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Nov. & Dec. 2025



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# The Florida Register

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## Just A Note...

This is a wonderful time of year to enjoy many traditions, shop for special gifts and decorating needs, and so much more that the holiday season brings – using our publication as your guide. We have included recipes that you may want to add to your festivities. Have fun exploring the special events that are summarized in our Shows & Events Listing!

Please be sure to visit our Facebook page and like it. We post lots of updates about shops and events, plus we welcome reader comments and interaction. On our website, you can find links to our advertisers' web sites, view the current shows and events listing, read the paper online, subscribe to the paper, and more.



David, Rachel, Grace and Amy

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Rachel was home for almost a week in September so all 3 of us could join Grace at UGA for her sorority's family weekend. We had so much fun visiting Grace, catching up with her friends & their families, and having amazing meals in Athens. November and December will be busy months for our family and I know for our readers probably too. So I like to make sure to remember to enjoy these upcoming family gatherings, special events and so much more that November and December bring.

Our January/February issue will be out shortly after the first of the year. That issue has an annual theme of Quilting, Needlearts, Fiber Arts and Sewing! So be sure to plan a visit to your favorite shop to pick up your copy!

Have fun shopping this Holiday season. Don't forget to use our guide as your road map. We wish you and your family Happy Holidays!

Amy & David



## Shows and Events Listing

### January/February events due by December 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. 15)
- Mon-Sat 5:30 pm ..... Quilts and Lace (pg. 29)
- Tuesdays 6 pm ..... Inspire Quilting & Sewing (pg. 22)
- Wednesdays 7 pm ..... Crafty Quilters (pg. 19)
- Fridays 3:30 pm ..... Quilted Twins (pg. 15)

### November

- 1..... Grand Reopening of Black Dog Quilt Shop in Clermont (pg. 16)
- 1-Dec 31 ..... Holiday & Cyber Monday Sales at Quilts and Lace in Melbourne (pg. 29)
- 1-Dec 31 ..... Holiday & Cyber Monday Sales at Sweet Time Quilting in Sebastian (pg. 29)
- 13-15 ..... Holiday Open with Great Sales at Beyond the Stitches in Crystal River (pg. 7)
- 14-15 ..... 42nd Annual Fantastic Quilt Show at Venetian Center in Leesburg (pg. 9)
- 14-15 ..... Shut the Front Door Event at Quilts and Lace in Melbourne (pg. 29)
- 14-15 ..... 12th Anniversary Celebration at Pam's Fabric Nook in Port St Lucie (pg. 30)
- 15..... Finishing Class at Common Thread in Ocala (pg. 7)
- 21-22 ..Arts & Crafts Holiday Show at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Palm Harbor (pg. 24)
- 21-Dec 6 ..... Visit the 6 participating shops in the Central Florida Shop Hop (pg. 11)
- 28..... Black Friday Sale at Beyond the Stitches in Crystal River (pg. 7)
- 28-29 ..... Black Friday & Saturday Specials at Scrap & Sew in Lutz (pg. 23)
- 28-29 ..... Colorful Friday & Small Business Saturday Sales at Quilt A Bit in Greenacres (pg. 30)
- 28-29, Dec 1 .....Mystery Sale at Margie's Sew Much Fun in Crestview (pg. 4)
- 29..... Annual Holiday Bazaar with Lanark Village Wandering Star Quilters in Lanark Village (pg. 5)

### December

- 1-3 ..... Grand Opening of new space & Tent Sale at Meg's Quilt Cottage in Sebring (pg. 19)
- 1-20 ..... Super Savings on Brother Machines at Nana's Quilt Shop in Brooksville (pg. 20)
- 6..... Tool Time at Margie's Sew Much Fun in Crestview (pg. 4)
- 9-13 ..... Pre-Inventory Sale at Cookie's Fabrics in Marianna (pg. 5)
- 18-19 ..... Year End Sale at Nana's Quilt Shop in Brooksville (pg. 20)
- 26-27 ..... Super Clearance Sale at Quilt A Bit in Greenacres (pg. 30)

### January 2026

- 8-10 ..... Stitching Retreat at Common Thread in Ocala (pg. 7)
- 15-18 ..... Buttons Light Up Our Lives Show at Shores Resort in Daytona Beach Shores (pg. 28)
- 17..... Celebration's Pups & Prints at Lakeside Park in Celebration (pg. 14)
- 17-24 ..... Visit the 9 participating shops in the North Florida Shop Hop (pg. 27)
- 23-24 ..... Marketplace 2026 at Rohan Recreation Center in The Villages (pg. 8)
- 23-24 ..... Quilts by the Lake Quilt Show at First Presbyterian Church in Lakeland (pg. 17)
- 30-31 ..... Hands-On Classes with Moda Fabric Event at Quilts and Lace in Melbourne (pg. 29)

### February 2026

- 6-8 ..... Stampfest at Matheos Hall at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Clearwater (pg. 24)
- 7..... Airing of the Quilts at Maxine Barritt Park in Venice (pg. 25)
- 13-14 ..... St Andrew Bay Quilter's Guild Show at Central Panhandle Fair, in Panama City (pg. 5)
- 13-14 ..... A Gathering of Quilts Show at Charlotte Harbor Center in Punta Gorda (pg. 25)

continued on next page

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It's Not Just a Craft, It's Therapy

Our Writer's Favorite Holiday Recipes

Can be found throughout this edition!  
We thank them and hope you enjoy trying the recipes.



### Events, Continued

#### February 2026 continued

- 13-15 ..... America's Garden Quilts Show at Rec & Aquatic Center in New Port Richey (pg. 24)
- 20-21 ..... Chautauqua Quilter Guild Quilt Show at the Community Cntr in DeFuniak Springs (pg. 5)
- 27-28 ..... Seaside Piecemakers Quilt Show at Melbourne Auditorium in Melbourne (pg. 29)
- 27-Mar 21 ..... Save the Date to visit the participating shops in the Central Florida Shop Hop (pg. 20)

#### March 2026

- 1-Apr 30 ..... Visit participating shops during the All Florida Shop Hop (pg. 3)
- 21..... Lanark Village Wandering Star Quilters Quilt Show at Chillas Hall in Lanark Village (pg. 5)
- 28..... Suwannee Valley Quilt Fest at the Historic Train Depot in Trenton (pg. 6)

#### April 2026

- 25..... Airing of the Quilts at George Sands Park in Carrabelle (pg. 5)

#### May 2026

- 11-15 .. Quilting & Sewing Camp at Blue Lake (AL) with Stitcher's Quest in Fort Walton Beach (pg. 4)

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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!**

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**Holiday Instant Hot Chocolate Mix**

submitted by Donna Jo Copeland of Breezy Manor Farm  
See her article in this edition.

1 box Hershey's or Nestle instant chocolate powder  
2 to 4 cups powdered creamer (any flavor)  
1 box (14 oz or so) powdered milk  
Mix well, store in glass jars.

To make...add 3 tablespoons to a mug of hot water, stir gently until well mixed. Add some miniature marshmallows and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

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**Do You Have a Favorite Blanket?**



by Becky Van Vleet

Over the years, I've owned countless blankets, quilts, Afghans, and throws galore. Many have held a special place in my heart. Some have traveled around with me from house to house, room to room, serving various purposes along the way.

When I was a child, I had a baby blanket that became quite worn over time, yet I refused to give it up, not even for a cookie bribe. I rubbed the corner under my nose at bedtime. I recall having a doll blanket or two.

Now that I've reached my golden years, I have a new favorite blanket. It's very old, and the color is a faded coral. It seems moths have taken a liking to it over the years, leaving behind a few small holes. This wool blanket is coarse, scratchy, and thin.

Oh, how do I cherish this blanket. It originally belonged to my father who received it during WWII when he joined the Navy and attended boot camp. As he journeyed from California to the Philadelphia Naval Yard to board the USS Denver CL58, this blanket was packed in his seabag.

During 1942-1945, my father, Walter Troyan, served as a young gunner on this cruiser, enlisting at age seventeen. The blanket certainly felt the vibrations of battle as the whole ship endured shimmies and shakes with the fire of its guns against enemies in the South Pacific.

After the global war ended, my father held onto the blanket, using it in his home with his new bride. Back then, nothing was discarded, not even a small war-time blanket.

If only this blanket could talk! It would recount its journey from boot camp to a warship, from one home to another, the countless bodies it warmed, the beds it lay on, the boxes it was packed into for moves, and the hands that folded it over the years.

Today, this is my favorite blanket. I snuggle up with it and remember my father's sacrifices during WWII. It's so old, faded, and dotted with small holes, but what a comfort it is to me today.

Becky Van Vleet, a retired school administrator, lives near Colorado Springs with her husband, Troy. They are the parents of four grown children and enjoy spending time with their nine grandchildren. Becky is a children's picture book author, and her website is devoted to family stories and creating memories: [www.beckylvanvleet.com](http://www.beckylvanvleet.com).

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**Lanark Village Wandering Star Quilters**

**Upcoming Events:**

Sat., Nov. 29, '25: 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Holiday Bazaar, Lanark Village Boat Club  
Sat., March 21, '26: "Star Spangled Coast" Quilt Show, Chillias Hall in Lanark Village  
Sat., April 25, '26: 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Airing of the Quilts, George Sands Park in Carrabelle

All Events Free Admission 9-3  
For more info contact Ronda at 229-221-2706 or [rondalove@hotmail.com](mailto:rondalove@hotmail.com)

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**KISSed Quilts Poinsettia Window**

As we enter the holiday season, I wanted to share this design that uses red, green and cream colors. It is a new collection from Island Batik Division of Lumin Fabrics called Merry Moments. I hope you will have lots of merry moments during these holidays.

This batik collection seemed just perfect to make into a quilt that, as I made it spoke to me like a Poinsettia. My original pattern was called Winter Bright in blues/whites but with this colorway it just kept speaking to me like a beautiful Poinsettia plant that so often we see at this time of year.

This pattern uses several techniques, including a little bit of paper piecing, templates and traditional piecing. The framework felt like a window and there is a secondary design that creates an onpoint shaded green square in the background.

I hope you've been enjoying the designs this year. I'm looking forward to sharing some new designs next year.

Ask at your local quilt shop that carries Island Batik fabrics for these fabrics and pattern. You can also find this pattern here at KISSed Quilts.

© Marlene Oddie ([marlene@kissedquilts.com](mailto:marlene@kissedquilts.com)) is an engineer by education, project manager by profession and now a quilter by passion in Grand Cones, WA at her quilt shop, KISSed Quilts. She quilts for hire on a Gammill Optimum Plus, but especially enjoys designing quilts and assisting in the creation of a meaningful treasure for the recipient. Fabric, patterns, kits and templates are available at <http://www.kissedquilts.com>. Follow Marlene's adventures via <http://www.facebook.com/kissedquilts> and <https://www.instagram.com/marlene.kissedquilts>

**Veterans Day: A Time to Remember**

by Nancy J. Nash

On a Sunday morning several years ago, my brother, who was visiting Belgium, decided to attend a church in Brussels. As he was leaving the service, an elderly Belgian man approached him and began to speak in French. My brother replied in French that he was a visitor from America. The man instantly switched to English and declared emphatically, "I was here. Christmas 1944. The liberation. The Third Army. General Patton. A magnificent army. Thank you."

He was referring to the heroic effort of Patton's unit that marked the turning point of the Battle of the Bulge, contributing to the defeat of the Nazi war machine and thus to the end of World War II. His gratitude was unending.

I was not born until after World War II, but I had a chance to observe how it had affected older generations. My parents and their neighbors learned what their priorities were while enduring the turbulence and uncertainty of war. They embodied their values, living simply, honoring their Maker, and cherishing family and friends for the rest of their days.

My mother always drew Veterans Day to our attention. She informed us that it was originally called Armistice Day to celebrate the truce that occurred at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918, effectively ending World War I.

Years ago, in our small town, I sometimes walked up and down the street with my grandmother. Along the way, we would occasionally meet Ruth, a friend of hers. Ruth had never married, but she would smile and ask after my mother (whom she had known when Mom was a little girl). She would chat with me and ask about the other grandchildren, expressing genuine interest.

Grandma told me that Ruth had been engaged to a man who died fighting in the First World War. She was a high school graduate who could barely support herself. She lived in a house with relatives. Yet I don't remember detecting a trace of disappointment, bitterness, or envy of others' blessings. From time to time, I would see her at the local library, sweeping or mopping for a few hours, always ready to greet me with a bright, contented smile.

This Veterans Day, remember the young soldier and his beloved and so many like them. Who can measure the worth of their sacrifice? It is priceless. And like the old man in the church in Belgium, let us give thanks for whatever peace and freedom we have enjoyed.

© 2025 Nancy J. Nash, who is the author of *Little Rooster's Christmas Eve* and *Mama's Books: An Oregon Trail Story*. She holds a B.A. in English composition from Mount Holyoke College and an M.F.A. in Writing for Children from Simmons College. She may be reached at [nancynash341@gmail.com](mailto:nancynash341@gmail.com).



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**Ginger Shortbread** from Julie Druck

1 C. flour  
1/2 C. brown sugar  
1 tabl. ground ginger  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
1 stick of butter

Combine first 4 ingredients with a fork. Cut in the butter. Press into an 8" round cake pan, then prick evenly with your fork. Bake at 325 for 35 minutes (sides will puff slightly and will be firm to the touch). While still warm, slice into 12 wedges. Let cool slightly then lift them out of the pan and cool the wedges completely on a plate.

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**The December Victory**

by Barbara Kalkis  
 If December were a person, I'd say it was an accountant. From my business perspective, December is end-of-month, end-of-quarter, end-of-year. It's time to clear my desk of current year projects and file them away. I clean out cubbyholes, unread mail, and all the other clutter that somehow got squirreled into folders marked "to do TODAY", to do tomorrow, and to-delay-as-long-as-possible, including startling surprises forgotten from September and October. (I have perfected the art of purposeful procrastination.)

From a personal perspective, December marks the final sprint to finish making Christmas cards started in early October, which got set aside for Halloween; continued in November, which got sidelined for Thanksgiving, and, finally - Yikes! - pulled out as I realize Christmas is only days away. Thank Heaven for the person who said "The Twelve Days of Christmas" start on December 25th.

Besides making and mailing Christmas cards and letters, I have an inordinate number of friends who were born in December. All require a handmade card. (Since I'm not creative enough to think past December's classic images of pine boughs, holly, poinsettias, and snow birds, these cards usually resemble holiday greetings with a big "happy birthday" die-cut slashed across a winter scene.)

So, I begin cleaning in earnest on December 1st. I edit my Christmas letter, update mailing labels, and deliver the entire batch to the post office. (I thrill to drop my stuffed envelopes through the mail slot inside the post office's sorting room.) I leave feeling cheered that yet another deadline is completed.)

Despite the pages of to-lists scattered from my desk to the kitchen counter and everywhere in between, the heart of me loves the real gifts of December. No, I'm not talking about the wrapped packages of cookies, candy, ice wine, or clothing. I'm talking about the Christmas greetings in my mailbox. I don't mean my email "in box", where I read the electronic greeting once or twice and then delete it. I mean the paper kind.

December's cards and letters reveal so much about the people I love and why I love them. Some cards are homemade, precious for the care and time it took to make them. Some cards are purchased at small craft and specialty stores. I'm impressed by the designs and images that my friends are drawn to: religious scenes or puppies with bows around their necks, a lamb and a lion at peace resting together, reindeer roaming in the woods, a cardinal brightening a frozen forest tree limb, scenes of hearth and home, jolly Santas delivering gifts.

My favorite gifts are annual Christmas letters. They are not just a litany of happy times; they are diaries of significant moments that remain etched in memory.

During a year, we think in terms of a to-do list of goals: What we are doing today or tomorrow or next month. We tick off the days in terms of projects and plans "completed" and move on to the next set of hours and days. But in December, all the noteworthy activities, vacations, jobs, family events and milestones are accounted for in the letter. It is that document that reveals the true meaning of the year: Its joys, heartbreaks, accomplishments, milestones, and events that illuminate our fondest memories.

No matter how it's worded or written, the Christmas letter stands as the document that captures the spirit of our lives and sends the truest feelings of love and remembrance.

Yes, I do think December is the accountant of the year. It sums up who we were, what we did, and how we spent our time here on earth.

-Barbara Kalkis, 2025. Full disclosure: Barbara was and remains a teacher, as well as a writer and tech consultant. She's author of "Little Ditties for Every Day...A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm." Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

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**Antique Afterthought** by Daylyn Miller

I suppose it all started searching for deep blue glassware. Tall and short vases, bowls and goblets, enough to decorate and draw all eyes to the center of crisp white tablecloths for my niece's wedding reception. What an elegant idea! So, we were on a quest. We had seen a thousand different glasses and teacups over the last four antique stores, as well as patterned plates, old tools, worn cookbooks and Bibles, and to my inner teenage girlie delight, Barbie Christmas ornaments and seeds of Nancy Drew mysteries. My sister-in-law was simply on the lookout for her beautiful blue glassware, but unbeknownst to her, I was being introduced to a new side of myself. A new world of possibilities was entering my heart and opening up my mind to the past. I hadn't encountered these feelings for a while, and I was intrigued. I felt a rare glimpse into old memories that had the potential to stop me in my tracks, make me close my eyes, and simply 'remember'.



There is no logic to this fascination with antique stores I've grown to love. I am an established neat freak. I love my home and closets organized. If you ask anyone in my family if they are missing something, I've likely put it away or (yikes) thrown it away. Yes, that's a simple truth about my personality. When I was growing up, my joy was in keeping the small room I shared with my sister cleaned up and tidy. No shelf or wall space was left in disarray. This is a good addiction of sorts, right? I surely thought so. Which makes it even more curious that I now eagerly search out these ever-popular antique stores, large or small, whenever I can and wherever we happen to be traveling to.

It's hard to explain 'the feeling', but I'm convinced now that it will rise in me sooner or later as I venture in. I'll start down an aisle or towards a cluttered booth and begin to browse. I've learned to anticipate and slowly take in the experience. After visiting dozens of these types of stores, I'm prepared to begin with an attitude of curiosity, wondering ... just what will I uncover? I move between the cabinets and my thoughts start to wander. Sometimes I'll give attention to how beautifully displayed certain items are or have a thought of their history and unique journey to finally end up there. But mainly, I'm waiting to feel the goosebumps and strong sensation of reminiscence when I see something specific from my past. Something that just by looking at it will prompt 'the feeling' that brings both joy and nostalgia wrapping their arms around me like a warm sweater. It can be as precious as an old 'Life' magazine with a cover photo that looks like my mom, who I miss dearly, or as silly as an old Fisher Price Farm that makes a 'moo' sound when the little plastic barn door opens. I've been stirred up emotionally from outdated, yet classic light fixtures that resemble the ones from my grandparent's Colorado home, or an old out of tune Gibson covered in Beatles stickers. That guitar takes me back to playing 60's songs with my aunt, singing in her small Indiana kitchen seated on silver metal chairs. My mind retreats in time and I'll remember being 7 or 8, propped on a stool with my elbows leaning forward onto a cracked laminate tabletop covered with gold flecks. The details swarm my mind. Seeing an old pipe, I can almost smell my great grandpa. Some items that bring this reaction surprise me, and that's half the fun. And then other times I'll see something, and the sensation vanishes much too quickly before I even have a chance to enjoy it. I'll slowly walk backwards and retrace my steps to try to retrieve and relive it. Colored plastic drink stirrers like the ones from my Papa's martini, quilts with Sunbonnet Sue patchwork designs, and an advent calendar that resembles the one that always brought excitement to five little sisters every year as we'd begin to decorate for Christmas. All have prompted 'the feeling' and consumed my heart and senses. I've perused the old metal lunchboxes and then caught myself opening the Elvis one (or dare I admit, the David Cassidy one?) to check for the matching thermos inside. Old albums, jewelry, purses, and scarves. Vintage Scrabble tiles in little baskets, pictures inside beautiful antique frames, and eye-catching endearing knick-knacks displayed on tops of worn dressers with large oval mirrors. All these things ... were precious to someone.

This could be completely overwhelming if I let it. But I don't. My 'Antique Afterthought' is to simply enjoy and take it all in. Visually and emotionally. And then thank God I've learned to compartmentalize both of these very different parts of my personality. Just let go of being in control for a little while and embrace the journey. Old and new, clean or cluttered. Gratefulness for my past and my present fills me to the brim. I can't stop searching now, whether I end up walking out of those antique storefront doors with a tangible treasure or not, I'm confident that 'the feeling' will be arriving soon, just around the next aisle.

-Daylyn is a Denver, CO native who loves the mountains ... but her heart always longs to be traveling through other states as well! She and her husband, Bill, have a teaching ministry RedemptingDay.com. Her favorite adventures include road trips with coffee in hand and being with her very blessed and beautiful family.



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**Gifts That Keep on Giving**

by Janet Young  
 Christmas comes with great expectations. We envision the perfect day filled with peace and joy, as everyone sits around the table with smiles on their faces, engaging in recollections of Christmas's past, and then it happens. Someone makes an offensive remark, or perhaps a child spills a glass of milk all over the beautifully decorated dinner table. Suddenly, those perfect, peaceful moments have now turned into a chaotic mess. And, to add to our discontent we tell ourselves the perfect Christmas occurs in other people's homes, why not ours.

Perhaps it is time to take a step back, and ask ourselves, why we celebrate in the first place. The obvious answer is we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Maybe, just maybe, we are focusing on the wrong aspects as to what Christmas is all about. Perhaps, it is time to acknowledge that God gave us the greatest gift ever...He gave us His Son.

So, instead of spending days preparing for the Christmas dinner, you might want to see how you can scale it back a little and still have an enjoyable meal. The same thing would apply to holiday entertaining, and decorating. In the long run, you may discover you are having a more relaxed, and peaceful celebration.

What about gifts? The same principle applies. Children need toys. I get it. But, why do we go overboard each year in our spending, only to regret it in January when the bills start arriving.

My thoughts that I just shared came about when I happened upon the following quote from an unknown author. He or she says "Give the Following Gifts":

- To your enemy - forgiveness
- To your opponent - tolerance
- To a friend - your heart
- To customer - service
- To all men/women - charity
- To every child - a good example
- To yourself - respect

Granted these are not tangible gifts, that you can wrap up in a pretty box and attach a beautiful bow, but wouldn't you agree that these are the gifts that will make every day feel like Christmas. What better gift can we give to others as well as ourselves.

- © Janet Young is a Certified Tea and Etiquette Consultant, Co-Founder of Mid-Atlantic Tea Business Association, and prior owner of Over The Teacup

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### Collections

by *Shelby Kottemann*

I'm not a pack rat. You might say I have "collections." Recently, I collected my favorite cozy socks so that when they inevitably go out of fashion, I'll have no worries. My feet will be warm forever! On a shelf in my closet rests a small bag filled with my favorite lipstick, that did get discontinued! I'm so glad I have my collection!

I don't just collect small things. My great-grandmother's tea cart stands across the room from me, serving as my coffee bar. The morning sun is shining on the small oak kitchen table where my family sat together for 26 years. In the window sill beside it sits a geode I found tucked at the back of my grandpa's bookshelf, the last remnant of him after my uncle cleared their home out for sale. It's always been near me.

Some of my collections are for creating. Like some adorable stickers from the 90's that are prime for scrapbooking and pique my interest just as much as they did when I was a child. There's a collection of authentic vintage fabric scraps sitting on my sewing table right now. Some are the leftovers from colorful aprons and homemade dresses. Others are printed flour sacks from the 1930's. My great-aunt, Vera, gave them to me one day.

"These were my mother's. I want you to have them because I know you're the one who will do something with them," she said with resolve.

Indeed I am. I'm currently making a quilt from them. I'm going to give it to my mom for Christmas so that she can snuggle up with her grandma's love. I even found the "Shower to Shower" powder that Grandma H used every day. With a light dusting, the quilt will bring back that comforting memory too.

I'm what they call an old soul. Throughout my life, I've had more close friends in their 80's than of my own age. There's Marvin, the retired farmer, Jeanne, the wise artist. There was Bill, the WWII Navy veteran, Yvonne, the church pianist, Dave, who could have been a great comedian. With my gravitational pull toward this salt-of-the-earth generation comes more loss. I keep my collection of memories with them written in a notebook. I don't ever want to forget how special they were.

You see, collections can be so much more than clutter. I don't want the things I love to go away, so in my own way, I keep them, like that family kitchen table. I give them new life, like Grandma H's scraps. I honor them, like the stories of my old friends. To me, they're collections of all the love I've encountered in my 32 years of living. I imagine as I grow older, my collections will only grow more meaningful to me—and larger!

©Shelby Kottemann, who is an Author, Reiki Master and Founder of "Love's Nature LLC" for the love of nature and the nature of love. Her email is [contact@inlovesnature.com](mailto:contact@inlovesnature.com). To learn more, visit the website [www.inlovesnature.com](http://www.inlovesnature.com).

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**A Cup of Tea with Lydia**  
 Hosting a Holiday Tea

by Lydia E. Harris



Hosting a Holiday Tea can be as easy as 1, 2, 3.

**1. Planning**  
 Start by making a guest list. Who could you invite? Keep the number small and personal.  
 Would a midmorning brunch with scones, fruit, and tea suit you? Or an afternoon tea with favorite holiday sweets? If you want to serve a three-course tea with sandwiches, scones, and sweets, consider lunchtime for your get-together, then find a date and send out the invitations.

**2. Preparing**  
 To decorate, focus on the setting for tea. For instance, Christmas offers many themes: bells, Christmas trees, stars, Nativity characters, candles, holly, candy canes, and more. For a casual tea, you could gather around the fireplace for a warm, cozy time. For a formal tea, prepare the table with linens, teacups and saucers, and a festive centerpiece. Fresh flowers are beautiful, but you may have a holiday decoration that suits your theme. Holiday-themed cookie cutters make fun napkin rings, and you can send them home as party favors.  
 What's on the menu? Whether you plan a light tea or a luncheon tea, a simple or fancy tea, here are menu ideas.  
**Sandwiches:** Choose one or more fillings, such as chicken, egg, or tuna salad; ham and cheese; or cream-cheese-and-cucumber sandwiches. Make dainty sandwiches using white or wheat bread or both. Leave the sandwiches open-face, or top each one with another piece of bread. Cut sandwiches into shapes with cookie cutters. Or trim the crusts and cut each sandwich into quarters, three finger sandwiches, or four triangles (cut diagonally).  
**Scones:** Prepare your favorite scone recipe or mix. If desired, add raisins, white chocolate chips, chopped nuts, chocolate chips, or grated orange rind. Cut scones into wedges or simple holiday shapes such as bells or circles for balls. Serve with butter, honey, jam, lemon curd, and whipped cream.  
**Sweets:** Select your favorite holiday recipes for candies, cookies, or cakes. Cut them into small pieces. Consider frosted brownies with crushed candy canes on top; Or bake Candy Cane Crisps (recipe in this edition). You could also ask guests to bring favorite cookies and the recipe to share.  
**Tea:** You will find holiday blends for sale in tearooms. Look for peppermint or fruit-flavored herbal blends, and teas blended for the season. Serve the tea from a teapot with bright ribbons and bells tied to the handle.

**3. Hosting**  
 I like to pray for each guest before the party. Then welcome them with a smile and holiday music playing in the background. The lovely setting and delicious food will make guests feel loved and special.  
 "The pot is on, the cups are waiting,  
 Favorite chairs anticipating,  
 No matter what I have to do,  
 My friend there's always time for you."  
 (Anonymous)  
 May God bless you with love, joy, and peace this holiday season.

© Lydia E. Harris is a tea enthusiast and the author of three books for grandparents: GRAND Moments: Devotions Inspired by Grandkids, In the Kitchen with Grandma: Stirring Up Tasty Memories Together, and Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting.

**Blueberry Torte**  
 from Kerri Habben Bosman

**Crust:**  
 3 cups well-crushed graham crackers  
 1/2 cup butter  
 1/2 cup powdered sugar  
 Blend well and spread into a greased 9" by 13" pan.

**Custard layer:**  
 8 oz. cream cheese  
 2 eggs  
 1/2 cup sugar  
 1 t. vanilla  
 Mix well until smooth and spread on top of graham cracker crust.

Bake 15-20 minutes at 350 degrees or until custard is set. Allow to cool and spread one can of blueberry pie filling on top. (I often make my own pie filling from either frozen or leftover fresh berries)  
 Spread whipped cream (8 oz container) on top of berries and cool baking dish in refrigerator for at least a few hours.

*My mother-in-law gave me this recipe the first time we looked at recipes together as she knew it was one of my husband's favorites. Now our whole family enjoys it whenever I make it. It is a very refreshing dessert during the holidays or any time of the year.*

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GIRLFRIEND WISDOM

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**GIRLFRIEND WISDOM:**  
Friendships also need to be nurtured. Is there a long-time friend you haven't connected with lately? Time flies by so quickly, take a moment and text or call that special friend to let them know that you are thinking of them. Most of all, schedule time for lunch, a walk, or an activity to grow and add valuable memories with that good friend. You will be twice-blessed when you do!

Joy & Blessings, Jody

Girlfriend Wisdom is written and illustrated by Jody Houghton®.  
Color files of this writing and artwork are available: www.JodyHoughtonDesigns.etsy.com



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 E G G N O G M E H E L H T E B E O  
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 R E G N A M H F R I E N D S F H S  
 S L T R E E I E C S C S R R S E E  
 T S H N E G A S A A E A A A T R J  
 H A R A S E N N T L N N R A T D E  
 G I E G S E T I C L K D K O G S S  
 I T E G L A K I K I E S L O L T U  
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 F E I B E I I C L G O D O E S N J  
 A S S O L L E R A F C T M E M O O  
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 I I M T S O G A B A N O R E R M E  
 L O E E J E O L T R G R N D Y A P  
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- |              |                |            |                |
|--------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| ANGEL        | FRUITCAKE      | MANGER     | SNOWFLAKES     |
| BELLS        | GABRIEL        | MARY       | SNOWMAN        |
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| CANDLES      | GOLD           | MYRRH      | STAR           |
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| DECORATIONS  | ICICLES        | SANTA      | TOBOGGAN       |
| EGGNOG       | JESUS          | SHEPHERDS  | TOYS           |
| FAMILY       | JOSEPH         | SKATES     | TREE           |
| FRANKINCENSE | LIGHTS         | SLEIGH     | WREATH         |
| FRIENDS      |                |            |                |

**Piecing Life Together When to Quit**

by Barbara Polston

You've had that type of day. You know, the kind of day where everything you touch seems to turn to garbage? I had one of those days recently.

While poking around my favorite quilt shop, I came across a line of fabric that was perfection itself. Designed in soft lavender, grey, gold and cream, the fabric was printed with doves, wheat sheaves and gentle florals. Despite my commitment not to buy more fabric, I couldn't leave it behind. I didn't have a project in mind; I just wanted to see these beautiful fabrics flow under my needle and turn into something lovely.

I searched out a pattern that I thought would showcase the loveliness waiting on those re-sewing seams to make the wide narrower and employing my seam ripper on those too narrow to restitch them hoping for a wider result. Threads were flying everywhere! I was spending the same amount of time unsewing as I was sewing. Something was wrong with every unit. It was frustrating and no fun at all. Each time I tried to assemble a block, my family heard my grunts and groans of dismay emanating from my sewing space. Perhaps, I thought, I should just put this away for today and try again later. Although it was a struggle, I completed half of the blocks needed for the quilt top.

I really wanted to make progress on this project. The next day, I sat down to piece blocks again, filled with trepidation. Low and behold, everything flowed together perfectly! I found the "sweet spot" and every strip I pieced fit perfectly with its neighbor. No ripping. No resewing. It was so enjoyable to have this success and I finished the rest of the needed blocks in record time. All the blocks were ready to lay out, piece into rows and finish into the largest section of the quilt top. What a difference a day can make!

What is the lesson here? I believe that there are some days when things just aren't working and it's OK to walk away. While the desire might be to forge ahead, maybe it's better to quit and try again another time. H.G. Wells had it right when he said, "If you fell down yesterday, stand up today."

©Barbara Polston, September 2025. 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 failed 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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**Who Likes Food?**

by Lesley Storts

Many years ago, I cut out a quote from a newspaper by the philosopher Voltaire that states, "Nothing would be more tiresome than eating and drinking if God had not made them a pleasure as well as a necessity." I tried to keep this in mind when my kids complained about my cooking and specifically when I wanted them to try and eat vegetables. Fortunately, they all enjoy vegetables as adults. The Voltaire quote always grounded me in the idea that food is integral to life.

Food has become the star of the show in all kinds of art. The quilting world is no exception for incorporating food motifs in designs. As a longtime fabric collector (notice that I did not say stash hoarder - wink wink!), I have accumulated various pieces of food related fabric over the years. As a pincushion maker, I am always on the lookout for interesting vessels to use as a base. I continually find miniature pieces that relate to food such as tea cups, mixing bowls, soup bowls, baskets, cookware and fruit shaped pieces. After several years of collecting, I decided to make a dedicated batch of pincushions related to food. And since I add buttons and unique pins to each of my pincushions, I became focused on finding food themed items to use for the batch. Most of the buttons were purchased from Etsy. Many of the beads were found at retail stores. Michael's craft store has a large bead selection that includes food themes in glass, acrylic and resin. I was delighted and excited to find so many beautiful glass beads made via lampwork. Some of the most exquisite pieces were made by artists and sold on Etsy. The miniature glass pieces are little works of art!

If you are interested in making a pincushion, you can start by looking in your collection of trinket dishes that you may have stored or sitting around. You may have leftover items from kids or grandkids such as doll dishes that work well as pincushion bases. Other examples of vessels that I upcycled into a pincushion: cast iron ashtrays, Hello Kitty candy tin with handle, ceramic strawberry container and egg cups. Additionally, I made many of the pincushions in salt cellars. I am an avid collector of salt cellars to use as a pincushion base. The neutral glass is ideal for use with colored fabric that can highlight a button or special beaded pin. Reflecting back on this batch makes me want to make more food pincushions! The possibilities seem endless. Quilting and crafting with food themed fabric and notions is a fun and interesting way to enjoy this pleasure and necessity!

Lesley Storts is a long-term quilter, crafter and fiber/textile artist. Part of her craft and fabric works include custom pincushions made in antique glass. Additionally, Lesley is a longarm quilter providing edge to edge and custom quilting. To learn more, visit her website: www.stortsmarket.com, find her on Instagram: lesleystorts @stortsmarket or Etsy: StortsMarket

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**Building Harmony**

by Jeff Cappis

**Christmas 2025-Building Memories**

It's that time of year again. I love Christmas! We get to reconnect with family, see the magic in things and eat too much. Out here, the countryside gets covered in a blanket of snow that never gets disturbed. It looks good, even at -40 degrees.

The one thing I like are the memories. You can know what you were doing this time last year, or maybe thirty years ago. (I won't admit to looking back more than that). Both Cathy and I have great memories of our childhood Christmases, so naturally, we wanted to create some for our grandchildren as well.

Our property around the house lights up nicely at night, so we decided to create a small winter wonderland for the kids. We put Christmas lights around some of the trees. I dug a small toboggan run through the snow. The ice on the pond froze over so we had a small skating rink.

Cathy found some yard ornaments of deer that light up, move their heads from side to side and go "Moo." (We all know that deer don't go "Moo," but I guess the Chinese manufacturer didn't). They scared away the real deer too. Soon we were into a large inflatable Santa and an inflatable snow globe we saw at a department store. When plugged in, it inflates and lights up to reveal a large snowman inside with snow falling around him. Then we got another one, only with a working carousel in it. After that, out went the electric candy canes. We even found some little elves who busily work making toys. The icing on the cake was a series of five fireworks. All this was connected to a single switch so I could turn it all on at once. We picked out the Christmas music to play and Cathy decided we'd serve hot chocolate.

I have to admit, it looked great! We took a few test walks through our creation. It made us feel a little like children again. A couple of glasses of wine didn't hurt either. The colors, the blinking lights and all the activity looked great. All we needed was a fresh blanket of snow and wait until Christmas. Bring on the grandkids.

On Christmas Eve we had a filling dinner, then promised the kids Hannah, five and Hunter, three, that we had a surprise for them. They got excited as we all put on our snow suits. Cathy poured us all hot chocolate and we headed out onto the deck where the spectacular could be seen the best. Then came the count: "Five, four, three, two, one..." and I hit the switch.

I am happy to say that somewhere in the world that night there were children laughing and running around a winter wonderland. I am unhappy to say that it wasn't at our place.

One of the deer went "Moo" then fell over. Only one of the five fireworks went off. It went straight up, then straight down into a snowbank without going off. The inflatable snowman and Santa began to emerge from the snow like 2 ghouls rising from their snowy graves. Hunter spilled his hot chocolate all down the front of his coat. Hannah hid behind Cathy. Then one of the candy canes shorted out and everything went dark.

We all stood there stunned for a moment. Then the firework went off in the snowbank, blowing snow all over us. Through the cold, quiet darkness I could hear Hunter say, "I'm hungry. Can I have some potato chips?" Hannah said, "Let's go watch a movie."

Nothing went as planned. For Cathy and me it was a bitter disappointment, but still we never forgot it. In fact, we all laugh about it now. I guess real memories happen, they're seldom designed.

Here's hoping you have memories of this season. Merry Christmas and best regards from all of us at Harmony Acres.

- ©2025 by Jeff Cappis Email: jcappis@telus.net

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**Wit & Wisdom**

**An Attitude of Gratitude**

by Roxanne J. Ferguson

It's the holiday season. We are thinking of Thanksgiving and Christmas and both are good times to be thankful. In fact, anytime is the right time to be thankful! I know that I need to be reminded of this every now and then. It is so easy to see the negatives in our lives...the things that go wrong, the things that are discouraging, the things that weigh us down. We deal with stress and anxiety. These negative thoughts affect us emotionally, spiritually, and they also affect our physical health. We need to take charge of these thoughts. It's about perspective. My mother used to say, "Is your glass half empty, or is it half full?"

If you woke up this morning and are in fairly good health, if you have a bed to sleep in and food to eat, if you have clothes to wear, and some form of transportation, if you have a family or a friend or two, life is pretty good. There is probably more going right than is going wrong. The best remedy for stress and negativity is gratitude!

Before you get out of bed in the morning, be thankful for something...the sun coming in the window, the blanket that kept you warm, whatever comes into your mind. My daughter gave me a "gratitude journal", so every day I write down three things for which I am thankful. Some days it is harder than others. Some days it is a sentence. Some days it is just one word. Lately the word has been...sunshine!

We struggle more as we get older. I am thankful I have eyesight, that I can hear, and that I can walk. None of these things are as good as they were, but I still have them. I am thankful I can breathe, I can swallow, I can taste, my heart beats pretty well, and so on! I am thankful for my husband, children, and grandchildren. I have to fix my focus, and when things get tough, go back and think of the good things.

With all the problems in our country today, when we look at conditions in other parts of the world, we are reminded that we still live in a pretty good place. When we truly think about it, there is always someone with much bigger problems than we have. Sometimes they are more cheerful than we are! Why is that? Because they have learned the secret of gratitude. So let's be thankful. It is good for the body and good for the soul.

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

- © Roxanne Ferguson lives in northern New York State, between Lake Ontario and the Adirondack Mountains, an area called the Tug Hill Plateau...snow country. Roxanne is a wife, mother, and grandmother of 8. She enjoys gardening, preserving food, music, writing and spending time with her grandchildren. She is active in her church and community. A retired teacher, she wonders how she ever had time to work. (witandwisdomwriter@gmail.com)

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**Back Porch Break**

by Nancy Brummett

**'Tis the Tweason!**

It seems to me there is a season not getting enough attention. It's the time of year between Thanksgiving and Christmas. So how are we to spend this tweason if you'll indulge my coining of that word? How can we hold on to the best of Thanksgiving while eagerly anticipating Christmas?



Holding on to the gratitude we felt at Thanksgiving is certainly a start. Sure, we are to be grateful at all times. But gratitude is more top of heart when everything we read or ponder has a thankfulness theme. I Thessalonians 5:18 encourages us to give thanks in all circumstances. Not necessarily for all circumstances but finding something to be thankful for in the midst of our situation no matter what it is. Perhaps writing with this verse in mind, Sarah Young wrote in the November 28 entry in Jesus Listens: "I give You thanks, regardless of my feelings, and You give me joy, regardless of my circumstances."

So give thanks. When we are able to purchase a gift for everyone on our Christmas list, let's give thanks for the resources that make those purchases possible. If a harried shopper cuts us off in traffic or takes the parking spot we were aiming for, let's give thanks we aren't going home with a dented fender.

I love that the quote also reminds us of the promise of joy because that's something else that spans the seasons. As we move into the first week of Advent, the time we anticipate celebrating the coming of Christ to the world, we begin a four-week journey that helps us focus on hope, love, joy and peace. All four should fill our hearts and minds during this tweason, but joy can be a part of every week, every celebration, and every memory. We have so many friends who lost someone they loved this past year. In the midst of their grief, may the memories they have bring joy. Or so I earnestly pray.

Before we know it this tweason will have passed away and it will be Christmas! Christmas, a time for remembering that out of His great love for us God sent His son to dwell among us. Emmanuel. God with us. May the anticipation we feel now be centered more on Him and less on the harried hustle and bustle to come. During this in between time, let's set our hearts on the true meaning of Christmas and let the rest be just the colorful trappings of the holiday.

So Happy Thanksgiving, Joyous Tweason, and Merry Christmas! God bless us one and all.

Nancy Parker Brummett is an author and freelance writer in Colorado Springs, CO. To learn more about her work and life, find her on Facebook or visit [www.nancyparkerbrummett.com](http://www.nancyparkerbrummett.com).

**Pumpkin Gingerbread Trifle**

from Janet M. Bair

Prepare a box mix of gingerbread in an 8-inch pan. Cool completely, then crumble the cake.

Mix 4 cups cold fat-free milk with 4 packages of instant butterscotch pudding mix. (1 oz. pkgs) Mix for 2 minutes until slightly thickened. Let stand for 2 minutes.

Stir in:

- 1 can (15 ounces) solid pack pumpkin
  - 1 teaspoon cinnamon
  - 1/4 teaspoon each ground ginger and nutmeg
- Stir pumpkin and spices into the pudding until well blended. Thaw 1 carton (12 ounces) frozen reduced-fat whipped topping. In a trifle bowl or large glass bowl, layer a fourth of the cake crumbs, half of the pumpkin mixture, more cake crumbs, half of the whipped topping. Repeat layers.



**Sebring**

**Stories of a Farm Wife**

**Thankful for my Blessings**

by Tammy Page

At the time of the year when we are celebrating being thankful for our many blessings, and yes, I have many to be thankful for, blessings and the celebration of Jesus, I reflect back on my career in social services. Helping people with food, rides, a shoulder to cry on or a listening ear has always come easy for me. I enjoy making people happy and don't we all need some more happiness in today's world?

I have no idea how I became an advocate, what road I took or why I do what I do but non the less I am one. One for the battered wives of over the road truckers, one for children who don't learn their colors before kindergarten because mom is too busy trying to keep the home calm and happy for her partner's sake. How I got here is not as important as to why I continue to work long, tireless hours, running back and forth to hospitals, police stations and shelters. I guess I've always had the "middle child syndrome" of being the independent thinker and doer, and to plead another's cause so I shouldn't be surprised that I ended up being an advocate for those less fortunate. I suppose being an independent thinker I feel that everyone deserves a certain level of care, a peaceful home, school life and help at times when they so desperately need it.

I didn't start my career as an advocate but in a way, I've advocated for someone or something most of my life. As a child I was always making sure classmates were included in school activities. In high school I advocated for those who were left out or mistreated so it must have been a quality I already possessed and didn't know it. After high school I got a job working at a bank returning non-sufficient funds checks which was not all that glamorous, but it gave me a chance to advocate for customers who might have made a mistake in their accounts. I always felt bad when I had to charge people who I knew were struggling financially so at times I would give them a call in hopes they could rectify it and not get charged a fee.

After having our third child, I went back to work part time in the "people business" again. For the next 24 years I've problem-solved, assisted, maintained, and planned for people. If you look the word, "advocate" up in the dictionary (do people still use those?), you will see it means to defend or maintain a cause. That's me to a T! My husband always tells me I can't save everyone nor can I bring them home. He knows me well. I would, if permitted donate more of my time, my money, and myself to those who need a helping hand once in a while. Now I know in my head I cannot do all these things but, in my heart, I want to help each and every one without crossing the boundaries of being an advocate instead of being a friend. There are times when feelings of worry and helplessness overcome me and it's very frustrating that others don't feel the same way I do. Why can't others lend a hand or give someone a ride or donate to a good cause? I must obey boundaries as an advocate but as a human being I do not. Why can't I help a single mom with 2 children who could use transportation to the food stamp office? Or donate some of my own blankets and home goods to a family having to start over? As a child of God, I will offer what I can, when I can.

So, during this holiday season, please think of others and the troubles they may be facing. Say hello to a stranger in the fast food line, hold a door open for the lady with bags, her purse and her child in her arms. Give generously to the bell ringers or the local Christmas Giving Tree and be an advocate that you and God can be proud of.

- Tammy Page writes from her family farm in Indiana, where she enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren, browsing antique shops for collectibles and farm life.

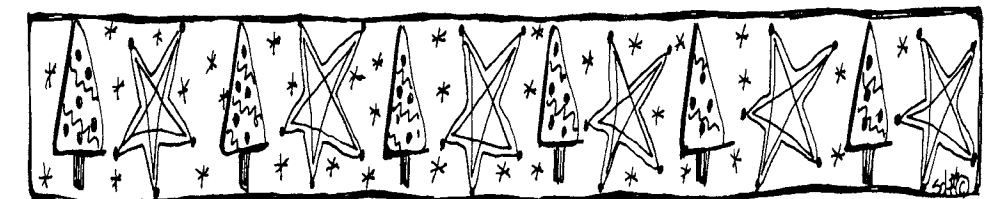
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 3 cups milk  
 8 oz. of cool whip.  
 1 Box graham crackers

**Directions:**  
 Mix pudding and milk. Fold in cool whip. In a 9" x 13" dish, layer graham crackers, pudding, graham crackers, pudding and a final layer of graham crackers.

**Topping Ingredients:**  
 1/3 cup cocoa  
 1 cup sugar  
 1/4 cup milk  
 1 stick butter  
 Vanilla extract

**Directions:**  
 Bring to a boil.  
 Pour over graham crackers.  
 Refrigerate for several hours.



**Life on My Farm - Breezy Manor Just Enough**  
*by Donna Jo Copeland, farmeress*

I can remember being told to add just enough sugar to the tea, just enough milk to the pie dough, just enough salt to the green beans. Always just enough. Oh how I would love to hear my mom, grandma, great grandmother say that again.

Growing up very poor on a family owned farm, we lacked many things but somehow mom made sure we had just enough. There was a family of 14 kids in town who would often walk out to our farm to play. Mom would serve us watered down kool-aid and saltine crackers. Those kids thought we were rich!

Somehow there was always enough.

I guess I have lived my 76 years having just enough. The wolf is always at the door but I manage. Oh there are conveniences I would like to have, but...

My barn my son and I basically built in 1976 and has been redone many times by me, needs serious work. This old farmhouse needs major work. And my wood stove still scares me after more than 50 years. But I manage.

Feeding my livestock tonight my thoughts wandered to young people caught in today's world. Yes, I think they are caught. Always want more, seem to shun manual labor, basically isolate themselves. If hard times fall and I'm sure they will, I wonder how young people will adapt.

Then, working with my sheep I remembered the farm kids I've been watching compete in livestock shows. They work hard, hold steady, honor commitment, and I watched them shake hands with the winners. These 4H, FFA, farm family kids will be our salvation, I hope.

With the onset of winter and year's end it is time for reflection. And time to pause, give thanks, count our blessings. We have so much to be thankful for...blue skies, fresh air, neighbors, family, animals to soothe our souls. Nothing like a furry hug after a hard day!

Every night before I sleep, I count blessings, often sleep comes before I finish. With Charlie, my 7-month old pup, I'm thankful my brother keeps him when I have 2 day shows. My friends are the moral support and laughter I need and we speak the same animal and fiber language!

Weird story, take on just enough...a few days ago it was a hot steamy day. I cut brush, moved fences, cleaned on the barn and hay shed, filled water tanks, evening chores. At nearly dark I came to the house, dirty, sweaty, tired. I decided to take off my t-shirt and jeans on the porch, not track the muck inside. Pulling my shirt over my head, it was wet and sticky, so were my jeans. I was covered in what looked like blood but couldn't remember hurting myself that badly. I turned on the porch light, started washing off with a bucket of water. When I discovered it wasn't my blood but pokeberry juice. Some must have fallen into my shirt, ok a lot of them. What a mess! Guess God gave me just enough smarts not to panic.

Christmas is a time for me to just get thru, not my season. I will hunker down, tend chores, fight the weather. This winter will be different as I have decided to quit breeding bunnies, goats, sheep. As it stands now, I have enough livestock to supply my fiber needs. It might change.

Life is full of change, a farm too. We need to learn to take change in stride, figure out how to manage, love, laugh, work hard, be content with just enough.

I wish you all peace, love and laughter and maybe a furry hug too!



**Reader Shares!**  
*Finished Project!*

I finished making a super large bow from scraps from all my Scottie Dog quilts! All the fabrics were from previous projects, and I had a piece of 2-sided interfacing and just ironed on the pieces then quilted it. I saw the pattern on another site and wanted to try it for some time. For now, it's on a quilt hook. I love making Scottie Dog treasures!

Shared by reader M. Lukas of New Port Richey




© 2025 - 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.

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**Writing From Life**  
by Jeanette Lukowski

**Samplers Teach Balance**

Starting a new hobby seems to include learning the language associated with said hobby. Like with so many other things, this knowledge appears to come in waves.

Once upon a time, I thought that transitioning from sewing my own clothes to quilting would be easy! Terms like "seam allowance" and "bias edges" were familiar to me, while the new terms—"flying geese," "stabilizer," "raw-edge applique," "paper-piecing," and "samplers" are part of my skill-building journey.

My first quilted sampler is a small wall hanging, created as part of a quilt guild challenge. Using a pattern book I already owned, I selected 12 different fabric blocks; I used some region-specific fabrics curated from the local quilt store; I added generic white sashing around each of the 6" blocks; I machine quilted the project; I then moved away from the area before the wall hanging could be displayed with the other guild members' samplers.

My second (current) sampler, then, is just something I'm working on alone. With downloadable patterns being released for free every week (from one of the larger quilting fabric companies), I began this path blindly. (The company, and its many contributing designers might know where the overall design is headed, but I don't. I don't even know how many block designs are being released.)

The week before the program started, I spent a bit of time thinking about how my color-coordinated self could be balanced against the uncertainty of the paced release. But, like when I chose to nurse my babies some thirty years ago, I told myself I could quit anytime I wanted to. (They each reached the sixth month before I tapped out.)

So, if I was going to participate in the quilting sampler project, what colors would I use? After all, I had taken that Color Theory class; I felt more confident in my ability to choose complementary colors. But...how many would I need? How much fabric of each? What if I choose "wrong"? Maybe a theme, or season then.

Christmas was my first thought. But, I have very specific Christmas quilt patterns already in my sewing collection, just waiting for the time to create them.

Fourth of July? Not knowing how large the project might become, I eliminated that option because I couldn't imagine using a Fourth of July themed quilt for anything other than sitting on a curb, watching a summer parade.

Easter? Valentine's day? Halloween?...  
October gets cold enough to cuddle under a quilt, I can abandon the project, making a variety of table runners or whatnot if I run out of steam, and I already have a small plastic tote with a variety of Halloween fabrics.

Working on blocks 15, 16, and 17, I've been discovering the lesson of "balance," along with some new skills. What happens, for instance, if I place this dense design next to a tone-on-tone? How does the value of the block read if I change this fabric to that one? Hmmm.

Yep, I'm still having fun.

© Jeanette Lukowski 2025. Jeanette is a mother, grandmother, teacher, and author who lives in Alexandria, MN. She is inspired by the lives of strong women. Her email address is: [writingfromlife@yahoo.com](mailto:writingfromlife@yahoo.com)

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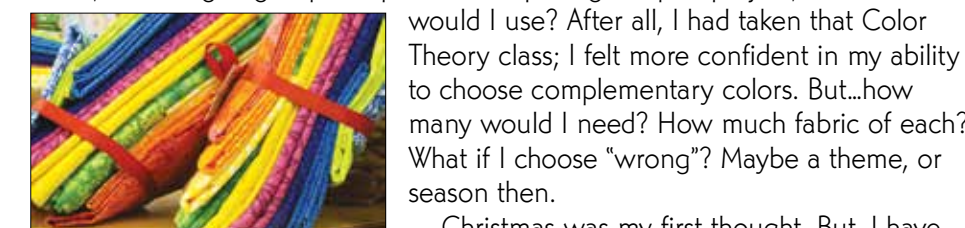
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**'TIS THE SEASON**  
**Blueberry Corn Cakes**  
SERVES 4

Crisp-edged, with maple syrup - YUM!

2/3 c. flour 2 Tbsp. canola oil  
1/2 c. yellow cornmeal 1 c. milk  
3 Tbsp. sugar 1 egg  
1 Tbsp. baking powder 1 c. blueberries FRESH OR FROZEN (NOT THAWED)  
2 Tbsp. cinnamon maple syrup, heated  
1/4 tsp. salt

In a lg. bowl, whisk together first 6 ingred.; whisk in veg. oil until lumps are gone. Add milk & egg & stir until just blended. Gently fold in blueberries. Drop batter by spoonfuls into hot oiled skillet; use back of spoon to spread batter in pan; cook over med. heat. When edges are crisp & brown turn & do other side. Keep warm in 250° oven. Serve in a puddle of hot maple syrup.

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**Holiday Seafood Salad**  
from Barbara Kalkis

8 oz of real crab or deli-style crab flakes  
1/2 Cup celery, chopped finely  
1-1/2 tsp chopped green onions, both white and green parts  
1 Tbsp chopped black olives (optional)  
1/8 tsp dill weed  
Pepper and salt to taste  
1/4 Cup cream cheese, softened  
2 Tbsp mayonnaise

Mix all ingredients, chill for 30 minutes, and serve as a dip or a spread.

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## Ladling Out Love For 105 Years

by Kerri Habben Bosman

In a drawer in my mother-in-law's kitchen lives a large, well-worn ladle. It has been serving soup and stews for decades. These days Mom doesn't actually cook so much anymore, but she still enjoys being part of the preparation. After all, just because you are nearly 105, doesn't mean you can give up a lifetime of ladling out love. Perhaps because you've prayerfully and intentionally loved for that long, it is as natural as breathing in and breathing out.

I fell in love with Mom the first time I met her six years ago this December. She was young, then. Only 98 and days shy of her 99th birthday. My then boyfriend, Wayne, took me to Wisconsin to meet his mother, and one of her grandsons and the youngest great-grandson also came with us. Quinn was barely two then. When we entered the home where Wayne was raised and where Mom has lived since 1946, Quinn wiggled out of his dad's arms. Mom's eyes and mine had just locked and we'd smiled at each other. When Quinn darted forward, I took a deliberate step back. Both of our smiles deepened, and I knew that she knew the most important thing about me from that simple action. That I love with a humble and whole heart.

We still mention that moment to one another sometimes. How we both felt the instant connection between us, born of our love for Wayne but also because we quickly learned we are woven of the same type of cloth. One that drapes and soothes but also has a hint of malleable steel in it when needed. One that stretches but doesn't break.

Since that first visit, we've been to Wisconsin many times. I say thank you every day that I came to be her daughter-in-law. We've cooked together, sat for hours at her kitchen table looking through recipes, and stood side-by-side at her sink, washing and drying dishes. She has shared the stories that shaped her, including the happy times, the trying times, and the tragic times.

This year marks another milestone. Wayne's dad passed away fifty years ago this November 30th. Mom has been a widow since she was 54 years old, two years older than I am now. Yet the ring her husband gave her still embraces her finger, and she speaks of the first time she saw him like it was yesterday. From all she has told me, I sense the core of who he was through the man Wayne is today. During their marriage, they had six children, four still living. December 17th is Mom's 105th birthday, and enduring love and steady faith still radiate from her.

Wayne's parents started a company along with building a family. Bosman Monuments has now been in the memorial business since 1957. Mom was a pivotal part in the success of the company, helping the bereaved. She ladled out so much love that customers often became friends. All the while, she fed her children home-cooked meals they will always remember, sewed some of their clothes, and canned fruits and vegetables from their garden.

For many years she was an organizer and volunteer at a soup kitchen, cooking and serving. It is one thing to devote yourself to feeding your family, but her ladles of love served strangers. Except to her they weren't strangers. They were hungry people given a meal with heart and hope within it. She learned to do this watching her own mother feeding people in need during the Depression.

When we stay with Mom, I cook a lot and leave frozen meals for after we go home. I use her soup ladle as often as I can. After all, I have a legacy to live up to.

© 2025 Kerri Habben Bosman is a writer living in Cape Carteret, NC. Her email is 913jeeves@gmail.com.

## Shop Hop

## 2 Minute Lift The Best Screenplay Ever Written

by Kathy J. Sotak

Was high school just one big improv class? Tell me about your screenplay and I'll share mine.

Some scenes were exhilarating, like when **Spontaneity** moved me across country after a five-minute pay phone call. Other pages **Heartbreak** took over, like when holding my first stillborn son, wondering what could have been.

Some stories starred **Unbelievable**, which included tales of running a 26.2-mile marathon. Then **Miracles** of two more children entered the scene, afterwards realizing I couldn't remember life without them.

At places the genre changed to the **Hero's Journey**, like Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings* or Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars*. You know exactly what I mean. You start off on a simple trail but then it twists and turns through harrowing trials. At the end you look back and can't believe it. You were changed. Not changed, but enriched. With new perspective. More of who you are. **Transformation** arrives.

Then of course there are the scenes with **Ugly**. I've tried to edit them out. The ones where I made embarrassing choices and mistakes that hurt other people. The countless times Fear took over and battled with **Wounded Ego** for the lead role. Although I've tried to erase her, the deleted scenes are still there, auto-saved forever in version history.

The act I'm writing now is with a new character named **Peace**. She has taught me that past, present and future woven together with **Love and Grace** is the still lake I'm seeking. Peace is having me study Neo from *The Matrix*. The climax of the movie is the scene where he bursts into a million zeros and ones, becomes one with the universe, then reassembles his body into **Wholeness** beyond words. This is my quest and nothing less.

As I'm reassembling my full binary code, this summer I went back home to restore deleted scenes from long ago. The file was called **Tween and Teenage Years**, which I opened up by traveling 1,500 miles to my high school reunion.

I didn't want to re-open these deleted files: My teenage self was a physical misfit with acne skin and overweight body. To compensate, **Fear and Awkwardness** overran my mental and emotional bodies. I had no choice but to improv, developing an exaggerated, enflamed personality. All these years later I wondered, did the real me show at all during those early years? Or did my embarrassing improv character overtake the lead role?

So here I was, over thirty years later at the reunion to find out. That Saturday afternoon we shoved three tables together at the local bar and we laughed for hours. It didn't matter what we talked about. We just enjoyed each other's company. There was no bragging, boasting or comparing. Just a comforting familiarity, a respectful remembering as we were the ones to shape each other's lives, allowing today. Then it hit me: **It wasn't just me playing improv back then. We all had to do some form of improv.**

With neon lights and 90's country music playing, there were no characters at the table that day. The only ones present were **Comfortable In Our Own Skins**.

My **Indiana Jones** quest is complete for now, where I sought and found these scattered, discarded pieces, introduced them to Love and Grace, then let them comfortably take center stage with the rest of me.

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**Writing from Life**

by Jeanette Lukowski

Cookies or Bread?



When I was young, I was introduced to some fancy cookies a German lady made. The lady's daughter and I were classmates from Kindergarten through 8th grade, and we were in girl scouts together, so I saw the cookies appear at least once a year at potluck meals or seasonal parties. I never paid attention to the details, though, as I was just a child. For me, it was all about the chocolate cookies. Since hers were not chocolate—featuring red or orange jams or jellies rather than chocolate—I would pass them by.

During Christmas visits to my mother's home after I got married, I finally ate a few of the German lady's fancy cookies. Little blonde folded cookies with raspberry or apricot jams, sprinkle-covered with powdered sugar, these cookies quickly became memorable culinary treats.

My mother said these cookies were called [ko-LOCH-keys], but I could never find their recipe in my favorite Betty Crocker cookbook. Forced to rely on my mother's connection to the German lady for my occasional taste, I've spent more years thinking about the cookies than actually eating some.

This past summer, then, while driving around the state seeking cute new fabric stores to visit as part of Minnesota's annual shop hop, I looked through the car's windshield and saw "Kolacky Bakery" in big red and white letters on the side of a brick building.

Could it be?! Those yummy cookies I remember the Germany lady making? The bakery was closed that day, though, so I made a mental note to go back some day. It was a pretty fall day in mid-October when I finally made the 45-minute drive back to that bakery.

I walked in, inhaled the lovely scents of fresh-baked—wait, bread? Where are the cookies?

"Oh, the kolacky are all right there," the young clerk smiled, pointing to a cabinet display full of what looked like dinner rolls rather than cookies.

Seeing the confused look on my face, the clerk continued. "We make the closed kind. They come in all of these flavors: Apple, Apricot, Cherry, Poppy Seed, Prune, and Raspberry. What can I get for you?"

My brain was still frozen on their not being cookies, so I told the clerk to help the other customer first.

Well, I ended up purchasing too many of those bread-filled kolacky, because I wanted to explore a variety of flavors. (Unlike cookies, I couldn't simply purchase one of each.)

Returning back home, I conducted some internet research: Kolache, Kolacky, Kolaczki. Czech, Polish, Russian. Oy vey. No wonder I was confused!

Like the English language itself, our country is pretty amazing in how it has incorporated other regions' foods and traditions. Patchwork quilts also follow an interesting path of adaptation: artistic or functional, they might be hand sewn, machine-stitched, machine-quilted, or tied.

It's winter now; I'm sitting on the couch, wrapped in a cozy flannel patchwork quilt which I made last year, eating the last of my bread treats. (Poppy seed.)

© Jeanette Lukowski 2021 • Jeanette is a mother, grandmother, teacher and author who lives in Menakato, MN. She is inspired by the lives of strong women. Her email address is [WritingFromLife@yahoo.com](mailto:WritingFromLife@yahoo.com)

**About The Cover Artist**

*Elizabeth Tyndall*

Elizabeth is an artist inspired by nature. She's a wife and a mom who loves mochas, cats, old houses, playing in the garden, photography, decorating, restoring old furniture, reading, writing and searching for beauty to paint everywhere. She absolutely loves nature, stories, books, journaling, finding beauty in words and art, and can be found dreaming of new things to create daily.

Since she was eight years old, she knew she was meant to be an artist. For years she grew up crafting with her mom but found a love for painting and designing as well. At the age of 16 she began working as a florist, creating floral arrangements for weddings, upscale events and holidays, but her real passion is painting and creating art.

Bringing nature into a canvas, is what she's been inspired to do for the past 30 years, but lately she's realized how therapeutic and healing it can be to be surrounded by both. There is beauty and peace found in the world around us, so why not bring some of it indoors. Her passion is to create spaces that will help us to grow and inspire us to live a more fully authentic life. She believes you can never go wrong with bringing nature into the space you live in. Her work is mainly inspired by nature, but she also loves creating pieces that are whimsical and fun as well.


Many of her paintings are created from trips to the mountains, hikes through the forest and even visits to garden shops. She is always looking for inspiration through nature so many of her paintings show her love for the outdoors and her love for birds, animals and flowers too.

One of her proudest achievements was the creation of the new Whale Tail License Plate for California! It was released in 2011 and it's still currently available to purchase! She also was a cave artist for Mercer Caverns and has designed collectible trading cards for games like Magic the Gathering and Ophidian.

She is truly humbled and blessed that she gets to do what she loves every day and that her art can be found on licensed home decor products, such as greeting cards, gift boxes/bags, flags, floor mats, wall art and more, at places like Hobby Lobby, Barnes & Noble, TJ Maxx, Ross, Cost Plus, Joann's, Dollar Tree, Walmart and many other stores throughout the country as well as in many local boutiques, and stores internationally!

Through her art, she hopes to inspire others to see the beauty and joy that is all around us in our everyday lives just waiting to be found!

To view Elizabeth's art prints, go to [www.PennyLanePublishing.com](http://www.PennyLanePublishing.com) or call Penny Lane Publishing at 800-273-5263 for more information.



**Melbourne, Sebastian**

**Grandpa's Oak Tree** by Wayne M. Bosman

Planting a tree is in some ways a major act of faith. Often when an adult plants a tree, a thought passes through their mind that they may not even be alive when the tree reaches maturity. That is one of the reasons that garden stores supply half-grown trees and deliver them with heavy equipment. Instant gratification and assurance of success. This story is not about one of those trees. Rather, this is about a tree that was almost an afterthought that succeeded mightily.

When my father returned from World War II, he and Mom lived for a while in an apartment in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He was a laborer at one of the local factories, which were all very busy during the post war boom. He was a farmer at heart, and they dreamed of having some land out in the county to raise the children who were still just part of the dream. Dad's nephew was willing to sell him 10 acres adjoining his farm at a very good price, so all they needed was a house. Fortune smiled on them. A local church wanted to put in a bigger parking lot, but there was already a house on the property. The house was not very old and it had been built by a building contractor for his own use. He built it to last forever. They made a deal to buy it and have it moved to the rural location.

Dad's family pitched in to get the house ready to move. Mom learned to use the tractor to dig a basement. She laughs now to think of her 26-year-old self-running the tractor and hauling loads of dirt. Dad and his brothers poured the concrete and built the cement block walls for the basement. The house was placed over their work and lowered into position. Their work must have been good, because almost 80 years later it is sitting as securely as the day it was finished. That was 1946.

I didn't come into the picture until 1951, the fourth child out of an eventual six. By that time, most of the landscape was in its' prime. Four apple trees, one cherry and one plum were already producing fruit. Dad's garden covered a full acre and we ate well. Mom's garden had flowers that ensured something was in bloom from spring to fall. We ate from the currant bushes before they had a chance to ripen and got to the raspberries even before the birds could. But this story is about Grampa's oak tree, isn't it?

Grampa- Mom's father- was already getting old by the time the house was planted. He couldn't run a tractor or do any physical labor. He didn't drive, so he and Grandma came out sometimes on Sunday after church to survey the progress. One Sunday they brought with them an oak sapling. It had been a volunteer that had sprung up in their back yard, the beneficiary of the good soil that they had nurtured for 25 years. He suggested that it would provide good shade for them someday. It was planted before the rest of the fruit trees were even purchased. It was always referred to as Grampa's tree, and it still is. I had to dig through some long-ago memories to find out the story of the tree.

The fruit trees are long gone. The plums went first. I was still a child then. One by one the apple trees died off; only the memories remain of climbing in the "Monkey tree" and eating (and throwing) apples. But Grampa's oak tree, from a spindly little sapling, still towers over the yard of the house that Mom has lived in for the last 78 years.

- © 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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## Golden Christmas Coins

by Janet M Bair

Chocolate money! How rich we felt as children, when my brother and I got gold foil-covered chocolate coins in our Christmas stockings! We looked forward to those all year. There was something magical about having money you could eat. We saved them for a while too, eating them slowly.

At the time, money held little meaning for me. My parents bought what I needed and because we lived in the country, there were no city display windows to ogle over, and we didn't watch much TV.

With little money or access to stores, I grew up making my own Christmas presents and cards. I would make up a puppet show or song review for my brother and I to do for our parents. I made small loom pot holders, embroidered doilies, and made various Girl Scout projects using natural materials. Who needs money when you can make it yourself?

As a result, I seldom look for expensive items for gifts. Being retired and living on a fixed income, my first inclination is to look for an experience our family can share, preferably for free. Many local libraries offer holiday concerts, movies or crafts programs with no charge. One library near us presents a one-man show of "A Christmas Carol" every year that is very entertaining.

A favorite of mine is touring the Osborne Homestead Museum (Derby, CT) when it is all decorated for Christmas. The local garden clubs each select a room to decorate according to a specific theme. Whether it is music, children's stories, nature or "Christmas Around the World" the creativity and talent these groups have shown are a delight to see.

We also search for special light displays to visit. One year when we were in Florida for Christmas, we took all the grandkids to see a special home that was decorated with dozens of light-up figures outside, complete with a snow machine. A costumed Santa and the Grinch welcomed the long line of guests on their street.

When we get together with our four grandchildren, I always plan a special craft we can do, as well as a cookie baking session. One year I sewed green stockings for each child. Then they Mod Podged all sorts of trims to decorate them to create their own individual stockings. We've also painted lots of wooden ornaments with glitter paint over the years.

Reading Christmas stories out loud to them is one of my favorite things to do. To me, it is priceless. I also enjoy reading many Christmas novels during the season for my own pleasure.

It is easy to get swept away in the high cost of gift giving in this season. All month I keep going back to Matthew 2:11 "And when they (the wise men) were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

The most important thing is to worship the Savior. Whether we have real gold or chocolate "gold," He simply wants our love and for us to spread His love to others. How ever we spend our coins, let us make golden memories with our families and friends this year.



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## Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

### The Native American Cranberry

With the holidays approaching, my mind went back to a trip we took several years ago to Cape Cod. That was all it took to arouse my curiosity about cranberries—those beautiful red and tasty-tart delights that are synonymous with the coming festivities and family gatherings.

When John and I drove past the dry bogs, I wondered how they would appear when the ripe and ready cranberry bogs were flooded and ready for gathering. There were bogs everywhere, and cookbooks were likewise plentiful in every gift shop we visited.

Cranberries reach their peak color and flavor intensity and are ready for harvesting between mid-September until around mid-November. A typical harvest would be around eight million barrels (each barrel weighs 100 pounds). Besides Massachusetts, I learned over half of each year's crop of cranberries are grown in New Jersey, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin.

Cranberries are trendy because they're high in Vitamin C, free of fat and cholesterol, low in calories and sodium, and relatively high in fiber—and just what the doctor ordered. Sweet or tart, whole or jellied, in breads, desserts or sauces, cranberries are not only healthy, but versatile and tasty.

The cranberry also played an important part in American history. As one of America's native fruits (along with the Concord grape and the blueberry), cranberries were part of the diet of the Native American Indians who lived along the Eastern coast and woodlands hundreds of years before the Pilgrims landed. It was the Indians who taught our forefathers about the culinary possibilities and medicinal properties of the wild cranberry.

Today, cranberries are available all year long (juiced, dried and frozen) and have broken out of their traditional role as a Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday condiment. A trip down the grocery aisles reveals cranberry juices, baked goods and mixes, cereals, salad dressings, marinades and jellies.

A favorite cranberry treat is to beat an egg white until frothy, roll each in the egg white and then in sugar. Pop them on a cookie sheet and put them in the freezer.

Once frozen, transfer them to a container and put them back in the freezer. When you're needing a bit of a snack, pop the tasty-tart delights into your mouth. YUM!

Here's a cranberry recipe that's perfect for any holiday gathering:

#### CROCK POT WILD RICE WITH CRANBERRIES

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1 1/2 cups wild rice, uncooked             | 28 oz. chicken or vegetable broth |
| 1 Tablespoon butter, melted                | 4 oz. sliced mushrooms, undrained |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt                          | 1/4 teaspoon pepper               |
| 4 green onions, sliced                     | 1/2 cup slivered almonds          |
| 1/2 cup dried cranberries or more to taste |                                   |

Mix all ingredients except almonds and cranberries in a crock pot. Cover and cook on low for 4 to 5 hours or until wild rice is tender. Meanwhile, cook almonds in an ungreased heavy skillet over medium-low heat for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring frequently until they start to brown. Stir the toasted almonds and cranberries into the rice mixture. Cover the crock pot again and continue cooking on low for 15 minutes.

©2025 Jan Keller No reprint without permission Jan shares other pieces of her life in her books, *Pieces From My Crazy Quilt*, and *The Tie That Binds*. These books can be ordered by calling 719-866-8570, or writing: Black Sheep Books, 11250 Glen Canyon Drive, Peyton, CO 80831

## Woven Fabric Hot Pads

by Deb Heatherly

Here's a great project for any time of year.

- Cutting for one hot pad:** Finished 7" x 7"
- (12) 4" x 7" strips (6 each of 2 colors OR use 12 different fabrics for a scrappy look.)
  - (1) 7" square for backing
  - (1) 2 1/2" x WOF strip for binding
  - (1) 6 1/2" square of Insulbrite

#### Directions:

- Fold the 4" x 7" strips in half and press.
- Fold both long edges to the center and press. Fold again and press. Strips should be 1" x 7" after pressing.



- On the backing wrong side, find and mark the center.
- Working from the marked center, place 6 folded strips as shown. Sew 1/4" from the edge to hold them in place. Note: If using only 2 colors, place 6 of the same color.
- Slide the 6 1/2" square of insulbrite under the strips.



**Optional:** If you weave tightly the insulbrite will not show through, but you can add a 6 1/2" piece of fabric, right side up, on top of the insulbrite and under the strips if desired.

- Weave the remaining 6 strips as shown. Sew 1/4" from the edge to hold the woven strips in place.
- Trim and straighten edges as needed.
- Add binding.



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/>. Shop Owners are invited to join her group just for you, "Grids Girls for Quilt Shop Owners Only" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/273593657256524/>. Visit Deb's website at [www.Debcatsquilts.com](http://www.Debcatsquilts.com).

## Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski



### Wants vs. Needs

I am at another crossroads in my life. Perhaps you can relate? For some time, I've been feeling that Change is coming. Big Change. Now, the time to decide has arrived. I'm literally waiting for (or is it that I'm dreading?) the phone call which will define the next course of action.

Unlike two of my very dear friends, this call is not coming from the doctor's office, telling me about the test results of whether the cells are cancerous or benign. Rather, the matter is regarding another job change—which in my life, means another move.

Recently, I have discovered the value of a Pro / Con list when I'm facing such big decisions. Do I apply for a job here or there? Do I purchase this car or that car? Do I spend the money to go visit my friend, or do I instead keep the money in the savings account where it is accruing pennies in interest? Time is of the essence on this particular decision, though; the call will be coming any minute (and my publisher has requested my article by today).

Would you mind if I draw you into my assessment of this decision? Here? Now? (Could prove to be embarrassing to me, as the decision and its outcomes will be in play by the time you read the article.)

I don't really want to move again. But, a move has been on the horizon all of this year, as renting my current living space has never been a long-term plan. So, whether or not I accept this job, there is likely to be a move before the calendar year expires.

Everyone is in support of me taking the job. Everyone knows how hard I've been working to pursue a sustainable-job-model post Covid.

It's not exactly the top pick of my job-Wants, though. (We all have "The Perfect" scenario in our heads, don't we? Movies, books, and even television shows have been built upon that premise.)

The job does tick off a lot of my Need-list items, though.

The fears of the unknown are what woke me at four o'clock this morning. How many times did I get out of bed between four, and the alarm letting me know it is 6:30am? Once for the bathroom (aging bladder). Once to open the bedroom window, as the room was stuffy, and the rain had stopped. Once to clear my sinus passages. Once for a drink of water. Sadly, none of those activities offered the answer to my debate.

Asking my 28-year-old for help with my decision amounted to: "It's not what you want, but it's got what you need."

That's the eternal rub of life, is it not? Wants vs. Needs. I know I need food, clothing, and shelter. (Water, a balanced diet, and exercise as well, if you ask any doctor. Or my mother.)

This job might make me a minimalist, as the boss suggested a review after three months. (Pack light?)

© Jeanette Lukowski 2023. Jeanette is a mother, grandmother, teacher, and author who lives in Mankato, MN. She is inspired by the lives of strong women. Her email address is: [writingfromlife@yahoo.com](mailto:writingfromlife@yahoo.com)

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