectic Collectibles
719-740-2301
124 Main, Limon
W-Fri 10-5; Sat. 10-3

You're not going to walk
in and out of this store in
a hurry. It you like
treasure hunts, you will
like this store. Call before
you go. She is trying to
sell her building.

The Challenge

Susan Bishop

There are many unique small businesses and events in eastern Colorado that contain one-of-a-kind gifts suitable for friends and family this holiday season. What would it take for you to actually take the challenge and buy your gifts locally this year?

Step Away From the Computer

It's easy to go to Amazon.com and "shop." One click. It's here in a couple of days. Someone brings it to your door and you can even use the box to wrap it in. You can even ask them to wrap it before they send it and type what you tell them to write on the "card" (which is a flap of heavy paper). No work involved. No traveling. Generic gifting at its "best." I think, however, the recipient might be a tad disappointed. And, there is much to be said for a beautifully wrapped gift with a large ribbon on top. Presentation can be part of the gift.

Go Out Into the Community

Yep, out where the people are. Rub shoulders, practice being friendly. Smile! Interact with business owners, learn their names, compliment them on something you see or the way they've designed the store. You never know when you will make a new friend. If you work in the city, and consider it "local," go east on a Saturday. Learn to love the more rural areas around your home.

Search out New Adventures

Every year O'Malley's Mercantile (Watkins) hosts an event in November. So does The Carriage Shoppes (Elizabeth). Search through the pages of the *Prairie Times* for more information on these two stores and other gift shops open year around. You'll also find other events that might interest you. Did you know there are tons of gifted crafters in our communities? They frequently show up at craft fairs, bazaars, and monthly events. Fall is a great time to find special gifts for special people in your life. Get familiar with the businesses listed in our Girls Day Out ad above. The Bennett-Kiowa road is a pretty drive between two areas listed. If you've never been... go! Take someone with you! Shopping is more fun with a friend.

Are you feeling the challenge? Give it a try! ♦

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LOCAL HISTORY BY STACIE MAY



A Brief History of Byers

A pioneer scout named Oliver P. Wiggins came to our area around 1866. He knew the railroad would come through soon, so he started a place called “Bijou” (part of the Bijou Creek runs to the west of our town). Mr. Wiggins built a general store where the Byers Park now sits.

The railroad made its way in our direction. Around 1870, trains were coming through Bijou, making regular stops by the new general store. After several failed attempts to establish a post office in the general store, Oliver asked his good friend William Byers (the owner and editor of the *Rocky Mountain News* in Denver) if he could help secure a post office for the new little town of Bijou. William succeeded—we were now an official town! This occurred around 1873.

To honor the friend who made growth and future for our area possible, Mr. Wiggins changed the town’s name from “Bijou” to “Byers.”



William Byers

Now that Byers had an official post office, he added a restaurant, saloon and meat market. There was also a schoolroom in the upstairs of the general store. Around 1889, Mr. Fetzer and Mr. McDonnell purchased 160 acres. A portion of this became a site for the town. A livery stable, storage for beans and small stockyards were built by Mr. Wiggins’ store... one would never guess all this was where the Byers Park is now!

Ranchers transported livestock (sheep and cattle) on trains from the local stockyards. As the 1800s came to a close, Byers was growing to the south (where Lippitt Hardware is now).

What did Mr. Wiggins do in the late 1800s you may ask?

He founded the town of “Wiggins.” ♦

Editor’s Note:
While searching out images to accompany this article, I discovered William Byers’ wife, Elizabeth, grew concerned about the many left penniless and homeless in the aftermath of the Colorado gold rushes.



She was among the group of women who founded the first known charitable institution in Colorado, the Ladies’ Union Aid Society, in 1860. This became the Ladies’ Relief Society, whose work continues to this day.

Elizabeth also helped found what is now the Denver Children’s Home. ♦

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The Cooking Lesson

Beverly
Newton

One day I answered the door, and there stood my neighbor with a plate of cookies in his hand.

“Can I come in?” he asked.

“Of course,” I answered. “I’m always glad to see you.”

When he got in, he shoved his paper plate at me and said, “I made these and they’re good. I made them for you.”

“For me?!” I exclaimed, and reached for a cookie. Then I stopped and looked at it. There was something in it. I couldn’t tell if it was dirt, a chocolate chip, or something else.

He saw my hesitation and explained, pointing, “That’s a raisin. Mom made me do that.”

Quickly, I shoved the whole thing in my mouth, not wanting to examine it too closely. It was surprisingly good! “Those are delicious,” I said.

“I can make you more—right now,” he said, and grinned.

“How can I resist an offer like that?” I

answered, and thus began my cooking lesson.

I’ve been a cook for many years but I was appalled to find out I didn’t know a thing about baking cookies. My teacher was quite adamant about any suggestions that came from me. If he did it, it was the correct way. I knew chefs could be quite egotistical about their craft but I didn’t realize how sure of themselves they could be.

I suspect there are other cooks out there who don’t the finer points of baking cookies, so I’m

passing on what I learned.

The first thing you do is tie your apron up under your chin. Then you step on the tail of it three or four times. When you do, you give it a jerk and that takes care of the whole thing.

When you are stirring your cookies, the wilder you stir the better it is. You then are sure to throw flour, egg, and shortening all over the counter, but this is all right. You just scoop up the mess and put it back in the bowl. This way you get a few coffee grounds

look like a six or an eight bakes better than a blob dropped on the cookie sheet? Also you must have cookies that look like bears and dogs and if you can have one shaped by a giraffe it’s even better. Before you put them on the sheet, you must eat at least three handfuls of dough at various times just see if it tastes as it did the last time you sampled it.

All this work will probably get the best of you so you must stop and guzzle. Quantities of orange juice will give you the strength you need to continue.

Okay, now they are all in the oven. It’s time to watch the cookies so you can see what they go through to be cookies. Cookie dough goes through a variety of emotions before it becomes a cookie. It gets angry and puffs up high. Then it begins to weep and falls down. Then it

breathes in and out a few times. Finally, spent and brown, it has become a cookie.

When you take the cookies off the sheet, throw a couple on the floor for the dog. If he doesn’t die, you’re in business. Suddenly you are very tired of the whole thing, so it was pointed out to me that it was all right to go play airplanes.

These are the things you learn when your teacher is only five. He promised to come back and teach me more. I can hardly wait till we get to soufflé. ♦

and little lettuce and maybe if you’re lucky, a cracker crumb or two. All these things are bound to improve the flavor of your cookies.

Now you sweep the bottom of your apron through the dough a couple of times (these are the parts you stepped on earlier). I was also surprised to learn it’s much better to play in the dough before you put them on the baking sheet. This means you’ll have cookies in all different shapes and, alas, shades.

Did you know a cookie that

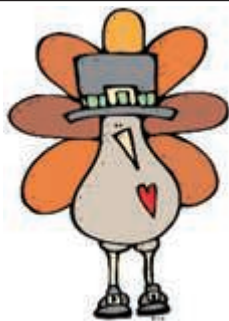


“When you love what you have, you have everything you need.” - Unknown

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.” - Melody Beattie

“After a good dinner, one can forgive anybody, even one’s own relations.” - Oscar Wilde

“When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.” - Willie Nelson



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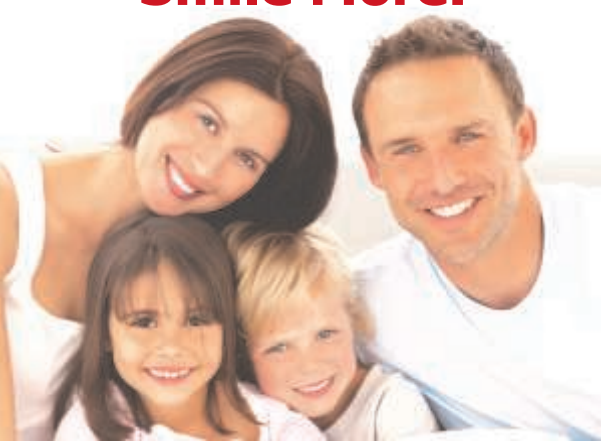
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Free 1bdrm housing in exchange for experienced ranch hand to care for horses. Utilities provided except propane. Paddock cleaning, watering, and twice daily feeding 5 day/week. No smokers/drugs. NE of Elizabeth 303-841-2949 Text OK

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Horse Boarding \$250, full care, 3 spots in large shed, 1 in run in barn, outdoor arena, round pen Sun Country 720-422-8200

Fiber Tools: exc cond: Harrisville Designs 36" Floor Loom, 4 harness, 6 treadle, \$1750 OBO Harrisville Designs Adjustable Weavers Bench \$225 Pictures avail 303 521-1129

1992 Ford Minnie Winnie: fully loaded, sleeps 6, 65,000 mi, AS IS \$10,000 OBO; 1976 Sea Ray: 21', AS IS \$2,000 OBO. 303-881-1575 Strasburg

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Misc: Superwinch TR1500 \$175; Eastwood Metal Bender \$125; Kenmore Refrigerator w/ice \$125; 1953 Ford F100 OEM Bench Seat \$700; 1953 Ford F100 OEM Embossed Tailgate \$650 Jack Dixon 303-570-7162

Misc: Powder Coating Set \$1,200; Wire Fee Welder Pac Electric \$250; 70AMP Arc Welder \$100; Gas Generator \$100; Chandelier 16lt \$500; Propane Stove w/self cleaning oven \$250 Nancy Dixon 303-570-7163

Swaddling clothes: free baby items. Clothes newborn to 4T. 2nd Saturday of each month. 10-2 at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Eliz, CO.

Misc: Artic Cat ATV w/ Accessories - \$5000; Game Trailer \$475 303-646-8853

Misc: Owens Dog Box for 2 Dogs w/Pads \$850; Craftsman Motorcycle/ATV Jack \$55 303-646-8853

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MISC GROUPS:

AA: If you want to drink, that's your business. If you want to stop, we can help. 24 hr. HOT LINE: 303-322-4440

Eagle's Nest Ranch: using horses to help people soar above adversity. 303 -596-2784 eaglesnestranch.org

Elizabeth Senior Center: have fun and socialize! 823 S. Banner St. Eliz. 303-646-9549. Mondays at 10:45. Bring lunch.

Food Bank of the Rockies: Mobile Pantry Second Fridays at Franktown Seventh Day Adventist Church 905 N. State Highway 83, Franktown. Sponsors: CCC, FSDAC, LWCC

Kiowa Food Pantry: distribution site for CO TEFAP food program. Monthly to low-income people qualify. Senior Food Boxes 60+ Tues: 8:30-noon, Fellowship Hall 303-621-2376

Kiowa Senior Center (behind Samuel Elbert County Bldg. on Comanche Street) welcomes all senior citizens Wed & Fri for a \$3 noon meal, fun & games. 303-621-2561

Lawyers at the Library: for parties without an attorney. 2nd Tues. of the month: 6pm-8pm. Eliz Public Library.

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BEN

Deidre House

In every person's life there is at least one great person, or one great animal. In my life, I have been blessed, for I have had two great people and two great animals.

Now don't get me wrong, I have had many fantastic people in my life: people who have influenced me, whether right or wrong, people who have loved me and cared about me. And I have had many, many animals in my life that I have loved and cared about, but this story is about one very special animal in my life: Ben.

Ben is an old Morgan horse that could never be replaced. Not with any other horse or animal. Not with any person or object, and not with any amount of money. Ben is one of a kind in both animal and human worlds. I "rescued" Ben, or should I say, Ben rescued me.

I got Ben when we first moved to our ranch outside Kiowa. I bought him sight unseen from a person I thought was a friend. He told me Ben was 10 years old, a good riding horse and a real bargain for \$800. I trusted this person, so I bought him. He was delivered to me on a Friday so I could spend the weekend getting him used to his new place. I figured I would give him a couple of weeks to settle down. When they let him out of the trailer and I first saw him, I was in awe. He was beautiful. Brown with a black mane and tail. His eyes said it all. He had the most caring and trustful eyes. He came to me right away with a graceful and powerful step. I was in love.



A couple weeks later I decided to ride him. He took the saddle and bit with no problem, even seemed to enjoy it. I walked him out of the corral and prepared to get on.

A few years ago, I was in a serious car accident where I broke every bone from my neck down with major injury to my right foot. I ended up with a fused ankle and foot. So to ride a horse I have to actually put my right foot in the stirrup by hand. I put my left foot in the stirrup and jumped on. As soon as my behind hit the saddle, Ben took off at a full run. I couldn't grab the right stirrup so my right leg is flying in the wind. I tried to get him to stop, but he was determined to get rid of what ever was on his back.

Ben galloped straight at the barb wire fence. If he jumped the fence he would lose me, as I only had one foot in a stirrup. If he turned right I was okay, if he turned left I was out of luck. He turned left. Ben kept going and so did I, but I was going straight to the ground. I landed in a yucca bush. Ben came back to look down on me. As Grandpa always said, when you fall off a horse, get right back on. I did, we went for another fast ride. This time he stopped dead in his tracks. Over his head I went. Again he was looking down on me. We

came to a mutual understanding that day. He was the boss. I came to find out my 10 year old horse was actually in his 20's. Lesson learned.

Ben became my best friend. I could never ride him, but he was always there to give me a hug, to lay his head on my shoulder, to play with me in his own way. He would follow when I would ride my other horse, Jasmine, and would have a fit if he lost sight of us. Ben lived into his 30s. I miss him and his antics, but my life is all the better by giving him a better life. ♦

My Guardian Angel

Kathy Humbert

It was during that time of day, somewhere between day and night, where everything seems fuzzy and not quite real.

The traffic was light and the radio in my little import was playing some great old favorites when I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, headlights approaching the upcoming intersection. In my sense of time and space, he was moving too quickly to be slowing down for the stop sign he was approaching. I had the right of way but instinctively began slowing down in anticipation of his failure to yield. Then, all in slow motion of course, it became perfectly clear that this set of headlights was indeed attached to a vehicle with a very careless human in control.

He ran the stop sign, doing about 40, hit my front end at a 45-degree angle and kept going. I could hear brakes squealing and then sirens. Everything seemed to be very chaotic. I heard someone yelling to disconnect the battery before it started a fire. Then there was a comfort there: a sense of safety. It was a woman at my driver's side window. She was rubbing my forearm and telling me everything was going to be all right. I believed her and didn't panic even though I knew something terrible had just happened to me.

She stayed with me until the sirens stopped. Then she was gone. The next thing I remember, I was being pulled out of the window and put into the ambulance. These people were attending to my aches and pains, which were only now taking me

out of the slow motion of trauma into full consciousness. At the hospital I was x-rayed and sutured. I received several stitches in my legs and head and my left forearm was severely bruised. The ambulance attendants and hospital crew thought for sure it was broken by the way it was bowed,

but the x-rays disagreed. Then the police questioned me for what seemed to be forever. For days after I would stare off into space and recall the entire episode in my mind. In the coming weeks, as the investigation got under way, events unfolded that would change my whole perspective.

The squealing brakes I heard were not my own, they were the vehicle behind me which belonged to an off-duty fireman who witnessed the whole incident. He stopped short of hitting my car and when he noticed the driver not stopping at the accident he had just caused, he went after him. He was able to get a license plate number and a description of the vehicle and driver before he returned to the scene to lend his assistance. The police kept asking me what I remembered about the accident, and the events following it, but insisted there was no woman at the scene.

Within a week the police found the car that hit me hidden in its owner's garage. The owner's nephew had hidden it there with my car's paint all over it. I was able to thank the fireman who left the scene in order to help me. I truly believe the woman was my guardian angel, keeping me calm in the moments I was alone before help arrived. ♦



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“POP” MACHINES Charles Oz Collins

I just put \$1.25 into a machine to buy a cold drink. This particular machine, considerably taller than I am, dropped the plastic bottle about five feet so I must wait three minutes to open the bottle.

If I don't, the contents will fizz up and part of my drink will end up in my lap or on the floor. Equally, disappointing, what's left of the contents will be flat since most of the carbonation bathed my hand. It was not always so.

I believe my favorite pop machine was in Amos Finch's filling station. It was a chest-type cooler that held enough water to keep bottles of pop semi-submerged. As I recall, it was red and probably had "Coca-Cola" emblazoned on the outside. Nostalgia may have to do with my fond recollection of that dispenser of cold drinks but I believe it had several other advantages over later or even contemporary machines.

Variety:

Most pop machines, including the latest models, offer a selection of perhaps 6-8 flavors. Since half of these are diet versions, the actual range of choices is small. To be sure, there may be more than one machine lined up and in that manner a wider selection is available.

Now in Amos' filling station you could get a real selection, even in the 1950s. There was always Coca-Cola, and sometimes one or two cola-pretenders. Then there was NEHI pop, with about a dozen flavors, the odd Crème Soda or Root Beer, and my personal favorites, pee-wee bottles of Orangette, Grapette, and Lemonette. You might even happen upon a little bottle of milk in there but you were advised to pass on this since it might have been part of Amos' lunch.

Visibility:

Contemporary "soft drink dispensing units" do not let you see what you are buying. The machine's contents are rumored by a series of lighted buttons, which you push in, hoping there is truth in advertising. Before the current crop of ambiguous, internally lighted purveyors of carbonation and sweet syrups, there was a generation of machines that let you see the bottle cap of your potential purchase. Typically, there was a vertical line of bottle sized holes each containing a beverage. Each cleverly locked until you parted with your money. At that point you grabbed the neck of the bottle and yanked. It permitted only one yank per payment. If you changed your mind mid-jerk you were too late. You could push the bottle back thinking this would alert the machine to your decision to partake of another flavor but all that accomplished was the re-locking of

the bottle and losing your investment.

The pop machine at the Finch filling station offered a full range of choices, the opportunity to view each one, assuming you were tall enough to peer over the edge of the tank, and the privilege of changing your mind right up to until you popped the cap from the bottle. Size, color, bottle shape, and degree of chill were all at your fingertips. Why, you could pull out two or three and compare them side-by-side before rendering a final decision. Now I think about it, even if you were short on one end and could not see the bottles, there was still the opportunity to exercise an informed choice among the multiple drinks. If you wanted an Orangette, Grapette, or Lemonette, you fished around in the water. These bottles were small

and often submerged. You kept pulling them out till you got the right color. If you wanted a coke, you felt for that uniquely sculpted bottle. A NEHI of any flavor was easy. As the name implied, these were tall bottles sticking well above the water's surface and they were "fat" from just below the neck all the way to the bottom.

Change:

Here the superiority of my fondly remembered pop machine is so evident as to hardly warrant explanation. I got my Orangette out, popped the cap off in the opener attached to the side of the tank, savored a sip, and then walked over and handed Mr. Finch a nickel. On the rare occasion I had a dime he handed a nickel back. Why, I could stand there if I chose and drink the whole six ounces and only then pay for my pleasure. This was customer-friendly merchandising at its best.

Need I tell you about getting correct change from machines? I will grant that it is a convenience to put assorted coins, bills or a credit card into the modern contraptions when they are functioning as intended. Somehow, however, I think the intent of the designer is not necessarily the "intent" of the infernal machine. After rejecting three perfectly good dollar bills in a row the fourth disappears never to be seen again, at least by you. And who has not had the experience of putting the correct change in only to be "told" by the machine, "Please Make Another Selection!" But if your selection is to push the coin return button, don't be surprised if you get short-changed. I figure the machine is charging a service fee, like a bank. Finally, does anyone really believe calling the 800 number



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posted on that machine that is withholding your money will bring satisfaction? Is someone going to come from two states away to refund your money? I figure if I call "they" will send me a form to fill out in triplicate and in front of a Notary Public, after which I must send it by Registered Mail. It will cost \$3 just to ask to get your fifty cents back.

The pop machine at Amos Finch's station had one additional important advantage; you could sit on it. Kids could come in and with or without buying a pop feel welcome to hop up on the machine. As a kid, this put you more at eye-level with adults. It did not grant the privilege of participating in adult conversations unless you were invited, but all the same you felt more a part of the grown-up society of that gas station. From this convenient perch one could learn who had gotten rain and how much, the price of yearling steers, what kind of job the county was doing keeping up local roads, what was wrong with the high school football team, and which neighbor was exaggerating his beet or corn yield.

This was knowledge to prepare one for adult life and how to take your place in the community. And, you could accomplish all this while sipping a cold Orangette. I would need a ladder just to see the top of the pop machine down the hall from my office. If I tried to sit on it some nice men in white smocks would come and invite me to visit with them, and not about the weather. ♦

The Old Dog
Don Parsons

"Get rid of that scruffy dog! He's old; you're old and you know I'm allergic to him! You're 73 and in dog age he is over 75! Sometimes I think you have both outlived your usefulness."

"Now Martha, calm yourself. Old Viking is fine. I'll take him for a hike in the Pike National Forest today. He'll like that. Ben Franklin said an old wife and old dog are a man's two best friends."

"You're calling me an OLD WIFE?" his wife screamed. "I'll give you old wife. Take him and go hiking. And leave him in the woods!"

"Relax, Martha. We'll bring you back a present. Some pine cones for table decorations."

Tawnee stretched and yawned. He looked down along the river. Maybe a deer would come down to drink tonight, just at dusk. Or maybe a rabbit or a house cat. Tawnee was becoming less and less afraid of people. There were so many of them hiking the trails lately; and they never carried guns. Tawnee's tail twitched. He heard the faint bark of a tired old dog.

Something's moving up the trail, thought Tawnee. He peered through the tangled underbrush. It was an old man, hiking. *He can't fight back,* thought Tawnee. *I'll eat him.* The great cat hissed softly. The man came closer. Tawnee could hear his labored breathing. He tensed his muscles, the black tip of his tail twitching. As the old man passed, Tawnee sprang from his hiding place. His claws struck the man in the back. His open jaws bit into the man's jacket. The animal's hot breath terrified the old man, who could barely scream faintly, "VIKING! COME!"

From out of the pine trees hobbled an ancient Elkhound. The dog attacked Tawnee, gripping him by his hind leg. Tawnee was forced to release his hold on the old man. He turned with slashing claws to fend off the determined canine. Viking's teeth on Tawnee's leg caused the lion to trip and tumble. The surprised cat broke loose and climbed on a fallen tree trunk, the old dog barking and chasing him.

What is this? thought Tawnee. *I'm leaving.* Tawnee bounded away with Viking scrambling in pursuit.



"Martha, we're back. We brought you some pine cones. I'm scratched up a bit. And, oh yes. We won't be getting rid of our old dog!" ♦

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A Lesson from a Student

Melissa Face

Each December, my senior English students read *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Besides lessons on British tradition, I also try to incorporate something more modern, to illustrate the relevance of the values and morals Dickens included in his novella.

Earlier this fall, I found an article about a woman who went an entire year without spending. She paid her bills, then said goodbye to everything that wasn't essential. Her efforts resulted in a savings of \$23,000 at the end of the year.

My students and I discussed her accomplishment and whether we might consider taking on a similar, shorter challenge. They agreed that they could do without many of their purchases, but at first it might be difficult.

Then I heard a murmuring among students in the back of the room. "What is it? Please, tell me what's on your mind," I encouraged.

One of my seniors spoke up. "Okay, that's great she saved \$23,000, but what did she DO with it?" Erickah asked, "I mean, did she feed the homeless? Give it to charity? The article would be much more compelling if she had made a real contribution with what she saved."

It caught me off guard. I had to pause a few moments before responding.

"I agree with you," I told Erickah.

Without realizing it, my student had given me great advice, a wonderful plan to begin a new calendar year.

When I went home that evening, I told my husband about our class discussion and my modified plan. "I want to go on a six-month spending strike," I told him.

"Anything that isn't essential will have to wait, and everything left over after paying bills will go to charity."

Our family of four loves going out to eat and shopping at our favorite retail stores. We also enjoy weekend getaways, so we knew cutting out all our overnight trips would sting. But we also knew we could put these simple pleasures on hold if we had a fantastic reason for it.

My husband was on board. He liked the idea of getting back to the basics for a while. Even though we intended to proceed with our plan regardless, we asked our older children's opinions before we got started. We presented the idea to Delaney and Evan after dinner. Evan listened intently. When we asked what he thought, he responded, "Well, sure! I already have a great life!" His enthusiasm provided even more reassurance that my husband and I were doing the right thing.

On January 1, we put our plan into action with a few modifications to the no spending rule:

1. **We could go out to eat if we had a coupon or gift card.** We had saved gift cards we received for Christmas and those we



earned from credit card rewards. We planned to use them for special occasions.

2. **There would be no charging unless we had a medical emergency or a necessary car repair.**
3. **We would not purchase any new items unless they were presents for someone else.** We felt this exception was appropriate in the event our children were invited to a birthday party.
4. **When we needed something, we would shop at a local thrift store.**

The early weeks of our new lifestyle were easy. We had two significant snowstorms and no choice but to stay home and enjoy being together. Plus, the children still loved their Christmas gifts, so there was no mention of getting anything new.

A few weeks later, Evan's rec league basketball season began. After his first game, my husband and I realized he needed better shoes. Off to the thrift stores we went. We were only at our second shop when my husband spotted a pair of gray and black Shaq shoes. Aside from the worn laces, they looked great. Evan tried them on and they were a perfect fit. They were only three dollars, and we knew we had better laces at home.

Our kids took to thrift shopping right away. They saw it as a treasure hunt and loved that each thrift store had different items than the one before. We returned to thrift stores as other needs came up, and we used thrift shopping as a reward for good grades and behavior.

My husband and I also noticed our plan forced us to connect more as a couple. We talked about our money when it came in and discussed all our expenses, something we had struggled with in the past. We went in-depth about what was important to us in terms of spending and saving and were making long-term goals we planned to work towards once our 6-month stretch was complete.

We aren't even at the halfway point yet, and so far, we have found our new lifestyle to be rewarding. We spend a lot of time together as a family checking out books from the library, making crafts, cooking meals at home, and playing with toys the kids forgot they had.

My husband and I talk more in the evenings now. We enjoy the simple pleasures of reading a good book or watching a classic movie. We recently decided to continue our plan for an entire year instead of only six months. We had hoped to make a difference with our charitable contribution but had not planned on this action improving our own lives as much as it has.

I'm grateful my family was receptive to this change, and I'm thankful my student, Erickah, shared her comment that day in my English 12 class. I always look forward to teaching this unit on Dickens, but this year I was taught the real lesson on giving. I hope we can give back as much as we have received. ♦

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R. Salomon

Two of My Close Friends

Have you ever heard that saying, "A dog, is a dog, is a dog?"

I used to think that. A dog after all, is just an animal that requires feeding and watering. A dog is just another responsibility. That thinking changed when I relented and got two dogs. Are dogs more than just animals? Believe me, they are. My dogs, Cinnamon and Cuddles, are dear and close friends; they are loyal, loving and friendly, and a source of favorable emotional, physical and social therapy.

Cinnamon is the older of the two. He has short legs, small paws, straight rusty color hair with touches of white and dark brown. He has lots of freckles on his tummy. His eyes are light brown with tints of green. His short, rust colored eyelashes flash when he's barking. He is the stouter and heavier of the two dogs. He is photogenic and moves about with dignity and style.

Cuddles has long legs. His paws are large for his small frame. His hair is fine and curly. He is white all over his little pink body. His eyes are light hazel and his nose a blend of pink and brown. Cuddles is graceful and light on his feet when he walks and jumps. He can jump very high and, unlike Cinnamon, he can run very fast.

Both dogs adore each other and enjoy each other's company. As an example, Cinnamon will be drinking water from his water bowl or eating from his food bowl. Cuddles will come up and drink from the same bowl simultaneously and Cinnamon doesn't mind. They share the same doggie bed and sleep together side by side. After all, what are friends for? They share and watch out for each other's best interests.

Cinnamon and Cuddles have helped me become more responsibly carefree.



They have taught me to enjoy the simplicity and freedom of smiling, laughing and crying. They are "aspirin" for feelings of sadness and loneliness. Their friendship is a soothing medicine to my mind and spirit. Their antics of play and frivolity are stimulants of laughter and much needed fun.

They can sense my distress or frustration and know when I'm angry. They disengage and eventually come around, letting me know it is time to "get over it." They generously share their hugs and their kisses of licks and warm breath. They readily forgive and demonstrate their enjoyment of my company unreservedly. A man by the name of Ben Williams said, "There is no psychiatrist in the world like a puppy licking your face."

Therefore, I do not believe "A dog is a dog, is a dog." Andy Rooney said, "The average dog is a nicer person than the average person." I agree with him, coz Cuddles and Cinnamon are more loyal, trustworthy, and loving, and true to me than some folks I know. Yes, they are dogs, a species of the animal kingdom. More importantly, they are my friends. They are part of my family who care for me. ♦

If the Shoe Fits Elmer Curl

During the depression days of the thirties, shoes were worn until they no longer fit properly.

I am reminded of this fact whenever I visit a doctor complaining about sore feet. He says my foot problems were caused by wearing too-short shoes.

I would get new shoes in the fall just before school started, usually mail ordered from Montgomery Ward. The fitting consisted of standing on the chart in the catalogue and marking the width and length, then using the figure to order. I remember getting a pair one year I really wanted. Even though they didn't fit comfortably, I declared they were okay so I could keep them. It was a big mistake!

Even when my shoes did fit right, they wore out before school was out in the spring. I'd cut cardboard or, if I was lucky, find a piece of old inner tube to make into an insole to cover the hole.

Overshoes were the four-buckle high top variety and were black. All went well until the next year when the shoe size increased and made the overshoe hard to put on. This usually caused a tear in the back of the boot. Then they no longer kept out snow and water. My feet were always cold and wet. One year I got a pair of high-top leather boots with a little pocket on the side to carry a pocket knife.

I was so proud of my boots. I kept the leather oiled, hoping it would keep out water and snow. It didn't.

I didn't have a pair of dress shoes so I'd have to polish the old ones for times when we went out to special occasions. The polish was always a black liquid in a bottle with a dauber for applying the polish to the shoe. By the time I was drafted into the Army, I was experiencing foot trouble. The Army made me special shoes. They were uncomfortable, but eventually I wore regular Army issue shoes. After falling out of several marches due to sore feet, I was reassigned to the motor pool and exempt from marching.

Due to my experiences, I was very fussy about the shoes our children wore when they were small. I believe that is the reason none of them have foot problems today.

Keep a close eye on your children's foot-wear. If the shoe fits—let them wear it, if it doesn't—don't. ♦



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Viewpoint

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Thank Goodness It's Over (Or is It?)

By the time you read this, the midterm elections will be over and the last vote counted (hopefully). There will be winners, losers, and the wailing and the gnashing of teeth. Many polls will be proven wrong (again) while abundant excuses will be made all around.



Media outlets will be carrying bags of cash to the bank while the candidates supporter's wallets will be considerably lighter.

Meanwhile, most of the public is sick and tired and completely burned out about the whole process by the time election day arrives.

Question: is this what elections are supposed to look like and is this election finally over?

The answers to both of these questions is no.

First, I believe the election process, as originally envisioned, was that qualified individual citizens step up to serve in office, then move on with their lives. And second, no it's not over because now we are in the run up to the 2020 elections (groan).

This all reminds me of the hilarious dark satire 1991 movie *What About Bob*. Neurotic mental patient Bob Wiley (Bill Murray) literally drives his egotistical psychiatrist Dr. Leo Marvin (Richard Dreyfous) crazy. At one point in the story after Bob has made himself familiar to Dr Marvin's family, the family is vacationing at their mountain cabin when someone in the family quips, "Where's Bob? Is Bob gone?"

"Bob's never gone!" Dr. Marvin roars. He jerks the front door open to reveal Bob casually leaning up against it, and screams, "Bob's not gone! He's never gone!!! You SEE?!"

Sound familiar? Everywhere you look, there it is (politics) on cable news, smart phone news feeds, football games, awards programs.

The Perfect Storm

The news media's complete obsession with politics has been growing for some time and become especially intense with the advent of social media. For political junkies, politics is a religion complete with priests and priestesses (party leaders and politicians), creeds and ceremonies. Things like 2nd amendment rights, pro-choice, gay rights, free markets, etc, are some of the doctrines one must affirm in order to be in good standing in their particular group. The media is more than happy to excite the passions of these addicts to keep their network ratings up and the ad dollars rolling in, plus social media has enabled everyone and anybody (I do mean *anybody*) to try to take center stage and pretend they have something worth saying. Of course, the lack of face to face contact enabled by this same social media has turned it into a rancorous "back alley" as far as respect and manners go. Who's in office does matter and elections do have consequences, but there is such a thing as balance in this whole process.

Not too many years ago we had to trudge down to the polling place and stand in line to vote. If the weather was bad or someone in the household was

sick, we went anyway. There was no early voting, no mail in ballots. Election day was election day and that was that.

What percentage of eligible voters participated back then you might ask? More than do now in most cases if you care to look it up. Making it easier and/or more convenient to vote hasn't really gotten more people to participate, it's just made elections more expensive to the taxpayers, total hell for the candidates, and longer lasting stress for voters.

Today, candidates aren't facing election day but election month or even election year(s). Campaigns have become more drawn out and longer, far more costly, and a lot more annoying to the public who still have their own lives to live. I believe this is one reason why a lot of people don't bother to vote—they're simply disgusted with the whole process.

Here are three possible remedies to make elections and campaigns more sensible and tolerable.

Briefer and Simpler are both Better

First, term limits at all levels for politicians and party officials would do a lot to change things. Office holders wouldn't be in office long enough to set up their own power structures and/or become corrupted. Party leadership at every level



would see a constant turnover with healthy new blood bringing fresh new ideas. No more iron clad power structures.

Second, establish shorter campaign seasons which would allow those without a lot of financial backing to have a better chance. Ceilings on campaign spending and full disclosure of all campaign contributions would help keep things within reason. The cost of running a national or even a statewide campaign has become absurd and needs to be addressed.

Third, let's go back to the "it's election day, go to your polling place and vote" way of voting. We can make provisions of course for the infirm or others with legitimate reasons why they can't "go vote," but make it so candidates only have to live through one election day, not an election month, and voters only have to suffer through one day too.

— Jerry Bishop



The *Prairie Times* wishes you a Happy Thanksgiving!

We are grateful for your support.



JD. Bishop

Is America Supposed to be a Democracy or a Republic?

I hear people talking about America losing her sense of “Democracy,” which is interesting, because our salute to the flag includes the line, “And to the Republic, for which it stands.”

When I look at what the Founders wanted, I suspect America has evolved into too much of a democracy over time. By that, I mean the general voting population has been given way too much say over political matters.

Basically, the key difference between a democracy and a republic lies in the limits placed on government by the law. Both forms of government allow citizens to vote for politicians to represent their interest and form the government. But in a republic, the constitution or charter of rights protects certain inalienable rights that the government cannot take away, even if a majority of the voters have voted otherwise. In a “pure” democracy, the majority is not restrained in this way and can impose its will on the minority.

Constitutionally, at the beginning, the eligible voting general public voted over who would end up in the legislative “house” at federal and state levels. These elected individuals then decided who our senators would be. The “house” we voted for appointed them. States had different processes in place for selection of their governors while presidents were elected by the vote of the Electoral College. Here again, states each decided how their “electors” were chosen (State’s Rights).

At the start, the United States was a republic. Our swing towards democracy started within the early 20th century with various amendments to the Constitution. I personally support the first fifteen amendments and the 19th amendment, because I believe those rights are foundationally important for constituting a free republic, but I am less sure about some of the others.

In the early days of our Republic, I doubt the general public decided, for example, whether to retain judges or not. In full fairness, what do most of us know about judges at the state level? Unless we have stood before them, or someone has

it in for them enough to launch a massive campaign to get them thrown out, they’re unfamiliar to us.

Also I’m not sure a simple popular vote deciding “moral” issues is always wise. This can pave the way for faulty laws being passed and not easily repealed.

The founders realized the general public can be fickle and not always wise, therefore proposed that new laws were to be measured against the Constitution as the yardstick.

I believe the reason our founders wanted us to be a republic instead of a full democracy had to do with preventing election issues from becoming over-politicized. I think most would agree our current election process is flawed.

One of the problems of a “full” democracy is it’s ability to restrict individual rights. The minute we start imposing a simple “majority rules” consensus on Americans and in the process remove our individual rights, we are on thin ice.

Politicians come and go. Political parties ebb and flow. As far as all elected officials (despite their party affiliations) are concerned, the best thing we can do is urge and encourage them to defend our Constitutional freedoms.

Whenever the current state of affairs troubles me, I strive to keep in mind that the ultimate hope for the future lies not in politicians, political parties, or human made institutions, but instead lies in having faith and following our Creator’s Natural Laws, knowing there are many ways miracles can (and do) happen.

I believe most Americans want what is best for our country. It’s just that many of us differ on what that might be. ♦



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Information to Help in the Implementation of Your Estate Plan

Last month, I wrote about the five documents I believe everyone should have in their estate plan. They include a will or trust, financial and medical powers of attorney, a living will, and medical information (HIPAA) release form.

This month, I want to offer some additional information to make sure your wishes are carried out should you become incapacitated or die.

- You should choose the people to fulfill the roles of agent under your powers of attorney very carefully. They should be people you trust and who are able to handle the responsibility of making these decisions for you. Your selections should not be made lightly or because you don’t want to hurt someone’s feelings by not appointing them.
- Financial and medical powers of attorney should have a successor, or back-up agent, named in the event the first named agent is unable to act. Wills and/or trusts should also have a back-up personal representative and/or trustee.
- Make sure you discuss your wishes with the people you have chosen so they will be in a good position to know what YOUR decision would be if you could make it yourself. Remember, that is the whole reason for creating an estate plan—to make sure decisions are made so that your wishes are met in the event of incapacity or death.

- Once created, the originals of these five key documents should be kept in a safe place, such as a fireproof safe or safety deposit box. If kept in a safety deposit box, make sure someone has permission to access the box in the event you cannot.
- Unsigned copies of these documents can be kept in a place that is readily accessible for review and discussion. The location of these documents should be shared with key family members and friends.
- Those named in the powers of attorney documents should know where they can access signed copies of the documents. They should also know where the originals are located in case they need access to them.
- You should give signed copies of the medical power of attorney, living will and HIPAA form to your health-care providers and physicians.

This is a general outline for estate planning purposes. It does not constitute specific legal advice or create an attorney-client relationship. It is best to consult with a qualified estate planning attorney who can help you with your specific situation.

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*Make sure to tell
them you saw their ad
in the Prairie Times!
Have a Happy
Thanksgiving!*

Elizabeth Christmas Festival!

Sat. Nov. 24 10am-4pm
SEE SANTA, Free Admission

A full day of fun for the whole family! Bring your camera!!

Petting Zoo, Train Rides, Live Pony Carousel Rides
Bungee Trampoline, Face Painting, Balloon Art.

Kids can make ornaments and decorate wreaths with
Santa's Elves while parents select the perfect Christmas
Tree and Taste Wine and Food from Local Artisans!



SAVE \$10 OFF

**FRESH CUT
CHRISTMAS TREE**

**100's of Christmas
Trees to Choose From!**

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