

Starting my campaign early for People magazine’s annual honor

I want to get an early start on my campaign. No, I’m not running for president again although I ought to. I’m pretty sure I could do a better job than the frontrunners if I did nothing at all.

But, no, I’m kicking off my campaign for People magazine’s Sexiest Man Alive. I’ve been snubbed every year since the list began in 1985 with Mel Gibson. He won’t be making the list again since his anti-Semitic rant and making a death threat toward his girlfriend, which was recorded. Nothing sexy about that.

Johnny Depp is on the list twice. I’m pretty sure his well-publicized divorce has squelched his eligibility going forward. Besides, he’s just weird.

Nick Nolte made the pick in 1992. Nick Nolte? C’mon! Who makes this call?

Looking over the past winners, scoping out the competition, I see that there are several who have not lived up to our expectations. Maybe I can win by default after all the others fall from grace.

Several have won the title twice. Surely, they could get to me if they limited people to one win a piece.

But it brings up the question, if they were the Sexiest Man Alive one year and then again a few years later, were they not sexy in between? Other people became more sexy and then less sexy?

There’s an argument for my campaign: I’m sexy all the time.

In this day and age, though, the word “sexy” is becoming politically incorrect. Can you even call somebody sexy anymore?

If you call yourself sexy, you sound arrogant. I can live with that. But if you call somebody else sexy, then you’re being sexist. It just feels offensive in 2023.

I don’t care because I deserve it. It would be my luck, though, that the judges finally come to their senses and dub me to be the Sexiest Man Alive the same year the word gets outlawed by the snowflakes.

People will get offended over just about anything. Some don’t like being called snowflakes. That’s irony.

Snowflakes used to all be

Ramblin’ Man

By David Porter



liberals. It was a favorite term by conservatives who railed against political correctness. Then a bunch of them started getting their noses out of joint and became the snowflakes.

Now it’s just name-calling, and name-calling is bad unless you agree with the name-calling or you’re the one doing the name-calling. Then it’s OK.

But, I digress. I don’t know who the judges are or where to write a letter, but if you feel inclined to help me out, maybe you know who to contact. It needs to happen this year or maybe next year. I don’t know how much longer I can keep up with this constant sexiness. It’s exhausting.

Now, I’m secure enough in my manhood to acknowl-

edge that some of the people who have made the list are well-deserving. I mean, really, if they gave it to George Clooney every year for the past 35 years, who could argue with that?

But they don’t. They mix it up. So, as long as they’re mixing it up, I still have a chance. In the words of Denny Crane, “Hope springs a kernel.” I can’t win Humblest Man Alive. Not now, anyway.

© Copyright 2023 by David Porter who can be reached at porter@ramblin-man.us. Vote for me for Sexiest Man Alive. Or president. You choose.

Its been a week for trying new recipes

This past week I got in a mood to try new recipes and I tried five of them. One of them was for chicken kabobs which turned out to be “meh.” We thought it seemed rather bland, like I hadn’t marinated the chicken long enough. But I did follow instructions and marinated the meat for three to four hours.

Two days later, I found a small dish with a dark liquid in my refrigerator. Took me a couple minutes to figure out what it was. I had followed recipe directions to reserve some marinade for basting the chicken while grilling, and then forgot all about it. That might be why the chicken was less than flavorful. Oops! So I am saving the recipe to try again.

I do have two of those new recipes to share with you. The first is for a Broccoli Slaw. I will print the recipe as I found it, but I will admit to taking a short cut with the recipe. I bought packaged broccoli

slaw mix rather than do all the chopping called for. This turned out to be pretty good!

Broccoli Slaw

Makes 6 to 8 servings

- 2 heads broccoli
- 2 cups shredded purple cabbage
- 4 scallions, sliced
- 2 med. carrots, grated
- 1 cup fresh chopped parsley
- 1/2 cup mayo
- 6 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 2 tsp kosher salt

Trim ends of broccoli stalks. Remove crowns. Peel stalks, halve crosswise. Thinly slice each half lengthwise to create rectangular slices. Cut into matchsticks. Place in a large bowl. Cut florets into 1 inch pieces. Add to bowl with cabbage, scallions, carrots and parsley.

In a small bowl, whisk mayo, lemon juice, maple syrup, mustard and garlic. Pour over broccoli mix. Toss to coat well. Fold in nuts and cranberries.

Season with salt. Chill. This is best made early in the day or day before.

A couple notes about this recipe: As I said before the recipe, I used store bought broccoli slaw mix which already has the carrots and purple cabbage. So that saved a lot of chopping. I also used green onions instead of scallions. The recipe calls for maple syrup, please use the real thing, not pancake syrup. Also, try adding only part of the dressing to the veggie mix and toss well. Add more if needed. I dumped all the dressing in and found it to be too much. The broccoli was swimming in the dressing.

I found this next recipe for Cinnamon Roll Cherry Cobbler online, and thought it sounded delicious! It combines two things I love, cinnamon rolls and cherries. Upon eating the first serving, I was disappointed because the “cinnamon rolls” didn’t taste like I expected. But when I started thinking of “cobbler” instead

Let’s Cook

By Linda Hoskins



of cinnamon rolls, I realized it was quite good. So really, this recipe needs a new name. My husband, who is not a lover of cherry pie, liked this recipe. He said it is even better served with ice cream! The cherry portion is flavored with Red Hots candies and adds a real boost of flavor!

Cinnamon Roll Cherry Cobbler

- 1- 14 1/2 oz can pitted tart cherries
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp cornstarch
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 Tbsp red-hot candies
- 1 1/2 cup flour
- 6 Tbsp packed brown sugar,divided

- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup shortening
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1 Tbsp butter, softened
- 1/3 cup finely chopped pecans
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 cup confectioners sugar
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice

Drain and reserve juice from cherries. In a small pan, combine sugar, cornstarch, water and reserved juice. Stir in red-hots. Bring to a boil, stir constantly and cook 1 to 2 minutes more until thickened and bubbly, and candies melted. Reduce heat to low, stir in cherries and heat through. Place into a greased 8 inch square pan.

Saying goodbye — all the way to Circle K

Recently, I read a story on Facebook that I have seen several times before. The author(s) of these Facebook posts change the characters from mother and daughter to father and daughter, but despite the change of characters, the feeling the story leaves behind is a good one.

The synopsis of the story is that the author was at a busy airport and overheard a mother and daughter (or father and daughter) saying their good-byes to each other. According to the story, they hugged each other and the mother said, “I love you and I wish you enough.” The daughter replied, “Mom, our life together has been more than enough. Your love is all I ever needed. I wish you enough, too.”

The Facebook story continues by explaining that after the mother and daughter separated, the author was curious

about the phrase, “I wish you enough” and gently asked the mother, “When you were saying goodbye, I heard you say, ‘I wish you enough.’ May I ask what that means?” The mother explained, “That’s a wish that has been handed down from other generations. My parents used to say it to everyone. When we said, ‘I wish you enough,’ we were wanting the other person to have a life filled with just enough good things to sustain them.”

The story continues with the mother reciting some specific wishes, such as, “I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright no matter how gray the day may appear. I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun even more. I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive and everlasting. I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final goodbye.”

This Facebook story got me thinking about my own family and the words we use to say goodbye or to tell someone that they are loved. In my own family, when my children were very young, we lived near a Circle K Convenience Store which was located across the park from our house, maybe 200 yards away. Cathy and I would steal the name of a book title written by Amelia Hepworth, “I Love You to the Moon and Back,” and we would frequently tell each of our children that we loved them to the moon and back. The kids would either respond by saying they loved us to planets far beyond the moon (We love you to Jupiter.... we love you to Mars...) or they would tease us by saying that they loved us, “All the way to Circle K,” which inevitably resulted in much laughter.

My wife and I have been blessed by having three of our

So there I was

By Pete Buckley



grandchildren living within walking distance of our house and they are over frequently (which we love). Somehow, a strange ritual came into being between my wife (Cathy, aka Nana) and the granddaughters, and I’m not sure how it began.

Whenever they leave our house after a visit, the little girls shout from the window of their van as they are leaving, “Good-bye Mac N’ Cheese!” or “Good-bye Peanut Butter & Jelly!” and Cathy would reply, “Good-bye Fruit Loops!” or

“Good-bye Coco Puffs!”

I have no idea how this farewell phrase came about, and although the names of the foods they call each other change, this ritual that began when they were toddlers, continues to this day as they are all enrolled in elementary school. I know it’s silly and these sayings make no sense, yet I can’t help but smile each time I hear them yell, “Good-bye Cherry Piel!” or “Goodbye Rice Krispies!”

I think back to my own childhood and recall that my

dad would always tell us that he loved us before we left the house, no matter if we were going to the grocery store or going away to college. In fact, the last words he ever said to my brother and sister and me as we were standing around his bed while he lay dying from lung cancer was, “Remember, I love you.”

I imagine that many families have traditional sayings of goodbye or hello or I love you, when other family members arrive or leave and I would enjoy hearing them. If readers would please jot down their story and send it to the email address at the end of this column, I will see if I get a sufficient response to write a follow-up column.

Email presseditor1@gmail.com to be forwarded to the author.

Illinois Master Naturalist program accepting applications for August training

University of Illinois Extension, serving Coles-Cumberland-Douglas-Moultrie-Shelby Counties will be offering Illinois Master Naturalist training from Aug. 8–Oct. 10 with the majority of classes every Tuesday from 5:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. held at Douglas-Hart Nature Center in Mattoon. There will also be classes onsite at Warbler Ridge Woods and Shelbyville Visitor’s Center.

The mission of the University of Illinois Extension Master Naturalist Program is to provide science-based educational opportunities that connect people with nature

and help them become engaged environmental stewards. “The Master Naturalist training is a great way to learn more about our local natural areas, get together with people who are interested in helping our environment, and make some great connections”, says Extension Program Coordinator Jenny Lee.

The program educates and trains adult volunteers so they are better equipped to share natural resource information with others in their communities and to assist with environmental conservation and restoration activities. We all

have a responsibility to protect the natural resources in the places we live to ensure our world is “fit for the future.”

For those wanting to become a Master Naturalist volunteer, the University of Illinois requires each applicant to complete an application, background screening paperwork, and schedule an interview with Master Gardener and Master Naturalist Coordinator, Jenny Lee. The fee to participate is \$200 and covers classroom sessions, field training, handouts, and the Master Naturalist manual. Financial assis-

tance is available.

Upon completion of the Master Naturalist training, graduates will become Master Naturalist Interns and have 2 years to complete 60 volunteer service hours to become an Active Master Naturalist. To continue as an Active Master Naturalist, volunteers must fulfill 30 volunteer hours and 10 continuing education hours annually. There are many great opportunities available throughout the year to reach these hours.

Applications, screening paperwork, interviews, and course fees

must be received and completed by July 24, 2023. If you have any questions, please contact Jenny Lee at 217-345-7034.

If you will need an accommodation in order to participate, please email uie-ccdms@illinois.edu. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs.

WRITER: Jenny Lee, Master Gardener/Master Naturalist Coordinator, University of Illinois Extension Coles County