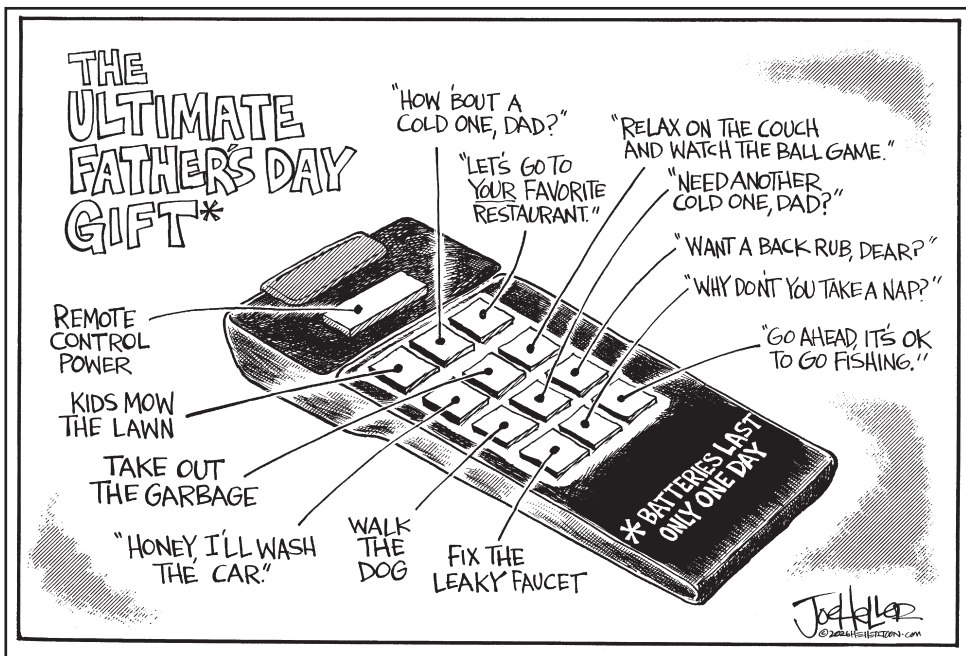


BACK IN THE DAY

Underwood

COMPILED BY SHELLY WALLACE

from the Files of the Central McLean News Journal



DIGGIN' IT

BY PHAIDRA YUNKER

Frankentrees

Last time in Frankenflowers, we peeked into the laboratory behind modern annuals. Now it's time for the bigger, woodier creations—the Frankentrees. Many of the cultivars we've known for decades didn't just "happen." They were stitched together, cloned, selected and tested with a level of horticultural mad science most gardeners never realize is happening behind the scenes.

Here's the part that may surprise people: your apple tree is a clone. Not in the lightningcrackling castle sense, but in the practical horticultural sense. Apples don't grow true from seed. Plant a Honeycrisp seed and you won't get a Honeycrisp—you'll get something unpredictable.

Every named apple began as a single standout seedling. But you can't preserve it by planting its seeds. You preserve it by grafting.

Grafting is the tree world's surgical assembly. A hardy, diseaseresistant rootstock becomes the bottom half; a twig from the original desirable tree becomes the top. Line up the cambium layers, wrap the joint and the tree heals into one organism.

The Honeycrisp in your yard is genetically identical to the original Honeycrisp discovered at the University of Minnesota. Same with Haralson, Sweet Sixteen—every named apple is a clone of one original.

Even a perfectly assembled tree won't fruit without the right pollen partner. Most apples are selfincompatible, meaning they can't pollinate themselves or another of the same variety. A Honeycrisp can pollinate a Haralson, and vice versa, as long as they bloom at the same time.

And no, a pear can't pollinate an apple. Wrong species, wrong wiring.

Some fruit trees, like the Ure pear, are selffertile. But most apples and pears need a partner. If in doubt, read the tag—growers must list compatible pollinators.

So why does a single apple tree in an older neighborhood often produce fruit just fine? Because it's almost never truly alone.

Older towns like Washburn have decades of builtin pollinators: old crabapples, aging backyard apples and volunteer seedlings tucked along alleys. Crabapples, especially, are excellent universal pollinators. To a bee, the whole neighborhood is one big orchard.

In a brandnew subdivision, though, a lone apple tree may bloom beautifully but produce nothing. Until a second apple or crabapple is planted, the tree simply can't complete the biological handshake required to set fruit.

Here is another Frankentree fact: some of the toughest trees in our region weren't bred in a lab—they were

found.

One of the best examples is the Prairie Expedition® elm. When Dutch elm disease devastated American elms across North Dakota in the 1970s, entire groves died. But in western North Dakota, one elm stood alive and healthy amongst all of its dead neighbors. NDSU researchers recognized it as a rare survivor. They took cuttings, cloned the tree and then did something straight out of a laboratory scene: they inoculated the clones with Dutch elm disease on purpose. When the clones survived, they proved that the resistance was real. After years of testing, the tree was released as Prairie Expedition®, one of the most coldhardy, diseaseresistant American elms available today.

That survivor wasn't a fluke—it's the kind of discovery NDSU researchers hunt for at their Absaraka research site.

North Dakota has one of the most advanced coldclimate tree programs in the world, and its headquarters isn't in a distant botanical garden—it's right outside Absaraka, about 35 miles west of Fargo.

The Dale E. Herman Research Arboretum is 80 acres of alphabetical plantings, trial blocks and longterm experiments. It's the largest collection of woody plants in the Northern Great Plains—more than 5,000 species, cultivars and selections, all grown under the same unforgiving conditions the rest of us garden in.

I've toured this "mad science arboretum" more than once, and every time I'm floored by the depth of the research. They test everything: cold hardiness, drought tolerance, disease resistance, soil pH, growth habit—even the basics we argue about in garden clubs. Mulch versus landscape fabric? The science is clear: fabric is terrible. Planting depth? Too deep and you're sentencing the tree to a slow decline.

Every new introduction—including Prairie Expedition®—is trialed here for years before it ever reaches a nursery. If a tree survives Absaraka, it can survive almost anywhere in North Dakota and the upper Midwest. Most nursery tags will list the origin of the species, and when you're shopping for trees, always go with the University of Minnesota or NDSU variety when possible. NDSU occasionally hosts field days and tree walks at the Arboretum. For upcoming dates or to ask about group tours, call the NDSU Department of Plant Sciences at 7012317971.

If you ever get the chance to walk those rows, take it. It's like slipping

20 years ago, June 2006

July 6-8 will mark the 50th anniversary of the McLean County Fair.

Ed Schmidt of Max has served as a volunteer on the fair board since its inception. Schmidt will once again be at the fair on July 6-8, as he was in 1956-57, as one of the original fair board members that each donated \$10 to get the fair started.

The Home Rule Charter, which will implement a 1.5 percent sales tax in Underwood, passed by a margin of 108 yes to 64 no.

In the race for two city commission seats, it was incumbent Roger Britton receiving 153 votes, Leon Weisenburger Jr. received 106 votes and Jason Gregoryk received 64 votes.

McLean County voters approved the issue of building a new county jail in Washburn.

Greg White, Underwood, reported catching a 29-pound 9 and 3/4 ounce brown trout at the Garrison Tailrace.

Members of the First Evangelical Free Church in Underwood gathered on Sunday to wish their interim Pastor Doug Sathren and his wife, Arlyce, farewell.

Family and friends are invited to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Weston and Rowena Johannes June 25 at Faith Evangelical Free Church.

Jenna Lawson and John Hoffman, both Moorhead, Minn., announce their engagement and forthcoming wedding.

Dwight Leidholm, economics, Underwood, has been named to the Minnesota State University Moorhead Dean's List for the 2006 spring semester.

30 years ago, June 1996

The McLean County fairgrounds will be rockin' to the hottest new show band to hit the area Saturday, June 22, as Kid Hollywood and the Wild Cocomuts take the stage on the final night of the fair.

The Underwood School Board approved early retirement applications for Shirley Simenson and Pat Kranz.

Cooperative Power celebrates 40 years at the cooperatives' annual meeting held June 7 in Bloomington, Minn.

40 years ago, June 1986

Great Plains Bible Camp was held at the grounds near Underwood.

Dave Binkley completed a replica of the airplane the Thunderbird Squadron uses for their maneuvers. The plane will be on display at the Minot Air Force Base when the real F-16 Thunderbirds come to put on a show.

Area students attending Business Challenge at Dickinson State College include Kelly Auck, Kelli Benzmilller, Bill Dziuk, Kristina Rime and Missy Sayler. Underwood counselor Geraldine Brenneise is also attending.

Yards of the week were the Delene and Irene Brockel yard and the Larry and Pearl Dziuk yard.

The Underwood Merchant's Women's Softball Team placed third in the Mandan Women's Softball Tournament. Team members include Veronica Johnson, Rachel Wenschlag, Sandy Landenberger, Penny Scheer, Virginia Gnabasik, Deb Hatzenbuhler, Jean Helseth, Cindy Kerzman, Connie Radke, Claudine Pochant, Kay Power, Vicki Benzmilller, Denise Firnekas, Dee Jesser, Thalada Nitschke, Holly Olson and Sandy Busch. Coaches are Mike Wenschlag and Scott Auck.

50 years ago, June 1976

Bids will be opened next Monday night for sewer and water in three of Underwood's proposed development areas. Bids will be opened for the Houser Addition, Repnow First Addition and Mees South Terrace Addition.

Enthusiasm is mounting throughout the county for Underwood's Bicentennial Fair Celebration. Lester Zietz, coordinating the day's activities, hopes the celebration will be the best in McLean County. The dates for the 1976 McLean County Fair have been set for July 2, 3 and 4. July 1, 4-H and Open Class Home Economics exhibits will be entered and judged.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Gutknecht will celebrate their golden wedding anniversary with an open house in the parlors of the Birka Lutheran Church on June 20.

A public bridal shower will be held in honor of Della Malnourie at St. Bonaventure Parish Hall on June 8. Miss Malnourie will be married to Marshall (Pete) Bratz of Coleharbor.

Bob Fransen of UND went 6-11 in the high jump Saturday in the National Collegiate Athletic Association College Division 11 track meet. He placed seventh in the meet. He is the son of the Arvid Fransens, Coleharbor.

Chances are good for Underwood to have a swimming pool. That is the assessment of Max Guenther, president of the city commission. The land for the pools has been appraised and only a final OK is needed before bids can be let.

60 years ago, June 1966

The rural fire department was called to the Hjalmer Swanson farm southwest of Underwood when a tool shed was on fire. Cause of the fire is thought to have been an electric fence.

Mr. and Mrs. Karl Sayler will celebrate their golden wedding anniversary on June 19 with an open house at the Underwood Methodist Church.

Layton Freborg, local contractor, has his crew of men in Turtle Lake

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Deadlines

3 p.m. Monday – classifieds
 10 a.m. Tuesday – advertisements, public notices, news and area announcements