

A TROLIC IN MEXICO

BREAKING THE PINATA DURING THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL.

This Month's Proving Pastime is the Great Social and Fun Making Feature of the Season—Breaking and Filling the Olla.

Christmas in Mexico is not the typical Christmas of cold and snow and ice, but one of bright, warm sunshine, cloudless blue skies, flowers in profusion, trees in full foliage and a life of out-of-doors.

At least a week before Christmas in the principal streets of Mexico arches are erected from sidewalk to sidewalk, festooned with wreaths of flowers and bunting in the national colors—red, white and green.

In every Mexican house great preparations are made for what is called the "pinata." Every child has his or her own pinata and saves the contents for weeks and months ahead.

The pinata is really an earthenware utensil which is in general use for cooking. It is called in common parlance an olla and is of brown pottery some-thing like the old-fashioned earthen-ware crocks used in the north before enamel ware became the fad.

The pinatas are large or small, as the purse of the purchaser permits. They are round, pot bellied and very large at the top. They are sold from door to door on the streets and in the markets. They cost only 10, 15 or 20 centavos, but the olla is the least expensive part of the game.

The body of the olla for a woman is covered with tissue paper then a crinkled paper dress is fashioned; then a bodice is built up drawn to represent a loose white waist, and above this is placed a false face. The face is made with black paper, braided into one long plait at the back, as the women wear their hair in Mexico. Sometimes a white tannana headpiece is made of the lace paper used by bakers and confectioners.

A flower pinata is decorated with large paper flowers in every color of the rainbow. Red, white and green ribbons, forming long streamers, and silver and gold tinsel, glass balls and colored lights all help to make the flower pinata very beautiful. The possibilities for dressing these pinatas are endless. In a large family the mother and daughters have their own pinatas, and great secrecy is maintained in the decoration of the olla. It is the aim of each to devise an original dressing for the pinata as possible, and it can be made a very extravagant ornament.

After the olla is decorated to the taste it is filled. The filling consists of peanuts, hazel nuts, hard candies, like marbles, and all kinds of Mexican delicacies. These delicacies are candied fruits, nut paste, etc.

Christmas night the pinatas are carried in great state into the sala and suspended from the ceiling one at a time. All the relatives of the family are present, and as cousins of the fifth and sixth degree are recognized and children are very numerous there is generally a large gathering. They all sit very demurely on chairs ranged in a row around the walls of the room.

One person is constituted master of ceremonies, the eldest son or daughter of the house. He or she stands in the middle of the room. Near by is a jar or umbrella stand filled with alpacos canes or sticks. When everything is ready a child or grown person is selected and called by name. She comes forward and is blindfolded.

Then the fun begins. The person blindfolded is turned round and round until she loses all knowledge of where the pinata hangs. A cane is put in her hands, and she is told to hit the pinata and try to break it. She is given three chances. If she fails to hit it she sits down amid laughter and ridicule. If she hits it without breaking it she is entitled to a small prize.

And so it goes on, one after another being called up, blindfolded and given a cane and three chances to break the pinata. Finally one more fortunate than the rest succeeds in giving a hard enough blow, and, crash, the pinata falls to the ground in hundreds of bits, and its contents are scattered far and wide.

A wild scramble ensues. Everybody rushes forward to gather as much of the spilled contents as possible. The fortunate breaker of the pinata gets a handsome prize and is awarded the seat of honor. He or she sits down and is debarrred from another trial at breaking another pinata. As soon as the confusion dies down and order is somewhat restored another olla is hung up and the same routine goes through. So the fun continues until the last pinata is broken, and then the prizes are awarded.

The pinata party is the great social and fun making feature of the Christmas season. After the pinatas have been broken and a supper has been served there follows dancing, or a traveling company of Indians from the mountains is brought in to sing and dance in native costume.

These traveling Indians are somewhat like the singing bands which go around at Christmas time from house to house in England, Germany, France and Italy. They have been known and popular in Mexico from time immemorial. The are much in demand during the Christmas holiday season.—Kansas City Star.

Love is never afraid of overwork.—Chicago Tribune.

HUTTON'S ONE RECIPE.

It Included a Paper Cutter, Ink Eraser and Rubber Bands.

Perhaps the most ingenious and the most original of all schemes for producing autographs was from a lady in a western town. She was raising funds for the building and support of a public library, and she had conceived the idea of issuing a volume to be called "The Authors' Recipe Book." Authors from all over the country, the most distinguished of authors—always authors with a capital A—had been good enough to send her a list of the favorite dishes of their own construction, with their method of making them.

The cookbook was one of the many forms of literature to which the recipient had never turned his attention. He had no more idea of cooking than he had of milking a cow or of harnessing a horse or of setting a hen or of building a dynamo. He did not even care what was cooked for him so long as it contained none of the ingredients of tripe and none of the essence of tomato. But he was asked to contribute a paper, which she would have reproduced in facsimile, stating what he could prepare most to his liking upon a kitchen range or in a chafin dish, with its manner of procedure. This quite nonplused him until he bethought himself of one particular and peculiar delicacy in the evolution of which he could safely trust his reputation as an expert. In reply, for which he received no thanks, he said:

"Take a long paper cutter; attach to the same by means of rubber bands, and securely, an ink eraser; insert the ink eraser firmly into a marshmallow plug and hold the same over a student's lamp or study fire until the marshmallow begins to sizzle, drops into the ashes, puts out the light or burns your hand. And eat while hot!"

He has never seen a copy of "The Authors' Recipe Book"—Laurence Hutton in Critic.

BULGING GUN BARRELS.

The Gun That Is Wrought by Careless Handling.

I have sold guns for ten years, and in that time four of them have had their barrels bulged, one by snow, one by dirt, one by sand and one by something else getting into it. One man crawling through a fence got a little snow in the muzzle. He could not remove it with his finger, so concluded to wait and shoot it out, which he did, but he found a bulge like a pulley's eye on the end of the barrel. Another got some earth in the muzzle and shot it out, and, he, too, found the same kind of a bulge on the end of his gun.

Another fired his gun at ducks, which knocked him over on his back and fairly got away from him. When he picked up the gun he found a narrow raised band around the barrel fourteen inches from the muzzle. In this case a wad had probably lodged there. This customer thinks the manufacturers ought to give him a new set of barrels. I tell him if the barrels had not been good ones it would have been a burst instead of a bulge, which might have maimed or killed him. Another man lying on a point brought down a duck with a broken wing which scurried for the water. The man ran and struck the duck with the muzzle of the gun and in so doing got sand in it. He blew most of it out and shot out the rest of it. Well, after that shot he found a little blister two inches from the muzzle about the size of a man's little finger.

Moral.—Do not shoot obstructions of any kind out of your gun if you value your life or gun.—Uncle Dan in Amateur Sportsman.

Something Wanted.

A bachelor, old and cranky, was sitting alone in his room. His toes with the goat were aching, and his face was overspread with gloom, no little ones' shouts to disturb him—from noises the house was free. In fact, from cellar to attic 'twas as still as still could be. No medical aid was lacking; his servants answered his orders and supplied him with everything. But still there was something wanted, which he could not command—the kindly words of compassion, the touch of a gentle hand. And he said, as his brow grew darker and he rang for the hiring nurse, "Well, marriage may be a failure, but this is a jolly sight worse."

"The Gentleman," said Cardinal Newman, "carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast—all clashing of opinion, all collision of feeling—his great concern being to make every one at his ease and at home. He guards against unreasonable allusions or topics which may irritate. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort. He is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or unfair in his disputes, never takes an unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments."

Their Only Chance.

A party of soldiers was taken to the shooting range for the first time. The men first fired at a target 500 yards away, and not one hit it. They were next tried at a target 200 yards away, and still every one missed. They were at last tried at one just 100 yards away, but not one hit it. "Attention!" thundered the drill sergeant. "Fix bayonets! Charge! It's your only chance!"—Kansas City Independent.

Need Never Reprehend Himself.

"What would did her father send after he had found out about your employment?" "Oh, he wrote me a very kind letter, saying he was glad we'd taken that course, as it relieved him of the necessity of giving his consent and having it on his mind all the rest of his life."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Sympathy.

"Have you congratulated our hostess on her birthday?" "No," answered Miss Cayenne; "I have condoled with her."—Washington Star.

The Situation.

Mrs. Knicker—Does your cook know her place? Mrs. Becker—That's just the trouble; she knows any number of them.—Harper's Bazar.

ORIENTAL PEOPLE.

Face of the Women and Classic Drapery of the Men.

Passing us occasionally, going to Jerusalem with butter and eggs and little jars of leban that showed their thick, creamy throats as they were held up to us, were small companies of women in single file. As one blue procession went by the leader called to us: "Why should you ride and we walk? Why is your lot better than ours?" Given the opportunity for leisurely argument, we could not by any philosophy have made satisfactory answer. We could only admit the fact as they saw it and recognize the universal world plaint of discontent.

They carry themselves, these women, like figures on an antique frieze. As they stride along, holding in sure balance on their heads their jars and baskets of homely produce, they tread the stony paths with the grace and largeness of action that we of the occidnt have grown to regard as belonging only to the age of Praxiteles.

The men are also admirable in the simplicity of their gestures, the big lines of their attitudes, the swing of their draperies. I saw a youth fling his mantle over his shoulder and fold it about him exactly in the manner of the classic Greek sculptural in his finely unconscious pose. God save the day when these sons of Canaan clothe their limbs in our ungainly garments.—Metropolitan Magazine.

OPEN AIR TREATMENT.

Reasons For Its Good Results in Cases of Consumption.

The advantages of the open air treatment for consumptives may be thus briefly summarized: The patient exposed continuously to fresh air gains in appetite, assimilates his food better, sleeps more soundly and awakens more refreshed. Free exposure to air is the best antipyretic. Sweating at night, formerly so common a symptom, usually ceases. Colds are practically unknown among patients leading an open air life. Secondary infection, on account of the comparative freedom of the air from micro organisms, is much less likely to occur. Tolerance of outside air is very quickly established, and no one who has tried the open air life will willingly go back to the former conditions of stuffiness. I have never seen any one made worse by exposure to fresh air. Even during a thick London fog patients got on better lying in bed on a balcony or in rooms with windows wide open and a good fire burning than when attempts are made to shut out the fog by keeping the windows shut.—Dr. H. W. G. Mackenzie in London Lancet.

RELIGIOUS TATTOOING.

A Custom That Is In Vogue in One Part of Italy.

In the "vanity" section of a museum at Florence there is an interesting collection of blocks used for what is called "religious tattooing" among Italian peasants of the district included between the Atlantic, Umbria and the Adriatic.

Peasants in these parts at work with shirt sleeves rolled up display a Christian symbol of some sort or a text tattooed in blue ink on their brown skin. This has been imprinted on the occasion of some special festival.

A wooden block, is pressed upon the tightly drawn skin to mark the outlines of the design. This is then punctured, and a blue ink is rubbed into the wounds, which usually heal in about twenty-four hours. The custom, which is essentially Christian, is in commemoration of the branding of St. Francis, who founded a monastery close to Loreto.—London Telegraph.

Tree That Turns to Stone.

There is a tree that grows in Mexico called the ejido, or stone tree. It is of enormous proportions, both in circumference and height. It has a number of branches spreading out widely and carrying leaves of a yellowish green color. The wood is extremely hard and easily worked in a green state. It is not given to either warping or splitting. The most remarkable thing about it is that after being cut the wood gets gradually harder, and in the course of a few years it is absolutely petrified whether left in the open air or buried in the ground. From this timber houses can be built that would in a few years become completely fire-proof and would last as long as though built of stone.

The Lobster's Advantage.

The lobster has been endowed by nature with two gifts which go far to offset the evils attending his lot. One is the ability to fight early, often and all the time if necessary, and the other is the ability to grow a new member—an eye, a leg or a claw—whenever the original is lost in the fortunes of war or by reason of any domestic unpleasantness. It is these two gifts which enable him to grow up and become a useful member of society. Most of his members being secondhand, so to speak, by the time he is really grown.—Four Track News.

Bad Effect of Bitters.

Luckily absinth is not much drunk in England, but other bitters are, some that are only less injurious. Your readers should know that all bitter tonics, habitually indulged in, are apt to do harm—to depress, not exhilarate. Such tonics should be taken rather as medicines than as everyday drinks. You could bring yourself to melancholy by means of gentian, quassa or columba as well as by wormwood.—Doctor in London Mail.

How She Saved Trouble.

"Does your janitor attempt to show his authority?" "No," answered Mr. Flatts. "He didn't have to show his authority. I started in by giving him to understand that I fully recognized it without any argument."—Exchange.

The Logical Cure.

"Did you ever have insomnia?" "Sure!" replied the man who pretends to know it all. "What did you do for it?" "Just slept it off."—Houston Post.

Women are said to make excellent postmasters. Kind of know how to look after the mail, as it were.—New York Mail.

REAPED AS HE SOVED.

The Crop That Was Raised by Melsionier's Clever Gardener.

Melsionier, like many other celebrities, had a passion for gardening. His gardener, an accomplished botanist, knew to perfection the seeds of every plant, and his master had often tried in vain to throw him off his guard.

"This time I have him," the artist remarked to a party of friends at the dinner table. And he showed them a packet containing the dried roe of a herring. He then sent for the gardener.

"Do you know this seed?" Melsionier inquired.

The gardener carefully scrutinized the grains.

"Why not?" he said at last. "They are the seeds of the 'Polpas Dananas,' a very rare tropical plant."

"How long will they be coming up?" Melsionier asked, with a chuckle of suppressed exultation.

"About a fortnight," was the reply.

Two weeks later the guests were again assembled at Melsionier's table, and after dinner the gardener was announced.

"M. Melsionier," the man said, "the seed has just come up."

"Ah, you surprise me!" the artist exclaimed as he rose and led the way into the garden to examine the botanical phenomenon.

The gardener lifted a glass shade and disclosed to view a small bed with three rows of pickled herrings' heads peeping out of the earth. Everybody laughed. Melsionier dismissed the gardener on the spot, but took him on again next day.

THE DANCE IN SPAIN.

It is an Essential Part of the Life of the People.

Dancing is a universal instinct with Spanish women. The great annual feria at Seville is largely an orgy of dancing. As evening approaches everywhere one begins to hear the sound of castanets and to see the graceful movements of the seguidilla, the universal Andalusian dance.

But the fundamental instincts of the Spaniard for dancing and the serious and profound way in which it expresses the temperament of the people are perhaps shown by nothing else so much as by the existence of religious dancing in Spain. At the time of St. Thomas of Villaneuva, bishop of Valencia, it was customary to dance before the sacred elements in the churches of Seville, Toledo, Jerez and Valencia. Religious dancing continued to be common in Catalonia and in Roussillon the most Spanish of the French provinces up to the seventeenth century.

But a real and unique survival of religious dancing is the dance of the seises in Seville cathedral, where the choristers, wearing the same costume as they were 400 years ago, perform a dance to the accompaniment of castanets in the space between the high altar and the choir.

Dancing is something more than an amusement in Spain. It is a part of that solemn ritual which enters into the whole life of the people.—Twentieth Century House.

Young Hunter's Hard Luck.

"Some years ago," said a hunter, "when I lived down on the eastern shore of Maryland, where I was born, I had passed a whole day gunning rabbits and had not killed one. On my way home through the woods I met a boy who had a live rabbit. Ashamed to go home empty handed, I gave the boy 25 cents for his rabbit."

"I then said to myself, I will let Mr. Rabbit to a bush and kill him, and the folks at home will say 'I shot a rabbit.' I took a shoestring and fastened the rabbit to a bush and then stood off, took aim and fired. When the gun had stopped kicking I saw Mr. Rabbit flying through the woods. My bullet had cut the shoestring in twain and had set the little animal free."—Baltimore American.

Sword Stands in Churches.

Sword stands came into use in London churches when it became customary to carry the city sword before the lord mayor as he went to church in state. During service the sword was placed in the stand or case provided for it, and in his own church the lord mayor generally had the stand placed conveniently near to or in his family pew. This custom, which is quite common before the end of the sixteenth century, apparently began in the reign of Elizabeth. The state visits to the city churches were discontinued in the majority of Sir R. N. Fowler, 1883.—London Standard.

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No one class of inventions has been so profitable to both the manufacturer and the inventor as musical instruments and appliances for same. Numerous improvements to the piano have been a source of large fortunes, and various devices are at present being continuously applied. Radically new instruments possessing real merit are the inventions needed in this line. The public is always ready to adopt almost anything new in both wind and stringed instruments.—Inventor.

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"Oh! Ouch! Stop that!" yelled Tommy. "Why, Tommy, aren't you ashamed?" exclaimed his mother. "I wouldn't cry like that if it were my hair that was being combed."

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A Mean Trick.

Adèle—Harry is a brute! Estelle—What is the matter now? Adèle—He bought my engagement ring while he was on a trip to Chicago, and I will never be able to find out how much it cost.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Doing is the great thing, for, if, reconstituted, people do what is right they come to like doing it.—Ruskin.

ANIMALS AND SCIENT.

One of the Miracles of Nature That Is Fast Understanding.

One of the most interesting of all the miracles of nature is seen as applied to animals. The subject is neither understood nor explainable. Whether it is a sixth sense or a marvelous development of one of the five is uncertain. Quite likely, however, it has very little relation to that sense which we know as smell.

To the sportsman the quality of scent is extremely important. When the air is dry and the ground hard there is little scent. When the wind is north or east scent is either largely wanting or does not readily diffuse itself. A southerly wind without rain and a westerly wind, if not too rough, are most favorable to it. Of course if the wind is strong it blows the scent away, and severe storms entirely destroy it.

It is very difficult for a dog to follow a scent just after a shower, and it is dispersed by the hot sun as well as by the storm. It is a fact also that scent comes as much from an animal's body as from its feet.

There is no time that a dog will follow a scent better than when the track is made upon white frost. If the frost is thick over the track, of course the scent is buried, but as soon as it begins to disappear the dog follows it easily. During thaws or melting snow scent seems to dissipate rapidly. Sled paths, swamp bottoms, dry wood and ice are all bad for holding or preserving scent, and so are sandy places and of course plowed fields when the feet sink in so deep that the earth is likely to fall over them.

Another peculiar thing about scent is that it generally ceases as soon as the animal is dead. This, at any rate, is the case, and, for that matter, almost all knowledge concerning scent is merely gained by observation and is rather unscientific, or at least haphazard and erratic. It is claimed also that nature often protects animals in the breeding season, so that they give out but little scent. For illustration, the coon gives no scent from spring until about the middle of August, when the young begin to take care of themselves, and their scent increases with their age and size. Both the rabbit and the coon have very little scent, but the fox, deer, moose and elk give out a strong scent and can be followed by a dog long after the track is fresh. Birds give but little scent, and it has been claimed that quail close their feathers closely when the dog is near and thus destroy their scent altogether.

Whether scent as we understand it as applied to animals is the same quality that human beings possess in smelling a flower is uncertain. Just how a dog, for illustration, can distinguish the track of his master from that of some one else or from a score of others perhaps hours after the track has been made is surely one of those marvelous miracles that are so incomprehensible as to elude ordinary speech.—Amateur Sportsman.

Beware the Hard Toothbrush.

"In spite of all that is printed nowadays about the care of the teeth," said an experienced New York dentist, "we should have to go out of business if we depended upon the patronage of men and women who have missed the prime of life. It is a mistake to assume that most of the false teeth are made for old persons. I venture to say that scarcely a day passes that a patient well in the sixties does not come to my office for some slight treatment to an almost perfectly sound set of teeth."

"I have frequently treated men and women past fifty who never had a tooth out but who had two slight cavities that required filling. On the other hand, we are repeatedly called upon to make artificial teeth for very young persons. I attribute it to the use of the hard toothbrush, which is a comparatively modern invention. The use of a hard brush even occasionally is a great mistake. The softest kind of hog's bristles makes the best toothbrush."—New York Press.

British Navy Divers.

Three schools for the instruction of divers are maintained by the British navy. The diving service is composed entirely of volunteers. No man is passed as a candidate who has a short neck, is full bodied or shows a florid complexion. Those suffering from complaints affecting the head or heart or having a sluggish circulation are also excluded. Six weeks of training at a diving school fits a man for open sea work. It is essential to descend and ascend very slowly owing to the effects of the great change of pressure. A man of strong constitution is not advised to ascend faster than two feet a second when the depth does not exceed eighty feet. The men in training are first taken to slight depths, which are gradually increased to a maximum of 120 feet. The normal limit is 150 feet, to which practiced divers often go.

Electric Fans in Winter.

The electric fan is generally associated with hot weather because at that time we are accustomed to resort to its use for cooling and ventilating our offices and living rooms, but it has its uses in cold weather, and in many of-fices and stores it maintains its position throughout the entire year. Its use in winter is principally to secure ventilation, though at times it is very convenient for obtaining a more uniform temperature throughout a room. An electric fan placed above a heater will distribute the warm air which would otherwise rise toward the ceiling and only reach the lower regions when displaced by still warmer air. The thorough circulation and stirring up brought about by the fan generally insure a pretty uniform temperature throughout the entire room.—Electrical Review.

A SCHOOL FOR SPIDERS.

The Insects Taught to Weave Their Webs Only on Bottles.

"This is my spiders' school," said the young woman, and with a little stick she brushed a few webs from the wall. "Not much to look at, is it? Only a dozen rows of wine bottles, a great many spiders and a great many webs. I make nevertheless a little money out of the school."

"Spiders' webs are in demand among surgeons and among the makers of certain astronomical instruments, the surgeons using them to stop hemorrhages with and the instrument makers using them in certain very delicate instruments—instruments wherein, strange to say, a human hair would not take their place, because a hair is neither fine enough nor durable enough to serve the required purpose."

"Besides selling the webs I also sell the spiders. A corrupt class of wine dealers buy the spiders. These men put them among bottles of new wine. I train the spiders to weave on bottles only—I tear down webs woven anywhere else—and it is amazing how quickly these well schooled pupils of mine will cover a case of port or claret with cobwebs, giving to the wine an appearance of great age."

"Six spiders in a week will add two years to the aspect of a dozen bottles of wine; hence you will readily see how valuable the ugly little creatures are to wine merchants of a certain type."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

SEWING COTTON.

The Humble Origin of the Great Thread Industry.

The origin of sewing cotton was told at a cotton manufacturers' meeting by the head of the great thread house of Paisley, Scotland. It was discovered in 1833 by his grandfather, who had a little business in Paisley, making silk twines for hatbands, which were used by every weaver. The silk came from Hamburg, and in 1803 Napoleon ordered the stock held there to be burned in order to hamper British trade. The weavers were in despair, but James Clark conceived the idea that cotton yarns could be twisted together to form the twines.

The experiment succeeded, and from this grew the idea that cotton could be substituted for flax in the manufacture of sewing thread and would not be so coarse and harsh. He began the manufacture of the thread in a very small way. It was at first put up in skeins and had to be wound into little balls by the purchaser, and then Mr. Clark invented the modern spools. He had them made by a wood turner, half a gross at a time. They cost him sixpence a dozen, and he charged the purchaser of the spool, which, however, was refunded when the spool was returned. The ladies of Paisley used to come to his shop with their spools and wait while he wound the thread on them. From this small beginning grew a great industry.

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Girls to learn Cloth Picking and Winding.

Enterprise Silk Co.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., 7th and Market Sts. Telephone 223.

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

HARRISBURG & ALLEGHENY VALLEY DIVISION. Low Grade Division.

In Effect Nov. 27, 1904. Eastern Standard Time.

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Train No. 12 Sunday leaves Pottsville 9:05 a.m., Red Bank 10:25 a.m., Philadelphia 11:30 a.m., Baltimore 12:30 p.m., Washington 2:30 p.m., New York 4:30 p.m., New Haven 6:30 p.m., Boston 9:30 p.m.

Train No. 13 Sunday leaves Philadelphia 6:00 a.m., Pottsville 7:15 a.m., Harrisburg 8:30 a.m., Easton 9:45 a.m., Pottsville 11:00 a.m., Harrisburg 12:15 p.m., Pottsville 1:30 p.m., Easton 2:45 p.m., Pottsville 4:00 p.m., Harrisburg 5:15 p.m., Pottsville 6:30 p.m., Harrisburg 7:45 p.m., Pottsville 9:00 p.m., Harrisburg 10:15 p.m., Pottsville 11:30 p.m., Harrisburg 12:45 p.m., Pottsville 2:00 p.m., Harrisburg 3:15 p.m., Pottsville 4:30 p.m., Harrisburg