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March & April 2025



# The Florida Register™

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# The Florida Register



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## Just A Note...

Welcome Spring!!! It's time to go shopping... Our advertisers are ready to share with you all their new products for Spring, whether it's a gift for someone special or something to make your home bright and sunny. Please remember to support these locally owned businesses. Let the shop owners know that you read about their shop in our publication. This is important because their advertising allows us to bring you this paper. They appreciate knowing the ads are effective and that keeps them advertising.



David, Amy  
Rachel and Grace

Keep an extra copy of the current issue of our publication in your car to use as a road map for places to shop. What a fun, relaxing way to ease into Spring. And don't miss the Spring open houses, quilt shop hops and shows that are planned. The shows and events listing summarizes all the events from the ads in this issue so you can easily mark your calendar to attend!

If you know of a great shop that isn't advertising with us, but should be, please email [ads@theregisterweb.com](mailto:ads@theregisterweb.com) with that shop's name, phone number and address so we can send them a copy of the paper.

Grace is really enjoying her classes this semester! She has classes specific to her Public Relations and Spanish majors and she's getting involved with clubs for her majors too. Rachel just finished a 3 week Southeast Asia trip – getting her travel accomplished before she starts her job at the hospital in Raleigh soon.

Thank you for picking up a copy of this issue. And be sure to share your copy or pick up another copy for a friend. Enjoy shopping this Spring and please let our advertisers know you read about them here!

Amy & David



### May/June events due by April 1

Mail a check for \$25 with your event info to the address at the top of page 2.

### Facebook Live or App Events

- Mondays 3:30 pm ..... Quilted Twins (pg. 12)
- Mon-Sat 5:30 pm ..... Quilts and Lace (pg. 23)
- Tuesdays 6 pm ..... Inspire Quilting & Sewing (pg. 16)
- Wednesdays 7 pm ..... Crafty Quilters (pg. 15)
- Fridays 9 am ..... Boutique 4 Quilters (pg. 26)
- Fridays 3:30 pm ..... Quilted Twins (pg. 12)

### March

- 1-Apr 30 ..... Visit all the participating shops during the All Florida Shop Hop (pg. 3)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit A & E Fabrics & Crafts in Pensacola (pg. 4)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Margie's Sew Much Fun in Crestview (pg. 5)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Cookie's Fabric in Marianna (pg. 5)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Beyond the Stitches in Crystal River (pg. 6)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Scrapy Girl Quilts & Fabric in Lake City (pg. 6)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Village Quilt Shop in Fruitland Park (pg. 7)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Quilted Twins in Dade City (pg. 12)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Quilters Anonymous in Clermont (pg. 13)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Black Dog Quilt Shop in Clermont (pg. 13)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Heartfelt Quilting & Sewing in Winter Haven (pg. 14)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Meg's Quilt Cottage in Sebring (pg. 15)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Inspire Quilting & Sewing in Plant City (pg. 16)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Nana's Quilt Shop in Brooksville (pg. 16)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Scrap & Sew in Lutz (pg. 17)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Fabric Smart in St Petersburg (pg. 18)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Keep Me in Stitches in Tampa (pg. 18)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Quilters Haven & More in Palmetto (pg. 18)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Cedar Valley Crafts in Englewood (pg. 19)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit White Daisy Quilt Shop in Punta Gorda (pg. 20)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Kits by Carla in Labelle (pg. 20)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Calico Station in Orange Park (pg. 21)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Sewing Garret in Daytona Beach (pg. 22)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Sew N Quilt Co in Holly Hill (pg. 22)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Sweet Time Quilting in Sebastian (pg. 23)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Quilts and Lace in Melbourne (pg. 23)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Quilt A Bit in Greenacres (pg. 24)
- 1-Apr 30 ..... During the All Florida Shop Hop visit Boutique 4 Quilters in W. Melbourne (pg. 26)
- 8-9 ..... South Florida Quilt Expo at Charles F Dodge City Center in Pembroke Pines (pg. 24)
- 11 ..... DIME Virtual Embroidery Event with Quilts and Lace in Melbourne (pg. 23)
- 13-15 ..... Original Sewing & Quilt Expo at RP Funding Center in Lakeland (pg. 13)
- 13-15 ..... Visit Heartfelt Quilting & Sewing during Original Sewing & Quilt Expo in Lakeland (pg. 14)
- 13-15 ..... Visit Inspire! Quilting & Sewing during Original Sewing & Quilt Expo in Lakeland (pg. 16)
- 21-Apr 5 ..... Visit Beyond the Stitches during the Central Florida Shop Hop in Crystal River (pg. 6)
- 21-Apr 5 ..... Visit the participating shops in the Central Florida Shop Hop (pg. 11)
- 21-Apr 5 ..... Visit Nana's Quilt Shop during the Central Florida Shop Hop in Brooksville (pg. 16)
- 22 ..... Suwannee Valley Quilt Festival at the Historical Train Depot in Trenton (pg. 6)
- 28-29 ..... Spring Fling Sale at Nana's Quilt Shop in Brooksville (pg. 16)

### April

- 5 ..... Sip N Serge Event at Quilts and Lace in Melbourne (pg. 23)

### Shop Hop

# THE 3RD annual all Florida SHOP HOP MARCH AND APRIL 2025

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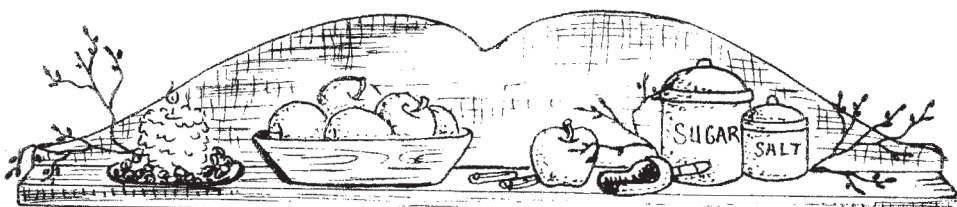
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The All Florida Shop Hop Magazine will go on sale Mid-January at all participating stores.

IT'S YOUR PASSPORT TO EMBARK ON THE GREAT SEWING ADVENTURE ACROSS FLORIDA!



## ALL FLORIDA SHOP HOP



### Baked Smoked Ham Recipe

The recipe of baked smoked ham not only tastes good, but at the same time has an appearance which is very appealing. Read further to learn the steps to prepare the main course perfect for your Easter meal...

**Ingredients:**

- 1 large smoked ham, about 12 to 18 pounds
- Whole cloves
- 3 cups pineapple juice
- 1 pound dark brown sugar
- One 16-ounce bottle dark corn syrup

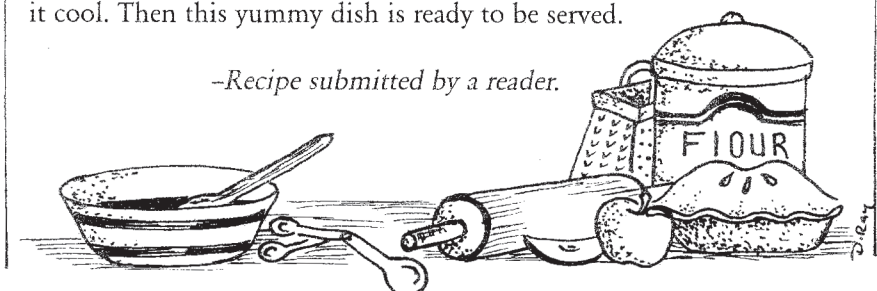
**Method:**

Preheat the oven to 325 F. Take a shallow roasting pan and place the ham on it. Score the fat and cover it with cloves. Take the pineapple juice and pour it over the ham. Bake the ham for 12 minutes per pound.

Remove the baked ham from the oven after 1 1/2 hours. Sprinkle brown sugar on the baked ham. Without touching the brown sugar, pour the corn syrup over the ham. Continue baking the ham but don't forget to moisten it every 15 minutes.

Once the baking part is over, remove the ham from the oven and let it cool. Then this yummy dish is ready to be served.

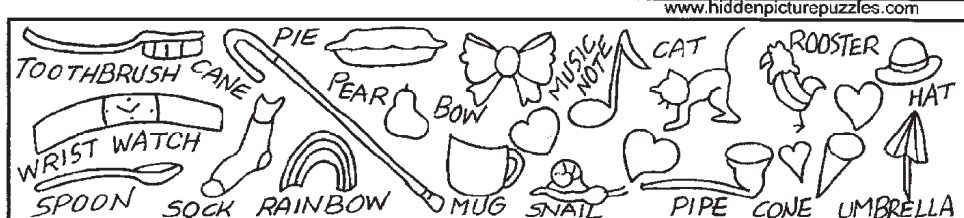
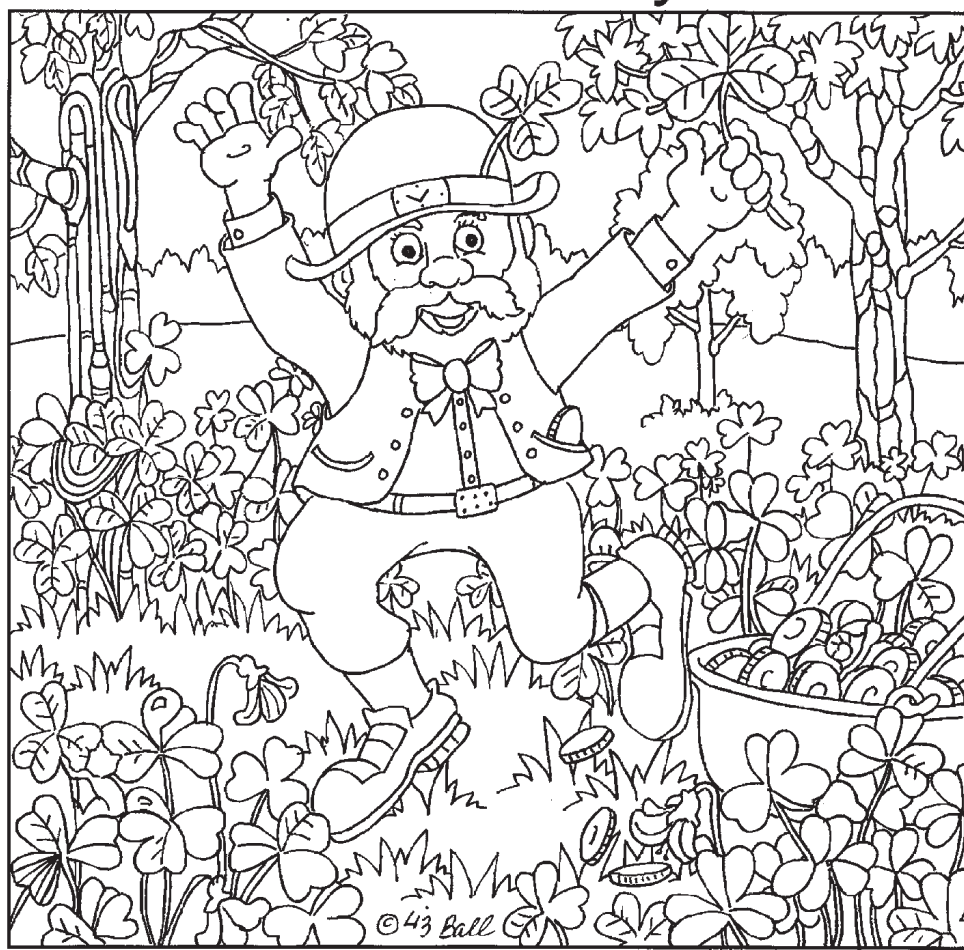
-Recipe submitted by a reader.



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**"My day is not complete 'til scissors, thread and fabric meet!"**

From reader - Alice Gaither in Sun City Center, FL

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## A Cup of Tea with Lydia

### Treasures from Talking Teacups

by Lydia E. Harris

When I turned 50, a friend gave me a copy of the book *If Teacups Could Talk*. I read it from cover to cover and became immersed in tea parties. Now after 30 years of sharing teatimes, I have learned that teacups really can talk and each one has a story.

#### Black Teacup

"Why would anyone want a black teacup?" Lydia asked when I came into her life. I was given to her during one of the blackest seasons in her life—when she was diagnosed with incurable cancer. She considered cancer dark and ugly. And since she doesn't like black, she called me her cancer cup. I could have been insulted, but I wasn't. I knew there was more to me than the outside. I had an inside too, with pretty flowers painted inside. And what's inside is the most important.

During Lydia's dark days of chemotherapy when her life was fragile, she learned God could take the adversity in her life and turn it into something beautiful. The seeds of hard times can sprout into beauty on the inside, if we accept the hard times and let God's love grow in our hearts.

Now when Lydia looks at me, I'm not rejected. I'm treasured. My story reminds her of Solomon's words in Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV): "He has made everything beautiful in its time." Yes, God does make everything beautiful in his time. But sometimes it takes a while.

I give her hope that God is working on the inside and there are beautiful things yet to come.

#### Yellow Teacup

Barbara thought Lydia's cancer cup was too bleak and wanted Lydia to think cheery thoughts. So, Barbara packed a tea lunch, wrapped me, and drove to Lydia's home. "This is a sunshine cup," she explained. Since Lydia loves warm, sunny days, she liked me and sipped tea from me often. I reminded her of God's warm love for her.

However, Barbara bought me at an antique shop, so I wasn't new when I was given to Lydia. One day Lydia noticed a crack in me. "Oh, no, my sunshine cup is cracked."

What good is a teacup that can't hold tea? I wondered what she would do with me.

Lydia didn't want to lose the sunshine in her life, so she keeps me in her china hutch along with her perfect teacups. Then during tea parties, she finds other uses for me. Sometimes I hold sugar cubes. (I must be getting sweeter all the time.) Other times I hold a votive candle adding cheer and warmth. Also, she uses my saucer as a small plate for cookies or a trivet for a small teapot.

I taught her when we feel broken, we're still useful. We may be chipped or cracked, and life may take a different turn than we expected, but God isn't finished with us. He works through our hard times, and he keeps working in our lives and creates new ways to bless us. In the Bible, Philippians 1:6 (NIV) says, "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." God will keep working with us until we go to meet him. Isn't that encouraging?

#### Blue-Flowered Teacup

Lydia met Joy more than 40 years ago while flying from California to Arizona. Since then, they have only met one other time. But they keep in touch with letters, cards, phone calls, and gifts.

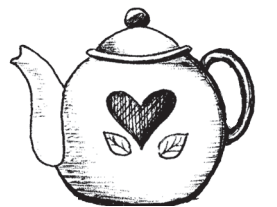
One day Lydia's sister called with hopeful news about new treatments for lymphoma. But there are many kinds of lymphoma categorized by different numbers, so Lydia wondered if this medicine could help her type of cancer. Alas, her number was not included.

"When will they come up with treatment for my number?" Lydia cried out to God. "Do you know my number?"

Then she noticed a package from Joy. Inside she found me—a beautiful teacup and saucer decorated with blue forget-me-not flowers. She exclaimed, "God, you're so sweet. So adorably sweet."

Lydia's favorite color is blue, and through the forget-me-nots God spoke to her saying, "I know your number. I haven't forgotten about you." Inside the cup she read the word "friend." Not only is Joy her friend, but God is her friend too.

*Isaiah 49:15-16 reassures us that God will never forget us. He has engraved us on the palms of his hands. Just as Lydia lovingly holds her delicate teacups in her hands, God lovingly holds each of us in his hands.*



## My Bunny Blanket

by Julie Pirtle

Fabric and yarn become so much more when they are touched by the creative hands that mold them into quilts and afghans. However, the magic really happens when those creative hands belong to someone that loves you.

My home is filled with blankets made by my grandmothers and great grandmothers. From the day I was born, I was wrapped in their loving creations. My first quilt was made for me before I was even born. It is a crib sized piece made from a solid cut of (now vintage!) cotton fabric covered with soft pastel rabbits. It is named "Bunny Blanket" and was a huge source of comfort to me as a child.

Looking at it today, I can see the battle scars that came from being so loved. Millions of washings that turned the tufted yarn ties into small pea shaped balls. The chewed-up corner from my new puppy. A couple of faded stains from juice mishaps.

As I look at that blanket today, I understand its significance even more now that I am an adult woman. I imagine my grandmother choosing the fabric, not knowing if her first grandchild would be a boy or a girl. I can see her sitting at her machine, busily sewing up her new creation in excited anticipation of meeting her first grandchild.

In the cedar chest that houses my Bunny Blanket are other equally loved creations. There is a small, crocheted baby blanket from my great grandmother. It is made from brightly colored wool yarn that has withstood the hands of time. Another favorite is the king-sized, cream-colored afghan that my grandma custom made for me a few years before she passed. I can still feel her hugs each time I wrap it around my shoulders.

Hanging on my guestroom wall are two quilts, each made by one of my great grandmothers. One is what I'd call a utility quilt. Hand sewn from pieces and parts of whatever fabric she could get her hands on; it served as a way to warm her family during the depression years.

Quilt number two was a wedding gift to my grandmother from her mom. It is made with the Wedding Ring pattern and was on her bed for decades. In her later years, Grandma pulled it out of her chest and asked me if I would like to have it. I was honored to accept it and still am to this day.

All of these blankets from my life are really storybooks, filled with emotion and love in each stitch it took to create them. The women that made them are long gone, but the gifts they left behind continue to warm me.

I am not a quilter nor a crocheter. My art comes in the form of paper crafting. I have spent years documenting the lives of my family. I've curated scrapbooks of ancestral pictures and documents that bring those long-ago generations back to life for us to understand where our roots are.

My books aren't warm and can't be wrapped around the shoulders of those I love. However, it is my hope that in decades to come, the pages will show the love of both myself and all the family that came before me.

We live in a busy and complicated world right now. I challenge you to pause. Take a moment to open your chest and rediscover your own Bunny Blanket. Feel the love woven into the quilts and afghans of your past. It's there.



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## Of Time and Tides

by Kerri Habben Bosman

One afternoon last October most of our family was gathered on the beach. Most of the men were fishing, most of the women were sitting and talking, and the youngest grandson and I were building a miniature fortress some distance away from the others.



Quinn and I took turns going to the water's edge to get wet sand for our creation. We also gathered sea grass, shells, and small bits of driftwood to press into the walls of our fort. We were immersed in our work. After all, whether you are seven or fifty-one, playing in the sand is captivating and affirming.

We took our time, packing the walls and smoothing them as the ocean waves grew closer. Suddenly Quinn stopped working and looked at me very earnestly.

"I don't think this is a good idea," he said. "The water is going to come and take everything away."

I paused, studying his serious eyes. I listened to the ocean, thinking first that an entire philosophy book could be written based on his statement. What I was really waiting for was the right words.

"Yes, it is," I answered. "But we will always remember this moment, our fort, and how we made it together. The tide cannot take that away. I think we should keep building it anyway."

"Okay," he said.

So, we continued on.

I have thought of this day many times since as my stepdaughter continued valiantly on in her battle to survive cancer. She did her best to thrive, packing all the goodness and love she could in the eighteen months after her diagnosis. Our family consciously made memories-going to the beach, watching her kids' sporting events, and often just sitting and being together. She loved to make charcuterie boards to feed our big family as we watched football games. We played yard games, like corn hole and bocce. When the time came that she was no longer strong enough to take part, she was still right there with us. Her spirit remained dauntless.

We all knew that the tide was coming in. How fast and how soon, that we didn't know. So, we just kept treasuring the next thing we did together, knowing that these times would sustain us when we needed them to. They are now our real-life fortress.

For my stepdaughter, the tide came in on January 23rd.

Yet, for all of us who love her, she will never fully leave us. She loved all of us so steadily and with an inherent and unending kindness. It was simply the way she lived. Along with those gentle ways, she carried within her a resolute strength that bolstered those around her.

I will forever see her in everything she loved, most especially her three children. I will see her in the graceful motions of the hummingbirds that come to our feeders. I will hear her in our laughter when our family is all together.

I will feel her essence especially when our family is on the beach. She loved the ocean with a quiet and enduring passion. She happily spent many hours just sitting on the sand, watching the waves. She also loved being on the water, enjoying her stand-up paddleboard. She was happiest, though, when it was all of us together, taking in the sand and sea.

Perhaps during this new time, we'll all gather on the beach. It is highly likely that Quinn and I will build another creation even as we know the water will take it back. For we will always remember. And we will always love.

The tide cannot take that away.

So, we continue on.

© 2025 Kerri Habben Bosman is a writer living in Cape Carteret, NC. Her email is [913jeves@gmail.com](mailto:913jeves@gmail.com)



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## ASPEN GROVE QUILTING

### Quilting Stories with Sam

by Sam Hilborst

This first weeks of Spring brings feelings of new beginnings. And, in all honesty, the topic for this segment's writing was again brought to my attention through the eyes of my eldest daughter. When she came home from her first week (more like two days) of school, my little first grader pulled out a handful of paperwork she had completed. "Mom, look at all my school stuff." Acknowledging her, I told her, "we'll look at this later," and continued with supper prep.

As we finished supper at the table, we pulled out L's schoolwork and took a peek. Most were typical school spelling work, journals, and colouring activities, but one caught my eye - "My Book of Resolutions." Opening the four-page hand-crafted book were her super sweet first-grade resolutions to help mom more, to play games with her friends more, to help in the classroom. It was the final page that I asked her about, as it rather confused me. The fill in the blank resolution was: Here is my resolution about Mother Earth, to which my six-year-old wrote, "be kind to animals." I remember looking right at her and saying, "L, you already do that and are so wonderful to animals, so that's not really a resolution." Without haste, my smart and sassy young lady said, with attitude, "well, mom, you know it's a new year, and I need to remember to keep doing it."

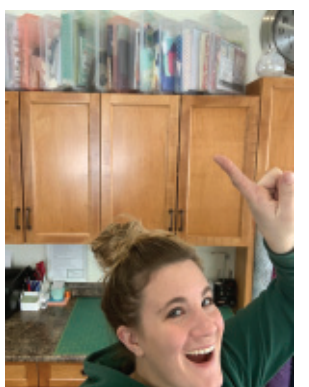
A couple days later, I started the process of prepping and planning my upcoming year at Aspen Grove Quilting. Walking into my cozy shop, I took a look around and saw my project boxes neatly sitting along the top of my cabinets. Each box contains an individual project that needs completion, ranging from starting blocks, sewing blocks together, or just completing binding. I sat down and thought, what projects do I want to start this year? Again, looking at my fabric for inspiration, those darn project boxes caught my eye once again! No ... new year, new project, right? Ding, it was like a reminder went off in my brain. Remember what L just told you?! "Well, mom, you know it's a new year, and I need to remember to keep doing it." New year, same project? That sounded peculiar; who's talking to me? This can't be my thoughts. And it wasn't! It was my little six-year-old's words repeating in my mind, telling me to finish doing what I started because it was going to feel just as good.

Prepping took quite a twist for me and my shop, from planning new projects to falling back on old ones. That is not how I anticipated my year to start. A quick attitude shift and I pulled out my step ladder and started to take down project boxes. As each box came down, I could feel my excitement building. I forgot about that one, or I remember how excited I was when I found that fabric, or oh, that pattern is so cute! Today, I look around my workspace, and a dozen clear boxes are scattered on the worktop. Each one brings a smile to my face and fills my heart with anticipation as I now have to patiently await each final project - it feels just as good!

Reflecting back on that moment of reading L's resolution book, I realized that her resolution meant more to me than it likely did to her. Boy oh boy, that little girl smacked me in the face with some strong words. A new start, but a continued action. What a wise take on how to perceive resolutions. Resolutions, perhaps, are not always about making a change or starting over but rather continuing what we are already doing, doing it well, and continuing through the experience of finding ourselves, bettering our lives, or enjoying the moments.

I hope you can continue doing the things that bring you joy. Continue appreciating life's little moments that warm your heart. And, of course, continue that project that has been tucked away for weeks, months, or even years. Hopefully, continuing that project, reaching completion, and admiring your accomplishment will bring the same overwhelming joy that being nice to animals does for my wise little girl.

© 2023 Sam Hilborst. I am a wife, mom to a young, growing family, and newly titled entrepreneur. My love for fabric and quilting lead me to open Aspen Grove Quilting. [www.aspengrovequilting.com](http://www.aspengrovequilting.com)




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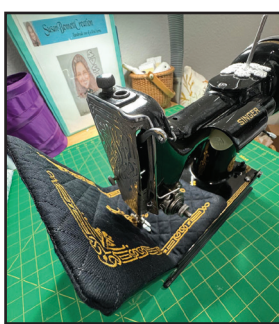
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## Reader Shares! Finished Project!

Who doesn't LOVE a Featherweight! Well I've recently adopted two! I wiped them down, oiled them in all the best places, changed out the drip pan pad, added new feet to both the machines and their foot controllers, removed threads that weren't where they should be. . . and then decided they needed to be "dressed."

Enter an embroidery pattern I enhanced just a little and my babies each have a new best friend. . . storage mats!

I purchased the pattern from Etsy and after stitching out a trial mat, I added each machine's serial number and birth date. . . a personalized mat to drop the presser foot on, lower the needle into and when it's folded up for storage it protects the bed of the machine from scratches and dings from the thumb screws on the side of the machine. . . happy all around!



Shared by reader  
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*Spring has sprung! oh what fun...*

*Recipe*

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Alice Martin • Greenwood Lake, NY

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1 medium onion, thinly sliced	1 tsp. salt
1 1/2 cups sugar (can use less)	1 tsp. pepper
1 cup water	1/2 tsp. garlic salt or powder

Directions: Cook pasta, drain and rinse. In large bowl, stir in oil, cucumbers and onions. Combine remaining ingredients, pour over pasta and toss. Cover and chill 3-4 hours, stirring occasionally. Serve with slotted spoon. Serves 8-10

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Designed By Kathy Graham



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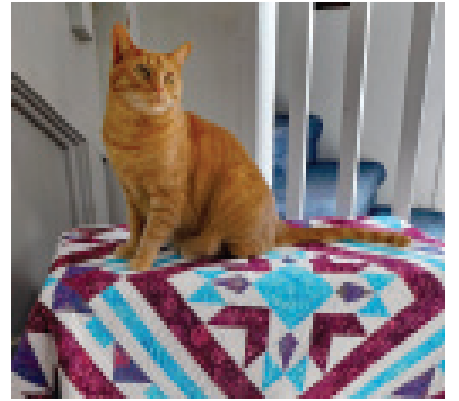
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## Ginger Cats

by Deb Heatherly

My mom always said that orange male cats had the most loving personalities. She has a picture of me around the age of 7 with sponge curlers in my hair, brushing my teeth and our big orange cat sitting on the bathroom counter beside me drinking water from the faucet. I think it's ironic that many, many years later, I still have a big orange boy that does the same thing. Every morning, he jumps on the counter and waits knowing that I'll drip the faucet just for him. The only difference from age 7 to now is that there are no sponge curlers in my hair.



As I look over at Monroe and Timmy, the 2 orange males who now share my life, I cannot help but smile. They both love to lounge near me in the crates that my husband made for them. This lets them be where they want to be, close to me while I work, but out of the way. Ok, maybe only out of the way 80% of the time because there are just some tasks that they are sure I cannot accomplish on my own. Both think that sewing binding on a quilt requires a furry counter weight to hold the quilt in place. Likewise, they think that any papers sitting by my computer might blow away without feline assistance. Quilt tops placed on the floor for a quick photo also need weight, a furry model or both. Convincing them otherwise can lead to quite the conversation.

We adopted Monroe when he was 4 months old. He was in the gangly stage where his ears were too big for his body and his legs seemed far too long. He was quite the comical little guy who had to investigate everything, but once exhausted from his efforts, had to curl up with his fur less mom or dad where he felt safe and loved. If the loudness of a purr is the gauge for contentment, he was one happy little boy. Now at age 6, when not helping in the studio he can be found in front of the bathroom sink with his belly facing the heating vent. In the evening, he is on my lap so that he does not miss Jeopardy or Wheel of Fortune. At night, he is most often found sleeping behind my knees. He definitely grew into his ears and legs and is now quite a big boy.

Timmy was my unexpected blessing a little more than a year ago. Showing up in our yard but too timid to come very close at first, it was a waiting game on both our parts for many weeks. Once I could touch him and get him to the vet, I was thrilled that he was not microchipped so I could claim him as my own. That joy turned to heartbreak on the second vet visit when they scanned him again and this time found a chip. My heart did not want to let him go but I knew if he had a family who was missing him, that I had to try and get him back home.

I called the number given to me by the microchip company and at first was told that they were not missing an orange cat. That led to me texting a photo. Finally, the lady to whom I was talking realized that he was a barn cat she had adopted many years before who had been missing for so long that they assumed something had happened to him. I almost cried happy tears when she said that if I wanted to keep him I could and that she would transfer the paperwork for the microchip.

Of course, I wanted to keep him! I was in love with this fur baby who had found his way to our yard some 8 miles from the barn where he used to live and then carefully and cautiously chosen us. Added to the fact that he now had a warm bed inside where he was protected from the elements and predators, letting him return to being a barn cat was something I just could not fathom.

I read somewhere that when cats choose a person, like Timmy did with us, that it's a true sign of trust. For them, being around someone they fully trust means that they can completely relax and rest at ease because they feel safe from harm. My husband says that each time Timmy looks into our eyes, you can see the gratitude and love. He is one of those cats who lets every emotion show and I am totally smitten. I tell him often that he is my angel and my unexpected blessing.

And so, it is with our little furry family. Timmy and Monroe have become good buddies. Like human siblings, their occasional squabbles occur when they both want the same toy. That is easily remedied by showing them that there are duplicates and that they each can have one. Max, our other male does not like him but we are working on that and our two females Lacey and Little just ignore him.

As their mom, I love each and every one of them and try my best not to have favorites, but I have to admit that these two orange boys just have my heart. My mom was right about them being different. There is just something special about a ginger cat.

--© 2025- Deb Heatherly is a designer for Creative Grids® rulers and the author of eight popular pattern books. Creative Grids® fans are invited to join her Facebook group, Grids Girls, for tips and inspiration and two free mysteries each year. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/770429649800457/>.

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### DeLand, Deltona

## Piecing Life Together

by Barbara Polston

### Word of the Year – Accept

I have never been much for making New Year’s resolutions. I have tried different things over the years. Setting goals I would like to accomplish has been one. Over the past few years, I have settled on choosing a word of the year. One word that will color my decisions and choices as I move through the year. “Patience” one year and “Change” another were successful standouts. For 2025, I have selected “Accept”. This word just popped into my head, with I believe, good reason.

The recently concluded year has been a bit of a challenge for me. After spending most of my adult life in the “Look, Mom, no cavities!” camp, my January 2024 checkup had me embarking on a year’s worth of dental work including an implant and several crowns. It was hard for me to accept. After a hearing test in my 40s, the audiologist told me I had close to “super hearing.” That became my personal belief about myself. A hearing test in 2024 found hearing loss necessitating the addition of hearing aids to my daily wardrobe. Finally, in October, I fell victim to a nasty virus. Feeling poorly for weeks, I’ve been left with lingering joint pains. It was hard for me to accept that this might just be me now.

When my oldest daughter visits from out of state we gather nightly as a family for dinner. I’ve always been the chef, preparing the menus and meals every night. I’ve noticed that she has started to take over a meal or two during each of her visits, kindly reminding me that I’m doing a lot of cooking for holiday meals and deserve a break. I think it’s a way of letting me know I’m getting older and may not be as capable as I’ve always thought myself to be. While I appreciate her thoughtfulness and a break from meal preparation, for part of me it is hard to accept.

This sounds like a pity party. When I talk to friends and hear their woes, I feel very blessed. I am still able to work, get my daily steps in and enjoy sewing and stitching. Some of my friends have not been so lucky.

Why do I sound like I’m singing a version of “Woe is Me?” Because all these changes, coming so quickly, have been hard for me to accept. My self-image has always been one of a confident, capable person. One who does not need to ask for help. One who is in total control of herself and her surroundings. Thinking that I may no longer be that person is hard for me to accept.

For 2025, I will work on being able to accept who I am now. I will be honest with myself about my limits and make allowances for the fact that I am aging. I will celebrate those things that I can do and let go of those things I can’t. Let’s check in at the end of 2025 and see how I did!

© Barbara Polston, October 2024. Barbara is the author of *Quilting with Doilies: Inspiration, Techniques, and Projects* (Schiffer Press, 2015) and a series of children’s books inviting young children to share in *The Adventures of Puppy Brian* ([www.puppybrian.com](http://www.puppybrian.com)). Barbara lives in Tucson, Arizona where she has sailed at retirement, but is getting more time for sewing in a variety of forms. Contact Barbara at [barbarapolstonquilter@gmail.com](mailto:barbarapolstonquilter@gmail.com).



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## Ideas To Make A Great Quilt Show Even Better - Tips for Success

by Judy Sharer

What do you expect to see when you go to a quilt show? Great quilts, right? Of course, if you're a guild who wishes to sponsor a dynamic show, here are some marketing ideas to consider.

Many quilt shows feature raffle quilts, an inexpensive opportunity for a non-quilter to own a handmade quilt while generating revenue for the host guild. Posters with specifics about the show, ideally with a picture of the prize quilt displayed in local fabric and quilt shops encourage early ticket sales and advertise the show months in advance.

To draw even more attendees, some guilds may offer a giveaway of quilt-related items every half hour during the show. Advertising is crucial. Some quilters in the community may not be aware of the guild and by attending may be enticed to join - always a plus.

Another tactic to increase participation is to ask attendees to vote for their favorite quilt and give a ribbon to the maker of that quilt or to the top three quilts that get the most votes. What if you also printed on the back of the ballot a scavenger hunt to find the maker's name of the quilt that has the most pieces, the most varied fabrics, the most colorful, the largest, or the quilt with the most triangles? Keep it limited to four or five items so it can be completed easily and award a special prize to the hunter drawn at the end of the show. The prize could be tickets for the raffle quilt or a refund of their admission fee.

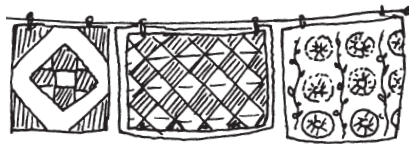
In addition to a raffle quilt, there are various ways to raise money to defray the expense of the show. Members could donate handmade items like table runners, placemats, coasters, and pillows to sell with proceeds going to the guild. Hold a basket raffle with baskets full of quilt-related items. Invite local fabric and quilt shops to be vendors and charge for table space. Quilters love to buy quilt-related supplies, patterns, and fabric at quilt shows!

Remember the show is all day. Maybe provide a variety of desserts, coffee, and tea to purchase and include an area where people can sit and relax. Better yet, go bigger and feature soups or sandwiches. Possibly, a church group or firehall auxiliary might be interested in providing a food service and sharing the profits.

A quilt show is an opportunity to show off the creations of dedicated quilters as well as raise money so the guild can buy fabric for next year's raffle quilt, sponsor a field trip, or perhaps invite speakers to guild meetings. Innovative ideas to accomplish these goals are rewarding to all.

As a quilter and author, I frequently participate as a vendor in quilt shows to showcase and sign my historical romance book series which have a thread of quilting running in the storyline. I've seen many innovative, vibrant and exciting marketing ideas to keep the great craft of quilting alive. Hopefully, this reflection will result profitably for your quilt guild. Happy Quilting!

© 2024 Judy Sharer. Judy is the author of *A Plains Life* wholesome historical romance series published by The Wild Rose Press. *Settler's Life*, *Second Chance Life*, *Civil War Life*, and *Love-Challenged Life* are now available wherever online books and eBooks are sold. Judy's series have a thread of quilting that runs through the family saga story. Visit [judysarar.com](http://judysarar.com) for more details and watch for the release of her next true romance novel.



## We've All Got Per-son-al-i-ty!

by Barbara Kalkis

It was during a long drive that I heard an old song called, "Personality" by Lloyd Price. The catchy tune caught me, but it was the lyrics that held me. Like most contemporary songs, it repeated the same lines again and again, making it easy for me to sing along to it. Unlike contemporary songs it was completely upbeat. No sarcasm, cynicism, sadness, or groveling. No, this is a song about a man rhapsodizing about his love because of one quality, her personality.

What captivated me is that the singer never describes her physical appearance. Listeners never learn the color of her hair or eyes, how she dresses or how seductive she is. It is a love song purely about her character. Her "personality" is in the way she walks, talks, smiles, charms (when was the last time you heard that word?) and loves. And - bonus! - she's got "a great big heart!"

Besides memorizing the words as I screeched along, the lyrics made me think about the concept of personality. Over the past two years, I've traveled to many different cities and states. In each trip the cities were vastly different in unexpected ways. They were all in the United States but each city had its own cuisine, landscape, style and culture. Viewed together, they exuded vastly different personalities.

Pittsburgh has an industrial vibe that captures its steel-making history, along with vast numbers of bridges mapping its geographical location on three rivers. In Boston, buildings flaunt a colonial architectural element. The street names, landmarks and historical sites are constant reminders and tributes to its revolutionary spirit.

Tucson snuggles into its Sonoran Desert home with exotic cactus landscaping, Puebloan architecture and a color palette of browns, oranges, golds and reds that drench its searing sunrises and fiery sunsets. Across the state line, Palm Springs vibrates with a fresh, energetic spirit through multitudes of namesake palms. Its architectural style somehow captures both the stark lines of mid-20th century modernism and the casual-cool personality of southern California at play.

These were all pleasant travel reflections that I could have put aside, except that I couldn't get that song out of my mind! I kept humming it at odd moments and was doing so when I gathered the mail one day. The mail carrier had dropped several issues of *The Country Register* in my mailbox. As I drifted through the pages of one issue after another, the advertisements caught my eye. For some reason I realized that I was looking at the personalities of the shop owners in their ads.

Almost without thinking I started to study the shop names. It seemed they fell into personality types. Birds are popular sources for names: like The Blue Crow, The Bird Nest, Red Cardinal Quilting. Some choose animals, like Red Fox Yarns. Barn Door Quilts and Prairie Point Junction exalt rural life. Others tell exactly what they do, like Loving Stitches, Compass Star Quilts, Cactus Quilting, The Sewing Room, Calico House, Nuts and Bolts Fabric, The Copper Needle. (Names were chosen spontaneously while writing this article).

I learned several things by getting attached to "Personality." First, six years of voice lessons was not one of my better investments. Second, we can groom, change and refine our personality - just like cities. Third, we all have a personality style. Some folks know theirs all their lives. Others reveal it purposely or accidentally, as in choosing a business name. Some of us must think deeply about it. But it's worth the time because personality is like a secret ingredient to a gourmet dish. It flavors life in the most charming ways!

©Barbara Kalkis, 2025. Barbara writes, teaches and consults under the business name *Maestro Marketing & Public Relations*. It was chosen as she watched the maestro conduct an entire orchestra in perfect unison.

# Sebring

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 D E L E T R A S I W E N G O M R E I  
 R Y A M I I I T H O O K R C I U R V  
 C A S S S R N S S I N O I O L H R A  
 A D T T H I A E T E A R O H Y T U L  
 L I S C N I C I P S T C E C S A S I  
 V L U T O N D D T E C W R Y O E E G  
 A O P R A A M O T S U C E O A D R I  
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| ASH WEDNESDAY | DEATH     | JESUS         | PENITENCE    |
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| BUNNY         | EGG HUNT  | LENT          | RESURRECTION |
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## Springing Ahead Without Falling Back

by Wayne M. Bosman

I have not been able to write much lately. Life does that sometimes. The holidays grab my attention, and then after the New Year begins, I get to breathe out again. I figure out where I am and what I might have to say.

This year, life has added even more complications. Shortly after New Year's, my 40-year-old daughter went into the hospital for more chemotherapy, a last-ditch attempt against the cancer she had battled for the last year and a half. The latest obstacle was a bout of pneumonia that had to be treated before any other treatment could take place. It was the beginning of a downward spiral that ended a week ago.

As difficult as all of this has been, I know that I am not the first or only one to deal with a loved one's premature death. My wife, Kerri, and I have been watching my daughter's fitful decline since she received the official diagnosis. We moved to our current home to be able to take care of things for her and her husband and their children--doing all of the little things that still needed to occur. Being available to pick up her children from school, shopping and preparing meals suitable for her family provided her with some relief knowing that they still were getting what they needed when she could no longer do the things that she loved to do as a wife and mother. As the cancer progressed and she was anchored more and more to the house, she was always happy to get the little messages that we had picked up her son on time and what we were cooking for supper.

Now that momentum, which had become the central focus of our lives, has come to a halt. Life is demanding a new momentum. Life always does. We are all still grieving and will be for a long time, but children need meals. The Marine Corps has gone above and beyond in providing leave for her husband, but ultimately, he will go back to his full-time duties. Kerri and I will settle into the new momentum life demand of us.

That brings me to the theme of this article. While we are still mired in the middle of winter with remnants of last week's snow on the ground, it is clear that it will not always be that way. As the snow melts and we look out the back window at the garden space, our thoughts are already turning toward the next stage. Last year's garden was one of our most productive ever, and we are starting to dream of an even better one this year. Seed catalogs are arriving. Plans for starting seedlings indoors are pushing their way to the forefront of our minds.

Of course, some of this is what you might call a defense mechanism. Focus on growth and new life, so the sorrows from what is lost forever don't drag us under. Naturally. There is too much about the end of life that we can't comprehend. To me, the greatest act of faith is to continue to live--to plant seeds that I may or may not ever get to harvest. My mother is 104 years old now. If you ever want to get her talking, ask about her garden and all of the gardens she has tended over the years. Ask her about her mother's garden, and the bounty it produced that got her family and many neighbors through the Great Depression.

It won't be long now before the first signs of spring arrive--the silly daffodils that always seem to bloom between snowstorms. Time for me to spring ahead and not fall back.

© 2024 Wayne M. Bosman is a retired auto mechanic living in Cape Carteret, NC. His email is [wbosman1@gmail.com](mailto:wbosman1@gmail.com).



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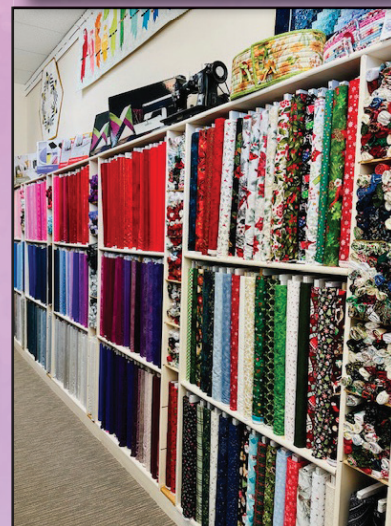
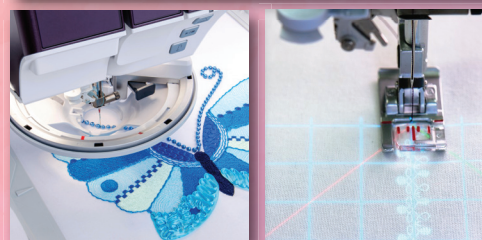
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It's Spring ♥



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## Life on My Farm - Breezy Manor

Steadfast in Changing Times by Donna Jo Copeland, farmeress

I'm writing about spring with ice and snow still on the ground--giving way to mid-winter thaw. Hard to guess what this illusive spring will bring but March in Indiana is a crap shoot. This farmeress is longing for a cool moist calm weather window but my 75-year-old bones yearn for 70 degrees and sun filled days.



Mom never took the flannel sheets off the beds and put away our long johns until at least mid-April. I can remember tugging up long underwear beneath my Easter dress several times.

January went by far too fast. With the very bitter temperatures I spent too much energy keeping body and spirit together, water thawed, firewood carried, barn tightening against strong winds. Had planned to weave on the two looms in the kitchen but I needed to close off all but two rooms due to the cold. And I can't get my hands to work at weaving when it's 48 degrees. Even changed to making Dutch oven salt rising bread as yeast won't raise when it's that cold.

I pursued other fiber activities. knitting, spinning, rug hooking, dyed some locks on the woodstove. Slept most nights in my chair. Us old gals are tough.

Sitting here in my old Windsor chair surrounded by spinning wheels, I look up at cob webs on the ceiling. They will stay 12 feet up until spring cleaning. Mom taught me that spider webs would stop blood flow if needed, just in case.

The deep snow did allow some cleaning. Snow is the best way to clean wool rugs and sweaters. A snow bath leaves them clean, soft and smelling fresh.

Early spring is always a good time to clean out, recycle, share things you no longer need or use. Many of my fiber friends have been hard at it. I'm more of a reorganizer, most farmeresses are. What if I need that very thing in 5 years? I can't just toss old clothes. Buttons, zippers are saved for one day. The cloth is cut up to weave rag rugs. One mess feeds another.

Needing to weed out my old spices, I just couldn't throw them out. So made some dye pots with oregano, rosemary and turmeric. I will dye with most anything.

The internet/technology and I are still feuding. The new phone is a beast. But I have found some homesteading and sheep groups out there. It's neat that some young people are wanting to embrace a simple agrarian life. In the nick of time, I had almost given up hope.

I heard someone say the other day that one of the reasons a woman's childbearing time was limited was so she could become a grandmother and impart her wisdom. I know I certainly learned a great deal from my grands, they had the time and the want to teach. I wasn't done learning when they all passed.

Sadly, my grandkids don't seem to want my knowledge or family history. They had better get their stuff together soon. Before I'm gone. I'm the elder in the family, the keeper of history and secrets. And I know some neat stuff!

In my realm I treasure old ways, knowledge, tools, furniture. And calm, quiet. Listening to sounds now I realize they are just sounds--complaining, selling, influencing. Constantly. I'm thankful we didn't have a TV until I was in the 5th grade and it wasn't turned on often.

I heard the voices of parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, grands, nature and farm animals. I heard the stillness of sunrise and the night music.

It saddens me to think of what sounds kids listen to now. In my loom house, no electricity, sitting in the middle of the sheep pasture, I work with the sounds of sheep, birds, rhythm of loom and spinning wheel. Peace and contentment, touched by my ancestors. Good work, hard work.

With the new season, new adventures and promises, let's try to take a step back. Listen to the little sounds, be at peace, love. Plant a garden, maybe a rose bush.

No recipe this time, but garden tips instead.

-© 2024 - Donna Jo Copeland writes from her farm, Breezy Manor, Mooresville, Indiana where she tends her flock and creates art from the wool. Being the 14th generation of farm owner/operator, Donna Jo brings alive the struggles of farm life.

### Breezy Manor Recipe for Gardening Donna Jo's Garden Tips

- Take plastic feed sacks (pet or livestock), fill with barn leavings, punch a few holes in the bottom. Plant potatoes, easy and easy to harvest. I have grown tomatoes this way too, tying the bags to the fence.
- In sturdy cardboard boxes, fill with barn leavings, plant beans. Easy care
- And if you don't have access to barn cleanings, come down, bring your bags, take all you want!

\*Submitted by Donna Jo Copeland, Farmeress at Breezy Manor Farm. (Original recipe from the 1889 Sundance Gazette in Wyoming.)  
See her article in this edition for what's happening on her farm.

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## Cleaning My Ears: The Hearing Method That Changed My Life

### Reflections on the Passing of my Father

by Kathy J. Stotak

My father passed away this past year, marking a new chapter: both parents are now ancestors, whispering their wisdoms through the ethers instead of the phone line. I still feel them though, guiding me along my own yellow brick road with their hands gently on my shoulder.

If you are in this category too you know that the first holiday season is like no other. It is emptier. There is a deep wanting filling your space. It is just not the same as it was.

Amidst my sadness, I'm thankful that I received full peace on my father's life while he was still alive. There are no lingering regrets or mysteries to solve.

It wasn't always like that though. It took me most of my life to figure out my dad. He was a farmer and rancher, therefore worked from sun-up to sun-down. Because of his hard work ethic our primary conversations were at supper time. And those conversations were pretty lame, like "How was school?" "What gas mileage are you getting?" or "Let's play a game of cards."

I wanted to have rich conversations with him like I did with my mother. We could talk for hours and we were a lot alike. She was a writer, and I am now a writer. She was a photographer, and I am now a photographer. She found joy and curiosity all around her. For example, my mother brought me into her world of noticing wild baby's breath growing in the prairie ditches, or watching the tiniest of spiders weaving their home in the corner window. Most impressive, she could notice a hurting heart from friends and strangers alike, then did her best to share compassion and peace to brighten their spirit.

Naturally, when my mother died 21 years ago, I wanted to communicate with my dad just like I did with mom. I just could not figure out how to communicate with him though.

A few years ago, it dawned on me. He had been communicating this whole time – but I wasn't listening. You see, he did not communicate like my mother. He spoke in his own way: not through his words – he communicated through his actions.

I started watching his actions instead of his words, and a whole new relationship opened up. I listened as he loved unconditionally. I watched as he forgave those who hurt him. I saw how he let the little things go – all of them. Yes, he shook his head at some of us sometimes, but he never said a word in judgment. He knew it was our life's choices, and instead likely said a quiet little prayer. Above all of this, I watched as he gave thanks to God and Jesus throughout his life.

I reword time even further to look back on his life with these new ears of mine. Despite working farmer and rancher hours, he ended early some days when it came to service work. He was an elder of his church, serving a vital role in the spiritual health of the community. He volunteered in many non-profit organizations and local services, such as being a volunteer fire fighter. My dad would always help others when it was the right thing to do and he had the means to do it.

Now that he is gone, I heard his wisdom loud and clear: every day God is expressing itself through our hands and heart.

We have no choice but to reflect on our own lives: how are our actions imprinting our legacy?

How about we simply give gratitude for what we're already expressing through our hands and heart. Also, who do we have a hard time hearing today in our life? Let's take these expanded ears to them and I bet we will hear clear as a bell.

-© Kathy J. Stotak Need another lift? Check out 60+ other stories at <https://2minutelift.com/>



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Recipe

### Baked Bean Casserole

Courtesy of Hazel Thomas, From The Country Register of Michigan

- \* 1 pound ground chuck
- \* ½ pound bacon, cut up
- \* 1 cup chopped onion
- \* 1 cup chopped celery
- \* 1 can pork and beans (large)
- \* 1 can baby lima beans, drained

- \* 1 can kidney beans
- \* ½ cup catsup
- \* ½ cup white sugar
- \* ½ cup brown sugar

- \* 1 teaspoon salt
- \* 1 teaspoon mustard
- \* 2 teaspoons vinegar

**Directions:**  
 Brown ground chuck, bacon, onion, and celery. Drain off fat and set aside. Mix pork and beans, lima beans and kidney beans together. Add catsup, white sugar and brown sugar and mix. Mix salt, mustard and vinegar and add to above mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

**“It has taken me some time to realize that buying quilt supplies and actually using them are 2 separate hobbies.”**

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## Building Harmony by Jeff Cappis

### Shopping and Other Adventures

Okay guys. Listen up. If you are the master of shopping at your local hardware store, I'm with you. We know where everything is, we know how much it should cost and the brands we like. We're ready and organized for the self-checkout. We have a route through the store. In and out quick with a military precision and - done. Total efficiency. Yeah, you're good. Like your worthiness to be in this world depends on it.



Now, go shopping with your wife.

I went into town with my wife to go grocery shopping and soon realized I have to start learning how to shop all over again. She does a lot of the same things I do. She keeps lists, she knows where everything is, she knows how much it should cost and the brands she likes. But she has done a lot more research so I'm learning to pay strict attention. I'm on her turf.

Grocery stores are a lot more chaotic. It's a dog-eat-dog parking lot; the shopping carts require change and everybody rushes around.

Inevitably she pulls out a list and sends me on missions around the store to find things. There's a lot of stuff in a grocery store. If I go off without knowing the particular brand/ size/ expiry date/ package dimensions/ grade/ and sales status, I'll have to walk back across the store to get the right one. Do you have any idea how many kinds of beans there are? Sometimes I have to cross the store two or three times. Note: A smart woman knows not to send her husband for hair color.

I run across other husbands wandering the aisles looking for stuff too. We're lost and we nervously joke with each other about the exercise we're getting. One guy said he'd rather be mowing the lawn or shingling the roof. Another said he'd rather be playing 36 holes of golf. Easier.

Another rule is that the chances of her being where you think she is going to be depends on how awkward the stuff is that you are carrying. I once had a couple big jugs of cold milk, canned goods, potato chips and juggled them across the store only to find she wasn't there. Stressful.

Apparently standing in the middle of the store shouting her name is frowned upon by everyone. Especially my wife. The staff wouldn't let me use the intercom so my next idea was to start doing concentric circles around the store perimeter. After 3 trips around the store I went up and down the aisles I thought she'd be at.

I finally found her in a totally different part of the store looking at pots and pans. (Oh ya, turns out we often go off our shopping list for other things too). By then I'd lost most of the potato chips, half the canned goods and my hands were frost bitten from the milk jugs.

She put down the pan she was inspecting and said, "Where have you been? I've been looking for you everywhere." My left hand went numb from the cold milk jug and I dropped it on my foot. Now I felt not only slow but clumsy too. Clean up on aisle 36.

Aside from the getting of goods, there is also a certain etiquette to shopping. You don't pretend the shopping cart is a motorcycle and make engine noises while revving the handle. Skidding the cart sideways around corners is dangerous and riding the front like a hood ornament is just annoying. Also, one should abstain from trying to juggle items like canned goods or eggs. Clean up on aisle 21.

If I break any of these rules and I'll get a stern look from my wife followed by a long silence. I think that means she's mad at me, but I'm not sure. She won't say.

The checkout is the next adventure. There is a long boring calm as you wait in line. Here you get to read magazine covers as you pass the gum and impulse merchandise. But when you get to the front of the line the cart must be immediately unloaded in a timely and orderly fashion. The person at the till is faster than you are so don't doddle or the people behind you will start making noises.

At our store I have to bag our own groceries. It is important to know that eggs and bread don't go on the bottom (If you do that some people will rudely call you stupid) and heavy stuff goes in the bag first. Cleaning supplies don't go with the fruit. \*Note: Toothpaste, soap and shampoo are not considered cleaning supplies.

Now it's time to make a clean get away. Out the door, get the dollar back from the shopping cart, load the groceries in the trunk, cart goes back to the store and get out of the parking lot as fast as possible without running down any other elderly people. The police will pull you over if you have one stuck in your grill.

All in all, I have to say the experience is survivable but prepare to have your ego (and possibly your marriage) damaged. Whenever possible, stick to shopping at the hardware store. They understand us there.



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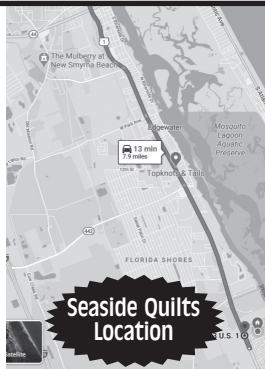
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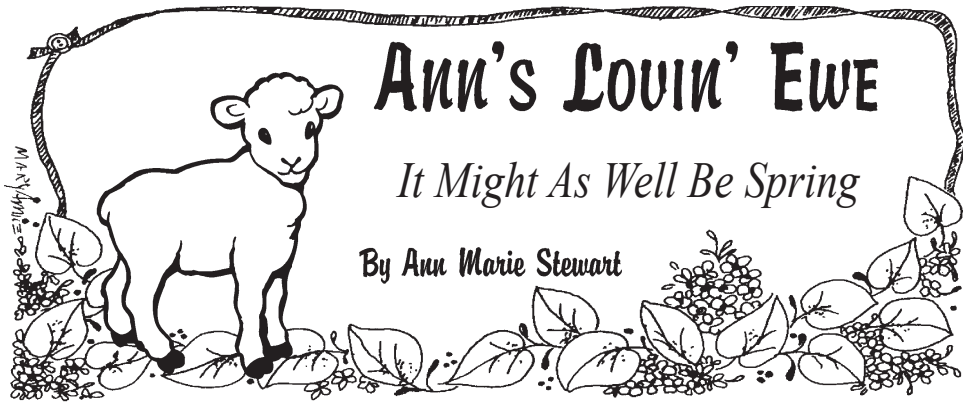
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## Melbourne, Sebastian and Online



Springing forward is a challenge. I love lighter and longer evenings but don't relish dark and cold early mornings. This year Daylight Savings falls on March 9th and Spring begins on March 20 (hopefully), and Easter follows on April 20.

On Daylight Savings Sunday, we scramble to get ready for church with an hour less time and the inevitable question, "Is it Spring back and Fall forward or Spring forward and Fall back?" Our clocks are all different. Which ones have been changed? What time is it really?

When my girls were younger and evening arrived, they couldn't believe they had to go to bed. "It's too early!" The next morning came too early, too, and they couldn't believe they had to get up in the dark. By Wednesday, they were still missing the school bus.

This meant another embarrassing encounter dropping them off at the school's Kiss and Go. Though my youngest daughter threw my jeans jacket over me, there was no hiding the fact that I was not properly attired. The principal opened the car door and called out, "Why Hello Christine and Julia!" My response wasn't quite as cheery, "Why is it always YOU when I'm wearing my pajamas?!!!" It seemed like my kids were running away from the car without kissing me goodbye.

The change in temperature also creates other challenges. Is it "In like a Lion and out like a Lamb?" Or the reverse? If I flip my clothes from winter to spring, then the weather goes back to a wintry mix weather watch with forecasts in the 40's. It leaves us wondering if the upcoming Spring Break will be a break for Spring!

Spring also means "In Like a Lamb" and our flock of sheep change clothes as well. There are many reasons to remove a ewe's wintry coat a few weeks prior to lambing. One reason is that the pregnant ewe will go to the barn to deliver. In addition, she'll be more in tune to the needs of her newborn lamb who is also missing a thick woolly layer of protection. I sympathize with our woolly girls, for without their fleece they look like a flock of goats shivering in the wintry air.

With March and April's unpredictable weather, I can't figure out if its time to savor one more fireside evening with hot chocolate, popcorn, and a good book, or time for throwing open the windows and beginning spring cleaning. Do I want more cozy times with the family inside or is it time to break out into the freedom of outdoor family fun?

Although the weather and sunlight is unseasonable, thankfully, the calendar itself remains predictable. I like flipping to a new page to see what's coming up. I enjoy a new day, a new season of the year, a new season of life. And no matter if the weather is "in like a lion" the lambs will soon arrive and skip across the fields. Maybe then we'll be assured that, as the Rodgers and Hammerstein song goes, "It might as well be spring."

© 2025 Ann Marie Stewart "Stars in the Grass" won best debut novel in the Christys, a great spring/summer read.



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## Everything's Coming Up—Crocuses!

by Janet M Bair

I love spring bulbs! Out of the many flowers I have planted over the years, crocuses and daffodils are the most enduring. I can hardly wait to see our purple and yellow hyacinths blooming. Sadly, our tulips have not survived the squirrels' descent upon them.



What is especially fun is that my "spring flower bed" is located right next to our house in a very sunny spot. In January, the daffodils and crocuses shoot their green tips through a frozen earth. Snow doesn't seem to stop their daring rise above ground.

This has been a most encouraging spot in our yard, for when all looks bleak and dead, the daffodils remain undefeated year after year. Surprisingly our crocuses somehow have become scattered all about our front lawn. I know I didn't plant the bulbs in the middle of the lawn. Who moved them? Only the squirrels know for sure.

Last year I counted 32 lavender crocus flowers blooming among the grass. I know I originally planted yellow and white crocuses too but I guess they taste better? because they have disappeared. It has been kind of fun to see where the flowers pop up.

With spring coming, maybe I will get busy like the squirrels. I'll sew some new flowered hot mats or cloth napkins. Or I could create a new wall hanging for the front door. It's time to finish up the larger quilting projects before our two spare bedrooms need to become space for summer visitors. The bedroom I sew in is not air conditioned which makes for uncomfortable quilting days in the summer.

I just finished an orange and yellow quilt top that needs quilting. Our quilt guild sews Comfort Quilts for The Hole in the Wall Gang Summer Camp in CT. The last collection day for quilts is in May. I have two other quilts in process besides the orange one to finish by then.

I thought the lavender quilt I'm working on would be easy. However, I bought the fabric two years ago and didn't realize there wouldn't be enough for the pattern I chose until after I cut it out. I will have to improvise something.

Isn't that what we all do with life—we improvise? Yes, the squirrels may have changed my garden design but it's still beautiful. My quilt will still make some little girl happy with whatever pattern I improvise.

What projects are you working on? What are your plans this spring? Even if they have to be changed around a bit, I hope that you find some colorful ways to make your days brighter.

- © Janet M. Bair of Ansonia, CT. You may contact her at librarybair@hotmail.com



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## A South New Jersey Farmer's Stories AM radio is my comfort food for the soul.

*by Ed Cuneo*  
You've heard of comfort food, right? That's the victuals that aren't supposed to be physically good for you but help you spiritually in a time of need.

AM radio is my comfort food for the soul.  
Sounds a bit strange but let me explain. I don't know of anyone today who listens to the AM signal on their radio. No one would even consider it in my part of the country. So, I count myself as one of those who prefer to torture themselves listening to "an inferior" signal when I could have access to the FM signal, the Internet and Satellite radio signals. (As a confession I do listen to those also. But my heart is with AM).  
I am a radio nut.

Remember the character Radio from the movie of the same name starring Cuba Gooding Jr. some years ago? Growing up that was me listening to the radio all the time. AM radio. I listened to it in the packing shed at the farm, in the pickup truck and car radios and even in the basement of our house where we had a small room, we called the model room where we built our plastic model cars and trucks with our buddies.

Today it sounds kind of quaint and it probably is but I am still a fan of AM radio. Lately the controversy over the removal of the AM signal from automobiles has put AM radio somewhat back in the spotlight. Back in the day, that was all we had to listen to. Sure, FM radio signals were around but you could only find them on a good Hi Fi set. If they did appear on a portable nobody listened to them because all of the popular stations were on the AM dial.

Ah, who could deny the romanticism of AM radio? Late night you could get signals from all over the country. The signal came in unless you went under a bridge. What about listening to it in the cab of a truck, the crackling of noise signaling the coming of a thunderstorm and hurry up and bail and pick up the hay or put the baskets of tomatoes in the garage after collecting them.

It was a blessing to grow up in the age of AM radio. Top 40 ruled the airwaves and what a big deal that was. Your favorite songs played in a rotation at least every half hour so if you missed them because you were busy you were sure to hear it again very soon. And if you were lucky you could call up and request a song on the air and you became a celebrity of the day to all of your friends.

Living in South Jersey afforded us the opportunity of being in one of the top listening areas in the country. As a kid everyone listened to Famous 56 WFIL or if you were my parent's age you listened to WIBG or Wibbage as we called it.

If you weren't into pop music then you could get the news from WCAU or listen to the family friendly WIP where the likes of Skip Clayton or Wee Willie Weber helped you through your day with the news, weather reports and general happenings in your area.

That was the beauty of AM radio then. It was very provincial. It was a conduit of information in an era when the TV provided only a few minutes a day in local news or events but the AM radio was always on and always talking about it. Not only did we get the professional football scores but we also got local high school scores and highlights which is virtually unheard of today. Announcements about dances and other social events were routinely reported on the local AM station.

In addition to the local broadcasting angle, AM radio and baseball were made for each other.

My earliest memories of AM radio listenership go back to when my father was hired as a bird dog scout for the Baltimore Orioles. He would go out to the family car which at that time was the 1961 Chevy and listen to the Orioles games at night on the AM signal of WBAL 1090 AM out of Baltimore. At least until my mother made him stop because he would almost run down the battery.

My father's father did nothing but listen to baseball on the AM radio. As a child of the Depression it was all he had as radio was the prime means of communication. I asked him one time why he only followed baseball on the radio and he told me that was the most comfortable way for him to enjoy the game.

I still prefer to listen to baseball on the AM dial. From my home here in South Jersey I can listen to the Orioles, the Phillies, the Mets, the Nationals, the Yankees, the Blue Jays, the Red Sox, the Pirates and the Indians on a good evening. Most of the time I fall asleep listening to those clubs on the AM dial.

If I'm not listening to a game on the AM dial, I'm channel surfing to find a station that still plays those Top 40 songs of yesteryear in what is known today as the Oldies.

Mostly I still get the feeling that AM radio and its signal allows me to reach out and be in different places around the country in a kind of mystical fashion that satisfies my young soul.

That's why AM radio is a form of comfort food for my soul.

—© 2024 by Ed Cuneo who hails from South Jersey. Ed Cuneo is a "Jersey Farm Boy" born and raised and still residing in Southern New Jersey with his wife, Teresa, daughter Anna and her rescue dog Henry. A retired school teacher, he owns the last 14 acres of his grandparents' farm where he has a market garden which serves as much as a place of quiet reflection as it does for its bountiful food supply.



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## GIRLFRIEND WISDOM



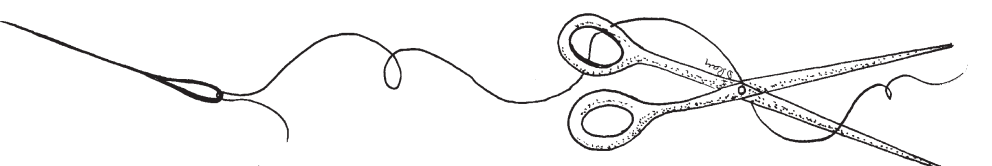
"Bless You" is often heard after a sneeze, even from a stranger in the grocery line. It feels really good and kind when we hear "Bless You"! How about the phrase "A Blessing in Disguise" referring to something that at first appears bad or unlucky but is actually good. We love it when that happens! "Count your many Blessings name them one by one..."

an age old hymn from 1897 is a perfect practise to make a special effort to appreciate the good things in one's life. The Irish have a well-known blessing: "May your troubles be less, Your Blessings be more, and nothing but happiness come through your door." A wedding blessing: May your marriage always bring glory to God, joy to one another, and Blessings to your family for many generations to come." A House Blessing: Bless this house, O Lord we pray, make it safe by night and day.. Bless these walls so firm and stout, Keeping want and trouble out... Bless this door that it may prove, Every open, to Joy and Love..."

**GIRLFRIEND WISDOM:**  
May you add your own blessing to these examples each and every day!

Joy & Blessings, 

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# The Daily Mentality

My house talks to me in the spring. It wants me to open all the doors & windows & let in fresh air, & it says "Clean me!" The hardest thing is to stay focused & not run outside to stare at the garden! ♡

Spring cleaning is GOOD, especially after it's done, after the comforters have been aired; after all the dishes & glasses have been taken out & shined up &

the cupboard shelves are sparkling clean. Then I get to go outside, bring the bird houses out of the barn, & hang a flower wreath on the kitchen door. ♡



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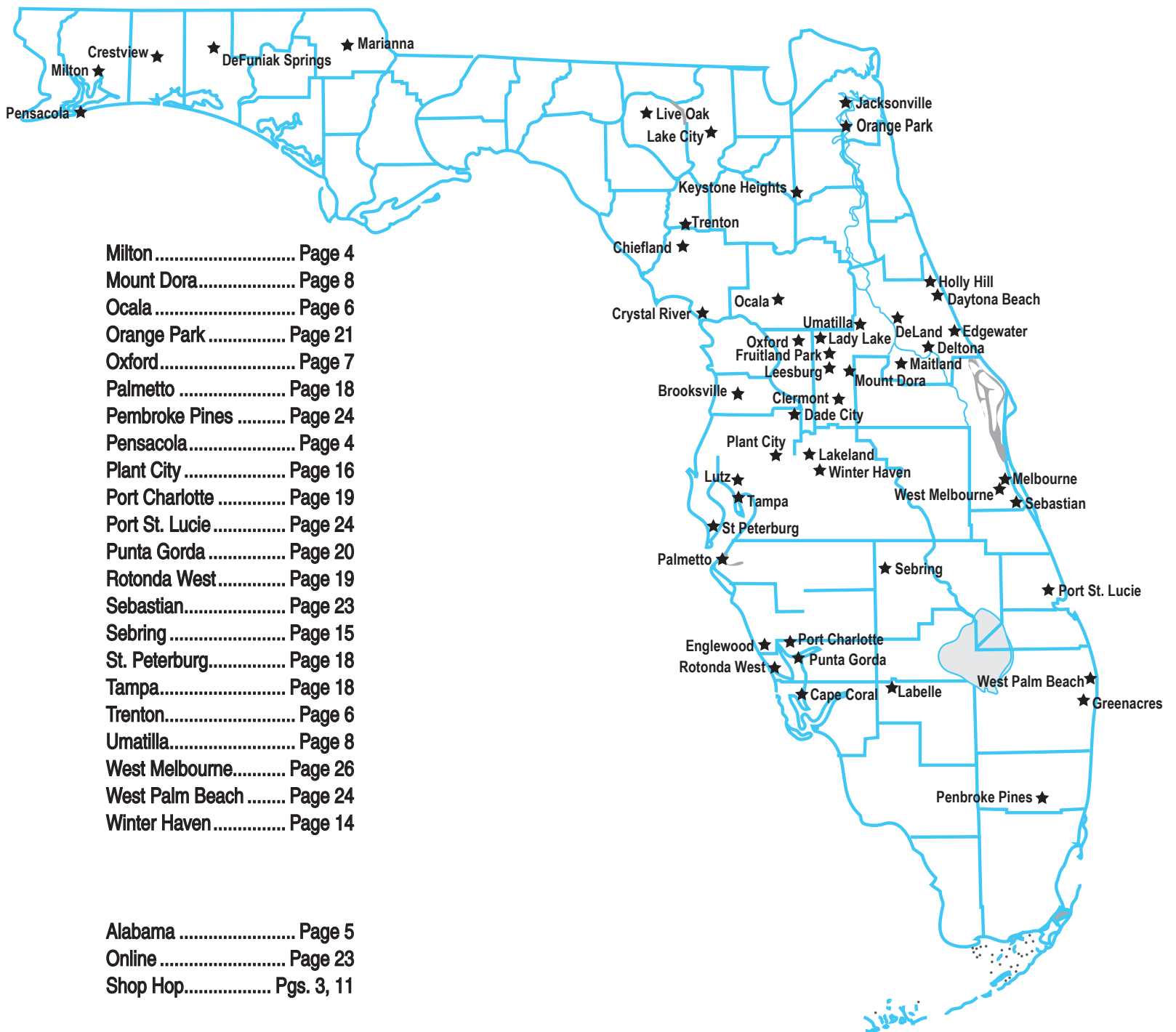
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## City Index & Map

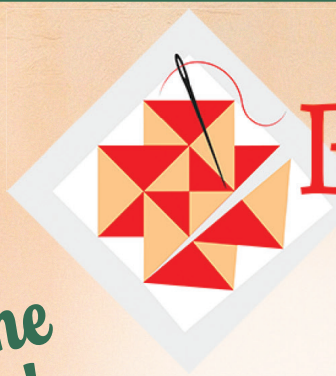
Ozark, AL ★



- Brooksville ..... Page 16
- Cape Coral ..... Page 20
- Chiefland ..... Page 6
- Clermont ..... Page 13
- Crestview ..... Page 5
- Crystal River ..... Page 6
- Dade City ..... Pgs. 12, 13
- Daytona Beach ..... Page 22
- DeFuniak Springs ..... Page 5
- DeLand ..... Page 9
- Deltona ..... Page 9
- Edgewater ..... Page 22
- Englewood ..... Page 19
- Fruitland Park ..... Page 7
- Greenacres ..... Page 24
- Holly Hill ..... Page 22
- Jacksonville ..... Page 21
- Keystone Heights ..... Page 21
- Labelle ..... Page 20
- Lady Lake ..... Pgs. 7, 10
- Lake City ..... Page 6
- Lakeland ..... Page 13
- Leesburg ..... Page 7
- Live Oak ..... Page 6
- Lutz ..... Page 17
- Maitland ..... Page 10
- Marianna ..... Page 5
- Melbourne ..... Page 23

- Milton ..... Page 4
- Mount Dora ..... Page 8
- Ocala ..... Page 6
- Orange Park ..... Page 21
- Oxford ..... Page 7
- Palmetto ..... Page 18
- Pembroke Pines ..... Page 24
- Pensacola ..... Page 4
- Plant City ..... Page 16
- Port Charlotte ..... Page 19
- Port St. Lucie ..... Page 24
- Punta Gorda ..... Page 20
- Rotonda West ..... Page 19
- Sebastian ..... Page 23
- Sebring ..... Page 15
- St. Peterburg ..... Page 18
- Tampa ..... Page 18
- Trenton ..... Page 6
- Umatilla ..... Page 8
- West Melbourne ..... Page 26
- West Palm Beach ..... Page 24
- Winter Haven ..... Page 14

- Alabama ..... Page 5
- Online ..... Page 23
- Shop Hop ..... Pgs. 3, 11



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