

## Random Tidbits



by Ellen Spirit Seeker Fisher

I've been looking through my computer files in an effort to clean up my computer. I have uncovered tidbits too short to make an entire column. So, I am offering a tidbit column. I hope you enjoy it!

### Charity

Charity has been on my mind lately. Since I have been taking care of my mother my income has been severely limited, so *monetary* donations are not an option now. How else can I help those in need?

I learned in my little church in the woods of my childhood to "brighten the little corner where I am". This means, to me, looking out for and taking care of the people, animals, plants, soil, air, water – all beings in my immediate surroundings. Charity of this sort could be recycling, looking in on neighbors, especially the elderly, being kind to animals and children you meet, not using polluting farming methods, feeding birds and other wildlife (especially giving them a water source), being a kind person who is easy to live with and who doesn't cause any negative emotions or resentments in those who must live with you.

These are acts of charity anyone can participate in. If, however, you can give money by all means please consider doing so. Any charity you may want to donate to can be checked out at [www.charitynavigator.com](http://www.charitynavigator.com). At this site you can check out how your charity spends the money it receives – what goes to the actual charity and what goes to administrative costs.

### Food

Food is charity of the ultimate kind. When you give of yourself to cultivate, cook and share food you have given the best of yourself.

Consider this from **Nayeli Guzman | New Mexico, USA:**

"We cooked some red Mexican beans for the harvest festival, and everyone loved them. It's always good to be able to give food. It's the best, dude. We don't think of what we're producing in terms of money, but just in

terms of health and food for our families.

Farming was in my prayers for a long time. This land is my teacher; it's my altar. It's at the heart of my culture. We've always done that. We've strayed so far from it that I feel we have to go back, no matter where we come from. I'm just being responsible to the struggles my ancestors went through. They fought for *tierra y libertad*, which means land and liberty. In fact, we're still going through that struggle today, with our food and even our genes being colonized.

We need to keep the traditions alive. We need to preserve the seeds. We need to preserve the soil. We need to preserve the planet."

### Soup

Share it for real charitable feelings!

#### **Native Soup for the Soul: Dale Carson; INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY MEDIA NETWORK**

When making a soup, there really are no rules. But there are general guide lines you can apply. Here are some tips:

--Save bones from pork chops, hams, beef or bison. Just throw them in a bag and freeze until you're ready to use them. If you buy soup bones, salt them a little and roast them at 375 degrees for about 30-40 minutes. This will improve the flavor and color of your soup.

--To thicken your soup, puree some cooked vegetables, then put this puree back into the soup. Saute them first for even more flavor. Or, add a tablespoon or more of instant potato granules. Another way is to mix ¼ cup of cornstarch with enough cold water then add very slowly to the soup.

--A common mistake when making soup is adding too much salt. Go lightly, then let people add their own at the table.

--Make your soup in a high narrow pot. Pots with low sides let the liquids evaporate too quickly.

--Never let it boil, always simmer soup for a long time; don't rush it. Meats need hours, other additions like vegetables and delicate herbs need very little time, so check often and adjust.

--Some chowders require milk or cream. If you are out of it, try some evaporated milk.

--Soup freezes fairly well. If you have too much broth, you can freeze that in ice cube trays and use it for seasoning vegetables.

### Mommy Soup

I made this soup a few weeks ago and it was a big hit. First, I cooked:

3 strips of bacon, drained and set aside saving some of the bacon fat to sauté

1 large Vidalia onion, chopped, and

3 ribs of celery, chopped

#### **Fill the soup pot with:**

1 quart of water and

1 quart of chicken stock (or vegetable broth)

#### **Add to this**

3 carrots, sliced fairly thin

¼ cup of each: white or brown rice, wild rice, and barley, and split peas

Simmer all for about an hour, than add about a cup of fresh cut up kale or spinach and a can or two of light red kidney beans. If you have dried navy, kidney, northern, or other dried beans, add them with the rices and barley as above. If you like tomatoes, a small can of diced tomatoes with mild chiles is a good but not a necessary addition. Crumble the bacon into the soup about ½ hour before it is done. Herbs like parsley, sage, thyme or cumin might be added sparingly at or near the end of cooking time, which is about 2 to 3 hours.

#### **Cultural TidBits, Cherokee Nation Newsletter The Raven Mocker**

The most dreaded of all Cherokee witches is the Raven Mocker, who robs the dying of their life. A Raven Mocker can be of either sex, and there is no real way to know one. They usually look old and withered, because they have added so many lives to their own. During the night when someone is sick or dying, the Raven Mocker goes there to take the life. He flies through the air with his arms outstretched like wings. There will be a wild wind noise around him, and sparks trailing from behind. Every once in awhile he will dive, and make a sound similar to a raven's cry. All those who hear it are afraid, because they know that someone's life will soon end.

