

My futile battle against buffoonery

I was sitting in the cigar shop having a perfectly fine time when Donovan walked in. Now, I know you have never met Donovan, and I'm envious of that.

You know that feeling you get when your cellphone says it needs to update? Instead of filling up with glee over the prospect of new software, you dread it knowing that it's just going to be a hassle and it's not going to fix anything noticeable. Plus, when it's done, your icons will be rearranged and something will be missing or broken.

That's how I feel when I see Donovan. I'd rather have a root canal.

OK, maybe it's not that bad, but he's tolerable only in small doses. I hadn't seen him in probably 10 years. I'd have been fine with another 10.

You've heard of Mr. In-Between? That's an old Burl Ives

Ramblin' Man

By David Porter



song — "I'm too old for girls and too young for women. I feel like a fish not allowed any swimmin'." Donovan isn't so much Mr. In-Between as he is Mr. Almost. He's almost funny, not quite interesting and "this close" to making sense. He's also two-faced and should have worn the other one.

So, why don't I just ignore him? Because everyone else in the room beat me to it. Someone spotted him coming, and it was like a combined game of telephone tag and musical

chairs. When the whispering stopped, the only seat left was next to mine.

I thought I'd try a new tack with Donovan by initiating the conversation in hopes of heading off whatever clown car he was driving today. But the middle of my sentence interfered with the beginning of his, so he just jabbed it right in there.

There's no point in trying to wrestle for the floor. You're not going to win with this guy. I don't know what he uses to be

so obnoxious, but it's working.

I was feeling froggy, though, so I jumped on. I held up my hand, took my voice up a notch, and said, "Now hold on, Donny. I was speaking. You can't just come in here and sit down and hijack the conversation. It's rude and borderline flagrant. It's ..."

Donovan didn't wait for my next condemnation and lit his own conflagration. "Well, who squirted in your Post Toasties?" he asked. Then he started in where he had left off like nothing had happened.

Determined, I stood up and turned toward him. I ratcheted up my voice another notch. I was not going to be bested by this buffoon. "You did it again, Donny (he doesn't like to be called Donny). I was in the middle of a perfectly good rebuke and you cut me off again."

Now, at this point, you might expect the look on his

face to be one of surprise or shock or maybe remorse. But, no. His expression was one of amusement and familiarity, like this happens to him all the time.

He would not take the bait nor surrender the podium. He just started back telling the boring story he had cued up when he walked in.

The message was clear. He doesn't care that somebody else was talking. He has no concern whether he's offended somebody. He places no value on others.

I knew I was defeated. I sat back down as he continued to rattle on not caring that nobody was listening.

He talked non-stop for the next 45 minutes while everyone else in the room smoked their cigars and avoided eye contact with him. There were no nods of encouragement. No utterances of understanding.

No fuel was needed to feed his fire. It was exhausting.

How he managed to finish his cigar without ever missing a beat is a mystery. Finally, he set his spent stick in the ashtray and stood up. "Well, boys," he said, "It's been nice talking to you but I gotta go." And the whole room perked up.

"OK, Don," I said. "As much as I've enjoyed your visit, I'll enjoy your absence even more. You haven't changed a bit in 10 years, and that's a shame."

He chuckled, unfazed. And why should I be surprised about that? If he showed one scintilla of shame, he might feel compelled to evolve.

© Copyright 2023 by David Porter who can be reached at porter@ramblinman.us. Everyone brings joy to a room; some when they walk in and others when they walk out.

Real Life Wellness: Move it or lose it!

The second part of a complete Healthy Lifestyle system is Physical activities. This isn't Earth shattering news. But what most people don't understand is why it is so important. I often talk about how sitting is the new smoking. So, this week, I want to provide you with an outline of why movement is so important and provide you with some context you can use.

I think about Physical Activity a little differently than most people. Physical activity can mean different things to different people depending on your age, structural health, chemical health, and economic situation. But everyone can perform different physical

activity, no matter what form that movement comes in.

Simply put, the three types of physical activity I'm talking about is Aerobic (breathing) activities, Strength training and Flexibility. These three parts of physical activity can be performed anywhere, anytime without spending any money. But you must understand that the older you are, the more arthritis you have, and the more deconditioned your metabolism is, the more creative you must become.

I just turned 60. I used to love to jog. But my knees, hips and legs just can't put up with that level of abuse anymore. So, if you ever see me running, it's because someone is chasing

me! But I can walk with the best of them. When I do a brisk walk, or cut my grass with a push mower, I am doing the best I can to keep my joints moving and healthy. Age-appropriate exercise is very important.

My age-related problems are a good example of structural health (arthritis, posture, old injuries...etc.). I have trouble in all three areas of structural health I just mentioned and so my aerobic exercise consists of walking, hiking, and breathing exercises.

I have a weekly meeting with an Osteopath, who specializes in treating infants and babies with breathing issues. She has opened my eyes to

how poorly, in general, our society breathes correctly. When was the last time you thought about your breathing? I have found that if I focus on my breathing while I'm walking or hiking, I feel so much better and I have much less recovery time when I get done with my exercise.

Your chemical health also plays an important role in how well you can perform physical exercise. If you have Diabetic, Heart disease, Metabolic syndrome, Obesity or High Blood pressure, you need to start slowly and listen to your body. Every time you do exercise, it will be one step closer to be-

coming healthier, but you can't try to do too much too fast.

Finally, one of the most common obstacles to overcome with physical activity is an economic one. Most people automatically think you must go to a health club or have a Peloton to work out effectively. This is totally not the case. What you need is people around you who want to live a good healthy life. Take a walk with them. Work in the garden with them. Go hiking with them. Go shopping with them.

The sky is the limit. You don't have to sit and stagnant. You can learn to look better, feel better and live longer by moving more.

Real Life Wellness

By Dr. Bill Hemmer



New recipe to try: Chocolate banana bread

I have a recipe that I cannot wait to try. This recipe comes from Marian Burris of Reno, Nev. She says, "This Banana Bread is chocolatey delicious with double chocolate inside and a chocolate topping!"

Chocolate Banana Bread

Submitted by Marian Burris

1 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup cocoa powder
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 cup butter
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup white sugar
2 eggs
4 small bananas
1/2 cup chocolate chips
Topping:
1/4 cup half and half
2 Tbsp brown sugar
1 tsp butter
1/2 tsp vanilla
6 Tbsp chocolate chips

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9x5 loaf pan. Combine flour, cocoa, baking soda and baking powder in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, cream butter and sugars together until fluffy. Stir in eggs and bananas. Add banana mixture and chocolate chips to the flour mixture. Stir just until combined. Pour into loaf pan, bake for 50 to 60 minutes. Bread is done when a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean.

For the topping, in a saucepan, heat half and half and brown sugar over medium heat until brown sugar has dissolved and tiny bubbles start to form on the edges. Stir in vanilla and butter until melted. Turn off heat. Add chocolate chips but do not stir. Let

Let's Cook

By Linda Hoskins



sit for 2 to 3 minutes. Whisk until smooth. Cool completely, drizzle over bread.

If you are looking for a different recipe to fix for a brunch or family breakfast, and want something different from the usual eggs or pancakes, try this recipe for German Pancake. I printed this a few years ago, but think it's worth reprinting. This recipe

includes directions for making your own syrup, which is really delicious and way better than the bottled pancake syrup. But you can skip this part if pressed for time, and use bottled syrup. Try garnishing with a few berries if you like.

German Pancake

6 eggs
1 cup milk

1 cup flour
1/2 tsp salt
2 Tbsp butter, melted
powdered sugar
Syrup:
1 1/2 cup sugar
3/4 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup butter
2 Tbsp corn syrup
1 tsp baking soda
2 tsp vanilla

Place eggs, milk, flour and salt in a blender. Process until smooth. (or you can use an electric mixer). Pour melted butter in a 9x13 baking dish. Add batter. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes. Note: this will not bake in an even layer, that is what you want. Dust with powdered sugar.

In a large saucepan, combine sugar, buttermilk, butter, corn syrup and baking soda. Bring to a boil. Boil for 7 minutes (watch carefully, it may

boil over if you are not using a big enough pan). Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla. Let cool a bit before serving with pancake.

I found this recipe in a cooking magazine years ago, and I really don't know if it's a "German" specialty at all. Also, if you don't have buttermilk on hand, you can make your own. Pour 1 Tbsp vinegar or lemon juice in a glass 1 cup measuring cup. Fill with milk to measure 1 cup. Stir to combine, let sit for 5 to 10 minutes. Stir again before using.

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!

Weekly Horoscopes

ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, someone in your life says they're making changes, but when you look closely it seems like much of the same. A little encouragement on your part can help this person along.

TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

Tread lightly if you broach a difficult conversation with someone close to you, Taurus. These are tricky waters you are navigating and you want to maintain the relationship.

GEMINI - May 22/June 21

Problems may seem to you to be bigger than they really are, Gemini. Step back, take a few breaths and then look at things from another perspective. Ask for a second opinion as well.

CANCER - Jun 22/Jul 22

Look for the double meanings in

conversations you're having with coworkers this week, Cancer. They could be trying to tell you something, so read between the lines.

LEO - Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, you are typically good at reading others' moods, so use that skill this week when placed in a sensitive situation. It will help guide you on what to say and what to keep quiet for now.

VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 23

There is a lot of socializing going on in your life right now, Virgo. Enjoy the excitement while it lasts and maximize all of the events you can attend. Things may start to slow in a few weeks.

LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

It's probably best to keep your head down for the next few days and just

go about your normal routine, Libra. Don't get pulled into anyone's drama or offer your take on things.

SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, it is time to be more proactive about getting what you want. Make a list of the things that most interest you right now, and then devise a plan to make things happen.

SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

Figure out which stance you want to take right now, Sagittarius. Are you seeing the glass half full or half empty? Perception can affect your daily life in many ways.

CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

Good news is on the way, Capricorn. This will leave you floating on air for some time afterwards. Surround yourself with the people you love this

week so that they can share the good fortune.

AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

There is a lot that you have been juggling for some time, Aquarius. Unless you take a break or ask for help, one of those balls are going to fall and that could have a domino effect.

PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, you have every right to express your opinions. Others will just have to accept what you say even if they don't agree with it.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

JULY 30

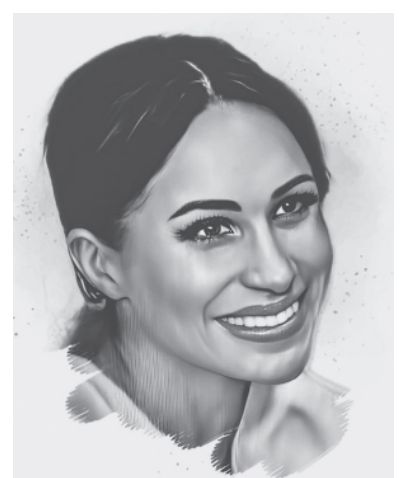
Terry Crews, Actor (55)

JULY 31

BJ Novak Actor (44)

AUGUST 1

Jason Momoa, Actor (44)



AUGUST 2

Austin Theory, Wrestler (26)

AUGUST 3

James Hetfield, Singer (60)

AUGUST 4

Meghan Markle, Dutchess (42)

AUGUST 5

Patrick Ewing, Coach (61)