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Dark Horses

John Clayton

A national anthem to never forget

The game hadn't even started at McNair Field and Forest City Owls head coach Matt Hayes was going for the save.

Hayes took two big strides from where he stood just outside the home dugout toward the singer. There was a prolonged silence that occurred somewhere around "the perilous fight" and lasted until, oh, about the end of the War of 1812.

But just as Hayes, who hears the "Star-Spangled Banner" live about 100 times per year, stepped out to offer a reminder, the singer found his voice.

"Sorry, ya'll," he said. And I know the poor guy wanted to be just about anywhere else, like maybe running the Iditarod naked or over in Butner working as Bernie Madoff's press agent.

Then, he started over — and made it through the second time around, his full-on country baritone mixed with a touch of gravel and smidgen of bar-room smoke.

It ended well because folks around here are polite — I've been places, such as Philadelphia, where the cute-as-a-button 8-year-old version of that same guy would have been booed all the way to New Jersey.

In the end, he did remarkably well in his recovery, but it spurred talk and memories in the press box about National Anthems, good and bad.

As a sports writer, I may hear it as many or more times than Hayes in any given year. I've stood for thousands of live and recorded versions all over the country.

Two of the best were in Philadelphia, actually — an A Capella version by Boyz II Men and a lyric-free rendition by pianist Bruce Hornsby and saxophonist Branford Marsalis.

And one at Texas Stadium by a teenager named LeAnn Rimes. Afterward, I remember saying, "Wow, that little girl can sing."

Then, there have been performers who remembered the words, but you wish they hadn't.

Jessica Simpson was supposed to have sung the anthem at the 2004 Indy 500, but the band Aerosmith signed on to sponsor a car to promote its upcoming release of "Just Push Play."

So, former Indianapolis Motor Speedway President Tony George decided to bench Simpson and bring in Aerosmith front man Steven Tyler to sing the National Anthem after Jim Nabors' traditional "Back Home Again in Indiana."

Problem is, George didn't ask me about that or any other decision, but especially that

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Something Good To Eat



Herbalist Michele Tanner pours glasses of herbal tea sweetened using all natural plants from her own garden.

Garrett Byers/Daily Courier



Local woman uses natural herbs for improved health

By ALLISON FLYNN

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RUTHERFORDTON — Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme are more than just lyrics in songs or additives to your foods.

They might also improve your health.

Herbs are nothing new, but discovering how they can affect your health is something that might be confusing or scary to some people. But with the help of an herbalist, you can learn to incorporate them into your diet.

"I have studied anatomy and physiology, pathology and protocols, plant botany, holistic nutrition," said Michele Tanner, a certified clinical herbalist and owner of Michele's Garden. "I can make herbal remedies and can teach you how to cook for health."

Tanner has been a certified herbalist for three years, saying she's always loved "everything herbal." She is certified

by the Appalachia School of Holistic Herbalism and the North Carolina School of Natural Healing Mountain Spirit School of Herbalism, both in Asheville.

An herbalist, she explained, works with doctors to provide information on what you can put into your diet to help with your overall health and well-being.

"Herbs are medicinal and can be gentle, but also profoundly affect a person's well-being," she said.

Herbs are just one facet of holistic medicine, which looks at treating a person as a whole, rather than targeting specific areas.

"This whole model of health is very new," she said.

When a client visits Tanner, they are given an assessment based on questions about their health. The assessment includes what is recommended they eat and do to have

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Garrett Byers/Daily Courier

Michelle Tanner's kitchen is filled with an assortment of natural herbs and extracts used to create her healthy and delicious dishes.



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