

THE APPALACHIAN FREE PRESS



MAY 2023 - VOLUME 2, ISSUE 6

THE APPALACHIAN FREE PRESS

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 6

Cover Photo: *Photography by Chelsie Blair Nunn. Three people exuberantly sputter spring water on a country road in Little Sycamore Holler, Tennessee. 35 mm high-resolution black & white photograph.*

Table Of Contents

“home grown, home bound” by Emily Sholly.....	3
Jo Ann’s Corner: Mother’s Day By Jo Ann Bullard.....	5
Popular Appalachian Beliefs And Superstitions From The 18th And 19th Centuries By Banjo.....	7
Mountain Folk Forage: Fleabane (Asteraceae Erigeron) by Aimee LaFon.....	11
An Interview with Shannon of Dogwood Arts Alliance By Ezekiel Streetman.....	16
Lay Me Down by Aimee LaFon.....	19

home grown, home bound

By Emily Sholly

i have been deeply rooted
in the place where i was born
and though i've spread my roots on out,
drawing nourishment from the dark and bloody ground
and beyond, from valley to prairie to coast;
to throw myself like a seed to the winds
is something i would never do.

i have watched many an able wind pass by
and snuggled deeper into my familiar soil.

how sad

people say.

you could go anywhere

anywhere in the world

anywhere you want.

Exactly!

i say, and remain

deeply rooted



Jo Ann's Corner: Mother's Day

By Jo Ann Bullard

It's good to see you on this Mother's Day weekend. Come on in and help yourself to a breakfast beverage. Let's talk.

Our staff at the Cafe have decided to devote this entire weekend to Mother's Day. Miss Josie will be doing her usual cooking, but we have a surprise.

Her father, Mr. Uno, will be cooking for us this weekend. He is a famous Chef who is known for his desserts. You're in for a treat. We will be having all kinds of special events and drawings for prizes. We also have live music.

If you have company, bring them on in. We would love to meet them. After all, what better way to celebrate Mother's Day than to have a weekend party in their honor? On a more serious note, someone once asked me if I had any regrets in my life. I quickly replied,

"Yes, I never had children." Now the Good Lord didn't bless me with children. I've had many 4 legged children but not little boys or girls. I've always wanted to ask this question because I've always wanted to know. I hope you don't think that I'm being too intrusive.

We've been celebrating your day since yesterday morning. Miss Josie and Mr. Uno had to call in their friends to help cook and serve all the folks we had stop by. Everybody is talking about and remembering their Mother.



Whether your Mother is alive or passed, you were a part of her, and she will always be a part of you. I could say a million words about Mothers, but it still wouldn't be enough. So I will honor Mothers with this Native American Prayer.

The words of the Prayer say:

"Great Creator. Bless every Mother today. Let her heart know that you are giving her your spiritual blessings for the work of her hands and the love she has so freely given to those children under her care. Let her know that she is loved, respected and valued. Let her never doubt that she is special in your and her children's eyes. Let her passion for being a Mother be pure. Let her life overflow with all the blessings she deserves on this special day and on every day of her life."

Having said that, let's share a breakfast beverage and a Native American Proverb. The Proverbs of today go like this,

"May the warmth of Mother Earth and the loving Spirit of your Mother dwell in your Spirit and Heart forever. "

"The richness of the harvest depends upon the care you give to the crop."

Thanks for coming. Enjoy your gift of today. Have a great day. We look forward to seeing you next time!

Popular Appalachian Beliefs And Superstitions From The 18th And 19th Centuries

By Banjo



I have collected folklore, old-wives tales, and superstitions for years. I dug deep into my collection for several days, sorting through to find those that are not as well heard of today. Some may be unusual. Some are just plain weird and creepy.

Many of these tidbits you may have never heard. Let me know if you have any to add to my list.

If a mother eats fish before the baby is a month old, death will follow. A cat should not be left in the room with a sleeping baby, for it might suck the baby's breath and kill it.

If children shed their teeth before they are seven, they will die before they are eleven. If you have a kind of ringing in your right or left ear, it is called a death bell, and you will hear of a death in the direction of east or west.

If anyone calls your name, and you answer or go to see and find no one has called you, you are going to die. The spirit of your dead father or mother or some other deceased relative has called you. So, if you are called, do not answer.

To change the name of a person will cause his death. To dream of hair is a sign of death. If your hair grows fast, you will not live very long. If you dream about a tooth, it is a sign that you will hear about a death.

If you dream about a tooth falling out, it's a sign of death in the family. If you lose a front tooth, a relative will die. When you dream of white clothes, it means death. Don't try on a black bonnet, or you will be wearing it for mourning. Walking with only one shoe on means someone will die soon.

If you wake in the morning with the death mold (yellow spots) on your hand, it is a sign that a dead man has shaken hands with you. If an ill person gets better on Friday, he will die on Sunday.

If a dog- howls near a sick person, that person will surely die. If dogs run around the house in which someone is sick, the patient will die. If a person in the home is sick and a rooster hops up on the steps and crows looking way off, the person will die.

If an owl hollers at a house while anyone is sick, it will make them worse and probably cause them to die. It is believed that a person will die easier if his head is toward the East.

If it rains while a person is dying, the devil has come to take the body. If you dream of a dead person moving in a hurry, he has gone to hell.

If a dying person hits you, you will die. Never start anything on Monday because you'll never live to finish it. If you drive nails on Sunday, there will be nails driven in your coffin before the week is out.

If you walk through the woods with your sister, and she walks on the left side of a tree, and you walk on the right, your mother will die before the year is out. In building, never mix old and new lumber, for someone will die soon if you do.

If you make a window out of a door, one of your family members will die. If three people look in a mirror at the same time, one will die within a year. It is believed that the pictures of dead people turn yellow. Some think photographs are omens of death.

To rebuild an old table is a sign of death in the family. If you sing at your table and dance by your bed, You'll have no rest when you are dead. To see a shadow of a coffin in a glass of milk is a sign of death. If a ball is thrown through a window, there will be a death in that house soon. If a garment is made on Ascension Day, the wearer will be killed by lightning. Never sweep anything through a door after sundown, or some member of your family will die.

If anyone starts to piece a bed quilt in the form of a star, someone in their family will die before it is finished.

While sewing, if a drop of blood gets on the garment, the one for whom the garment is intended will die before it is worn out. To dream of an angel is a sign of death. If you stand on your head, your liver will turn over, and you will die from it. A shooting star is a sign of someone going to heaven. A comet is a sign of death.

A green winter means a fat graveyard, while a white Christmas indicates a lean graveyard. If three people light a cigarette from the same match, one will die in a year.

If you dream of hearing a gun firing, it is a sign of death. To dream of muddy water is a sign of death.

If you sleep on your belly, you will drown. If a cow bellows after dark, someone is dying. If a dog stretches his front legs forward and inches along on his stomach, he is said to be measuring somebody's grave. If a groundhog barks at you, you will die.

To dream of fresh pork out of season is considered a sure sign of death. If the first snake you see in the year is a dead one, some member of your family, or a friend, will die during the year. If a snake bites a person that has eaten onions a day or two before, the person will die.

When a weasel crosses an Indian's path, he fears greatly, for it means speedy death. If a hen lays a small egg, some member of your family will die. If a bird pecks on the

house, count the number of times, for they signify the number of days before a death will occur in that house.

One dove is a sign of death. If you hear a mourning dove around the house, someone will die unless you tie a knot in the corner of your apron. If you kill a hummingbird, you will not live to be twenty-one years of age.

Turn your pockets wrong side out after hearing the hooting of an owl so as to prevent death. If an owl whoops on a tree near the house or on a chimney, it is a sign of death in the house or the neighborhood.

If the people in the house would put salt in the fire to burn the tail of the bird in the chimney or would turn a pair of shoes upside down under the bed, or would turn clothes inside out, the owl would stop hooting and fly away.

An earwig in the ear will work its way into the brain and kill you To dream of lice is a sign of sickness and death.

Never give anybody any red pepper. It will give them bad luck, and they will more than likely die soon.

Blackberry blossoms bring death; they make people restless and cause all sorts of trouble during blooming time.

It is a sign of death to dream of fruit out of season. It is bad luck to set pine trees out in the yard in a line, for as many members of the family will die as there are trees in the line.

If you stand with your back too near the fire, it will melt the marrow in your backbone and kill you. Never leave pictures uncovered in a room where a corpse is laid out.

If you are afraid of a dead person, touch one, and you will never be afraid of another; the spirits will cease to haunt you. If a dead man doesn't get stiff at once, some other member of the family is going to die. The door knobs should be changed after death so the ghost won't come in.

Mountain Folk Forage: Fleabane (Asteraceae Erigeron)

By Aimee LaFon

In our yard, we have a policy: don't mow it if it flowers. So, this spring, our yard is wild with fleabane, and our backyard is spattered with the white hairy daisy-like flower of this plant. Additionally, since we've been growing it out, we've had many more bees - and we've also noticed that some of our most common basement-dwelling pests like centipedes and flies have stopped coming indoors. Curious, huh?

Maybe Fleabane really does repel fleas and creepy crawlies.



About Fleabane (Asteraceae Erigeron)

Folk Names: Daisy Fleabane, Erigeron

Fleabane is in the family *asteraceae*, which means it's related to daisies and sunflowers. Like sunflowers, this North American native wildflower is also edible!

However, fleabane didn't get its name from its nutritious, spinach-like leaves.

Instead, this plant was traditionally kept in Appalachian homes to **repel fleas**. One would hang the flowers — stems, leaves, and all — above doorways or make sachets to put in wardrobes and beds to repel fleas and flies. However, there's no proof this actually works — chock it up to superstition.

That said, I do have some hanging in my room right now since I have a carpet beetle problem. It may be helping - and it may not.

Anyways, here's a fun fact: the name *erigeron* is a greek name meaning “early to rise old man” since this flower has white, hairy petals and is one of the first spring flowers to bloom.

In terms of edibility, the leaves are always edible, but some fleabane types have toxic flowers. Because I'm a cautious person, I'll never eat the flowers just in case.

Before North American colonization, fleabane leaves and roots were used to make poultices and smoke inhalants for treating headaches and colds. Additionally, the [USDA states that:](#)

“The Cherokee and Houma tribes boiled the roots to make a drink for ‘menstruation troubles’ and to induce miscarriages (to treat ‘suppressed menstruation’). It was also used to treat hemorrhages and for spitting of blood. The Catawba used a drink from the plant to treat heart trouble.”

Because of the associations between fleabane in miscarriages, please be careful with this anticoagulant blood thinning forageable. While it, in my experience, eases cramps, **if there's any chance you are pregnant, please never eat this wildflower.**

Topically, this flower, when combined with cleavers, can be an all-natural remedy for poison ivy! Keep reading for my recipe.

How To Identify and Harvest Fleabane



Fleabane is not an endangered or threatened plant, and it will crop up in full force on lawns, near forest clearings, and anywhere it can get its roots to hold. So, you don't need to be too careful about over-harvesting this flower.

Fleabane blooms between April and July, growing mid-height stems that can reach 3ft or taller. These stems have small, slightly prickly hairs on them. These prickly hairs can cause contact dermatitis on people with sensitive skin, so be cautious when touching them.

The flowers of fleabane are very easy to recognize. They have a yellow center and hairy or fringe-like petals that are white near the flower's center. They become pinkish or violet as the petal tapers out.

The leaves are alternating, which is an important detail to notice when harvesting fleabane. Fleabane lookalikes do not have alternating leaves.

How To Prepare and Use Fleabane

Today, I'll teach you how to eat the leaves of fleabane and how to make a poison-ivy-treating salve from it.

How To Eat Fleabane Leaves

It is critical to cook fleabane leaves when eating them, as the hairs on the leaves can be abrasive, unpleasant, and uncomfortable going down.

Additionally, you should try to eat the younger, heart-shaped leaves of this plant rather than the larger ones because they taste better, have less hairs, and have less of that compound that causes miscarriages in pregnant women.

So, to eat them, I recommend boiling or blanching them in water to make something similar to collard greens - they taste very similar.

Fleabane Poison Ivy Salve

The combo of cleavers and fleabane reduces inflammation and increases blood flow to sores, which makes them perfect for reducing the effects of poison ivy.

To make a simple salve:

1. Crush 1 cup cleavers (another great forageable) and ½ cup of young, dried fleabane leaves.
2. Heat ¼ cup coconut oil in a saucepan until it is thoroughly melted
3. Add 5 tablespoons of beeswax to the coconut oil and allow it to melt over low heat.
4. Place the dried cleavers and fleabane leaves in a tea bag or coffee filter and close the top with staples or a bit of twine.
5. Steep the herbs in the oils over low heat for at least 1 hour.
6. Pour the mixture into a salable container, straining it first if any plant matter remains in there.

7. Optionally, add a few drops of clove oil, which is a natural anesthetic like lidocaine, and will also increase the shelf life of the salve.
8. Refrigerate and seal the container once it's solid.

This salve will last for around 1 year.

An Interview with Shannon of Dogwood Arts Alliance

By Zeke Streetman



The Dogwood Arts Alliance is a 67-year-old nonprofit organization based in Knoxville, Tennessee that promotes local artists, flora and fauna, and communities.

For more information, [here's their website.](#)

Q: What's something most people don't know about the Dogwood Arts festival?

I think there's a misconception that Dogwood Arts only hosts events in the spring — when in reality, we host 20+ events and programs that span the entire calendar year. When we aren't planning large festivals like Chalk Walk, the Dogwood Arts

Festival, and Southern Skies, we're hosting monthly exhibition receptions in our gallery, packing Art Kits for Kids, installing outdoor sculptures and providing opportunities for muralists around the city.

In the 65 year history of Dogwood Arts alliance, what would you say has had the largest community impact?

Dogwood Arts has impacted the Knoxville community in a variety of ways over the years, but in my opinion, the biggest impact was due to the hard work of the women who started our organization in 1955. They were really the trailblazers who got the Dogwood Trails 'off the ground' and turned Knoxville into a springtime destination for visitors from around the country.

Q: Which areas of the community have been impacted the most?

The best part about Dogwood Arts is that we really reach all parts of our community through one program or another. The Dogwood Trails span over 95 miles across the city/county – showcasing neighborhoods in all four quadrants of the city. Our Art Kits for Kids program reaches every fifth grade student in Knox, Anderson, and Blount Counties, and visitors from across the country/world get to enjoy our public art program when they travel in through McGhee Tyson Airport, which is one of our sculpture sites.

Q: What direction do you see Dogwood Arts going in the future, specifically what kind of expansion plans are floating around?

Over the past several years, our organization has expanded our programming to include several 'Emerging Maker' and youth-focused art programs. We're really focused on providing opportunities for up-and-coming artists, expanding our public art program by connecting artists with business/building owners interesting in commissioning murals, and providing access to art supplies for youth through our Art Kits for Kids program.

Q: Which garden is your favorite, and which trail has the best view in your opinion?

It's so hard to choose! Every Dogwood Trail is unique and each neighborhood is full of beautiful views/special features, but my favorite has to be the Sequoyah Hills Trail. It's one of the longest and definitely the best to get out and walk, jog, and enjoy the waterfront parks along the way. My favorite garden is Lloyd King's on the North Hills Trail – he's been a dedicated volunteer for almost 40 years and his garden has over 200 azaleas, it's really beautiful when everything is blooming in the spring.

Lay Me Down

By Aimee LaFon

I've been listening to voices these days
As I lay in bed,
I curl my collar to push my ears closer to
The space where I think they speak-
They tell me how to spell words that
I wanted to use when I was not awake
But I forgot them and they turned my
Name into an autocorrect suggestion:
"Lay Me Down"
I haven't been sleeping, so I always open
The window to expose a screened in breeze
That I consume with my eyes- I sit, trying
To define the shape of a tree that has already drowned
In a sea that I cannot perceive.

I've been holding onto memories of things that have already died these days,
And for some reason I hear doors slam at night,
Calling out the departure of a breathing pattern I once
Harbored. When Plato told me about Theseus' ship last night,
I wondered if the battered parts of me that I have replaced
still sit in my gut's graveyard
Or maybe they went their own ways, found a



Hospitable port-town that does not look like a glass-boned cage
Either way, they do not belong to me anymore.

I've been trying to fit into a bed that is too short for my legs these days
My feet hang over the edge, peeking from my well-worn blankets
Until I withdraw into the shell that I grew myself.
I feed it with my old journals, letters that I wrote
To my first boyfriends, gluing something together
That still looks like the revisionist history
I wrote for myself, but when I glue them around my body,
The ink dissolves and breaks my language into
Nothing, and I am a sad turtle. I rescind it all,
Take back my love from my mother, from him, from her, from them, from you
To make a space where hopefully I will evolve into a human that looks like home again

These days.

I look at my hands and see skin
That has replaced the man I was.

Back then,

I was someone with a voice.

Right now,

I am opening the window,

And I am looking for a tree

Coiled

In sound.