



News from Peef & Lo

There is ALWAYS Something

OK. Alright. We're late again. But before we apologize for our tardiness, we really need to tell you WHY we're running a bit behind schedule.

We've actually had a bit of a run-in with good news.

PAUL, a.k.a. Peef, has landed himself yet ANOTHER new job. And this time, it's not just ANY old get-yerself-some-money job. This time, it's a music job. A true dream-come-true.

If you've been around for a while, you might know that Paul spent four long years studying music and business during his college years. But, upon leaving the Ivory Tower, he landed a job in building supplies... strictly one of those adult decisions that has little to do with fun and games — and everything to do with survival. Paul was, after all, getting married to the ever-so-lovely Lo, and he needed to make a little cash to build her that Pie-in-the-Sky.

So Paul worked. And worked. And meanwhile, he kept his stereo up really loud in the background. As it turns out, this could've been one of the best things he'd ever done.

It could probably be categorized as a blessed accident — the way Paul came across this fine, new job. It was definitely NOT the type of

opportunity that he could have ever landed without a bit of divine intervention. Sure, there was the music background. And the sales experience. But who REALLY comes across the job of their dreams while glancing through the want-ads of a local paper?

But that's exactly what happened. It was a Sunday afternoon. Peef and Lo were relaxing by the fireplace, reading the paper, when suddenly he saw it. THE JOB. Right there in the middle of the page.

This wasn't just ANY job. This was it — a sales job with Hal Leonard Corporation, the biggest music publishing company this side of the Nile River.

Peef was stunned. Lo immediately went into overdrive and started tweaking his resume and writing up a cover letter. Peef just tried to keep breathing at a steady pace. This was all just too exciting.

The long and short of it is, Paul dropped off his resume bright and early that Monday morning... and three weeks later he was offered the job. Needless to say, things around our house are kind of in a state of flux. Paul now reports TO an office, rather than working from home... which means he needs a

lunch, an ironed shirt, and... of all things... a suit coat. Lo is impressed that Paul would even entertain the notion of working in a place that made him wear a "monkey suit". Her respect for him grows more and more each day.

There's also the issue of the car — mainly that there is only ONE car. This means a great deal of coordination and skill in getting everyone everywhere that they need to be each day. Of course, coordination and skill has always been Peef's strong suit... so you can just imagine what we're dealing with here.

On another note altogether, it seems that not many people have ever even HEARD of Hal Leonard, so we find ourselves continually coming up with crazy stories to tell them when they ask what sort of place it IS that Paul works. I think some people assume it's some sort of mob-run corporation that does FUN things like laundering money and assassinating presidents. We always have to disappoint them by revealing that it's just a music publishing firm — and that NO, they can't go there and meet the Godfather.

Sometimes we find it's best just to smile and nod when someone looks curious.

We are **NEW**.
and **IMPROVED**.

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"JUST CUZ"

Stuff we can't explain,
but wish we could.

Playing with Food

In 2002, Jorg Piringer's new Vienna Vegetable Orchestra, comprising between 10 and 20 players, began performing on instruments made from carved-out carrots, aubergines, pumpkins, and other vegetables. Piringer's instrument? A "gurkaphone" horn made from a hollowed-out cucumber, a bell-pepper bell and a carrot reed. [After each performance, the vegetable instruments (which took several hours to make) were thrown into a large pot of soup or stew for the musicians and audience to "enjoy a second time."]

Piringer, Jorg (?-) Austrian musician, head of The Vienna Vegetable Orchestra

[Sources: *The Sunday Telegraph*, September 2002; gemueseorchester.org]

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TALES OF URBAN GARDENING at its finest

The gardening bug seems to have struck again — only this time, he bit LONG and hard. And Peef and Lo have been irreparably scarred.

It began in the depths of winter, if I'm remembering correctly. Peef and Lo had just spent an inordinate amount of time at the public library, gathering tomes of entertainment for a long and cold weekend at home. They came home, sat down, and began perusing their finds. One of the books Lo had picked up was entitled "Square Foot Gardening" — a practical book, she thought, and maybe one that would help her to get a head start on her planning.

Sure enough, the book contained a wealth of information. She must have sat there and read the book practically straight through before declaring to Paul: "We need to build raised beds. We need to start some seeds. We need to do all of this — NOW."

Turns out "Square Foot Gardening" isn't as innocent a thing as it might first seem. It's an evil book —filled with promises. Promises of high crop yields. Low weeding ratios. And excessively simple methods.

The concept behind square foot gardening is ... pretty much what it sounds like. You garden "per square foot" of garden space. What's truly amazing about the concept is that you can fit a TON of stuff in one square foot, if you truly believe Mel Bartholomew. For example, you can fit NINE bush beans per square foot in one of Mel's gardens. It's really quite fascinating.

And of course, this fascination is how it all started. The very next weekend Peef and Lo trekked off to the store to buy some seeds. They erected a grow light in the basement. They bought soil-less potting mix. And hauled out their trowels and watering cans. And Lo got her wish. Spring came. The seedlings sprouted. And grew. And

grew. And soon enough time had passed that they needed to be planted elsewhere. Lo looked at Peef and said: "Honey, it's time to build."

Of course, before they could build anything, there was work to do. First, they spent lots of time digging sod out of their backyard. They spent even MORE time smashing the sod against hard metal objects to get rid of as many of the "dirt clumps" (very technical term) as possible. Peef spent a great deal of HIS time doing what he referred to as "saving worms". We effectively smashed 10,000 chunks of sod and saved approximately 850 worms — all in one day. We felt pretty accomplished. But the piles of dirt in the backyard still didn't exactly look like raised beds... yet.

The following day we made a trek to Menards. After much pondering, we picked out the type of wood we wanted, and we loaded it up into the back of our (considerably smaller feeling) SUV. With our tail end dragging mercilessly on the concrete, we headed for home where we donned ourselves with gas masks and set to work cutting all of that wood into pieces. Cutting the wood, while slightly challenging, really went quite quickly. In no time, we'd started piecing them together and securing them with nice, long, galvanized screws.

Two drill bits and a couple of batteries later, we declared our project completed. What lovely

beds they were — and wow! How BIG they were.

And they were, indeed, quite large. Especially when you consider how many bush bean plants you could fit into each one of them, according to the holy premises of square foot gardening — 288, to be very precise.

Peef and Lo waited a week or so before planting. The rains had come, and they

felt that a bit of rest was in order. It was quite a shock to realize that, even after they'd planted their six tomatoes, Fourteen peppers, twelve basil, four tomatillos, three eggplants, two zucchinis, two parsleys, and left a little bit of room for 18 measly bush beans... that there was STILL room for

more plants in those gardens. It was positively astounding!

Peef and Lo both believe that God has performed a miraculous work in their backyard. Not only did he grant them space to plant weird and wonderful things... but he gave them TOO much space (a very nice excess, if I do say so myself). That's so typical of God.

There are contemplations of planting a few rows of cutting flowers for late summer bouquets. There is also the idea that it might be nice having bunches of beets gracing our table. Or maybe a few carrots. Or Brussels sprouts. And if we get really carried away, we could always just plant more basil — and then make gallons of pesto at summer's end. The possibilities right now seem endless.

So, there is much joy abounding in the Fredrich household. Two very determined minds are working ceaselessly to figure out what sorts of things they might plant in their spare 6 feet of gardening space. Meanwhile, tomatoes and peppers and tomatillos are growing quite successfully out back. The weather is warming, the cats are meowing, and things seem to be looking up.

I realize that you're probably wondering what all of this means, really — I mean, in the LONG TERM. And I'm not really sure I can answer that. However, I can tell you that Peef and Lo now have dreams of quitting their jobs and becoming sustenance farmers. They figure their backyard is big enough for about six more of these remarkable raised beds. And that would beer, ah... mmmm.... about 864 more bush beans...



Ethics and Morels IOI



So, let's talk about morels for a bit, eh? No — not the kind of morals that keep you from doing really nasty things to that neighbor of yours whose dog barks at inane hours of the morning. I'm talking about the mushroom. The FUNGUS amungus.

First — a bit of trivia. According to the Milwaukee Public Museum, the Great Lakes Region of the U.S. is blessed with an excess of 2,000 different varieties of fleshy fungi that could be called mushrooms. But apparently, of these, only about 50-100 (2-5%) are actually edible. And OF THESE 50-100 mushrooms, people really only eat between 5-10 varieties. Not a lot.

They call those of us who EAT mushrooms mycophagists... not exactly the most appetizing of words, if you ask me. But I won't argue. I'll just eat.

After all, eating mushrooms is a favorite pastime around our house. Things get particularly interesting around this time of year — because morels are in season. Just this year, around his birthday, Paul spotted a basket of morels in the grocery store.

His eyes grew wide, and his stomach began to growl. He looked at me pleadingly and asked — "Can we please have wild mushroom risotto for my birthday??" Now how can you resist that sort of request? We spent a few dollars and bought about a quarter of a pound of the delectable little beasts. And we sautéed them in butter and created a heavenly topping for our risotto.

Waldo (Lo's brother) happened to be gracing us with HIS presence that night — and he took a bit of pause when he glimpsed those ugly mushrooms. Of course, he didn't argue with us about eating them. In fact, as he put it: "I never met a mushroom I didn't like." Apparently I didn't have to bribe him with the fact that Romans considered wild mushrooms to be "cibus diorum" — food of the gods. He already knew that.

I have to hand it to Waldo, though. Morels are definitely not pretty things. In fact, German folklore attributes the origin of morels to the devil. Offended by a very wrinkled old woman, he apparently transformed her into a

mushroom. Ever since, calling a woman "a morel" in Germany has been a MAJOR insult. I'd say that would be pretty much of an insult ANYWHERE — but maybe German women are more easily offended than the rest of us :)

In any case, if I've learned anything over the years it's that the BEAUTY of a food is never really proportionate to its flavor. Some of the ugliest foods in the world are really the most tantalizing. Just take a look at an UGLY fruit. Or a block of tofu. NOT exactly the most attractive foods in the world. But come on over — and I'll make you some dishes you won't forget.

Anyhow — far be it from me to judge an ugly mushroom. Or a woman, for that matter...

They always say that mycophiles have more fungi... and maybe that's not so far from the truth. So — until next time — mind your morels... and they'll mind you back.

I am still here. And other miscellaneous observations

Dear Diary -
As the weather warms, I must share my exceeding displeasure with remaining indoors. As you might have already guessed, I have not yet been successful with my escape through the hatch I located earlier this year on the East side of the house. — an old milk chute, as it turns out.

Of late, I have tried tirelessly to make my getaway. But, it seems that each attempt is thwarted — either by my own failure to test the boundaries of speed, or by the clever actions of my keepers. Needless to say, I am growing weary. I shall not speak of this any more today. But you can be certain that my mastermind is working continually on a solution to this quandary.

In the meantime, I have made a few very disturbing observations about my surroundings.

First of all, Zoe grows agitatingly



more FRIENDLY all the time. It seems that she has charmed my masters by demonstrating all sorts of inane tricks (most especially her habit of falling down "dead" when they shoot her with one of their fingers).

It seems that they have fallen under her evil-monkey-spell, and I am quite suspicious. WHY is she doing this? And what does it all mean to me? I've been mulling such thoughts each day as I feign work on my daily studies. She often comes past smelling of tuna... her reward for bowing to the masters.

Ahhh... maybe there are larger fish to fry.

Moving my conversation out-of-doors, I've observed through the kitchen window the meanderings of two very foreign felines — alley cats, if you will. They seem to come around most

of all in the evenings — and they stay and taunt my masters with their whining. I've seen them begging affection of late, and I wonder of their intentions. I should hope they do not have plans to adopt my masters, for THAT would create a whole NEW set of variables in my already complex existence.

What makes matters even more hard to digest is that my masters have even taken to NAMING these stray creatures. They are sitcom-sounding names — "Lenny" and "Squiggly" — totally ridiculous, if you ask me. Just writing them here conjures vague memories of greasy hair, the image of someone named "BooBooKitty" and an intense craving for Pepsi and milk.

Ah, well. If I cannot vent such things in private, where CAN I vent?

I bid you adieu for tonight.

ELMO

**We are NEW.
and IMPROVED.**

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**AMOR SITIS UNITI
Be United By the Cold**

