

Columns

It’s hard to part with old, worn-out appliances

Some household objects come and go with little notice but there are others that are so revered that the possibility of losing them can cause stress. You might think that in this day and age with so much available to purchase the above statement is silly but it is not. I have had my “Sony” Dream Machine clock radio for almost 50 years; it has begun to malfunction and I am stressed at the thought of losing my friend.

When we were first married in 1967, I brought to the union a portable travel clock my parents had given to me at graduation. Why they thought the clock was a good idea I do not know but it did service me well for a couple years. Hubby added a “Sony” super sized stereo with giant speakers to our possessions and his stereo was so special that it contained an AM-FM radio. At bedtime, Hubby would turn the radio on to the Chicago WLS Radio station and I would set my portable clock for 7 a.m. but sometime during the night one of us had to get out of bed and turn off the stereo radio.

This system worked pretty well until our son was born in August of 1968. We tried many methods of trying to coordinate his 3 a.m. feeding with turning the stereo radio off but by then our son had become used to the music and would not go back to sleep; so one of us would have to get back up and turn the radio back on.

We continued this method well past the last 3 a.m. feed-

Memories and Musings

By Cheri Sims



ing, but one night, when our son was 5 years old, the stereo radio ceased to function and the three of us tried to get to sleep without music. Over the next couple months, we purchased a couple different clock radios but none were to our liking.

Hubby did not want to replace his stereo; the speaker sound quality when playing records was too great. We were used to the depth of sound from the stereo and the radios all sounded tinny. By this time, Hubby was pretty irritated by all the money we had wasted on inferior radios, so for Christmas that year, he splurged and purchased the new model “Sony” AM/FM clock radio.

Hubby paid a whopping \$40 for this magnificent clock radio and not only did it replace the stereo radio, the sound quality was almost as good. Now it was time to retire the portable travel clock with its lighted dial and I must tell you that it was pretty disconcerting not looking at that orange lighted dials the first couple nights.

I adapted to the new radio and eventually liked the red

colored display. The fact that I did not have to set the clock every night was another great point, but I had a hard time getting used to sliding the alarm button to the on position. That was when Hubby started setting the alarm and continued to do so for the next 40 years.

The amazing thing about this clock radio was that the radio play time is set to one hour and it even has a one-hour push button, which I push reputedly during the night.

Last year, I noticed that the volume control was sticking a bit and suddenly, last week, the alarm did not function as it should have and has continued to malfunction repeatedly. Last week, I bought a couple clock radios and was dissatisfied with both so I decided to look for the old travel alarm. I always kept it with the suitcases but we must have discarded it sometime over the years so that idea fizzled. Finally, I purchased a cheap alarm clock and set it next to the radio; I don’t want to give up on my old friend just yet!

I have a couple other old items I hope I never have to

replace; one is a “Sunbeam” hand mixer, which I inherited from my mother-in-law and it just so happened to be the same make and model as one I received as a wedding gift. That one ceased working at the age of 25, and my mother-in-law had barely used hers so I was grateful to have been gifted her mixer.

I also have my first and only ironing board, which was also a wedding gift. It is metal and wider and taller than most that were manufactured in 1967, and although it is difficult to find ironing board pads to fit it, I have managed. The boards my friends have are

so short that one has to bend over to use them.

I also have a very old, wood-handled broom, which I would be lost without because it has attained the perfect shape for sweeping my porches. I guess you can tell I have a hard time giving up my old housework friends. I guess I don’t like change.

As you might have guessed from last week’s column I am on a fresh tomato kick so I will share my new experiment which turned out delicious. Take a loaf of French bread and slice it in half length wise. Spread each half with either softened butter or olive oil

(I like butter). Chop a large handful of fresh basil, thyme and chives and sprinkle liberally on top of the buttered bread. Thickly slice tomatoes and place close together on top of the chopped herbs. Sprinkle onion powder, salt and pepper on top of the tomato slices. Place on foil and put under the broiler until the tomato slices bubble and begin to brown. Top with blue cheese crumbles (or any kind of cheese you prefer) and return to broiler for a few seconds. Slightly cool and enjoy one of the best ways to eat fresh herbs and tomatoes.

Enjoy summer eating.

Perseid meteor shower this weekend

The planet Mercury reaches its greatest separation from the Sun tonight, though it’s not the most favorable view. Mercury’s orbit pretty much aligns with the western horizon, so the planet sets less than an hour after sunset. You might catch it looking low due west just after the Sun sets.

The big event occurs over the weekend as we have perfect conditions for the Perseid meteor shower; one of most potent of the year. The peak of the shower occurs Saturday night into Sunday morning and the Moon is out of the sky. Under dark sky conditions, one might see two meteors a minute with rates increasing after midnight.

The Perseids result from the Earth passing through the

In the night sky

By David Leake



dust trail of Comet Swift-Tuttle, which last passed by the Sun in 1992. The meteor particles are roughly the size of sand grains, entering the Earth’s atmosphere at roughly 130,000 miles per hour.

As the grains slow down, their energy is transferred to the air and the air glows. This is what you see in the sky. If those skies are clear, the CU

Astronomical Society will host a meteor watching event at the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, near the Sugar Grove Shelter, at 8:30 p.m. Bring a lawn chair and join us!

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

The measure of greatness

Disclaimer: this article will go to print after the next U.S. World Cup game and they may not be in the running anymore.

Soccer is my jam. In my playing days, I had a hard time watching professional soccer because I always got the urge to be on the field. Maybe the years of coaching youth soccer is what changed that. I enjoy cheering in the Illini women’s team at any match I can make and I keep up with the Men’s and Women’s leagues and World Cups.

To make sure you can follow along, the World Cup tournaments are played in 2 stages. The first stage is the Group Stage. Teams are divided into groups of 4 at random. Teams play each other once within their group, earning 3 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, and zero points for a loss. The top two teams at the end of the group stage advance to the Knock Out Stage or Round of 16. This stage is bracket style, single elimination.

In cases of tied points in the group stage, other factors then determine who moves on to the Round of 16. First the

Margie’s Mess

By Margie Carter



point differential, then points scored, then points against.

This last week was rough for our Women’s National Team. They started the group stage with a 3-0 win over Vietnam, which was expected against a debutante team. They then tied Netherland 1-1. The Netherlands have always been a strong team, the match up was actually a repeat of the 2019 final for the Cup. So there wasn’t much of a surprise on the result, except that it was the first time the U.S. has trialed a game since 2011.

At this point in the group stage the U.S. sat at 4 Group Points, tied with Netherland.

Their final group game was against Portugal, also debutantes; first time teams at a

World Cup. The game ended in a tie, 0-0, but there was a moment within 10 mins to the end of the game that the unthinkable almost happened. A Portugal player broke into the scoring zone, got a shot off, and it got pass the goalie; the ball was inches from going into the net but instead hit the goal post. In the end, the U.S. advanced to the knock out stage by a point, having finished 2nd in the group.

It didn’t take long for the coverage of the game to turn nasty. With the loudest criticism coming from a formal U.S. Women’s player. What struck me was that her annoyance had little to do with how the team play and more to do with how they interacted after

the match. Players were seen talking lightheartedly with each other, at one point laughing in conversation. Players also met the fans at the edge of the pitch for autographs and selfies.

Yes, the team had a rough game and didn’t play their best, but with the group stage having finished for them, they knew that they had advanced. A little celebratory encouragement seems more than appropriate.

The media jumped on this bandwagon quickly, with outlets running multiple stories about the former player’s comments.

It’s important to note that the U.S. team has been one of the loudest voices in fighting for equal pay in soccer around the world. The Women’s Premiere League in the U.S. has taken off and many teams are building a brand behind a business model that men’s teams in all sports have used successfully.

The U.S. Women’s team is decorated way beyond the Men’s team, with 3 World Cups under their belt. They contin-

ue to be undefeated in their last 11 games.

Two days after their Portugal game, in another group, Morocco’s team was 1 point ahead in group points at the end of their last game. The team huddled around at the side of the field, waiting for news of the other group game that was minutes from ending. If Germany could get off one more goal they would earn the group points to push Morocco out of the running. The video of the Morocco team celebrating in cheers was captioned “When dreams come true.”

Not to take anything away from the Morocco team, but had they tied and the deciding factor was the goal differential, Morocco was sitting at -5 because of a devastating lost in their first game.

What then is the difference between the U.S. advancing and Morocco? Is it because the world expects more from the U.S. team as the defending champions?

As a U.S. fan, it hurt to see those comments. I’ve followed this team through the season, groaned when our leading

scorer suffered an injury that would force her to miss the World Cup. I’ve seen the drive the players have. And while I too was disappointed in the way they played the last game, as a youth soccer coach and a mom of competitive athletes, I immediately thought, “On to the next one!”

Yes, the goal post saved them from going home, but the 80 minutes of soccer before that, where they fought for possession, took multiple shots on goal, and stopped multiple attempts at their goal, should count for something.

It’s the same pep talk to give my girls when they don’t place super well in a high level competition. They made it THERE. Out of all the girls their age, at times in the entire state, they are in that top 5, 10, or even 20.

It’s like being last place at the Olympics; you still qualified and competed at the Olympics. Winning is amazing, but measuring our commitment, drive, motivation, and passion should be based on much more than 1st place.

Try this easy and popular potato casserole recipe

I have a super easy, super good recipe for potatoes that makes a perfect side dish for your cook out or to take to a potluck. I call them Deb’s Potatoes because I got the recipe many years ago from a friend named Deb, but the recipe she wrote just said “Potatoes.” So to distinguish this recipe from all other potato recipes, I started calling it Deb’s Potatoes. My kids used to request this recipe by calling “those good potatoes.”

Deb’s Potatoes

2 lbs frozen Southern hash browns
1 stick butter, cubed
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 small carton sour cream
8 oz shredded Cheddar cheese
Mix all in a large casserole dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

Note about above recipe: I like to let the potatoes partially thaw so it will be easier to mix. However, if I forget to thaw them but am in a hurry, I mix it as well as I can, then about 20 minutes into baking, I mix it again.

Let’s Cook

By Linda Hoskins



Sometimes we grill pork chops or chicken that is simple, with only basic seasoning and I am planning on having

baked potato with it, I look for a veggie side dish that has some “oomph.” This next recipe is a great way to jazz up

green beans. You can use frozen green beans, but it’s especially good when you use fresh green beans. The recipe has “Spicy” in its name, but don’t be afraid of it. Yes, it has some kick, but I have never had anyone think it was too spicy. If you prefer less kick, use a bit less red pepper flakes.

Spicy Asian Green Beans

14 oz green beans
1/4 cup orange juice
3 Tbsp soy sauce

1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
1 clove garlic, minced

Cook beans just until crisp-tender. In a small pan, mix orange juice, soy sauce, pepper flakes and garlic until well blended. Heat to a boil. Reduce heat to low, simmer 1 to 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Stir into green beans. Serve immediately.

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!