

It's hard for me to believe it's the 20th Anniversary for All Out A'cappella! As a proud product of Unit 7 music, also singing at St Thomas in Philo in grade school and harmonizing with my mother, Betty Lou Ducey as organist for St Patrick's Parish in Tolono over 40 years, I was proud to 'represent' our wonderful programs as emcee over the years. Fondly remembering moments with some of our legacy music directors over the decades, like Polly Anderson (whose name is on Unity's Auditorium) and band directors like Brad Hulick as well as Beth and Jay Rogers for our choir, Unity High School and Junior High musicals were always done so well. When Mrs. Mary Ellen Page passed away, at her 'Celebration of Life' so many of us had great stories to share of spending time making sets, costumes and being on the crew as well as acting and singing. When I visit with young students about my radio career and am asked about what inspired me to do a "D.J." job in the mid to late 80's... it's all of those teachers and the foundation of hard work and bringing together the details to put on a terrific show.

I certainly wanted my kids to get into music like I did and recall working with then Principal Janet Ellis-Nelson to get a Talent Show going at Unity

West's school with so many acts auditioning to dance, sing and do magic tricks or a comedy routine. Today's co-presidents of the Unity Music Boosters, Kevin and Emily Polonus shared their passion for the Fine Arts touting statistics about the higher graduation rate and testing scores for

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REGINA JOHNSON (Reg Cakes owner providing sweet treats at the Bake Sale) with Bonnie and Cary Woolard, Diane Ducey, Sharon Baxley, Anne Watson, Emily Polonus and Teresa Ford pose after one of the All Out A'cappella shows. Unity Music Booster friendships remain strong after working together to improve the music scene in Unit 7 for years. Be a part and get details at UnityMusicBoosters.org. Submitted photo.

Ready for sun and warm weather...routine things

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:6,7,8,9

Today is a windy day. Is it March winds arriving early? It's been peaking at 35 MPH. But it has slowed down some. The sun is playing hide and seek with the clouds. Oh my! I am so ready for sun and warm weather. Or at least warmer, we really do need more rain. But I'd rather not have these cold temperatures. But it's not all about me, is it?

I did my laundry this morning after several lectures to myself. Then I decided I'll hang the things out. After hanging out the towels and sheets, I decided the rest of the things can dry inside. That wind was COLD!

I haven't done anything else that amounts to anything. I've got all the batteries charged.

My sisters have plans to come on Saturday afternoon to go through some more of our mom's things and maybe do some more cleaning.

Our sis Louise and Dale heard some devastating news.



My Amish Home

By Millie Otto

They left for Florida, I believe it was this past Tuesday. Before they reached Florida, they got a phone call from one of Dale's doctors with the dreaded news that one of the spots they've been checking is, after all, cancer.

Yes, they had the props knocked out from under them. They will come back now and start treatments. I just feel so sorry for them it wouldn't have nearly as hard had they found out right away. But they left here with the thought that everything was clear.

Our church district has had two funerals in three weeks time. The two oldest women in our church have entered their eternal rest. My mom was the oldest at 97 and Erwin's sister Anna was 89. Anna's funeral

was February 19. That is partly why I can't get motivated. It just brought everything back and kind of knocked the props out from me. I thought I was coming out of my fog, then yes, we had that visitation and funeral to get through.

This is now after lunch. I've got the laundry all put away. What I hung outside dried and smelled sooo good! The sun is more serious about shining but it is still very windy. Maybe it will go down when the sun goes down. Maybe...

I really did want to go to town this afternoon. Possibly clean the Welcome Center, but it may be too windy.

I have my own cleaning to do. I'm thinking that may suffer somewhat. Probably I'll

just sweep the floors and call it good.

This is now Saturday as I finish up and yes, I did just sweep the floors. I did go clean the Welcome Center yesterday afternoon. It was still windy but had warmed up quite a bit. The bike ride helped clear some cobwebs from my brain.

It felt good to do some of my routine things again.

In closing--Save the earth. It's the only planet with Chocolate!

How about this French Toast. Baked Caramelized French Toast

1 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup butter
2 Tblsps. light corn syrup
Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Pour into a greased 9x13 baking pan

6 slices bread
Put on top of syrup.
1/4 cup white sugar
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
Sprinkle half of this over bread.

6 slices bread
Top this bread on the bread in the pan and sprinkle with remaining cinnamon/sugar mixture

6 eggs
1 1/2 cup milk
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
Beat eggs and rest of ingredients and pour over bread in pan.

Cover and chill overnight. Remove from Refrigerator 30 minutes prior to baking. Bake at 350° for 30-35 minutes, uncovered. Sprinkle with powdered sugar before serving.



Winter is releasing its icy grip. Not steadily, but I'll take lows around 20 F during cold snaps over lows in the teens below zero. I'll take snow that blows into drifts that pile up 10 to 15 flakes deep and melts by afternoon, over snow that blows into drifts two feet deep and snowbanks that don't melt for weeks. I'll take highs above freezing.

And the increase in daylight. And the increasingly frequent days where it makes a run at 60. Or even 70. Fat Tuesday and the next two days

after saw runs at 50, 60, and 70 before Old Man Winter returned.

Spring's green shoots and even some early flowers are coming forth.

Bees are out visiting the early blossoms. Woodpeckers have been drumming and chiseling out feeding holes and possibly nesting sites.

Robins are back and squabbling. Geese have been heading north. Bluebirds are back, and seemingly in larger numbers than the past few years. Blackbirds are back. Skunks are pairing up and looking for

homesteads. I've seen quite a few road kills. I've had one encounter with a live skunk which ended without it spraying. If you see a skunk nearby, keep an eye on it. If it starts to turn and face away from you, move away, facing away from it, slow and easy. Most likely, by

the time you're a few steps further away, the skunk will be back about its business.

Of course, the early weeds are flourishing. Keeping them at bay is an ongoing challenge. But being able to sit in the

warm sunshine, the hoodie cast aside in favor of the neck drape, is a great job benefit.

Especially after the winter we've had. It is also pleasant - or perhaps tonic is a better word - to turn over garden beds in such weather. And get after more of the leaves that blew in just before the late-January storm blew in and buried them. And the ones that blew in after that.

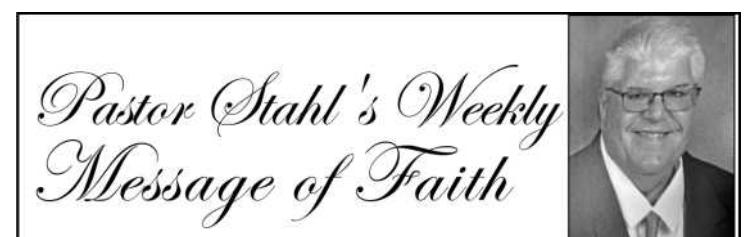
Snowdrops are blooming. Hyacinths are up. Tulips are growing fast. Narcissis are up. Some crocuses are up. A squill is up, and has a bud.

The rabbits will decide whether to let it bloom. Last year they kept eating the squills, which surprised me because they are supposed to be rather toxic.

Gaillardias and Mexican Hats are up. A lot of the Mexican Hats are new this year. A lot of the old ones died last year. Verbenas have green leaves and should bloom in a few weeks or so. Native penstemons, which are evergreen, are starting to grow again. They won't bloom for months yet. Columbines are up. These are the native Prairie Columbine

(Aquilegia canadensis) with red and yellow flowers. They bloom around May Day. Hummingbirds should arrive around then.

I took a walk out into the county on the last day of February. There were killdeer calling. A plume of smoke determined my next turn. A grassy field was being burned off. Elsewhere, another field was being treated with a liquid agricultural chemical. More signs that Spring is not far away.



Hello Everyone!

As I write this, the sun is out and it's actually warmer! Spring is on the way! But before we get too comfortable with the weather, we know it will turn cold again! Just remember, each day that passes is closer to Spring! Go Cardinals!

We are now in the Season of Lent, that period of 40 days, not including Sundays, between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. We remember the sacrifice that Jesus Made on our behalf. His Disciples were Blessed to be in the very Presence of God Almighty. They worked alongside the Lord for 3 years, watching Him Heal people from diseases, Making the deaf hear and the blind see. He even Raised Lazarus from the dead. It must have been awe inspiring to be in the very Presence of God.

Isaiah in the Old Testament had a similar experience. In Chapter 6, Isaiah writes that he saw the Lord. "He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of His Robe filled the Temple." (Isaiah 6:1) The Lord was surrounded by angels who were shouting,

"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD OF HEAVEN'S ARMIES! THE WHOLE EARTH IS

FULL OF HIS GLORY!"

Isaiah felt humbled and scared in the Presence of God and the angels. "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord of Heaven's Armies." (6:5) "Then one of the angels flew to me with a burning coal from the altar and touched Isaiah's lips with it. "See, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven." (6:6,7) Then the Lord Asked, "Whom shall I Send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us? And Isaiah said, "Here I am. Send me." (6:8) Isaiah saw the Lord, confessed his sins, was forgiven, then sent out for ministry. That is the amazing Power of God. In the Lord's Presence, we realize that we can never measure up on our own. Without God, there is no hope for any of us. But God Knows that and Sent us Jesus. He Took our punishment on the Cross for our sins. Like Isaiah, we are cleansed and forgiven. Then God Sends us out to spread the Good News of Jesus and His Love. Isaiah was cleansed of his sins, then sent out for ministry. That method has worked for count-

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OSF Peace Meal Menu

Here is the Sidney, Homer, Philo, Tolono, Sadorus, and Pesotum Peace Meal menu for Thursday, March 5 through Wednesday, March 11.

Thursday, 3/5/26
Sausage and gravy, egg bake with tri-peppers and onions, orange juice, biscuit served with butter or margarine, and a half pint of milk.

Friday, 3/6/26
Tuna noodle casserole with peas, broccoli, fruit cup, whole wheat bread served with butter or margarine, and a half pint of milk.

Saturday, 3/7/26
Ham on sub roll with tomato and lettuce, V8 juice, fruit, chips, and a half pint of milk.

Sunday, 3/8/26
OSF Peace Meal is closed.
Monday, 3/9/26
Baked ham, sweet potatoes, brussels sprouts, fruit cup, whole wheat roll served with butter or margarine, and a half pint of milk.

Tuesday, 3/10/26
Country fried steak with gravy, corn, green beans, fruit cup, whole wheat bread served with butter or margarine, and a half pint of milk.

Wednesday, 3/11/26
OSF Peace Meal is closed.

OSF Peace Meal provides seniors, age 60 and older, with a nutritious lunch Monday through Saturday and are closed on Sunday and Wednesday. There is a suggested donation of \$4.00 for each meal, however, no senior will be denied a meal because of an inability to financially contribute. The Illinois Link Card is an accepted form of payment. For more information, please go to <https://www.osfhealthcare.org/osf-peace-meal/> or call 1-309-665-5900.

The Homer Peace Meal congregate site is at the Homer Village Hall located at 500 East Second Street. It is currently carry-out only. For reservations, please call 1-309-665-5900. Home delivery in southern Champaign County is currently available in Sidney, Homer, Philo, Tolono, Sadorus, and Pesotum.

Menu substitutions may occur due to global supply chain shortages, but a nutritious meal is still guaranteed.

The OSF Peace Meal menu is submitted for the OSF Peace Meal Senior Nutrition Program by Ann Rhoton.

Philo Library News

I'm wondering how many of you have flowers breaking out of the soil and looking for the sun? I have them both at home and at the Library and I'm hoping that March will be a lamb from start to finish.. Speaking of plants growing, I wanted you to know that we are working on a program through the Extension.. Subjects will include growing herbs, veggies, and flowering plants. We are asking those who have them to bring seeds that you harvested and we'll have a seed swap at the end of the program..

As it turns out, March is a very busy time for the Extension people, but Ryan Pankau is trying his hardest to make ar-

rangements It might be early to mid-April when we finally have the program, but there's still time to plant. Watch for announcements on our web site and also on bulletin boards around town. The program could be on a weeknight beginning at 6 or 7 p.m. or it could be on a Sunday afternoon. If you would be interested in attending, and one of these possibilities would work better for you, please call or email Sue at the Library (217) 684-2896, or Philopublib@gmail.com. The program should last between one to one and a half hours.

That is all for today, thanks for reading.