

Each individual has, I suppose, daily responsibilities and decisions that are unique to that particular person. As similar as we humans are, each of us is also unlike every other person in some way. And, as we go about our daily lives, I am guessing that most of us are absorbed in those small details that are our own.

I thought about this as I went to the root cellar to get potatoes for dinner. My wondering began even before I came to the door leading from our warm basement to the little stone-floored room where we keep potatoes, onions, and carrots, as well as pails of other staple ingredients.

On this morning when it is minus 17 Fahrenheit, I was glad that I had left the door between the basement and the root cellar cracked a bit, allowing just a smidgen of heat to penetrate that chilly, humid space. It wouldn't do to freeze those potatoes!

Then, after I had gathered up the tubers for today's meal and stashed them in the upturned hem of my fleece pullover—rather like women of another generation who used their aprons as bags or pails when carrying eggs, vegetables from the garden, or perhaps, apples for a pie—I brought the potatoes up to the kitchen sink and began to peel them.

It is a decision every day that we eat potatoes—and that is probably at least five days out of every seven—what variety to prepare. I would guess that this choice is one most people would find unusual.

It may not be of any importance in the history of the world, but it does matter when preparing a meal. With one potato variety, I learned this unpleasantly. In fact, it was that same kind of tuber I was peeling today. The name of this potato is Satina. They are a slightly yellow tuber, not as bright as Yukon Gold, but not pure white like our old standby Onaway. I love Satina potatoes now, but I did not at first. The first year we grew them, I found that they cooked more quickly than other varieties, and if even slightly overcooked, become mushy and watery. For awhile, I avoided them, using them only for soup or some other recipe where “cooking up” didn't matter so much. But, then, I found that if I were careful and took them off the stove just on the verge of being completely cooked, they made the most appealing “smashed potatoes” of all the kinds we grow.

So, choosing which potatoes to bring up from the root cellar, while of no importance in the world, does make a difference in the quality of our meals. The Butte russets are for baking, for regular cooking, for oven fries, for mixing with other vegetables to roast. The Onaways are for general use and are the ones from which I begin to steal by July 4th every year, reaching under the largest plants to extract the marble-sized tubers. The Red Marias are good cooked, baked, fried, and mashed. The French fingerlings are the potatoes I choose when I want to make some kind of fancy dish. The small, red, slightly rosy-fleshed are as good to look at as they are to eat.

I don't have to decide what to wear to work each morning. I don't have to warm up a vehicle in this cold weather. I do not need to worry about school or packing lunches. It is of no concern to the larger world if my hair looks terrible after I gave myself a trim. But, I do have to decide what kind of potatoes to

cook.

On the list of “problems” that are definitely of the “First World” kind, my potato decisions are even more frivolous than most. But they are still part of my daily life.

On a larger and much more important note, once again our Congressman John Molenaar of Michigan’s Fourth District has sorely disappointed many of us. He has not surprised us, though. He did not have the courage to vote with eleven other Republicans in joining Democrats in stripping committee assignments from the QAnon Representative Marjory Taylor Greene. Another Shame on You, Mr. Molenaar! One of your Michigan Republican colleagues did have the courage to vote to remove this advocate of conspiracy theories from positions on the Education and Budget committees. Thank you, Congressman Fred Upton. You could not stomach Greene’s non-apology for disbelieving the school shootings, and I would guess that you were outraged to see the visual threats made by Greene toward several Congresswomen of color. Molenaar, I guess, just doesn’t care.