

Columns

Use ‘circus peanuts’ to make this holiday salad

Last week I read a news story which announced that the board of the “Kellogg” Company has decided to divide the vast empire into three different companies in order to be able to focus individually on each line of products. Apparently it has become too hard to manage the growth of cereal, snacks and plant based products.

It looks to me like they have done a pretty good job since W.K. Kellogg started his cereal company named “Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Company” in 1906. The Kellogg brothers actually began business around 1894 but a change in family dynamics became the

reason for the first company split.

The history of the Kellogg family and their most famous product, corn flakes, is quite interesting and would take more time than this column allows to detail all the facts but suffice is to say that it was quite a successful idea to create a product originally meant to provide an improved vegetarian diet for the Battle Creek Sanitarium patients of which W.K. Kellogg was most interested. Wikipedia has a detailed history should you find this interesting and want to learn more about the Kellogg’s ([https://en.wikipedia.org/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kellogg%27s)

[wiki/Kellogg%27s\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kellogg%27s)

The “Kellogg” logo is probably one of the most recognized advertising logos in the world and I am not sure just how they plan to reinvent the logo for all three companies but if they don’t use the well recognized red “Kellogg” name on all the products I would think that some of the products might get lost in the shuffle.

The “Kellogg” brand had acquired many smaller companies over the years, one being the former “Sunshine Biscuits” cookie and cracker company where my dad worked for many years. Only a few of the “Sunshine Biscuit” products still remain today but the most

Memories and Musings

By Cheri Sims



recognizable is the “Cheez-It” cheese crackers. I would not even venture to guess how many hundreds of cases of “Cheez-it’s” my dad sold or how many boxes our family ate over the years (I have a box in the snack drawer right now) but it was and is a great snack cracker and I am not surprised that “Kellogg” retained the product when the “Sunshine Biscuit” company was sold over and over again. “Kellogg” acquired it when they bought the “Keebler” company. “Keebler” retained the red “Cheez-it” box with the little Sunshine baker logo; “Kellogg” removed the baker but the red box remains. It is mind boggling at how many famous food brands Kellogg owns or owned at one time: Famous Amos, Keebler, Pringles, Murray’s, Kashi and Eggo are just a few but there are many more we would recognize.

“Tony the Tiger,” one of the most recognizable advertising mascots, does not seem to be used as much as it used to be but I can recall TV iconic advertising gimmicks back as far as the 1950s. My favorite was the “Hamms” beer bears and

I didn’t even know what beer was but I sure loved the commercials. “Speedy” the Alks Seltzer boy came in a close second for me, and who could forget “Farfel,” the “Nestles” dog? Did you spell out N E S T L E S to the tune of the commercial song?

The “Rice Krispies” kids and the dancing “Kool-Aid” pitcher were also favorites, and yes, I asked my mom for those products. My son asked for everything he saw advertised with “Snoopy” on the commercial or any box with the picture on it, and more recently “Cadbury” candy made the “Cadbury” Easter bunny famous, but the most notable would have to be the “Energizer” bunny and don’t forget the “Just Born” candy company who makes the famous “Peeps.”

Speaking of Easter, I finally found circus peanuts at “Rural King;” I should have known to look there first but I checked every store I have been in for the last couple weeks. I loved “Circus Peanuts” when I was a kid and my parents always bought them at Easter. If you don’t know about Circus Peanuts they are not nuts but an orange, peanut-shaped marsh-

mallow candy which is banana flavored and was all the rage from the 1940s to the 1960s.

“eater.com” states: “When were they invented? Created in the 1800s, Circus Peanuts are one of the original “penny candies” and remained popular through the 1960s. Penny candies — dubbed so because of their 1-cent price tag — were individually wrapped hard or chewy candies that were sold by the piece at soda fountain, candy, and 5- and 10-cent variety stores.”

Then sometime in my childhood, Mom found a “Circus Peanut” salad recipe and for many years I would only eat “Circus Peanut” salad and ham for Easter dinner. I will be making it this year too.

Try it, you might like it!

Circus Peanut Salad

2 (3 ounce) packages orange gelatin, I used sugar free

2 cups hot water

30 marshmallows, circus peanuts candy

20 ounces crushed pineapple, drained, save juice

Put gelatin and circus peanuts in a bowl.

Add hot water and stir well until completely mixed.

Pour pineapple juice into a measuring cup and add cold water to make 2 cups of liquid.

Add to gelatin mixture.

Refrigerate until partially set.

Fold in drained pineapple and Cool Whip.

Chill.

<https://www.food.com/recipe/circus-peanut-salad-211343>

When to view Mercury

Last week, we talked about Mercury entering the evening sky. Mercury will make three excursions into the evening sky this year but not all are equal. It all depends on the angle of Mercury’s orbit compared to the horizon and it’s not the same each time. If the plane of the orbit nearly parallels the horizon, there isn’t much to see.

As we head into April, we’ll experience the best evening view of Mercury for all of 2023. The planet will appear starlike, but it will gain altitude each day, appearing to approach the brighter Venus, higher in the sky. Look to the lower right of Venus. Though

In the night sky

By David Leake



Mercury isn’t super-bright, there are no other bright stars in the area. Mercury will be farthest separated from the Sun in mid-April. Take time to check it out.

The rumor is, the Polish doctor Copernicus, who is given credit for the model placing the Sun (and not the Earth) at

the center of the solar system, never saw Mercury. Don’t be like Copernicus!

David Leake is retired Planetarium Director of Staer-keel Planetarium at Parkland College and co-founder of the Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society, Inc.

Missed flight leads to all-day airport adventure

We’ve had six presidents since the last time I flew commercially, so I had forgotten how adventuresome it can be. I’m not eager to do it again soon.

I think the guy who designed the modern passenger jet must have opened a can of sardines one day, looked inside and said, “Now that’s what an airplane cabin should look like.”

Pandemic, schmandemic, let’s squeeze 180 strangers together. Some people won’t even shake hands anymore, but you put them on an airplane and they’re attached like ticks on a hound. All the comfort of a cattle car with the convenience of a tooth extraction.

Communal risks aside, the real adventure was on the return flight. The airline recommended arriving three hours early since Spring Break is a

busy travel time and long lines were expected at the security checkpoint. So, I left the hotel at 5:30 a.m. to make an 8:30 flight.

I couldn’t get a direct flight to St. Louis, so there was a 40-minute layover in Las Vegas. That’s great, I thought; I won’t have time to lose all my money in Sin City.

But the plane I came three hours early for was 40 minutes late. I wouldn’t have time to make my connecting flight.

The airline computer saw my predicament and I was summoned to the counter. The problem was that there were no later flights for my destination. There were flights on other carriers, but Not-best Airlines couldn’t (or wouldn’t) apply the simplest fix.

Instead, they re-routed my trip. The computer looked at all the available choices and

Ramblin’ Man

By David Porter



created a new map, apparently without the assistance of a globe.

The new plan put me in four different timezones in four states. They flew me over my timezone to Tampa, Fla., then north to St. Louis turning a five-hour flight into a 20-hour adventure.

They didn’t provide any meals for the inconvenience, but they had snacks on the plane. They also gave me a \$200

voucher so I can experience the fiasco again sometime.

So you can enjoy it, too, I’ve come up with the Not-best Airlines home edition. Here’s how it works.

You tell five friends to come to your house at 4 p.m. for a 7 o’clock party. Have them wait in the garage for the first three hours. For extra authenticity, have your dog walk around them a couple of times to sniff their clothes.

Then have them climb into your car making sure you leave the center seat till last so someone will have to get out to let the last person in.

Tell them you’ll give them a snack but wait an hour and a half before you actually give them any.

For the snacks, use sandwich bags and place in each one a generic, tiny, cheese cracker and two chips of dehydrated bagel. You can use a brand-name cheese cracker, but rub off all the flavor first. Fill the rest of the bag with miniature pretzels. Offer them a soda but split one can per three people.

Ask them where they want to go and determine a destination. Then drive in the opposite direction for an hour and a half. Then pick another direction other than the one you need and drive for another

hour. Wait three hours at each stop but don’t let them leave the car.

When we finally made it to St. Louis, the crew told us to “hustle” out so they could get to their hotel rooms. I turned to the parasitic passenger next to me and said, “That’s rich. They delayed my trip by 15 hours, and now they want ME to hustle?”

Maybe next time I should book a better airline. But I have that voucher to use. With any luck, I can tour the entire continental United States on one ticket, at least from the inside of each airport.

© Copyright 2023 by David Porter who can be reached at porter@ramblinman.us. The voucher math works out to \$13.33 per hour of inconvenience. I could make more flipping burgers.

The impact of a gap year on our community’s future

Dr. Josh Bullock
Lake Land College President

The future of our region depends on our ability to attract and train a highly skilled workforce and sustain progressive, family-friendly communities. Our success depends on our young adults seeking out education and training to fill the labor shortages we are experiencing in critical areas such as healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and information technology, to name a few.

However, only half of the high school students in our area are going to college or attending a post-secondary institution, according to the average of data collected during the past four years from the National Student Clearinghouse.

As we moved through the pandemic, society was accepting of the fact that young adults

needed a gap year and predicted they would enroll in college shortly thereafter. However, this is not coming to fruition and there is growing concern about what this means for our country’s future.

National studies predict slower economic growth, labor shortages, poor health and a lower tax base as potential outcomes of a society with lower educational attainment. Locally, we could feel the impact directly as those with only a high school diploma pay 31% less in local, state and federal taxes than people with associate degrees, according to a recent study by College Board.

Our interest in this data goes beyond a desire to boost Lake Land’s enrollment. Our success is directly linked to the success of the communities we serve. We are com-

mitted to providing options for residents to obtain an education and training beyond high school so they can earn life-sustaining wages, support their families and have the cushion of benefits and paid time off. We are committed to creating a highly-skilled workforce to fuel economic growth.

As part of our Strategic Plan, we set out to talk directly to the high school students in our district to identify potential roadblocks or barriers to attending college. This past fall, faculty and staff facilitated 24 focus groups within four in-district high schools and four Pathways programs. They talked with 223 high school students who shared their thoughts and experiences related to planning for the future. Of that total, 143 were planning to attend college, while 80 were not.

The data revealed several themes that mirrored national studies. Students are concerned about cost and the value of college. One student said, “Do I even want to go to college and then waste the time and money? When you do it, and then not ever really need it.”

They are anxious about the future and have a fear of the unknown. Some in the group who were not planning to attend college reported having negative feelings related to school in general.

In both groups, students did not realize that Lake Land College offers trade programs such as welding, automotive and construction. They identified additional barriers to higher education such as reliable transportation, safety, gas, housing and feeling un-



prepared for college.

While they reported parents as being the most influential persons in their decision to attend college, they were definitely impacted by other family members, siblings, educators, friends, social media influencers, teachers, counselors and coaches.

The study provides valuable information for Lake Land College and our communities to create a future in which our young people see the value in education and training after high school. Kudos to creative programs such as Leaders Innovating for Tomorrow (LIFT) in Mattoon and the Effingham Regional Career Academy (ERCA) in Effingham, which focus on pathways for high school students to explore careers and develop foundational skills in critical workforce sectors for our region. These types of collaborative partnerships between public and private entities are critical to the future success of our communities. How can we work together to continue breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for the youth in our area to thrive?