

Editor: Henny van Dijk

www.uthro.org

January, 2024

A "L & L" on January 24

UTHRO Went Galactic...



UTHRO member Liliana Cracraft will be the speaker at our January Lunch & Learn addressing a topic few are familiar with ***"The Use of Medicinal Herbs in PreHispanic and Traditional Mexican Medicine."***

When the Spaniards arrived in Tenochtitlan in 1519 they encountered a culture vastly different from the one they left behind.

The Aztecs viewed reality from a perspective that was almost incomprehensible to the newly arrived. They were extraordinary astronomers who had developed a yearly calendar accurate to within eleven minutes. They were also advanced mathematicians, spectacular craftsmen, architects, artists – musicians, painters, sculptors, dancers-, and poets, especially the members of the elite classes.

The Aztecs, males and females were also doctors, and believed in healing not just the body, but also the spirit of sick people. Their knowledge about medicinal plants was extensive, and their practice of medicine, like every other aspect of their lives, was inseparable from the concept of the cosmos and their religious beliefs. In fact, their word for doctor, *tepati*, was derived from *teo*, sacred, and *patli*, medicine.

Tenochtitlan has been called the Venice of the Americas because, like Venice, it was a magnificent city built on a series of canals, but it was more beautiful than Venice in one very important aspect: it was clean. A thousand workers washed and swept the streets and plazas every day, and clean water was brought into the city through aqueducts. The great capitals of Europe at that time were full of filth and misery. The rat-infested alleys were covered with garbage and human waste, and clean running water was not even conceived of, and baths were a rarity. So, without a doubt, the Aztecs fortunate freedom from the pestilences of the Old World was due to their epidemiological control and their extreme cleanliness. In this lecture, you will hear about the strict personal hygiene practiced by the Aztecs, their vast knowledge of medicinal herbs, the use of anesthesia, and the practice of asepsis before they knew of the existence of microorganism, but for now reserve Wed. January 24, from 11 AM—1PM, have some lunch on us and again parking is free at OCB.



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UTHRO Member in the News

I noticed this recently on Facebook:

Nicholas Knobil is with **Julane H Knobil**.

Went to go visit my mom to celebrate her 89th birthday... As a gift I suggested we go to the American Helicopter Museum, and, being a mother who loves her son, she said that would be a great idea! (We both know I've had worse ideas) She paid (of course) to get us in, and don't you know we found a photo of the very same Kaman helicopter (NC47105) she got a ride in on the day it was certified in 1949. She was 14.

I contacted Julie "Hi Julie, just saw that awesome picture of you in the 1949 helicopter and I would love to use that in the Evergreen, can I as many of our members know and remembered you?" and surprise, surprise, she emailed me back with:...



"Certainly you may use it! I got quite a laugh out of my son's posting that old and recent picture. I hope all is well in Houston, but I am glad to be here in PA even if it is cold. My love to everyone!"



Changing of the Guard

As we move forward to a new year, I would like to thank our Executive Committee Members for their dedicated service to UTHRO. These are the people that keep UTHRO growing, keep us fiscally responsible and most importantly foster our sense of community at our many excellently planned events. Those individuals for the last year are; Efren Pena, - Vice President, Margaret Zambrano - Treasurer, Daun Gray - Secretary, Janice Thomas and Marilyn Wells - events, Henny Van Dijk - Editor and Communications Chair, Peggy O'Neil - Endowment Chair and Member-at-Large and Kathy Bradley - Past President and Member-at-Large. Thank you also for the terrific job that Pat Grealy and Glen Schreyer do keeping our website up-to-date and in compliance. The next time you see these people, thank them for their contributions.

A special thanks to Daun Gray for serving as our Secretary for the last four years. Daun has fastidiously provided the Executive Committee with minutes of each monthly meeting and maintained a comprehensive record of all minutes, committee reports and financial reports. Daun has also volunteered at every opportunity to assist with all UTHRO events. She has been an asset to the Executive Committee and I am pleased to report that Daun will continue as a Member-at-Large Committee Member.



At the Annual Meeting and Holiday Luncheon, Mary Francis Fabrizio volunteered to run for the position of Secretary and was duly elected by the membership. Welcome Mary Francis! Mary Frances Fabrizio was born in Youngstown, Ohio, but Texas has won her heart, and Houston the fortunate winner. After thirty-two years at the U.T. Medical School and her last 16 years working at the Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, she retired and found her niche in volunteerism, for the San José Clinic, and Texas Childrens' Hospital as a member of the Blue Bird Circle;



Mary Frances takes great pleasure in world travel with destinations as diverse as Oberammergau, Cairo, and Israel. She is also a fair hand in the kitchen; her "Dessert Night" Christmas party is a must on the calendars of many of her friends. She became a member of UTHRO in xxxand lucky us will continue her voluntary work as the new secretary on the Executive Committee for the next 2 years.

Barbara Kelly and Henny van Dijk reporting

UTHRO OFFICERS 2024

President	Barbara Kelly
Vice-Pres	Efren Pena
Secretary	Mary Frances Fabrizio
Treasurer	Margaret Zambrano
Newsletter Editor	Henny van Dijk
Web Administrators	Pat Grealy & Glenn Schreyer

To protect our officers' personal information on our website, UTHRO has instituted a new general purpose email address: uthro@uth.tmc.edu. This is a "forwarding" email that will send copies to both the UTHRO president and Efren Pena who will then forward the email to the appropriate person. Including the recipient's name in your subject will be very helpful; e.g. Subject: For Barry, BBQ lunch. If UTHRO members already know the phone number or personal email address of an officer then by all means continue using that for your communication needs.

A Classic Dutch Cookie ...



Speculaas is the kind of Dutch biscuit also popular in Belgium and Germany. Traditionally baked and served on the eve of St. Nicholas Day (the 5th of December in The Netherlands and the 6th in Belgium) and Christmas time in Germany.

Ingredients and Preparations:

Speculaasjes are thin, spicy biscuits that are brown, very crunchy and beautifully decorated with different images or patterns pertaining to St. Nicholas and the events surrounding this holiday, however only the front side is stamped while the back part remains flat.

Speculaas are baked with regular ingredients like: flour, butter, sugar, leavening agents and spices. Usually white flour is used, but almond flour is another choice.

The most common spices for speculaas include nutmeg, ginger, white pepper, cinnamon and cardamom. There is no standard amount of spices because the choice is based on individual taste preferences.

The dough is made in two separate mixing procedures.

First, sugar, butter and the spices are mixed together.

Then in another bowl flour and leavening agents will mix together before its addition to the dough. To prevent the

dough from heating up to fast, it is usually stored overnight in a cool place. This is important because spices are given enough time to permeate and achieve the desired flavor.



The almost traditional and famous windmill design

Once the dough is ready. It is rolled very thin and cut into desired sizes before the molding and baking process. Some say that the best way to achieve a good imprint is to refrigerate the dough prior to stamping. Speculaas once the specialty in the December month, is now available year round even at my HEB,

but the original ones are a lot more crunchy, fresh and a pleasure to nibble on.

Henny van Dijk. Text and images

New Beginnings, sort of...!



Maxine by John Wagner

Forget your juice cleanses. Hang up your jump ropes and boxing gloves. Put that credit card down and forget about buying that expensive gym membership or personal life coach. Sure those things can be helpful and maybe lead to some lasting change and better habits if you keep your "New Year, New You" motto past January 15. But for the rest of us, who are either burnt out on resolutions altogether or have to disguise them with words like "goals" or "new hobby," we think the new year should be fun and not bum us out as much as the last three seasons of the pandemic have. Let's look at 2024 as an opportunity to take on a bucket list of ways to make ourselves and our families experience even more joy or at the very least, laugh a little bit. Maybe even at ourselves for how much we want to make resolutions.

Whatever way you slice it, make 2024 a year you can look back on and smile and feel less stressed about.

Stop doom scrolling on Twitter.

Do so much yoga that it actually justifies wearing yoga pants 24/7.

Wake up before noon on the weekend

When meeting with friends, I will stop telling the same jokes. Or I'll make new friends.

I will stop saying "Mmmm, how nice" during the inspection at the airport. It seems that this is only provoking them.

I will drink more. Benjamin Franklin seems to have said that beer is proof of God's love.

Give up blaming the family dog for every strange smell in the house (especially when I know it came from me).

Read the books I bring to the beach. But, for real.

Tell the doctor the truth when they ask how many drinks — alcoholic or caffeinated — I have in a month.

Stop . Googling . Symptoms.

UTHRO

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*To update your address or phone number
please contact us at 281-655-1983*

And Now For Something Completely Different... What in the World is Mast...?



During the past month and a half we heard a lot of things hitting the roof and our AC unit and when I investigated I noticed a large amount of acorns all over the backyard. Eric Bergen my most trusted weatherman also noticed it and called it a mast year, so since I'd never heard of that I had to investigate

The question was where are all the acorns coming from? Some years, my yard is covered in acorns. Can you help us understand what is going on?

What you and your neighbors are experiencing every few years is a "mast year." The term "mast year" comes from the botanical term, *mast*, for tree fruit—seeds, nuts, acorns, etc. Nuts and acorns are considered "hard mast," while berries and apples are "soft mast." A mast year occurs when trees produce an overabundance of fruit.

Boom and bust cycles of acorn production do have an evolutionary benefit for oak trees through "predator satiation." The idea goes like this: in a mast year, predators like chipmunks, squirrels, deer etc. can't eat all the acorns, leaving some nuts for growing into future oak trees. Years of lean acorn production keep predator populations low, so there are fewer animals to eat all the seeds in a mast year. Ultimately, a higher proportion of nuts overall escape the jaws of hungry animals. So..., are trees smarter than humans making sure the species survives? Just wondering...!