

THE BERKELEY PLACE POOBAH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BERKELEY PLACE ASSOCIATION, FORT WORTH, TX



PRESIDENT'S LETTER ROSS DOUGLASS, BPA PRESIDENT



Hello Friends and Neighbors,

We've come a long way from 1909 with the Fort Worth Zoo having only one lion, two bear cubs, an alligator, coyote, peacock and a few rabbits. I wonder what the founders would say if they could see droves of people lined up during Spring Break to get a glimpse of the now 7,000+ native and exotic animals? Living next to a nationally ranked zoo is exciting, and I kind of feel like one of those peacocks wanting to show it off. However, I am not blind as a bat to the challenges that come with such an attraction in a residential setting. I want to thank everyone in Berkeley for their feedback, encouragement, and suggestions for improvements for future Spring Break traffic. Most of all, I want to thank you for your grace and pa-

tience. I do understand some residents are affected more than others with the traffic and congestion. Thomas Hanes and I will present all of the feedback and information to the Berkeley Zoo Traffic Committee in order to assist them with organizing an agenda to advocate for Berkeley when meeting with the zoo, city, FWPD, and T/PW.

To get a full picture of how the traffic impacts those residents outside of our own streets, Thomas and I walked the zoo traffic on Wednesday. Let me just say—WOW. As we walked down Forest Park Blvd, a gentleman rolled



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NEXT MEETING OF THE BPA
MAY 13, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M.
LOCATION TBD



PRESIDENT'S LETTER (CONTINUED)

down his car window and asked, "Do y'all know what this traffic is about? All we are trying to do is get to the zoo." We told him he was in the right spot because the line of cars in front of him were all going to same place, the zoo. He then laughingly said, "I thought something was going on at TCU." Close, but no cigar.



We continued our walk along the loop from Forest Park, Park Hill, University and Colonial. As we encountered zoo patrons walking, we would ask where they parked. Answers ranged from Fiesta grocery store on 8th Avenue, Westbend parking garage on University to Baylor Scott and White hospital parking garage. In my opinion, the Fort Worth Zoo is worth every step. However, I'm not toting small humans on my hip, on my back, or both. We are lucky to live close enough to enjoy the highly esteemed zoo anytime we want, but I would bet all my souvenir money it is probably not going to be on Spring Break's half-price Wednesday.



(Continued on the next page)

PRESIDENT'S LETTER (CONTINUED)



President's Prime Time:



From an award-winning zoo to an award-winning family, please meet the Weldons: Rachel, Lynnlee (9), Guy (6) and Piper (2) who live on Rockridge Terrace.

1) Q: How long have you lived in Berkeley?

A: 2 ½ years.

2) Q: Career

A: Retail Property Management

3) Q: What is your hometown?

A: Rachel: Waco, TX

Lynnlee, Guy & Piper: Fort Worth, TX

4) Q: What attracted you to Berkeley?

A: Lily B. Clayton plain and simple.

5) Q: What are your favorite things about Berkeley?

A: Friendly people and close to city amenities.

6) Q: Suggestions to make Berkeley better?

A: Don't change a thing, leave it the way it is.

7) Q: What makes a good neighbor?

A: Shout out Penny and the neighbors who are willing to help out. That include homemade cookies, moving trash cans, tracking down my dog.

8) Q: How would you describe the neighborhood?

A: Friendly and it takes a village.

Thank you to the Welden family for allowing me to interview them so that the neighborhood can get to know them a little better. In my continued efforts to interview BPA residents that you and I might not know next month's family has been living in Berkeley for over 50 years on Warner Road. Any guesses as to whom it might be?

ISAAC'S STORM BY ERIK LARSON

REVIEW BY TERESA PERKINS

During our family's recent trip to Galveston, I purchased the book, *Isaac's Storm* by Erik Larson, at the gift shop in Bishop's Palace. I have read Larson a few times, and I've always been interested in the 1900 hurricane that wiped out much of Galveston, so I picked it up. I read it almost straight through.

Larson is an excellent storyteller of absolutely true events. His research is thorough but also keeps you wanting a little bit more. If you are interested in and know a little bit about Galveston, his account of the epic storm is fascinating because you know the streets and you can picture the events leading up to the hurricane. The people were taken

so off guard—you can picture them walking along the Strand or having lunch at the Galvez. If you've never been in a hurricane, you'll feel like you have been after reading this book. The records that Larson uncovers from people who "weathered the storm" are detailed and tragic. Larson tells the story by following Isaac Cline, the resident meteorologist in the developing U.S. Weather Bureau. There is much more that could have been done to save the people and the city.

—Teresa Rose Elizabeth

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HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

BY TESS MCDONALD

The Berkeley Place Association puts on eight social events during the year for all ages to enjoy and publishes the excellent *Poobah* newsletter along with a neighborhood directory every two years. Your association also makes a nice donation to the feeder schools in our area, welcomes new neighbors, decorates for Christmas, and helps maintain Hargrove Park. We ask for a minimum donation of \$30; however, if you take advantage of all that is offered, we ask that you be generous in your giving.

A brand new way to pay your dues:

After determining that Venmo and PayPal take

out too much of your donation for fees, we are switching to Zelle. If you are not familiar with this method, it is very simple to do. Most banks offer Zelle, and all that is needed is to go to your bank APP, find Zelle and enter: treasurer@berkeleyplace.org to make a donation. It goes to the bank immediately with no delay and no fees involved. Should you choose not to use Zelle, just drop off a check to Joey Dierker, the BPA Treasurer, at 2209 Ward Parkway or mail to our P.O. Box 11447. Fort Worth 76110.

If you have already paid your dues, they have been received and noted and are much appreciated.



Gavin and Cole Newberry at Inks State Park near Burnet, Texas

2024 SOCIAL EVENTS CALENDAR

EASTER EGG HUNT TILLERY PARK 10A-12P	MARCH 23	SPRING GARAGE SALE	APRIL 13
ADULT HAPPY HOUR LOCATION TBD	MAY 4	4TH OF JULY PARADE PARADE ROUTE TO LILY B	JULY 4
FALL GARAGE SALE	SEPT 14	PUMPKINS IN THE PARK TILLERY PARK 4-6P	OCT 20
BERKELEY SENSORY SAFE HALLOWEEN 6-8P	OCT 26	SANTA IN THE PARK TILLERY PARK 9A-12P	DEC 14

EVENT DETAILS TO FOLLOW



"Don't wait for someone to bring you flowers...
Plant your own garden and decorate your own
soul." - Luther Burbank

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SOLAR ECLIPSE

BY JOHN MINNERLY, DVM,
UNIVERSITY ANIMAL HOSPITAL



“Do I need to worry about my pet’s eyes with the solar eclipse?” “Should I get them eclipse glasses?” “Do I need to keep them indoors?” The easy answer is no. Pets don’t care about the sun. They only care about the sunlight. They might look at it . . . briefly.

Of more concern is how they react to the darkness. You might notice some changes in your pet’s behavior as a result of the sudden darkness in the middle of the day. Pets that are food-motivated may start thinking that it is time for their evening meal. Some will expect their owners to be walking through the door after work in the middle of the day. Some of the more anxious pets may confuse perceived time with the actual time. Dogs that are already suffering from “sundowners” syndrome may face more confusion. Many may just feed off the excitement that their owners are feeling.

There have not been large studies on how pets react to solar eclipses. Between the fact that the solar eclipse is occurring in densely populated areas and that a large number of people have a way to video their pets, this has the potential of providing vast amounts of information. If you are home, videoing any abnormal behaviors your pet is experiencing may be beneficial to behaviorists. At least provide some good TikTok fodder.

The Fort Worth Zoo would be a good place to spend the eclipse. The zoo is participating in a study of the effects of the eclipse on various exotic animals. Watching the animals that aren’t keying on human reactions may be more entertaining. The metroplex is expecting a large influx of people for the eclipse, and the zoo may be crowded.

If your pet is anxious or is afraid of thunderstorms,

try making things as normal as possible them. If they take medication for thunderstorms, and you won’t be home to watch them, it would be best to medicate them to prevent undue anxiety. Closing curtains and blinds may help decrease their perception of any changes. Pets overall are expected to behave better than their human counterparts.

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IT'S A SMALL WORLD

BY CORKY ELKINS

I left Fort Worth when I became a stewardess for American Airlines in 1964 and was based in Los Angeles. I was gone for fifty-eight years but finally made it home two years ago. I always loved Berkeley and bought my little dream cottage to grow old in. I've been meaning to write this since I moved in but never took the time as life and having fun got in the way.

I closed on this house in January 2022. A few days later I was invited to have dinner with

a friend who lived in the Forest Park Apartments, and he also invited his longtime friends: Stanley and Cathy Baker. We were having cocktails when Smiley told the Bakers that I had just bought a house in Berkeley. It turned out Stanley had grown up in the house I bought—what a coincidence! We had much to talk about.

It was another three months before I could move in, but I made the house my own. I've always loved old houses in charming

neighborhoods and fell in love with mine when I first stepped onto the front porch. Once inside, when I saw the double fireplace, the pretty arches and arched, paned doors separating the living room and den, my dream came true. Only the kitchen was terrible, and I could start from scratch and get the kitchen of my dreams. I totally gutted the kitchen and utility room, turning the space into kitchen but gently touched everything else in the house.

(Continued on the next page)

IT'S A SMALL WORLD (CONTINUED)

Stanley loved my plans for his childhood home. When it was finished, and I had moved in, he brought his girls to see their grandparents' home where they had spent time as young children. The house had many happy memories for them, and I got a glimpse of the history of my home, firsthand.

Growing up, I had many friends who lived in Berkeley and always loved this neighborhood. Fort Worth is the biggest little

town in Texas, and Berkeley is still pretty much as it was when I was growing up. "Mr. Rogers' neighborhood." I have always stayed connected to friends of my youth at Alice Carlson, McLean, and Paschal (class of 1962). I host those friends a few times a year for our once-a-month dinner gathering. Mine is the perfect house for entertaining.

My dancing friends come for the "Almost Midnight Breakfast"

after Buddy's Big Band at South Side Preservation Hall every other month. This little cottage can entertain forty to fifty people and not feel crowded—it serves all my needs. The neighbors and neighborhood are so much more than I ever expected—a friendly neighborhood to grow old with. What more could you ask for?

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ROSIE'S BOOK CORNER

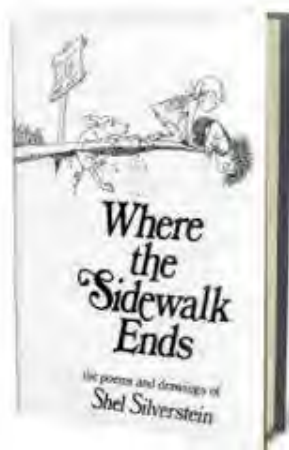
BY DEBRA MILLION

April is National Poetry Month so it's time to find more poets that children will fall in love with. You might think that there's no way your child would enjoy poetry, but I know that's not the case. A few years ago, I tutored first and second graders at Lily B. We worked on math. Yes, I can do first and second grade math and maybe third, but once those pesky letters come in around fifth grade, you know, $4 \times y - x$ $y - 6 =$, I'm out.

I am much more suited to be a reading tutor. The students would try so hard to progress in their reading. One day, I read some funny Shel Silverstein poems to them. I had found the magical carrot to dangle in front of their little noses! They loved the poetry so much that every time we had a tutoring session, the reward at the end was a few lines of Shel Silverstein.

The three books that were on our shelf were *A Light in the Attic*, 1981, *Falling Up*, 1996 and his first collection of poems, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, 1974. *A Light in the Attic* is dedicated to his daughter Shanna who died at age eleven.

Shel Silverstein was a poet, cartoonist, playwright, musician, and song writer. Some of the songs he wrote include Johny Cash's "A Boy Named Sue," and "Hey Loretta!" and "One's on the Way" for Loretta Lynn. He was the recipient of two Grammy Awards as well as being nominated for an Academy Award and a Golden Globe. Many of his works are adult themed so if you do want to introduce your children to his poetry, make sure you stick to his books specifically aimed at children. The poems are accompanied by his cockeyed and humorous black-and-white illustrations.



Here are two of our favorites from *A Light in the Attic*:

Surprise!

My Grandpa went to Myrtle Beach
And sent us back a turtle each
And then he went to Katmandu
And mailed a real live Cockatoo.
From Rio an iguana came,
A smelly goat arrived from Spain.
Now he's in India you see-
My Grandpa always thinks of me.

Tusk, Tusk

The Walrus got braces,
And that's why his face is
A tangle of wires and steel.
He'll sit and he'll wait
Till his tusks are both straight-

And then think how happy he'll feel!
(But meanwhile, they're ruining his meal.)

A Light in the Attic spent two years on The New York Times Bestseller list, outdoing other authors like John Grisham, Stephen King, and Michael Crichton. This year is a yearlong celebration of the anniversaries of some of Silverstein's best-loved works, *The Giving Tree*, *A Giraffe and a Half*, and *Who Wants a Cheap Rhinoceros?* are celebrating turning sixty and *Where the Sidewalk Ends* is turning fifty. It's a perfect year to add some Shel Silverstein to your bookshelf.



BRIX BARBECUE INFUSES HIP SOUTH MAIN WITH SMOKEY MEATS AND DOG-FRIENDLY PATIO

BY ERIN EAST



Brix Barbecue (“Brix”) started out in a parking lot across from Hop Fusion Brewery off South Main with a few picnic tables beside an Airstream, a smoker painted like a WWII-era bomber airplane and affectionately known as “Brisket Bomber,” the determination of homemade BBQ pitmaster, Trevor Sales, and his rescue dog Brix.

Brix, like many popular local BBQ joints, a la Heim and Panther City, started as a weekend pop-up with social media alerts posting the menu. Within minutes of the announcements, loyal fans formed long lines and as you got closer to the belly-rumbling smells of smokey meats, one feared the provisions just might run out and the butcher paper menu would be torn down for the day.

Owner Sales began the leap to a permanent restaurant in 2021, purchasing a spot on South Main at the corner of Rosedale. After numerous construction delays, Sales opened his restaurant in August 2023.

After the opening of the brick-and-mortar location, *Texas Monthly* critic Daniel Vaughn revisited Brix and dubbed it the best new spot in town, praising

Fort Worth’s “best collection of young barbecue joints in Texas.”

We often stood in line on Sunday afternoons when they featured their Le Brix Burger, a fresh two-patty smashburger with cheese and their secret Dank sauce, and a side of fries. After missing the grand opening last summer, we were eager to visit the restaurant. Auggie and I headed out mid-afternoon on Sunday, March 10, hungry and then disheartened when we arrived to a “Sold Out” sign. However, staff on site encouraged us to return at 5:00 p.m. as Sales has started back up his “Brix after Dark” re-opening each Sunday from 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. or sold out. And return we did!

Brix offers on Sunday evening “Steak Frites Night,” grilling up a 32 oz cowboy cut ribeye, a boatload of crinkle cut French fries with house seasonings and sides of chimichurri and Dank Sauce for \$59.99, aimed to serve two or more. Do not let a bit of sticker shock sway you; it will be one of the best ribeye’s you eat in the city without the deluxe steakhouse overhead price. You can order ahead online or gamble they won’t be sold out.

Upon receiving an impromptu side hug and plea, “But Mom! It’s Spring Break and we are in Fort Worth,” from Auggie, we placed an order for the Steak Frites, adding the Le Brix Burger and sides of tallow beans and Dank elotes, Brix’s version of Mexican street corn. Our entire order arrived on one sturdy aluminum tray. The medium rare ribeye, taking more than half the tray, was smoked and then finished on the grill. Auggie tackled his cowboy cut with the appetite of a fifteen-year-old but would not win the battle. He had steak and eggs the next day to finish every last bite.

(Continued on the next page)

BRIX BARBECUE INFUSES HIP SOUTH MAIN WITH SMOKEY MEATS AND DOG-FRIENDLY PATIO (CONTINUED)

The Le Brix Burger triggered memories of why I was willing to wait ninety minutes for this tasty, grease and melted cheese trickling down your wrist, beloved smash burger. The elotes don't stray from a traditional recipe of cilantro and crema fresca, with their Dank sauce adding to their intrigue. The tallow beans are a classic BBQ side, rich and creamy.

Brix does not have a huge dining room and seating is family-style. Additional seats are at the inside bar that will also open with a garage-style door to the outside patio on nice days. The patio is dog-friendly, with a handful of picnic tables. The inside bar offers Lonestar Beer on tap, but also has a full bar and more beers in cans. Attentive and cheerful staff were constantly helping clear empty containers and asking us if we needed anything. The vibe was lively, the line to order never receding, and the food outstanding.

Parking by the patio is limited to only four spots due to the outside smokers. We found street parking along Main and a sign noted additional parking around the corner.

We would often talk to Sales and his fiancé at the pop-ups, as he is a transplant from the Chicago area, and we attended college in Indiana and would joke and carry on about life up North. As Auggie and I enjoyed our irresistible Brix dinner, we saw Sales enter Brix, along with his wife and little girl. I watched Sales make the rounds talking to his staff, and then he and his guests dove into their Steak Frites. I really love their story, which can be found on their website; he had a dream and worked tirelessly to get it in motion. Now barbecue fans can fill up on prime barbecue while supporting a small business owner, who like me, someone from up North, fell in love with Fort Worth and made it their home and livelihood.

Brix Barbecue 817-386-4694 1012 South Main, Fort Worth, Open Thursday to Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or sold out and Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. or until sold out. Brix After Dark 5:00 p.m. Sundays.

Instagram @brixbarbecue

Sources: <https://www.texasmonthly.com/bbq/updated-brix-barbecue-fort-worth> and www.brixbarbecue.com



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JOY OF MEDICARE

MEDICARE MYTHS

BY FRANCES LOOK

So many Medicare myths out there. Not the fairy tale kind but the scary kind that will cost you lots of money. These myths come from all kinds of people—hospital staff, home aides, office workers, neighbors, and of course Facebook!

This is it. “Original Medicare is better than any kind of Supplement or Medicare Advantage.” What? The best way to debunk the myth is with actual money computations. Everyone speaks money. On Original Medicare the hospital alone is \$1632 for the first day. Every admittance. That is before the doctors, specialists, gazillion tests, anesthesiologist, and therapists add their fees. For days 61-90, the hospital alone is \$408 a day; for days 91-150, it is \$816 per day. After 150 Days, the patient pays 100 percent.

Now the biggie. There is absolutely no cap on what you will be charged. Let that sink in. No oversight. Hospitals can charge what they want.

Original Medicare is strictly an 80/20 (%) policy. Medicare pays 80 percent, patient pays 20 percent of charges. Remember, there is absolutely no cap on what you will be charged.

Just using a few national averages on costs for common surgeries. Heart: \$175,000–\$250,000; your 20 percent would be \$35,000–\$50,000. Hip or knee: \$50,000; your 20 percent is \$10,000. Spinal fusion: \$110,000; your 20 percent is \$22,000. Sepsis: \$one million plus, but your 20 percent is only \$200,000 plus. Maybe you have that lying around. I know I don't. If I did, I would want to spend it another way. Maybe this is why MediGap Plans and Medicare Advantage are so popular.

Myth buster. “Only Original Medicare covers a skilled nursing facility.” Wrong. Every Medicare Plan covers a skilled nursing facility. Original Medi-

care, MediGap, Medicare Advantage. The gotcha on all plans is that the patient must be hospitalized for three days and under a doctor's directive to get into a skilled nursing facility.

Myth buster. “Home Health Care is only covered under Original Medicare.” Wrong. Home Health Care is covered under all Medicare plans. The magic word is “health” in the name of the service. The home health agency caring for you must be certified by Medicare, ordered, and directed by your physician. “Home Care” is not covered. That is non-medical/personal care for activities of daily living. Examples are bathing, dressing, and bathroom help. Home care is not covered by Original Medicare or any Medicare plan. Never has been. Tricky wording, just the one little word!

Myth buster. “Long Term Care is covered by Original Medicare.” Wrong. Never has been, never will be. Not any plan, anytime, anywhere. No exceptions. This requires a separate Long Term Care Policy set up with a financial advisor or strictly self-funded.

Medicare is a federal program with federal guidelines from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. CMS for short. All MediGap or Medicare Advantage Plan must offer equal or greater than Original Medicare, never less.

Hope this clears up some of the myths.

Frances Look,
“MissMedicare101”
missmedicare101@gmail.com
972-510-7660



PLEASE SAY HELLO TO DANICA!

BY ROBIN FULTON



Danica is the ray of sunshine you've been dreaming of! This nine-month-old, 50 lb. tan-and-white hound mix is the perfect blend of love and goofiness. She's a smart cookie with a love for toys and a knack for couch snuggles. Danica's laid-back demeanor makes her the perfect companion for lazy days, but when it's playtime, she's all in! Get ready for lots of love and laughter with Danica by your side!

She and her sister, Hailie, were found at the Kennedale Racetrack. They were going from pit to pit looking for affection and food.

Rescued by Allie's Haven Animal Rescue in Fort Worth, she's the best of all worlds. She loves playing with her sister and foster pup siblings but is also a huge couch potato. Danica enjoys cuddling with her humans or sunbathing all by herself. Understandably, she was previously timid but is coming out of her shell. She's even gained enough courage to let her foster mom's cows sniff her! She's also good with kids. How about those crazy, cute ears? To top it all off, she's housetrained and has some basic training.



Good with Dogs, Good with Kids, Good with Adults, Good for Seniors/Elderly, Good with farm animals, somewhat vocal, Does Good in the Car, Does not require a yard, Crate trained, Plays fetch, Likes to play with toys, Likes to be in your lap, Playful, Affectionate, Eager To Please, Intelligent, Gentle, Goofy

If Danica sounds like a good fit for you, please put in an application on the adoption page at <http://www.allieshaven.org>. Thank you for considering giving this girl the life she deserves.



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Service Volunteers Needed

Berkeley Social Chairs want to create a list of high school students in need of service hours to help before, during or after events.

We will have clear descriptions and times of jobs as they are needed. We are happy to sign service hour logs and round up generously!

If interested, please email

SHELBY.RYON@GMAIL.COM

FROM BERKELEY KITCHENS

A GIANT HAMBURGER

JUDY ALTER

We call it Aunt Amy's Giant Hamburger at my house. Aunt Amy is the wife of my late ex-husband's only brother. Despite divorce and death, my family has stayed close to the New York Alters, who live in the Bronx. It's a recipe that has stood the test of time for me—like probably fifty years. It's written in Amy's careful hand on a 5 x 8 notecard which now makes me wonder if she was in school when she wrote it. The card is yellowed and stained with splashes, the ink fading and smudged.

A word about technique: if you have a fish grilling basket, that makes it easier to cook this hamburger. Double bonus if you can do it on the grill and get that good smoky flavor. But don't despair if you don't have the grill or the pan. Broil the burger on both sides, being careful with the flipping process. I'd suggest using a couple of plates rather than trying to flip it with spatulas as you do a smaller hamburger. I've also discovered that many dishes, like meatballs or salmon patties, hold together better if refrigerated before cooking. My mom's trick was to throw in a handful of dry tapioca, but I can't find that on the market these days. Also you'll note the recipe calls for a three-oz. jar of chopped mushrooms, which dates it. I gave up buying canned mushrooms years ago—just chop a quarter lb. of fresh mushrooms. I've also written out the margarine in favor of butter.

Ingredients (makes six servings):

- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1-1.5 cups seasoned herbed stuffing mix, crushed (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)
- 3-4 oz. chopped mushrooms, lightly sauteed
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup beef broth
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced green onions
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced almonds, toasted (I don't like nuts in a lot of things and omit these—you do you.)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup snipped parsley (also optional)
- 1 tsp. lemon juice (do not omit—makes a big difference)
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 lbs. ground beef
- 1 tsp. salt

Directions:

Melt butter in a medium saucepan. Remove from heat and add stuffing mix, mushrooms, beef broth, onions, parsley, almonds if using, and lemon juice. Thoroughly stir in the beaten egg. (Add it last so that other ingredients will cool the butter and not let it cook the egg.) Set mixture aside.

Combine meat and salt and divide into two equal portions. On sheets of aluminum foil, pat each half into an 8" circle. Spoon stuffing over one circle of meat, leaving a half-inch margin at the edges. Top with second circle and peel off the top piece of foil. Seal the edges of the two patties by pressing together. Invert the meat patty onto a well-greased grill basket or sheet pan and peel off remaining foil. Grill over medium coals 10-12 minutes on each side or until done. (See above for cooking it in the broiler.)

Cut into wedges, like a pie, and serve with ketchup. Aunt Amy suggested warmed ketchup, a nicety I'd never thought of. Potato salad would be a good side because it seems like a picnic meal.



SCAMS FOR EVERYONE, ESPECIALLY THE ELDERLY, TO AVOID IN 2024

BY BILL PARDUE

Didn't think I could combine the Fort Worth Zoo spring break week madness into my series on scams? Here, hold my . . . iced tea.

As Berkeley struggled/survived through another spring break of zoo traffic, you may not have noticed the story about the fraudulent ticket scam that targeted the Fort Worth Zoo last week. Scammers listed discounted tickets for the zoo on different social media platforms, but everyone should know this: Tickets for admission to the Fort Worth Zoo can only be bought on the zoo's website, FortWorthZoo.org

While we all know that our Fort Worth Zoo is special, it is not alone. Scammers have targeted other zoos and aquariums around the country as well. Here is the link to the NBCDFW online article:

<https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/families-pack-fort-worth-zoo-on-half-price-wednesday-as-zoo-warns-of-phony-ticket-scam/3487814/>

Last month, I asked the following question: We often hear about SCAMS targeting the elderly, but how common are they?

The Dragnet "I just want to get the facts, ma'am" answer stated that in 2022 over 88,000 fraud complaints were reported by those over the age of 60 with losses over \$3 billion.

This week, however, I have a more sobering and personal answer. A very good friend of mine lost his mother last week and I attended the funeral and get-together at the house afterwards. As everyone had gathered and was sharing updates about their families and parents, one of those attending shared that his mother had

recently been scammed out of \$485,000. You read that correctly, over \$485,000. You may be saying, "How is that possible? Someone had to notice, someone . . ." My response: It did happen and by the time the family intervened it was gone. I am gathering more details of the scam that I will share next month but obviously the economic impact was devastating.

Also last week, another friend shared that his friend Bob recently had to intervene in his mother's finances. The mother had met some "new" friends on Facebook after her husband had passed away (possibly targeted from obituary?) and eventually developed friendships that ultimately included texting and communicating on other chat platforms. Soon, multiple "new" friends were vying for her attention and were often older men with military backgrounds (who knew we had so many retired generals looking for friends on Facebook). Bob also noticed all of her "new" friends had new Facebook profiles and exactly five pictures. After establishing the friendships, the "new" friends encountered some unexpected problems and needed her help (and by help they needed her \$\$). So she sent some. And then some more. And then . . . and then . . .

This leads us to our next "Scams for everyone, especially the elderly, to avoid in 2024" to avoid.

The Romance/Friendship Scam

So Bob said that once he started looking into his mother's finances, he noticed several unusual withdrawals (that were used to buy gift cards or funds sent by cash apps such as Cash App). To be clear, Bob's mom is a reasonable person in good health with full mental capabilities. His

(Continued on the next page)

SCAMS FOR EVERYONE, ESPECIALLY THE ELDERLY, TO AVOID IN 2024 (CONTINUED)

elderly mother said that she was just helping her “new” friends. However, when provided with evidence that her “new” friends were from Nigeria (Bob discovered that most of the text messages originated from area code 234, which is Nigeria) and that this was all a scam, she didn’t believe her son. After Bob restricted his mother’s ability to access funds to send to her friends, his mom

started telling other family members and friends that her son Bob had taken away her money and she needed to borrow some money so that she could buy groceries (and more gift cards for her friends).

Just so that we are all on the same page, I’m not shaming Bob’s mom. Older people are more likely

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SCAMS FOR EVERYONE, ESPECIALLY THE ELDERLY, TO AVOID IN 2024 (CONTINUED)

to be isolated and cherish someone new wanting to talk/be interested in them (for friendship or romantically). She has been bamboozled by professional scammers. She honestly believes that she has made new friends and that they are in need, and she wants to help them. In my experience with my own mother, elderly people can be very trusting and unfortunately naïve about the sophistication of scammers lurking to seize on their good nature. Bob says that months later his mother still receives about one new Facebook message a day from fake accounts.

I should note that Bob recently retired from IT work and has skills most of us do not possess (such as cloning his mother's phone so he can see any calls and messages she receives). It was this ability to monitor her texting that allowed Bob to see that his mom had actually texted one of her "new" friends/scammer checking on them to see if they were okay. At this point, Bob's mom still thinks she is being hamstrung by her son from helping her "new" friends.

Did I mention that Bob's mom has already sent her "new" friends over \$16,000 in either gift cards

or cash apps. If you think you or your parents wouldn't fall for something like this, neither did Bob. Or the other hundreds of thousands of other elderly or their families.

How do you protect yourself or your elderly family members from a Romance/Friendship scam? Here is some good advice from NCOA (National Council on Aging).

Signs of a sweetheart/friendship scammer:

- "Love bomb" you; Love bombing is standard among sweetheart scammer tactics. It is when a person lavishes you with excessive flattery, affection, and praise early in the relationship in an effort to manipulate your emotions.
- Ask you to move to another app or website to speak privately.
- Claim to be a native English speaker, but their spelling, grammar, or accent tell you otherwise.
- Say they live in your home country but they're traveling for work. They may claim to be, for example, a military service member, a traveling physician, or an oil rig worker.
- Have an online profile that doesn't match up with what they've told you, in terms of either photos or biographical details.
- Refuse to chat on video, claiming their phone's camera doesn't work or they don't have a cell phone at all.

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SCAMS FOR EVERYONE, ESPECIALLY THE ELDERLY, TO AVOID IN 2024 (CONTINUED)

- Give dubious excuses for not being able to meet up in person, such as being in a car accident or a loved one dying.
- Ask you to send them money for a family medical emergency—or store gift cards because they’ve lost their job. They might say they’re going to buy airline tickets to come visit you. Basically, scammers will use any “hardship” story that’s already worked in getting people to part with their cash.
- Ask to send you money in order to get their hands on your personal banking information.
- Perform a reverse image search. This can help you confirm whether the person is who they say they are using photos from their online profile.
- NEVER give out your personal information, such as contact details, until you’ve met a person face-to-face and feel at ease with them. Scammers rely on getting access to their victims in different ways.
- Do not send intimate photos—especially with your face showing, sweetheart scammers could use these later to blackmail you.

How to outsmart a sweetheart/friendship scammer:

- If a situation feels fishy, run it by someone you trust to get their honest opinion.
- Be wary of strangers reaching out on social media. Do you have mutual connections? Is their profile full of photos and information, or is it bare?
- Google potential dating partners or friends. It’s not being paranoid—it’s being smart. You can do this in multiple ways.
- Type their full name into Google search box plus the word “scam”, plus their stated job, plus their stated location.
 - o Type in the word “scam” followed by something they’ve told you about themselves (e.g., “military”) and find articles about common scams (like this one!). See if they are following those same steps.
- If you like someone, ask for a quick phone or video chat. If they refuse or make up outlandish excuses, that’s a red flag.

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SCAMS FOR EVERYONE, ESPECIALLY THE ELDERLY, TO AVOID IN 2024 (CONTINUED)

- If you're interested in someone on a dating app, ask to meet up with that person. Always meet in a public place until you're feeling comfortable. And like with video chat, refusal to meet up (especially multiple refusals) is a warning sign you shouldn't ignore.

What to do if you think you're the victim of a sweetheart/friendship scam:

- File a report with the online dating app or social media website where the scammer first contacted you.
- File a report with the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3); <https://www.ic3.gov/Home/File-Complaint>
- Report the fraud to the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/#/>
- Notify your financial institutions that you may have been scammed
- Change all of your passwords immediately.
- Block the scammer immediately on all forms of communication: messaging apps, phone, text, and social media.

While reporting the scam can feel scary, sharing what happened to you can prevent it from happening to someone else.¹

As I write more of these articles, I notice I'm talking to more of my friends and family about the topic of scammers. The number of times that someone relays a story of their family or someone they know that has been scammed is incredible and alarming.

We need to remember that the Baby Boomers didn't grow up with computers and while many are proficient users, even they may not understand the sophistication that scammers have at their disposal to prey on them. That said, we all have to be on our toes to ward against potential scammers.

Have a conversation with your family and your friends to bring awareness of the scams out there, especially targeting the elderly, and how to combat them.

Now, give me back my . . . iced tea.

"Stay Suspicious, My Friends"

¹ <https://www.ncoa.org/article/sweetheart-scams-how-to-avoid-being-a-victim>



CALLOWAY'S NURSERY*

Monthly Lawn & Garden Organic Checklist

January

- Fertilize pansies with [Calloway's Natural Garden Food](#)
- Plant vegetables like tomatoes/peppers through March
- Plant herbs
- Spray [Bonide All Seasons Oil Spray](#) for to control scale insects, if needed
- Prune evergreen trees and shrubs
- Decorate with indoor plants

February

- Use [Corn Gluten Meal](#) to deter weeds from germinating in the lawn
- Plant trees and shrubs using [Calloway's Tree & Shrub Planting Mix](#)
- Apply [Lava Sand](#) to beds
- Prune peach and plum trees
- Plant herbs through March

March

- Fertilize all planting areas if not done in February
- Mulch all bare soil with [Calloway's Organic Hardwood or Cedar Mulch](#)
- Amend vegetable beds with [Calloway's Organic Compost](#)
- Apply [Turf Mender](#) to revive the soil
- Fertilize lawn with [Calloway's Natural Garden Food](#)
- Replant containers with seasonal color

April

- Apply [Calloway's Natural Garden Food](#) to vegetables
- Release beneficial insects
- Leave foliage of daffodils to recharge the bulbs
- Spray [Bonide Neem](#) on roses
- Treat chlorotic plants with [Green Sand](#)

May

- Apply [Calloway's Natural Garden Food](#), [Molasses](#) and [Green Sand](#)
- Release beneficial insects
- Use [Monterey B.t. Spray](#) for bagworms
- Prune spring blooming shrubs
- Time to plant summer flowering, heat loving tropical plants

June

- Apply [Calloway's Natural Garden Food](#), [Molasses](#), and [Green Sand](#) at the first of month if not applied in May
- Apply [Horticulture Corn Meal](#) for fungus problems as needed
- Control webworms with [Monterey B.t. Spray](#) or [Bonide Captain Jack's \(Spinosad\)](#)
- Control snails, slugs and pill bugs with [Monterey Sluggo Snail & Slug Control](#)

June Continued

- Deadhead spent blooms
- Apply [Natural Cedar Warrior](#) to deter mosquitoes

July

- Use [Diatomaceous Earth](#) to control crawling insects
- Mulch flowerbeds and trees to conserve moisture
- Apply [Molasses](#) and [Green Sand](#) once to the lawn and beds
- Plant tomatoes

August

- Water pots and hanging baskets daily
- Water lawns, 1" per week, best done in early mornings
- Mulch flowerbeds and trees to conserve moisture with [Calloway's Organic Hardwood](#) or [Cedar Mulch](#)

September

- Apply [Liquid Fish & Seaweed](#) twice this month
- Apply [Calloway's Natural Garden Food](#)
- Apply [Turf Mender](#) to revive the soil
- Use [Corn Gluten Meal](#) to deter weed seeds from germinating in the lawn
- Apply [Molasses](#) and [Green Sand](#)
- Refresh landscape and containers with pansies

October

- Use [Corn Gluten Meal](#) to deter weed seeds from germinating in the lawn
- Rake and remove leaves on your lawn
- Apply [Lava Sand](#)
- Plant trees and shrubs
- Divide summer blooming perennials
- Use [Jobe's Blood Meal](#) to fertilize pansies
- Add pumpkins and gourds for fall color
- Beautify with cyclamen

November

- Fertilize bulbs, annuals, and perennials with [Calloway's Natural Garden Food](#)
- Mulch for winter protection with [Calloway's Organic Hardwood](#) or [Cedar Mulch](#)
- Plant winter annual color

December

- Plant spring bulbs (tulips and hyacinths) using [Jobe's Bone Meal](#) to provide nutrients
- Fertilize indoor plants once during winter
- Water any dry areas to help protect against cold injury
- Provide food and water for the area's wintering birds
- Christmas trees and poinsettias make the season bright

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