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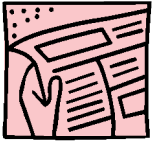
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## 46th Annual Wild Wind Folk Art & Craft Festival

Celebrating Handcrafted Artistry and Family Fun!

This year's event takes place on Saturday, September 12th & Sunday, September 13th at the Warren County Fairgrounds, 371 Barton Run Road, Pittsfield, PA. Held rain or shine, hours are 10 am to 5 pm each day.

For nearly five decades, the Wild Wind Folk Art & Craft Festival has become a cherished tradition held each year the weekend after Labor Day. It continues to draw art lovers, families, and friends from near and far for a memorable celebration of creativity and community. Visitors are welcomed by the familiar sights, sounds, and aromas of early fall—kettle corn popping, the scent of homemade pies and apple strudel, vibrant mums, crisp apples, and the warm greetings of artists reconnecting with loyal customers.

At its heart, the festival is a celebration of handcrafted artistry. More than 150 skilled artisans will be on hand, offering a wide variety of unique, high-quality creations. Throughout the grounds, live demonstrations highlight traditional and contemporary techniques, from wool spinning to the captivating process of glass blowing.

Beyond the artistry, the event offers a full weekend of family-friendly entertainment. Children and families can enjoy a traveling petting zoo, balloon art, hula hoop fun, and interactive activities. The Tamarack Wildlife Center returns with its popular birds of prey exhibit, along with educational presentations. Weather permitting, Double C

(story continues on p. 4)

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(story continued from p. 3)

Ranch Carriage Services will offer scenic horse-drawn rides around the fairgrounds. A special highlight this year is the return of Alexander the Magician, delighting audiences with a blend of humor, magic, and many new surprises. Those inspired to learn a trick or two can even participate in magic lessons offered throughout the weekend.

Live chainsaw carving demonstrations will also be featured, with talented artists Lisa Barr of Barrnone Carvings & Creations and Brian Fox of Fox Sawmill and Custom Design transforming raw wood into impressive works of art. Visitors are encouraged to watch these creations come to life!

Festivalgoers can take a break in the shaded picnic area or enjoy a wide variety of food options, including BBQ, gyros, crab cakes, pierogies, hand-cut fries, French artichokes, homemade pie, old fashioned root beer, and more. Live music will provide the perfect backdrop, with the Kokomo Time Band performing on Saturday and Old Dawg Bluegrass taking the stage on Sunday.

The Wild Wind Folk Art & Craft Festival welcomes you to join them for a weekend of award-winning artistry and family fun. The admission fees are \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and veterans, and free for children 12 and under. As a bonus, those who attend on Saturday can return on Sunday free of charge. This is a special event, one not to be missed! We look forward to seeing you there!

For more detailed information, please visit [www.wildwindfestival.com](http://www.wildwindfestival.com), email [info@wildwindfestival.com](mailto:info@wildwindfestival.com), or call 802-689-0609.

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**Say Cheese! (Cream Cheese, That Is)**

I love cream cheese. Truly. But in our house, it comes with a side of caution. For my husband, cream cheese is less "spread the joy" and more "brace for impact." He has gout, and certain rich foods can trigger an attack. If he spots cream cheese on a menu, he'll often take colchicine preemptively, just in case. That may sound dramatic, but anyone who has experienced gout knows it's no small thing.

Gout is a form of inflammatory arthritis caused by a buildup of uric acid in the body. When uric acid crystallizes in the joints, the result can be sudden, severe pain and swelling. Although it's commonly associated with the big toe, gout can affect almost any joint — feet, ankles, knees, wrists, fingers, elbows, and even the spine. In fact, my husband's first attack struck his spine, which was both unexpected and intensely painful. Our doctor jokingly suggested taking the medication with vodka, noting he was likely in for several uncomfortable days.

**So where does cream cheese fit into all of this?**

Cream cheese itself is relatively low in purines compared to foods like organ meats or shellfish, which are well-known gout triggers. However, it is high in fat. While some research suggests that certain full-fat dairy products may not increase — and may even modestly lower — the risk of gout flares, moderation remains important. For us, that means enjoying cream cheese occasionally rather than generously.

**What Exactly Is Cream Cheese?**

Cream cheese is a mild, soft, fresh cheese made from milk and cream. Unlike aged cheeses, it is meant to be consumed fresh and has a smooth, spreadable texture. Stabilizers are often added to improve consistency, and it's available in a wide range of flavours, from plain to herb-infused to sweet varieties.

In the United States, cream cheese must contain at least 33 percent milk fat, giving

**Shrimp Dip**

I remember having this dip back in the late '80s. I have a weakness for it, but how can you resist anything with shrimp?! This is a more upscale version than that one, as it uses frozen shrimp instead of canned.

1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened	2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
1/2 cup sour cream	1 medium green pepper, chopped
1/4 cup mayonnaise	1 small tomato, chopped
1 cup seafood cocktail sauce	3 green onions with tops, sliced
12 ounces frozen cooked salad shrimp, thawed	Assorted crackers

In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese, sour cream and mayonnaise until smooth. Spread mixture on a platter or bowl. Top with seafood sauce. Sprinkle with shrimp, mozzarella, green pepper, tomato and onions. Refrigerate until serving. Serve with crackers.

(story continues on next page)

**BEDFORD - DONEGAL - MT PLEASANT - SOUTH PARK**



## Sausage & Sauerkraut Balls

I was inspired to search for and try this recipe because a friend said that it was something her mom used to make. She mentioned that she'd made it once herself but that her family was eating them as fast as the balls came out of the deep fryer!

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 lb. pork sausage   | 4 oz. cream cheese, softened     |
| 1/4 cup finely chopped onion                                 | 2 Tbsp dried parsley flakes      |
| 1 (14 ounce) can sauerkraut, well drained and finely chopped | 1/4 cup flour                    |
| 2 Tbsp dry bread crumbs                                      | 1 large egg, beaten              |
| 1 tsp Italian seasoning                                      | 1/4 cup milk                     |
| 1/2 tsp prepared yellow mustard                              | 1 cup dry bread crumbs           |
| 1/4 tsp garlic powder  | 1 tsp Italian seasoning          |
| 1/4 tsp ground black pepper                                  | 1 quart vegetable oil for frying |

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook and stir sausage and onion in the hot skillet until sausage is crumbly and browned, about 10 minutes. Drain grease and allow to cool slightly.

Transfer sausage mixture into a large bowl. Stir in drained sauerkraut, 2 tablespoons bread crumbs, Italian seasoning, mustard, garlic salt, and pepper. Combine cream cheese and parsley in a small bowl; mix into sauerkraut mixture. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Place flour into a shallow bowl. Whisk together egg and milk in another bowl. Place 1 cup bread crumbs and Italian seasoning in a third bowl.

Heat oil in a deep fryer to 375°F.

Shape sauerkraut mixture into 3/4-inch balls. Coat balls in flour, then dip in egg mixture and roll in bread crumbs to thoroughly coat.

Working in batches, fry balls in hot oil until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain on a paper towel-lined plate and serve hot.

*(story continued from previous page)*

it its rich, creamy character. Canadian standards are similarly robust. Regulations in other countries vary, but the defining feature remains the same: cream cheese is indulgent, smooth, and unapologetically rich.

### A Brief History of a Breakfast Staple

Cream cheese was first developed in the United States in the 1870s. William A. Lawrence, a dairyman from New York, experimented with French Neufchâtel cheese and added extra cream, creating a richer, softer product. His innovation quickly gained popularity.

In 1879, Lawrence partnered with Samuel S. Durland to expand production. The following year, cheese distributor Alvah Reynolds began marketing the product as "Philadelphia Cream Cheese," even though it was produced in New York. At the time, Philadelphia had a reputation for high-quality dairy products, and the name conveyed a sense of premium quality.

Reynolds later acquired the Empire Cheese Company to increase production under the Philadelphia name. After a factory fire, operations shifted to the Phenix Cheese Company, which eventually merged with Kraft. Under Kraft's ownership, Philadelphia Cream Cheese became a widely recognized household brand.

### From Dairy Case to Cultural Icon

Over time, Kraft's marketing helped elevate Philadelphia Cream Cheese beyond a simple spread. Memorable advertising campaigns featured whimsical imagery — floating bagels, heavenly kitchens, and the well-known "Philadelphia Angel." These ads positioned cream cheese as an essential ingredient for both everyday breakfasts and special-occasion desserts, especially cheesecakes.

The combination of strong branding, consistent quality, and clever advertising helped cement cream cheese as a staple in North American kitchens.

### Canadian Production Standards

In Canada, cream cheese must be produced by curdling cream with bacterial cultures and forming the curds into a smooth mass. Specific stabilizers and preservatives are permitted within regulated limits, and only approved enzymes may be used in production. These standards ensure a consistent product while maintaining safety and quality.

### A Simple Jalapeño Popper Tradition

Despite his dietary limitations, my husband insisted that I include our favourite cream cheese recipe: jalapeño poppers.

The truth is, it's less a formal recipe and more a practical solution. One summer afternoon, faced with an abundant jalapeño harvest and no desire to visit the grocery store, I improvised with what was in the fridge.

I beat together cream cheese and Montreal steak spice in a stand mixer, then fold in grated cheddar cheese. The jalapeños are sliced lengthwise, seeds removed and filled with the mixture. I bake them in a cast-iron pan in the oven or cook them on the barbecue at fairly high heat until the peppers are tender and the cheese is bubbling.

There are no precise measurements; everything is added by feel. Despite that — or perhaps because of it — they are always a hit. I've served them to guests and received generous compliments, which feels slightly undeserved given how simple they are to prepare.

For us, cream cheese isn't an everyday indulgence. It's something enjoyed thoughtfully and occasionally. But when it does make an appearance — especially tucked inside a jalapeño and bubbling hot — it's worth the wait.

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### Clam Dip

Probably not a dip you'd want to serve to someone who isn't a seafood fan! Just a note: I've purchased canned clams at a dollar store and the grocery store. I by far preferred the grocery store brands, I found the discount clams rather gritty – anyone else experience this?

8 oz. cream cheese softened	1½ tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 (6.5 oz. can) minced clams drained, juice reserved	¼ tsp garlic powder
3 Tbsps mayonnaise	black pepper, to taste
2 tsp fresh lemon juice	sliced green onions for serving, optional

Drain clams, reserving liquid.  
 In a medium bowl, use a hand mixer to beat cream cheese until fluffy.  
 Mix in the drained clams, mayonnaise, lemon juice, Worcestershire, garlic powder, and pepper. Gradually add clam juice, 1 tablespoon at a time, until desired consistency is reached.  
 Refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving. Top with sliced green onion if desired.

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## Retired and Tired by Cheryl Potts

Since I've retired, I'm busier now than when I was working full-time! I guess that's a familiar saying among us retirees, or as we are lovingly called, "elderberries".

Not only do we get to enjoy our leisure and try new creative endeavors but we can join groups such as "Senior Stretch-n-go", "Slow-mo Quilting", and "Scrapbooking Senility", as well as going out to lunch once or twice a week with senior friends.

However, squeezed into my creative groups and lunch dates are many important outings a few times a month. I've met some very interesting people in my travels to the "Oligists" and "Scopies". For example last week I met with my cardiologist to make sure my heart was pumping properly and saw my blips on a screen. Of course, I sat in a massage chair, reading a four year old magazine, waiting a half an hour, while the nurse consulted the radiologist for my test results. The massage was wonderful. I ordered one on my phone while waiting.

Next week, I go to my dermatologist to get my skin tags, age spots, lumps and bumps examined. For this one, I have to completely disrobe while trying not to make eye contact with the doctor! Thank goodness, the office staff are all females!

Next month, I go to the ophthalmologist for my yearly exam. There's nothing worse than that "puffer" machine! It makes you blink excessively, mentally trying to avoid the puff of air into your eye, which makes you endure it five more times before getting a successful reading! Then I'm blinking uncontrollably for the rest of the eye exam. Whoever came up with that test should be scrutin-eyed!

Part of my yearly visitations is the dentist (new word- why not). Got to keep up with my teeth cleanings and scheduled x-rays to keep the pearly-whites gleaming. That's probably the most relaxing of all the doctor visitations.

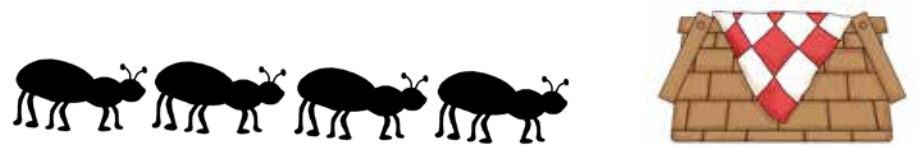
However, the worst has got to be the colonoscopy! You might be scheduled every 3-5 years, depending what they find up your...body part. In the old days, doctors would ask if you wanted to watch the exam on the TV screen. At least if I fainted I'd be on the table already. Who in their right mind would want to watch that disgusting movie? I don't even watch medical shows on regular TV!

Suffice it to say, elderberries have no life of their own after retirement, because of the many necessary, monthly doctor appointments. I'm busy enough with my regularly scheduled lunch dates, social groups and grandchildren visitations there's barely time for doctor appointments. Sometimes there's 2-3 activities in one day! My children come home, look at my calendar and my full schedule and ask me, "Mom, why did you retire?" I say, "I guess after teaching for 30 years I wanted to try something different."

"Retirement is that marvelous time of life when the sun rises and you don't."

"Retirement is when you get out of the shower and you're glad the mirror is fogged up."

Isaiah 40:31 says, "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Thank you, Lord.

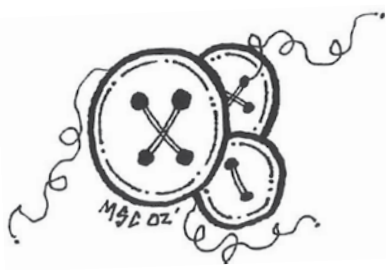


# WV – MORGANTOWN - VARIOUS SHOP HOP TOWNS

## Life-to be continued.

by Wayne M. Bosman

Last year was a momentous and chaotic one for our little family with the passing of both my daughter and my mother, but life continues on. With spring's annual rebirth going on all around us comes an inspiration to see what life has in store for us in this new season of life. While I am still slowly opening my eyes and heart to the joy of life, Kerri has already started exploring hers.



Kerri, for her part, started sewing things by hand whenever she could, to try to make everything as true to life as possible. No more zippers, which weren't invented yet. Elastic, invented in 1820, was technically okay, but the likelihood of it being available here was small. Buttons, hooks and ties were the order of the day. Dyeing by hand was common, especially with indigo as a local cash crop. She hasn't tried that yet.

For Kerri, Spring has sprung. For me, the first tentative shoots are emerging from my fallow soil. I hear the birds more now, insistently calling out their springtime message. I look over my unfinished projects, actually finishing some! I look out at the ocean, waiting for the schools of fish to migrate through, following a rhythm that only they understand. I stay still, grateful that I have a life to be continued.

Wayne M. Bosman is a retired auto mechanic living in Cape Carteret, NC. His email is wbosman1@gmail.com.

For her, the place to start was to revisit things that she has enjoyed in the past. She has always loved local history and been an avid seamstress. She has spent the last few years teaching preschool to indulge her love of young children. A natural meeting point of these things fell into place for her this spring.

When we moved to the NC coast a couple years ago, a new local history opened up. Because life can be busy, we never had time to explore the history of the region. We had passed right by the History Museum of Carteret County many times, always vowing to stop in. We have time now. What we found was an opportunity for her to pursue three of her loves.

The museum started a program aimed at opening up fourth graders to how their area was settled and grew to what it is now. Kerri fit right in. Over the years she made a number of true to period dresses that she wore giving tours at historical sites. Most of them still fit, although some apparently shrank or something...

She augmented them with new dresses and aprons that she spent enjoyable evenings creating. One of her characters that she got to portray for the Museum program was a locally well-known woman who was a Civil War era spy for the Confederacy. Miss Emeline spent the war smuggling supplies to Confederate soldiers across Union lines. The voluminous skirts of the era coupled with a lady's personal modesty gave her plenty of hiding places. Kerri stitched together a slip with pockets capable of holding a pair of boots, two pairs of pants, bandages, sewing articles and an entire ham without looking out of place. She put her hair up in a way common to the era and hid notes in her hair that she gave to the fourth graders during their field trips.

The children loved it all. Opening a window for them to a time when there was no internet, no television or even radio. Telephones were not yet invented, much less cell phones. Cars? No. Malls? No. For most families, a trip to town was a major undertaking to sell what you produced or to buy what you couldn't. Kerri would come home from the museum excited and enchanted by the questions the children asked, and how some children's eyes lit up when something caught their imagination.



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## Memories of Mom

*by Tammy Page*

Oh, how I wished I had seen that the previous month's edition was about sewing and quilting because I would have loved to have written a story about my mom's legacy of making a quilt for my sisters and I and for each the grandchildren too. But you see I've been very busy the past few months going through my parents 69 years of marriage belongings. My father recently passed away after being a widow for almost three years and I have had the chore and blessing of clearing out mom and dad's household. It's been a lot of work for sure but it's also brought me joy being able to go through some of mom and dad's things including mom's sewing basket and the many totes and drawers of quilting and sewing materials she had used over the years. I found old seam rippers that she taught me how to use carefully, patterns from my childhood and patterns of playsuits and baby doll clothes she sewed for my daughters. I found her old thimbles that brought tears to my eyes as I remember she never sewed without one. I came across her old black handled metal scissors that weighed a ton and also handmade patterns she had traced. I also discovered she had totes upon totes of material stored in the spare room where she had bought for one project or another and remnants of the quilts, she put together for each of us.

Her sewing machine was always set up in the extra bedroom for when she got a whim to start a new project. One year she made me, and my sisters, my daughters and niece set of matching Christmas runners and napkins. I found several extra sets of those in one of her sewing cabinets. I also found quilt blocks sewn together where she had started a new quilt and didn't finish it. I came across old tools I had not seen since my childhood when she taught me how to sew. A couple such items were the metal hem markers that were different colored, the many little boxes of straight pins and the spools thread of every color. I had to be careful cleaning out those drawers for all the sharp items laying at the bottom. By the way, how many bobbins can one person have?

I wasn't a quilter myself but she was and we have all enjoyed receiving her beautiful quilts. She would piece the one of a kind patterns together and send them off to a lady in Kentucky to quilt them and when completed, the lady would mail them back to mom. I didn't realize the money and work that went into each one until I found all the leftover quilt squares and the hand-written bill the quilter had charged her. It really wasn't much for such a beautiful craft but I'm sure it added up after piecing ten quilts. Today, I have several on display in my living room and bedroom.

One funny tidbit about mom and her quilts. She never wanted us to hang them up for fear of sun damage and tearing the seams. She was very particular about that but I still hung them up on quilt racks and some draped over an old wooden ladder. I wanted everyone to see her beautiful craftsmanship. Her quilts mean more to me now that both of my parents are gone. Each time I pass by one I can remember her scolding me for not having my hands in the right place on the sewing machine or making me rip out a seam on my 4-H apron.

As I cleared out mom and dad's home, I had a small estate sale and mom's sewing machine and materials were a hit. Quilters and crafters went crazy over her supplies and were still asking for more at the end of the day. A young woman bought mom's sewing machine and some of her material and I could not have been happier that a new seamstress was starting her own traditions of sewing things for her family and friends.



## That Old Pink Robe

*by Becky Van Vleet*

I was heartbroken when my beloved mother left earth for heaven in 1977 when I was only 23 years old. My husband and I hadn't even reached our second anniversary yet. It felt so unfair. I'll never forget the day Daddy asked my sisters and me later on to go through our mother's clothes and decide what to do with them. That was an incredibly difficult day. We donated some items, while others we kept as personal mementos. I requested my mother's pink satin robe. It was already missing a couple of buttons, and dangling threads hung from the satin quilting. I can't recall why I asked for it, but I saved it in a drawer for almost 40 years.

Here come the grandchildren. Six granddaughters! As I brought out the robe for them to play dress-up, fond memories of my sweet mother filled my mind. Watching that old pink robe find new life with the little ones made my heart burst with joy. However, with age and gentle play, it has become quite worn. I've had to mend the robe several times. It's much too large for my younger granddaughters, yet they adore its long length and the feel of the satin. The memories of my mother wearing that robe around the house on chilly days are still etched in my mind to this day.

To preserve the cherished garment as a special keepsake, I've removed it from the play clothes and placed it on a dedicated hook in my closet. I'm thrilled whenever my granddaughters say, "Nana, I'm cold. Can I wear your mother's robe?" I hurry to retrieve it for them. I share tidbits about my mother when the robe comes out. How kind she was to others. Her pretty brown eyes. How her homemade macaroni and cheese was the best ever.

The memories flood back. And when more than one granddaughter visits at the same time, it's not unusual to have to mediate who gets to wear it. I never imagined this would happen!

Why did I save this old robe? Back then, I wasn't sure why I wanted to hold onto it. But now it makes perfect sense. It holds cherished memories as I watch my granddaughters scampering around in it whenever they feel "cold." It reminds me of my lovely mother, and that's priceless.

I encourage all of you—grandmothers, mothers, daughters, aunts, sisters, and friends—to hold onto a piece of clothing, a quilt, a doll, a teacup, a scarf, or any meaningful keepsake you can pass along to your children or grandchildren. While the item might not seem important now, its value often grows over time. Share the story behind it. Create a cherished memory. Treasure the tale. That old pink robe brings me immense joy even today.

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**A Mother's Day Card**  
by Maranda K. Jones

Dear Mother Nature,  
I am thankful for all that you do!  
The green grass below my feet  
And above the sky so blue.

Thank you for the love you give  
In sunshine, clouds, and rain,  
The birds chirping all around  
The spinning weather vane,  
The calves' moos, the lambs' bleats,  
And the many babies we can hear.  
Thank you for the sounds we long for  
As inspiration this time of year.

You teach us to be patient  
And let the little ones grow.  
You endlessly encourage the  
Gardens planted in a row.

You inspire wisdom and strength  
Into creatures great and small.  
Your power abounds in new growth,  
In the plants both short and tall.

You continue to breathe life  
In ways not easily understood.  
We'd send you a Mother's Day card  
If only we really could.



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Consider these popular seed types and the common backyard birds they attract:

**Sunflower** – Black sunflower seeds attract blue jays, goldfinches, woodpeckers, purple finches, chickadees, titmice and nuthatches. Striped sunflower seeds appeal to chickadees, doves, grosbeaks, northern cardinals, nuthatches, titmice and woodpeckers. Sunflower hearts (also known as "hulled sunflower" and "sunflower chips") attract chickadees, common redpolls, juncos, doves, finches, goldfinches, grosbeaks, nuthatches, pine siskins, titmice and woodpeckers.

**Nyjer** – These lightweight, tiny seeds are a favorite of goldfinches. Put nyjer seeds in a hanging feeder with tiny holes so the small seeds won't get blown away. Nyjer also attracts redpolls, juncos, doves, indigo bunting and pine siskin.

**Safflower** – These white seeds are slightly smaller than black sunflower seeds. Because they are bitter, grackles, blue jays, starlings – and squirrels – don't like them. However, they do attract doves, purple finches, chickadees, titmice and downy woodpeckers.

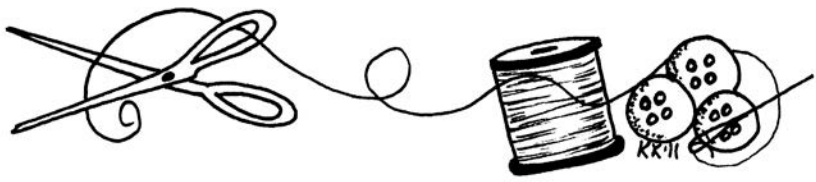
**White millet** – Good for scattering on the ground, white millet attracts ground feeders such as juncos, sparrows, indigo buntings, towhees and mourning doves.

**Cracked corn** – Popular with ground feeders, cracked corn appeals to doves, crows, jays, sparrows, juncos and towhees. Avoid getting finely cracked corn as it's vulnerable to rot and can quickly turn to mush.

When choosing a bird seed mix, pay attention to the ingredients list on the package. Bird seed is required by law to list ingredients in order of content. Some cheaper mixes have filler seeds such as wheat, red milo, red millet or "assorted grain products." Most backyard birds won't eat those, and your seed mix could end up wasted on the ground.

Learn more about making your backyard an oasis for birds of all kinds at [eLivingtoday.com](http://eLivingtoday.com).  
Photo courtesy of Unsplash

NEIGHBORING STATES ADVERTISERS



Focused on Fun

by Jeanette Lukowski

For a number of years now, my grown son has made jokes about our different approaches to life. He describes us as being two different kinds of birds in the same flock: I am the focused goose at the front of the “V,” fighting the windshear every mile—while he is the “relaxed” goose, riding the lift. In the “work smarter, not harder” ideology of his younger generation, he challenges me to enjoy the ride rather than fight through negotiations.

The adjustment has been challenging, but I’m already beginning to see some improvements in my physical health and mental outlook since I started down this path! All because I’m trying to focus more on “fun” and smiles now!

First, I attended a class on Color Theory held at a quilt shop. Such a great outing! Part of my course fee included my very own color wheel—while the other part introduced me to the woman who explained what it all means in relation to selecting quilting fabrics. Well worth both the time, and the course fee, in my humble opinion.

While we waited for the class to start, I had the opportunity to chat with a fellow classmate. She talked about how she meets her son for lunch every Friday, followed by a variety of classes offered at the quilt store in which we were sitting. How fun! I still work, but she planted the seed: Regular meal visits with family members!

After that, the rewards began quickly accumulating. A lunch-date with my mother, sister, and two others; a comedy show with my son and two of his friends, followed by dinner out; my granddaughter’s after-school dance program (which ironically ended 15 minutes after it started), followed by dinner out; two Sunday drives with my son to orchestral concerts in towns an hour’s drive away, followed by dinners out.

And then this afternoon, the postal clerk and I shared such an exchange of giggles over a package I was mailing to a friend in another state, because it sounded like a set of maracas clicking away in the cardboard box! “Is it anything fragile?” she asked.

“No, they are just empty wooden thread spools. I am sharing them with my friend, because she is a wood carver. I forgot to take them when I went to visit her last summer, so I’m just mailing them to her now,” I explained.

That’s when we both acquired the giggle-bug. What might the other postal employees who handled the package along its journey think about the sound they would hear coming out of the box? What other unusual—or funny—things do people mail to others? What will my friend think when she retrieves the package from the post office? Or, if porch-pirates snag it—and think they have acquired something really cool? What if someone thinks the contents got broken during the shipping process? Such a lovely random Wednesday.

Smiles are free, and my blood pressure might be lowering.

© 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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NEIGHBORING STATE ADVERTISERS

# Summer Vacation!

by Judy Sharer

As an adult looking back, I have many fond memories of summer vacations. Once school was out, it meant being free to spend time with neighborhood friends and visiting family.

Our neighborhood had many kids of all ages. We would gather together to play kickball, tag, hide and seek, or ride bikes. When the streetlights came on, it was a race to make it home.

In my family, Summer meant we had additional chores. I worked in the garden planting the vegetables and when the produce was harvested, I'd help with the canning. Dad had a small patch of strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries that we'd pick and make into jam and jelly plus enjoy with shortcakes and cobbles.

My brother was tasked with keeping the lawn mowed. My sisters did additional housework as well as looked after me, the baby of the siblings.

When I was young, I remember visiting my grandparents who lived in a neighboring town. My parents would put me on the bus with my little suitcase. I'd sit right behind the bus driver with instructions not to bother the other passengers. My grandparents would meet the bus at the bottom of the hill from their house. I liked visiting because I had my own room and bed to sleep in. Grandma taught me how to do needlework, knit and crochet. Families tended to live close in those days and mine

was no exception. My aunt and uncle lived right up the hill on a farm. I'd spend time with them during the summer too. I'd help feed the beef cows, pigs and chickens with my uncle and my aunt and I would bake sweet treats to put in my uncle's lunchbox. We would often read books together after supper or listen to music on the radio while dancing around the living room.

All of these experiences contributed to making me the strong and capable woman I am today. Bored? We didn't have time to be bored. There was always something interesting to do.

Of course, this was in the 1960s; a time before cell phones, computers, Xboxes, and iPads, before a lot of things today's children have to occupy their time. Parent usually want their children to have more than when they were young, but if I could go back and change time, I wouldn't change a thing. I believe I turned out just fine. What will you be doing with your children or grandchildren this summer vacation? Hopefully, you'll be making some sweet memories.

*Judy Sharer just released her spicy historical romance/family saga titled Secrets in Room Four, the first in her series Love Lessons. She is also the author of a sweet historical romance/family saga series titled A Plains Life. This four-book series also published by The Wild Rose Press is appropriate for the entire family and is available on-line wherever books and eBooks are sold. Visit Judy's website judysharer.com and follow her on Facebook and X.*

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**Clutter Happens**

by Julie Pirtle

**Lessons From a Quilt**

I am a collector of romance. Not hearts. Not Gothic novels. I enjoy the romance of items that show a long life. Do they tell a story? If not, is it easy to imagine a story befitting of their valor for withstanding the test of time?

While thrift finds are always fun, my favorite pieces are those that have been passed down by my family. I love to be the keeper of the history they shared with my ancestors. It's a feeling hard to put into words, but if you know...you know.

My favorite treasures that have been entrusted to me are quilts that were made by my great grandmothers. They hang like proud family crests on the wall of my guest room. They are uneven. The corners don't match up when folded. Some colors have faded and some hand stitching is not as strong as it used to be.

Even with all those irregularities, they are still stunning. One is a wedding ring pattern that was made for my Grandmother by her Mom. It was a gift for their wedding in the early 40's. I remember seeing it on their bed as a young child...well into the 60's.

The other quilt is a carnival of small colored scraps. It is bordered with a bright seafoam green fabric. The pieces came from old shirts, dresses, blouses...anything that could be reused to create a fabric masterpiece. (Looks like upcycling isn't such a new trend after all!)

Over the centuries, quilts have been mainstays in the lives of those who used them. Women made them for their families as a necessity. After all, running to the Department Store for a new blanket wasn't really an option!

When I see a really old quilt, I like to think about who used it. Were they traversing cross-country in a covered wagon? Was it used in a backwoods farmhouse? Did it grace the bed in a Victorian home?

As important as the usage was the way most quilts were made. In the days before any electronic diversions, people actually talked to each other! In this way, the Quilting Bee became the social club of local groups of women.

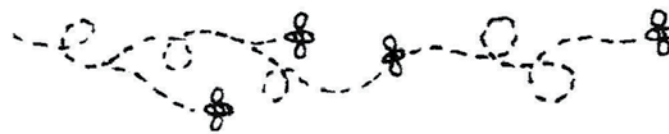
Together, they spent quality time. I imagine there was a lot of gossip, tears and laughter. All the while, their busy and crafty hands sewed stitch by stitch, making the creation a community effort.

In a time of our lives when life is uncertain and the world is a little crazy, I think we should take some wisdom from those quilts and the artisans that made them. It didn't matter what array of colors were sewn together. It was beautiful. Spending time together allows for a time of support and healing. It was also beautiful.

The stitches that connect the pieces of us together as a community are there if we take the time to see it. The seams holding those pieces together bind us as one. We humans all need the warmth of community ... and quilts.

Quilts make life softer. Old quilts make us wiser with the stories they tell. Let's make a pact to be softer and listen to those that have stories to share. We've got this. I know we do.

*© Julie Pirtle lives in Eagle Point, Oregon. She is a Professional Organizer and owner/operator of Clutter Happens. She also works with clients nationally through video consultations. The Clutter Challenged can reach her on Facebook: clutterhappens or email her directly: clutterhappens@yahoo.com*



**Free Pattern**

For more fun and creative inspiration visit:  
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Free Embroidery Pattern – May not be sold or used for commercial purposes. Use this pattern for embroidery, wool applique, punch needle or rug hooking, painted projects or whatever your imagination can dream up! Reduce or enlarge pattern as desired.

HANOVER

### Strawberry Shortcake

1/2 cup of butter	3 eggs
1 cup of sugar	3 t. baking powder
1 cup of milk	1 cup of flour
Juice of 1/2 a lemon	

Cream together butter and sugar. Add beaten eggs and lemon juice. Mix the flour with baking powder and add to wet ingredients.

Bake in greased cake pan at 350° for 20 minutes.

Mix sliced strawberries and sugar to serve with the shortcake. Cover with whipped cream.

Enjoy!

© house FIRMAR

## Life on My Farm - Breezy Manor

### The Disappearing Back Porch *by Donna Jo Copeland, farmeress*

My life thus far has been spent mostly living simply, farm centered. Old farmhouse with their high ceilings, drafts and tall trees. A brief time spent in a tiny apartment, formerly a chicken coop was endured. Ugh.

One of my favorite things about an old farmhouse is the back porch. Sometimes they were planned, sometimes just kind of stuck on. Whatever their construction they defined farm family life.

Where I grew up it was small, 4 steps up into the kitchen, sharp left to basement stairs. A handy place for barn coats and boots. Lots of big nails to hang odd things from. A door with a glass panel to be used in winter, replaced with screen in summer. Sort of a pass thru leading to the barn.

Our neighbors across and down the road had a glorious back porch--long and narrow, lots of small windows on the west side. Near the kitchen door space for a small table and old Hoosier cabinet. I loved visiting Bonnie and Harold, walking thru that back porch, we never used the front door. Her clothesline and chicken yard were just outside the door. The house sat on a small rise, tall trees lined the drive.

Where I live now, for over 50 years, have a magical back porch which has transformed itself many times. House was built in late 1800s with wood front and back porches. In 1960, in what seemed to be a cement pouring era, they were removed, cement floors poured, brick facing, storm windows and doors. And my back porch floor has a bump which keeps the door from opening all the way. I've tried grinding it down to no avail.

My young kids and I enjoyed many summer breakfasts there at my great grandmother's kitchen table. Then it became a brooder house for baby chick's, and still does. Then bunny cages one frigid winter.

Once I went to a livestock auction, brought home 2 day old calves, angus and holstein. Bedded them on the porch for quite a while. The chick's got moved into the kitchen--penned under the kitchen table.

When I had my goat dairy (over a quarter century) I had an old Philco fridge there filled with milk, cheese, eggs and ice cream. Customers came in, got what they wanted, left money in a coffee can.

For the last 30 years I have let the porch take on its own life. The Wool from my sheep fill shelves, a long table serves as a dye studio. A spin dryer sits on a small table. A tall chimney cabinet holds dyestuff. My hand tools nestle on a handmade corner shelf. Seedlings start in the east windows.

Lots of love, laughter and magic have happened on that back porch. The big windows bring in sunshine, fresh breezes, it's one of my happy places. The cistern with its old handpump sit just outside the door, path to the barn on the right.

Some may consider the kitchen to be the heart of a home. I think it's the back porch holding laughter, animals, boots and the soul of the family

Sadly looking at new houses today I see no back porches, just a door to the garage.

The farm back porch whether neat, messy, filled with life and laughter was where your friends and neighbors entered. The door was never locked.

You can't do that today

For all of our advancements, we have lost so much. Old farmhouse back porches carried a life and magic all their own. And almost all gone, living in memories

At 76 I probably won't move again but should I get the chance to build a new house, the back porch would be the first design

Late spring, early summer is absolutely delightful. Warmth, long days! Being out in the fresh air. Let's all get busy with a garden, get our hands and bare feet in the dirt, play in the mud. And grow our own food.

Peace, love and laughter!

*-© 2026 - 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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## Spinning Wheels for Freedom

*by Janet M. Bair*

As the 250th anniversary of our country draws near, I have been contemplating freedom's cost. Freedom is not free.

When the American colonies decided to boycott British imports of tea and cloth, the American women did their part. By the 1750's, a great deal of cloth was imported from Britain.

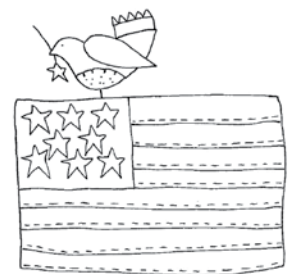
We read these facts today, but it doesn't register what extra work this would mean for the average mother of a large household.

Making cloth involved many time-consuming tasks such as spinning thread from wool or flax and then slowly weaving the threads on a loom. The Patriot leaders called upon American women to create cloth locally so that the colonies were no longer dependent upon Britain to survive.

Wearing homespun became the patriotic thing to do. Just as women became creative in brewing teas made from native plants such as sage, raspberry and strawberry, they grew flax and sheared their sheep. Various plants were used to dye thread as well as onion skins, nut shells, and bark.

In the late 1760's and early 1770's, women got together for spinning bees for the cause of freedom. Each woman would load her spinning wheel into the back of a wagon and go to the appointed gathering spot, usually the minister's home. The women would sit and spin for a whole (farmer's) day, from dawn to dusk. The gatherings often numbered 100 women from all economic backgrounds. Freedom from Britain was their united goal.

It's no surprise then to know that every scrap of fabric was cherished and re-used and re-worked until it became only small pieces, which were then patched into a quilt. The artistry and creativity of colonial women is to be admired. It makes me wonder what American women would do today to help the cause of freedom.



© Janet M. Bair of Ansonia, CT. You may contact her at [librarybair@hotmail.com](mailto:librarybair@hotmail.com)

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- Potted Garden
- Cutting Garden
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- Meditation Garden
- Rose Garden
- Rock Garden

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