

BUZZ, BODY & BITES

A newsletter for actively aging adults
Virginia Cooperative Extension
Family & Consumer Sciences
December 2023 Newsletter



Christmas to the Rescue

*A modified short story
by RL Williams*

"Snow, cold, wind, and I am stuck in this train station on Christmas Eve afternoon," Andy mumbled, looking around the sparsely populated terminal. "What a way to spend a holiday," he lamented.

"Attention!" the loudspeaker echoed. "The Silver Streak Express is now arriving. The train's departure will be delayed due to snow and deteriorating weather conditions."

"Oh great, I might not get home for Christmas," Andy said. "Stuck here too?" he asked one lady sitting close-by. "Yes," she replied, "and it's snowing outside. I'm visiting from Florida and this much snow is exciting."

"I'm from Chicago so I'm not that thrilled about it," he explained.

"Attention!" the loudspeaker blurted again. "No trains will be arriving or departing due to bad weather."

"Well, that's it. We're stranded," Andy sighed as he rose and walked over to a window.

He noticed the snow was falling at a heavier rate. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a small brown haired dog moving down the whitened sidewalk in a haphazard pattern. A woman approached, sweeping the floor. "That's Nosee," the woman said. "He's been hanging around here the past week or so. He's going blind, so I call him No - see. I heard his owner dumped him. Maybe they didn't want a blind or sick dog. It happens you know."

"It will be getting dark soon and colder too," Andy noted. "I think I will see if I can bring him in here, maybe get him some water and something to eat."

He put on his coat and ventured outside in search of Nosee. "He couldn't have gone far, he can't see very well," Andy recounted. "Looks like some tracks in the snow lead over there," Andy followed into an alley. "Here boy," Andy yelled.

"Here Nosee ..." Not a sound was heard in response. Andy noticed an old cardboard box on its side in the back corner of the alley. Andy stooped down and noticed a familiar little brown haired creature. It was Nosee huddled in the box surrounded by trash. "Hey Nosee," Andy offered. The little dog's head looked up slowly in Andy's direction. He noticed the grey clouded opaque eyes, an indication that Nosee was indeed going blind.

"Let's get you inside where it's warm," he said, scooping up Nosee in his arms. Drained of energy, the animal did not resist. Once in the train station, Andy took off his coat and made it into a makeshift bed for the dog.

Andy approached the ticket window and asked if they had a bowl he could use for some water for his new found friend. "Well, we don't allow pets in here," the station clerk said.

"Look, it's Christmas Eve, I can't let the dog freeze to death outside," Andy replied.

"Hmmm," the clerk thought a moment. "I didn't see any dog in here. Dog? What dog?" Both Andy and the clerk smiled.

"See the lady over there about a bowl and water," the clerk added, pointing to the lady Andy had met earlier sweeping by the window. Andy and the lady got a water bowl and a few scraps of roast beef from a sandwich she had.

Nosee scarfed down the roast beef as if he had not eaten for a week. "Feel better boy?" Andy asked, patting Nosee on the head. Nosee looked up with a slight whimper. His attempt at a puppy dog smile said it all.

Andy sat there with Nosee in his lap as the evening hours passed. The terminal grew silent and they both fell asleep.

"Attention!" the loudspeaker blared out for the first time in hours, waking Andy. "The Silver Streak Express will be departing shortly from Gate 2. All passengers please report there."

"What to do with you?" Andy asked, looking at Nosee. He stood up holding Nosee and strolled toward Gate 2. The station clerk was doubling as ticket checker. "We don't allow pets on our trains," the clerk said in a deja-vu moment.

"It's Christmas ..." Andy stated before being interrupted.

"I don't see any dogs here," the ticket checker smiled, pointing the way to the train.

Andy returned the smile and walked down the corridor, dog in arms, knowing he did the right thing. Moments before Andy stepped on the train, a familiar sound echoed. "Attention!" the loudspeaker bellowed,

"Merry Christmas ... and good luck Nosee."

Bites

Wintertime Stew



This recipe uses a winter favorite, butternut squash. The perfect savory stew to warm a winter evening.

Source: Maine Cooperative Extension

Ingredients

- 1 onion, chopped (½–¾ cup)
- 1 clove garlic, chopped or minced
- 2 teaspoons olive or canola oil
- 2 cups water
- ½ butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into ½-inch cubes
- 2 cups tomatoes, canned, diced
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon mustard
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups fresh chopped spinach
- 2 cups cooked rice

Instructions:

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan, sauté onion, and garlic until transparent.
2. Add water and squash to saucepan, cover, and boil until squash is tender; about 10 minutes.
3. Add the tomatoes, sugar, mustard, oregano, and salt. Boil for 5 minutes.
4. Add rice and spinach. Cook covered until rice is hot and spinach is wilted.

Body

Exercise Safety in the Cold

As the air begins to get more crisp and days are shorter, it is important to keep exercising and think about your safety in the cooler months. Here are some reminders for exercising this winter:

- Wear reflective, bright-colored clothing to ensure you're seen.
- Dress for the weather. Layer your clothes with a moisture-wicking underlayer (e.g. Nylon), a warm mid-layer, and a jacket. Avoid cotton as a base layer.
- Wear ear warmers or a hat. Ears are one of the first extremities to get cold and hats keep heat from escaping from your body.
- Wear gloves and warm socks.
- Don't skip the warm-up! Be sure to warm up your body before exercise and cool down to help prevent injury.
- Stay hydrated! Since it's not hot, we may not feel thirsty. Be sure to drink water often.

Mind Games

Brain Teaser

Try to find the hidden meaning in the following rebus puzzles! A rebus is a visual word puzzle that uses the positioning of words, letters, and/or symbols to represent a common phrase, sometimes in an indirect or tricky manner. Happy decoding!

TAILR RIALT AIRTL TLRIA	JOBINJOB	TRY UNDERSTAND 2
LANG4UAGE	NATFISH NATFISH	GIVE GET GIVE GET GIVE GET GIVE GET
L O V E	D MOVIE D MOVIE D MOVIE	POT OO OO OO OO

Answers: trail mix, in between jobs, try to understand, foreign language, tunafish, forgive and forget, falling in love, 3D movie, potatoes

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