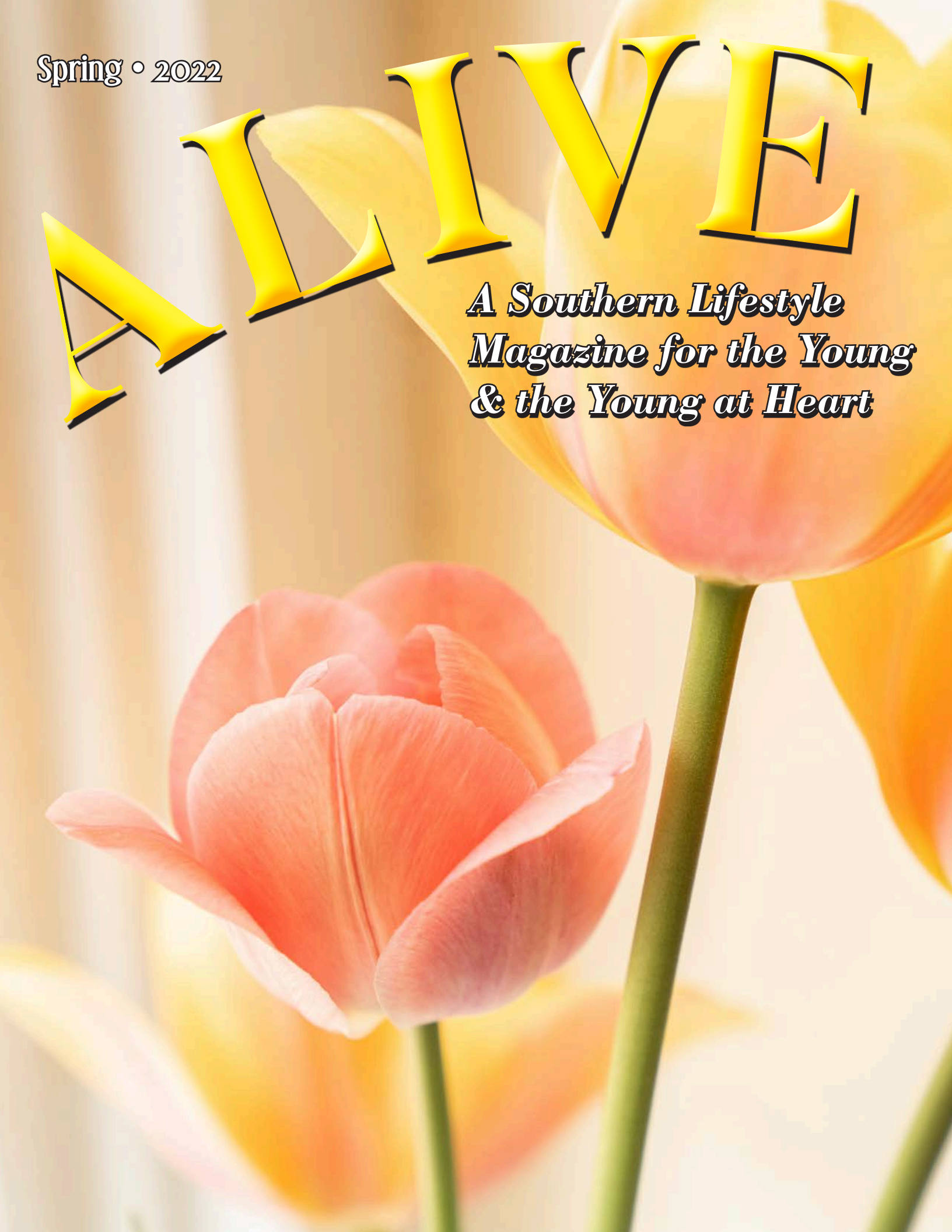


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- John Wambles, Publisher

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HEAD 'EM UP, MOVE 'EM OUT!

written by: **Bonnie Lill**

Kids have a lot of ways to fill their time: video games, sports, hanging out with friends, to name just a few.

The Rye kids of Houston County – Augustus, Esme, Romy and Joss – have taken it to a whole new level by embracing the art and science of showing beef cattle.

Beef cattle are just that – destined to be eaten – and there is a lot to producing quality meat that most of us don't know about. It all begins with a living creature that must be properly cared for and nurtured, and it results in that calf eventually being on someone's dinner table.

Raising livestock is an important part of our food source as well as our economy. So why would a child get involved in something that seems like a pretty grown-up endeavor?

Actually, there are a lot of benefits in youth involvement. Kids getting involved in show-

ing both beef cattle (males) and heifers (females), or any other livestock, for that matter, learn a whole lot about responsibility, leadership, communication, showmanship and sportsmanship, and where food comes from. The life skills they learn really are for life.

THE PROCESS

Showing calves (defined generally as up to about two years of age) begins when the calves are little. Whether they are born on the Rye farm or purchased, they first must grow accustomed to human contact.

Esme, 13, who has been showing calves since the fourth grade, has named her current calf Peaches. Peaches is a Simmental steer who resembles a Hereford.

Since Peaches was small, Esme has held him, rubbed him, washed him, groomed him, fed him and gotten him accustomed to the halter and being led, all while speaking to him calmly and never forcing him. The serene and patient 8th-grader has mastered the use of the show stick, a long stick used to guide the calf and help him place his feet correctly. The show stick is NEVER used to beat the calf.

There are numerous other jobs related to raising calves, like cleaning out the stalls, keeping records of what they eat, figuring out how much to feed them so they have optimal weight gain by the time they are ready to sell, to name just a few.

THE UPSIDES

Esme admits that she enjoys working with cattle since she loves animals.

“You just can’t hit them or be mean to them,” she says. Esme says being kicked is always an occupational hazard to raising calves, but her solution is simple: “Stay away from his butt.”



FROM LEFT, ESME, AUGUSTUS, AND ROMY RYE DISPLAY THEIR AWARDS AT A 2021 CATTLE SHOW.

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AT 9, JOSS RYE MAY NOT BE SHOWING CALVES YET, BUT HE ALREADY KNOWS HIS WAY AROUND SHOW CATTLE.

Romy, 11, is in the fifth grade and in her second year of raising calves. She loves doing the gentling, grooming, feeding and getting this year's calf, Puff, ready to show.

Elder brother Augustus is in his fifth year of raising calves, and he, too, thoroughly enjoys the months of prep. His favorite part is fitting and clipping, which is the final "primping" before a show. (Who knew that cattle actually have "product" for their hair!)

He does the fitting and clipping for all of the family calves; the girls are not quite ready for that somewhat complicated job. He also keeps track of all of the animals' weight.

Augustus's calves this year are Jordan, a Chi-Maine cross, and Sancho, a Chi-Angus cross. He likes feeding them and keeping track of their weight.

He explains that the goal of feeding them properly is to have them at the highest weight at which they can walk fluidly, creating an animal that will yield large amounts of beef while still being structurally sound and healthy. You don't want too much or too little fat. Timing is the key, since they will be sold for meat in mid-May.

Joss, at 9, has not yet started showing calves, although he has seen up close what it entails.

He was not sure if he wanted to participate this year, but he said his dad, Seth, encouraged it. Joss, too, enjoys taking care of the calves, but he also is enthused about the end game.



ESME RYE, 13, HELPS HER CALF POSITION HIS LEGS BY GUIDING HIM GENTLY WITH A SHOW STICK.

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“It gives you money when you win, and then you can sell the calf and earn money that way, too,” he explains.

All four of the Ryes enjoy the time spent in the show ring at competitions.

THE DOWNSIDES

Of course, there are always downsides to any activity.

For the understated Esme, the hardest part about it is her last day with her calf.

The lively Romy says it a bit more directly: “The worst part is selling them, that they’ll be turned into meat!”

“The worst thing about it is having to wake up extremely early to feed them before school,” says Joss, sounding like a teenager already.

Augustus is a little more hands-on when he says, “The worst is cleaning stalls.”

Despite his aversion to this part of the endeavor, he manages to do a lot of the daily house-keeping for everyone’s calves.

SHOWTIME!

The show season, which begins in February, culminates in mid-May, when the calves are

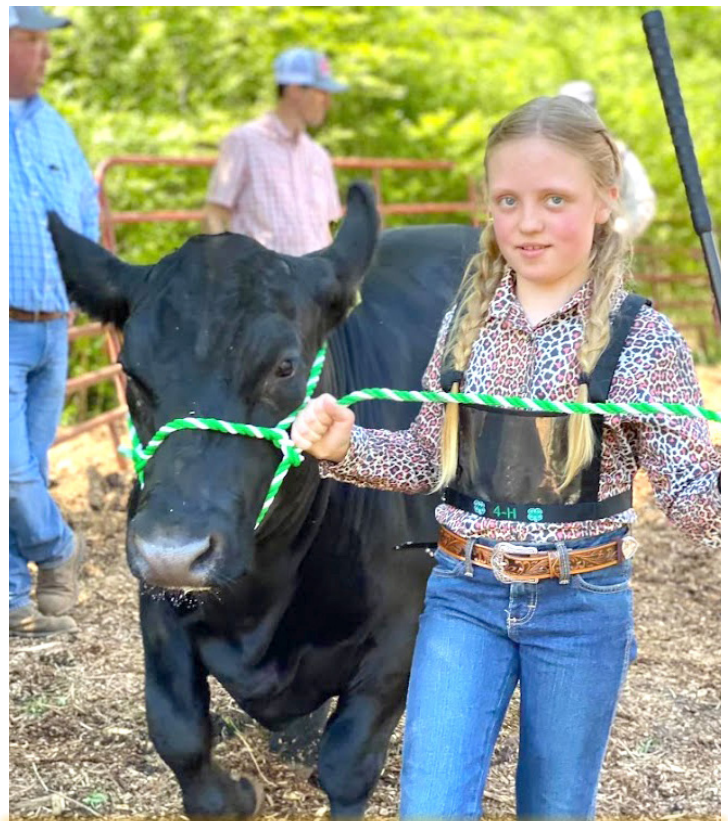
shown and sold. Youth may compete in various categories. The optimal time to sell a calf is when it is 18-22 months old.

In the ring, calves are judged on appearance, stature, how they are standing and how manageable they are. Those showing the calves are also judged on showmanship and how they manage their calf.

The enthusiastic Romy loves being in the show ring with her calf; indeed, the three older Ryes are old hands at showing, and they gain both satisfaction and helpful feedback by showing the products of their labors.

Esme’s mom, Pam, says her elder daughter is sort of a “cow-whisperer.”

“I never worry about her in the show ring with a 1,000-pound steer,” she says. “She is always so calm, and her calves do just what they are supposed to do. They follow her around like a puppy dog.”



ROMY RYE CONFIDENTLY LEADS HER CALF INTO THE SHOW RING IN 2021.

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AUGUSTUS RYE WORKS WITH HIS CALF TO GET HIM COMFORTABLE WITH THE HALTER.

Ever the pragmatist, Augustus is not as bothered as the girls are when the calves are sold.

“The purpose of raising a steer is to produce beef,” he says, adding that you know that when you begin.

The Ryes have done very well in the past with showing their steers, winning a number of awards and selling their beef at a good price.

Augustus is sure that being involved with showing cattle is in his future in some way.

“I’d like to be a beef producer, and I would like to help kids with it, too,” he says, adding that it’s not only a lot of fun but has a lot of advantages for the participants.

For more information on livestock programs for kids and youth, contact your local UT Extension Office and ask about 4-H, or contact your local high school about FFA participation.

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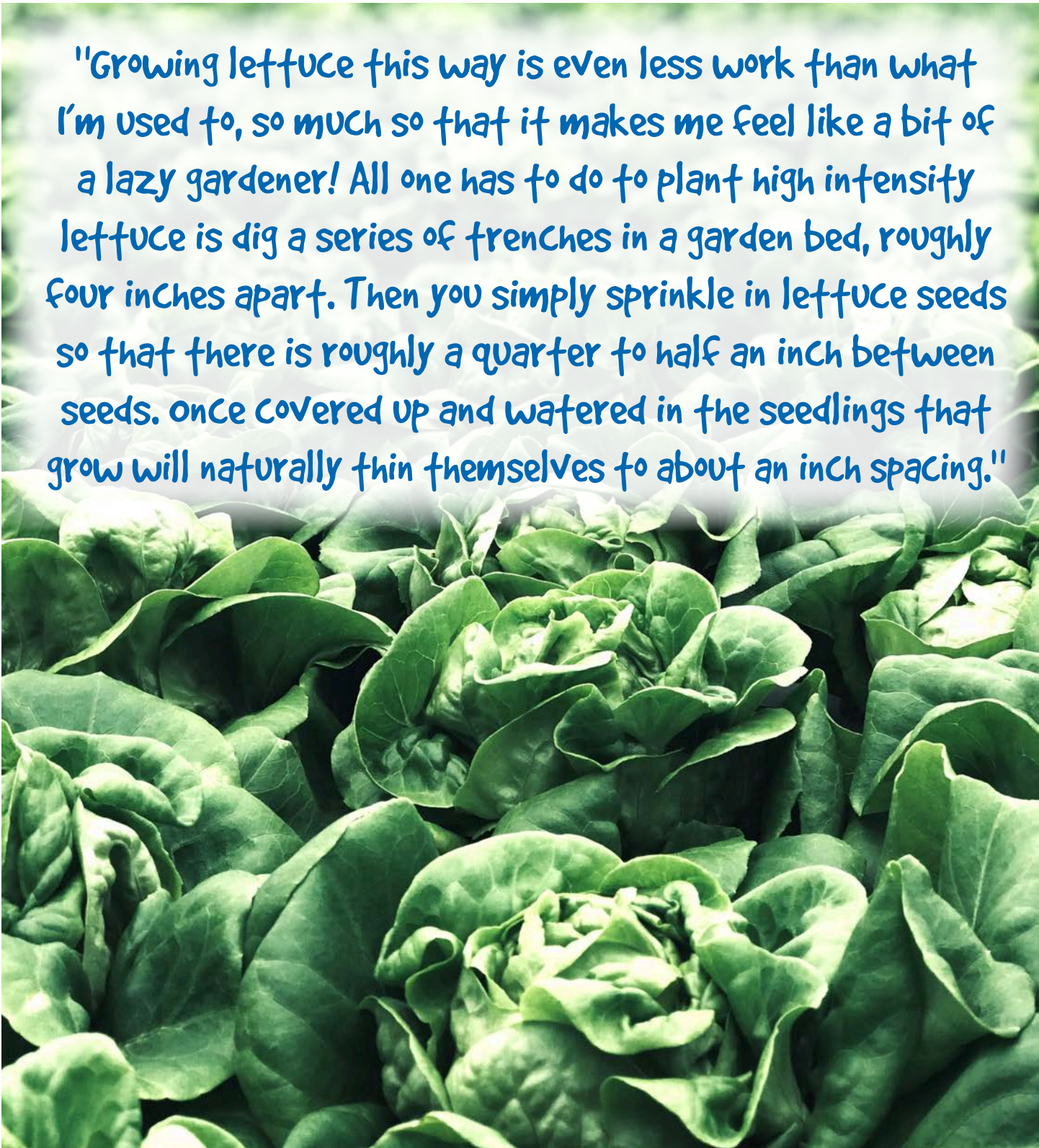
garden for Spring

written by: **Alsey Gwinn Wheatley**

This year is a very exciting one for our family as my husband and I prepare to welcome our second child into the world. The last few months I've developed a wild craving for Caesar dressing that's had me dousing everything from chicken strips and fries to the more routine salad mix in the stuff. But with supply chains still less than reliable and prices getting higher, it feels like rolling dice every time I walk into the grocery store; will they have heads of romaine, or at least bagged salad available this time? Will it be fresh and crisp, or just shy of turning brown from too long sitting in a delivery truck? A lady has needs after all, and these days those needs include having something that will get salad dressing from the jar to my mouth without having to resort to a spoon. To that end, I've found myself obsessively checking the forecast for the first signs of spring so that I

can get my garden back into gear and start growing my own lettuce.

I've dabbled in growing lettuce before, but never found it overly rewarding. My issues have always been that it takes so much space and time to get a single head that it never felt worth the effort to do. However, those issues are neatly solved with high intensity gardening. This practice, adapted from bio-intensive farming, involves planting at the minimum recommended spacing in order to maximize the amount of food you can harvest in a given area. I already use high intensity gardening for some of my other plants, and have had good results. The plants help support one another, their leaves blocking the sun from hitting the soil around them to



"Growing lettuce this way is even less work than what I'm used to, so much so that it makes me feel like a bit of a lazy gardener! All one has to do to plant high intensity lettuce is dig a series of trenches in a garden bed, roughly four inches apart. Then you simply sprinkle in lettuce seeds so that there is roughly a quarter to half an inch between seeds. Once covered up and watered in the seedlings that grow will naturally thin themselves to about an inch spacing."

prevent both weed growth and water evaporation. This means less work for me during hot summer days, something that I'll certainly appreciate even more than usual this year as bending down becomes more challenging.

Growing lettuce this way is even less work than what I'm used to, so much so that it makes me

feel like a bit of a lazy gardener! All one has to do to plant high intensity lettuce is dig a series of trenches in a garden bed, roughly four inches apart. Then you simply sprinkle in lettuce seeds so that there is roughly a quarter to half an inch between seeds. Once covered up and watered in the seedlings that grow will naturally thin themselves to about an inch spacing. Continuing to leave it

to its own devices will let the rows of lettuce do something called self-supporting. In addition to shading out weeds and keeping their soil moist, the rows being so close together means that instead of falling over and spreading out across the ground they will instead overlap and push each other up towards the sun. This prevents them from competing for sunlight and, so long as they're watered deeply, their roots will spread down in pursuit of nutrients instead of growing sideways and choking one another out.

Gardeners can feel free to use seeds for leaf lettuce, head lettuce, or even spinach for this method, but it should be understood that the nature of this kind of gardening won't allow any lettuce heads to form. While something like iceberg or romaine can still be grown, what will actually be harvested is loose leaves. This is done via 'cut and come again' style harvesting. So long as you use a sharp tool and are sure to leave a good three inches above soil level, then the plant will actually regrow its leaves automatically. This not only allows for a long harvest period, but means gardeners can enjoy a great deal more fresh, homegrown greens than the more traditional growing methods. And all with almost zero effort on their part!

It's the first week of the year safe from frost as I'm writing this, and I'm hoping that the spring showers break around my firstborn's nap time so that I can quickly dash out to the garden and plant my own high intensity lettuce bed. With a little time (and some luck) the only thing I'll be worrying about is whether the grocery store has pre-made Caesar dressing or if I'll need to whisk up my own.



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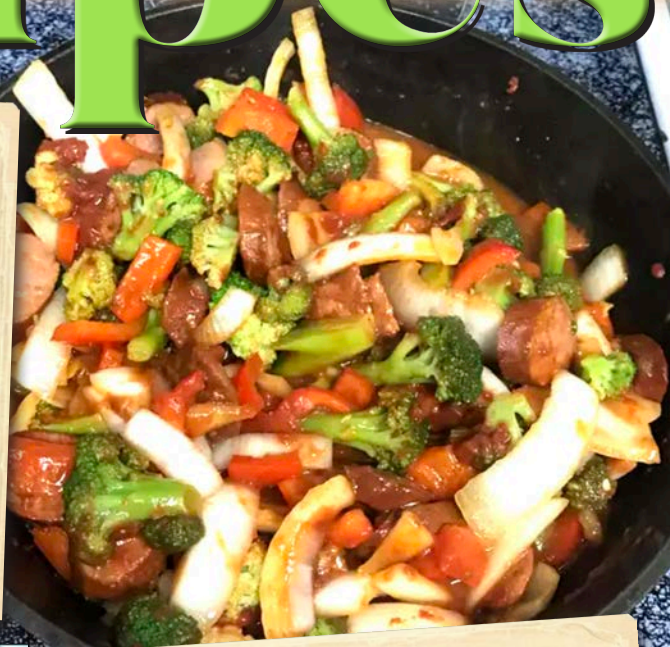


Down Home Cooking Recipes

Smoked Sausage Skillet

1 package Smoked Sausage, diagonally cut into 1/4-inch slices
1/4 cup olive oil • 2 cloves garlic, crushed • 1 large red bell pepper, sliced thin • 1 small yellow onion, sliced thin • 1 package frozen broccoli, thawed • 1/2 cup chicken broth or water
1/2 cup tomato sauce • 2 cups instant rice • 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Heat olive oil and crushed garlic, stir in smoked sausage slices and cook until smoked sausage is browned. Add pepper, onion, broccoli, chicken broth and tomato sauce and simmer for about 10 minutes until vegetables are tender and the liquid is absorbed. In the meantime, cook rice according to package instructions. Stir rice into the skillet, sprinkle with cheese and serve.



Peanut Butter Pie

1 (9 inch) prepared graham cracker crust • 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened • 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter • 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar • 1 (16 ounce) container frozen whipped topping, thawed • 15 miniature chocolate covered peanut butter cups, unwrapped

Mix the cream cheese, confectioners' sugar and peanut butter together until smooth. Fold in 1/2 of the whipped topping. Spoon the mixture into the graham cracker crust. Place the remaining whipped topping over the top of the peanut butter mixture and garnish with the peanut butter cups. Chill for at least 2 hours or overnight before serving.



Southern Fried Cabbage

3 slices bacon, cut into thirds • 1/3 cup vegetable oil
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste • 1 teaspoon ground black pepper, or to taste • 1 head cabbage, cored and sliced • 1 white onion, chopped • 1 pinch white sugar

Place the bacon and vegetable oil into a large pot over medium heat. Season with salt and pepper. Cook for about 5 minutes, or until bacon is crisp. Add cabbage, onion, and sugar to the pot; cook and stir continuously for 5 minutes, until tender.



Sweet Potato Casserole

4 1/2 cups cooked and mashed sweet potatoes
1/2 cup butter, melted • 1/3 cup milk • 1 cup white
sugar • 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract • 2 eggs, beat-
en • 1 cup light brown sugar • 1/2 cup all-purpose
flour • 1/3 cup butter • 1 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9x13
inch baking dish. In a large bowl, mix together
mashed sweet potatoes, 1/2 cup butter, milk,
sugar, vanilla extract, and eggs. Spread sweet po-
tato mixture into the prepared baking dish. In a
small bowl, mix together brown sugar and flour.
Cut in 1/3 cup butter until mixture is crumbly,
then stir in pecans. Sprinkle pecan mixture over
the sweet potatoes. Bake for 25 minutes in the
preheated oven, or until golden brown.

Baked Ham & Cheese Sliders

3/4 cup melted butter • 1 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1 1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce • 1 1/2 tablespoons poppy
seeds • 1 tablespoon dried minced onion • 24 mini sandwich
rolls • 1 pound thinly sliced cooked deli ham • 1 pound thinly
sliced Swiss cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish.
In a bowl, mix together butter, Dijon mustard, Worcester-
shire sauce, poppy seeds, and dried onion. Separate the tops
from bottoms of the rolls, and place the bottom pieces into the
prepared baking dish. Layer about half the ham onto the rolls.
Arrange the Swiss cheese over the ham, and top with remaining
ham slices in a layer. Place the tops of the rolls onto the sand-
wiches. Pour the mustard mixture evenly over the rolls. Bake in
the preheated oven until the rolls are lightly browned and the
cheese has melted, about 20 minutes. Slice into individual rolls
through the ham and cheese layers to serve.

Pineapple & Banana Smoothie

4 ice cubes • 1/4 fresh pineapple -
peeled, cored and cubed • 1 large
banana, cut into chunks • 1 cup
pineapple or apple juice

Place ice cubes, pineapple, ba-
nana, and pineapple juice into
the bowl of a blender. Puree on
high until smooth.

Crab Cakes

1 egg • 3 tablespoons mayonnaise • 4 teaspoons lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes • 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
1 tablespoon minced green onions • 8 ounces crabmeat
1/2 cup crushed buttery round crackers • 1 tablespoon butter

In a medium bowl, whisk together egg, mayonnaise, lemon
juice, red pepper flakes, tarragon, and scallions. Gently stir in
crabmeat, being careful not to break up meat. Gradually mix in
cracker crumbs, adding until desired consistency is achieved.
Heat butter in a skillet over medium heat. Form crab mixture
into 4 patties. Place patties in skillet, and cook until golden
brown, about 5 to 6 minutes on each side.

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Mama

*She had the fine-boned hands of a lady,
With few lines on a flawless face.
Skin that was made of velvet,
Prettiest girl in the place.
She grew up in the Delta,
Mississippi born and raised.
With manners and speech of the South,
Gentle wisdom often praised.
Judi and I named her Mama,
And we never got too old
to lay our head upon her soft shoulder
When life was sharp and too bold.
She saw us through our heartaches,
Walked with us hand in hand.
Always our friend and protector,
Never failing to understand.
She'd been born in 1919
And lived every day God allowed.
We laid her to rest just last week,
102 years later now.
Mama, I'm going to miss you,
Your love, your wit, and your laugh.
I'd be more than honored
to be like you just by half.*

written for her mama, Patricia Price, by:

Sharon Price

Feb. 8th, 2022

NOTHING BUT FAMILY FUN AT THE 641 DANCE BARN

written by: **Jennifer Wheatley**

Shake, Rattle, & Roll

You can almost hear the pain in Calvin Jones' Facebook post on March 18, 2020: "We are about to make one of the hardest decisions we have ever made. We will be closing 641 Music Barn in Camden TN until April 03, 2020. To all our friends and supporters, you all mean so much to us and we cannot take the chance of getting any one of you infected and possibly losing a life. We hope that everyone will understand and come back and see us when we open back up. God bless all of you and everyone that are risking their lives fight-

ing this awful disease. Please be safe and we look forward to see all of you again real soon. AGAIN WE ARE VERY SORRY AND FEEL LIKE THIS IS SOMETHING WE HAD TO DO FOR OUR FRIENDS." Accustomed to welcoming an average of 165 folks they value each week, it was obviously a difficult choice to close the business.

For a few weeks, he posted which bands had been scheduled and messages about how

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the closure was affecting him, "The hardest part about it is missing all our friends, hopefully someday we can open the door and all reunite, that will be a happy day. Hope everyone can stay well, and please be safe, some day we want to see all of you at the reunion."

The 641 Music Barn was closed much longer than Jones anticipated as the Corona virus spread

around the world and took thousands of lives. Jones was hospitalized with the disease and spent time in recovery, but he survived and made it back to the barn that has become so important to him and his wife, Jan.

A family friendly place to dance and listen to music, the 641 Dance Barn is open every

Friday night with a live band, from 7 pm to 10 pm. Cost is \$7 a person. It is not uncommon to see grandparents and great grandparents teaching their grandchildren the steps. There are occasional pot luck dinners and evenings dedicated to 50s music, where folks are encouraged to break out their "saddle oxfords, poodle skirt or roll up your jeans leg and let's cut a

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rug', but the norm is line dancing and two step-ping. An attendee says "I even learned to Polka!" The crowd is now back to around 120, most of whom are regulars.

There are almost 1000 likes for the facility on Facebook, which also includes a review that says the "owners treat you like family. What more could you ask for?" Another says "I love 641, the people, the music and especially Calvin and Jan! It good, clean fun!"

Jones credits the solid crowd to the relationships that have formed. "It's like a family. We talk to every person every Friday night and treat everybody the best we can." He says the people are what he enjoys most about owning the business and is pleased when his guests tell him they have "never been to a place so friendly." New folks show up, but they are part of the group by the end of the

night. Weather can also be a factor in the crowd size and Jones is known to let people know road conditions on Facebook.

Buying the Dance Barn was part of a different kind of recovery for Jones. Along with the death of his first wife, Ruth, he had left behind both a career in telecommunications and a long history

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of organizing baseball tournaments in Henry County. He remembers working with the tournaments since 1963, when he son Steve began in Little League. One in particular stands out to him. There were over 50 teams playing eight to ten games simultaneously at local parks and the high school fields, all of which were crowded with players, parents, and supporters. Jones says "That was work!" When asked if running the dance barn is as much trouble as manning a baseball tournament, he says "No, no, no!"

His second marriage brought with it a renewed sense of purpose and the couple decided serving as hosts of a weekly dance was just what they needed and bought the venue in 2016. The Dance Barn was the site of Jones' recent 90th birthday party, where he was surprised by his family. He says he was "the oldest person at the barn." Maybe so, but he is possibly the youngest at heart and determined to share his exuberance with anyone who visits the 641 Dance Barn.



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Simpler Times

by Bonnie Lill



CHURCH

Back in the day, there was one constant regarding church: on Sunday morning, everyone went. Regardless of which denomination you affiliated with, Sunday morning was sacrosanct. It was spent in church.

Church is a serious subject because it involves the worship of God, but it does have its lighter moments. After all, God made us with the ability to smile and laugh, and he endowed us with a

variety of senses of humor. Where and when these insert themselves can inject humor in any situation, even a religious one.

In the late 19th and into the mid-20th century, my mother's family had their membership at St. Columbkille Church in Wilmington, Ohio.

My grandfather loved the internal combustion engine, and he had a car from early on. Despite not

being Catholic, he faithfully drove the family to St. Columbkille every Sunday.

One Sunday in the mid-1920s, as they were getting back into the car after Mass, the waistband on my great-grandmother's underpants broke and they fell to the ground around her ankles. (Back then, ladies' undies looked more like today's men's boxer shorts, so there was no elastic to hold them up.)

No one said a word.

Great-Grandma Thompson simply stepped out of the crumpled cotton at her feet, picked it up, stuffed it in her pocketbook and got in the car. It must have killed my fun-loving grandfather not to laugh, but he held back, in public, that is.

No one ever said a word to her about it, although the story eventually did become part of family history and lore.

In that Southern Ohio parish and in many other churches, revenue was raised in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by "pew rentals." Our family pew was on the left side about a third of the way back in the beautifully ornate church. When my grandmother was growing up, there was a little brass holder on the back of the pew that held a small, typewritten card with the "renter's" last name on it.

By the 1950s, the cards were gone but the little holders were still affixed to the pew backs, and we always sat in the family pew. I don't know for sure, but I hope that my family never chased any visitors out of "their" pew!

In the 1950s in Chicago, many large, plain churches were built to serve the spiritual needs of the burgeoning immigrant population (first- and second-generation Americans) moving to the suburbs from the more urban areas. What a blessing and a novelty it was for those families to own a small single-family home and not have to share the bathroom with other families. It was an equal blessing and novelty to be able to worship in the

large, airy spaces that were being constructed.

In my parish of St. Anne's, there were generally five or six Sunday Masses, and at each one, they passed the plate twice.

One of the ushers who extended the long-handled basket down each row on his designated side of the church was a neighbor, Mr. Mollicone. His son, Paul, was my best friend. Mr. Mollicone was a joyful Italian-American who loved God, his family and friends, and a good joke.

I was not yet school-aged when my weekly observation of the plate-passing prompted me to ask what at the time seemed like a logical question when I saw Mr. Mollicone as we were walking into the narthex. I looked at my mother and asked loudly, "Mommy, do we have to pay to get out now?"

My shy mother was as mortified as Mr. Mollicone was tickled. He broke into his infectious laugh, as did a number of the parishioners around us. They were probably wondering the same thing but were too polite and grown-up to ask.

Today, St. Columbkille is still holding its own, but due to the changing demographics in the Chicago area, St. Anne's is slated to close by summer. According to a recent Pew research poll, the number of "nones," or folks who have no religious affiliation, is growing nationwide. The number of Protestants is decreasing, and the only reason the number of Catholics is holding steady is due



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immigration. Homegrown Catholic numbers are declining as well.

A lot of things about the past should stay in the past; we would hate to do without plumbing, electricity, cars and the like. But my hope is that folks today can find a way back to sharing their religious beliefs in community.

We were not meant to be alone in our faith walk, and the Bible tells us not to “neglect the assembly.” Worshipping in the woods or on the beach is great – but we should also find time to worship together. Not only can it bring us closer to God and each other, it can also bring us some memorable, funny moments!



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PHRASE GENERATOR

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YOUR BIRTH MONTH

Jan - nervous as
Feb - funny as
Mar - mad as
Apr - cheap as
May - stubborn as
Jun - smart as
Jul - arrogant as
Aug - reckless as
Sep - strict as
Oct - joyful as
Nov - sophisticated as
Dec - chatty as

YOUR FAVORITE COLOR

red - a cannon full of gumbo
orange - a gelatin salad
yellow - a car-sized stink bug
green - a giddy pirate
blue - a five-legged cow
purple - a televangelist
pink - a malnourished tick
black - a house-trained skunk
white - a cross-eyed clown

LAST DIGIT OF YOUR PHONE

0 - in a Black Friday
fist fight
1 - in a kissing booth
2 - in PawPaw's garage
3 - at a debutante ball
4 - in a spring tornado
5 - at a plumber's
convention
6 - on a sticky board
mousetrap
7 - at Mama's house
8 - on a horse with no
legs
9 - near an exposed
septic tank

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