

# Columns

## What we have here is a failure to communicate

Communication is such a funny thing. Sometimes, indirect communication is understood as a polite directive while direct communication is sometimes interpreted to mean the opposite of what was conveyed. It's "reading between the lines."

For instance, if my wife says, "Could you turn the volume down?," she's not asking me if I'm physically capable of operating the remote although that, literally, is what she did. She's requesting that I turn down the volume but trying to be nice about it.

On the other hand, if someone says, "I don't mean for this to sound mean," it's probably going to sound mean. "I don't mean to offend you," "don't take this the wrong way" and

"I'm not upset about this, but" are all setups.

Navigating the "she said, he heard" waters can be a challenge. We constantly have to think about how the other person is going to interpret what we say even when the conversation seems direct.

Just tonight, my wife said she was going to prepare a snack and was going to put hers on a paper plate. She noted that the last time, I wanted mine in a bowl. I said, "A paper plate is fine." She said, "I'll put it in a bowl."

Well, a bowl is fine, too.

We're both analyzing the discussion. I know that a bowl dirties a dish, which she doesn't like after the dishwasher has already run. She knows I'm acquiescing to a

paper plate to avoid dirtying a dish, but she also knows that I'm going to use a fork, which dirties a dish, anyway, so I might as well use a bowl, too. Reading between the lines.

Sometimes, I can't decide whether a direct or indirect statement is best, so I just don't say anything. That can have its pitfalls, too, as we learned earlier today.

We were in the big city, and she wanted to stop by her favorite big box store because she had a coupon. She always has a coupon.

She baited me by saying they were having a clearance sale. I love the clearance aisle like she loves a coupon.

As we approached the automatic doors, she suggested that we could save time by

### Ramblin' Man

By David Porter



splitting up. That means she's going to look at girl stuff and doesn't need my snarky commentary. Plus, she doesn't want to spend an hour watching me play with every toy in the clearance aisle.

The clearance sale was underwhelming, so I found a chair in the patio department and sat down. I lowered my cap and closed my eyes.

I thought about texting her to let her know where she could find me, but I knew if I said "no rush," she would interpret that as "I'm ready to go."

I figured if I stayed in one place, she would find me.

Meanwhile, she found what she wanted in five minutes and went to check out. She didn't want to rush me, so she decid-

ed that she would stay in one place so I'd find her if I was ready to go and went looking for her.

So, there we were, both staying in one place and not wanting to rush the other. For an hour. Look at all the time we saved by splitting up.

She might have come looking for me sooner but took a phone call. My time wasn't really wasted because I got a nice nap in. But next time, I think we need to work out a better communication plan.

© Copyright 2023 by David Porter who can be reached at [porter@ramblinman.us](mailto:porter@ramblinman.us). And to all the people snickering at the old man asleep on the patio furniture, I am way too old to care.

## Recipes for BBQ brisket and blueberry lemonade

This week I have a recipe for the grill that calls for beef brisket. My brother and his wife fixed this for us over 40 years ago, and we have been making it at least once a summer ever since. Brisket is generally a tough piece of meat and needs to be slowly roasted or smoked to produce a tender cut with loads of flavor. This recipe uses neither method.

### Apple Glazed Brisket

4 - 4 1/2 lb beef brisket (or smaller)  
1 onion, peeled and quartered  
1/3 cup white wine  
3 Tbsp yellow mustard  
3/4 tsp curry  
1 garlic clove, cut in half  
10 whole cloves  
10 oz apple jelly  
3 Tbsp minced green onion  
1 1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp pepper

Place the brisket in a large pot with enough water to cover. Add onion quarters, garlic and cloves. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 2 1/2 to 3 hours. (make sure the brisket is covered with water the entire cooking time).

In a small saucepan, mix jelly, wine, green onions, mustard, curry, salt and pepper. Heat over low heat, stirring occasionally until the jelly is melted.

Place brisket on grill, baste occasionally with jelly mixture while heating through, about 30 minutes.

A note about this recipe: sometimes the brisket comes with a thick slab of fat. I usually slice off much of it, but leave

### Let's Cook

By Linda Hoskins



some on. Also, please note the recipe calls for whole cloves, not ground cloves. If you don't have whole cloves on hand but you have the ground cloves, you could try using 3/4 tsp ground cloves for every teaspoon of whole cloves. If you have neither, try using allspice, or use a 50/50 blend of cinnamon and nutmeg. I found this information online and have

not personally tried any of these.

I like to make old fashioned scalloped potatoes to go with the Apple Glazed Brisket.

Recently, we were gone on vacation, and one evening at our hotel bar, I tried a drink that was new to me. It was so delicious and a perfect drink for hot summer nights. After getting home, I tried making it

myself, and it was just as good. Sadly, I don't remember what the hotel called it, so I am just making up the very uncreative name for the drink. This drink calls for vodka, but I made it without the vodka for a guest, and she raved about the refreshing flavor! You definitely want to use basil in this drink — it adds a great flavor!

### Blueberry Lemonade

blueberry vodka  
pink lemonade  
fresh blueberries  
fresh basil leaves  
slice lemon, optional

In a tall drinking glass, pour 1 shot blueberry vodka. Add some ice cubes, top off with pink lemonade. Throw in a few blueberries and some

muddled basil leaves. Give it a quick stir. If desired, garnish with a slice of lemon.

Any bartender will tell you the correct way to muddle the basil is to place it in an empty glass, then gently muddle before adding other ingredients. I prefer to lay the basil on a small plate and lightly crush it, then add to drink. If you don't have a muddler, you can use a wooden spoon or the back of a fork to lightly crush, but be careful to not tear it. Or you could even rub the basil gently to release the oils.

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

## BBQ varies greatly across North America

It is summer and time for picnics, cook-outs and BBQ and I am craving the smoked meat Hubby used to make in our smoker. We did not have a designated smoke house or one of the big professional BBQ rigs but we bought a nice-sized meat smoker and Hubby tried to make smoked meat like we would have when visiting Canada or some of our western states.

Canadian smoked meat is beef brisket with special spices, in particular coriander, cayenne pepper and dill and one can purchase "Montreal Steak Seasoning" but it contains too much dill for our taste.

The actual smoked meat one buys in restaurants, in Quebec, does not have that overpowering dill flavor. Pastrami and Canadian smoked meat are similar but pastrami is made from the fattier part of the brisket while smoked meat uses the whole brisket and is usually leaner.

In the USA, in the western states, beef, pork and chicken are all smoked or grilled and usually rubbed with a dry rub or marinated and then placed in a smoker or grill or cooked over hardwood or charcoal.

Most western meats are not called smoked meat but referred to as BBQ. Canadian BBQ is much different than what we here in the USA deemed BBQ. Most Canadian BBQ is a thin liquid like gravy as opposed to the thick BBQ sauce we all know. Actually, I would compare Canadian BBQ sauce to those we have had in some of our southern states; although southern BBQ tends to

### Memories and Musings

By Cheri Sims



have too much vinegar for our liking.

As we traveled the two countries we picked up recipes we liked and when Hubby decided to try his hand at smoking meat he created his own recipe which ended up being similar to all those we liked. He would smoke the meat using the spices we liked and then we would add the brand of BBQ sauce we preferred or just ate the meat without BBQ sauce. We tried our hand at homemade BBQ sauce but could never get the spices to our liking.

We were both particularly fond of "KC Masterpiece" when they had a smokehouse in Saint Louis and my favorite dish was their smoked chicken. We could never get any of the waiters to give us a hint of the spices used in the chicken but I decided that it was tarragon and lemon so I would marinate chicken quarters, over night, with tarragon, lemon, onion powder, salt, pepper and garlic and then Hubby would put them in the smoker above the beef and pork and the chicken turned out as close as I could come without an official recipe.

Eventually, KC Masterpiece came out with a lemon and

cracked pepper sauce and I had hoped it would taste like the chicken I had at the smoke house but was sadly disappointed so I would just add a small amount of original hickory KC masterpiece sauce to my chicken.

We were both quite fond of Wyoming BBQ but neither of us could figure out why we liked it so much until an old-timer at one of the BBQ joints informed us that they used mostly mesquite wood and that information changed the way we smoked meat.

Mesquite wood has a stronger flavor and seems to pair better with brisket, with or without BBQ sauce. Canadian smoked meat is usually smoked with a combination of hickory, apple and cherry wood which lend less smoke flavor than the mesquite.

Most southern states use predominantly hickory wood and you might note that I have not mentioned the eastern states in our BBQ or smoked meat travels and that is because we tried it a couple times in Massachusetts and Delaware and then never again out east. The east and west coasts are known for fish and seafood so why not indulge when you are there?

I am defiantly not a master griller or a griller of any kind; I am afraid of gas or charcoal fires so I have stayed away from them but I am craving the flavor so I have been tempted to buy an electric smoker. I have been researching them and they have come a long way since they first appeared on the grilling scene and it looks like they might have made it easier for my level of ability.

My son said why bother; just bake it in the oven, but I do not want the wood smoke flavor in the oven because one cannot get rid of it once it is embedded in the oven.

Have you even had BBQ deviled eggs? If not then I suggest you try them. They were on the menu in a BBQ diner in Montana and even though Hubby was not fond of deviled

eggs I decided to try them and I was hooked.

Just make your normal deviled egg mixture and add a couple tablespoons of BBQ sauce before filing the egg halves. They are really good this way.

We were also surprised that many of the BBQ eateries in Montana and Wyoming put BBQ sauce on French fries. I, however, thought that BBQ meat and fries was a bit too rich with sauce but Hubby liked that combination.

I usually eat my fries with nothing else on them when eating BBQ; for some reason I don't even care for catsup on fries when eating BBQ sauce.

We also noticed that many BBQ diners do not serve dessert; our only theory was that since the sauce is so sweet

most people don't want dessert.

That was until we ate at "Pig Tales" in Flower Branch, Ga. We were in hog heaven after having smoked brisket, sweet potato fries and baked potato salad and then the waitress offered us banana pudding and key lime pie, which just happens to have been both of our favorite desserts.

Hubby decided his banana pudding was the best he had ever eaten and I was so happy with the key lime pie that I ordered a piece to go and kept it in the cooler for the next day.

Writing this trip down memory lane has just about made me decide to buy a smoker and I am certainly going to have to make a key lime pie.

Happy summer picnicking!

## Check out the Milky Way this weekend

If you happen to be out walking the dog tomorrow morning before sunrise, look for the planet Jupiter in the east. Jupiter rises at 3 a.m. just to the left of due east, followed a half hour later by a very thin waning crescent Moon.

The Moon is "new" Sunday, meaning it sits between the Sun and the Earth. It also means we'll start seeing a wonderful crescent Moon probably Tuesday evening in the western sky after sunset.

Take advantage of the Moonless sky this weekend to see some fainter things in our evening sky. The summer Milky Way rises in the east after 10 p.m. and runs along the

horizon from north to south. The darker sky you have, the easier it is to see. When you look into the Milky Way you're looking into the thickest part of our home galaxy, which is shaped a lot like a frisbee with our solar system roughly 2/3 of the way from the center to the outer edge. The glowing

### In the night sky

By David Leake



"clouds" you are seeing are star clouds. Try using your binoculars or a small telescope.

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