

# THE FOREST REPUBLICAN

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## HILES NEWS

Are you catching up on all those summer jobs? The yard work, home maintenance, farm and garden work, and all that other stuff you've meaning to get to when the weather got nice? Me neither! But 'slowly but surely' we have been getting some things done. Rain makes a good excuse not to work too hard, and then, hot weather makes just as good of an excuse. I think I am beginning to understand the concept of slowing down as we age.

Here we are at the end of July already. That would seem to mean half or better of the summer is history. School supply lists and all those supplies are on the store shelves. Kids, better get out there and enjoy the summer—it won't last much longer!

### **Dog Days**

Have you ever wondered why these hot days of summer are called the Dog Days? I used to think it had something to do with the heat making us lazy as an old dog. Hearing some of the bear hunters going by early in the morning and their dogs yelping, eager to get to the hunt leads me to believe those dogs are not lazy at all. They are really into their sport!

So I did a little research about Dog Days. Here's some of what I came up with:

### **The Dog Days of Summer**

Everyone knows that the "dog days of summer" occur during the hottest and muggiest part of the season. Webster defines "dog days" as...

1: the period between early July and early September when the hot sultry weather of summer usually occurs in the northern hemisphere

2: a period of stagnation or inactivity

But where does the term come from? Why do we call the hot, sultry days of summer “dog days?”

In ancient times, when the night sky was unobscured by artificial lights and smog, different groups of peoples in different parts of the world drew images in the sky by “connecting the dots” of stars. The images drawn were dependent upon the culture: The Chinese saw different images than the Native Americans, who saw different pictures than the Europeans. These star pictures are now called constellations, and the constellations that are now mapped out in the sky come from our European ancestors.

They saw images of bears, (Ursa Major and Ursa Minor), twins, (Gemini), a bull, (Taurus), and others, including dogs, (Canis Major and Canis Minor).

The brightest of the stars in Canis Major (the big dog) is Sirius, which also happens to be the brightest star in the night sky. In fact, it is so bright that the ancient Romans thought that the earth received heat from it. Look for it in the southern sky (viewed from northern latitudes) during January.

In the summer, however, Sirius, the “dog star,” rises and sets with the sun. During late July Sirius is in conjunction with the sun, and the ancients believed that its heat added to the heat of the sun, creating a stretch of hot and sultry weather. They named this period of time, from 20 days before the conjunction to 20 days after, “dog days” after the dog star.

The conjunction of Sirius with the sun varies somewhat with latitude. And the “precession of the equinoxes” (a gradual drifting of the constellations over time) means that the constellations today are not in exactly the same place in the sky as they were in ancient Rome. Today, dog days occur during the period between July 3 and August 11. Although it is certainly the warmest period of the summer, the heat is not due to the added radiation from a far-away star, regardless of its brightness. No, the heat of summer is a direct result of the earth's tilt.

The Romans sacrificed a brown dog at the beginning of the Dog Days to appease the rage of Sirius, believing that the star was the cause of the hot, sultry weather.

Dog Days were popularly believed to be an evil time "when the seas boiled, wine turned sour, dogs grew mad, and all creatures became languid, causing to man burning fevers, hysterics, and phrensies" according to Brady's Clavis Calendarium, 1813.

In Ancient Rome, the Dog Days extended from July 24 through August 24 (or, alternatively July 23-August 23). In many European cultures (German, French, Italian) this period is still said to be the time of the Dog Days.

For the ancient Egyptians, Sirius appeared just before the season of the Nile's flooding, so they used the star as a "watchdog" for that event. Since its rising also coincided with a time of extreme heat, the connection with hot, sultry weather was made for all time: "Dog Days bright and clear / indicate a happy year. / But when accompanied by rain, / for better times our hopes are vain."

In recent years, the phrase "Dog Days" or "Dog Days of Summer" have also found new meanings. The term has frequently been used in reference to the American stock market(s).

Typically, summer is a very slow time for the stock market, and additionally, poorly performing stocks with little future potential are frequently known as "dogs."

A casual survey will usually find that many people believe the phrase is in reference to the conspicuous laziness of domesticated dogs (who are in danger of overheating with too much exercise) during the hottest days of the summer. When speaking of "Dog Days" there seems to be a connotation of lying or "dogging" around, or being "dog tired" on these hot and humid days. Although these meanings have nothing to do with the original source of the phrase, they may have been attached to the phrase in recent years due to common usage or misunderstanding of the origin of the phrase.

The feast day of Saint Roch, the patron saint of dogs, is August 16.

## **Calendar and Almanac**

July is National Doghouse Repairs Month and Women's Motorcycle Month.

July 28—National Milk Chocolate Day

July 29—Lasagna Day

July 30—Cheesecake Day

August is American Adventures Month, so plan your adventure now!

August 1—Friendship Day, and Girlfriend's Day, World Wide Web Day, and Sister's Day

## **Easy Lasagna**

Even though it's not the best time to start up the oven, this dish is so yummy that it just might be worth a few extra degrees in the kitchen. Not having to boil the noodles saves some heat and time. Lasagna makes a large amount. If you're not planning on company, divide the ingredients up into a couple of smaller pans and freeze one, well wrapped and labeled, for later. (Thaw overnight in the refrigerator and cook as directed.)

Servings: 12

1 pound lean ground beef

1 (32 ounce) jar spaghetti sauce

32 ounces cottage cheese

3 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

2 eggs

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

2 teaspoons dried parsley  
Salt to taste  
Ground black pepper to taste  
9 lasagna noodles  
1/2 cup water

In a large skillet over medium heat brown the ground beef. Drain grease. Add spaghetti sauce and simmer for 5 minutes.

In a large bowl, mix together the cottage cheese, 2 cups of the mozzarella cheese, eggs, half of the grated Parmesan cheese, dried parsley, salt and ground black pepper.

To assemble, in the bottom of a 9x13 inch baking dish evenly spread 3/4 cup of the sauce mixture. Cover with 3 uncooked lasagna noodles, 1 3/4 cup of the cheese mixture, and 1/4 cup sauce. Repeat layers twice. Top with 3 noodles, remaining sauce, remaining mozzarella and Parmesan cheese. Add 1/2 cup water to the edges of the pan. Cover with aluminum foil.

Bake in a preheated 350 degree F oven for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 10 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

## **Animal Jokes**

### **The Lonely Frog**

A lonely frog, desperate for any form of company telephoned the Psychic Hot line to find out what his future has in store.

His Personal Psychic Adviser advises him, "You are going to meet a beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you."

The frog is thrilled and says, "This is great! Where will I meet her, at work, at a party?"

"No" says the psychic, "in a Biology class."

### **The Mail Carrier**

The mail carrier had a registered letter that needed a signature for a party on his route. Receiving no response to his knock on the front door, he went around to the back door which he found open, except for the screen door. He knocked. A high pitch voice from inside said, "Come in."

Upon entering the kitchen, he was confronted by the largest German Shepard he had ever seen. The dog bared his fangs menacingly, forcing the mail man against the wall. The mail man shouted, "Lady, call off you dog before he eats me alive."

The only response he got was that same high pitch voice coming from the next room saying, "Come in."

Pressing his body against the wall, he slowly worked his way to the door way leading to the next room. Looking around, he saw the room was empty, except for a parrot in a cage. After the threat from the huge dog, he was becoming quite irate and said to the parrot.

"Darn you, don't you know any words besides 'Come in?'" Without a moments hesitation the parrot responded, "Sic him!"

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