MEMORIES & MUSINGS

By Cheri Sims

Cheri lives, writes and gardens in Charleston.

My goodness, school is starting again, where did the summer go? The neighbor kids are excited for grade school and my big kids are excited for the Illinois State Fair. They have planned a birthday celebration weekend at the fair and plan to attend a couple of the concerts. This will be the first concert they have been to for almost two years and they are excited but I am worried for all of them. It is hard to give them advice about school, travel and shopping in these uncertain times when the news is all over the place and one does not know what to believe. I trust they will all be safe and use common sense.

I, on the other hand, have decided to continue to limit my traveling locally, even though Canada had opened the borders to fully vaccinated United States citizens. If you are looking for a unique place to visit and decide to go north, vaccination documentation and a negative COVID test is required but no quarantine required. At the time of this writing the US has not opened our northern border to Canadians. My Canadian friends tell me that there are mask mandates in most of the Provinces but right now hotel prices are quite low and those who own businesses which depend on tourist trade are thrilled that the border has opened. Sadly the July Quebec Festival de Ete, which Hubby and I have attended twenty-three times, was greatly scaled back for the second year in a row due to the border crossing having been delayed until August. This situation we all find ourselves in may not be how I expected to spend the retirement portion of my life but I am sure glad I have this old house and a blank slate yard to occupy my time.

This is the perfect time for community involvement and I have rejoined the Charleston Chamber of Commerce. One of my most proud business moments was being the first woman elected to the Chamber Board and I look forward to being active again. There has been a resurgence of activity on the Charleston Square and more business on 18th Street and Lincoln Street and I am so happy that these areas are growing. I would encourage you to shop locally and become involved to help your commercial areas.

The fall season doesn't officially start until September 22 but I have seen fall merchandise in the stores this week. I guess it is time to think about fall house cleaning and just how much I will decorate this year. First, I must make green tomato mince and put up green beans for my winter enjoyment. My herb harvest has been plentiful and I am thrilled about that but my squash and pumpkins did not like growing in a huge container so I will have to re-think that for next year. I simply do not have enough sun at this house to grow some of the veggies I like so I hope to find them at the farmer's market.

A good friend just brought a huge bag of grapes from her parent's old grape arbor and I am contemplating surprising my Mom with a grape pie. Mom has a childhood story about begging Granny to make her a grape pie and after much begging Granny made the pie and Mom ate most of it by herself. If I recall correctly she never asked for another grape pie but that has been about seventy years ago (Mom is 95) and I think it is time she has another one. I have never made a grape pie so I have been reading recipes from all my favorite websites, Most of the recipes are similar so I suppose I shall just close my eyes and point to one and commence baking. Sadly these grapes are not the seedless kind so I will endeavor to follow the instructions carefully. Reading the recipe about squeezing the pulp conjured up a memory of my Granny; I can recall her standing at the sink with a white towel squeezing something and the towel was turning purple. I wonder if that was when she was making the pie for Mom?

The grape pie I have made is the seedless green grape pie which we discovered in Napa Valley, California. We had never heard of green grape pie but it sounded good so we tried it. Hubby chose to have his with a slice of cheddar cheese but I opted for just the pie as it came and it was delicious. I have made the pie using a recipe I found at "the kitchn" website and it is close to what I tasted in California. We also tasted a cobbler made with wine grapes but I can state that I was not fond of that grape recipe.

Enjoy your garden bounty!

Green Grape Pie

Makes 9-inch 1 pie. Recipe adapted from MAC & CHEESE

Ingredients

* 2 unbaked pie crusts, such as those from this recipe
* Approximately 2 1/2 pounds green grapes (weighed before stemming)
* 1 cup white sugar, plus extra for top crust
* 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
* 1 lemon, juiced
* 1/4 cup elderberry flower syrup
* 1/4 cup dark honey
* 1/4 teaspoon salt
* 3 tablespoons corn starch
* 2 tablespoons un salted butter, cut into small pieces

Directions

1. Heat the oven to 425°F. Pat one pie crust into a 9-inch pie pan. Place the pie pan into the freezer while you prep the filling.

2. Pluck the grapes off their stems and place them in a large saucepan or pot. Add the sugar, nutmeg, lemon juice, elderberry flower syrup, and honey. Turn the heat to medium and cook, stirring frequently. When the mixture is quite warm to the touch, whisk in the salt and cornstarch. Cook, whisking frequently, until the mixture is boiling and thickened slightly.

3. Remove from the heat and use a slotted spoon to remove the grapes from the liquid. Put all the grapes into the frozen pie crust, then pour in enough of the syrup liquid to fill the pie crust. Leave about 1/2 inch space between the top of the crust and the liquid. Top the grape mixture with the pieces of butter. Press the second disc of pie dough on top of the pan, and crimp the edges together. Cut a few small slits in the top, and sprinkle the top crust generously with sugar.

4. Bake for 30 minutes or until crust is well-browned and filling is bubbly. Let cool completely before serving. *https://www.thekitchn.com/recipe-green-grape-pie-121225*

REAL LIFE WELLNESS

By Dr. Bill Hemmer

Immune System Antibody Basics

I have intentionally stayed away from anything COVID related for the last few months because I think we all need a break from it. But with all of the news lately, I decided to jump back into the fray and explain the basics of antibody formation within your Immune system.

I have been studying the Immune and the inflammation response for over 30 years and it is the key to you living longer, feeling better and looking better. This is how I have come up with my Taming Inflammunity program. But for the purpose of this article, I just want to give you some basic facts so you can make up your own mind about our current situation.

The first basic fact you need to understand is about your ability to create antibodies. Antibodies are the part of your Immune system that attaches itself to nasty stuff, like viruses, then other parts of the Immune system can identify the virus as foreign and allow killer cells to attach themselves to the antibodies to eliminate the virus from your body.

What most people don't understand is most of your antibodies aren't found in your bloodstream most of the time. Specific antibodies are only found in your bloodstream when you actually need them. Your Immune system can produce antibodies for 1000's of different nasty bugs. If all of those antibodies were in your bloodstream all the time, there wouldn't be room for anything else!

Therefore, your body will only produce a specific type of antibody when that bug infects you. In the case of COVID, if you haven't been infected, you will not have specific antibodies for COVID. Thankfully, other antibodies from the other four Corona viruses can step in and bind to COVID viral particles and begin your immune response. Of course, those antibodies aren't as good as the specific antibodies for COVID-19, but all the research shows your body will begin to fight off COVID-19 with your other Coronavirus antibodies from the beginning of the infection.

Now let's say you have been exposed to COVID-19 or have been infected with it. The first thing that happens is your Innate Immune system (the one you are born with), is activated and kills some of the virus. Those viral particles are then swept away into the lymphatic system to be disposed of. Within your lymph nodes are special cells called Memory B and T cells. Those cells recognize this new viral particle as something they have never seen before and begin to make new and specific antibodies for COVID-19.

Once your body begins to make these new COVID 19 antibodies, they will flood your Immune system and attach themselves to all of the COVID-19 viral particles they can find. The more viral particles you have, the more antibodies you will produce. The symptoms of COVID-19 are directly related to the amount of virus you have to fight off. This is what is referred to as your viral load. The higher your viral load, the worse your symptoms will be.

Once your viral load is cleared by your Immune response, your antibody production goes to zero because you don't need to produce them anymore. But your Memory B and T cells specific for COVID-19 antibodies are still alive and well and are always monitoring your lymph fluid to begin to produce COVID-19 antibodies in seconds if you need them.

The bottom line is, if you have been infected, you will have the antibodies you need for the future. If you have not been infected and have taken the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, you will produce antibodies for the spike proteins of the COVID-19 virus.

Legislation passes for more affordable utilities for low income households

On Thursday, July 29, Governor Pritzker signed SB265 into law expanding the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and increasing access to the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP). The PIPP is a companion plan to LIHEAP which addresses utility affordability by allowing qualified participants to pay no more than six percent of their monthly income for electric and gas utility services as well as recieve forgiveness for 1/12 of their total utility debt for each on time monthly payment.

According to Larry Dawson, President and CEO of the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA), "This new law will allow many of our most vulnerable households to afford their utilities and reduce the burden of administering the program by the local Community Action Agencies." Dawson went on to state, "This legislation that was signed into law resulted from many months of negotiations among a number of Community Action Agencies, energy affordability advocates, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity staff and representatives of large regulated utilities."

According to Cathy Feltner, Executive Director of Embarras River Basin Agency (ERBA), "This new law will enable us to serve more households and strengthen the safety net especially during these critical times of the pandemic when more households have sought our assistance." Feltner went on to say, "Our Agency served more than 1,031 households with PIPP and 5,652 households with LIHEAP in FY 2021. We are planning to serve more households as a result of this very critical piece of legislation."

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) that primarily administer the LIHEAP and PIPP programs in Illinois are federally designated to locally address the root causes of poverty. In Illinois there are 35 agencies that administer the LIHEAP and PIPP programs covering all 102 counties of the State with these critical services. Collectively, CAAs in Illinois provide vital services to more than one million individuals on an annual basis. Besides human services, many of the CAAs in Illinois are engaged in community and economic development activities that range from affordable housing creation, housing rehabilitation, supporting local businesses and employing small contractors. These agencies use both federal and state funding to address local poverty issues.

Applications for LIHEAP and PIPP are available starting on September 1, 2021. If you are interested in applying, please call ERBA at 1-800-252-1152.

About IACAA

The Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies is a membership organization which serves as the network for Illinois not-for-profit corporations and units of government which strive to raise the health, education and economic standards of Illinois low income population. Visit th website at www.iacaanet.org.

Coles County announces 4-H Award Champions

Swine Awards

Champion Duroc Barrow - Brantley Combs

Champion Duroc Gilt - Cole Lemmon

Champion Yorkshire Barrow - Cole Lemmon

Champion Black Poland China, Barrow - Nate Shrader

Champion Berkshire, Barrow - Olivia Thoele

Champion Berkshire, Gilt - Ben Cummins

Champion All Other Breeds, Barrow - Arabella Combs

Champion All Other Breeds, Gilt - Karly McKinney

Champion Commercial Barrow - Nate Shrader

Champion Commercial Gilt, Breeding - Amira LeGrand

Champion Market Gilt - Karly McKinney

Champion Breeding - Karly McKinney

Grand Champion Market Hog - Karly McKinney

Goat Awards

Champion Meat Wether Goat - Rylan Spencer

Champion Dairy Wether Goat - Laine Hacker

Champion Junior Dairy Goat - Laine Hacker

Champion Junior Meat Goat - Ashley Updegraff

Champion Pair of Meat Does under 1 year - Ashley Updegraff

Champion Senior Dairy Goat - Laine Hacker

Champion Senior Meat Goat - Ashley Updegraff

Junior Showmanship - Meg Richey

Senior Showmanship - Blair Richey

Champion Pair of Dairy Does under 1 year - Laine Hacker

Beef Awards

Champion All Other Breed Heifer - Ty Nolte

Champion All Other Breed Steer - Colby Metzger

Champion Crossbred Female - Calla Hill

Champion Cow/Calf - Abigail Metzger

Champion Crossbred Steer - Landon Ames

Champion Hereford Steer - Landon Ames

Champion Market Heifer - Kaylin Nolte

Champion Shorthorn Female - Colby Metzger

Champion Shorthorn Steer - Kaylin Nolte

Champion Simmental Female - Calla Hill

Champion Simmental Steer - Cowen Metzger

Grand Champion Breeding Female - Ty Nolte

Grand Champion Market Beef - Cowen Metzger

Grand Champion Rate of Gain - Emma Spencer

Junior Showmanship - Kaylin Nolte

Rabbits Awards

Best of Show Rabbits - Willow Thomas

Grand Champion Buck - Willow Thomas

Grand Champion Doe - Carter Ballinger

Grand Champion Individual Fryer - Hayden Frantz

Grand Champion Meat Pen - Myles Kaufman

Junior Showmanship - Addison Daugherty

Poultry Awards

Champion Pair Rooster & Hen - Gavin Drake

Champion Individual Rooster - Gavin Drake

Champion Market Bird - Lainie Hacker

Champion Overall Market Pen - Matthias Hacker

Champion Cockerel - Lainie Hacker

Champion Hen - Lexi Drake

Champion Individual Pullet - Asher Stewart

Champion Other Domestic Fowl - Jeremiah Stewart

Champion Egg Production - Whitley Dearing

Jr. Showmanship - Lainie Hacker

Sr. Showmanship - Gavin Drake

Sheep Awards

Champion Market Ewe - Mallory Homann

Champion Market Wether - Camden Hill

Grand Champion Market Lamb - Mallory Homann

Champion Ram - Thomas Vandeventer

Champion Pair of Market Lambs - Camden Hill

Champion Rate of Gain - Olivia VonLanken

Champion Ewe - Thomas Vandeventer

Champion Fleece - Thomas Vandeventer

Jr. Showmanship - Thomas Vandeventer

Sr. Showmanship - Blake Homann

Horse Awards

Champion Barrel Race - Addison Daugherty

Champion Costume Class - Kaylin Richey

Champion Flag Race - Ashton Warren

Grand Champion Halter - Ashton Warren

Champion Miniature Horse- 34" & Under - Ashton Warren

Champion Plug Race - Addison Daugherty

Champion Pole Bending - Addison Daugherty

Champion Senior Western Horsemanship - Kaylin Richey

Champion Spoon and Egg - Ashlee Higginbotham

Champion Walk & Trot - Ashton Warren

Champion Western Pleasure 56" & Under - Ashlee Higginbotham

Champion Western Pleasure Over 56" - Kenley Carr

Jr. Showmanship - Ashton Warren

Sr. Showmanship - Kenley Carr