

Succulent horse-saliva icicles

Don Martin has many fond memories of growing up in Lancaster City in the 1940s.

Neighborhood men sitting on their front steps on hot Friday nights, listening to the fights on the radio and drinking Ballantine Ale.

Gorgeous George and Argentine Rocco wrestling on the screen of the first TV on Martin's block.

Watching horse-drawn delivery trucks, especially from Queen Dairy, with their smart horses who knew all the homes on the route and where to stop.

"We especially looked forward to winter, when we were granted one of our favorite treats," writes Martin, of Willow Street.

"The horse's saliva froze while dripping down from their jowls, forming tasty, salty icicles which we enjoyed with relish. That was before we had snow cones, and better. Don't believe me? Check with any of those who grew up on the 600 block of East Marion Street"

Salty saliva icicles -- with relish?

That takes the cake.

And so Don Martin wins this year's Liars Contest award -- an autographed copy of this column, suitable for framing, or not.

The Scribbler received a dozen entries this year -- a record number -- and some of the runners-up are very good.

Here are the best of them:

Michael Carey, of Lancaster, comments on a popular aspect of the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

"The sheep-to-shawl contest is all very fine," he writes, "but out in Somerset County, where I grew up, things are tougher. My mother and her sister are still mighty proud of the year they won the sheep-to-bomber-jacket contest.

Dr. Paul Ripple, also of the city, has a whopper. He says Abe Zook, an Amish man who lived south of Quarryville (near the Slumbering Groudhog Lodge, of which Ripple is a member) did some experimenting with a diesel engine.

Zook found that by using a much larger flywheel he could cut fuel consumption 30 percent.

By using a carburetor, he cut consumption another 30 percent.

He used a manifold to cut consumption yet another 30 percent.

Finally, by using a much larger piston rod, he reduced consumption an additional 30 percent.

"Now," concludes Ripple, "at 120 percent less fuel consumption, he had to bail out the fuel tank once a month."

Bob Horst, of 1568 Linden Ave., winner of the Scribbler's first Liars Contest, submits another Amish-related fib.

"To placate angry county natives," he writes, "slot machines for the convention center are being manufactured by Amish craftsmen in Bird-in-Hand."

Lucy Rankin, of Columbia, claims that Lady Gaga and her local boyfriend were spotted at Kitchen Kettle Village in Intercourse, helping to make whoopie pies.

"When they finished," Rankin says, "Lady G. was heard to say, 'Now, let's go make some whoopie!'"

Donald Pentz and Explorer Scout Post 1863 provide a prodigious prevarication. It's too long to relate in its entirety, but here's the essence.

The real reason the Army of Northern Virginia invaded Pennsylvania in 1863 was to obtain chocolate to make s'mores.

Rebel spies crossed the Susquehanna River and obtained chocolate from Hershey and Lititz. They carried it back to Confederate troops camped at Wrightsville.

The troops built campfires to toast chocolate, marshmallow and Graham cracker S'mores.

The prevailing winds blew sparks from those fires onto the Columbia-Wrightsville bridge, which burst into flames.

So the bridge was burned not by Union troops trying to prevent Confederates from crossing into Lancaster County, but by Confederate troops cooking S'mores.

"As we all know," conclude Pentz and the Explorers, "the Southern sweet-tooth is seldom slaked."