



**Times Remembered**  
**Betty A. Young**

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**Cast Iron Cookware**

The other day when I was out and about looking for antiques; namely cast iron cookware or just anything that might strike my fancy I found a cast iron muffin tin that would hold six muffins. I already had two cast iron muffin tins that bake twelve at a time, but I thought, I need this one because it is just the right size for two people. But I waited and someone else bought it. I was too late. I know what my mother always said, "A bird in your hand is worth two in the bush." Well, I let this bargain get away. I know many of us have done the same thing before.

I have been using cast iron cookware ever since I started cooking when I was about ten years old. That's all my mother used. Seems as though it went "out of style" for a few years but everyone wants it now and it has driven the price up considerably.

Cast iron cookware, in my opinion, is the secret ingredient to great-tasting food. I cook and bake with it exclusively. Whether it's French toast or chicken fried steak, I always reach for my trusty, vintage and modern cast iron cookware. Many pieces were my mother's and other pieces I've found at auctions, yard sales and thrift shops.

When I find a piece of cast iron I give it a thorough scrubbing with coarse salt and a halved potato. I wipe it out with a damp dish cloth to remove all the salt and then generously coat the muffin tin or whatever piece with bacon grease. After baking it in the oven at 325 degrees for three hours, the result is an amazing transformation and muffins slide out with ease every time I bake them.

If you want to start a collection of cast iron; start out with the basic pieces like a skillet, muffin tin, and the popular Dutch oven. You can now also purchase Lodge pieces already pre-

seasoned too.

The following recipe uses the basic cast iron pieces that I mentioned above.

**BLUEBERRY MUFFINS**  
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
¼ teaspoon salt  
1 cup vanilla yogurt  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 large egg  
½ cup cooking oil  
½ cup sugar, plus additional for garnish  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 cup fresh blueberries, (or frozen and slightly thawed)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease muffin tin.
2. In large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder and salt; set aside.
3. In medium bowl, combine vanilla yogurt and baking soda; set aside.
4. In large bowl, beat egg. Add oil, sugar and vanilla, stir to combine. Alternate adding flour and yogurt mixture to egg mixture, stirring until just blended. Carefully fold in blueberries.
5. Pour batter into muffin tin and sprinkle additional sugar atop each muffin. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes until muffins are golden brown. Remove and cool. Yield: 12 muffins.

**Snakes can be scary, but they're not the only things that bite**



**America's Heartland**

**Roger Alford**  
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I have a very good friend who says there are only three kinds of snakes that people should fear.

Big snakes, little snakes and sticks that look like snakes.

You realize, of course, that the dislike most people have for snakes is rooted in the Bible. In Genesis 3:15, after Eve was enticed to eat of the forbidden fruit, God cursed the snake: "On your belly will you go, and dust you will eat, all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and mankind. He will crush your head and you will strike his heel."

And that's been the relationship ever since, with the exception of some people who, for reasons my friend doesn't understand, choose to keep snakes as pets.

Long years ago, while working as a young newspaper reporter, I interviewed a logger who had caught a big rattlesnake and decided to keep it as a pet. That fellow put the snake behind glass in his living room and after a couple weeks, convinced it had become tame and friendly, he took it out to play with it.

Apparently not in a playing mood, the big timber rattler bit the fellow on the index finger. His family rushed him to the hospital where he came very close to dying. Antivenom and several days of medical attention saved his life.

It's strange how we are prone to press the bounds of common-sense by playing with things we shouldn't, things that can hurt us. Drugs and alcohol come immediately to mind.

An alcoholic beverage might look tempting on TV commercials or in movies, but "in the end it bites like a snake" (Proverbs 23:32). The same is especially true of drugs that have such a strong grip even in America's heartland.

Wouldn't it be fantastic if people would flee from such things the way they'd flee from poisonous snakes?

The Apostle Paul had

to deal with a snake one time on a remote island while warming himself beside a fire.

"When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a poisonous viper fastened on his hand. When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, 'No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.' He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and was not harmed" (Acts 28:3-5).

How great it would be if people of our day could so easily shake off the harmful things that take hold of them. Unfortunately, those things aren't always as scary as serpents, at least not in the beginning. So, people begin to play with them, convinced they're harmless and fun, until the day they sink in their fangs.

It would be much wiser to stay away from such things, treating them the way people treat big snakes, or little snakes, or sticks that look like snakes.

*Roger Alford offers words of encouragement to residents of America's heartland. Reach him at rogeralford1@gmail.com.*

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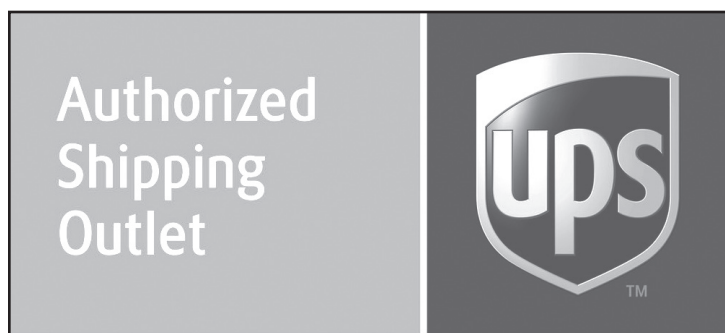


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