



News from Peef & Lo

Measuring time with coffee spoons.

Making observations is pretty important in life. Wouldn't you agree?

Yeah, I thought you would. That's why I'm going to take the next few moments of your time and ask you to do a bit of observing. It's just a simple exercise... and it won't hurt. I promise.

First, I want you to note that this newsletter is late. OR — let's be nice. It was DELAYED.

Maybe you DIDN'T notice that until I mentioned it. Of course, it's also possible that you have been pining over the missing newsletter for quite some time — thinking it must have gotten lost in the mail or something equally horrible.

I'm here to dispel any myths that surround this unforeseen tardiness. I'm here to assure you that we've been thinking of you just as often as we were before. The newsletter hasn't been sitting around in some dead letter bin at the post office. And nothing terrible happened to us. We're just in flux.

Some of you already know that Paul lost his job in September of 2003 — not a pleasant surprise, but one of those things. Happily, you might also know that Paul is now employed again — with a company called U.G.A., a firm which acts as a sort of consulting firm to small businesses and self-employed individuals.

It's a challenging sales position that pays on a 100% commission basis. Paul is now self-employed too, which means that we've leapt headlong into a whole new

tax adventure.

As you might have already guessed, this change hasn't come without a bit of adjustment. Lori is in SHOCK, of course, that Paul is home most of the time and is no longer taking week-long trips out of state. Paul is working his fingers down to the bone, trying to contact thousands of small businesses in Milwaukee and developing a good, solid client base. And we're both simultaneously thanking the Lord for this new opportunity... and wondering how long it's going to take us to get a hang of things!!

Of course, while all of the adjustments were happening, the HOLIDAYS rolled along — rudely, as they usually do. And suddenly our lives were filled with tinsel... and trees... and gifts... and the FLU. Yes, this year, Peef and Lo spent most of their Christmas vacation vegged out on the couch, recuperating from some sort of nasty respiratory flu bug.

That didn't stop us. But it did manage to slow us down. Suddenly, the New Year came along, and we found ourselves caught up in the angst of impending change and progress. Work was busy for the two of us, and we had all we could do to catch our breath at night as we lay, collapsed on the floor of the family room.

Anyhow, we've been busy of late, and things like newsletters have pretty much

fallen to the wayside.

You'll forgive us, though. Won't you? It's your choice, really. But we'd love it if you would.

Just in case you think it a TERRIBLE thing that we delayed the newsletter, you might choose to observe that since we've waited so long to send it, we can actually now adjust the schedule of it a bit. The quarterly can now start (appropriately) in January, and end in October. Not an altogether bad thing, when you think about it. And quite logical, really.

The final thing I wanted to point out to you is that the newsletter has a bit of a new "look" to it. Maybe you noticed. Maybe you didn't. It's of no consequence, really. We just felt like stirring things up a bit.

The coffee cups seemed like a friendly addition to the whole affair — and they fit the notion that we want this newsletter to feel like a warm visit with good friends — which YOU are. And the idea of a fresh start was pretty appealing in and of itself.

After all, it's 2004 — a whole new year. We're not the same people we were last year, so why look like it? It's time for a new image. A few pounds of weight-loss. A new hair-color. Who knows? Maybe changing the look will improve the content.

Well — we can always hope.

**We are NEW.
and IMPROVED.**

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January of 2004

PREDICTIONS FOR 2004. *Peef and Lo's Private Little List.*

1. January will be colder-than-average, but we will live.
2. P&L will have a fabulous time with out-of-town friends in February.
3. Lo will develop a fun-but-focused advertising campaign for Peef's new business that takes his sales over the top.
4. Peef will thrive in his new position, and by April will be wondering what all the fuss was about.
5. BIG FISH will win best picture at the Oscars.
6. Spring garden plans reach fruition. Peef and Lo finally have their vegetable plot! And herb garden! And pretty front yard!
7. P&L will NOT give up their penchant for farmer's markets, despite backyard bounty.
8. BIG BANG fireworks in Milwaukee will actually be GOOD this year.
9. Howard Dean will become the Democratic nominee, but he won't be able to stand up to Bush in the Fall election.
10. Christmas will come earlier than expected.

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New Years Eve: The Obesity Connection

We're quite sure you've all heard some of the latest health and diet news... Atkins is revising its high-protein plan; The SouthBeach Diet is all the rage; Low-fat is OUT; Richard Simmons is still alive and kickin' in his dolphin shorts.

The list goes on and on.

Now, Peef and Lo have never been advocates of dieting. In fact, we are firm believers that diets create a self-perpetuating cycle of guilt and additional weight gain that has a negative impact on overall bodily health. But we have made some observations recently that have caused us to reconsider the varied implications of some of our thoughtless actions. And today, we'd like to share one of our most recent observations: **New Year's Eve is responsible for our ongoing battle with excess fat.**

It's a sneaky day... and not one which most of us would dare to take lightly. It is, after all, the day before the NEW YEAR. A day filled with the promise of a new life, new opportunities, and new blessings. It's a day on which we gather with friends and loved ones and pay homage to past, present and future. It's also a day on which we EAT.

And no, when I say eat, I'm not talking about your ordinary, run-of-the-mill everyday eating. Not the breakfast, lunch and dinner sort of eating. I'm talking about an ongoing, omnipresent FEAST of goodies.

Each year, on December 31st, we gather together with our good friend Steph and we spend the entire day cooking up scrumptious things to nosh. Our menu this most recent year included such delicacies as mushroom and leek triangles, spanikopita, spicy coconut shrimp, homemade Middle Eastern flatbreads, and our old standby (and Paul's favorite) Merkt's cheese spread on crackers.

Each year we bring back some old favorites, but we also vow to add something new and different to the menu. This year it was a Carrot Compote in the style of the Tunisian Jews. I think Elmo liked it a bit more than we did, but it was quite nice smeared on a nice piece of warm flatbread.

Our feasting begins in the early afternoon and gradually tapers off in the evening hours, as we make our way through games and games... and games of Trivial Pursuit. We often reluctantly stop our games to observe the strike of midnight and sip a bit of champagne. But sometimes the party extends well into the morning hours.

Lest you think we're some God-forsaken crazy hedonists on New Year's Eve, I should add that we don't STUFF OURSELVES into an oblivion, or practice bizarre Roman purging rituals.



But we do eat. Heartily. And we enjoy ourselves for an entire day, ringing in the New Year feeling quite happy and satisfied.

However, there are some problems with this. Lately, we've been contemplating the idea that this happy, satisfied feeling might have a pretty dramatic effect on how our bodies react to the food that we consume in the New Year. We think our body might be celebrating too on that evil night. And storing food for later use... right in our tubby little thighs. It's quite possible that any resolutions we make to the contrary would be moot in the New Year. For we've trained ourselves to be... well, fat.

We're party people. And frankly, we like celebrating all sorts of interesting holidays throughout the year. We invite people into our home frequently and always welcome a chance to adopt any new and different celebration days that come along (having a Jewish cat helps considerably, of course). But lately, in light of our recent findings, we're reconsidering the concept of NEW YEAR celebrations. It might be a very good thing for us to avoid them for a while — and see if it makes a difference in our overall physiques. After all, we've managed to dodge the Chinese New Year already this year... and I think I've noticed that my feet look ...thinner.

A Note About Old Pipes.

No, not THOSE kinds of pipes. But that's cute. Very cute.

We're talking about water pipes. In a house built in the 1920's. We're talking about under-the-kitchen-sink type pipes that were placed just a bit TOO close to the outside wall. We're talking about pipes that tend to FREEZE when the wind chill gets a bit too low.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Peef and Lo have discovered yet another joy about

living in an older home. Freezing pipes.



the problem.

Of course, our immediate impulse was to panic. Visions of busted water pipes and other monstrous disasters

It was fun — waking up and attempting to turn on the water to wash the breakfast dishes, only to discover that the hot water was... well, it WASN'T. And that was

clouded our minds. We paused to pray. And then we checked the basement. We were fortunate that we found our frigid pipes in time. Nothing burst. Nothing leaked. We just had to spend a bit of time with a hair-dryer. And then make sure that we hooked up a bit of heat tape to those pipes so that they wouldn't freeze up on us again.

So — we survived, the only side effects being a temporary case of plumber's-butt and a couple of bad pipe dreams.

The Chicken has been DILLified.

Have you seen the cooking show on PBS that features that lovely little Scandinavian fellow... the one who cooks outside in a field somewhere, and who has the most amazing affinity for fresh herbs and fish? I think his name is Andreas... ah, but what does that matter??

Peef and Lo love that guy – even though they doubt they will ever be able to find fresh lingonberries. Or dragonweed. Or half of the other ingredients he yammers about.

And it was on a very fortunate day, indeed, when they happened to catch his show. And he WASN'T talking about marionberries or snowberries or making VODKA. He was roasting a chicken. A simple chicken. With ... DILL.

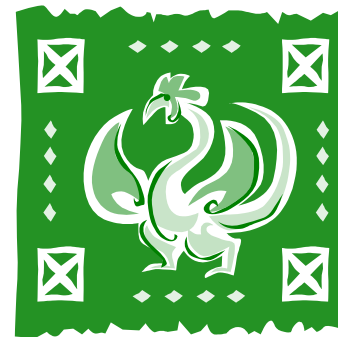
Of course, we sat enrapt. We watched him plow through a gigantic field of dillweed, chomping on large pieces of it as he walked. We watched him chop that dill, fine as could be, and mix it with a nice hefty chunk of good old butter. And we watched as he loosened the skin of that lovely (and probably very fresh) chicken and rubbed some of

the fragrant butter against the muscle tissue. We kept watching as he filled the chicken cavity with chopped lemon and even MORE fresh dill and then placed the fine (if greenish) bird into the waiting oven to roast.

Now, by this time, most stations would have been to commercial at least three times. But not good OLD PBS. Nope. They gave us the whole show in one big dose. And made us VERY hungry in the process.

Of course you know what we did when we finished watching that funny little blonde man and his chicken. We ran out and bought a chicken. And some fresh dill. And a lemon. And we rubbed dill and butter all over our chicken. And stuffed his little cavity with lemon and more dill. And we put him in the oven to roast.

Now, I would have NEVER guessed how good a chicken smells when it's roasting with a whole load of dill around it. But this bird was FRAGRANT. It was positively intoxicating. And, as the bird baked, the odours moved slowly – from the kitchen throughout



the house. By the time our bird was done, we could barely stand it. Our world was covered in drool.

I wish I could convey to you how lovely that bird tasted. Served up with a little pile of mashed buttermilk potatoes and a side of cruciferous veggies, it was sheer heaven. I would have never guessed that a handful of humble dill could have done so much for a piece of poultry – besides turn it a very odd shade of green. But it was remarkable. And we were changed.

Now you probably think, at this point, that we must be certifiably crazy for devoting this entire article to talk about a dill-roasted chicken. But trust us. YOU DIDN'T TASTE that bird. And if you had, you'd understand what we're so worked up about. Really. You would.

I live with two humans. And an evil monkey.

Dear Diary –
It seems like an age since I last wrote. But, as you will soon see, there are reasons for that.

Life has been an arduous journey for me, and I am happy to now have a few short moments in which I can record the events of the past few months.

I trust you remember the more minor details of my life – but in case you cannot, I shall recap them for you. I am a lovely orange cat. I am Jewish. I live with two reasonably pleasant humans. And an evil plotting monkey named ZOE. I do not often complain, but am constantly plotting my escape from the home of my masters.

Right now I am severely sleep deprived and am without many of my greater faculties. I also seem to have lost my typewriter in the move and only recently found paper and a writing instrument that would accommodate my lack of opposable thumbs. So, I hope you will excuse



the poor penmanship and stilted thoughts.

It all began last May when my masters decided to move into a new house. They began rearranging my habitat – moving their belongings here and

there, and packing everything into gigantic boxes. As if this were not bad enough, when the day arrived, they packed me up with the monkey and drove me to the new house, only to lock me upstairs in a bathroom for many long hours. They provided us with food and drink, but left me without my typewriter or any other form of entertainment. The monkey was whiney and insufferable. I thought my life was over.

Fortunately, within a few hours, we were let out of the bathroom and allowed to roam freely throughout the house. I was in love with my newfound space, until I realized that the vastness of the premises meant that I would have to defend myself

far more vigilantly against the attacks of the Zoemonkey.

Already, she began new tactics – much worse than any used before. Hiding in the bathroom bidet. Pouncing out from behind doorways and dark halls. Rushing at me, out of nowhere. I doubted I would survive very long without a plan.

So, I have been plotting for months now. I have spotted an escape hatch on the north side of the house – a path to the outdoors that I might use to my advantage once the weather warms a bit. I would estimate that I have a few more months to wait before I can put my plan into action. In the meantime, I thought I would pen a note to you, my friend, and let you know of my whereabouts. I have written my coordinates on the back of this note.

I think of you often and hope you are well.

ELMO

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and IMPROVED.

Paul & Lori Fredrich
6136 W Locust St
Milwaukee, WI 53210-1464

Amor Sitis Unit!

