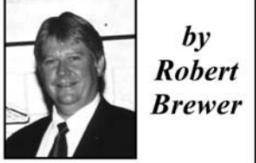


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Extension Tips



by Robert Brewer

Many Americans are trying to beat rising food prices by growing and preserving food at home. Food preservation may save money for some, but not for everyone. There are many reasons for preserving food at home. Some have to do with finding ways to save money, while others may have to do with satisfaction, creativity or family tradition. The two most common forms of food preservation are canning and freezing. Freezing is a quicker way to prepare food for long-term storage than canning or drying, she said. Frozen produce, if carefully preserved, also tastes more like fresh than other preserving methods.

It costs between 38 and 50 cents a year to maintain a freezer for one pound of food, not including the cost of the produce.

In general, chest freezers are less expensive to run, but upright freezers can be more convenient, she said. Better insulated freezers can cost more to purchase, but less to operate. Frost-free freezers cost as much more to operate than conventional defrost freezers.

To keep freezing costs down: remember the following tips:

Don't place the freezer in a warm place like the laundry room near heat-producing appliances, as freezers in warm rooms use more electricity.

Keep the door closed. Opening the door frequently uses more energy to keep the food cold.

Buy the size you need. Large freezers use more electricity.

A full freezer is more efficient and uses less electricity per pound.

Clean condenser coils and defrost freezers as needed.

A well-managed freezer can save time, energy and gas from fewer trips to the store. To get the most out of your home freezer, freeze only foods that the family likes to eat, and in packaged amounts that can be served at one time.

When freezing foods, be

sure to use the proper packaging to protect flavor, color, moisture content and nutritional value from the dry conditions of the home freezer.

Containers should be moisture-vapor resistant, durable, leak proof, flexible, crack resistant at low temperatures and easy to seal and mark, she said. Rigid plastic containers can be used for liquids. Freezer bags and wraps are more suitable for dry-pack products that contain little or no liquid.

Vacuum packaging is recommended for dry packages. Read the manufacturer's directions carefully when using a packaging machine for wet foods. Vacuum packaging removes the air that can lead to drying, oxidation and off-flavors even at freezer temperatures.

There are also ways to minimize air trapped in other types of pack. That is an important factor to control in all freezing.

Canning can be a less expensive way of storing food than freezing, but more time and energy are spent to prepare and process the foods. Canning some foods can be difficult for beginners and it requires preserving foods by using methods that keep the food safe when stored at room temperatures.

Food may spoil and make you sick if reliable canning directions are not followed exactly. Costs associated with canning include the purchase of canners, jar funnels, lifters, jars and lids. The cost of water, fuel and extra ingredients like vinegar, sugar and spices must also be counted.

Canning jars cost \$7 to \$12 a dozen, but can be used for many years if handled carefully. Lids, however, need to be purchased every year and cost around 12 to 30 cents each when bought in small quantities.

The cost of added ingredients can be minimal with vegetables. Most recipes call for up to one teaspoon of salt per quart jar. But, sweeteners for jams and jellies, or spices and specialty peppers for pickles and salsas, can add significant costs.

Consumers should also compare the cost of similar food purchased at the grocery store. Try to find economical sources for foods if you are trying to save money over purchasing them at the grocery store.

There are different preservation methods for many foods. Choose one that works for your family and produces the form of food you like.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

"We tread the endless circles of our own habits and ideas while around us the world is changed beyond recognition." Walter Russell Mead

Fundamental change is occurring in the world. That statement is true on any given day, but there are times when we are more aware of change and how it affects our day to day lives. If you are living off of the proceeds of a retirement account embedded in the stock market, you are acutely aware of change. Last week over a trillion dollars simply vanished from that casino. If you are trying to feed a family on a budget, you were not fooled by the deceptive changes in packaging designed to obscure smaller amounts for the same price. Packages can't get much smaller so now prices go up without the attempted subterfuge. Yes, living on a budget, you are also acutely aware of change. If you are working part time at a retail store because you haven't been able to find steady work in construction for over two years, you were among the first to be aware of change.

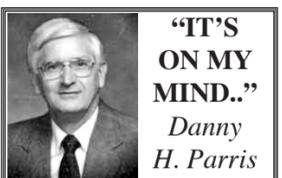
This is not the beginning of another recession. It is the continuation of a correction. It is the inevitable result of basing an economy on consumption and allowing that economy to become infested with parasitic institutions and practices which extract value while producing nothing of value. It is the inevitable result of allowing government and the businesses which own it to pay for their worldwide financial empire (and the military infrastructure which supports it) by borrowing from the future as well as robbing from the present by devaluing the currency. Every time the government devalues the dollar by creating new ones out of thin air, the percentage of our incomes required to pay for food, fuel and other necessities goes up. The dollar has lost about 15% of its purchasing power in the last year alone.

Though change is inevitable, we resist it, and the older we get, the more we are inclined to resist. Many of us are still in denial. We think that in time, things will go back to "normal." I'm here to tell you my friends, that this will not happen. What we came to view as "normal" in America was anything but. At the height of our affluence, we consumed more resources and more energy per capita than any civilization in the history of mankind. That affluence was built on manufacturing, but government meddling made it more profitable for companies

to ship jobs overseas, so we lost our manufacturing base. That affluence was built on technical innovation and scientific advance, but today innovation is choked by litigation (watch Microsoft and Google arguing over patents) and science takes a back seat to food stamps (for the first time NASA, which was responsible for so much of the technical advances which created jobs and grew the economy, is without a mission).

In the past we have looked to the political process for remedies to our problems. As Dr. Phil might say, "How's that working for you?" In recent weeks Congress gave us a fine example of just how ineffective the political process has become. A permanent political class intent on maintaining power is not an effective agent of change. Add to the dilemma the sad fact that too many of us are demanding a change back to the good old days. Our expectations are unrealistic, but this will not stop politicians from making promises they can never deliver. Stir into the mix a frightened and angry element determined to frame every problem in moral or religious terms and what you have is a recipe for a country paralyzed by inaction while the world changes around us.

What then, can we do as individuals? First of all we must accept that the world has changed and we must be prepared to change as well. To thrive in the new world an individual or an organization must be smarter, leaner and more efficient. We should not abandon our conservative values, but we should look for "liberal" ideas to address the problems we all face, ideas that will come from thinking outside the box of our habitual views and practices. We should not abandon the political process. Tyranny is not a good alternative to a corrupt and bloated democracy. However, we should apply a more ruthless criteria to our candidates. Instead of candidates who tell us what we want to hear, wrapped in the flag and deep fried in religion, candidates who demonize the opposition and warn us of the dangers posed by all our enemies but have little to offer in new ideas, we should instead look for candidates who are willing to tell us the truth. Only if we are willing to hear the truth and act on it will we be able to become our own agents of change. Otherwise we will huddle against the coming storm in such shelters as we have been able to prepare.



"IT'S ON MY MIND.." Danny H. Parris

Waiting for the other shoe to drop

We live in a hurrying world. We seem to be hurrying up to wait. We hurry to the restaurant and wait in line. We hurry to the doctor's office or to the hospital, sign in and wait to be called. We rush to the airport to catch a departing flight, or to meet someone on an arriving flight, only to sit and wait. We drive like mad to meet our deadlines only to get tied up in traffic where we sit and wait. We go to supermarkets, department stores and home building stores and almost all the time you get in line and wait to pay for your purchases. Some businesses issue numbers to their customers and you wait until your number is called. Some people are happily waiting for retirement (or they were until a few days ago). Others are anxiously waiting for results from medical tests. Some people are on important waiting lists. Lately, it seems that most of the world has been waiting for the other shoe to drop. There have been so many natural disasters and national calamities that most folks are waiting for more bad news - "What's going to happen next," seems to be on the mind of the multitude. Masses of individuals have been waiting for that call for a job interview and they are weary of waiting. Most of our population is tired of our political parties in Congress waiting each other out. The voices are crying out "stop playing the waiting game, we have waited long enough." For most of our marriage my wife and I have been waiting with people. We have been waiting up with folks or waiting out situations or waiting to see the outcome

of events and experiences. In my time of waiting I have watched how others wait: at traffic lights, waiting to be seated at restaurants, waiting for their food, or waiting for the elevator to arrive. But it has been in the hospital waiting room that I have gained the most knowledge of how people wait. Some wait very quietly and privately. Others are nervous, talk incessantly and cannot remain in the same position very long. They constantly move their arms and legs, sit, stand and walk about. A lot of people read. Some people read books; some newspapers and others scan every magazine available. The younger generation surfs the web or listens to I-Pods. A lot of women cross stitch, crochet or work crossword puzzles. In my observation women wait better than men. They wait productively. Then there are those who seem to wait prayerfully and meditatively. The Bible has much to say about waiting. Paul says that the whole creation is groaning and travailing, waiting for God's complete redemption. As Christian believers we are not waiting for the other shoe to drop but waiting for His Son to descend. Simeon, a just and devout man was waiting for the promised Messiah. He was not waiting on death, but he was waiting for light, life and peace. It was when he had seen the Christ Child that he said, "Now, let thy servant depart in peace." Job said, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job 14:14). Isaiah said, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). In your times of waiting, my God grant you patience, and may God help you to be faithful. When your change comes may it be for the better. Wait, I say, upon the Lord!

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Our two-year-old and four-year-old share a room, but they just won't stay in bed. So I sometimes stagger their bedtimes, and put the little one down first, then sneak in the older one. But it's just so time-consuming. I thought about switching their bedroom to a smaller room and keep all toys out of the bedroom. Right now, their room is both playroom and bedroom, and I think that's part of the problem. Any suggestions?

A: I'm not sure I know what your question is. First, two young kids sleeping in the same room is a natural setting for them to spark off of each other and want to play. Especially now that they know it's got mom all cranked up. So one option is to let 'em play. Remove as much of the fun stuff from the room as possible. If they get up and play for a while there is probably very little harm done. You can put them to bed earlier the next night as a consequence if you wish, but that isn't going to register very high on the Richter scale of the two-year old.

You have actually found a solution...stagger their bed times. Admittedly, it takes a little extra time, but remember all these "annoyances" (as compared to flagrant disobediences) are only for a time and will go away soon - unless mom makes a huge issue out of them; then they tend to hang around longer because kids love to push mom's buttons.

Another option you suggest - there is a bedroom and a playroom and you are thinking about moving them to the play room. So why not put one of them there and leave the other one in the bedroom? Am I missing something here? Maybe I should suggest that you get creative. Buy ear plugs; remove the bulb from the lamp in their room; move the kids' room to the garage - one in the back seat of the car, the other in the back of the SUV - make it like camping; why not one in the attic, one in the basement... I'm only kidding of course, but wouldn't it be wonderful if all of our parenting issues were no more life-threatening than this one!

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

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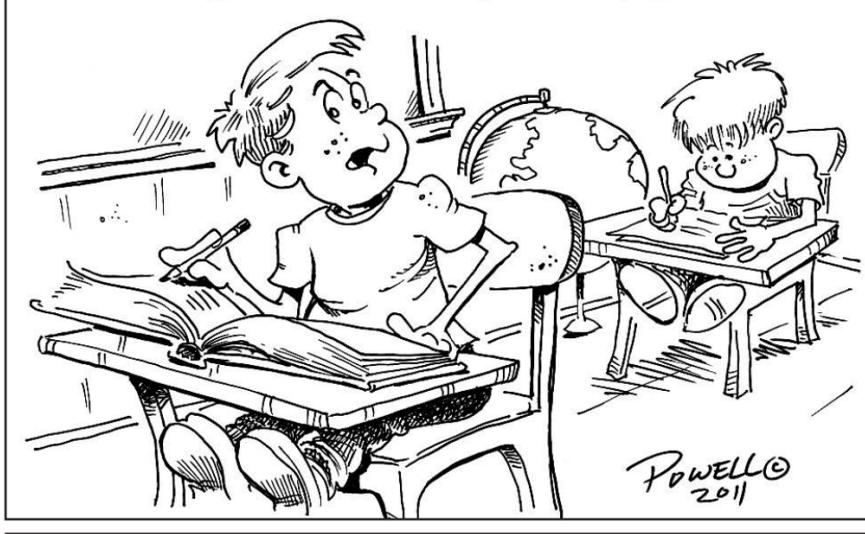
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