

# Author's BAZAAR

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# Editor's note

By **DEAN REA**

This month we offer readers a mix of “what I would do if I were to win the lottery” and chickens.

Chickens?

Yes, chickens who talk.

As a former farm boy, I can vouch for author Lee Kirk's claim that chickens can do more than cluck and cackle. If you don't believe me, turn to page 16 and learn something about a chicken's vocabulary.

Meanwhile, a number of people have reported what they would do if they were to win a lottery. Most claim that they don't buy lottery tickets.

Dave Tribby wrote: “Sorry to be a party pooper, but I don't have any big plans on what to do with winning a jack-

pot. Lotteries are a way of taxing people who don't know math, and because Liz and I are mathematical science majors, we've never been tempted to use our money in that way."

Another respondent said: " I would take the money, every penny and find a way to counter the growing acceptance of the use of marijuana — both recreational and medical. The latter can only be seen as a 'foot in the door' to change the law, thus allowing pot smoking to be done without a penalty. The lack of thinking people in allowing this destructive drug to be decriminalized astounds me."

I join the majority of respondents who don't buy lottery tickets. I am happy with my lifestyle and wouldn't want the hassle of dealing with folks I don't know who want to be my "friend" for obvious reasons.

If I were to win a lottery, however, I would spend the money as rapidly as possible because I'm 83 years old and can see the end of the rainbow approaching.

Or, maybe I'd buy some chickens so that I would have someone to talk to.

# \$pending a \$tupendous \$uperfluity

What would you do with the money if you had won the multimillion nationwide Powerball lottery in early December?

Two ticket holders split the \$360 million payout in the \$550-million multi-state Powerball lottery. They had the option of taking the cash that remained after paying federal and state taxes or receiving annuity payments during a 30-year period.

You pay \$2 for a ticket and can win by matching five white balls in any order and a red Powerball number. The odds of winning the record-setting early December jackpot were 1 in 175 million.

A dozen people responded to the invitation to share their thoughts on what they would do with such megabucks.

Some said they don't buy lottery tickets. Others confessed that they picked up a ticket occasionally.

You can read the following summaries of what several people would do with the winnings:

# Winning the Texas Lotto

By Sheryl L. Nelms

I buy  
a quick pick  
every week hoping  
I will win millions of jackpot dollars

there was a lady who worked at Transport, when I did  
she was our clerk in the Claims Department  
her brother won thirty-seven million  
she quit her job the day after

he spread his wealth around

there is a lawyer in Dallas  
who lives in my daughter's neighborhood  
he was in a lottery pot and the four of them won  
now he gets eight thousand dollars a week for life

he no longer works,  
so he strolls the blocks with his wife and dog  
when it comes my turn I plan to  
get a CPA first to protect the money  
then I will set up a scholarship fund at my alma mater  
buy a house or maybe a ranch  
help my kids, if they want it  
pick out my dream

red extended cab Ford pick-up truck

then drive around passing out hundred-dollar bills  
to random folks  
for the fun  
of it

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## Giving it away

**By Rich Hopkins**

Well, sir, you want to know what I would do with the multi-million dollars I would win in the big lottery? First, of course, I would have to buy a ticket, but so far, I have resisted the temptation. But that being overlooked, hey, I just won the big one. Something like \$386 million dollars, right?

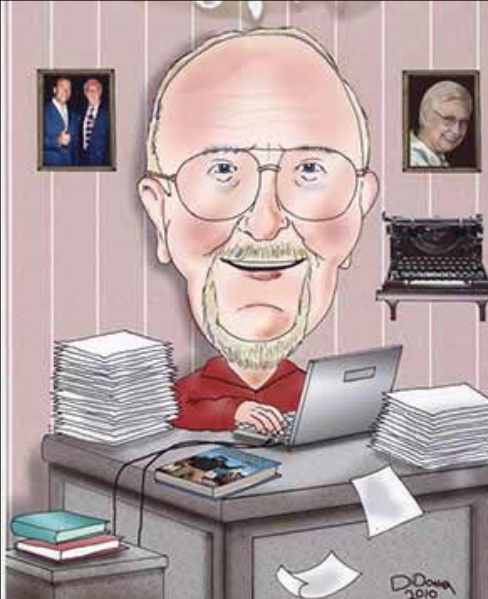
Well, first I would create some sort of perpetual fund to underwrite a youth program in our local church. We need

to make some greater effort to recruit and retain younger members and, unfortunately, that isn't being done primarily because we don't have the money

Next, I would get the politicians into a room and lock the door until I got some solid, serious, commitments from them in matching my funds to upgrade highway access to our beautiful little community. Building roads costs lots of money and our town just isn't on any "list" for highway improvement. But the influx of a big piece of money might change that picture. The local joke is that there are five ways of getting to Morgantown (the largest nearby city, about 40 miles) from Terra Alta — and none is any good.

Finally, if any money were left over, I would create a perpetual fund for creating and continuing a typecasting educational and promotional program. I would pledge my own extensive collection of machines and matrices to the program and devote my own energies toward making it a functioning reality. If properly configured, it might just be a source of employment for a few folks, too.

Well, sir, that's my dream but as I suggested earlier, it won't happen simply because I'll never waste money on buying a lottery ticket.



# On the road again

**By Barry Schrader**

If I win any size lottery, I would move back to California and live near the ocean, spend a month at the Ahwanee in Yosemite each year, and set up a trust fund for my kids so they can't spend it all at once when I am gone.

I would also build a museum for DeKalb County, which doesn't have a countywide one, and hire a curator to run it. I would install a theater pipe organ in our new home for my wife Kay. Next I would buy myself a Heidelberg press and hire an oldtime printer to turn out private books and ephemera, then print rare books and treatises. Of course I would let Kay have some of the money to spend.

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# the checkup

**By Ross Carletta**

\$550 million!

Really, now, who needs that much money?

Had I won the lottery and was handed a check for \$550 million (before taxes, of course), I wouldn't do anything out of the ordinary and would try to keep my identity se-

cret. Can you imagine the number of phone calls and people knocking at your door?

I wouldn't quit my job because I don't have one. I'm retired.

I wouldn't go on a spending spree because I have all I need, and there is nothing I want that I can't pay for with my pensions and Social Security.

In fact, I think I have too much. Money spent means more possessions, and I shun possessions. I'm looking for ways to pare what I own.

My only extravagance is my guitars. You can only play one at a time, but I have four. Together, they equal the cost of my 2004 pickup truck when bought new. I suppose I might buy a truly fine classical guitar, but I'd sell a couple of the ones I have to help pay for it.

I could pay off all my debts, but I have none. I don't buy anything I can't pay for.

I could buy the Corvette or Mustang I've drooled over since the first day I saw them, but they are so impractical. I don't need them. My truck runs just fine and serves my every need.

I could buy land on a trout stream in Montana or Idaho and build a fine but small log home, but I'm too old to put up with the winters.

I could buy a new house where I live, but I've put 12 years and a lot of work into the one I have. I'm comfortable in this house and in our quiet, little cul-de-sac. Why would I move? I've thought of paying off my mortgage, but then I'd lose the tax break.

I could give some to a charity I believe in and to people in real need, but there still would be millions and millions left over.

So, what would I do with all that money? Probably stick it in some very safe investment and leave it alone. It would become part of my estate and would be shared by my heirs. Hopefully, it wouldn't be a burden to them and hopefully they wouldn't fight over it.

I'm content and very lucky to be where I am. I believe a massive amount of money would do nothing but upset that contentment and would create more problems than it would solve.

No, I didn't win the lottery, and quite frankly, I'm glad I didn't.



# POWERBALL PERSPECTIVES

**By Elizabeth Lindsey**

Every Thursday and Sunday mornings my next-door neighbor calls to ask me to check our newspaper to see what the numbers are for the Mega Millions and Powerball drawings. She's never won and probably never will, but pe-

riodically she tells me what she'd do if she lucked upon the right number combination.

She'd get out of the Section 8 apartment where she and her husband (who works for Vanderbilt University in the buildings and grounds department) live, and they'd move into one of the luxury condos downtown. She'd buy a car so they wouldn't be dependent on the city bus anymore. She'd make sure her husband could take some of the cross-country train rides he likes to watch videos about, and she'd go to Hawaii. The bulk of the jackpot, however, she'd give to one of the city's food banks or meal programs because the idea of people going hungry bothers her.

When I think about what I'd do with the Powerball jackpot, it's hard not to compare my dreams with my neighbor's. Because I'm the daughter of a lawyer and an accountant, I'd immediately hire a financial adviser, pay the taxes on my winnings and start making wise investments so we could live off the interest.

I'd like to buy the large, elegant Edwardian compound with the big iron gates, swimming pool and attached guest-houses that takes up half a city block not too far from our modest bungalow. Then I could move our aging parents in with us in such a way that we'd all have our own households but I could still be close enough to help when neces-

sary. We could even hire good live-in help for our parents when it becomes necessary. It'd be like creating an instant neighborhood of family with a lovely shared garden in the middle.

I'd buy a brand-new car based on its styling, not on its reliability rating in Consumer Reports because I'd always be able to afford the repairs. Heck, I could even buy two new cars for myself — one to use while the other's at the mechanic's.

I'd send my husband on the adventures he's always wanted to experience in Asia while I roamed Europe. I'd give some of the jackpot away immediately but leave the bulk of it as bequests in our wills because a shroud has no pockets. We favor social and health organizations, animal welfare, and educational institutions. It's hard to imagine being in a position in which we could leave a generous gift to every charity we like, and I'd enjoy not having to choose anymore.

My neighbor and I may come from very different parts of the socioeconomic spectrum, but in the end, it turns out our Powerball dreams aren't all that different. We both want to improve our housing and transportation situations, indulge our travel dreams and give to those causes we feel strongly about. I suppose the difference lies in the scale of

our dreams. What feels like more to her doesn't feel like quite so much to me because I'm fortunate enough to be starting this Powerball dream already having so much more than she.

It'll be impossible for me to win a Powerball jackpot unless I actually start buying tickets for it. But my neighbor, well, who knows? If she does win someday, I'll be happy for her and feel it couldn't have happened to a person who'd appreciate it more.



# Let's talk chicken

**By Lee Kirk**

I have heard, on reasonable authority, that there was once an academic study done on the language of chickens. The man who conducted this survey ascertained that chickens possess a basic vocabulary of about 30 words.

Furthermore, by taking his study abroad, he determined that this is a “universal language” — that a French chicken,

say, could understand one from Spain or the United States. In other words, there is a kind of Chicken Esperanto.

That could be useful not only to the cosmopolitan cockerel, but imagine what a summit meeting of poultry politicians, or a featherbrained United Nations General Roost-in would be like: instant and universal understanding. A concept to be envied by our multi-lingual species.

I'm afraid my own chicken observations have been less broad-based. For the most part, they've been confined to local farmyards. Still, I can agree on one point: Chickens have a definite set of utterances for various occasions.

Almost everyone, I'm sure, is familiar with the sounds a hen makes when she's laid an egg. "Buk-buk-buk-buk-buk-buk-beGAK! beGAK! Buk-buk-buk-buk-buk-buk-beGAWK! beGAWK!" she cries.

In translation, the commentary goes like this: "I laid a great big EGG! An EGG! I laid a great big EGG! It HURT! Like HELL!

After hundreds of years of human fiddling with their genes, chickens have changed. They've added weight, and most have lost the ability to get it off the ground. Lacking the survival skills of fleet-footedness and fast flight, they've coped by refining a verbal warning system. I have sometimes wondered if our own word for "hawk" might

have evolved from that of the chicken, for that is what their word for danger most resembles: a loud scream of “HAW-WWWWK!”

It so happens that they will emit this sound at any sign of threat. A backfiring tractor, an errant housecat prowling through the barnyard bushes, or a bandit-masked raccoon appearing in the hen house door at night will all evoke the same warning, “HAWWWK! HAWWWWWK!”

The response is swift. If the event occurs while the birds are roosting in the house, every fowl takes up the cry, flaps its wings and flops back and forth to hit the ceiling, walls, and sometimes even — serendipitously — the doorway. On the one hand, the ruckus may result in driving away the intruder. At the very least, such a mid-night alert will catapult the poultry-keeper to action so forcefully that he or she may well be out of bed and halfway to the henhouse before awakening, and certainly before giving thought to getting dressed.

Having performed this ritual innumerable times only to find the chickens settling cozily down upon their roosts by the time I arrived, saying their night-nights and chortling softly, I sometimes wondered if it might not have been a wicked kind of chicken humor: the Revenge of the Poultry upon the One Who Takes Eggs.

Chickens may cry “HAWK!” many times a day when they range freely in the yards. Flying predators are their ancient as well as contemporary enemies. However, they don’t take much time to assess the danger — anything overhead is suspect. Many a time I’ve heard the cry and watched dozens of petticoated hen posteriors disappear under any available cover when only the shadow of an airplane had passed over the ground.

And the pigeon we hosted for years seemed to delight in circling the yard in long swoops until the biddies and crows alike were quaking under porches, bushes and pens. Then he’d drop to the ground, strut back and forth and murmur “Curucoooo-ooo-ooooo. Curucooocooo,” which seems to be pigeon for “Gotcha again, you dumb clucks.”

A hen calling her chicks to some tantalizing morsel she’s uncovered will croon, “Barrrruck-buk-buk-BUK-BUK-BUK!” This, of course, means, “Come over here I’ve got a BIG FAT BUG.” If they’re slow, she emphasizes the statement: “Get here quick and catch this BUG BUG BUG!”

The most enjoyable of hen sounds is a sort of humming or mumbly singing that occurs on one of those days at the end of spring or beginning of summer, the sort of day when the chicks have been weaned and the sun is warm


and the wind is still and the air is alive with the sounds of insects. The earth abounds in bugs, too, and maybe some early grass seeds or maybe some tender shoots are in the offing for a hen willing to claw the ground a bit.

On those days the biddies drift aimlessly about like sailboats without much wind behind them, and their crooning seems to have little purpose other than to comment on the purposelessness of the day:

“Ohhh, what a lovelyyyyy dayyyyy,” (they sing.)

“I think I’ll just scritch and scratch a bit,  
but then, maybe I won’t. Maybe I’ll find a spot  
where the ground’s sun-lit, where there’s a lot  
of dust to take a bath in, to while the time awayyyyy...”

And you know, the way they put it, it sounds like a fine idea.



## How to love a chicken

**By Lee Kirk**

I've heard people say it's impossible  
to love a chicken, but that's not true.  
A chicken is a different kind of critter, see?  
You can't love a chicken the way  
you would a dog, or a cat, or  
a little human with freckles on its nose.

Some people say chickens are stupid,  
but that's not right, either.  
You won't catch a chicken doing calculus,  
or playing Vivaldi on a violin.  
That is not a portion of poultry potential.  
Put another way, let's see you lay an egg.

In order to love a chicken, see,  
you have to think like a chicken.  
You have to feel like poultry  
deep down into your bones:  
experience curiosity at bug level;  
recognize shadows for what they might be.

Understanding chicken is simple, really.  
Let first light pull matins  
right out of your throat. Cackle your triumphs,  
crow your gains. Scratch calculations  
in the dust with your toes:  
the cipher of seasons, the aptness of eggs.