

Columns

Dragons guard the hidden treasure

I have a time capsule that I keep under my easy chair. I didn't choose that location or that purpose. It just worked out that way.

The time capsule consists of items that fall out of my pockets between the seat cushion and the armrests. They eventually make their way to the floor.

The chair is a big, heavy thing with an electric footrest, so moving it or tipping it up is a chore complicated by the fact that the armrests are about 8 inches wide and serve as desk space when I'm working. So, tilting the chair back means taking off all the crap that is piled up on the armrests, which have no room for arms.

At the front of the armrests

Ramblin' Man

By David Porter



are cup holders, one on each side. I don't know why anyone would need two cup holders. Do people keep two drinks handy?

The holder on the right holds my soda, and the one on the left holds everything but soda. It's full of cigar cutters, lighters, ink pens, receipts, etc.

About every six months or so, I clear off the chair so I can

tip it back to retrieve whatever has fallen through the vortex. It's a two-person job, and it feels like Christmas every time I do it. Some of the treasures are things I didn't know had dropped but have been looking for. I don't even recognize some of it.

Today was the day when we opened the time capsule. We flipped a coin to decide who

gets to lift the chair and who gets to crawl underneath it. Neither job is sought after, but the one on the bottom has to have a lot of trust in the one on top.

My wife held the chair back and inquired about my life insurance. That did not instill confidence.

Now, before you go all judgment on me, I lifted the chair and then she held onto the back to keep it tilted. That part isn't bad once you find the balancing point. Crawling underneath isn't horrible; it's the trying to stand back up at my age.

Today's discovery was exceptional. I found two of my best cigar cutters, three lighters, two ink pens, three popcorn kernels, a fruit loop and

48 cents in change. There was also a candy wrapper, a piece of paper with a phone number I didn't recognize, two business cards, a Lego brick and a pencil. When did I ever use a pencil?

I also found my flyswatter, a battery and the spare remote control for the TV. Venturing farther in, I found my missing slipper, the agenda for a long-ago meeting, a flash drive and a ball cap. Clearly, not all of these things fell out of my pockets.

Not surprisingly, there were no lost cigars under the chair. If I had dropped a cigar between the cushions, that would have called for an emergency unveiling of the time capsule. I can live without my best cutter or favorite lighter,

but cigars don't gather dust in my house.

But there was a lot of dust under there. You've heard of dust bunnies. These were more like dust dragons.

I gathered all the important stuff, and we lowered the chair back down. I said I would go get the vacuum sweeper for the dust dragons. Then, realizing that we would have to lift the chair again, decided they could wait till the next unveiling. And knowing me, probably the unveiling after that.

© Copyright 2023 by David Porter who can be reached at porter@ramblin-man.us. I'll slay the dragons another day, but for now, they're guarding the hidden treasure.

Heart health is like wrestling an Octopus!

We all know how important our heart is. But there is so many variables to consider when discussing it. This week, I want to break it down into workable chunks, so you can decide for yourself which of the tentacles you would like to wrestle first.

The most important part of controlling your heart health is to control your overall inflammation. Sounds familiar huh. But inflammation is the underlying factor in almost every chronic disease. In the case of the heart, high blood pressure, cholesterol issues, obesity, Metabolic syndrome, and Type 2 Diabetes all can be traced back to chronic inflammation gone wild.

Let's start with high blood pressure. When you have too much inflammation, your blood vessels become irritated. This irritation leads to the inside layer of the blood vessels to become rough and sticky instead of smooth and slick. This leads to an increase in the amount of pressure necessary to move your blood through the vessels.

Another common cause for high blood pressure is dehydration. I know this sounds weird but think about it. If you don't hydrate yourself and provide your body enough fluid, your blood becomes too thick, and your heart must work harder to push blood through the system.

Real Life Wellness

By Dr. Bill Hemmer



I've written many articles about cholesterol. To put it simply, cholesterol is the good guy, not the villain! Cholesterol is one of the main building blocks of your many of your anti-inflammatory and stress relieving hormones. When these levels get too low, you can't decrease your inflam-

mation or handle stress effectively. This sounds to me like a recipe for disaster.

Our population has never been so obese in the history of the world. I'm not going to get into the reasons why right now, but obesity goes together with inflammation. Inflammation causes a rise in fluid

retention and liver congestion. If your liver is stressed, your ability to detox is also greatly compromised. Both these things come together and create an obesity soup for each of us to swim around in.

Finally, Metabolic syndrome and Diabetes Type 2 go hand in hand with each other and round up many of the issues we have talked about already in this article. Metabolic syndrome combines high blood pressure, excess body fat around the waist and high cholesterol or triglycerides. Of course, Diabetes Type 2 is chronically high blood sugar.

Everyone of these issues are the tentacles of the heart disease octopus! Each one of

these things by themselves can bring your heart to its breaking point. But putting them all together is almost surely going to shorten your life. But the good news is, each of these factors can be reversed no matter how old you are!

Once you begin to eat real food, get a good night's sleep, enjoy some daily sunshine and exercise at least three times a week, all these things can be modified. I literally work with people in their late 80's that have reversed all of these issues.

Life is too short to be sick. We all have the God-given ability to create health in our body. Never forget that!

Absolute power at Capitol prevents lawmakers from addressing important state issues

By STATE REP. JED DAVIS

Running for office last year, I knew Illinois was broken. But I have come to realize in just the few short months of serving as the state representative in the 75th District that the problems are much greater than I ever imagined as a candidate.

I have found that there are many good ideas that have both Democrat and Republican support but these bills never see the light of day because the

House leadership refuses to allow them to move forward. For instance, I am a co-sponsor of House Bill 1079, which ends the 35-year moratorium on new nuclear power plant construction in Illinois. This legislation has strong bipartisan support but it has never been called for a vote on the House floor despite overwhelming support in committee.

The reason legislation such as House Bill 1079 does not come up for a vote is because the House leadership won't allow it. Power in Springfield is absolute and unfortunately wielded not by the body as a whole but by the individuals who control the House and Senate chambers.

Former House Speaker Michael Madigan may no longer be in charge of the House but the rules he used to control the pro-

cess are very much intact. The rights of individual members are almost non-existent.

What has this top-down approach gotten us? Are we tackling the big issues? Are we solving the state's problems?

We could not take a few moments to vote on important bipartisan legislation to end the moratorium on nuclear power plants and ultimately address the rising cost of electricity in Illinois and to ensure we do not have rolling brownouts. Instead, we spent time considering legislation to ban the use of pronouns "boy" and "girl" referring to children in statute (HB1596), require menstrual products be put in all public restrooms (HB 3093), and ban cat declawing (HB 3093).

I talked to a lot of voters in the 2022 election cycle and not

once did I hear anyone bring up the need to put feminine hygiene products in every public restroom. People want lower utility bills. They want better schools. They want more jobs and more opportunities. Instead of addressing these central, core issues our leaders are focused on banning cat declawing and other mind numbingly inane ideas.

It would be one thing to entertain legislation like this if we were considering the important issues facing our state, but we are not.

One of my bills (HB 2609) requires price transparency at hospitals. It has bipartisan support and would go a long way toward stabilizing the price of health care in our state. It never got called and was never even heard in committee.

I understand that time is a factor. There are thousands and thousands of bills introduced every year, and it is difficult to give them all a fair hearing. But why wasn't a bill requiring price transparency at hospitals called for a vote when a bill banning cat declawing was called?

We wonder why we have the fifth highest unemployment rate in the nation. We wonder why we lost more than 100,000 people last year and we wonder why we pay some of the highest taxes in the nation.

Our state is in serious trouble, and it is being run by unserious people. If I learned anything as a freshman legislator, it is that the go-along-to-get-along politics lead only to a permanent minority that constantly is forced to cede power to people who think the most pressing

issue facing Illinois is the availability of tampons in the men's room.

I may be a small voice in a big pond but all it takes to begin the process of change is for people like me to point out the obvious. There are some of us who are doing just that, and our numbers and influence are growing because the thing the political elites have forgotten is that they have built a house of cards that will all come crashing down once their incompetence and poor leadership is exposed. We deserve better. What we need is strong leaders who will stand up and declare the "emperor has no clothes" and that is exactly what I intend to do every day I am in Springfield.

State Rep. Jed Davis is a Republican from Newman who was elected to his first term in 2022.

Letters to the editor

To the Editor:

The Supreme Court is run amok, and it's time to get it under control.

For the last year, we have witnessed scandal after scandal come out of the Supreme Court. From learning that Samuel Alito may have leaked a decision about reproductive health to conservative anti-abortion activists, to discovering Clarence Thomas has been secretly accepting luxury vacations from a GOP megadonor for twenty years, the actions of these justices on the highest court in the land are unconscionable.

Thankfully, this bad behavior can be addressed. Congress has the ability—and responsibility—to act as a check on the Supreme Court and restore faith in our judicial system. It's time they take the first step and pass a code of ethics for the Supreme Court.

No one is above accountability, and that includes our justices on the Supreme Court.

Sincerely,
Dorothy Taylor
Sullivan

Try this shrimp and asparagus recipe

The other night I tried a new recipe that turned out pretty good. With fresh asparagus showing up in stores, this is the perfect time to try this recipe. You will want to have some crusty bread with this to sop up that delicious sauce!

Garlic Butter Shrimp and Asparagus

2 Tbsp olive oil, divided
2 bunches asparagus, trimmed
kosher salt
6 Tbsp unsalted butter
5 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp onion powder
pinch red pepper flakes
1 1/2 lb medium size raw shrimp
zest of 1 lemon
juice of half a lemon
parsley

In a large skillet, over medium-high heat 1 Tbsp oil. Add

asparagus, season with 1/2 tsp salt. Cook, stirring occasionally till crisp-tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from pan, keep warm.

In the same skillet, over medium heat, cook butter, garlic, onion powder, red pepper flakes in 1 Tbsp oil until melted. Add shrimp. Season with half tsp salt. Cook until the shrimp is pink. 1 to 2 minutes per side. Remove from heat. Stir in asparagus. Add zest, lemon juice and sprinkle with parsley. Toss and serve.

I gave you the recipe as I found it. I do have a few comments about it. I didn't have unsalted butter, so I used regular butter. Also, the recipe calls for cooking the asparagus for up to 8-10 minutes, don't! My asparagus was crisp tender within

Let's Cook

By Linda Hoskins



4 or 5 minutes. Please don't ruin your asparagus by overcooking! The recipe calls for 5 cloves garlic which I used, but I think next time I make it, I may add a bit more garlic and a bit less lemon juice. I thought the lemon overpowered the garlic. Also, I made this as a stand alone dish, but we both thought rice would have been good with this, or perhaps pasta. It defi-

nately needed something.

This next recipe comes from a reader in St. Clair County, Illinois. I have not tried this yet, but it sounds like a great recipe for an informal meal or a party.

Calzone on a Stick

Submitted by Belle Griffin

8 wood craft sticks
8 turkey or chicken sausage links, cooked

1 pkg Grand size Biscuits
1 jar pasta sauce
4 Mozzarella sticks, half in half length-wise

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Insert sticks halfway into each sausage. Set aside. Roll each biscuit into a 7x4 oval. Place 2 Tbsp pasta sauce on the long side of the oval. Top with sausage and half Mozzarella stick. Fold dough over, crimp edges to seal.

Place on baking sheet, seam side down. Bake for 15 minutes until golden brown.

Serve with warmed pasta sauce for dipping.

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!