

Columns

Looking forward to warmer weather and gardening

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.
My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.
Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

— Longfellow

I'm trying, Henry. I'm trying to keep my sad heart from repining, but coming day after day, this weather has me feeling melancholy, and I'm sure

I'm not the only one. Three days in a row it started raining right at 5 p.m. as I was leaving Parkland and I was Abe Simpson, muttering to myself, shaking my fist and yelling at the clouds.

It's true that spring sprung on Monday, but apparently mother nature didn't get the memo. Last weekend, the blue devils were scheduled to play a tournament in Casey, but snow forced its cancellation. Track meets, baseball games and softball games have all been postponed. Some will be rescheduled, but most won't. It's always been an issue for spring sports in the Midwest, but that fact doesn't make it

Hook, Line and Sinker

By Tony Hooker



easier to take. I'm ready to enjoy the familiar, easy rhythms of a baseball game, with a warm breeze blowing and the sun shining on my face. Or maybe I'll wander over to catch a softball game. The compact dimensions of the field make for a more frenetic

experience for the most part, unless we get a dominating pitching performance, which I've also always enjoyed.

Ok, so how do we do the opposite of repining? We think of things that make us happy, of course.

The new addition to the

family is growing up big and strong, and just thinking about him makes me smile. Willow the kitten has brought laughter to Hookerville with her naughty antics. She managed to swipe three golf balls from my putting green earlier this week, and I have no idea where she hid them. She has quickly become the queen of the castle, and the min pin and chiweenie, her canine brothers, don't really love it but seem to have begrudgingly accepted her.

Finally, my tomato and pepper starts are doing well. I've transplanted them into bigger containers, and I'll probably have to do it one more time

before I plant them in their permanent homes in mid-May. I'm looking forward to a box garden for the first time. I'm just too old and too fat to crawl around on the ground, so if I can't get to the garden's level, I'll bring the garden's level to me. If I look hard enough, I can always find the true blessings in my life. I have my family, my church family and my work family to sustain me and for that I'm grateful. And what's that golden orb that just shined it's light through the window, however briefly? Welcome back, brother sun. Please stay a bit longer, next time.

Learning about (and enjoying) Texas brisket

I recently went to a wedding in Ft. Worth, Texas. If you've never been to Texas, it turned out to be everything you might expect... longhorn cattle, lots of people wearing cowboy hats, cowboy boots, belt buckles as large as a pie plates, and many Texans appeared to be driving huge pickup trucks with cow catchers on the front grille. People from Texas seemed to be extraordinarily polite with many men hurrying to open doors for ladies and saying words like "Howdy" and "Ma'am."

The bride at this wedding was originally from Illinois, so there were a lot of Illinoisans in attendance. During the festivities that led up to the wedding, I got into a discussion with one such Illinoisan named Deb. When I asked Deb how she was enjoying Texas, she answered that she liked Texas, but one of the main reasons she was excited to come to Texas, (in addition to the

wedding) was the opportunity to eat some real Texas brisket. She had heard from her Texas relatives about how the taste of real Texas brisket could not be beat and Deb was dying to try out some of that Texas brisket.

Ever since she arrived in Texas, Deb has been itching for a taste of Texas brisket. However, at every pre-wedding event (Welcome meal for out-of-town guests, family get-togethers, rehearsal dinner, etc.) Deb was served everything but brisket. Deb told me, "I've had tacos, Mac n' cheese, pulled pork, chicken, and for heaven's sake I was even served meat balls from Walmart...but NO BRISKET!"

For the uneducated (me), the Internet has taught me that Texas brisket is different from most brisket, because, unlike other briskets, Texas brisket includes the entire cut from the breast section of a cow that weighs anywhere

from 8-to-12 plus pounds. Pitmasters smoke this section of beef at "low and slow" temperatures (225F to 250F) via indirect heat for eight or more hours for classic BBQ brisket-meat that is tender and supposedly infused with a smoky flavor so delicious there's no need for barbeque sauce.

But don't despair, for this story has a happy ending. In the days leading up to the wedding, Deb was guaranteed that brisket would be part of the buffet that would be served following the wedding ceremony. Deb could not wait for the event. She began to fast for 24 hours prior to the wedding, in order to leave plenty of room for the anticipated brisket. I can neither confirm nor deny that witnesses observed Deb drooling during the wedding ceremony, but I do know that when Deb got into the buffet line, she pointedly refused to crowd her plate with non-essentials

So there I was

By Pete Buckley



like salad or vegetables. No, Deb was saving all available space on her plate for the Texas brisket. That Texas brisket, the legendary Texas beef that Deb had been salivating for these past three days, was the very last item in the buffet line, and a server was cutting and placing one-to-two pieces of this mana-from-heaven onto each person's plate. When Deb reached the brisket station, the server place two measly pieces of meat on her plate. Deb didn't move. She didn't utter a single word. Instead, she simply stared at the server while continuing to hold out

her plate. The brisket server may not have known the history of Deb and her failed quest to be served Texas brisket; but I do know that this carving station server took one look at Deb's face and he immediately sensed something. I'm not exactly sure what the server sensed, but he suddenly began piling Deb's plate high with pieces of Texas brisket.

Finally, after three days of waiting, Deb was able to sink her teeth into real Texas brisket. When she was asked if the Texas brisket lived up to all the hype, Deb responded with a resounding, "Ah, it was okay."

Brisket is cut from the breast section of a cow, just below the chuck; there are two briskets per carcass, and each brisket consists of two distinct areas separated by a layer of fat. The point (also called the deckle) is the richly marbled, fatty section of meat that sits on top of what is called the flat, the bigger, leaner bottom section, which also has a more even thickness.

When you're talking Texas brisket, you're talking about a full, packer brisket (i.e. the entire cut, with both point and flat sections intact) that weighs anywhere from 8 to 12-plus pounds. This is what pitmasters smoke at "low and slow" temperatures (225°F to 250°F) via indirect heat for 8 or more hours for classic BBQ brisket-meat that is tender and imbued with a smoky flavor so delicious there's no need for barbecue sauce (although that never hurts).

This shrimp recipe popular at potluck get-togethers

When I am attending a potluck, this shrimp recipe is the one that I am most often asked to bring. The name "Spitfire Shrimp" is a bit misleading. The shrimp is loaded with a zesty flavor but most people don't find it to be really "hot." This is best served hot, but still good as it starts to cool down to lukewarm.

A friend told me she likes to cut up the leftover shrimp to add to her salad. The first time I had it was at a party, and the hostess had each shrimp sitting on a small piece of thin sliced bread. It looked very festive and made it easy to pick up. I usually serve it on a

platter with toothpicks handy.

Spitfire Shrimp

Seasoning:
juice from 1 lime
1/4 cup cayenne pepper sauce (I use Frank's)
1 Tbsp cumin
1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
1 Tbsp crab boil seasoning
Shrimp:
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 shallots, finely chopped
1 Tbsp olive oil
2 Tbsp butter
2 lbs jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined
12-15 blades fresh chives, chopped

Combine lime juice, hot sauce, cumin, pepper flakes and crab boil seasoning in a small bowl. Set aside. Preheat a large skillet over med-high

heat. Add olive oil and butter. Quickly saute garlic and shallots for 1 minute. Add shrimp, cook for approximately five minutes, tossing frequently.

Remove shrimp from pan, keep warm. Add the reserved sauce and heat through. Place shrimp back in the pan, quickly toss. Remove the pan from heat. Add chives and toss.

I do not recommend using Tabasco in this recipe. Tabasco and Frank's hot sauce are both hot sauces but they are not the same. Tabasco sauce is made with tabasco peppers while Frank's sauce is made with cayenne peppers. Tabasco is spicier, while Franks has

Let's Cook

By Linda Hoskins



a more peppery flavor. A little Tabasco goes a long way, and as this recipe calls for a 1/4 cup, most people may find it too hot.

Please do not overcook the shrimp, it will get tough and chewy. Raw shrimp tends

to look almost gray in color and is translucent. When the shrimp is done, it will be white with pops of pink or red, and will be opaque.

Watch the thickest part of the shrimp; when it turns from translucent to opaque, it's

done. Resist the urge to cook another couple minutes! If you are not sure, you can use a thermometer; cooked shrimp should be 145 degrees F.

You could also use the "touch" test. Raw or undercooked shrimp feels springy, bouncy and slimy. Overcooked shrimp feels tough and rubbery. You want your shrimp to fall in between, with a soft and tender texture.

If you have a recipe to share, please send to letscook!@heraldpubs.com or mail to Mascoutah Herald, PO Box C, Mascoutah IL 62258. Thanks and Happy Cooking!

Ignorance versus stupidity

I have been describing the difference between these two words for quite a while, but never has it been more important to understand this difference than when I discuss our current healthcare environment.

Simply put, ignorance is when you just have no idea a concept or information exists. A good example is protein gets converted to sugar before it is burned by your cells for fuel. This new information has only been discovered over the last decade and has never been highlighted in any of my many seminars, books and lectures I have attended, until recently. This information is important because it changes dietary

recommendations for almost everyone!

Our current medical model isn't about empowering you with new and important information like that so you can take better care of yourself, it's about decreasing symptoms while leaving the underlying disease in place. What if you understood how to reverse and eliminate your underlying chronic disease, would you live a better quality of life?

I have spent my entire 35-year career digging into health literature to better understand the easiest, most effective way to build a healthy lifestyle so I could teach my patients how to stay out of our current medical system. As we all know,

Real Life Wellness

By Dr. Bill Hemmer



once you get sucked into our current model, it is very difficult to break free from it.

It is my belief that if everyone reading this knew how to build and maintain a healthy lifestyle, they would do their best to follow through and do it. But the odds are definitely stacked against you. If you

attempt to learn more about how to live a healthy lifestyle, you must buy something.

Facebook, email, Twitter and everything else on the internet has great marketing and sounds great, but when you finally bite the bullet and spend your hard-earned money, it is usually just re-hashing things

you already knew, and you become even more discouraged.

So, the collective ignorance of basic healthy lifestyle concepts is not our fault. There has been no simple consensus of how to build and maintain a healthy lifestyle for the last 70 years. Every now and again, books and lectures pop up which teach basic foundational concepts that can be successfully used by everyone, but they are usually a flash in the pan and become drowned out by billions of dollars being spent promoting our current symptom-based model.

Stupidity, on the other hand, is when you know something, and you ignore what you know and do the opposite any-

way. The best example for me is I know sugar is bad for me, but I will still find myself eating a cookie or a piece of pie on occasion. I know better, but I justify it somehow. That's just plain stupid.

We all live in the same boat. Being ignorant isn't a crime. Our current medical system is all about sickness care not health care. I write my articles to help you learn more about building your healthy lifestyle so you can become less ignorant about how you can help yourself, no strings attached.

Next week, I'm going to begin a discussion of the 7 most common problems people experience and how to take care of them yourself.