



News from Peef & Lo

Van-ity! Van-ity! All is Van-ity

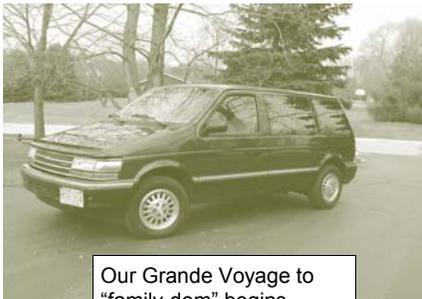
I remember watching all of Paul's friends purchasing minivans when we were in college — and I remember thinking they were completely nuts. After all, everyone knows the assumptions that people make about you when you buy a "family car" — and there's usually no way to avoid the inevitable comments about babies, the goo-goo gah-gah eyes, the awkward questions about marriage and procreation.

No, no. The Family Planning course Paul's friends took their Junior year in college was not exactly "sinking in". In fact, they were buying minivans for a completely different reason: a minivan just happens to be one of the most affordable venues with which to haul around one's percussion equipment! Kinda like a small semi-trailer with a more plush interior.

But even so, I couldn't really picture buying a minivan. I thought it would take an awful lot to convince me to ruin my entire image by being seen driving around in the world's biggest family car. And Paul agreed.

And our life went on for quite a few years without any more talk of minivans.

But things change as you get older. You start thinking less about how you appear to everyone else, and more about how you can get by with what



Our Grande Voyage to "family-dom" begins...

you have... and thus you have the story behind our most recent purchase: a minivan.

We didn't buy the minivan to haul around our impending children (sorry, guys — no little ones on the way). Thus, we aren't planning a carpool, or starting a babysitting business or anything else to do with children or excessive amounts of passengers. No, we didn't even buy it to haul around Paul's percussion equipment on a regular basis (although that may come in handy one of these days). The truth is, we just bought it in the good old-fashioned spirit of practicality.

With Paul's blazer needing to be replaced pretty desperately — we needed an

affordable, dependable vehicle... and one that would be big enough to haul dirt for container gardens, furniture from rummage sales, and Christmas trees in winter.

And a minivan fit the bill pretty well.

When this deal came up, we had to take it... Regardless of what we thought about minivans ... regardless of the looks we expected to receive driving around in our little "family" car... we had to be as practical as possible, under the circumstances.

And we were.

Paul and I still stare out of the windows of our little van and wonder what the staring people are saying as we pass. We still mourn the death of "cool" in our household. Sometimes I duck when we pass high schools. And, truthfully, I still get nervous every time I hear someone laughing when my windows are rolled down. But, it's not so bad.

And some days, when nobody we can see is looking, we even sneak outside just to catch a peak of our little evergreen bus... and usually, even we smirk.

Quarterly Notes on Our Well-Being

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☺ Hey look! It's a little piece of empty space! Isn't that special?



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Gardening with Peef and Lo: Chapter One

I really think that May 7th is too early to start gardening... I really do.

I'm not talking about starting seeds in the house, or raking around in the dirt for a while on weekends. I'm talking about trying to plant actual plants outside and expecting them to live through the next month.

I don't know what it is. But it tweaks my moral fibers all wrong and makes me twitch in unmentionable places.

Oddly enough, it's something I just attempted this year — and last time I checked, all my plants were still in pretty good working order.

It was just getting so warm outside, and it started to feel as if we had to do something with the porch. Things were starting to look sadly bare out there when the sun shone and I knew I was about to break down and get my knees dirty.

Of course, we didn't just jump in and start gardening at the drop of a hat. We talked about it for a couple of weeks before actually setting out on our adventure. I purchased a lovely little book on container gardening and we mulled around some ideas for hanging planters and window boxes.

Paul measured things and poked around at walls and the doors. I was determined not to garden until at least the 20th of May, when I had plans to spend the day at a local herb sale.

I have to admit, however, that our "planning" stage got pretty boring pretty fast. And all of a sudden we were in the car, driving off to the new Stein's in Menomonee Falls.

Our self-control was impeccable! We made it all the way down the aisle with all the dirt and stones and wood chips before I began exclaiming with delight: "Oh, my! Honey, come over here! I'm in love!"

There, right before me, were the most lovely glazed pottery pots... and in perfect sizes for our little porch garden. Paul also fell in love instantly and we filled the cart with treasures and set off to find plants with which to fill them up.

A few aisles and a whole lot of sweat



It's getting to be a jungle out there...

later, we had the cart filled with our wishes, wants, and needs... dirt, stones, fertilizer, planters and enough plants to appease our gardening bug for an hour or two.

I have to confess. It was simply heaven to sit out on that porch and grime around in the dirt, planting things on the ungodly date of

May 7th. And it was even better to stand back and look at the finished product — a little green jungle of porch, with just the perfect little path down the middle.

Now Paul keeps reminding me about how we had to plead with our tomatoes last year, begging them to "make love, little tomatoes, make love!"... but I'm not getting discouraged this early in the game.

After all, the way I have this figured, even if everything dies — we'll have time to start completely over even before it gets to be June 1st. :)

Bleach is NOT your Friend..

I don't care what sorts of good things they tell you about bleach... that it disinfects, that it whitens, that it will get out your toughest stains... it's all lies.

Bleach is evil.

Honestly, there's nothing worse than pulling a load of laundry out of the washing machine and realizing that you've just given a really bad dye job... to your husband's khaki shorts.



There's nothing worse than realizing you've just given a really bad dye job...

It's true. I bleached his khakis. They had a grease stain. I had already washed them once, and I was determined to get it out... come hell or high water. So, I added a teeny bit of bleach to the load.

It was just a tiny bit. Honest. Just enough to scare that stain right out of those shorts.

And it DID scare the stain away... along with any remnant of natural looking color in the fabric.

When I pulled them out of the washer, they were a cross between bright orange and brown... after drying them, they're now a pleasant tangerine color... but definitely not khaki anymore.

I'm sitting here as we speak, staring at this pair of shorts which are still kind of draped over the bed. They're pretty awful looking. I wonder if anything matches them.

I haven't folded them yet because I'm still contemplating whether or not to try something else... before Paul gets home :)

Cooking with Peef & Lo: We Even Eat Steak

I have come to quell a rumor regarding the feeding habits of our friends, Peef and Lo.

There have been some reports that these two quirky kids have decided to become vegetarians. In other words, they have placed their beef, chicken and fish in a place very far from their lips... and nary the twain shall meet.

This is not true.

There have been other reports that there is a severe tofu shortage in Germantown, very likely due to their odd preferences in cuisine.

Not true either.

Neither is it true that Lori and Paul eat ONLY things weird and obnoxious, so as to have things to write about in their newsletter.

I just wanted to straighten things out once and for all...

It occurred to us that this matter might be slightly problematic, when our beloved brother, Mark, approached us at Easter with this question:

"OK, how much hamburger have you eaten this year?"

Now, I must admit that our answer was not impressive. It was certainly "lower than average". But, I assured Mark that we ate enough ground beef to sufficiently cloud our health. I don't think he believed us.

A few weeks later, in an email from a good friend, it was stated in no uncertain terms that get-togethers

between us would definitely NOT include food that I cooked. And although I assured him that I was capable of creating dishes composed of "normal" food, he didn't seem completely convinced.

So, I am here today to quell the rumors that we are healthier than we actually are. Although we are greatly complimented by your assumptions and flattered by your delightful comments, we must admit that our lives remain tainted by steaks, barbequed chicken, and a weekly pint of high-fat, carageenan filled ice-cream.

And even more tragic:

Sometimes we even like it.



A delectable feast

Elmo: Patio Boy Takes on the Jungle Beast

We always thought we owned a spectacular cat of a most unusual bravery. After all, he often took very daring leaps from our porch in the dead of night, trusting only his keen senses to guide him to safety on the hard concrete sidewalk.

He used seemed so brave stalking bumblebees and wasps on our small wooden patio. He aggravated bugs I couldn't even identify and ate some I wouldn't have touched with a ten foot pole. His aim was impeccable, and when he was in the heat of a really good battle, he never gave even the slightest thought to his own safety. Sometimes, when he cocked his head very slightly to the side, you could just picture him out in the wilds of Africa, hunting something delicious and dangerous for dinner.

But, I'm afraid all of that beautiful bravery is just a sad façade... a cover for something even more reckless and

tragic. I'm afraid our Elmo is nothing more than a scaredy cat.

It all started with our new garden (please read more on page 2). We brought home beautiful pots and filled them with wonderful (and edible!) greenery. We spent almost 3 hours digging and planting and sowing our hearts out, placing some in hanging baskets, and others in window boxes, preparing for the moment that our little beast would take his first steps into our delightful jungle.

We had visions of grandeur. We had visions of horror. We prepared for the worst.

And we hoped that our poor little plants would survive the summer in close contact with our funny little petal-muncher.



What strange greens you are...

And when he took his first steps out onto the porch and put his nose in the air to take a big gulp of fresh green air, he looked for a moment as if he were going to walk out into our little jungle and live in peace and harmony with our new plant friends.

But, alas and alack, things could never be so simple... Elmo took one look at those big green hovering plant monsters, and he took off back

through the patio doors inside the house to cower behind the rocking chair. So much for our big bad hunter!

We have since lured him into our jungle again and again. We believe he is acclimating quite well. In fact, we are now preparing for the day he finds out that all those green monsters are nothing more than small, green edibles.

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Amore Sitis Unit!

