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FROM THE FRONT PAGES

Stories you may have missed in last week's BHG newspapers

Santa, snow and celebration

SACA Lodge became SANTA Lodge Saturday afternoon.

Jolly Old St. Nick made a stop in Garrison to see all of the wide-eyed boys and girls. He wanted to check who was naughty or nice, as well as what they wanted for Christmas.

After visiting with Santa, the children decorated sugar cookies and enjoyed them with milk.

This was one of the many events that helped mark the close of the third and final weekend of the Dickens Village Festival.

In the eyes of Dick Messerly, president of the festival's planning committee, everything went great.

"I don't think it could have been any more successful," Messerly said, noting that the festival – after a year off – came back with a great response. "A lot of people felt that way, too, from the response we had from the public."

McLean County Independent

Voting precincts set for 2022

A total of six voting precincts have been established in McLean County for the upcoming election year.

The McLean County Commissioners approved the precincts, as well as the polling locations, at their meeting Dec. 7. The precincts and polling locations, as presented by County Auditor Beth Knutson, needed to be approved by Dec. 31.

The precincts would include one in District 8, which is located within the city of Wilton; one in District 4 and one in the newly formed District 4A, located within the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation; two in District 6, with one in the South McLean and West McLean Soil Conservation District; and one in District 33 in the county.

Central McLean News-Journal

Park board highlights early pool prep

Ongoing pool maintenance was the focus of the Dec. 8 Washburn Park Board meeting that featured conversations on how to handle a broken lifeguard stand, as well as necessary work in the facility's restroom area.

After updating colleagues on how he recently placed boards over the community pool toilets to protect them from snow runoff, Washburn Park Board President Mark Lemm addressed the possible need for a new lifeguard stand if the current one couldn't be repaired.

The downside to purchasing a new wood-based platform, he noted, was the price, which could hover around \$1,500. Metal stands, conversely, would be even more exorbitant, running at around \$2,200, per Lemm.

The Leader-News

CALENDAR

Friday, December 24

Turtle Lake's United Methodist Church welcomes the community to their candlelight Christmas Eve Service, starting at 7 p.m.

Friday, December 31

First Luthern Church - First Night Party, 7 p.m. - ? Must make reservation. The party is for everyone, families, singles, couples, card players & game players. Come for the supper and stay for the fun!

The Community Clothing Share Exchange will be open each Thursday from noon to 6 p.m. at 221 Main St., Turtle Lake.

There is a food pantry located outside the Mercer Baptist Church open 24 hours a day. Access to anyone.

Library Hours:

Washburn Public Library - Monday-Thursday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Underwood Public Library - Monday, Wednesday and Friday -10 a.m. to 3 p.m. -Tuesday and Thursday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Turtle Lake Public Library - Monday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

If you have a calendar submission please send to leadernews@westriv.com and label "Calendar Event" in the subject line. Thanks!

MEALS ON WHEELS

Dec. 27: Cabbage roll, mashed potatoes, peas, tropical mixed fruit.

Dec. 28: Hamburger goulash, mixed vegetable, cucumber salad, fruit cocktail.

Dec. 29: Ribs, baked beans, German potato salad, pears, brownie.

Dec. 30: Beef tips in gravy over egg noodles, stewed tomatoes, coleslaw, apricots.

Dec. 31: Closed.

Be Inspired by the Mediterranean Diet

PRAIRIE FARE

By Julie Garden-Robinson, Food and Nutrition Specialist NDSU Extension

"I'll have falafel in my pita," my son said to the foodservice worker.

We were at a Mediterranean restaurant in downtown Minneapolis.

"Do you know what falafel is?" I asked him.

He grinned at me and nodded. I could almost read his mind.

My big-city guy was putting up with his small-town mother.

I had a flashback of his daycare provider's note. She was concerned about his picky eating behavior. He only wanted macaroni and cheese and applesauce back in the day.

He certainly developed an adventuresome palate.

Falafel, by the way, is made from chickpeas, which are also known as garbanzo beans. To make falafel, cooked or canned chickpeas are mashed or processed in a food processor. Then they are blended with chopped onions, herbs, spices and often, baking soda and chickpea flour. The mixture is formed into patties or small balls and then fried. Avocado oil sometimes is used as the frying oil due to its heat stability.

My husband and I had whole-grain pita bread stuffed with seasoned beef, chopped red cabbage, cucumber, avocado and hummus (also made from chickpeas).

I watched the chef make our sandwiches. Frankly, I was a little leery of this flavor combination. I was pleasantly surprised. We all felt as stuffed as our pita bread after a big dose of flavorful fiber.

Chickpeas and other pulse foods, such as lentils and split peas, are notable sources of fiber and the B vitamin folate.

Eating a Mediterranean-inspired diet is particularly healthful. In fact, the Mediterranean Diet has occupied the first or second spot on "healthiest diet" lists for several years.

The Mediterranean eating style is embraced by 22 countries near the Mediterranean Sea, including Greece, Spain, southern France and Italy.

The Mediterranean diet is rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, healthful fats and lowfat dairy. In particular, the eating pattern usually incorporates at least one to two servings of whole grain foods at each meal, two servings of vegetables at lunch and dinner and one to two servings of fruit

at each meal. Fruit often is served as a dessert.

It is rich in beans, nuts, seeds, fish and seafood. It includes dairy, poultry and lean meat.

If this sounds familiar, be aware that the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate (at www.choosemyplate.gov) have similarities to the Mediterranean Diet.

Vegetables and fruits are particularly high in antioxidant nutrients such as vitamins A and C, and carotenoids such as beta-carotene and lycopene. Antioxidants serve as our "internal boxing gloves." These natural chemicals in foods help our bodies fight damage to the cells of our body from smoke, pollution and other stressors on our bodies.

Although it is called a "diet," the Mediterranean diet is not necessarily for weight loss. However, filling up on vegetables, fruits and whole grains may help with weight maintenance or loss.

Eating healthfully can reduce your risk for chronic disease. Several positive health outcomes are associated with following the Mediterranean diet. Some researchers have noted fewer heart attacks and strokes, better blood glucose control for those with diabetes and a reduction in the risk for certain types of cancer.

Some researchers also have linked following a Mediterranean diet with reducing risk for depression and Alzheimer's disease.

Here's a colorful Mediterranean diet-inspired salad recipe. Try it as a side dish with broiled salmon. See "On the Pulse of Healthful Eating" from NDSU Extension for 15 pulse recipes. This publication is available at <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/food-nutrition/on-the-pulse-of-healthful-eating-using-more-pulse-foods-in-your-diet>.

Orzo Salad with Chickpeas and Artichoke Hearts

1/2 cup orzo or other tiny pasta

2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil

1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon ground pepper

1 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice

1 (14-ounce) can of artichoke hearts, drained and chopped

1 (15-ounce) can of chickpeas,

HAT TIPS

Cold weather



BY DEAN MEYER

Hello,
It was fun waking up this morning and looking at the thermometer! Fifty degrees warmer than it was two days ago! Only in North Dakota does 20 above and windy qualify as a nice day. But dang, it is.

On Saturday, it was too cold to put your tongue on the flag pole. And every year I have to try it. Shirley figures eventually I will outgrow it, but I keep hearing of ways to get it off that don't hurt. I'm beginning to think those are made up!

I'm wondering how some of our southern friends in the oil field are handling this. They have to be some tough old cowboys to crawl up on that

rig when it's way below zero and that wind is blowing 30 or 40 mph. Kind of like a friend I talked to yesterday. He asked what I was doing and I told him I had just put my horse away after riding (I was lying.) Told him it wasn't too bad (-55) because I wore a facemask. He said he was sure wishing he had worn one!

I used to do quite a lot of winter riding. But not on that kind of day. And if you had to, most of the time you were leading your horse to keep your toes from freezing off. And the past couple days, as sitting in a heated cab on a tractor feeding cows, was dang glad I wasn't harnessing a team and pitching hay out of a sweet clover stack to feed cows. Those "good old days" were a bugger.

Again this week I talked to my Montana friend. You know, the one with the wife. Yeah, that one. Have to check in with him to get a weather report every once in a while so I know what is coming.

Turns out the guy knows a doctor in Watford City. And

occasionally goes down there for a checkup. Now, I'm not one to drop names around but the guy is a scratch golfer. And does venture to Las Vegas once in a while on a golf outing.

My cowboy friend said a neighbor of his went down to Watford for a checkup. Boy, they worked him up and down. They poked and prodded and reviewed his history and said for a fifty-five year old man, he couldn't be in any better shape. If he kept up his lifestyle, he shouldn't have to come in for another checkup for years.

Well, as the neighbor walked out the door, bang! He dropped over dead!

My cowboy friend confronted the doctor golfer and pointed out that was pretty damn bad advertising for the hospital to have a guy drop just as he left the hospital and had that glowing report.

The doctor said, "It happens occasionally and we just turn them around so it looks like they were walking in!"

Later, Dean.

Dr. Grassick

DAKOTA DATEBOOK

December 24, 2021 — James Grassick started his career as a physician in Buxton in 1885. Among his many interests were Indian lore and archaeology — you might remember that he once owned the Highgate mastodon that now resides in the ND Heritage Center in Bismarck. He also enjoyed writing, and each year, he put together handsome booklets for his friends for Christmas. In one of these, he wrote of a special Christmas Eve he experienced back in the horse and buggy days. It was after nightfall when the good doctor was called to attend a woman in labor in a remote settler's home.

"The wind was blowing briskly, the air crisp, the sledding heavy and the snow falling thickly," he wrote. "It was time for anyone that was out to seek shelter, for everything indicated an approaching storm, and that, for a benighted traveler on a trackless and treeless prairie, was enough to make the bravest think of home, wife and kiddies. But our good Doctor," he wrote, "was used to such conditions, they were in the line of his calling. He had faced storms before..."

Dr. Grassick soon found the trip tough going. "It was now quite dark," he wrote, "the stars were hid, and all sense of direction was gone except what could be learned from the wind. The prairie trail was obliterated..."

Grassick thought he finally spotted a light in the distance, but his eyes were playing tricks on him.

"The snow, charged with icy particles came down more thickly," he wrote, "the biting wind increased in velocity, the cold became more intense and our traveler was beginning to feel its effects in lessened willpower and benumbed sensibilities..."

When Grassick felt himself giving up, he let up on the reins, and his horses instinctively moved toward safety. Finally, they stopped in the shelter of a haystack, and the doctor looked around to get his bearings. When the snow lifted for a few seconds, he made out the dim

outline of a sod shanty and made a dash for it. It turned out to be the home of his patient.

Inside, two small children, Betty and Bobbie thought he was Santa Claus and were disappointed he wasn't bearing presents. Grassick comforted them and went in to see their mother. "As midnight approached," he wrote, "it became evident that a visit from Santa was a certainty and just as the clock struck twelve a terrific swirl of the wind made the rafters creak and the pane of the little window rattle; but these sounds were only the prattle of tiny feet as Santa's coursers mounted the roof on their way to the chimney..."

"And within," he continued, "stood Grandma with her outstretched apron ready to receive the parcel as she had often done before. She evidently was not disappointed for in the fullness of her heart she cried out excitedly, 'Look here! What is this?' and there, sure enough in her lap lay two little pink, plump, pulsating parcels." A boy and a girl.

Grandma had clothing for only one baby, so Dr. Grassick spread his heavy coonskin coat before the fire and wrapped the newborn twins in it. There was no thought of heading back to town.

"The sun came up without a fleck to mar its brightness," Grassick wrote, "a million diamond points sparkling in its course. Soon the news of Santa's storm journey, and of the gifts he had left for Betty and Bobbie, were known in the settlement, and they were not long wanting in clothes for the two infants, for the good ladies of the neighborhood soon provided the needful. And the Doctor's coat was thus released from its mission of Christmas helpfulness."

"Dakota Datebook" is a radio series from Prairie Public in partnership with the State Historical Society of North Dakota and with funding from the North Dakota Humanities Council. See all the Dakota Datebooks at prairiepublic.org, subscribe to the "Dakota Datebook" podcast, or buy the Dakota Datebook book at shoppairiepublic.org.

The perfect gift

HELPING WORDS



BY REV. ERIN LYNN GULLICKSON, DAKOTA PRAIRIE WINDS PARISH,

The season of Advent continues, and Christians wait, watch and prepare as the celebration of Christmas draws near. What "prepare" looks like in each home varies greatly depending on schedules, traditions, and baking skills. For many, preparing for Christmas includes a shopping list. We share gifts with those in our lives just as the Magi or Wise men, brought gifts to honor Jesus. Sometimes, finding a gift for someone is nearly impossible.

This time of the year is bittersweet for most of us, sometimes more bitter,

sometimes more sweet. In and through all of life's circumstances, I can tell you most wishes heard by pastors in the church are all similar and connected. In fact, the top two wishes include: 1) A wish for more time with those they love. 2) A wish that their children/family/friends went to church.

Good news! Both of these wishes can be given as a gift any time of the year, with or without wrapping paper. If you'd really like to knock their socks off, give generously of both and set aside time to attend a worship service together. Christmas Eve, many churches hold candlelight Christmas Eve worship services, and if you've not had the chance to experience it, may this be the year you give this gift to yourself. Christmas Day celebrations continue with more chances to share time together in a pew. If you already spend Christmas with loved ones in church, never forget that each and every Sunday holds another opportunity for this gift. If

you're looking for something more out-of-the-box, then invite and pick up a little one or an elder in your area and take them to church. The perfect gift in Christ is never a one-and-done ordeal; this package includes 'come as you are, none of us are perfect, we learn and grow together each time'. It may also contain the need to ask/practice/offer forgiveness, sitting in a different pew, singing together off-key, setting aside your own ideas to make room for others and more. It is ancient, yet, always being made new; the single, most wished for gift, that will keep on giving forever.

Grace, peace, and hope to you this season!

Rev. Erin Gullickson is a pastor with the Dakota Prairie Winds Parish, which includes Concordia Lutheran Church in Benedict and Our Savior Lutheran Church in Max. She also served as chaplain for the North Dakota Highway Patrol and Garrison-Max Ambulance.

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SMART Resolutions

PRAIRIE FARE

With 2022 nearly upon us, so too is the tradition of the New Year's resolution. Merriam-Webster defines the New Year's resolution as "a promise to do something differently in the new year." I would argue that in practice, the resolution is less of a promise and more of a hope or intention.

My resolution for 2021 was to read 20 books by year's end. I failed. I could blame my kids, work, other hobbies, but honestly I blame my phone! In my defense, I was in good company as a flopped resolver; less than half of New Year's Resolutions are estimated to be successful.

An estimated 74 percent of adult Americans set a personal goal each year, the most common category being to improve health and wellness. If you are a regular at a gym or fitness center, you have witnessed the phenomenon of the January influx of attendees that typically trickles back down to baseline by March.

Whatever your resolution, there are some ways to increase

your odds of being successful in following through in 2022. One tip is to make your goals follow the SMART mnemonic: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-sensitive. Let me elaborate, using my failed 2021 goal as an example.

Specific: "Read at least 20 books this year" is specific, but I could have done better. Had I explicitly listed each book title up front I would have avoided time wasted searching for books throughout the year.

Measurable: My goal was easily measurable; just count the books. If your goal is not measurable there is no way to know whether you are on track to reach it.

Attainable: I did not set a goal to read 50 or 100 books in a year. I know people who read that much, and I admire them, but that was not realistic for me. Setting an unattainable goal may set you up to quit in the early stages.

Relevant: I set this goal because I enjoy reading, and I know I am a happier person

when I spend my downtime with my nose in a book. Choose a goal that you care about, and maintain enthusiasm.

Time-sensitive: Most New Year's resolutions will have a time frame of one year. But setting smaller time-sensitive goals can be helpful. I ought to have made a sub-goal to read two books per month to keep on pace.

The New Year might be a great time to commit to a positive change in your life. I hope the SMART approach will help you (and me) succeed this year!

Kelly Evans-Hullinger, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices internal medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show celebrating its twentieth season of truthful, tested, and timely medical information streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

How to Keep Takeout and Home-delivered Food Safe

PRAIRIE FARE

By Julie Garden-Robinson, Food and Nutrition Specialist NDSU Extension

"Why do you have baking pans in your car?" my friend asked me.

She was observing the small metal baking pans tucked in the back pockets of the front seats.

"I couldn't find plastic trays that fit in the pockets," I replied. That really didn't answer the question, did it?

We use the trays to avoid spilling food on the seats or floor of our car when we eat in the vehicle.

I looked for plastic trays but they were all too large to fit in the pockets. Small cookie sheets filled the bill.

During the early days of the pandemic, my husband and I picked up food to eat in our car or bring home. We put many miles on our vehicle during the early months of the pandemic.

We liked to see some other scenery outside of our home. While my husband drove, I arranged the food in their wrappers on our trays.

We found a spot with a small herd of deer, and we visited them regularly. Sometimes the deer walked right up to our parked vehicle.

No, the deer didn't get to sit in the backseat and enjoy a snack on a tray. Our car is too small for that.

Most of us had some options when many dine-in restaurants closed during the early pandemic. We could have opted for takeout, meal delivery, grocery delivery or cook-it-yourself meal kits mailed directly to our address.

When the pandemic began, most restaurants closed for a while. Some restaurants only allowed takeout and others had drive-through windows. Unfortunately, some restaurants closed permanently due to loss of revenue and staffing challenges.

According to the National

Restaurant Association, the restaurant industry lost \$280 billion in sales during the first 13 months of the pandemic. Millions of workers lost their jobs either temporarily or permanently. Others did not return to foodservice work.

Life has shifted in many ways during the past nearly two years, including how we obtain our food. Fortunately, COVID-19 is not spread through food, according to the Food and Drug Administration. As we all probably know, the virus primarily spreads through tiny droplets in the air through close contact with people.

Most of us enjoy eating food prepared outside of our home, at least on occasion, and we need to follow safe food-handling recommendations. The Partnership for Food Safety Education or PFSE (at www.fightbac.org) recently launched a national campaign about food delivery called "Prep Yourself."

I paraphrased some of the key messages from the new PFSE campaign for all of us to consider during food delivery. Most of these tips would directly apply to food pick-up too.

Before ordering, ask questions. What are the company's safety standards? How do they respond if the product is delivered at an unsafe temperature or if it appears that tampering has taken place?

Be sure that someone is home when the food is delivered so the food can be stored properly in the refrigerator. If no one will be home, be sure to establish a safe place that is cool, shaded and protected from pests. Be sure to inform the restaurant when you order.

When the food is delivered, the responsibility for safe handling becomes your responsibility. Look for stickers on perishable foods that say

TAKEOUT page 8

Feature idea?

Call 701.462.8126 or email leadernews@westriv.com with any news tips

OUR OUTDOORS

Grab & Go



BY NICK SIMONSON
DAKOTA EDGE OUTDOORS

If you've ever watched the top of a tip-up spin after a pike has taken the offering below, be it frozen smelt, herring or perhaps even a hot dog, you often wonder when the metal circular blur is going to stop.

Sometimes the process takes well over 30 seconds before the whirring T slows down and the force of nature on the other end takes a break from its underwater jaunt. That's because pike are creatures of speed, sprinters capable of blasting across a short distance at an incredible pace to ambush

their prey and trap them in their toothy maw. After that initial attack, however, pike don't stop moving.

With the bait T-boned in their mouth, held tight by not only the jagged teeth along the edges of their jaw, but also those curled up in a wide row along the top of their bony beak, they swim on assuring that the morsel is held tight and not lost. After a bit, however, they stop to turn their lunch lengthwise and swallow it for the long process of digestion.

This pause is where we as ice anglers see the shift in our equipment and know when to set the hook. By watching that spinning component, we know when to get ready for the battle. At the call of "FLAG!" the sprint over to a triggered tip-up can set off a rush of adrenaline, especially on those waters where big pike are present.

Since one never knows whether it'll be a hammer-handle sized specimen or a true leviathan, a sense of mystery and excitement remains with

any deployment of fish traps on the ice. Setting that excitement aside however can be part of the challenge, like watching a bass blow up on a summer topwater and waiting a second or two to set the hook, not jerking the tip-up from the ice hole in a cold spray of water and slush is an acquired skill.

Instead, on approach, inspect the tip-up for motion. If the flag holder is still twirling when you arrive, let it stop. Then grab the tip-up from the ice, pull up the slack line and feel for the fish below. If there's weight, set the hook with a strong upward pull and get ready for the battle. When the fight gets going, keep things as neat and tidy along side the hole as possible, setting the tip up a couple feet away and gently laying any gained line on the ice between the unit and the hole, so that it can easily slide back up through your hands and down the hole when a pike makes another dash into the depths.

This also helps keep line from

tangling around the tip-up and other obstructions which might result in a lost fish, or just a mess. In all situations, keeping the line tight is key to landing the fish, but in those instances where circle hooks are being used to facilitate a release, it is of the utmost importance and is just one added element to consider in the heat of the moment.

The final challenge comes at the end of the fight when steering a pike's head into the ice hole. It's easier at early season when the cylinder isn't as deep. But later in winter, sometimes the hole can be as deep as the fish is long, even with bigger pike. It requires some finesse, and to have played the fish out a bit, to angle the head up toward the surface but the pointy nature of a pike's snout helps once the fish has been fatigued.

Yawing the auger a bit at the completion of the hole also creates a concave angle to the edges of its bottom which can

help bring fish up a bit easier. At the hole, I like to use an old glove to lip-land toothy pike. Their jaws instinctively lock around it, making it an easy pull onto the ice.

Other options include a landing tool like a Boga grip, or a tight grasp around the area behind the head, if you don't mind getting your hands or gloves cold and wet for a bit. If a release is being considered, avoid touching the gills or the eyes of the fish and those hooked too deeply, especially with a larger treble, should be kept as they are less likely to survive.

Remember that when a pike takes a bait under the ice, and flag pops the battle has not yet begun. Wait for that pause that signals the fish's grab and go run has stopped, and then get ready to set the hook. A little time and some practice on those lakes loaded with pike will condition you on what to watch for and how to convert more on ice excitement this season ... in our outdoors.

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1-e-tfn-nc 58540
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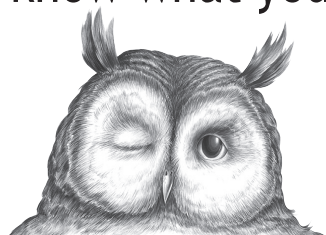
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MISCELLANEOUS WANTED

HAVE a news release or other information that needs to reach all ND newspapers? ND Newspaper Association can help! One call does it all. 701-223-6397.

DIET page 3

- drained and rinsed
- 1/3 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh mint, chopped
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 6 cups baby spinach

Bring a small saucepan of water to a boil. Cook orzo until just tender, about nine minutes, or according to package directions. Drain water and allow to cool. Transfer to a medium bowl and toss with oil. Mash garlic and salt into a paste with the back of a spoon in a medium bowl. Whisk in lemon juice and pepper. Add

the cooked orzo, artichokes, chickpeas, feta, dill and mint; toss gently to combine. Add tomatoes and toss again. Serve on top of fresh spinach. If making ahead of time, wait to add tomatoes and spinach until right before serving.

Makes six servings (1 cup per serving). Each serving has 220 calories, 6 grams (g) of fat, 10 g of protein, 36 g of carbohydrate, 8 g of fiber and 560 milligrams (mg) of sodium.

(Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D., is a North Dakota State University Extension food and nutrition specialist and professor in the Department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Sciences. Follow her on Twitter @jgardenrobinson)



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DAKOTA EDGE

Southeast ND Ice Fishing Opportunities Abound



BY NICK SIMONSON
DAKOTA EDGE OUTDOORS

While water levels are down about two feet after a dry spring and summer across southeastern North Dakota's prairie lakes country, the opportunities to find fast ice fishing for perch and walleyes are up.

Record rains from the fall of 2019 have helped keep waters fishable and expanded the number of lakes stocked with popular winter species according to North Dakota Game & Fish Department (NDG&F) Southeast Fisheries District Supervisor B.J. Kratz.

"Surprisingly, most district lakes are down 20 to 24 inches on the average and just because of the surplus of moisture we had a couple of years back in the late summer and the fall. The maximum elevation for a lot of those

lakes were at record highs, so we're capitalizing on the bank of yesteryear so to speak, to keep us in the game for this year," Kratz states. "It's a unique year, basically we've set a couple records: we've got 131 waters now that have fishable populations and that equates to about 56,000 acres of opportunity out there."

The Big Four

The region features four prominent water bodies for ice anglers to key in on for a shot at good numbers and excellent sized fish, and with some shifting population dynamics, things have changed over the past few years on Lake Ashtabula, Spiritwood Lake, Jamestown Reservoir and Pipestem Reservoir.

Kratz suggests that anglers will find a good mix of walleyes on Lake Ashtabula this winter, and a chance at some hefty pike due to the size of the reservoir located north of Valley City.

Additionally, crappies and perch provide steady panfish options in the waters behind Baldhill Dam, and with a little searching along the channel edges and the surrounding flats and structure, action can be fast.

"Ashtabula is always a fun lake for people, I enjoy it a lot

just because of the diversity of fish species that are present there. We don't have a lot of lakes in the southeast district that have so many different fish species, and not only that, but good opportunities or maybe even the best to catch larger fish. Ashtabula certainly holds its fair share of crappies and walleyes to some very large pike in there," Kratz details.

While Jamestown Reservoir did not fill to its standard pool level and forage opportunities may have been limited by the lack of inflow this openwater season, Kratz advises that this likely will not impact the water's solid population of crappies which can dine on items as small as plankton.

The walleye fishing may be a bit more difficult, but the species does remain in good numbers and likely will be on the hungry side for ice anglers pursuing them. Spiritwood Lake's waters still allow for some good darkhouse spearing opportunities for pike, though there may be some gaps in year classes for those pursuing the fish with a fork. Pipestem Reservoir remains in a rebuilding state, as crappie populations took a hit following a winterkill four

years ago, but Kratz suggests targeting an amazing pike population and a respectable set of perch year classes coming up in the reservoir located north of Jamestown.

"With Pipestem, the crappie population there probably won't be much, we're still in a recovery mode," he warns. "But the perch population there is better than it's ever been...and the pike population is crazy good," he suggests for anglers considering alternative targets on the reservoir.

A Solid Spread Spread out across the district are dozens of prairie lakes and sloughs providing great perch and, more recently, phenomenal walleye fishing for ice anglers. Many of those waters receive little or no pressure during the openwater season, due to their lack of boat access, but are more accessible to ice anglers who can walk or drive on in the winter.

Kratz reports from spring and summer surveys that there are more lakes in the district with excellent populations of walleyes than ever before.

"We had 28 lakes this year in the district that exceeded 10 fish per net-night, which is kind of an index for a good

walleye fishery. Some of those lakes where the catch rates were good — they're all over the place — but Mud and Pearl Lakes north of Medina were good, Foot Lake just south of Medina was exceptional as well. North of Jamestown we had Hoggarth Dam and as far down south as Lidgerwood country we had Reiland Lake and Four Corners over by Hankinson,"

Additionally, perch options remain strong in the southeast with a number of secret and not-so-secret spots available to anglers looking to catch a few hefty football-sized fish. Kratz recommends North Hobart for strong catch rates and good average size, and North Eckelson sports a robust population with bigger fish available. The Brooks Complex south of Cleveland also boasts good perch fishing on a bigger water which allows anglers to spread out and find fish.

Anglers looking for prairie water pike options should check out Flood Lake by Kulm and Grass Lake near Lidgerwood for consistent action for northerns from two to five pounds this winter.

It was a silent night

ND ROOTS

BY SUE BALCOM

I almost forgot. Christmas is coming. Somehow between work, my daughter moving, helping my brother with my dad, who is quite possibly experiencing his last Christmas with us, school programs, church programs, shopping, wrapping, baking and fielding invitations, I almost forgot Christmas is right around the corner.

"Somehow, it came, it came just the same."

But it's not the same. Every year Christmas at the mall has appeared earlier and earlier. This year I caught the help filling the shelves before Halloween. Then, the ads come. There is a constant barrage of sales, offers for free shipping, the constant ding of emails filling my Outlook. Add to that the fact I live in an isolated area and have no need to decorate because nobody sees it anyway. I have a tree, but it looks like the Grinch, while my Christmas past gathers dust in bins of ornaments and trimmings. I might be pleasantly surprised at what I have stashed in the root cellar.

Like the cold moon this past weekend, I am full of nostalgic memories of what Christmas was like as a child. It was a time of quiet increasing darkness filled with anticipation. There was never a time we did not make that obligatory trip to visit the grandparents on Christmas Day. There was a

chance to visit relatives and feast on special treats, many of which we never had at our table.

The night before Christmas made the most significant impression on my memory.

Christmas Eve, a silent night. I don't recall that we had a traditional dinner. I don't remember we had dinner at all. We so wanted to open Christmas gifts, however meager the offerings under the tree. But first, there was church.

We walked to church because we only lived about a block away. I'm sure we always had new dresses, maybe new shoes to wear. My mother crafted our dresses from my grandmother's substantial castoff skirts. Money was scarce without a regular job, but Mother made up for it by gardening, sewing, painting other people's barns and cleaning. She cleaned the church; my father rang the bell. We survived. The greatest gift we had was time to spare for the things that money can't buy.

Walking to church as a family on a snow-covered gravel road, I followed my mother's path. Her feet made a funny impression in the snow — a pointy triangle like an oversized guitar pick punctuated by the dot of her slender high heel. Those lovely high heel shoes clicked on the concrete when we arrived at the church — what a wonderful sound.

Brushing off snow and

stamping off feet, the church, old and ornate, was lit with the yellow light of candles. There were wooden pews, and the pulpit had a position of power elevated from the main altar area.

The congregation's children reenacted the story of Christ's birth, followed by Silent Night or rather "Stille Nacht" in the light of real candles. To prevent burns, the slender white candles were slipped through an X in a round paper holder, and no one, but the very youngest, was denied the opportunity to carry the light of the Lord.

As families exited the church on this most silent of nights, each child received a bag of nuts with fruit and a few small candies. To us, that bag was worth so much more than its content.

It's hard to find that small brown sack filled with memories amongst today's piles of ribbon and paper and countless dinners and parties and eating and drinking and multiple family obligations. Shopping, texting, posting sharing every Christmas event with everyone online.

While enjoying the grandchildren enjoying Christmas, I mourn the richness and flavor of my Christmas past.

May you experience some quiet and calm in preparation for the birth of Jesus. Merry Christmas.

TAKEOUT page 5

"Keep refrigerated" or "Keep frozen" and then follow the recommendations.

Handle the delivered food safely. If the food is fully cooked, serve it right away or hold it hot in an oven or preheated slow cooker. Cook raw foods or refrigerate or freeze as soon as possible. Be aware of the "danger zone" (40 F to 140 F). Food should be kept cold (below 40 F) or hot (above 140 F).

Encourage family members and guests to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds before eating. Make available alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

My family enjoys food from around the world, whether cooked at home or from a restaurant. This week I am featuring a slow cooker carnita recipe typical of Mexican cuisine. It is courtesy of the PFSE and includes their food safety instructions. I added the nutrition information. By the way, "carnita" is the Spanish word for "little meats."

Slow Cooker Chipotle Carnitas

- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup lime juice (about 2 limes)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons oregano
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 2 to 3 individual chipotle peppers from a can of chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 2 tablespoons of the adobo sauce from a can of chipotles in adobo
- 3 pounds skinless, boneless pork shoulder (excess fat trimmed)
- 1/4 cup orange juice (about 1 orange)
- 1 cup chicken broth, reduced sodium
- 2 bay leaves
- Fresh cilantro, chopped (optional garnish)
- Flour tortillas and/or corn

tortillas

Wash hands with soap and water. Gently rub garlic and limes under cold running water. Place garlic, lime juice, oil, salt, black pepper, oregano, onion powder, cumin, peppers and adobo sauce in a small food processor or blender. Pulse until well combined and a paste is formed. Rub the pork shoulder with the chipotle paste, rubbing in thoroughly on all sides. Do not rinse raw poultry or meat under water. Wash hands with soap and water after handling raw pork. Gently rub orange under cold running water. Place orange juice, chicken broth, bay leaves and seasoned pork shoulder into a slow cooker. Cook for eight hours on low or four hours on high, until internal temperature reaches 145 F on a food thermometer. The pork should be so tender that meat falls apart easily. Remove pork from slow cooker and shred the meat using two forks, removing excess fat. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed. Heat oven to broil. Line one baking sheet with foil and spray with cooking oil. Place carnitas onto a baking sheet with half of the juices and broil until most of the pork looks golden, crisp and crusted, about 4 minutes. Remove from oven. Gently rinse cilantro, pat dry and chop. Garnish carnitas with chopped cilantro, if desired.

Makes eight servings. Each serving of the pork has 290 calories, 16 grams (g) fat, 34 g protein, 1 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 690 milligrams sodium.

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