



News from Peef & Lo

Autumn: An Ode

Have you noticed...?

When the gems of summer begin to tire, we tend to clean up slowly. We pack each moment away reluctantly, carefully, as if to preserve something of its marvel. We steep in each moment ... and we are changed.

There's something about the last cut of summer — the last time the grass is mown, when it's still green, and fresh, and smelling of life. There's something about the moment of resignation when the mower is placed back in its shed, and its blades are replaced by the rev of a newly-tuned snow blower.

There's something about the feeling in our noses as the allergens begin to hit — that scratchy feeling in our throats as the ragweed infiltrates the delicate membranes.

Yes, there's even something about the first sneeze that makes the heart wonder of the things to come.

When we see the first geese flying south, we look up. We hear their horns honking, and we realize that it is really over. The summer has gone into hiding. Autumn riches have replaced the tattered remains of sunlit bliss.

But there's something poignant about the way the jeweled tones fly off the trees in swirls and eddies. And something moving about the way they hit the ground, crackling with glee.

There's something about the way the children chatter to and from school, kicking pinecones to the bus and mashing their pink noses into the

steamy glass. It's something that we long to remember.

The bite of crisp apple meets cinnamon. Our homes become warmer. We hold our breath. Rake meets sidewalk and screams

When we look out of the window and see the trees frowning — naked against blue panes of sky, we sigh. The crisp air bites our cheeks.

We are made fragile, and then renewed.

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FALL COLOR FACTS:

Low temperatures destroy chlorophyll and, if they stay above freezing, promote the formation of anthocyanins — the pigments which allow leaves to change color.

Bright sunshine also helps to destroy chlorophyll and enhance anthocyanin production.

Dry weather, by increasing sugar concentration in sap, also increases the amount of anthocyanin in the leaves.

So the brightest autumn colors are produced when dry, sunny days are followed by cool, dry nights.

For peak viewing locations and times, contact the Wisconsin Division of Tourism at (800) 432-8747 or visit their website at: <http://www.travelwisconsin.com/d2k/servlet/internet.fallcolorreport>

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Local Flavors: Our Summer Experiments

Summer has been wonderful — HOT, but wonderful. And we've quite a bit to report on the culinary front.

Our garden surprised us this year. Amid the drought-like conditions and bizarre weather patterns, we have been granted a bountiful harvest including dozens and dozens of tomatoes, a very large number of yellow squash, a couple of eggplant — and an impending harvest of tomatillos that is so extraordinary that it is going to leave us yanking out our hair.

You can just imagine how well we've been eating. ☺

The extra long days also gave us plenty of time to contemplate and carry out our most elaborate dinner plans. The central air-conditioning also contributed to our culinary success. And it warranted us a bit of diversity in our methodology as we weren't limited to standing outside in front of the grill to avoid heating up the kitchen.

We didn't do anything particularly outrageous. But we did have our share of fun. And we made a few interesting discoveries along the way.

First, we "happened upon" fish tacos (thanks to the recommendation from some good friends of ours). Now we can't get enough of them. We've already tried them with cod, tilapia and catfish. And we're currently experimenting with sauces and toppings which expand from the traditional mayo and cabbage.

On one of the hotter days of the summer, we made escabeche — a fiery Mexican pickled condiment that includes carrots, onions and plenty of jalapenos. ☺ It was definitely spicy and we burned our little digestive tracts, but it was quite perfect for the hot weather. We declared it "a repeater" and found that it paired quite well with fish tacos.

We also found ourselves experimenting with a wide variety of vegetarian enchilada fillings. Among our discoveries, we were delighted to find that both swiss chard and kale work wonderfully as a filling with a bit of cheese and onion. It's just another interesting way to get more greens in our diets.

Speaking of "greens", we attempted eating dandelion greens (both raw AND cooked) — and decided they were just *TOO* bitter. But we're planning to try again ... in, oh, about seven years.

On the VERY exciting dessert front, we ate far too much icecream, and had a bit too much fun attempting to make our OWN renditions of popular

flavors — including a lovely low-fat cheesecake icecream that would be just lovely swirled with a bit of Nutella. ☺

We also found the PERFECT brownie recipe (never mind the fact that it calls for two sticks of butter AND chocolate chips). With slightly crisp tops and gooey insides, they were simply delightful when served with raspberry sorbet and orange-chocolate sauce.

Interestingly enough, amid all the feasting, we both managed to ride our stationary bike often enough to avoid putting on the pounds. And most of our exploits were successful enough that we've decided to keep on cooking — at least for another year. ☺



Get Online with Peef and Lo

Take a long, hard look at the "NEWS FROM PEEF and LO" that you're clutching in your hand and you might notice that it arrived in your mailbox via the lovely people at the USPS. We love mail, and we're sure you do too — - but there's a faster, easier way to keep in touch with Peef and Lo.

Thanks to technology (and Lori's new computer capabilities), you can now receive the newsletter ONLINE.



All you need is ADOBE ACROBAT READER®, free software that lets you view and print Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. With Acrobat Reader, you can also fill in and submit Adobe PDF forms online.

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Please drop me an email if you are interested in receiving your newsletter online; I'll add you to my online list! I'd also love to hear from you if you happen to be online!

Lori

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Books, Travel ... It's Starting Again

Just about the time that Lo was getting used to her freedom (and a semi-normal work week), it's time for school to begin again. Time for the strange work hours, the finagled schedules, the weird intellectual books, the mangled brain cells. Time for that bizarre adjustment in the marriage relationship which is slowly-but-surely making Paul into an honorary angel.

Yup. Classes begin again. And this time it's business. Six credits and forty hours of clinical work at Milwaukee High School of the Arts. Lo is having a bit of a "wow" moment. Especially since it recently hit her that she's going to have to STUDENT TEACH in a few short months.

But, we're up for the challenge. It's going to be an interesting and fun-

filled semester. After all, one of Lo's classes is called "The History of the American Musical" ☺ It's okay to laugh — we're laughing too. We're envisioning really bad productions of "Oklahoma" and "South Pacific". And sleep deprivation due to late-night sing-alongs. UGH. ☹



And right about the time Peef was getting used to being at home and eating REAL food, he's revving up for another fun-filled autumn filled with hardware shows and sales calls.

One of his future trips will take him to the paradise of Western Iowa,

where he will have the rare opportunity to drive through never-ending countrysides filled with cows, pigs and cornfields.

On the bright side, Peef was excited to learn that they're sending him off to Philadelphia in mid-October... so, that's a bit of an exciting change from the usual.

We're already starting to research the lovely restaurants he might be able

to sample while he's in the lovely City of Brotherly Love. If we're really lucky, Lo will be able to tag along for the ride.

Overall, it should be an eventful season for the two of us. Busy, busy, busy... but blessed, we're sure. We always are.

Clicker Training 101

There's something called "clicker training". You use the top of a baby food jar and a little bit of innovation to perform amazing feats of operant conditioning. And one day, your cats miraculously begin to obey your every frivolous command. Really.

We realize that you don't believe us, but it's true. We're training Zoë. And Elmo is coming along for the ride, if very reluctantly.

We've started by training the little maniacs to sit on kitchen chairs while we prepare their dinner each morning and evening. It's working. But it's a slow process. Most mornings, the scene looks something like this:

Paul rises from bed and is immediately attacked by a screaming Zoë and a whining Elmo. Paul goes immediately to the kitchen to stop the madness.

Paul pulls out two kitchen chairs. He points at one (to his right), and Zoë immediately hops up onto it. *CLICK*

If she's feeling especially obedient (and hungry), she might even sit when she is commanded to. On a really good day, she lies down automatically. *CLICK-CLICK*

Elmo, on the other hand, hasn't really gotten the hang of the whole idea. Sometimes he hops up on his chair *CLICK* Sometimes, he stares at the chair like it is an alien. Other times, he

wanders around the water bowl like a lost puppy dog looking for his owner. At times like these, Elmo is generally assisted, like an elderly gentleman, to his appropriate landing.

Once both cats are seated comfortably, the fun begins.

First, the dry food is poured into the bowls. Both cats stare greedily onto the counter. Zoë whines.

Then, the can of moist food is opened and a spoon is used to scoop food out of the can and into the bowls. Paul

must be very careful NOT to tap the spoon on the side of the bowl or Zoë will jump down from her chair. If she remains on her chair, she is given a treat and congratulated. *CLICK* If

she jumps down again, disaster strikes. Usually Elmo follows — in which case, the whole scenario is forced to begin again.

If all goes well, the food goes into the bowls and the cats remain on their

respective chairs until commanded otherwise. *CLICK* We don't wish to discuss what happens on days when both cats appear to have left their brains on the windowsill. It's not pretty. Just envision lots of calling and clicking and frowning cats and you'll be pretty close.

Maybe we're crazy. Who knows?! But it's been an interesting experience. And we have very high hopes.



*News from
Peef and Lo*

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