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The Country Register

of NJ and DE



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Advertiser Index

Shops are listed alphabetically by location.

Cities & Shops	Page #	Cities & Shops	Page #
New Jersey		Delaware	
Cape May Court House.....	15	Bethany Beach.....	5
Fiber Arts Yarn Shop		Sea Needles	
Elmer	10	Dagsboro	5
Peggy’s		Serendipity	
Flemington	13	Dover.....	4
Duck Flats Farm Fiber Studio		Delaware Sewing Centers	
Marmora	16	Shady Lane	
Dollard Baker Sew & Vac		Lewes	5
Mickleton.....	10	Kid’s Ketch	
Primitive Gatherings		Milton.....	5
Pedricktown.....	11	Kid’s Ketch	
Heart Felt Designs		Newark.....	7
Pequannock	13	The Blue Hen Quilt Shop	
Acme Country Fabrics		Wilmington	6
Red Bank	12	Hayes Sewing	
Antique Center of Red Bank		Sew What	
West Creek	8, 9	Wyoming.....	7
KC Creations		Simply Charming	

Neighboring States & Shop Hops

All Mid Atlantic Shop Hop ..	16	Oaks PA	3
Ashland OH	3	PNQE	
NE OH Quilt Show		Stroudsburg PA.....	14
		American Ribbon	



Events Listing

See shop & show ads for complete details.

July

Day	Event	Page #
1-8/31	All Mid Atlantic Shop Hop – Various Towns	2-16
23-25	NE Ohio Quilt Show – Ashland OH.....	3

August

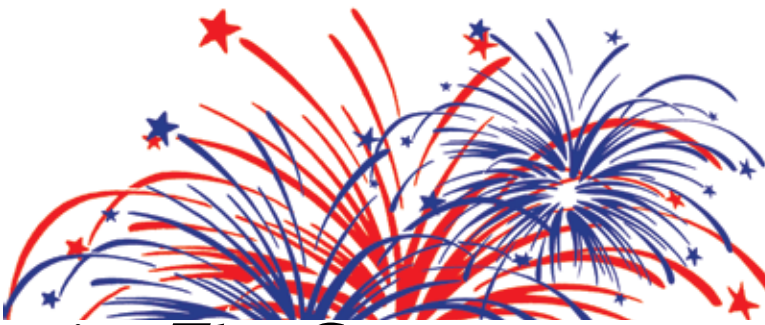
Day	Event	Page #
22	Fall Preview Open House, Heart Felt Designs – Pedricktown NJ ..	11

September

Day	Event	Page #
17-20	PNQE – Oaks PA.....	3



NEIGHBORING STATE AD



America The Great

by Janet Young

As we enter the 250th Anniversary of our nation, let us be ever mindful of the impact the signing of the Declaration of Independence signifies.

Signed in 1776 in Philadelphia Pennsylvania, this document shaped the future of our country as it stated that all people are created equal, and are empowered by unalienable rights, to which we adhere to this day. Through this document our freedoms were granted. The establishment of this nation was built on God-fearing men, who wanted to escape Britain’s religious persecution, taxes, and social constraints.

Many believed that the Hand of God enabled them to win the wars. In fact, the reference to God’s Hands is a symbol of peace, strength, and the ability to see His influence in all things. For example, when George Washington was preparing for battle, fog appeared overnight which enabled Washington and his troops to escape. Abraham Lincoln referencing “this Nation under God,” encouraged the people to fast and pray for this country, which further supports the idea of divine guidance. Another example that these men saw The Hand of God in establishing this nation, was their commitment to putting “In God We Trust” on our currency. Many examples show that these men clearly felt God’s Providence was upon them.

Just as the men and women of yesterday, fought for our freedom; so too, our brave men and women of today are fighting to keep our nation safe and free. Let’s not destroy that which we have fought for so hard these many years.

There is no question the United States of America is by far the greatest country ever. Let us not destroy it from within. We reap what we sow. So tonight, when you put your head on your pillow, I trust that you will thank God for this country and pray that as a nation we will come back to Him. For our country was built on Godly principles. If we turn our backs on God, He will let us go on our narrow ways. Remember America is the greatest country ever born, let us not destroy it.

Happy 250th America!

© 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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Go Take a Ride On a Train

by Barbara Kalkis

Visiting family used to require enough driving to make me feel like a crunched-up candy wrapper at the end of the trip. I'd pack enough clothes and jackets for all four seasons and every eventuality, from hiking to yoga class to restaurant dining to slouching in front of the TV. Intent on filling every space in my car, I even packed camping gear: tent, sleeping bag, backpack and cookware. (Never can tell if the family wants to take an impromptu hike.) Finally, I'd throw in the necessities: maps, emergency road assistance supplies, snacks, chips, water bottles, a stack of CDs and my cell phone. Content that every contingency was addressed, I'd head off for several hours on seemingly always crowded highways.

The trips included stops at familiar cafes and boutique shops along the routes. Although I passed through beautiful farm lands, I could only glance at the blossoming fruit trees, ripening tomatoes, corn, hops, sunflowers and golden wheat. At freeway speed, it was just a colorful blur. Occasionally I'd see trains in the distance, moving at pace with and then ahead of us when traffic slowed. It looked romantic and alluring, but I needed my car and all of my possessions.

That changed in one moment on a drive home one holiday weekend. Traffic was heavy but moving fast. I had just crested a hill and was headed into the valley when a small car blew a tire. The force of the blowout threw the car across three lanes of traffic and spun it around, facing into the cascade of speeding vehicles. Miraculously, every traveler in every lane hit the brakes and stopped in time. After a collective gathering of breath and senses, the two young inhabitants exited the car and ran safely to the side of the road. It was a game changer.

On my next trip, I decided to try a train ride. I figured I'd hate it. After all, how could I get along without all my stuff? Downsizing is painful, whether it's a house or a roomy car. However, the freeway near-miss incentivized me. I packed only essentials in a backpack and carry-on. I am now a train loyalist.

While someone else "drives," I relax in the rolling comfort of a seat on the top level. I have high-speed Wi-Fi, so I can catch up on email, news and the daily crossword. Best of all, I have the luxury of time. I can study every aspect of daily life as it floats by. Trains capture the endless parade of sights: from smoking industries, to landfills, to condo villages, to mansions, to stunning wild lands, farms, forests, waterways and an endless sky. Graffiti "decorates" construction sites, yet the English teacher in me admires punchy philosophical bits of street wisdom and impressive artistic talent displayed in creative -- almost three-dimensional -- lettering that transcends calligraphy. Large-scale mural artistry is a real talent!

As we barrel down the tracks, the conductor sounds the whistle in a continuous shrill scream. The stopped highway traffic at the cross-roads seems like a dream. We pull away and continue the blissful rhythm of the rails.

Driving requires stopping to "stretch." Plane rides are cumbersome. When I want to move on the train, I sashay over to the café car. The train alone offers us a close-up look at how we live our lives, place by place.

The fabric of America is not in the sky. It is on the land. And it is the train that shows us who we really are. Don't take my word for it. Go take a ride!

©Barbara Kalkis, 2026. Barbara divides her time between consulting, writing, and teaching. She's author of Little Ditties for Every Day. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

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NEWARK - WYOMING – DE

The Importance of Dreams

by Shelby Kottemann

Follow
YOUR
Dreams
THEY KNOW THE
Way

Dreams are one of the longest standing mysteries in the universe. We can dream of things in our sleep or we can daydream of possibilities for our life. Whether night or day, I have come to believe that dreams hold a power in our lives beyond our realization. Here are two ideas why:

Some nighttime dreams are just an interesting conglomeration of things our minds are processing. However, I think we've all had a dream or two sometime that we just knew was more than a dream. One of mine came a few years ago. Whether you believe in Angels or not, I had a dream that something from Heaven told me to pray for my mother. When I asked why, I felt a reply of "Health" and it felt urgent. I asked my mother if she had been to the doctor lately. She showed me a spot where her dermatologist had frozen a mole off her arm with liquid nitrogen. I asked her to have it checked again. She knew I had dreams and feelings, so she went without question. The doctor who checked it scheduled emergency surgery to remove melanoma that had spread so deeply that it was within a hair's distance from her lymphatic system. I might still have my mom today because she and I trusted a dream.

As for daydreams, I have a theory that I would love for you to put to the test: When we daydream with a sense of appreciation and joy in our hearts, without any expectation, that dream goes out into the universe and it comes to us in extraordinary ways. Even small things apply. For instance, I thought to myself a couple of times, "Wouldn't it be nice to have some soft pink peonies in my yard?" I even looked at them in the store, but with some big expenses that had come up, I just couldn't justify buying flowers. A week later, I was out for a walk and stumbled upon a large paper bag marked Free peonies. What are the chances of that? Peonies! I looked up and said, "Thank You."

Starting today, I invite you to trust your dreams: your sleeping dreams and your daydreams, big and small. Follow your instincts. Imagine the possibilities with gratefulness and joy. Allow your mind to wander and your heart to listen. You just might notice that your dreams aren't so fantastical after all. You might find that some dreams are truly whispers from your soul.

Shelby Kottemann is an author, teacher, and empathic reiki therapist. She created Loves Nature LLC to help others create heart-centered lives. You can reach her at contact@inlovesnature.com. Visit her website at www.inlovesnature.com.

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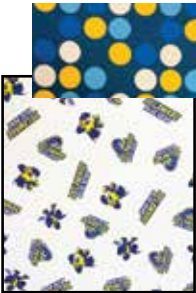
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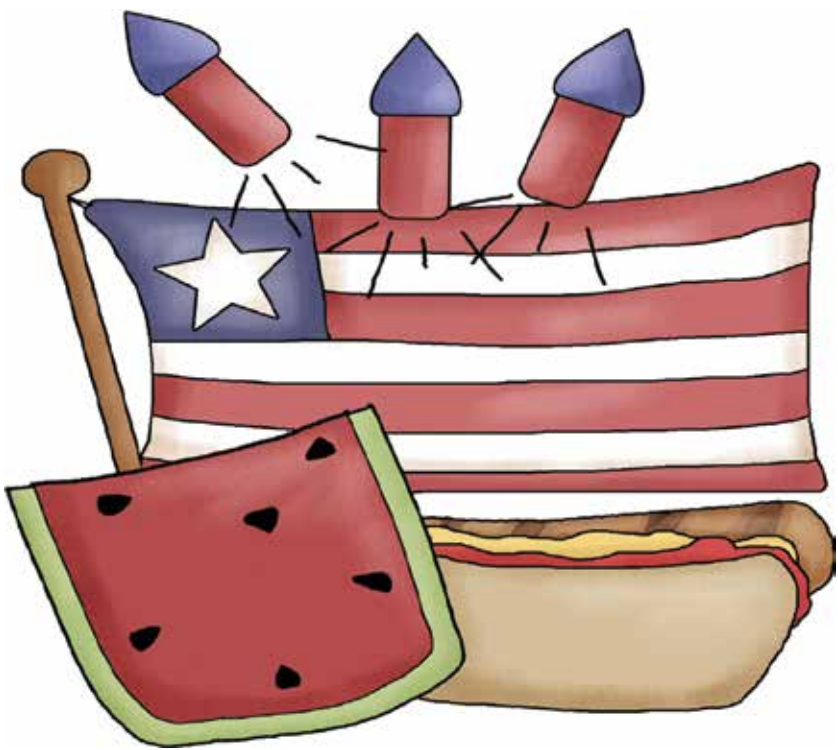
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Life on My Farm - Breezy Manor

It's Been a Soggy Mess, And Now..

by Donna Jo Copeland, farmeress

My goodness rain, muck, mud, floods, wild winds and weeds chin high!

Garden update: my feed sack garden is doing well... tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers are happy and I will have some produce soon!

I planted beans in rows of heavy muck, we will see how they do. Of course I had to cover with pieces of fence trying to chicken proof

I lined the feed sacks up against a section of cattle panel for support and the cucumber vines like the climb!

And of all things, my weedeater mower is on the fritz. Lacking money for repair or replacement, I have decided to let the goats and sheep graze, letting the yard just go au natural... Charlie likes being in charge, waiting for my "round em up" command. He's got it handled!

I confess I like seeing what comes up with no mowing. The flea bane who is usually white, this spring has been a glorious pink! Lots of patches of white clover, a feast for the bees. Plantain has made a huge bed by the wood shed. My yard is really kind of neat.

My bane, as with most sheep raiders, is the lovely thistle. Yes their purple blooms are lovely, their stickers not so much. As I don't spray, Charlie, me, spade, leather gloves and wheelbarrow spend a lot of time in the pasture digging. I do bag the whistles for garbage pickup. Can't have those stickers in my sheep wool!

As I have a huge patch of false nettle across the creek, I have spent years searching for redeeming qualities, to no avail. I've tried dye, cordage, the goats and sheep won't eat it. When I mow with my scythe the cut off bits reroot. I tried a weed wizard to burn it, did the tops but it came back. So once again (when the water level goes down and I can wade across) I will dig and bag.

Living here over 55 years I have taken note of the changing weeds. Pigweed and Johnson grass used to cover garden and pasture. Then Japanese knotweed, then thistles and nettles bringing along Creeping Charlie for company.

I try to spread barn leavings, muck and manure over pastures and gardens. But one old lady with a pitchfork and wheelbarrow can only do so much. And weirdly no one volunteers to help. But I try. Not always my best but I try.

In half a century I think I have raised the ground level 6 inches. The dirt certainly is happier with no chemical sprays or bagged fertilizer....just poo.

When Charlie and I take a break with a cup of tea and homemade cookie, we sit in the yard and enjoy the sheep grazing contentedly. Makes me smile. Reflect. Tell myself it's good that I'm a simple lady, poor in coin farmeress and stewardess of my wee corner of the world.

I try to keep my wants and needs simple. No internet, no TV, no computer, no central heat, no air conditioning. Almost a primitive lifestyle. But there is peace here with all of the craziness of livestock....and magic.

My soul sings as I work with the toolslooms, spinning wheels, spades, pitchfork, hammers...of my ancestors. I even have my great great grandmother's homemade wooden ironing board---yes I still iron. I feel the comfort of their love, their legacy.

And I grieve for the youth today. They seem so lost in technology, no sense of purpose or direction. Alien to manual labor, tactile sense. Loss of respect for each other. They don't take time to rejoice in sunrises or the serenity of sunset. Never take the time to lay on a hillside and watch the clouds.

Yes I cry the lament of old crones.
May you dig in the dirt, plant flowers, vegetables, breathe rain fresh air, greet each day with joy in your heart.
Peace and love.

© 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.



From Breezy Manor Recipe File

Afternoon tea, scones and fresh berries

1 to 2 cups fresh berries, washed, put in a pretty bowl

Mix together

2 cups flour	1/2 cup cold milk or cream
1 stick cold butter, grated	1/4 cup sugar
2 t. Baking powder	1egg

Mix by hand until a dough forms, put out on floured surface, knead a bit, pat into an 8 inch circle. Cut into 8 wedges. Place on parchment paper lined cookie sheet, bake 18 to 22 minutes at 400 degrees.

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PEDRICKTOWN

Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

CONSISTENCY

It would be helpful if children were born with an instruction booklet mapping out the exact techniques for perfectly raising each particular child to adulthood. With an individually charted road map to follow, painful experiences for both parent and child could be avoided. Even if my children had arrived with instructions, I probably wouldn't have read them any better than I read the instructions that accompany kitchen appliances. I prefer to take the independent approach and wing it on my own—at least until difficulties force me to seek assistance.

Consistency was one of my major parenting objectives. I felt providing my children with consistent discipline throughout their formative years would create a strong base for their individual growth and development. Reflecting on this lofty goal brings the realization I blew it! Failed!

As the mother of an inquisitive three-year-old, I can still hear myself saying, "I already answered that question. I'm busy fixing your lunch. Stop chattering and go play." In contrast, when my children were 13-years-old I said, "Sit down for just a minute and talk to me. You never talk to me anymore!"

I remember shopping for school clothes when my kids were five and ready to start kindergarten. I told them, "These are just the kind of clothes all your classmates will be wearing—and the kind you'll want to wear, too." But when they were 15, my tune had changed to, "Who would want to look and dress like everyone else in your school?"

Don't act like such a baby," I pleaded with my six-year-old. "Aren't you ever going to grow up?" Then at 16, my message changed to, "You've got plenty of time. Slow down! Don't be in such a hurry to grow up!"

There were days when my children seemed to make it nearly impossible for me to accomplish my household chores. When they were seven and underfoot, I said, "It's such a pretty day—so nice outside—you don't even need a jacket. Why don't you go outside and ride bikes with your friends?" By the time they were 17, I flipped and said, "I don't think you need to go anywhere tonight! You're hardly ever home anymore because you're always going off with your friends!"

On second thought, maybe I didn't fail.

I was consistent—I was consistently inconsistent!



©2026 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.

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Life in Skunk Hollow

Christmas in July

by Julie A. Druck

I've been thinking a lot about Christmas lately – more specifically, about Christmas trees. The thoughts have been coming as I wander through the newly-planted Christmas tree field on the hill above our little house. I've taken to walking through the grassy field most evenings at dusk, praying over and blessing the trees – that they would grow strong and well as they work their way to maturity over the next 7 years.

In addition to a growing beef cattle herd, our son, Caleb, and his wife, Abby, are trying this new venture on the fifty-acre farm on which both our families live. Our son is a thorough researcher and meticulous implementer of any new project that he takes on. So, after much planning and paperwork, he purchased 1,100 Canaan and Douglas Fir seedlings. And over a period of three days in late spring, our family helped put those baby trees into the ground. Four generations from Caleb and Abby's families turned out to help at various times over those days. From Caleb's grandfather who helped dig holes to little nieces and nephews who watered the baby seedlings with cups from a bucket, it truly was a family affair.

Caleb told me that he heard 7-year-old Joshua gently talking to one of the trees as he watered its base. Josh's encouragement of "Grow, baby, grow" is the same desire of all those who helped – from the ones who babysat Caleb and Abby's toddler son (who was more interested in eating dirt than planting trees), to Abby's sister who helped tuck trees into the ground while her newborn son was tucked into his swaddle against her, to those who golf carted bucket after bucket of water to the field, and the ones who dug (seemingly) countless holes. We're all eager to see the growth and harvest of the crop.

And therein lies a tendency I recognize within myself – that of wanting to jump to the end of a process – no matter if I'm making something, reading a book, or waiting for trees to grow. The process can sometimes feel like an interference to the ending. Sometimes I just want to have the gift without the bother of opening it! And yet, I'm slowly realizing (in a lot of areas of life) that the process, the journey, IS the gift.

You know, the length of time we have on this earth is unknown to us. There's no guarantee that I'll actually see those trees grow to fruition or ever have the privilege of having one decorate our home during the holiday season. But if I focus on the beauty of the process instead of jumping ahead, I realize that seeing the end of the trees' maturity isn't the only, or even the primary gift. One gift that's already been realized because of these Christmas tree seedlings has been the blessing of family working together for a common purpose. And that purpose goes far beyond a farming venture. For this year, we planted more than just trees. We planted common memories – memories of the joy and sweetness there is in helping one another. The process of doing a job together is just as valuable and as precious as tall, mature Christmas trees. And so, in a sense, beauty has already begun coming to fruition, and these seven years of waiting will provide more opportunity to discover, delight in, and be thankful for all the gifts that will surface in the process.

Julie Druck is from York, Pennsylvania, and writes from her farm in Skunk Hollow. She'd welcome your comments at thedruck.s@netzero.com.

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Decorating, Entertaining and
Living in the Early American Style *by Annice Bradley Rockwell*

A Celebration of Strength

In 2026 with the approach of the height of the year, we have so much to be proud of. As our nation celebrates its 250th year, one of the best ways to proclaim our patriotic pride is through decorating. Our yards this time of year are naturally filled with the beauty of green lawns and gardens filled with color. The stands of red beebalm that attract the hardworking hummingbirds are in full bloom now. Our blue hydrangeas that are always lush and vibrant are all part of the backdrop of a spectacular and especially patriotic summer.

To decorate our porches, gorgeous primitive buntings of red, white and blue expand our décor and lend historic appeal. Small bicentennial flags lined along our fence let people know we are truly celebrating our nation's proud history.



To make our enthusiasm even more evident, we might even create historical decorative vignettes that are unique and have an even stronger colonial appeal. A huge copy of The Declaration of Independence paired with a Revolutionary cloak and tricorne hat can be placed next to an inkwell with a quill and American flag. It's a way to celebrate freedom and to honor history.

Participating in the Past

Taking part in our town's 250th celebrations will no doubt be a time to remember. Whether it is a tour of the local museum's bicentennial collection curated just for this year, or an historic home tour designed with 250 in mind, the activities for this very special summer abound. Summer favorites such as the July 4th parade or the quaint shoreline town's boat parade will be received with exceptional fanfare and enthusiasm this year because this historic milestone deserves it.

Spirit of 1776

So as summer gets into full swing and festive events start to gain momentum, consider taking part and enjoying the "Spirit of 1776" fun. As people who are naturally passionate about history, colonial antiques and the legacy of our nation's past, this summer is a time to bring our absolute best.

© Annice Bradley Rockwell is an educator and owner of Pomfret Antiques. She is currently working on her book, *New England Girl*. NewEnglandGirl2012@hotmail.com

A Primitive Place Magazine

Take a Step Back in Time

Take a step back in time, with A Primitive Place, where history comes alive! We invite you to step back in time with guided tours through five beautifully styled homes, each reflecting a unique and timeless charm. You'll also discover informative articles on antiques and primitive décor, along with hands-on craft tutorials, quick and easy recipes, and our exclusive APP Marketplace—where you can find, and purchase items featured in the homes you love.

www.aprimitiveplacemagazine.com

Orzo and Pine Nut Salad

A delicious side dish, full of flavor, texture, & crunch. ♥

2 c. pine nuts
2 Tbsp. butter
1/2 lb. orzo pasta
1 c. black olives, sliced
1/2 c. parsley, minced
1/2 c. green onion, minced

1/3 c. green bell pepper
1/3 c. red bell pepper
1/4 c. fresh lemon juice
1/4 c. olive oil
freshly ground pepper
Parmesan cheese, to taste

In a large skillet, lightly toast the pine nuts in the butter; drain on paper towels & cool. Cook the orzo in boiling water; drain & rinse in cold water. (Be extra careful not to overcook the pasta.) Very gently, mix together all ingredients; cover & chill. ♥

From The Summer Book, by Susan Branch, with Love ♥ www.susanbranch.com

FLEMINGTON - PEQUANNOCK

The 250th Anniversary of the United States: Ideas and Ideals

by Nancy J. Nash

In the 1890's, a man named Dietrich was a blacksmith at the Wilhelmshaven naval shipyard in Germany. The story is told that one day he spoke to his younger brother, Wilhelm, and gave him a warning.

"I'm not supposed to tell you this," he said. "I could lose my job for divulging this secret. But down at the shipyard, we're not making cargo ships for world trade like the Kaiser wants the public to believe. We're putting guns on them. We're building battleships and preparing for war.... Don't stay in this country. You have to leave again."

Wilhelm had already lived for a short time in the Midwestern United States with his wife and son before returning home to Germany. There they were blessed with the birth of another child, Sophia. The young father bemoaned the lack of job opportunities he had had as a carpenter in the Midwest. But now there was another reason to return: trouble was brewing in his native country. He knew he had to heed Dietrich's advice.

Wilhelm and his family crossed the ocean to Ellis Island, landing on July 3, 1894. Little Sophie was almost three years old. She watched, transfixed, as her parents bowed and kissed the ground in gratitude for a new homeland. She never forgot.

The family settled in Illinois, where Sophie grew up on a farm, as did her daughters after her. One of them later married into my family and became my aunt. She was raised to value freedom, and all her life, she embraced the sense of responsibility on which freedom rests.

A number of years ago, my brother wrote *Books and the Founding Fathers*, a study of the literature that influenced the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Our Founders thought deeply, read widely, and attempted to articulate principles that they could then apply to forging a system of government responsive to the will of its citizens.

Over and over, they affirmed the need for virtue and integrity among the people of the new nation. Ultimately, the success of the American experiment would depend upon the ability of its foundational ideas to live in the minds of the citizens and the power of its ideals to sustain their willingness to sacrifice.

The Founders gleaned wisdom from the works of ancient philosophers and from Judeo-Christian scripture (with its emphasis on freedom, justice, equality, and human worth). Thus was born a nation different from all other nations - one that replaced kings and queens with a few carefully crafted pieces of paper that contained an enduring blueprint for the American republic.

The United States is not simply a place of prosperity or a distinctive landscape. At its heart is a set of principles of government intended to honor human dignity and to form a sturdy framework for freedom. Its ideals continually demand our attention and challenge us to think soberly and wisely.

Sophie grew up to marry the son of English immigrants. England and Germany fought each other in the First World War, but the life of the young couple in America was one of peace. It was also rigorous, working a farm without running water and electricity for many years. But Sophie had seen her parents kiss the ground in this new land, and she never forgot their gratefulness for the opportunity to escape oppression and to embrace liberty. Neither did my aunt.

Their memorable heritage is like fabric in a patchwork quilt, its colors and designs blending with others in a unique and vibrant pattern 250 years in the making.

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Nancy is the author of *Mama's Books: An Oregon Trail Story* and *Little Rooster's Christmas Eve*, both available at [amazon.com](#). 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 tradit2@verizon.net.

Age Matters Only if You're Counting

by Barbara Kalkis

I was feeling pretty perky about the country's 250th anniversary and even planning a family gathering until I had a conversation with a casual acquaintance. In a somber voice, he mentioned that he is old enough to remember our country's 200th anniversary. The thought of clearly remembering a major event 50 long years ago made him feel old. Realizing that I also fondly remembered 1976, my perky attitude died as quickly as a mosquito hit by a bug zapper.

Rather than dwell on how I've spent the last 50 years, I decided to consider age in a disciplined, logical manner. Difficult to do. After all, society is consumed by the ages of everyone we know and those we don't know but who are related to those we do know. We color our hair to hide the gray. We erase wrinkles with magic creams and medical procedures. We work out at fitness clubs with gusto and the determination of professional athletes. Health foods become meal staples. Conversations dwell on ways to stay healthy, what vitamins to take, how to maintain balance, how to be a 'super-ager,' avoiding unrefrigerated leftover foods that create toxic bacteria. (Cooked rice! Who knew???)

Taking a different approach, I took out a packet of 1976 quarters that I still have. Remember them? Yes, you may admit it. A colonial patriot is beating a drum; adjacent, 13 stars representing the colonies encircle a flaming torch. Below it are the immortal

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Latin words, "e pluribus unum," or "from many one," that beautiful concept of a diverse population united by love of country. The words, "United States of America... Quarter Dollar" circle the coin's edge. Every essential image packs just under 1-inch diameter.

Then I started to consider things older than I am. When in doubt, think about crafts. My first thought was that stitching things together had to have occurred on the final day in the Garden of Eden. On a more logical trend, I remembered spinning fibers and weaving linen into clothing and tanning animal skins into hats, coats, shoes happened in our earliest history. Anonymous painters like the one of Lascaux, France ancient caves, covered the walls with vivid likenesses of racing horses, deer and bulls.

In America, weaving, shaping bowls and grinding grain were mainstays of natives and, later, Pilgrims. Quilting was a mandatory job to make blankets. Children embroidered alphabet samplers with decorative stitches. Cooking was required to survive.

In the late 1800s, astute homemakers wrote books that elevated every housewife's tedious role into "craft". Suddenly, it wasn't just cooking anymore. Authors instructed readers how to design nutritious meals, sew clothing and decorative items. Most importantly, the books explained how to create budgets and manage household expenses under the title of "home economics."

With that history in mind, I feel better about age. As with all the anonymous people who lived in North America or came to it, building, creating, designing, inventing, painting, "making do" and doing what was necessary to make a home was the start of crafting. Folks just didn't know it then. Today we have the luxury of crafting for comfort, beauty and celebrating our imagination to make something beautiful or useful. Crafting is the heart of every national anniversary. It's not about numerical ages on a personal or even a national level. It's about ensuring that the age we live in and our own stage of life build on the past, celebrate the present and gift the future with new talents and new perspectives. Happy birthday, America! Here's cheers for the next 250 years!

©Barbara Kalkis, 2026. Barbara is a writer, teacher and marketing consultant. Her poetry book is Little Ditties for Every Day: A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm. She believes happiness lies in not thinking about age — hers or anyone else's.

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Ann's Lovin' Ewe

by Ann Marie Stewart

57 Questions of Life

With the passing of a loved one, we lose generations of knowledge, thoughts, wisdom, and a resource of history. No more can we find the answers to our questions. That thought begs us to consider what words are important to leave behind. Thoughts about this were spurred after reading **The Frozen River**.

Author Ariel Lawhon claims she “collects” people for her novels. Ironically, she “collected” 1780’s midwife Martha Ballard at her OB-GYN when she picked up Our Daily Bread and read the August 1, 2008 devotional about an 18th Century midwife who had delivered over a thousand babies and never lost a mother.

Then she discovered that Martha Ballard’s daily medical notations became a legacy and medical and historical record compiled and turned into a biography by Laurel Thatcher Uhlich on which Lawhon based **The Frozen River**.

So you see, Martha would be forgotten and her medical wisdom lost were it not for the fact that her words still have power.

What about you? What words do you need to record for future generations?
Blank Book. If you’re like me, you probably have a blank book like Martha’s just sitting around the house. Or you could pick up a pretty one for your nightstand. It’s not a diary, but a place to collect:

- Nightly thoughts
- Favorite Bible verses
- Beautiful quotes and sayings
- Something you learned that day
- A line from a book you read
- Memories

OR you could record memories of your kids or grandkids. During Covid when I daily walked the eight-mile trail with my friend Barb, she told me funny and poignant stories of her grands. “I hope you’re recording these!” I’d tell her. I didn’t want the stories lost or forgotten because I knew her grands would one day appreciate the re-telling.

- You could record:**
- Something your kids or grands said that day
 - Something your kids did or learned that day
 - Some wise advice they gave you
 - Some wise advice you want to give them

Memories are important. Recently someone sent me a decade-old letter my grandfather had written in a November birthday card to his son, Abram. Since it was near Christmas, Grandpa wrote about Baby Jesus having swaddling clothes then compared it to when their family fled Russia and my grandmother had no diapers for their six-day-old infant Abram. But someone had donated a few shirts and so his young wife cut off the sleeves and turned them into diapers! This was a precious fact I added to my novel.

I only knew this fact because it was written in a letter and saved and passed down to me. Whether emails, letters, or journals, find a way to record and preserve memories.

I was blessed to interview my grandparents about their escape from Russia and the child they left behind. These memories became the novel *The Remnants: One Family’s Escape from Stalin’s Russia* which will be available in October 2026. Please go to my website at www.AnnMarieStewart.com to learn more.

Your Questions. To help with your own research, I have compiled a list of questions from AmericanAncestors.org and VisitingAngels.com that can help YOU prompt loved ones to tell you about their lives. Or use the questions to start recording for the generations who follow you. You can download the 57 questions off my website at AnnMarieStewart.com Then print and start writing, talking and listening.



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.

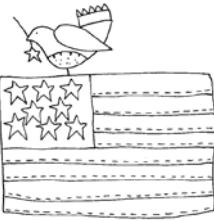
Making cloth involved many time-consuming tasks such as spinning thread from wool or flax and then slowly weaving the threads on a loom. The Patriot leaders called upon American women to create cloth locally so that the colonies were no longer dependent upon Britain to survive.

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



Avoiding ‘Cat’-astrophe

by Deb Heatherly

Let’s face it, cats are as drawn to quilting do-dads as much as we are. A game of bat the spool across the floor and under the furniture can keep the most curious feline amused for quite some time. Thimbles can be used for the same type of feline hockey game. Jelly roll strips can be dragged from room to room with the pride of capture in a game of ‘kill the snake,’ while expensive cat toys sit idle. If your fur babies are anything like mine, a simple cardboard box and a few dropped supplies create imaginative play and contentment like nothing else.

Which brings me to this true story.
At my previous studio it became obvious that our Max loved fabric strips. So much so, that if I was working with strips, I got in the habit of giving him his own strip to play with. If I did not, he would wait until I was not looking, jump on the cutting table, and then drag my strips, one by one, up the stairs. They were always deposited near his toy box for “safe keeping” and easy to retrieve later, albeit a little worse for wear with teeth and claw marks.

Because I was used to his obsession, I thought nothing of his continued habit a few years later when we moved. Much to his delight, during this particular project, I cut an extra black strip just for him.

“Here you go,” I said to him. “A snake just for you.”
He happily grabbed my offering and began to carry it around. I swear I could see him smile.

For days he carried it up and down the steps. For some reason, this black strip held his attention longer than others ever had. The black strip was never left near his toybox, because he seemed to always be dragging it somewhere. Maybe deep down, because of the fabric color, his primate instincts had kicked in and to him it really was a snake. This went on for over a week.

Having gotten used to finding it on the steps, I simply stepped over it and left his toy where I knew he would find it a bit later. On this particular day, I was in the process of stepping over the strip, when much to my surprise, the strip began to wiggle and move. I am sure I walked on air and gasped for air when I realized that this particular strip was indeed a black snake and not a strip at all.

“Snake! Come quick!” I called to my husband.
He thought I was joking at first because he too had been stepping over Max’s pretend snake for days, but he soon realized that something in my tone needed further investigation. Minutes later a broom, a dustpan, and a bit of maneuvering to keep Max from grabbing this ‘strip that moved’ and the snake, who was probably as scared as I was, was safely taken out to the woods and released.

For days I wondered...had the snake just found its way inside or had I actually been stepping over what I thought was a black strip for several days? I glad that I will never know for sure.

In the meantime, no more black strips for Max. Hot pink and neon orange seem like a much better choice from here on out.

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/>.

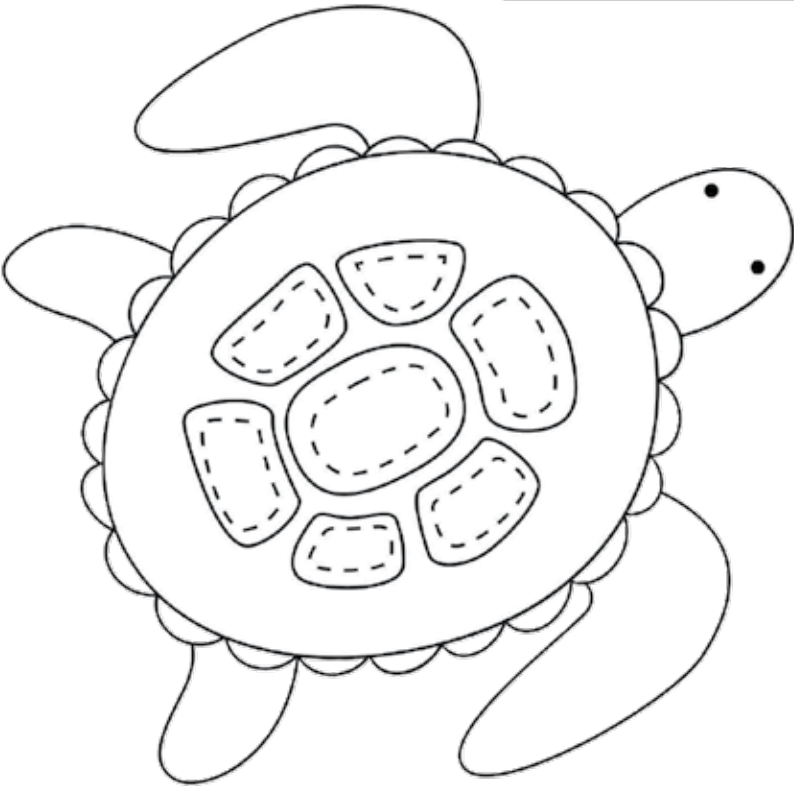
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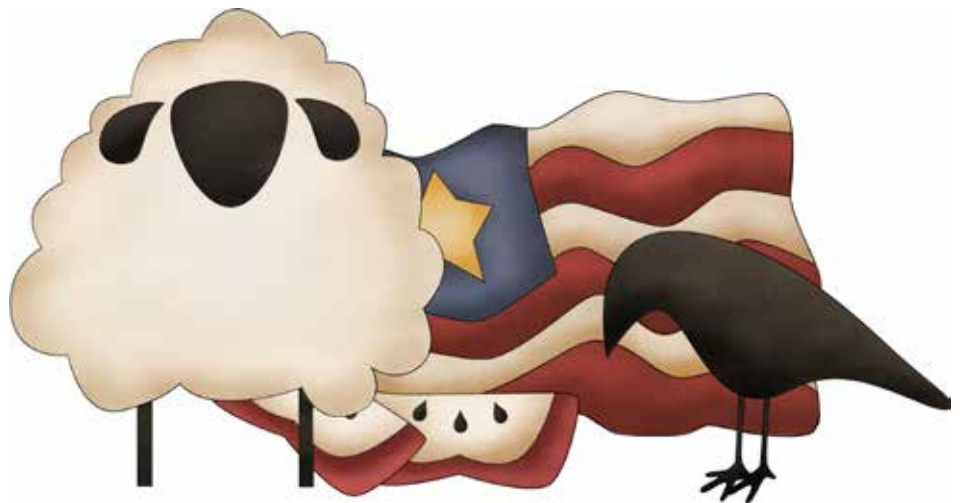
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MARMORA - VARIOUS SHOP HOP TOWNS

Weeding the Summer Garden

by Kerri Habben Bosman

I weeded our garden this summer morning before the swelter of the day snuck in. I worked beneath a nicely overcast sky, surrounded by a quiet breeze with the slightest hint of rain in it. I migrated from garden bed to garden bed, welcoming each arriving thought as I listened to the world breathe.

I talked to the tomatoes and smiled at the watermelon. I checked the cucumber plants, happy to see that more were growing after yesterday’s harvest. I shook my head at the plethora of mint, swiping my hand across it to bring forth its aroma. I pondered the tiny purple flowers on the thyme. I transplanted seven pepper plants to a better spot, silently apologizing as I uprooted them. I secured them gently but firmly into their new place, and watered them right away with a promise to come back soon.

My husband, Wayne, says it is an act of faith to plant a garden. Each winter as our seedlings sit in the front window, we eagerly await each new stage of their development. We plant dormant seeds with prayerful hopes, hoping that our care, their environment, and uncontrolled circumstance will support their growth into the best plant they can be. We rejoice from the first tendrils to the last vegetable or flower when autumn is coming upon us. We clear out for the last months of the year and wait to start all over again.

Much of our summer garden began on a winter’s day in January when I brought out all the seeds we’d saved from last year. Zinnias, marigolds, peppers, and tomatoes. The beans, carrots, sugar snap peas we had to buy. And of course, I bought plants. Except for spoiling grandchildren, we are frugal. With Scottish and German backgrounds between us, we cannot escape it. However, putting me in a plant nursery in late April with a credit card is possibly more dangerous than sending a shopaholic to the mall. Thankfully I have a lot of willpower, but often something beautiful and new to me simply jumps into my cart.

We bought our cucumber plants from our 16 year-old-grandson, Hunter. He grew them in his high school horticulture class, and then they had a plant sale. Cucumbers don’t always grow well here at the coast. Because he planted the seeds and nurtured them, we especially wanted them to bear fruit. Even if it was just one cucumber, his efforts would be a success. We are grateful to be enjoying many a cucumber salad.

And, like I said at the beginning of this article, I plucked out the ever-tenacious “Pflanzeichwillnichtus.” (This is my very own botanical name for a weed. It is a combination of German and Latin, meaning “plant that I do not want.”) Along the way, I made mental notes as to how the plants I do want are growing, deadheading as I go. I find a bit of irony in weeding-as I meticulously cull a concentrated area, I am also focusing on the entire garden. I feel the surrounding beauty and the grace of being alive. This creates a precious cohesion, an acceptance of all that is and all that is not.

Our garden of life these last few years has been partially fertilized by loss and sorrow. They churned up the soil of who we are, and these emotions are still breaking down into nutrients that will somehow serve us. Yet, through it all, we resettled our roots, trusting the journey in this strange soil, and we were given enough water and enough

light to grow into a new season.

Now, I must go to check the transplanted peppers, smile at the cucumber plants, and pause gratefully at the tender, tiny flowers of thyme.

Kerri Habben Bosman is a writer living in Cape Carteret, NC.





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