



Happy Saturday, Farm Friends! And Welcome to 2025!

We're trying to get back into the swing of things after our Christmas Break. The days haven't been as structured -- which is good -- but it does get a bit confusing as to exactly what day of the week it is! Do you ever have that problem?

During our break, we've tried to strike a balance between getting work done and enjoying a few special seasonal treats. Of course, we had to kick off 2025 with our traditional New Year's meal of collards (with chipotle peanut sauce), black-eyed peas and cornbread. Here's hoping that we ate enough good luck to keep our pockets stuffed with greenbacks and coins (but probably just seed packets, baling twine, pieces of hay...).



We've also watched a ton of movies (nearly every night!), munched on popcorn and even did a puzzle -- not sure when we did that last, but this puzzle was a gift from Ray's sister about 3 years ago. It was a lot of fun!



One of the coolest things we did was to visit the [Spectacular Holiday Blooms](#) display at the [Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden](#) in Kernersville. Despite the drizzly, foggy evening, we were amazed by the "flowers" that had been crafted from recycled plastic bottles.





In addition to the flowers, there was even a Vegetable Garden with tomatoes, cucumbers (pictured here) along with corn, pumpkins and sunflowers.



Volunteers have put in over 5,000 hours over the past 6 years recycling, preparing, and assembling plastic bottles into works of art for the Holiday Blooms.

We got all kinds of ideas about how to create plum grannies out of old bottles and maybe even a Christmas veggie garden display at the farmhouse. This event will be on our Holiday rotation from now on!

It hasn't been all fun and games during the break. The cows kept fussing that they hadn't had a round bale in a l-o-n-g time, so Santa Ray decided to oblige -- twice. Mia is now so fat that she can hardly lie down or get up.



Cheryl's been hanging out in the greenhouse kicking off our early seeding. Our first tomato seeds were planted on December 26 -- earliest ever! They will be planted in a high tunnel the

first week in March. 'Maters on the market table in May, anyone?



Off to Italy!

We are sad to be losing our neighbors and fellow Cobblestone Farmers Market vendors, Sandra Sarlinga and Fabian Lujan of [Piedmonte Provisions](#). But we are happy that they are pursuing their dream of owning an olive grove and farm in Italy and producing olive oil (which they'll ship to the US!). They are on a mission to produce the highest quality, organic olive oil—grown with respect for the land, harvested by hand, and pressed with centuries-old techniques.



Their new business is [Alma Sabina](#) -- the Soul of Sabina. Sabina is located northeast of Rome and has cultivated olive trees for centuries. Known as the origin of ancient Rome's olive oil, Sabina has continuously produced this product for nearly 3,000 years. Its rich terroir—with a Mediterranean climate, well-drained soil, and centuries-old olive trees—yields a complex, balanced oil renowned for its quality. In 1996, Sabina became the first Italian olive oil to earn DOP status, a testament to its heritage and excellence.

Sandra and Fabian, along with their son, Fermin, fly to Rome on January 16 and are taking very few possessions -- as you would imagine, shipping costs are out of this world! So to lighten their load, they are having a **huge moving sale on Saturday January 11 from 9-noon** at their

house (1077 Flat Shoals Road, King -- next-door to our farmhouse) -- all kinds of treasures await! Come bid farewell to our friends and wish them well on their new adventure!

That's all we've got for you this week, Friends!

Before we leave, we want to express our sorrow about the passing of President Jimmy Carter on Sunday. He was truly a great person who cared so much about the plight of his fellow human beings across the world. His courageous leadership on peace, human rights and the health of all people was an example that more world leaders should follow. From his beginnings as a humble Georgia farmer to his Presidency to his amazing work to improve the lives of so many, President Carter was role model for us and so many others.

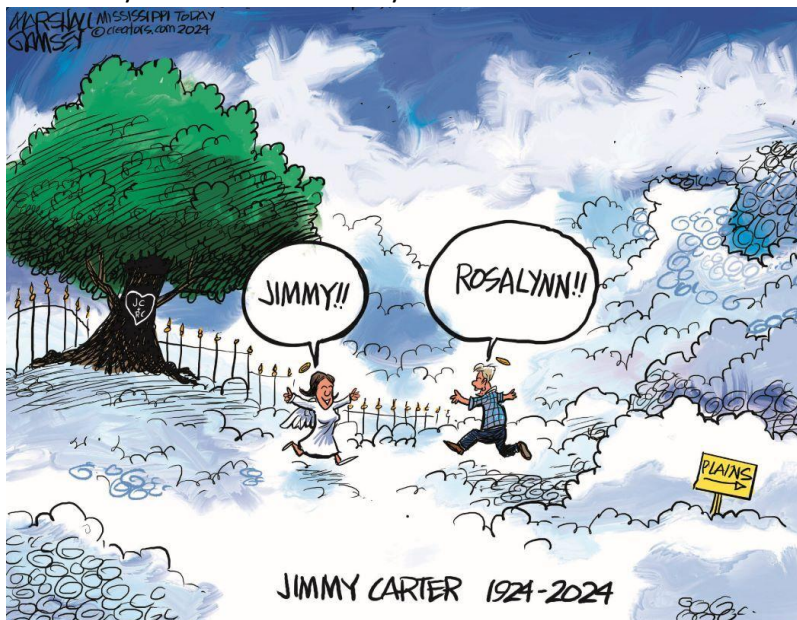
The words of Paige Alexander, the Chief Executive Officer of The Carter Center rang true for us:

Today, we lost a cherished friend, inspiring mentor, and courageous leader with the passing of former President Jimmy Carter. The world lost a great humanitarian and man of integrity, vision, and depth.

The Carter Center will continue to honor President Carter's vision and memory by dedicating ourselves to the work he loved so much. I know that you will, too.

President Carter touched everyone he encountered, from fellow peanut farmers to heads of state to you and me. If you would like to help celebrate his legacy and share your memories, I invite you to sign the official online condolence book at [JimmyCarterTribute.org](https://www.jimmycartertribute.org).

Let's all try to be more like Jimmy.



Cartoonist: Marshall Ramsey from Mississippi Today via creators.com

Be kind to your neighbors.
Until next week,
Cheryl & Ray

