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Paper 'n Ink... foodies despair...

By Lynn Brisendine

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect and give thanks. But, and it's a good thing, this holiday is known for its feast.

Baked, smoked, fried, anyway you wish to cook a turkey makes for a great dinner. Throw in some of my mother's, and now my wife's, cornbread dressing, add a little giblet gravy and I am looking forward to the holiday with eagerness.

Food is in the news, maybe as never before in some regards. Being a "foodie" has suddenly come into the fore. Clubs are springing up across the country where people join to share recipes, and pair wine with whatever is placed in a plate before them.

Television channels are filled with so many different cooking shows that you can, if you wish, watch how the pro chefs fix differing foods 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Many of these shows feature chefs competing against each other in timed contests using selected ingredients. At times the judges, or tasters, are critical to such an extent as to be mean.

Other shows spread out over the dial see the hosts take the audience to different locations in this country and many times across the globe. Some of the foods featured aren't at all typical to West Texas and at times watching someone cook and eat various dishes is simply too much and the only option is to turn the channel.

We have different food items for different times of the year. Thanksgiving is so traditional that the turkey, maybe a ham, some dressing, a little cranberry sauce, a nice green bean casserole is finished off with a slice of pumpkin pie slathered with a large dollop of whipped cream.

At other times, say in the summer at a ballgame, the fare usually consists of hot dogs, french fries and a cold drink. But, even these traditions are changeable these days. A trip to the ballpark can find a wide selection of foods, from the simple dog on a bun with mustard to a diners delight featuring a several course meal to be eaten in a fancy suite dining room featuring white tablecloths and huge windows to watch the action on the field.

Foods are, it seems, always in the news. This past week we found out that a bakery in the DFW area was going bankrupt and, in the doing, some old-time treats may leave grocery shelves.

The bad news told us that Twinkies were going to be a thing of the past. This news was so played up that I actually had a moment where I craved on of the little cakes filled with a special cream. I said nearly craved. I sat watching this turmoil over the possibility of no more Twinkies and tried to recall the last time I actually ate one.

Years floated by in my head and I honestly think it's been decades since I ate one these mini cakes.

Somewhere, way back when, I took the criticism of these cakes to heart and decided that eating them was not the best choice. Perhaps it was one TV talking head, years back, that said if this country should ever face a doomsday nuclear attack, the only survivors would be cockroaches and Twinkies.

This bakery also produced American snack staples like Ding Dongs, Snowballs, and Wonder Bread. The first two in that list are filled with fat, sugar and artificial stuff that is both unpronounceable and hard to digest.

Of course, the demise of these food items is not welcome news. Apparently this, from the myriad reports concerning these treats over the last week, sees 18,000 people losing their employment. Goodness, I had no idea that such a number of people made their livings by making these gastronomical no-nos.

Talk, of late, is that some Mexican billionaire is considering buying the recipes and the equipment and moving the business to Mexico.

Whatever, I wish him luck, but he shouldn't count on seeing any of my money. That craving I mentioned earlier lasted only a few moments and I realized that I wasn't going to miss something I hadn't eaten in many years anyway.

But then, like so much of what takes place in today's reality, my opinion and my lack of interest in Twinkies, Ding Dongs, Snowballs and Wonder Bread isn't going to make any difference.

However, one interview about this situation got my attention. The folks at the State Fair are worried that they will not be able to serve one of their epicurean delights, deep fried Twinkies. I never ate one of them either, but now...well they've got me really wanting one of the, probably, worst things you could ever eat.

Back to this Thanksgiving and all it stands for in our national tradition.

So much to be thankful for this special day in 2012. Just being an American is reason enough to say a special prayer on this Thanksgiving Day.

You and I, though, can also be grateful for being Texans, and as far as I'm concerned being a West Texan is even more reason to say thanks.

I suppose every person who enjoys living wherever that might be, mostly likes their home area and thinks themselves fortunate in the doing.

Living on the high plains has advantages.

No one is lobbing missiles indiscriminately at us. We live in a land of plenty and many of us will eat too much and then retire to a couch and watch the football games. What a life...

Happy Thanksgiving.

Wright Words...

By Dustin Wright
Sentinel Managing Editor

Growing up, I was active in the Boy Scouts, from the tender age of five or six up until the start of junior high.

Looking back on those times, I recall some great memories: pushcar derbies, pinecar derbies, making crafts, learning different skills and building friendships.

However, one thing from my scouting days tends to haunt me to this day.

A haunt which I have outgrown over the years but still occasionally causes me to shutter. Still causes me to wake up with cold sweats in the middle of the night.

Popcom.

For those not familiar with the Boy Scouts of America, the organization annually hosts a popcom sale fund raiser, where portions of popcom sales go toward the BSA for projects -- much like the more famous Girl Scouts and their oh so delicious cookies (the peanut butter ones are my favorite, if you're wondering.)

If memory hasn't failed me, I believe our local troop and/or individuals were challenged to be the top in sales for some sort of prize, which I believe was a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond at the time. With interest over years, that could make me millions!

Challenge accepted by this noble scout.

Not to boast, but I was a regular of Billy Mayes (God rest his soul) in selling popcom to the masses in Seminole in my youth. I (with the driving and selling assistance of my parents) spent countless evenings about town, so I could peddle of all things popcom.

Orville Redenbacher would have been proud to have known me and my abilities to push the delectable kernels.

In fact, one year, I had sold so much popcom that the delivery of the goods made two specific stops in Seminole, Texas that year: one being the M.S. Doss Scout Building to drop deliveries to the other members of Local Pack 705, the other to the Wright residence on S.W. 5th St. where the remaining 4,000 brown cardboard boxes were off-loaded into the living room of my parent's roughly 1,600 sq ft house.

Thus my nightmare began. Selling was the fun part of the job.

"Would you like to buy some popcom?" "Here's what we have."

"You can pay now, if you'd like."

Delivering the popcom, however, was far from fun.

At the end of a long day at school, where education was at the forefront of my day's agenda (I wonder how many of you actually believe that line), either my Mom or Dad, and I, would load up the van after supper with a pre-planned route of popcom boxes and tins of all shapes and sizes, and make our way out for deliveries.

"Here's your popcom. Thank you for buying from me. I hope you enjoy it."

I'm certain the enthusiasm I possessed while delivering the popcom was comparable to that of a Chicago Cubs fan realizing his beloved Cubbies were out of the postseason hunt -- in mid June.

I find myself muttering these words from time to time, sometimes uncontrollably when the smell of popcom wafts its way to the olfactory sensors inside my schnoz.

To this date, I am not a popcom fan.

Occasionally, I will grab a handful of popcom from my Dad when he has some at a ballgame. Even rarer -- comparable to that of a total eclipse -- I'll pop a bag of popcom at Casa de Wright.

But there are still those occasional nightmares (which outweigh the times I place a couple of popcom kernels in my mouth). The fear of thousands, upon thousands, of popcom boxes. The dreadfully long hours of riding in the car, selling and delivering, delivering and selling.

All for what? A savings bond that only gained \$8.47 cents in interest after several years of hoping I would make millions off my investment.

Sigh...

Now, if you'll excuse me, I am going to look up the number for a qualified shrink to see if we could address this popcom nightmare issue once and for all. I believe I have waited long enough.

Letter to the Editor

P.O. Box 1260 Seminole, Texas 79360
Sign and include address and phone number...
You may also send your letter via the Internet send it to

sentinel@crosswind.net

The Sentinel requests that letters be concise and reserves the right to edit for libelous content or inappropriate language and space. We will edit a letter to conform with the standards we use in publishing a responsible community newspaper.

The Seminole Sentinel welcomes and will publish engagement and wedding stories under a long time policy. The Sentinel will accept and publish for free weddings which are newsworthy. We will provide our readers this service with the understanding that we reserve the right to edit the content for space. We will not accept (for free) a wedding story which details an event more than one month old. Should you wish to have a story published concerning an event more than a month old, we have an affordable and workable wedding package available.

Thanks for reading...
the Seminole Sentinel
and seminolesentinel.com



State Capital Highlights

Compiled by Ed Sterling, Texas Press Association



Perry says no to creation of health care exchanges

AUSTIN — Nov. 16 was the deadline for Texas and the other states to declare their intentions regarding the formation of health care exchanges, as set forth in the federal "Affordable Care" law, referred to by some as "Obama Care."

Gov. Rick Perry's declaration came in the form of a Nov. 15 letter to U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

"As long as the federal government has the ability to force unknown mandates and costs upon our citizens, while retaining the sole power in approving what an exchange looks like, the notion of a state exchange is merely an illusion," Perry wrote, adding, "It would not be fiscally responsible to put hard-working Texans on the financial hook for an unknown amount of money to operate a system under rules that have not even been written."

Perry originally declared his intention not to implement a state exchange or expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act in a July letter to Sebelius.

Meanwhile, on Nov. 15, state Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, filed Senate Bill 84, legislation proposing to create a state health care exchange. The legislation would make it possible for Texas families and individuals who are unable to obtain coverage through their employer to purchase a reasonably priced policy through the exchange.

Ellis said SB 84 "will bring tens of billions of dollars to the state, expand Medicaid to approximately 1.5 million additional Texans, set up a state health insurance exchange that works for Texas and guarantees that the Commissioner of

Insurance has the tools necessary to ensure rates are fair and affordable. The expansion of Medicaid costs less in four years than what Texas hospitals spend on the uninsured population in one year. The needs of these individuals will not disappear if we fail to expand Medicaid, but we will lose out on a nine to one match that other states will utilize and we will continue to pass the cost down to local hospitals and ultimately to taxpayers," Ellis added.

Ellis, in his effort, faces Republican majorities in the state Senate, the state House and the governor's veto power, should SB 84 pass both Senate and House.

Prediction: busy Texas roads

Texans who travel over the Thanksgiving holiday will have plenty of company on the road, Texas Department of Transportation reported on Nov. 14.

According to TxDOT, results of a reader survey from Texas Highways -- the state's official travel magazine -- show "48 percent of Texans plan to travel, and among those, 92 percent said they will be traveling by car on Texas roadways."

Before setting out, drivers can check road conditions by visiting DriveTexas.org.

Officials call for drug screening

Gov. Perry on Nov. 14 was joined by state Sen. Tommy Williams, R-The Woodlands, state Rep. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe, and other Republican lawmakers to call for reforms to the state's welfare and unemployment benefit programs, including authorizing drug screenings for those applying for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Sen. Jane Nelson, R-Lew-

isville, pre-filed SB 11 for the upcoming legislative session to require drug screening for temporary assistance program applicants, and Williams, the governor's office reported, plans to file a bill to require drug screening for unemployment insurance applicants.

A governor's office news release reported the Texas Association of Business and National Federation of Independent Business joined the officials in a news conference in support of the proposed welfare reforms.

Tax revenue increases again

State sales tax revenue in October was \$2.03 billion, up 8.2 percent compared to October 2011, Texas Comptroller Susan Combs said Nov. 7.

Combs pointed out that the growth in sales tax revenue continued to be led by collections from the oil and natural gas-related sectors, while strong consumer spending drove gains in retail trade and the restaurant sector.

Combs said she would send November local sales tax allocations totaling \$611.5 million to cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts, up 5.4 percent compared to November 2011.

Unemployment figures improve

Texas Workforce Commission on Nov. 16 reported the state's unemployment rate dropped to 6.6 percent in October from 6.8 percent in September.

Also, employers added 36,600 total nonfarm jobs in October for a total of 277,400 jobs added in Texas over the year. The national unemployment rate was reported at 7.9 percent.

