

Autumn on the farm means love

At this time of year, our focus shifts to the breeding of does. It's difficult to focus on very much else. Like it or not, we are immersed in the season. The still air, often heavy with humidity, virtually drips with the essence of buck. It hangs thickly on the air, assailing human nostrils with its unmistakable force. Goat breeders recognize it instantly — we almost have an appreciation for it. Non-goat enthusiasts retreat in dismay, fanning the air with their hands in futile efforts to disperse the richly flavored layers of scent. Heavy and round, it wraps you in a musky cloud, the farm version of the scent of love.



EGGS IN MY POCKET

Mary Fenoglio

Well, maybe not love. More like complete, compelling interest, unmatched in its focus and drive. It is the scent of natural life at its height, not really “stinky,” as Grandson Two's mother declares it to be, nose wrinkled in optimum disgust as she walks backward in order to avoid any contact, however slight. Bucks tend to lose human friends right about now. Even I refuse friendly advances, and I like bucks. Once you get that scent on you, I defy you to erase it completely, no matter what you try. Unlike perfumes that cost hundreds of dollars per ounce and fade while the evening is still young, “buck” has to wear off. Literally.

I have bought “buck soap,” a small, stainless steel orb guaranteed to remove the aroma (not, the stuff used on dogs to remove skunk spray, plus every kind of soap available. The best method for transforming the pervasive odor into a barely noticeable aura is plain old baking soda. There is a large box strategically located near the shower at all times during breeding season. Rubbing down any part of the anatomy, which might have contacted a buck in rut, with copious amounts of soda (that has been made into a paste with water, allowed to remain on the skin for a few minutes before rinsing off, and followed with a good soapy lathering or two of regular bath soap) comes as close to doing the trick as we have been able to get.

True, there might be a faint sort of delicate reminder lingering on, barely discernible to humans. And you might still be the object of intense interest to any small animals with whom you share your life. I have been so thoroughly snoofered by the Pushface Pack on occasion that I felt as if I might at any second be vacuumed up entirely. They are, of course, noisy and efficient snooferers.

The soda treatment will ensure that, while you might sometimes notice a quizzical look on the faces of people not familiar with your line of work, it will not be the stunned expression coupled with the involuntary gasp and step-back it might have been without the application of soda. Only does truly appreciate the essence of maleness exuded by a buck on their behalf.

Nubians are notably vocal in their admiration. Distant neighbors have called asking if we have an emergency since they have heard a goat bellowing in pain for more than two hours. The only pain involved is that experienced by the listener who must endure the love song until it's over: The buck, meanwhile, is wooing the doe, reaching through the bars of his pen to rub his head amorously over as much of her as he can reach. He takes time out only to rattle the fences between him and any other buck penned near him, shouting epithets in a shrill and impressively threatening manner. The other bucks around him are mirroring his aggression, totally unfazed by his size or vocal renditions of dire, and possibly fatal, consequences should they even roll their eyes at his intended. He does other things too, but in fear of offending the sensibilities of those who do not have a personal acquaintance with any 250-pound hairy maniacs, at least the four-legged kind, I won't elaborate. It's all part of the game.

Breeding bucks should be in excellent shape before the season begins. Once the first doe expresses some interest, it's all downhill from there. Food loses its importance. He barely drinks. A buck not in good condition to begin with finishes the season in less than optimum shape. It's a long road back.

Often a doe in heat will choose a buck for herself and enthusiastically devote herself to letting him know that he is The One. This almost never will be the buck that the breeder has chosen for her, based on pedigrees, bloodlines and so forth. The doe has not read any of these documents and wouldn't care if she had. We have had does fling themselves on the ground — literally — rather than be bred to a buck they don't like. We draw the line at crossbreeding — on purpose at least — but if it's the same breed, we tend to give in. Bucks, alas, are equal opportunity guys. Just open the gate, please.

As long as the ears are right, we can be flexible. At least everybody can get some sleep. Things will quiet down. Eventually.



Library volunteer Pam Rezabek is the mystery artist who has left 19 hand-painted “gratitude rocks” outside the Georgetown Public Library during the pandemic. The rocks are now on display in the lobby of the library.

Creator of ‘gratitude rocks’ revealed

Several months ago, staff at the Georgetown Public Library noticed a rock outside the building on the loading dock. Not just any rock, though. It was a flat rock about 4 inches square that had been hand-painted blue with a message: “GPL Heroes All.” The rock also was decorated with Wonder Woman and Superman elements. The message seemed clear. Someone wanted the library staff to know that they noticed what we were doing.

Today — under trying circumstances because of the COVID-19 pandemic — the library staff continues to work very hard to provide basic services without the support of our volunteer base. We greatly appreciated the message on the rock. But no one knew who left the rock. It was a mystery. We enjoyed seeing it every day as we arrived at the library, so we kept it right where it was.

And then, a week or two later, another rock appeared near the first one. As time went on, more rocks appeared, one after another. By mid-September, 19 festive, colorful, painted rocks decorated the loading dock — each with a message like “Grateful for U,” “GPL cat’s meow!” and “Nutty for GPL.”

Each new rock reminded us that the work we were doing was important and much appreciated by our community. As

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Dana Hendrix

each rock arrived, we would talk about it and speculate about who our mystery artist was.

For a long time, we did not know who the creative soul was who was leaving us what we came to call “the thank-you rocks.” But then, one day a staff member caught the mystery artist as she left a new rock. The secret was out.

“I intended to remain anonymous,” said Pam Rezabek, a member of the Friends of the Library organization and a volunteer with the library for the past couple of years, beginning when we needed help with in-person children’s programming.

Pam said, “When COVID hit, and I was at home self-isolating, missing the library, I wanted to let everyone know they were in my thoughts and prayers. With all the changes the library and staff were going through, I kept trying to think of what to do that could express this in some personal, meaningful way. And then it came to me — rocks! Because everything I know about painting rocks I learned at a GPL children’s program, it just seemed like a perfect match. And that’s how they found their way to the loading dock.”

Pam retired to Georgetown from Houston four years ago. She had been visiting for many years and knew this was where she wanted to live because it is close to her two sisters, one of whom is also a library staff member and volunteer.

When asked what she values about the library that led her to create what she calls “gratitude rocks,” Pam said, “All that is important to me — the people, place and things. The people, who are all about being smart, quick, creative, supportive and kind. The place that is strong, enduring, available and giving. And all the GPL things that are such a

blend of program, service and community.”

She added, “Gratitude is the inspiration, and then the ideas just sort of happen. That’s how I finally settled on calling them gratitude rocks. I am just so very grateful for the GPL and the people. And it works both ways, because this project has brought me more joy than I can say, especially in this season of so much change. I’m really beyond grateful to know that the rocks have brightened the days at GPL, because GPL has most certainly brightened mine. Life is good. And I am grateful.”

The 19 gratitude rocks that Pam left at the library are now indoors in a display case in the lobby where everyone can see and enjoy them along with the library staff. We are grateful for Pam and for all the other library patrons who have thanked us for our service during the pandemic.

Dana Hendrix is the Adult Services Librarian at the Georgetown Public Library.



Library events

Oct. 2 – 31. Georgetown Art Center: “Art Hop” exhibit. Library and Georgetown Art Center.

Oct. 6. Tuesday Talks with Britin and Ann. Virtual. First Tuesday of each month at historic. georgetown.org.

Oct. 16. Roots | Records | Research: A Virtual Genealogy Workshop. Register at bit.ly/gpl-rrr.

For more information: library.georgetown.org/events-calendar or call 512-930-3551.

Cooler weather means Tex-Mex

As I write this, I’m sitting outside on my back patio while workmen are in the house working on my kitchen re-do. Lots of noise and dust, but hopefully I’ll end up with an updated and more efficient space! I asked one of the wonderful carpenters, Aaron Brock, what to write about this week, and he said this kind of weather puts him in the mood for Tex-Mex. I couldn’t agree more! It was fun going through favorite recipes for the same, and I hope cooler temperatures whet your appetite for Mexican food as well!

This casserole, like many of these recipes coming up, is not low-calorie, but sure tastes good on a cool day with a salad and maybe a cold beer.

Chili Cheese Jubilee

1 lb. ground chuck
2 T. shortening
2 T. butter



COOK'S CORNER

Laurie Locke

1 medium onion, chopped
8 oz. can tomato sauce
1/2 cup water
1 (1 1/4 oz.) package chili seasoning mix
2 eggs
1 cup Half and Half cream
11 oz. package little Fritos
8 oz. Monterey Jack cheese, grated
1 cup sour cream

1 to 1 1/2 cups grated Cheddar cheese
1/2 t. pepper
6 oz. can tomato paste
3 T. water
1 (14 1/2 oz.) can Hunt’s whole tomatoes
1/2 t. basil (I know...unusual for enchiladas)
10 corn tortillas
4 oz. can chopped green chiles
1 can golden mushroom soup
12 oz. Cheddar cheese, grated

In a large skillet, saute onion in butter. Add ground beef and brown well. Season with salt and pepper. Add tomato paste, water, tomatoes and basil. Allow to simmer while preparing other ingredients. Soften tortillas quickly in hot oil. Set aside on foil.

In a 2-3 quart casserole, place a layer of tortillas, a layer of meat mixture, a layer of chiles, half the mushroom soup, and a layer of grated cheese. Repeat layers. Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes or until bubbly. Serve immediately. Serves 4-6.

New Mexico Enchiladas

1/2 cup chopped onion
2 T. butter
1 lb. lean ground beef
1 t. salt

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