

The Friday Burrito

I'll Tell You No Lies

"There is a Japanese proverb that literally goes 'Raise the sail with your stronger hand', meaning you must go after the opportunities that arise in life that you are best equipped to do."

Soichiro Honda

"I think I learned most from editing, both editing myself and having someone else edit me. It's not always easy to have someone criticize your work, your baby. But if you can swallow your ego, you can really learn from the editing."

Christopher Paolini



The seasonal winter rains have started in Southern California. Perfect timing because I didn't want to water our lawn, nor did I fancy helping my octogenarian neighbor by watering at her request the 70 or so potted plants in her backyard. Her husband passed away last year, she accidentally broke her wrist recently, and she needs help from her family and neighbors to get by. The rainfall removed at least one weekly chore from my list. When you retire the chore list expands exponentially. Barely any time left to laze about and stare into space.

Another time sink is our eldest dog, Halley. She's getting to that point where her spirit remains upbeat, but her body is failing. She can't use her back legs or get up on her own. Several times through the night I awaken to her big-dog woof, straddle a makeshift sling around her torso, and take her outside to do her business ... assuming we make it outside without incident, which hasn't always been the case. Lots of janitorial duties ensue. But she's our baby girl no matter what, and we aren't ready to let her go.

Transmission Planning and Gas Projects are Hot Topics

No matter what I read these days, the key industry topic seems to be high-voltage transmission, mostly for additional interconnection of clean-energy projects. Also in the West, transmission development is a topic for regional integration. Coming in as the next most important topic, at least nationally (absent California's myopic outlook), is new gas power plants.

For example, the analysts at Bank of America Securities (BofAS) noted at recent annual EEI Utilities Conference that: "*Transmission has been a critical theme in early meetings ... While we had seen a clear lag in transmission development relative to [the] pace of renewable & demand growth, this appears [to be] an accelerating theme nationally at last.*"

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Western States Ticker

CAISO YTD Renewables Curtailment:

CAISO YTD Renewables Curtailment:

As of 10/21/23: 2,544,513 MWh
As of 10/31/22 2,356,685 MWh

% of solar and wind output curtailed:

YTD as of Oct. 2023 4.48%
YTD as of Oct. 2022 4.32%

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On the topic of gas-fired plants BofAS said, " *We continue to see [the] pace of new gas displacing existing storage development ... Reduced MISO capacity accreditation for storage & solar is a key factor on the swap.*"

The December issue of [EEnergy Informer](#), published by [Fereidoon Sioshansi](#), highlighted the global transmission problem that has become increasingly binding on interconnection of new generation projects. He wrote: "*[An] IEA special report offers a first-of-its-kind global assessment of the world's high voltage transmission grids, pointing out – surprise! – that they are not keeping up with the fast pace of development in renewable energy additions that are now taking place across the globe.*" I scanned the [IEA special report](#), and it does make the case of lagging transmission development. Its Executive Summary states: "*At least 3,000 gigawatts (GW) of renewable power projects, of which 1,500 GW are in advanced stages, are waiting in grid connection queues – equivalent to five times the amount of solar PV and wind capacity added in 2022 ... While investment in renewables has been increasing rapidly – nearly doubling since 2010 – global investment in grids has barely changed, remaining static at around USD \$300 billion per year.*"

Back in the U.S., it's not only new renewables projects that are making transmission development critical, but areas of load growth are becoming evident especially in Texas. The uptick in demand brings additional pressure to ERCOT, which is attempting to add new generation and transmission capacity across the board. [The WSJ reported about Texas](#) that, "*Texas is an extreme example with a big population that needs a lot of air conditioning, but it is also at the center of trends pushing electricity use higher in pockets of the country: the reshoring of manufacturing, the growth of power-hungry data centers and a push to electrification.*" I also think about Californians migrating to Texas because, well because California is choking its own economy and driving people out of the state.

The article notes that electricity demand is also swinging upward in Virginia, Iowa, North Dakota, and New Mexico. Those transmission networks are not keeping pace. There seems to be fewer concerns that generation portfolios of these growth-oriented localities will become the limiting factor. The [WSJ](#) said, "*Grid operators across the U.S. have been warning that power-generating capacity is struggling to keep up with demand, and that gaps could lead to rolling blackouts during hot or cold weather extremes.*" No one can argue with that possibility, but in my opinion transmission, or the lack of it, is the greater risk.

Hey Mister, Can You Spare an EV Charging Station?

If one of the electricity demand growth pillars is EV charging, then what is the situation for non-Tesla and EVs that can't use Tesla super

What we believe...

Competition yields lower electricity rates. Stable and transparent rules and regulations promote private investment.

Private investors, rather than utilities, will spend money on new power plants and transmission facilities if they can earn a return that is balanced with the risks.

Private sector investment results in lower average prices without risking consumers' money.

However, when IOUs do the investing, the risks to them are minimal or non-existent because ratepayers cover all the costs.

Overcapacity lowers electricity spot market prices; yet retail rates can increase in this case due to full cost-of-service regulation.

Markets work best when there are many buyers and sellers.

At-risk money will be put to investment where markets exist that are well regulated and yield credible price.

And what we should do ...

Believe in ourselves.

Encourage creation of independent, multi-state regional transmission organizations that coordinate policies with respective state utility commissions.

Support rules for resource adequacy that applies uniformly among all load-serving entities.

Enforce competitive solicitations by utilities for purchasing either thermal or renewable power.

chargers until next year at the earliest? Not good is the answer, [according to a reporter at the WSJ who sampled 30 different non-Tesla charging stations in LA County](#) in a Rivian EV truck (R1T). The failure rate was 40% amongst 126 individual chargers (typically 3, 4, or 5 chargers per station). That will certainly dim EV sales among new entrants.

The journalist identified three key problems that resulted in charging failures: OOO ... or, out of order (27%); payment card not accepted (10%); and, unable to handshake between the charger and the EV ... the two computers didn't connect with each other within a specified time (3%).

OOO was the most common problem. The fast-charging stations simply were dark, or had a sign posted that the chargers were unavailable. Payment problems had more to do with credit card readers not being able to verify the user, or in one case, the screen displayed CASH ONLY, but there wasn't any slot to accept currency. You gotta love technology.

The reporter's conclusion was, "*Charging-company executives I spoke to think the Tesla network will have trouble supporting many different EV models ... [However] I'm hopeful that with the new investments and machines, things will get better. For now, anyone planning to road trip with a non-Tesla EV is automatically a contender for World's Most Patient Charger!*" Go LA Chargers!

Support choice among retail electricity customers.

Lobby for core/non-core split of retail customers.

Advocate against policies that limit, through bid mitigation, merchant returns on investment that are comparable to utility returns.

Simply Suedeem

[Click here to learn more about Suedeem Kelly](#)



The voice telling the Iowa farmer, "If you build it, he will come," was enough to get him to take a chance and build a baseball diamond on spec. See the old, heart-warming film, "Field of Dreams" (1987). But it's not been heart-warming enough to get transmission financiers to build a long-distance transmission line on spec. Recognizing that, the Department of Energy has developed a \$2.5 billion Transmission Facilitation Program with funds appropriated by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act. And just last week it made its first awards of \$1.3 billion in "capacity contracts" to three planned transmission projects. This may be enough to get the financiers to take a chance on them.

Under the program, DOE can buy up to half of a transmission' project's capacity in advance of construction, becoming an "anchor customer" on the line. DOE can later sell the contract. It's an effort to crack the chicken and egg problem faced by developers of lines that won't be fully subscribed by local loads--like lines to bring renewables to markets. The awards went to National Grid's planned 1200 MW DC line between Quebec and VT/NH (Twin States Clean Energy Link), and to Grid United's planned 1000 MW line from NM to AZ (Southline Transmission), and to Berkshire Hathaway/Pinnacle West's 1500 MW, 500 kV line between UT and NV (Cross-Tie). Each awardee must give back to impacted local communities through a community benefit plan. In lieu of any eligibility for investment tax credits in the Inflation Reduction Act for "clean transmission," DOE's program hopes to be a helpful substitute.

The Green Transition, Economic Growth, and Global Order

Walter Russel Mead wrote an [essay last Monday](#) that really challenged the conventional wisdom adhered to by the Biden administration. Entitled, "The Global Toll of Biden's Green Enthusiasm," Mead explores the consequences of pumping federal money into investments that choke economic growth and damage the U.S.'s global influence. He makes a striking comparison of the current situation with that at the conclusion of World War II. Different facts but similar factors.

Mead felt that the Truman Administration understood the keys to maintaining world order as follows: "*At home, we could never sustain the necessary defense budgets or limit polarization unless the economy delivered for the average American family. Abroad, only rising living standards could promote the political stability and pro-capitalist sentiment that our system needed to survive.*" The Biden approach is different in that, "*It plans to shrink the defense budget in real terms ... [T]he White House remains committed to economic policies that will undermine growth at home while eroding political and social stability across much of the Global South ... free trade is critical to the economic dynamism the U.S. and its global system need.*" I reluctantly agree with Mead's last point, although there have been examples of economic growth abroad that have not improved the political agenda. Until last month, hasn't the Gaza Strip been one such example? Long-term growth due to greater job opportunities in Israel did not halt the capitulation of its government to a terrorist organization.

Mead makes the case that the green transition requires, "*... a massive shift of investment away from creating new goods and services toward replacing our existing energy and transport systems with systems that duplicate capabilities we already have.*" Amen. No increase in efficiency. No net increase in productivity. You may have a smaller carbon footprint but that's a maybe, not a certainty. Counter examples seem to be aplenty. He concludes with, "*Team Biden ... worries, legitimately, that a second Trump term would be chaotic. But nearly three years into its mandate, the administration lurches from one crisis to the next, and the outlook, at home and abroad, is darkening from week to week.*"

Colorado River Water and the Imperial Valley Farms

Local newspapers reporting on California's highly politicized Imperial Valley, an agricultural Eden because of its rich allocation of Colorado River water, dig up a lot of dirt on various things. In the past, I've read accounts in the [Desert Sun](#) that are pure speculation about dubious conspiracies. However, one Burrito reader sent me [a few articles that may have merit](#) about Colorado River water allocations to Imperial Valley farms. The paper pinpoints 20 of the largest water users in the area that on the whole suck out more flow than metropolitan Las Vegas. Could it be? The [Desert Sun](#) crafted the investigation with [ProPublica](#) and based their estimates of water consumption on satellite data, combined with records of who owns and farms each field in the valley. As such, real water use by individual farmers may differ. But what numbers the [Sun](#) came up with in their investigation?

According to the [Desert Sun](#), the water going to the largest farms foremostly grow hay for feeding livestock. The balance goes to farms growing produce and vegetables of all sorts, but mainly lettuce, onions, and broccoli. In an article that ran last Friday, the [Desert Sun](#) found, "*By far the largest users of the river are five members of the Abatti family, whose companies used an estimated 260,000 acre-feet in 2022, about 3% of the Colorado River's entire flow in the Lower Basin. Most of the water they use goes to growing hay. Southern Nevada, which relies on the Colorado River for almost all of its water supply, used about 220,000 acre-feet that year, much of which goes to serve over 2 million people in the Las Vegas metropolitan area.*" The next largest water-using farm uses only one-third of that consumed by the Abatti family. If those numbers are accurate, then it is an amazing comparison for a resource that is vital for the future of the non-agricultural West. Thankfully, this water use we are discussing is downstream from all the power producing hydro plants such as Hoover and Glen Canyon.

What is definitely true is that the water rights afforded to the Abatti family and many similarly situated multi-generational farms in the area are inherited and also carry tax advantages and very low acre-feet costs. The kicker is that much of the ag product, especially the hay, is exported overseas. Per the Desert Sun, "*Sixteen of the top Imperial Valley families mostly use their water to grow hay, which accounts for an estimated 685,000 acre-feet a year. That's more than four times the amount that goes to the 1.4 million people served by San Diego's water district.*"

Me thinks the grandfathered water rights that have withstood legal challenges ultimately adjudicated by the SCOTUS are ripe for review and reconsideration. On the other hand, farmers in Imperial Valley are conserving water by investing significant funds into modern pumping systems and new crop sprinkling methods. For example, the Abatti family cited above shaved 30,000 acre-feet per year compared to the previous year ... more than 10% of their annual usage. The Valley as a whole cut water consumption by 28%. However, according to the news report: "*Imperial Irrigation District officials point out that the agency now takes 500,000 acre-feet of water less than its legal share from the river each year — about 28% of its 3.1 million acre-foot allotment. Much of that is transferred to urban and suburban areas, which pay the irrigation district for that water. But actual water savings came from updating an antiquated canal system and from paying farmers to use less water.*"

Water usage rights in the Imperial Valley are a classic case of resource competition to satisfy conflicting ends. In fact, the long-running battle over this valuable resource is a story about the West that endures.

The Mexican Muse Returns

Rajan Vig lives in Mexico City and has broad experience in the U.K., U.S., and Mexico on energy matters. Several years ago, before AMLO became the president of Mexico, Rajan published a blog called the *Mexican Muse*. As the new populist president added more inane energy policies that were challenged in Mexico's courts, Rajan moved on to other things and stopped writing his blog. I mean, how much sad news can a person write when AMLO is at the helm? The last five years have been a tough haul for all energy players in Mexico. However, next year a new president will replace AMLO and Rajan is anxious to gear up and resume his publication. The first edition came out last Thursday and was entitled, "Don't Call it a Comeback." If you are interested in reading it (free for now) [click here](#).

Things In the West

Holy Wrapture

For many years writing the Burrito I have been doubtful about the efficacy of ad hoc groups populated with participants across the Western states attempting to solve large-scale issues that bump into individual-state energy policies. I've seen many come and go. In a very few cases that I can count on one hand they create sufficient momentum at a scale necessary to change things, say, at NERC, FERC, or at the CAISO. With age comes wisdom and enough joint arthritis to make one grumpy. Taking off my grumpy hat, I now think the only way to affect multi-state change is by creating ad hoc groups that formulate ideas in addition to the well-funded stakeholder efforts at the CAISO and SPP. It is inevitable that collaboration amongst broad sets of parties requires herding-cats style of leadership and thankless coordination by many volunteers. It's kind of like community service for the power industry.

Thus, as I was listening to the [WPTF Wider West Committee led by Caitlin Liotiris](#), I was surprised at the number of acronyms for western ad hoc groups that have popped up and about which I never heard before. There are a

lot of these groups, and below I'm sample a few of these alliances ... some that are obscure and others that are well-known legacies, with brief notes on each one's purpose.

The first acronym to grab my attention in Caitlin's Committee review was called the Westwide Governance Pathways Initiative (WWGPI). Like when the hell did this team show up because I certainly can't recall. It turns out that [last July I wrote about](#) a letter crafted by leading state commissioners from California, Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington. That was before the group took on the WWGPI name. I stated, "*A public letter was co-signed by multiple state regulators in the West to both the Committee on Regional Electric Power Cooperation (CREPC) and the Western Interstate Energy Board (WIEB) introducing a concept for a regional transmission operator that would have a contractual relationship with the CAISO, and in effect would provide governance over a wider area than just one state. The fact that this concept was championed by an array of states is not insignificant. The proposal has merit, but let's look a bit closer to examine the implications.*

"The letter explains that 'A separate non-profit entity governed by representation from across the West would be formed. That entity could provide a full range of regional transmission operator services, utilizing a contract for services with the CAISO, including eventual assumption of the EDAM and EIM. The independent entity could also act as a vessel for delivering a West-wide, fully organized market with governance shared across all states.' Great idea, but it is a touch naïve.'

"An independent entity with a contractual link to the CAISO will not easily satisfy multi-state governance issues because of the lopsided weight of the CAISO load relative to all the other balancing authorities outside of the CAISO. Sure, it's worth trying but expectations must be kept in check."

That was then, but now Caitlin reported that the effort has been ramping up with a series of documents, meetings, and presentations. A mission statement and charter for the group has been created, a [webpage](#) developed, and a stakeholder distribution list exists. For example, the stakeholders for WWPCI are meeting today. So, there you are, three acronyms mowed down right at the onset ... WWPCI, CREPC and WIEB.

The composition of the WWPCI holds the promise of multi-state cooperation. On the other hand, the knotty issue about governance to create a unifying regional entity doesn't have much hope, IMHO. But who knows? Maybe the group will come up with a workable plan.

The next low-hanging fruit for new ad hoc associations is the Western States Transmission Expansion Coalition (WTEC) that was started by the Western Power Pool (WPP ... are you getting your fill yet of W-led acronyms?). This was a topic I wrote about in [the October 13 Burrito](#) and opined: "*It cannot be overstated that WTEC's mission is a huge lift. They know it. You know it. We all know it. However, that doesn't mean it shouldn't be attempted.*"

Next up is the Western States Transmission Initiative (WSTI). Who are they and what do they wish to accomplish? Per Caitlin, "*WSTI is a partnership between Gridworks and CREPC that has been evaluating transmission planning and cost allocation issues in the West.*" So, WSTI and WTEC have missions that are pretty much alike except for the cost allocation issue that is part of the WSTI landscape but not WTEC. CREPC members thought there was a lot of overlap between the two initiatives, and according to Caitlin, "*CREPC doesn't want to duplicate efforts and can focus primarily on WTEC collaboration as a means to meet the same broad goals which WSTI identified. But the state cost allocation discussions do not appear to be well-aligned with WTEC and may warrant state leadership and separate activity. The need for state resources (staffing/funding) still exists with WTEC and/or WSTI and will need to continue to be pursued.*" Alas, perfection is the enemy of the good.

The final W group I wish to shove into your brain is called the Western Markets Exploratory Group (WMEG). This group has two years of history as a loosely knit group of utilities with 25 members representing 95 GW of asynchronous peak load. The members of WMEG hired the firm E3 to examine the benefits and costs of a

broader day-ahead market in the Western states. The [results have been made public](#), and according to Caitlin, "Results indicated that many WMEG members benefit more from a split market than a bookend case (with many non-WMEG, primarily California entities, benefiting from an EDAM bookend case), when including lost wheeling revenues."

Let's review what I covered above: WWGPI, CREPC, WIEB, WTEC, WSTI, and WMEG. Next time, I might expound on the CAISO and SPP working group acronyms. Just kidding.



Grand Phunk Salsa a la EnergyGPS

SP15 Solar Triple Whammy!!!!

The Op Ed below is from the team at EnergyGPS with Tim Belden as the lead writer. EnergyGPS covers the intersection of renewables and wholesale markets in its *Renewable Monthly Report*, which is part of the EnergyGPS eCommerce Platinum Plus package. For more information, email sales@energygps.com.

Energy GPS produces a Monthly Renewables report, which highlights major developments related to the performance of renewables in wholesale markets throughout the United States. As we progress through the rapidly evolving transition from thermal-based systems to renewable-based systems, it is critical to understand both the impacts of wholesale markets on renewables, and increasingly, the impact renewables have on wholesale markets. One of the biggest story lines of 2023 has been the complete annihilation of CAISO solar

	Sep			Oct			Nov		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Henry Hub Nat Gas	\$5.02	\$7.99	\$2.64	\$5.49	\$5.69	\$2.97	\$5.03	\$5.34	\$2.84
PG&E CG Nat Gas	\$6.64	\$8.84	\$3.67	\$6.99	\$7.33	\$5.88	\$6.08	\$9.56	\$5.09
SoCal CG Nat Gas	\$7.55	\$9.42	\$3.78	\$6.13	\$6.20	\$7.33	\$5.73	\$8.88	\$6.81
CAISO SP15 RT LMP	\$59.01	\$102.85	\$33.68	\$47.89	\$58.31	\$46.75	\$48.29	\$74.67	\$44.58
CAISO NP15 RT LMP	\$62.14	\$107.35	\$40.70	\$61.54	\$71.18	\$56.97	\$52.79	\$92.58	\$54.71
Wind Weighted SP15 RT LMP	\$56.26	\$94.50	\$34.25	\$45.67	\$53.87	\$41.25	\$48.78	\$70.71	\$42.16
Solar Weighted SP15 RT LMP	\$53.36	\$88.99	\$19.93	\$28.20	\$42.20	\$19.65	\$32.06	\$39.79	\$16.33
NP15 Heat Rate	9.4	11.7	11.1	8.8	9.8	9.9	8.7	9.8	10.9
SP15 Heat Rate	8.0	10.3	9.2	7.8	9.5	6.6	8.4	8.5	6.6
Avg. CAISO Load	28.1K	31.0K	26.6K	23.8K	25.1K	24.9K	23.2K	23.3K	23.8K
Avg. CAISO Wind	2.1K	2.0K	2.3K	1.9K	1.6K	1.8K	1.4K	2.1K	1.9K
Avg. CAISO Solar	4.3K	4.5K	5.6K	3.6K	4.1K	4.9K	3.1K	3.3K	4.6K
CAISO Wind Penetration Level	7.6%	6.3%	8.5%	7.8%	6.5%	7.4%	6.2%	9.1%	8.1%
CAISO Solar Penetration Level	15.4%	14.6%	20.9%	15.0%	16.2%	19.8%	13.3%	14.1%	19.2%
CAISO Wind SP15 Capture Ratio	95%	92%	102%	95%	92%	88%	101%	95%	95%
CAISO Solar SP15 Capture Ratio	90%	87%	59%	59%	72%	42%	66%	53%	37%
Pct Wind When SP15 < \$0	1%	1%	4%	3%	5%	9%	2%	4%	6%
Pct Solar When SP15 < \$0	1%	1%	10%	6%	6%	22%	3%	7%	13%
Curtailment_CAISO_Solar	35.9K	56.4K	72.5K	133.3K	87.2K	199.7K	42.6K	55.2K	25.7K
Curtailment_CAISO_Wind	1.6K	14.7K	1.8K	4.4K	34.1K	6.2K	1.3K	32.5K	0.5K

value. The table above is an example of the output in our report, showing all of the key variables which impact electricity prices and the value of wind and solar resources.

I have highlighted the key values for November 2022 and 2023 to assist with navigating the table and my commentary. We see several themes playing out when comparing prior years to this. First, natural gas prices have fallen this year compared to last year, but the basis from Henry Hub to California remains strong. Second, the market clearing heat rates in SP15 have fallen off a cliff in October and November (MTD through the 15th). The heat rates are the simple average of the all-hours power price divided by the natural gas price for that region. Third, the solar capture ratio, which equals the solar-weighted price divided by the all-hours price, declined to 59% in September, 42% in October, and 37% in November MTD. The result is solar-weighted monthly prices of about \$20 in September and October and \$16.33 in November. These are less than half of what they were in prior years.

Adding insult to injury, the percentage of solar generation that occurred during intervals with negative prices was 22% in October and is 13% in November MTD. CAISO has added a tremendous amount of solar to the grid in the last twelve months, with average solar production across all hours increasing from 3.3 GW to 4.6 GW. During maximum solar hours this increase is far higher. Solar market share in the CAISO (solar MWh divided by load MWh) is approaching 20%. And that doesn't include behind the meter, which is likely another 15%.

There are a multitude of reasons for this sharp change in solar value. The main reason is too much solar in southern California coupled with the inability to move the energy out of the region. The constraints include limitations on south to north flows on Path 15, as well as market seams, which limit the amount of solar that can be exported to other regions. It seems we have hit an inflection point, and it is not clear how bad things can get when future solar is added.

Recipes and Shout Outs

Festive Pumpkin Risotto and Orange Cranberry Relish with Chef [Laura Manz](#)

"Thanksgiving is among my favorite holidays. I cherish my childhood memories of spending the day before Thanksgiving at my grandmother's house, helping her prepare and plan for an abundant feast. Although she had retired to a small apartment, we were at least 25 people squished around artfully arranged tables and dishes. On food prep day, she always brined her turkey to assure a moist and flavorful bird. Preparing the stuffing was an hours-long ritual for the two of us. We would end our workday with special coffee cup sundaes to celebrate our success. I continue the Turkey ritual with fewer guests, less mayhem and updated sides that include pumpkin risotto and fresh orange-cranberry relish.

"Wishing everyone a wonderful holiday with much to be thankful for in the year ahead."



Orange-cranberry relish: A great supplement to the gelatinous cylinder of cranberry magic that can be pushed from a can, fresh cranberries make a lovely accompaniment to any Thanksgiving table. While this recipe can be made with raw ingredients, I prefer to give the fresh cranberries a quick cook for a more mellow flavor. Pick through a large bag of fresh cranberries and toss any that are not plump and fresh. Place the remaining cranberries in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the zest and juice from an orange, a pinch of salt

"Mexican Muse"

Succinct news on the Mexican energy sector with a tincture of British satire.

Please [click here](#) to read this week's issue and be added to the mailing list:

and a Tbsp. of sugar (or more to taste). When the cranberries start to pop, remove from the heat. Stir in 1/3 cup chopped pecans before serving.

Pumpkin risotto: I use butternut squash that adds a sweet and nutty flavor to the risotto. It's a myth that risotto must be continuously minded. The trick is to spend the last two minutes stirring to incorporate the butter and also air, a technique called *mantecatura*, to yield a perfect creamy texture. Use a good quality short grain arborio or carnaroli rice. I adapt my type of stock to the meal, in this case, turkey or chicken stock. Risotto is best served as soon as possible from the time it is cooked. A sturdy wooden spoon or spatula will make the task easier.



Peel and dice a small butternut squash. Over medium-high heat, sauté the pieces until tender in a mixture of equal parts butter and olive oil until pieces begin to caramelize and are softened. Remove from heat and set aside.

Heat 6 cups of stock in a medium saucepan. Begin your risotto when the stock is warmed.

I make my risotto in a 3-quart saucepan and any equivalent saucepan or non-stick skillet will suffice. Heat 2 Tbsp. of olive oil and 1 Tbsp. of butter in the pan. When oil is hot, add ½ cup diced onion and cook until soft, about five minutes. Add 1½ cups rice and cook, stirring occasionally, until it is translucent and has a glossy appearance, about 3 minutes. Add ½ cup dry white wine and cook until the liquid has evaporated. Add a generous pinch of salt and ½ cup warm stock. Let the stock boil away before adding another ½ cup stock, stirring each time you add more liquid. In 15 minutes, add 1½ cups of the cooked squash and continue to add (and boil away) stock. After 5 minutes, begin taste testing the risotto that should still have a slight crunch. Stir in 2 Tbsp. of butter and continue to stir vigorously and continuously for two minutes. Stir in ½ cup grated parmesan cheese; add salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat when risotto is on its way to al dente and serve as soon as practical.

I might drop in on you, Laura, for a lavish Thanksgiving feast. The story from your childhood about cooking with your grandmother struck a note with me. I didn't cook with my grandmother who was originally from the wine-producing region of Romania, but I watched her make dishes that were superb. This from a woman who was never taught to read or write. She would shop for ingredients at the grocery store and figure out the contents based on the picture label.

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Your stories are [below](#). Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday and there will be no Burrito next week. We'll do it again on Friday, December 1.

gba

Odds & Ends (_!_)

It's definite and I have made up my mind. You can't talk me out of it. After watching four or five NFL games last weekend, from now on I will only watch the last five-minutes of regular play. The incessant ads through the four quarters and the fact that most games are decided in the closing minutes makes watching the first 55 minutes of football torturous. YouTube video summaries are okay, but I do like live football action. I'll just tune in when the game clock strikes 5:00.

If you selected the meat-filled Burrito, then here are your stories. Make them last because there won't be a Burrito next week:



Terrorist Puns

At New York's Kennedy Airport today, an individual later discovered to be a public school teacher was arrested trying to board a flight while in possession of a ruler, a protractor, a setsquare, and a calculator. Attorney General Merrick Garland believes the man is a member of the notorious Al-gebra movement. He is being charged with carrying weapons of math instruction.

Al-gebra is a very fearsome cult, indeed. They desire average solutions by means and extremes, and sometimes go off on a tangent in a search of absolute value. They consist of quite shadowy figures, with names like "x" and "y", and, although they are frequently referred to as "unknowns", we know they really belong to a common denominator and are part of the axis of medieval with coordinates in every country.

As the great Greek philanderer Isosceles used to say, there are 3 sides to every angle, and if God had wanted us to have better weapons of math instruction, he would have given us more fingers and toes.

Therefore, I'm extremely grateful that our government has given us a sine that it is intent on protracting us from these math-dogs who are so willing to disintegrate us with calculus disregard. These statistics love to inflict plane on every sphere of influence. Under the circumferences, it's time we differentiated their root, made our point, and drew the line.

These weapons of math instruction have the potential to decimal everything in their math on a scale never before seen unless we become exponents of a Higher Power and begin to factor-in random facts of vertex. As our Great Leader would say, "Poor kids are just as bright and just as talented as white kids." Here is one principle he is uncertainty of--- though they continue to multiply, their days are numbered and the hypotenuse will tighten around their necks."

Why Did You Divorce?

A grandmother and her young granddaughter were out shopping. The little girl asked the older lady, "Grandma, how old are you?"

"Well, dear, that's not a question a lady asks another lady," Grandma replied.

"Well, then, how much do you weigh, Grandma?"

"I'm afraid that's another one of those questions a lady will never answer, my dear."

After a pause, the girl asked, "How come you and Grandpa got divorced?"

Grandma sighed. "That's even more personal than the other questions, dear, and I don't want to talk about it."

Later in the day the two made a purchase at a store, and Grandma had to pull out her driver's license for identification. Unbeknownst to her, the young girl had a chance to look at it along with the salesclerk. As they exited the store, the granddaughter picked up on their earlier conversation.

"Grandma, I know how old you are...You're 67." Grandma was amazed.

"And I know how much you weigh...162 pounds." Grandma blushed.

"And I know why you and Grandpa got divorced," said the girl. "You got an F in sex."
