*Wok & Roll by Peter Kwong, (Frederic) Inter-County Leader*

**Even in cold, snowy weather, backyard bird feeder offers entertainment**

After a surprisingly warm Christmas, it seems we’ve gotten back to true winter weather. Brrrr! It seems like just a few weeks ago I was bragging how good it felt basking in the 60-degree weather. Oh, how time flies!

We have bird feeders around our snow-covered yard, as my wife is an enthusiastic bird-watcher. We had golden finches and hummingbirds zipping around in the summertime, but in cold weather, there are downy woodpeckers, blue jays, juncos, chickadees, cardinals, nuthatches and many more.

As if by magic, the bird feeder is like a main terminal for all birds. Without any directions, all birds would follow their feeding orders and wait for their turns. While a certain species may go full-force to get their shares, other birds hang on the branches nearby, patiently waiting for their turns. Once in a great while, two or three birds argue for their seniorities, as to who should be first to feed. But the matter would soon settle as there are plenty of slots indeed, for all to enjoy a feast.

My office window faces the lake and I get to watch all the different birds munching on the seeds hanging on the feeders. Every two or three days, I have to refill the feeders with more seeds and suet. For some reason, all birds love the suet. It is kind of expensive, so to speak (yes, cost more than my beer). But it is our entertainment and it is cheaper than going to a theater.

I’ve learned to like animals as my wife is an animal lover. I still can’t cook roast duck, rack of lamb or venison in the house. Heaven forbid, having Bambi in the oven. We have two cats, down from three, three birds, down from seven, and 15, plus or minus a few, tropical fish in our home. A happy family indeed.

Anyway, we had problems with all the squirrels invading our bird feeders. No matter what I do to block their feeding habits, they’ve outsmarted me. I put on a “squirrel-proof” feeder, just to find them hanging upside down, feeding on it with a smile. They make that giggling and laughing sound that drives me nuts. I was even thinking of getting a squirrel gun and shooting them. Or hire Geezer Bob’s grandson, he could shoot them with bow and arrows. What a guy.

After many tries, I finally invested in a dome that goes inside the pole where you hang the feeder. My sweet revenge. I saw the little squirrel jumping to the feeder, just to hit the dome and fall off of the rail. After a few more tries of jumping up, getting blocked and falling off, he finally subsided. I guess I don’t know how that makes me feel — at least I’m smarter than a squirrel.

I’d never seen snow until I came to the States. It was the most sensational feeling to walk on a snow patch, to touch and feel the snowflakes, and hear the squishing sound beneath my feet. Now that the snow is accumulating, the old senses have lingered, how beautiful and how wonderful it feels. We have the tallest pine tree on our lake. Eagles rest on the higher branches and even the wild turkeys perch on the lower twigs, squawking for their companions to join them.

For whatever reason, the snow never blocks the moon from shining through. I often wake up at 3 or 4 a.m., just to notice that our front yard is glowing with pure white light, so soft and smooth. I would walk out on the porch in my pajamas and feel the presence of winter. Cold, yes. Peaceful, yes. Serenity, yes, yes, yes.

Standing there and staring at the sky, I forget about the cold. I enjoy just feeling the feeling of being there with nature and with the environment. There is a certain calm and peace that one doesn’t sense living in a cement forest with colorful streetlights, the noise of passing automobiles and the distant trains passing by or the landing of another aircraft in the wee hours.

And with the cold weather returning, I couldn’t help but think about these warm drinks. Enjoy!

**Keoki coffee**

Fill up a cup with 4 oz coffee or hot chocolate. Add 1 oz brandy and 1/2 oz coffee liqueur. Add a dab of whipped cream on top and there you have it.

**Hot cocoa nip**

Fill a cup with 4 oz coffee or hot chocolate. Add 1 oz brandy and 1/2 oz peppermint schnapps. Add a dab of whipped cream on top.