

ACCENT

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Max
Fitzpatrick

Historical work gets done, even far away

You have probably heard a familiar phrase that begins, "I don't mean to talk about myself, but ..."

Of course, the person proceeds to do just that. Well, this month's letter follows those lines.

It will relate tales about what an old historian does when he gets away from home.

My wife, Lois, and I winter in a small cow town in Florida. It is in rural DeSoto County.

When we get settled in our place, we hook up with the local historical society to find out how we can help out. This year the group has several projects under way.

A new headquarters and museum will be housed in an abandoned school building in Brownville, Fla. The local school corporation is restoring the two-story brick building to perfection. The DeSoto Historical Society will move in soon.

Another project is the restoration of a "cracker" house. These were wooden houses built with large porches on three sides and huge dormers in the roof to let the heat out. The word "cracker" comes from the sound of the long whips used by early cowboys during round-ups of stray cattle.

These people lived in such a house.

This house project was started before Hurricane Charley, and all of the work was lost when the wind blew it off the foundation.

In the near future the county will celebrate its third annual Pioneer Day. This portrays the yesterday life around Old Arcadia, Fla., through displays, demonstrations, food, exhibits, music and story telling.

A side note here is that Arcadia burned to the ground in 1906. Last year a commemoration was conducted to honor early pioneers who stood in the ashes and declared that the town could rise again.

Lois and I will help plan and present this year's Pioneer Day along with helping with the annual rodeo in a food booth.

The rodeos here also play out an old-time theme. There are shoot-outs in the street during the parade and a very impressive performance in the arena on rodeo days. The Arcadia Rodeo is known as the granddaddy of them all.

Old historians also enjoy athletic events.

We follow the DeSoto County High School boys basketball team. They are 21-1 as they near the end of their season.

So until next time, I will close with a "yippee-ki-yeh." Get along, all you Bulldogs.

Johnson County Historian Max Fitzpatrick is a longtime community volunteer and retired educator.

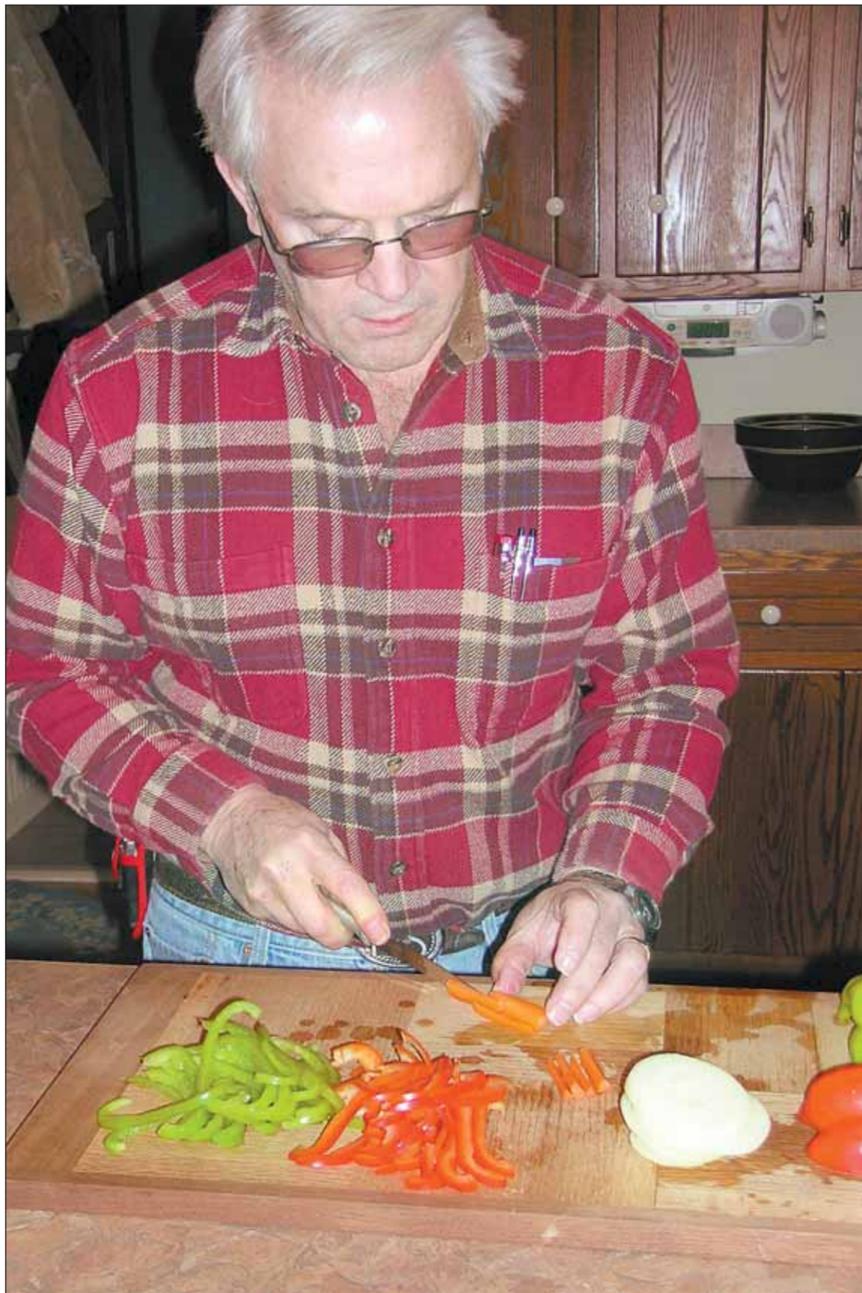
Don't buy just any old vacuum

Fine Living Network

Vacuum cleaners are one appliance to spend more for. Here's how to buy it once and buy it right.

- Analyze the flooring in your home. Canisters are best for places that have more bare floors than carpet. They're also handy in hard-to-vacuum places like stairs.
- When shopping, don't get caught up in the number of amps. Amperage only refers to the amount of electrical current, not the suction power.
- Lift the vacuum in the store; it should be substantial. A light vacuum is built for comfort, not durability.
- Look for a cog belt versus a flat belt. They're more reliable.
- Things like "dirt sensors" are features that just jack up the price and don't impact overall performance.
- Before you head to the checkout, plug the vacuum in. A good quality machine will operate quietly.

Warm up with hit-the-spot foods



Harold Shaeffer of Greenwood cuts peppers and onions for a veggie chicken packet that he makes with rice and Worcestershire and soy sauces. The meal can be made ahead of time and cooked when needed.

Snowy landscapes call for time-tested culinary arts

By ANNETTE JONES
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Freezing cold weather calls for comfort food. Temperatures hovering near zero make soup, stews and casseroles taste even tastier. Favorite dishes such as macaroni and cheese, potato soup and chili warm body and soul for many southside families.

Debbie Shay of Martinsville, a barber at Tracy Plaza Barbershop in New Whiteland, has a reputation for making the best macaroni and cheese in her family.

Just ask her nephews, who always request it.

Leslie Myrick of Bargersville, online marketing director for the Daily Journal, has everyone smacking their lips when she makes her white chili for company pitch-ins.

Cooking came later in life for Harold Shaeffer of Greenwood.

After Shaeffer retired before his wife, Janice Shaeffer, a third-grade teacher at Sugar Grove Elementary School, he decided to take over the cooking chores.

"Now I'm going to cook for you," he told his wife.

Before he retired, the only thing he made was chili and fried eggs, Janice Shaeffer says.

"Now, he's the cook and I'm the baker," she says.

She says he's a better cook than she is. "He's very precise," she says, watching him slice green and red peppers and onions for a veggie chicken packet he was preparing for the evening's meal.

Now that they are both retired, Harold Shaeffer tries to find simple but healthy recipes they can both prepare in their travel trailer as they roam the country.

He searches for ideas in food magazines and free pamphlets he finds at the supermarket, as well as on TV cooking shows.

"When she was still working, I'd fix a meal and take it to them," he says of his wife's co-workers.

It was a treat for everyone, she says.

COMFORT-FOOD RECIPES

Macaroni and cheese

1 2-pound box of macaroni cooked to package directions
 ½ stick butter
 2 cups milk
 ¼ of a large stick of Velveeta cheese product
 2 cups shredded cheese
 Salt and pepper to taste.
 1 tablespoon flour
 Place cooked macaroni in buttered or oiled 9-by-13-inch baking dish.

Melt butter in sauce pan. Add milk and about tablespoon flour to thicken slightly.

Add Velveeta and stir to melt. Add shredded cheese, salt and pepper. Stir to mix until the cheese melts.

Pour cheese sauce over the macaroni and sprinkle with more shredded cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes.

Debbie Shay,
Martinsville



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Veggie chicken packet

Recipe for one serving
 2 tablespoons uncooked instant rice
 1 boneless chicken breast half
 ¼ cup sliced carrot
 2 onion slices, separated into rings
 ¼ cup green and sweet red pepper, julienne
 1 tablespoon water
 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
 2 to 3 teaspoons soy sauce
 1 tablespoon butter
 Place rice in the center of a piece of heavy-duty foil (about 14 inches square); top with chicken and vegetables.

Combine the water, Worcestershire sauce and soy sauce and pour over vegetables. Dot with butter. Fold foil around the chicken and vegetables and seal tightly. Place in a baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 65 to 75 minutes or until juices run clear.

Open foil carefully to allow steam to escape. Repeat recipe for as many servings as needed. Can be prepared ahead and cooked before serving.

Harold and Janice Shaeffer,
Greenwood

White chili

1 large jar of northern beans
 1 jar salsa
 1 bag shredded Colby and Jack cheese
 1 can chicken broth
 3 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
 Boil chicken breasts in water on top of stove until done.
 Meanwhile, in crock pot, heat northern beans, salsa, shredded cheese and chicken broth. (It may look too soupy, but it isn't after it cooks.)
 Cook about two hours. Add cooked, shredded chicken breasts and stir well to mix. The chili tastes best if made the day before and then reheated.

Leslie Myrick,
Bargersville

Country potato soup

3 cups diced pared potatoes
 ½ cup diced celery
 ½ cup diced onion
 1 ½ cups water
 2 chicken bouillon cubes
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 cups milk (divided)
 1 cup sour cream
 2 tablespoons flour
 1 teaspoon chopped chives
 Bacon for garnish.
 Combine potatoes, celery, onion, water, bouillon cubes and salt in a large saucepan. Cover; cook for about 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender.
 Add 1 cup milk, heat. Mix sour cream, flour, chives and remaining milk in medium bowl. Stir sour cream mixture into soup base gradually.
 Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until thickened.
 Yield: 6 cups

Harold and Janice Shaeffer,
Greenwood

Barbecue sandwiches

3 pounds beef pot roast or pork
 ½ cup water
 ½ cup milk
 4 tablespoons vinegar
 6 tablespoons Worcestershire
 2 tablespoons chili powder
 1 bottle barbecue sauce
 Place meat in slow cooker. Mix all other ingredients and pour over meat. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours.

Remove meat and shred. Dump liquid from slow cooker. Add meat and barbecue sauce and let cook on low 1 to 2 more hours.

Harold and Janice
Shaeffer, Greenwood



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