



News from Peef & Lo

Things We Have Done Since Christmas

So, you're probably wondering what we've been up to for the past month.

We haven't called.

We haven't written.

We could've died for all you know.

Ha! Now you're starting to sound like Lo's father (who, incidentally, suggests that he "thought she died" when she hasn't called in a while).

We didn't disappear. Honest. We've just been busy with any number of day-to-day things. Like making sure the tarp didn't fly off of our house during our roofing project. And protecting ourselves from the sheets of water flying off the side of our house when we didn't yet have gutters.

Yeah, we've been having fun.

Fortunately, at this point in time, the roof is no longer on our list of things to worry over. The job is completed (at least as complete as it can be in the middle of winter), and we're once again safe and dry. We've knocked down our old problematic chimney and our water heater is properly vented. So, it's all good.

On another note, we have discovered the joys of being home together at dinner time. Paul was switched to a day shift sometime around the holidays — and although it's been an adjustment — it's great to eat together once again after almost 8 months. Paul is also finished working his Sunday shift — so we can relax our schedules there a little bit too (and sometimes even go out with friends for brunch!)

With Paul home in the evenings, we have (unfortunately) also gotten caught up with our favorite television shows. We've wasted an inordinate amount of time lately watching THE AMAZING RACE and JOAN OF ARCADIA, and I'll be thrilled when the weather warms again so that we can take more of our activity out of doors.

We did manage to successfully move our New Year's Eve celebration (our annual "food fest" with Steph) to the 28th of December — to ensure that we were able to make it to Paul's brother's wedding on January 1st. The fest went off without a hitch (aside from the fact that the roofers came to start working on the morning of the 29th — and woke us up!) and we also made it to the wedding in St. Paul, Minnesota, despite the insistence of freezing rain.

We started off the new year by reading the first three books in Lemony Snicket's A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS — books meant for children, but which are really a hoot when read aloud by two adults who never really quite grew up properly themselves. We followed the books up with a trip to see the movie — and we found it quite splendid, so we recommended it to a great many of our closest friends.

We have NOT been eating at restaurants much at all lately. But we have been experimenting in the kitchen. One of our favorite (and most recent) discoveries is a lovely soup made with bleu cheese

and cauliflower, which we've named "blue flower soup". It's become a perennial favorite for Paul, who heretofore SWORE that he hated bleu cheese.

Along a similar vein, we've been revisiting foods of which we thought we weren't terribly fond — and finding out, pleasantly, that they're not quite as bad as we thought. Anchovies were one of the first experiments (which we decided are quite good in Caesar dressing, if nothing else). Radishes are another (they're quite tasty when roasted — and unexpectedly so).

Both Peef and Lo are looking forward to the month of March — for many reasons, not the least of which is the approach of St. Patrick's day, which, around our home, means an opportunity to eat scads of corned beef and cabbage, Reuben sandwiches, and "Reubenised" pizza — and THEN to make beet borscht with the corned beef broth, which is even more of a treat.

Paul will be leaving for a few days at the end of February to go to a "toy" show for Hal Leonard. So, we expect that will be a hoot. A "toy" show, by the way, is exactly what it purports to be — a show where vendors sell/promote TOYS. So, we'll be excited to see what sorts of stories he'll come home with after that.

Meanwhile, Lori plans to spend a few days doing things with her gal-friends and just generally hanging out... which isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it's really what we hope to be doing a bit MORE of, overall, during the month of February.

The Saga Continues...

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GREAT QUOTE:

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh-ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh-ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

-William Shakespeare

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WILL WONDERS NEVER CEASE? PEEF AND LO WATCH THE SUPERBOWL

A few of you might be laughing already at the sheer thought of it. Peef and Lo, set up on the couch with a case of beer and a bag of Doritos — screaming at the big screen television set and getting up only to scratch themselves and grab a hot dog during the commercials.

But that's not QUITE how it happened at our house.

First off, there was no scratching. There wasn't much screaming. There's no big screen TV. And there were no Doritos. Oh — and nobody left the room during the commercials (but one or the other occasionally took a bathroom break during the actual game).

But there **were** hot dogs. And there **was** beer. And there was even a steaming vat of dip that smelled suspiciously like buffalo wings.

Yeah. We watched the Super Bowl. And I suppose you could even say we liked it. Sort of.

If you can envision the following scenario, you'll be a little bit closer to understanding how it all came down.

At some point, back in January, Lo reads the syllabus for her Advertising class. As she scans down past the first few weeks,

BOY MEETS NAMM

When Peef first started his job at Hal Leonard, it was suspected that eventually his position would advance to the level where he would be asked to do a bit of traveling. Not right away. But SOMEDAY, in the not-so-distant future, he would be asked to leave the safety of the blue glass building on Bluemound Road and journey to faraway lands. And, as we happily rang in the new year of 2005, the time came.

And the 18th of January arrived. And it was decreed that Peef leave his home and flee to the land of Southern California to earn his rite of passage.

The purpose? The National Music Manufacturer's convention (affectionately referred to as NAMM).

Now, having been to a hoard of conventions and shows while working for Schlage, Paul thought he knew what to expect. There would be a booth. There would be vendors. He would sell things... All of this was true. But there were other things. Things that happen at NAMM that

*she sees it there — written clear as day: "ASSIGNMENT: Feb 6 WATCH THE SUPER BOWL" A follow-up assignment for the week following Feb 6th insinuated that watching the **commercials** was pretty much the point.*

So, Lo set to work. She told Peef that she had to watch the game — for school. Peef looked very surprised, but decided that it might not be bad to spend the afternoon staying home and watching football like a normal boy.

From that point on, Peef and Lo began to make plans. After all, if they had to spend their Sunday afternoon and evening watching the cultural equivalent of a wrestling match, they were going to have some fun while doing it.

So, Lo collected recipes for delectable "super bowl food". And Peef set to work investigating what kinds of beer might be fun to try. In an effort to be certain that no one would misinterpret their actions, they told NO ONE about their plans.

When the day arrived, Peef and Lo went to church as they usually do on a Sunday morning. They came home, ate breakfast, and read the Sunday Journal Sentinel. Lo poached a bit of chicken and softened a couple of packages of cream cheese. They visited with Lo's Dad when he



one would never experience at a hardware show.

For one thing, there were real celebrities milling around at the convention — guitarists, drummers, musicians. Not just some guy who looks a lot like Tim Taylor walking around peddling caulk.

For another thing, there were lots of people with piercings and Mohawks. And people dressed as bats and walking around the convention hall on stilts. (NOT Paul or the employees of Hal, though). In



stopped over for a bit to drop something off... no one would have suspected a thing.

Until Lo pulled out the FRANK'S RED HOT and the dip went into the oven. She opened a bottle of Goose Island beer and snapped the TV on. The people next door and down the block started yelling at the top of their lungs. Suddenly, it became FOOTBALL TIME. And a newfangled experience was born.

Peef and Lo gorged themselves on buffalo wing dip — made quite delectable when served on El Rey lemon flavored tortilla chips. They made "pigs in a blanket" with cheesy sausages and crescent rolls — the kind that settle in directly on the hips as soon as they're digested. They drank more than one flavor of beer. And they made sure that even if they lost track of the score of the game, that they didn't miss a SINGLE commercial.

*It was truly a **cultural experience**.*

Um, Yeah. We had so much fun we might even do it again next year.

fact, "HalBot" is a common NAMM term vendors use with great affection when describing the clean, conservative suit-clad workers from Hal Leonard.

AND, on top of all of that excitement, the show was a lot of work. Sure, he was there with 30-40 other colleagues. But the booth was 2,000 square feet of impressive space — so there was hours of set-up and take-down (rather than the 45 minutes he'd grown accustomed to), and no mercy for the new guy. Peef had a great time, but he came home feeling like he'd been steam-rolled by a couple of crazies on stilts. It took a few nights of good old-fashioned sleep in a familiar bed to get him back to normal.

While Peef was gone, Lo stayed home. And her experience was equally exhausting. Most days she worked. And EVERY DAY she shoveled snow. And more snow. But she's not bitter. NO WAY. She just hopes they move the NAMM convention (or the blizzards) to the middle of July next year.

BUILDING MUSSELS

In our vast effort to Euro-fy ourselves, we've taken up eating mussels. Why, yes. We have. After all — eating mussels is MUCH more popular in Europe than it is in the U.S. In fact, blue mussels have been cultivated for nearly 800 years in Europe, and they have been used as a food source for over 20,000 years.

Heh.

No, that's not REALLY the reason why we eat mussels. And it doesn't even have much to do with the fact that mussels are low in cholesterol and high in selenium, calcium, iron, zinc and Omega-3 fatty acids.

Mussels just taste good. And the fact that live cultivated mussels are available for less than \$4 a pound (and can be cooked in about 5 minutes) is an added bonus.

We happen to have amassed a great collection of recipes using the darling little mollusks. In the spirit of good will, we'd like to share one of our favorites with you.

This particular recipe would make a PERFECT Valentine's Day meal, if you are even remotely inclined. Introduce the meal with a green salad, and serve the mussels with a crusty hunk of the best artisan bread you can find.

OLD BONES IS COLD BONES

Now, ALL of us are getting older — but nothing makes that fact more evident than our dear Elmo's recent trend in behavior.

He's not having ANY trouble jumping up onto the couch. Or getting himself hoisted to the uppermost peaks of our furniture just so that he can bite off little pieces of plant leaves and then puke them up all over the floor immediately thereafter. No, no. He's not losing his faculties or making messes on the living room floor. He's not even getting grey in the whisker.

Nope. He's getting COLD in his old age.

We noticed the phenomenon while eating dinner one night. There we were, sitting calmly at the dining room table — probably eating a batch of those mussels we've already raved about. And suddenly — the heat kicked on.

The funny thing about the heat kicking on — WASN'T that the heat came on. No — it was bigger than that.

Steamed Mussels in Bourbon Cream

- 4-6 oz bacon, chopped into 1/2 inch dice
- 1/4 cup minced shallots
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 T whole grain mustard
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp white pepper
- 2 lbs fresh mussels
- 1/4 cup bourbon

Crack open a nice bottle of dry white wine. Pour yourself a glass, since you'll only need a cup of the stuff for this recipe. Scrub those scabby little mussels with a stiff brush and de-beard them (if necessary). Toss any mussels that do not close reflexively when you knock them on the sink.

Heat a large paella or sauté pan over medium-high heat. Cook bacon until crispy and brown. Remove bacon and drain on paper towel. Eat a piece or two — but save most of it for dinner.

Drain all but 1-2 T bacon fat from pan. Add shallots and sauté until soft (1-2 minutes). Add garlic and sauté 1 minute longer. Deglaze the pan with white wine (right from your glass, if you wish) — being sure to scrape up any browned bits from the bacon. Reduce wine for 3-4 minutes or until it is nearly evaporated.

Meanwhile, stir together mustard, cream, salt and pepper and take a sip of your wine. When the wine is reduced (in the pan, not your glass), add cream mixture to pan and bring to a boil. Add bourbon and mussels. Cover and cook just until mussels begin to open and release their juices (4-5 minutes). Discard any mussels that do not open.

Mussels can be served directly from the pan — or removed to a large bowl if you'd like to be more formal. Sprinkle bacon over mussels before serving.

Serves 2 normal, hungry human beings as main course; 4-6 as appetizer



The vent clicked, and suddenly, Elmo appeared out of nowhere — almost in a flash of light and looking like a big orange BLURR — and planted himself smack dab in front of the vent. Not only did he plant himself there, he stuck his face UP AGAINST the grate — as if he was trying to push himself down into the basement with some sort of supernatural force.

First we suspected that this was some sort of new escape plan — that maybe he figured the warm air was coming from the outside and that somehow he could SQUEEZE himself right down the vent and out of the house. So, we laughed. Yeah, whatever. Go nuts, Elmo.

But, then, the heat kicked off. And Elmo didn't persist in forcing his face down into the vent. In fact, after staring into the vent and looking very confused for an inordinately long period of time, Elmo stood up and slunk away. And he disappeared completely — until the heat kicked on again.

These days, EVERY time the heat kicks

on, Elmo is there — at the foot of the vent. Sometimes he sits there and cleans himself, using the warm air as a sort of kitty blow-dryer (ironically, he's petrified of human blow-dryers). Other times, he just sort of LEANS into the vent, as if he's just going to curl up there and sleep for a VERY long time.

It has occurred to us that we're terribly lucky our vents are so big — or we'd likely have a very WARM cat and entire rooms in our house that were frigid. It has also occurred to us that he's going to have a pretty rude awakening when we turn on the air-conditioning in the summer.

But hey — for now, let him have his fun. After all, he's no spring chicken anymore. And it's about time we gave the poor guy a break.

The Saga Continues...

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AMOR SITIS UNITI!

