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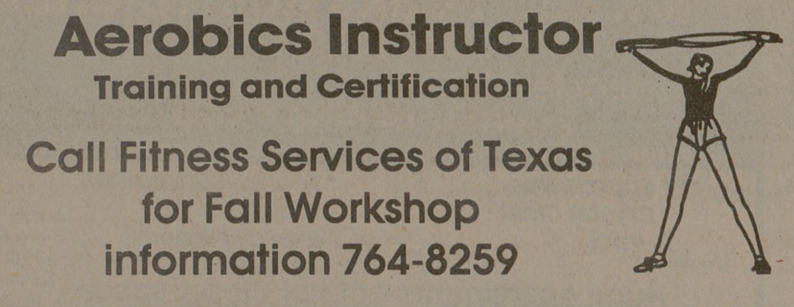

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# Dictionary defines folk expressions

**Associated Press**

BOSTON — There are Texans who call meringue "calf-slobber," Tennesseans who refer to snoring as "calling the hogs" and Wisconsinites who say a suspicious person has "beans up his nose."

Some New Jersey residents suffer "buckwheat itch," supposedly from eating pancakes in summer. In Virginia and North Carolina, firecrackers are called "baby-wakers." To be bow-legged in Kentucky is to be "bandy-shanked."

Those folk expressions and thousands like them now can be found in one place, the Dictionary of American Regional English, which took nearly 100 years from conception to publication.

The first volume of the dictionary, edited by Frederic G. Cassidy, professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin and head of its DARE Institute, recently was published by Harvard University Press and will soon be in bookstores. For $49.95, you get 903 pages covering "a" through "c."

This volume, and four more expected over the next several years, are the results of the first compilation of the quaint, funny, sad, melodious and vulgar strains in American speech.

"You get a sense sometimes that people were trying to outdo each other in coming up with colorful expressions," Cassidy, 77, said.

Food, for example, spawned expressions such as "Cape Cod turkey" for codfish, "Albany beef" for sturgeon, "Connecticut River pork" for shad, "Alaska turkey" for salmon and "Arkansas T-bone" for bacon.

There are scores of local names for fauna and flora, such as the black-eyed Susan which yielded 50 different names. There is the language of children's games, foreign phrases, illnesses and natural phenomena.

There are euphemisms, such as calling an illegitimate child a "catch colt" in parts of the Northwest or warning a woman in the South that her slip is showing by saying her "cotton is low."

There are etymologies. "Cakewalk" or "piece of cake," meaning something easy, has its roots in black dance contests that featured a cake as first prize.

The dictionary also captured words fading from the language. Examples include "old chestnuts," to Northeasterners something that is worn out by use.

The dictionary's foundation is the more than 40,000 expressions culled from local publications by the American Dialect Society, founded in 1889. That work was expanded by Cassidy, whose assistants conducted 1,847-question surveys in 1,00[illegible] communities from 1965 to 1970.

The project got started in earnest when Cassidy began badgering the society to make good on its promise to publish such a dictionary.

"I kept asking when it was going to be done," he said. "They asked me how to do it. I wrote an article for them on how I would do it . . . and then found myself appointed editor."

That was 1963, and he and Professor Audrey R. Duckert of the University of Massachusetts set to work.

The final volume will include condensations of the more than 2 million responses to the questionnaire.

# Franciscan Sisters make altar bread

**Associated Press**

LITTLE FALLS, Minn. — In a small room, off the corner of the cafeteria at St. Francis Convent, six members of the Franciscan Sisters carry on a tradition that was started nearly a century ago.

Using the simplest of ingredients — flour and water — they make altar bread. For Catholics, the thin, crisp wafers will become the "Body of Christ" once they're blessed at a church.

What may look like a small operation is, in fact, a $3.5 million business for the Franciscans. The tiny bakery produces about 20,000 Communion wafers a day.

Since its beginning in the late 1800s, members of the Little Falls Franciscan community have been rising early in the morning and heading for the bakery to make sure that the Communion wafers are fresh.

According to Sister Anne Furstahl, head baker and assistant administrator at the convent, altar bread is mailed to 150 locations in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Besides regular shipments to Catholic parishes, the Franciscans also ship altar bread to three Episcopalian and five Lutheran churches.

Making flour and water into altar bread begins at the mixer where the two ingredients are combined into a thin slurry. The Catholic church dictates that only these two ingredients be used in the wafers.

After the batter is thoroughly mixed and left to thicken slightly, two sisters ladle two scoops of the mixture onto hot griddles. Another griddle squishes the batter flat and an automatic timer clicks off 60 seconds as the women clean the edges of overflow batter.

Out of the presser come shiny sheets of cooked batter barely one-sixteenth-inch thick. After steaming in specially designed cupboards for up to six hours to soften the crisp sheets, it is time for the cutting.

While cooking, the sheets have been imprinted with 3-inch circles. These are the hosts that will be used by priests during the Communion sacrament. Each contains a neatly embossed religious symbol.

There is an automatic cutter, which punches out eight small hosts with each stroke of its arm. With 104 hosts to a sheet, the numbers quickly add up. Between 18,000 and 20,000 hosts, which will be distributed to parishioners, are cut w[illegible] the automatic cutter each day.

After the baking is completed there are large hosts to be counted and wrapped, small hosts to be packaged by weight, labels to be addressed and scraps to be whisked away in preparation for another day.

In its early years, when the Franciscan Mother house began making altar bread, the hosts were distributed strictly on a donation basis, Sister Anne said. But the costly special equipment and the escalating cost of electricity forced the sisters to begin charging for the hosts several years ago. Small white hosts now cost $7 a thousand. Whole wheat is sold for $8 a thousand.

Sister Anne estimates that there are about [illegible] bakeries in the United States which make altar bread for shipment all over the world. But the sisters say they are happy being a small operation.

# Collector produces key chains with scorpions preserved in resin

**Associated Press**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Aided by a black light, Darwin "Tex" Alldredge prowls the desert, tweezers and tongs in hand, looking under brittle bushes and between the twigs of mesquite.

He's collecting scorpions. Or black widow spiders. Or tarantulas.

If he is quick enough, and all conditions are right — such as a breeze blowing and no moonlight — he can gather between 100 and 250 of the fast-moving arachnids each night.

Embedding them in resin, he turns them into paper weights, belt buckles, bola ties and key chains.

Alldredge, 72, makes a nightly routine of finding a spot in the desert to hunt the elusive scorpions from which he makes these items. He does not hunt black widows nor tarantulas at the same time nor in the same location.

The collector, who takes only Saturday night off, wears a heavy pair of boots, well-worn blue jeans, an old short-sleeved shirt, and baseball cap. He attaches to his waist a gallon-sized plastic milk bottle which has the top cut out. He hand-carries a black light that is hooked up to a motorcycle battery. The battery is placed in a basket and carried over one shoulder.

This night he was looking for small-to medium-sized scorpions. The big ones are left undisturbed to scamper back into their holes.

Off he goes into the desert, usually alone, while his wife, Thelma, who is handicapped as the result of a car accident, sits and waits in the family four-wheel-drive vehicle.

He admits to having been lost at times. So before leaving home base, he puts a bright bug light on top of the jeep so that he will be able to find his way back from the rugged desert ravines.

"If a person got stung, it would only be like a wasp sting," he said. "I've only been stung three or four times in the past six years."

He explained that the bark scorpion is the only poisonous scorpion of the 11 varieties in Arizona. It is found around the bark of dead trees, such as saguaro cactus, and particularly in the Horseshoe Dam area.

"They are the bad dudes," he added. "If you get stung by one of them you'll know it. They can kill a child.

"Now what you're looking for is a white speck, like a snowball," Alldredge said while he zigzagged through the brush in the cool night. "You're not looking for something with a shape. There's one, see what it looks like?"

What Alldredge was shining his light on had a bright fluorescent quality and appeared as a large white object under the light. Approaching closer, one could make out the segmented body and arched tail, which went up as the scorpion scurried toward Alldredge.

"For all intents and purposes scorpions are blind," he said. "They know someone is near because the earth is shaking from our walking. They are an eating machine and out looking for gnats, but they'll eat anything. And they don't get far from their dens."

Alldredge spotted a small white object that looked like a piece of string and quickly stooped down to pluck the scorpion before it could scamper away.

"I need a lot of the small ones," he said. "I call them prairie dogs when they go into their holes. I caught 224 the other night when I got lost. It took me 30 minutes to find the car."

Alldredge sorts the scorpions by size and places them in alcohol, which kills and preserves them.

After this process is complete, he stretches them out to dry on boards before embedding them in resin.

"The alcohol replaces the water in their body and then I stretch them out on the boards," he said. "The hardest part is getting them to spread out."

For eight years Alldredge has been hunting scorpions out in the desert and plucking black widows from alley fences around Scottsdale. He began his hunting as a hobby and it has turned into a cottage business.

He and his wife moved to Scottsdale from Illinois because the warm climate gives Thelma Alldredge relief from the injuries she sustained in the accident.

# Newlyweds celebrate by crashing cars

**Associated Press**

WESTBORO, Mass. — Some couples drink champagne or dance when they tie the knot. Frances McLain and Kevin Li[illegible] say celebrated by smashing up their cars.

The wedding took place before 4,000 fans at Westboro Speedway Sunday night, just before the Sterling couple took part in a demolition derby, where drivers bang their cars into their opponents' until only one car can move.

The groom, a telephone technician, drove a black car with a tuxedo painted on the hood. The bride drove a white sedan with lace trim around the hood and a bridal veil hanging inside the back windshield. Both cars had gold rings painted on the left front tires.

The bride, a medical secretary, wore a silver-gray jumpsuit while the groom was dressed in black jeans, black running shoes, white shirt, black leather vest and black bow tie.

The couple exchanged vows in front of the announcer's booth and after a quick kiss, the couple got back into their cars and the derby commenced.


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