

Sterling Siren



January 2024, Issue 43

A Winter Message for our Bird Friends Care by Barbara Lewis

More than a hundred bird species supplement their natural diets with foods offered at feeders. They often rely most heavily on feeders in winter, when food is scarce. Additionally, some species will take advantage of backyard refueling stations during spring and fall migrations; others will stop by while nesting during the summer. Selecting a specific feeder design and a variety of foods can set the table for a greater diversity of birds. Choosing more than one will prevent crowding at your backyard buffet. Keep birds coming back with three essential ingredients: the right mix of quality seed and other foods, a source of fresh water for drinking and bathing, and ample cover from native plants. Follow this guide and watch the birds flock to your feeders.

1. Tube feeder If you hang just one feeder, this should be it. Choose a model with metal ports around the seed dispensers to deter squirrels. Hang it at least 5 feet off the ground, and 3 feet (or 30-plus feet) from a window to avoid bird collisions. *Seed types:* black oil sunflower, mixed seed, safflower, peanuts *Birds:* Chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, goldfinches, siskins, purple and house finches



2. Hopper feeder

With these feeders you can keep an abundant supply of seed dry and ready for visiting birds. The weight of the arriving birds triggers the release of seeds. Position this feeder on a pole about 5 feet off the ground, or hang it from a tree branch. *Seed types:* safflower, sunflower, cracked corn *Birds:* attracts all the species that visit tube feeders, plus larger birds like cardinals, jays, grackles, red-winged blackbirds.



3. Suet feeder



Hang suet in mesh onion bags or purchase a cage feeder. You can make your own suet “pudding” by grinding suet and adding seeds. Create homemade suet feeders by packing the mixture into the crevices of large pine cones. *Seed types:* suet and bird puddings *Birds:* woodpeckers, titmice, nuthatches, chickadees, occasionally wrens, creepers, warblers

4. Thistle feeder



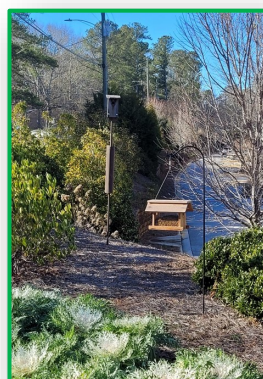
5. Ground feeder



These feeders make seed available only to small-beaked finches. Hang them from a tree or place on a 5-foot pole near other feeders. *Seed types:* nyler (a.k.a. thistle) seed *Birds:* goldfinches, redpolls, pine siskins

A simple screen-bottomed tray that typically sits several inches off the ground or on a deck. Some have covers to keep out snow; others may have wire mesh to keep out squirrels and large birds like crows. Place at least 10 feet from trees or shrubs to give birds a chance to escape predators. *Seed types:* mix of cracked corn, milo, millet, also sunflower seed, mixed seed, wheat, oat *Birds:* doves, juncos, sparrows, towhees, goldfinches

Taken from an open web-site



Sterling Estates Bluebird site w/ feeder and Nest Box



Mealworm feeder for Bluebirds, such as those around our campus

Editor: Ronald W. Lewis, M.D.
Section Contributors:
Maureen (Mo) Birkhead- Health Issues
Sally Cole- Special Feature
John Eadie- Wildlife and Gardening
Bob Erickson- Special Feature/Tidbits of History
Lynette Erickson- Humor
Judy Glauner- What’s New/ Resident and Staff Spotlight
Barbara Lewis- Gardening, Wildlife, and Library
Jenine Steele- Humor
Gail Watson- Welcome New Neighbors
Copy Editors and Proofreaders:
Marilyn Moyle
Lynette Erickson
Layout Editor: Jill Hughes

Tidbits of History by Bob Erickson

There is a household product that nearly everyone has used, but few people know its history. That product is the S.O.S pad and here is the story.

In 1917, Irwin W. Cox was a salesman for Wear-Ever Cookware selling aluminum pots and pans in the San Francisco area. He found that a common complaint was the difficulty of removing cooked-on stains from the aluminum surface.

Cox came up with the idea to use balls of steel wool soaked in soap to clean stains off the cookware.

At home, he and his wife would soak the balls of steel wool in a liquid detergent and allow them to air dry for easy handling. They resoaked the steel wool numerous times to build up layers of soap for scrubbing the heavily soiled cooking surfaces.

His wife came up with the idea to name their product S.O.S., meaning "Save Our Saucepans".

Cox started using the steel wool balls as a kind of calling card when he was trying to sell the pots and pans. In a short period of time, he realized his calling card was more popular than the cooking utensils he was promoting. On January 15, 1918, he was issued a United States patent for the pads as a "polish and cleaner".

However, when he was patenting the product, "S.O.S.", could not be used as the name because it was already the international distress sign in Morse Code. To differentiate the pads' name, the third dot in S.O.S. was dropped to create the S.O.S name that we still see today.

In 1919, Cox left Wear-Ever, moved to Chicago, and started the S.O.S company with the help of investors. George Brooks, a young engineer, joined the company in 1920

and worked on automating the manufacture of the pads. Brooks stayed with the company for 40 years, becoming the vice-president and general manager.



S.O.S pads continued to grow in popularity across the country with New York City being the biggest sales area. No one knows why they were so popular in New York, but it has been suggested that the pads were being used to stop rats from slipping into apartments through the drainpipe openings.

In 1938, the shape was changed from a round ball to an oval pad.

In the 1950s, S.O.S began television advertising on shows like, The Sid Caesar Show, The Molly Goldberg Show, The Price is Right, Queen for a Day, and Tic Tac Dough.



General Foods bought the S.O.S from the original investor group in 1958. In 1959, a box of S.O.S pads can be seen in the famous picture of Vice President Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev at the "Kitchen Debate" in Moscow.

In the 1960s, the color of the soap in the pads was changed from red to blue. Miles Laboratories bought the company from General Foods in 1968.

The current owner of S.O.S is Clorox, which purchased the company in 1994. In 2015, synthetic fiber pads were introduced for scrubbing surfaces that would be scratched by steel wool. S.O.S pads should not be used on furniture, non-stick pans, kitchen counter tops, costly carpets, stainless steel appliances, window glass, or leather.

Today S.O.S is still the market leader with around a 23% share. Brillo is the number two brand in this category.

Sources: The Clorox Company, Thoughtco.com, Wikipedia, Britannica.com, bondcleaningin-sunshinecoast.com



Food for Thought- The Cultural Diversity of Food by Ron Lewis

Every year for my birthday in January my wife would order me a fruit cake from Collin Street Bakery in Corsicana, Texas. This year and the last one came from a neighbor since they know that I like this brand so much; therefore this month's food article will focus on the history of this delicacy. Another popular American fruitcake is from The Claxton Bakery in Claxton, Georgia.

It can be fruitcake or fruit cake. It is made with candied or dried fruit, nuts, and spices, optionally soaked in "spirits". Because of their richness they are most often consumed on their own as opposed to adding condiments. In the United Kingdom, certain rich versions may be covered with icing and decorated. They are usually served in celebrations of weddings and Christmas. Fruit cake is different from fruit breads such as raisin bread.

The earliest recipe from ancient Rome (900 AD) lists pomegranate seeds, pine nuts, and raisins that were mixed into barley mash. In the Middle Ages, honey, spices, and preserved fruit were added. They soon proliferated all over Europe in different forms depending on the availability of certain ingredients. Pope Innocent VIII (1432-1492) finally granted the use of butter as an ingredient of the cake, which had been forbidden because of observance of Fasting. This was granted by a papal letter in 1490 giving Saxony permission to use milk and butter in the "Stollen" fruitcakes.

Starting in the 16th century, sugar from the American Colonies (and discovery that high concentrations of sugar could preserve fruit) created an excess of candied fruit, thus making fruitcakes more affordable and popular. The 17th century English fruitcake was originally yeast-leavened. Adding rum and dried fruit helped extend the shelf life of the cake. In the 1500s, a horrifying "plum pottage" (boiled beef leg combined with bread, spices, dried fruit, wine, and sugar) was mercifully replaced with plum pudding, a fruitcake-like mixture of dried fruit, spices, bread, and booze.

Because they were so rich, fruitcakes were rumored to have been considered sinful and were outlawed in continental Europe in the early 18th century. Fruitcake was served at the wedding of Queen Victoria in 1840 and continues to be served at royal weddings to this day. In 1969, one traveled to space on Apollo 11. It was never eaten and remains on display at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. In December of 2019, the Ruttinger family of Tecumseh, Michigan, celebrated their family's 141st year with the fruitcake Julie Ruttinger's great-great-grandmother Fidelia Ford baked in 1878. Ford had planned to serve the cake, after letting it rest for a year, but died before she got the chance. Out of respect, the family decided not to eat it and has kept it in a glass case ever since.

There are varieties of fruitcakes around the world. In **Australia**, most commonly served at Christmas, it is rarely iced but often consumed with butter, margarine, or custard. In the **Bahamas**, both the cake and ingredients are drenched with rum. In **Bulgaria**, the home-made cake is served throughout the year and is known as "keks". Another specific type is served at Easter in that country and is called "Kozunak". "Keks" is also a traditional fruitcake eaten during Christmas in **Poland**. Fruitcake in **Canada** is sold mostly during Christmas, is shaped like a small loaf of bread, rarely iced, and alcohol is not added to commercially-sold varieties. Dark, moist, and rich Christmas fruitcakes are the most frequent with white Christmas fruitcake less common. In **France**, fruitcake is called "gâteau aux fruits".

In **Germany**, baked goods, which fit the description of fruitcake, are not usually regarded as cake, but rather as sweet breads. "Stollen" is loaf-shaped or oval, and often powdered with icing sugar on the outside. The most famous stollen is the "Dresdner Stollen, sold at the Dresden Christmas market. In Bremen, during the Christmas season, the fruitcake is called "Bremen Klaben" and is not dusted with powder sugar after baking. Both of these two regional fruitcakes are protected geographical indications. In Southern Germany and the Alpine region, "Früchtebrot" is a sweet dark bread baked with nuts and dried fruit, e.g. apricots, figs, dates, plums, etc.



Collin Street Bakery Fruit Cake,
Corsicana, TX



Claxton Bakery Fruit Cake
Claxton, GA



Marzipan Holiday Stollen



Italian Panettone

In **India** fruitcake is a rich dense cake packed with dried fruit and nuts, flavored with spices, and usually made during Christmas. In **Ireland**, a type of sweetbread called “barmbrack” is eaten at Hallowe’en. In **Italy**, “Panforte” is a chewy, dense Tuscan fruitcake. The Genoa version is less dense but still crumbly, and is called “pandolce”. From the Emilia-Romagna region there are various types of fruitcakes, most being dark and heavily spiced with an abundance of candied fruits and nuts. “Panone”, produced in much of Emilia, has a lighter, fluffier dough and candied fruit inside the cake. “Panettone” is a Milanese sweetbread loaf available throughout Italy.

In the **United Kingdom**, fruitcakes, historically referred to as plum cake in England from around 1700, are made in types ranging from extremely light to rich and moist. The traditional Christmas cake is round, covered with marzipan. and then in white royal icing. It is often further decorated with snow scenes, holly leaves, and berries (real or artificial), or tiny decorative robins or snowmen. In Yorkshire, fruitcake is often served accompanied by cheese. In the United Kingdom, it

often contains currants and glace cherries. A type of fruitcake which originated in Scotland, the “Dundee Cake”, does not contain glace cherries but is decorated with almonds.

In the **United States** typical American fruitcakes are rich in fruit and nuts, hence the term “nutty as a fruitcake” was derived in 1938. Mail-order fruitcakes in this country began in 1913. Fruitcakes are also made and sold by Christian monasteries, as a means of supporting the monks and nuns who reside there. One of these is the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, in Conyers, Georgia. Most American mass-produced fruitcakes are alcohol-free, but those home-made varieties may be saturated with liqueurs or brandy and covered in powdered sugar. Brandy-(or wine)-soaked linens can be used to store the fruitcakes, and some people feel that fruitcakes improve with age. The Department of Agriculture says a fruitcake can last six months in your refrigerator. I love the large number of candied fruit and pecans in the Collin Street Bakery version and can attest to its longevity, enjoying it over several months of the year unrefrigerated.

Sources: grin.deltadentalins.com, Wikipedia

Odds and “Ins” and “Out”

by Ronald W. Lewis M.D.

We are entering into 2024, hoping for a better year. But two articles and a passage from a recent novel Barbara and I have read have encouraged me to prepare this essay to remind us of the need for big changes in 2024.

I wrote a series on Monuments for the 33rd through 35th issues of the Siren which included a small section on stumbling stones. An article in the December 16th-22nd *Economist* on page 45 in the *Charlemagne* section, entitled “Remembrance of Crimes Past”, brought to mind the **Never Forget** motif. It recounts the story of the placement of a Stolpersteine, or “stumbling stone,” placed on the street in front of the previous dwelling of Max Kösterich, a victim of a German concentration camp along with two of his sons, numbers in the six million Jews killed by the Nazis. The stone was placed by a grandson of Max whose father had fled to Australia, escaping the fate of his father and brothers.

The stone was placed this last November by the German artist, Gunter Deming, (from the 1968 generation), who, since 1996, has “chipped away at pavements” in around 30 countries in Europe, filling them with these brass plaques: “Berlin alone has more than 10,000 Stolpersteine.” Around 700 a month are installed these days across Europe. This artist’s avocation truly incorporates the “Never Forget” philoso-

phy.

The week before in the *Economist* on page 23, an article had also caught my attention. It was entitled “Young view on Jews- Old hatred, new audience”. The article included a discussion of a new poll from YouGov/the *Economist*. “Young Americans-or at least the subset of them who take part in surveys- appear to be remarkably ignorant about one of history’s greatest crimes. Some 20% of respondents aged 18-29 think that the Holocaust is a myth, compared with 8% of those aged 35-44.” Another 22% think the Holocaust has been exaggerated. The same poll “found that 27% of black respondents and 19% of Hispanics believe that Jews have too much power in America, compared with 13% of white responders who say so. “Whatever the reason” (the article suggests social media may be playing a role here), “the polling is alarming.” Probably an even larger percentage of our country do not know that many of the demeaning ideas and plans of the Nazis came from direct observation of how American society had treated the Native Americans and African American slaves.

In my mind, the “Never Forget” idea is important for us to remind us not to forget the horrors and truths of history. But 2023 brought us many stories of innocents dying: the Hamas slaughter of innocents, the American gun deaths of high school and elementary children, the many innocent deaths of non-combatants in Gaza and Ukraine. Yes, “Never Forget” is a noble mission but

“When Will it End?” is the most pressing existential question.

Justice is important! When a group that wants to eliminate your country, attacks and slaughters, as well as takes hostages, you don’t just turn the other cheek. But revenge is a type of “justice” that sometimes get out of hand. Otherwise, “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” results in a proverbial blind toothless population. We, as humans, seem to value polarization well over compromise and diplomacy all over the world. The difference between justice and revenge are hard to separate at times, but we need to work harder to figure this out, both individually and as societal groups.

I do believe in the basic value of life that lies potentially within each of us. I was struck by a beginning of a solution for our polarized world, surprisingly from a recent *New York Times* best-selling novel by James McBride on page 70 in his novel *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*. He describes a conversation between the characters Malachi and Moshe. “Malachi smirked, ‘Did you know that all the historical sources of Hanukkah are in Greek?’ ‘What’s that got to do with my Negro workers?’ Moshe replies. Then the punch line by Malachi, “**Light is only possible through dialogue between cultures, not through rejection of one or the other.**” I say **Amen.**

Importance of Walking by Jenine Steel

Walking can add minutes to your life. This enables you at 85 years old to spend an additional 5 months in a nursing home at \$7000 per month.

My grandpa started walking five miles a day when he was 60. Now he's 97 years old and we don't know where he is.

I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

The only reason I would take up walking is so that I could hear heavy breathing again.

I have to walk early in the morning, before my brain figures out what I'm doing..

I joined a health club last year, spent about 400 bucks.

Haven't lost a pound.

Apparently you have to go there.

Every time I hear the dirty word 'exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate.

The advantage of exercising every day is so when you die, they'll say, 'Well, she looks good doesn't she.'

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.

I know I got a lot of exercise the last few years,..... just getting over the hill.

We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

AND I love this next one!

Every time I start thinking too much about how I look, I just find a Happy Hour and by the time I leave, I look just fine.

You could run this over to your friends, but just e-mail it to them.

RSV in the Elderly Population- a Report by Maureen (Mo) Birckhead

Sterling Estates welcomed Dr. Amar Mohan M.D. on Tuesday, January 9th to present an information session for residents on the RSV virus and vaccine. Dr. Mohan is one of our Transitional Care physicians who is board certified in Internal Medicine, with a special interest in geriatric medicine and dementia care. There were 35 residents in attendance.

Dr. Mohan began his presentation with an overview of the most common preventable disease vaccines given to the senior population. These vaccines include the Covid, Flu, Shingles, Pneumococcal Pneumonia, TDAP (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis) and the RSV vaccines. He shared with the group how the immune system works to protect us from pathogens, including bacteria and viruses, and how the immune system ages (Immunosenescence), making it less capable of protecting us from disease. He also explained how vaccines work by exposing us to some component or version of the pathogens in order to stimulate our immune system to create antibodies to protect us from future disease. Dr. Mohan reassured the group that vaccines remain a very safe and effective way to prevent severe

disease, hospitalization, and death from preventable illnesses.

Information sheets were handed out to the residents in attendance related to the RSV (Respiratory Syncytial) virus. This is a common respiratory virus that results in mild cold-like symptoms in the general population. However, RSV can cause severe symptoms in infants and seniors. Bronchial inflammation, hospitalizations, and death can occur in these two populations when exposed to the virus. RSV is transmitted through direct contact when an infected person coughs or sneezes, and the droplets are dispersed through the air and land on common surfaces like doorknobs, tables or light switches, When a non-infected person then first touches these objects, and then his/her mouth, nose or eyes, they may become infected. Symptoms of RSV can include sneezing, coughing, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, fever, decreased appetite and fatigue. Prevention of severe illness can be accomplished by vaccination, frequent handwashing, and the use of masks.

Stay tuned for dates and times of upcoming RSV vaccine clinics here at Sterling.



More Humor by Lynette Erickson



"I'm not climbing down there to fetch your teeth. Serves you right for spitting."



Getting older has some benefits... Call it a "Senior Moment" and you can get away with pretty much anything!



HUSBANDS ARE THE BEST PEOPLE TO SHARE SECRETS WITH. THEY'LL NEVER TELL ANYONE, BECAUSE THEY AREN'T EVEN LISTENING.



Sterling Estates Independent Residents' Committees

Food Committee: Bob Steele (706 766-6479, bobsteele211@gmail.com)

Health and Safety Committee: Ron Lewis (706 284-2310, rlewis@augusta.edu)

Independent Residents are encouraged to share concerns with these Independent Resident committee chairs.

Erratum: In issue 42 of the Siren, the lead story on Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer was written by Bob Erickson, not by Ron Lewis. It was also listed as "Tidbits of History." It was caught when proofed; but when corrected the morning of 12/22 the computer did not enter it. I apologize to Bob, who has been an important writer for the Siren. Ron Lewis, Editor