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July & August 2026



Edinburg, Strasburg, Timberville, Winchester plus
Berkeley Springs, Martinsburg - WV and York - PA



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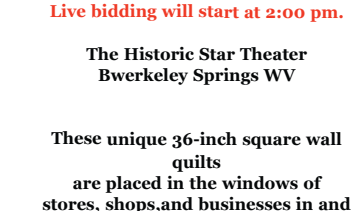
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July 30th-Sept.6th
at the
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Council (MAC)
Independence & Mercer Streets
Berkeley Springs, WV.



Delectable Mountains
Quilt Auction 2026

September 5th 2026
(Saturday) 2:00pm

This year's proceeds will benefit the
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Morgan County WV.

Bidder registration will open at
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Live bidding will start at 2:00 pm.

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Hotel room not included. See registration for price.

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Day Crafters Welcome
(See Registration form for details)

For more information or to register
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Countryforeswore@gmail.com
Registration form @
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Or scan the QR code



Snow Much Crafting
January 14 -18 2027
Comfort Inn Martinsburg-Alkens Center
1801 New River Blvd, Martinsburg, WV 25801

5 Day Crafting package is \$220.00
Includes crafting time from Thursday 3:00 PM - Monday 3:00 PM
6 Ft table, \$20 table gift, Door Prizes, Games,
1 meal on Friday, Saturday, Sunday (around 5pm)
and (Classes at additional cost)
Hotel room not included. Group rate is \$99.00 + tax per night
up to 4 people per a room.

VENDORS:
Country Paper Crafting featuring brands:
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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 "Pflanzenichwillnichts." (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.

Harrisonburg

KISSed Quilts

Take a Ride Into the Countryside

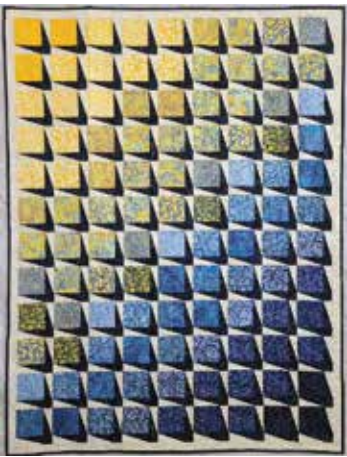
by Marlene Oddie

For over a decade I have been designing quilts with Island Batik fabrics. They are now a division of Lumin Fabrics and I'm honored that they asked if I'd put my name to one of the fabric collections designed by Jerry Khiev. I selected this beautiful blue and yellow collection – *Countryside Charm* – as my first Signature Collection.

Various values of blue and yellow create a pleasing palette that is just happy! The motifs are a variety of floral patterns, leaves and small petal shapes.

I've designed four primary patterns and a couple of them have bonus designs included.

Angled Shadows – you may recognize the block that I designed last year as part of our All Pacific Northwest Shop Hop event. This version of it doesn't include any sashings and has a consistent background throughout the quilt. This is easily constructed when using AnglePlay® templates for the half rectangle triangles. Having angled shadows is something new to our industry! Enjoy the 3-d effect.



Honeycomb –

Used my newly designed Half Hexi template, that maximizes the use of a 10" square and can cut a half or whole hexi, the setting elements and corners, to make this quilt. The template has holes where the 1/4" intersections are to help facilitate marking your seam start and stop points. Bonus: Make a simple wallhanging with your favorite fabrics. This concept could be used with any collection.

Sintra

Entrada –

This one may be familiar, but looks quite different than one you might have seen a few years ago. This is because I'm using a light medium value blue consistently for the vertical rectangle instead of a darker value. This may look difficult to construct but uses strata techniques to make it simple. This tile pattern can be found at the entrance of Sintra Palace in Portugal. I've chosen to color it quite differently.



Hearts-a-Bloom –

Using the corner-to-corner technique you'll get bonus half square triangles. So I used them in a bonus design—Windy Pinwheels. You could also just make one block set and frame it as a wallhanging.

These fabrics, templates and patterns are shipping to your local quilt shop now. If you need patterns, templates, fabrics and/or kits—please ask!



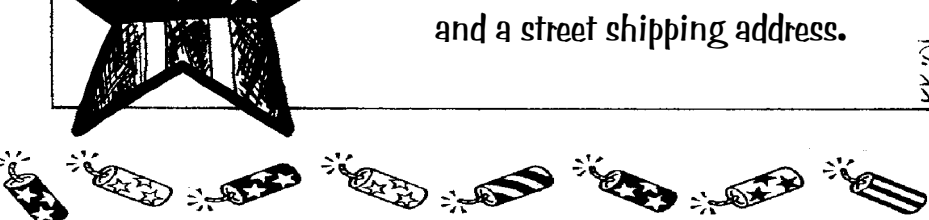
Marlene Oddie, of Grand Coulee, WA, is an engineer by training, a project manager by profession, and a quilter by passion. At her quilt shop, KISSed Quilts, she quilts for hire on a Gammill Optimum Plus and especially enjoys designing quilts and helping create meaningful keepsakes. Fabrics, patterns, kits, and templates are available at kissedquilts.com. Follow Marlene's adventures on Facebook and Instagram.



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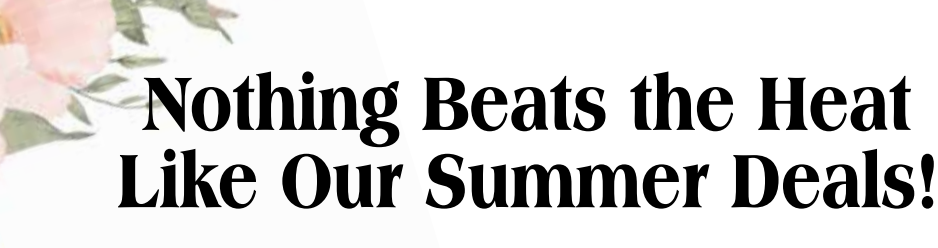
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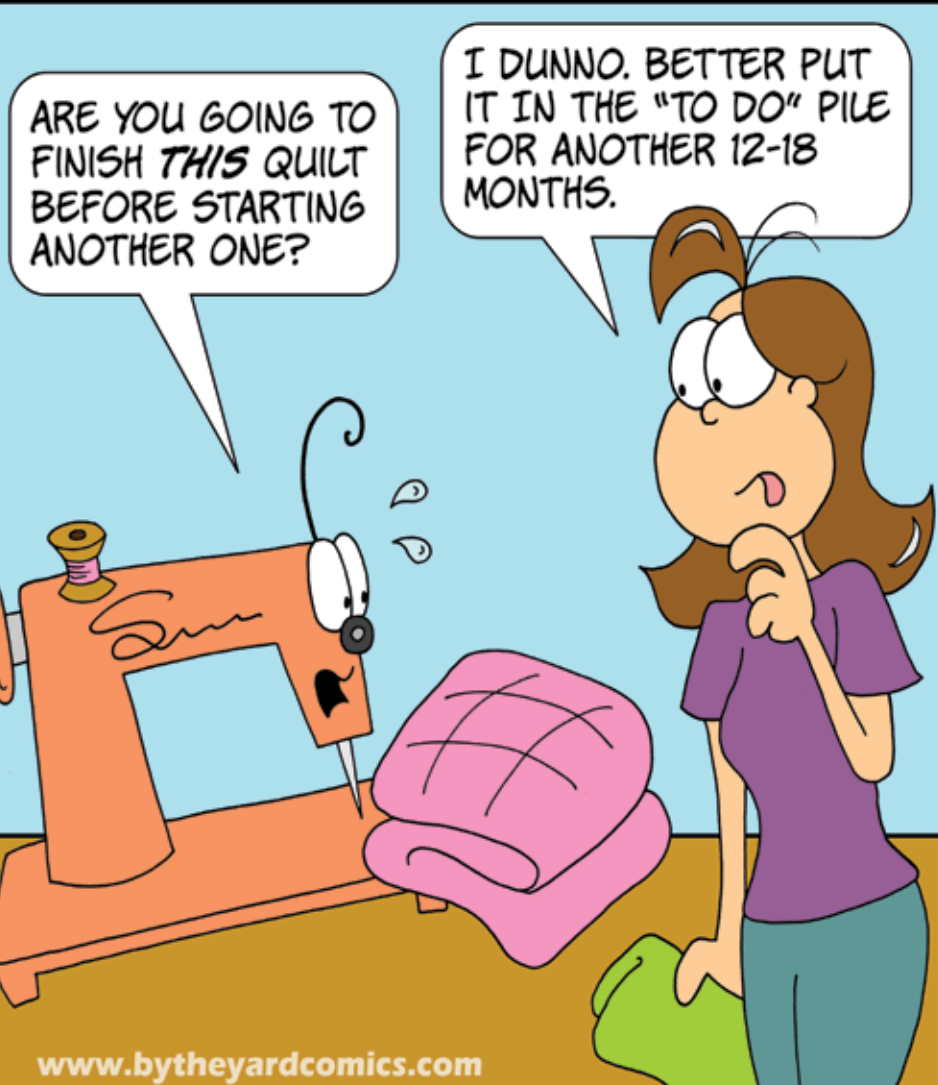


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By the Yard

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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.

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Reduce the stress & frustration of holiday shopping by daytrippin' now for needful things!

Travels are easy with the summer days and you'll have fun getting out and about. Make your list of friends and family with remarks of what they like to collect. As you shop, write the shop where you found the item and date of purchase. Place your finds in safe hiding (make a note on the list if you need a reminder) and put your list somewhere safe as well.

When November and December are upon us, find your list and smile when you discover how much shopping is already done!

Please let the shops you visit know that you read about them in The Virginia Register!

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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

Win A \$25 Gift Certificate

We give away a \$25 Gift Certificate each issue to redeem at a local advertiser's shop! You can register online at www.theregisterweb.com with the link "Register to Win" or complete the form (photocopy is acceptable) and mail to: P.O. Box 2419, Cumming, GA 30028. Please also include a favorite recipe, quote, tip or a craft project you want to share with other readers.

The drawing will be made prior to the next issue. The winner will be emailed information on redeeming their certificate and also announced in the next issue.
Note: We do not place your information on any mailing list.

And the Winner is...

Our winner from last issue is Barbara Krupp.

Barbara selected Patchwork Plus in Dayton as her favorite shop. She enjoys the shop because the "large selection."

Congratulations Barbara.

The Virginia Register Gift Certificate Entry Form

ALL ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PRIZE DRAWING

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About the Cover Artist
Pam Britton

Pam Britton was born in Colorado and moved all over the country on her parents' whims. Having lived in Florida, Arizona and Hawaii, the family finally settled in Texas where Pam met her husband, Ken.

A childhood full of drawing led Pam to enter a technical high school where she enrolled in commercial art classes. After graduation life took her in a different direction and it wasn't until the 1990s that she finally settled into working as an artist. Initially a craft painter, Pam's artwork would adorn muslin pillows and wooden accent pieces. As her work evolved she was bitten by the New England bug, a painting style she's happily adopted.

After spending a few years vacationing in New England she and Ken decided to take a leap and move to the northern coast of Maine (known as Downeast Maine). Far removed from the sophistication and tourist crowds of southern Maine, Britton is surrounded by good neighbors and unspoiled, natural terrain. This beautiful backdrop inspires her artwork, which has been well received by the local community. Pam often pays tribute to specific local landmarks in her work and has even been commissioned to create a sign for her town.

Britton says, "I have to credit my mother and my husband, to whom I've been happily married 40 years, for giving me the encouragement and advice and downright physical help to succeed over the years."

In summer of 2012 Pam and her husband decided to return to Texas, settling in the little town of Lometa on the western edge of the Hill Country. It was a move for a warmer climate once again, but also the prospects of new inspirations for artwork in the Lone Star State.

To view Pam's art prints, go to www.PennyLanePublishing.com or call Penny Lane Publishing at 800-273-5263 for more information.

David and Grace on a recent trip to Peru.

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Sorting Stash Summer

This April I was fortunate to attend the AQS (American Quilter's Society) show in Hartford, CT. Since it was only an hour away, many from our quilt guild attended. It was certainly much closer than going to Paducah, Kentucky for their main show. Seeing the amazing craftsmanship of quilters from all over the world was inspiring and intimidating. I could only imagine the thousands of hours that went into some of the stunning quilts. The "art quilts" that show a picture very close to a photograph amaze me. My friends and I were there for seven hours and we still didn't see everything. With over 100 vendors, it was hard to choose what to buy. I restrained myself and only bought ten fat quarters from out-of-state shops. The following weekend was our own guild quilt show sponsored by the 150 members. I was very happy to see my first queen size quilt "Seaside Dreams" on display. Two years ago when I first walked into Colchester Mill Fabrics, I fell in love with several turquoise seashell prints. After I walked around the whole store which has amazing selections, I went back to the first bolts of beachy themed fabric and created my quilt from them. While I can't swim all year round in New England, I can dream about the beach while sleeping under my quilt. At our show, there were four quilt shops selling fabric. I selected a fat quarter bundle of five coordinating beachy fabrics, plus an unusual piece of batik that I couldn't resist. Oh, and I bought a fat quarter of donut fabric for a doll's dress. Our guild sold a lovely variety of handmade items besides "mystery bags" of fabric. I just had to buy two of those.

April turned into May and at our last guild meeting, they held a huge sale of donated fabric for \$5 a bag. The collected money went towards purchasing child oriented prints for our Comfort Quilts that we donate to the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. Of course, I stuffed a bag. The following week, I went to a Quilt Auction where you bid on baskets of fabric. The competition was fierce but I managed to win the bid for one basket. There were 150 baskets of fabric to bid on but the prices quickly went up higher than I wanted to spend. But it was a fun event. This is going to be a stash sorting summer, as I lay fabric out on the two spare beds, the card table, and the rug, looking to see what pieces will go together and trying to decide what I am going to make. For starters, I was able to already sew a quilt top from a jungle print with borders of green, grey and a bright yellow. I usually have between 5-10 projects that I am working on at once. The piece of "glow in the dark" fabric I bought at AQS will make a cute pair of doll pants for my granddaughter. Several other doll dresses are in the works plus two requests for aprons.

I'm trying out various star designs using patriotic fabric for a wall hanging. The fat quarters I bought for this project are: white background with red stars, navy background with a 1776 drum print and a pale blue with a ring of small white stars print. I am still working out the sizing of my wall hanging. My fabric stash is not very large compared to other quilters. Most of my past sewing was clothing which left very few scraps and in 2020 I managed to sew every spare piece of fabric I owned, when we couldn't go shopping. I want to be a good steward of my resources and to use up the fabric I've already acquired in the past four years of quilting. One of my goals is to start cutting three inch strips to make a "scrappy" quilt. I have plenty of blue fabrics and my leftover pieces of yellow will coordinate well, along with green accents. It's a lot faster to buy material than to sew it! Hopefully, I can sit outside and do some sorting and organizing this summer. What are your fabric plans for the summer? Whether they are big or small plans, I wish you a Happy Fourth of July and a super summer!

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



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Those Were The Days!

Advertising in Song

In this day and age of instant communication, radio & TV, internet, social media and the like, it is a challenge to think back to a time when none of these existed. Radio, the first mass communication medium didn't emerge until the 2nd quarter of the 20th century. Magazines and newspapers were the primary source of news and information... albeit delayed. The telephone, patented in 1876, allowed person-to-person communication. A year later, Thomas Edison introduced the phonograph. For the first time people could hear recordings of voices and music. Until then, music and performances could only be heard live. That's why the piano was the most popular instrument in the American home. It was the family's entertainment medium. To keep up with the latest songs and music, the sheet music industry exploded in the 19th century. The industry changed from simple covers to colorful, eye-catching covers to lure customers into making a purchase. Sheet music (initially called "music sheets") in itself offered opportunities to publish historic classical scores and other instrumental music. But the medium soon opened up to song sheets that could tell stories of love and romance, humorous experiences, travels and news events like in "The Wreck of the Titanic." Anything a composer could come up with. As aviation emerged, it was quickly covered in sheet music – *Come Josephine in My Flying Machine, Come Take A Trip In My Airship and Lucky Lindy* amongst countless others. All this got me wondering what mediums did companies use to promote their products in the late 19th and early 20th centuries? It turned out sheet music was an ideal way for advertisers to get their messages and products out to the masses. With the emergence of the automobile, dozens of promotional pieces were published. Songs like *In My Merry Oldsmobile, My Little Ford Rambled Along, Take Me on a Buick Honeymoon*. Countless other manufacturers whose life spans were pretty short are immortalized in sheet music. *The Jitney Bus, Mack's Swell Car Was A Maxwell* and *A Jolly Ride in a Glide*. Food and beverage products were another area in which themed sheet music proliferated. Songs like *Heinz is Pickled Again, Under the Anheuser Bush, Rum and Coca Cola, I'm Just Wild About Animal Crackers*. Well, you get the idea. The beauty of old sheet music is that because of a plethora of subjects and themes, there is virtually nothing that one can't find of interest. I've found that amongst the many things I collect, I probably have more sheet music than any other thing. Pick the subject and there are enough to satisfy a collector's desire to accumulate. Some of my areas of interest include Rags, railroads, aviation, Black Americana, jazz, sports, musical instruments, songs about cities and states, just to name a few. But for me, I am most interested in advertising sheet music. Not only for their colorful, imaginative covers, but how they address their products in lyrics. My holy grail is a piece of music called "*Signs We See As We Pass Along*." Published in 1904, it is an early critique of the pervasiveness of advertising. A train passing through a tranquil countryside assaults passengers with 40 products on billboards, signs and painted barn sides. For more information about that intriguing song, see my article in the May-June 2017 *Antique Register*. The great thing about sheet music collecting is that they don't have to be just stored in albums. In fact, they serve as ideal framed decor. They are easy to display. And they are frequent conversation starters. A Good Read: Few books have been published of late about the history of sheet music. Some information can be gained from "*Old Sheet Music: A pictorial history*" by Marian Klamkin (1975); "*Victorian Sheet Music Covers*" by Ronald Pearsall (1972); "*Rare 19th Century Large Music Sheets*," and "*The Sheet Music Reference and Price Guide*" (1992). Value: The beauty of collecting sheet music is there is something for everyone. Many pieces are valued at under \$5. Others can be purchased for less than \$25. For some of the most desirable pieces such as those mentioned in this article can go far north of \$100. Remember, condition is one of the most significant factors in evaluating the value of sheet music. Start collecting sheet music, and people will "sing" praise to your unique eye and ear.

© 2026. *Virtually an antique himself, or maybe a "collectible," Jay Mark, has more than a half-century experience in the antiques business. He owns Those Were The Days!, an online specialty bookstore. A recognized historian, he also teaches, lectures and writes about antiques and history. Reach him at jaymarkhistorian@gmail.com.*

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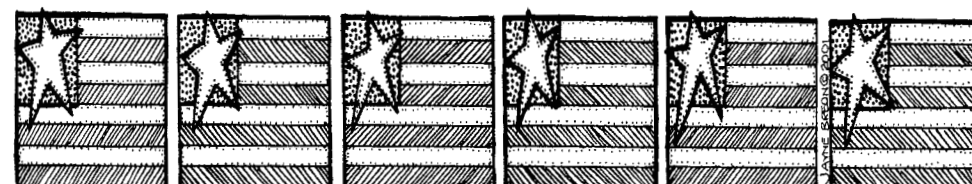
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Writing From Life

Crafting is ____

Fun! Individualized. Customizable. Approachable? Available to everyone! Different for each one of us. Yes, I was brainstorming all of the different words to finish the title with, when I realized I didn't want to limit the focus of our exploration. My craft is quilting. Talking with a quilting friend the other day, she shared pictures of a quilt top she had been working on—but was planning to take apart in order to make improvements. "I can do better," she explained. Her comment lingered. Of course she can do better! I've seen her skill. I'm also eager to see how she re-designs the quilt top. Walking my apartment building's hallways, I see varieties of paintings on both canvas and wooden boards, I see embroidery, I see beads which were arranged then fused together with heat; in town, I have seen classic car touring groups in parking lots, where car owners visit with others about the cars they have restored; I walk into the public library, and see posters about upcoming crafting classes; I open my mailbox and see to the community education mailing about crafting classes available to residents throughout the year. All of these crafting opportunities, available to anyone who is interested, are just a sampling, of course. Unlike formal school courses, however, there aren't grades assigned to the crafts we create. Oh, sure, there are contests and competitions any of us can pursue if we are interested—but we don't have to. I, for instance, tend to make things which interest me. A flannel quilt for a new baby or friend who lives in colder climates; a quilted table runner for a wedding gift; a quilted door hanging to celebrate the seasons; quilted placemats, quilted picnic "blankets," quilted wall hangings...even a quilt to record the daily high temperature for the first year in a new town. Might I now add to my earlier list of adjectives? Crafting is invigorating, as it provides me with a sense of freedom like no other activity, and it's... Okay, it's not necessarily free. But freeing? Yes!! Liberating. There have been a number of times I thought about ways to make an income from my crafting. Unlike when I first started sewing, technology has created so many ways for crafters to monetize their skills—to share a new bit of knowledge, insight, even their thoughts or skills with people well beyond their geography. (This very publication, for instance, provides a platform from which to share thoughts, ideas, and information.) Every time I think about it, though, I come back to the same conclusion: I love crafting because I don't have to care about the critics. Instead, I get to do absolutely only what intrigues me, tickles me, or draws me to it out of curiosity. Granted, I don't get a raise or promotion like a job might provide, but I also don't fear being fired—or encouraged to retire. Crafting supports autonomy, allowing each of us to choose our own path!

© Jeanette Lukowski 2026. 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





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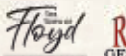


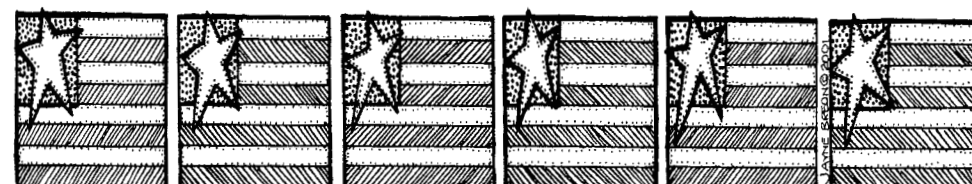
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Building Harmony

A Stormy and Furry Night

It was one of those stormy Friday nights. The rain was driving down and lightening was flashing constantly all around, Cathy and I were intrigued by the storm as the thunder rattled our house. Our dog Waldo didn’t take it quite so easily though. He either tried to find a place to hide, (like behind a toilet) or huddled close to us when the thunder clapped. We had to keep an eye on him so he didn’t piddle on the floor in fear. That was fine with him. He liked to stay close.

Later on that night Cathy grew tired and went to bed but I was still watching the storm. Something about these storms draws me to them. There is a smell to the rain and the sound of it driving down. The flash of light and eventual boom. Wow. I decided to step outside to experience it first hand.

There is a good spot for this just outside the garage door. The eves protected me (barely) from the rain and I got a good view of nature’s fury. The trees on our property were whipping around with the wind. I was in awe. Then I heard the door close behind me and latched.

I was locked out. Drat. I considered ringing the doorbell but this would mean waking up Cathy. After careful consideration I looked for another option.

At least I was mostly protected under that eve for the moment and the show was spectacular. Every time the Forrest lit up I could see every leaf and every blade of grass for just an instant. Between lightening flashes the Forrest was mostly dark, except for a small solar light some forty feet away.

Boom! Cool! Flash! Wow! Boom..... This was going on for a while when I noticed something out of the corner of my eye. Something moved in front of that solar light. It cast a silhouette towards me through the mist.

In the brief flashes of light I could see it was close to the ground with spiky wet fur violently shaking off water. Between the flashes it let out out a horrible howl. Then the Forrest would go dark again.

Still I could tell through that faint shadow in the mist, that it was getting bigger, or closer. I was blinded by another lightening flash. Again, darkness and a sinister howl.

Now I could hear it panting. It even let out an occasional snort. I tried the door. Still locked. I dare not move or make a noise. Perhaps it hadn’t seem me. With the rain driving down, the wind a few blinding flashes, the immediate booms and all that howling I was getting pretty untinged.

Now I could smell what ever it was and it was rank and close by. There were noises all around and I wasn’t sure what to trust.

Suddenly it leapt at me... knocking me to the ground hard. I could feel it’s weight as it landed on me and even more: it’s claws on my chest! It growled and howled. It drooled on my face as it came ever closer.

In the lightening flashes I could see it’s spiked wet fur and it’s teeth up close. It’s breath stank. It gave out one last howl as I prepared to lose my entire face and then... It licked me.

Then it wagged it’s tail. What? After a moment my heart settled down. Turns out Waldo had sneaked outside with me and got lost in the rain. He was wet, lost and scared but more than happy to find me. He tried to lick my entire face off. Things went from scary to just kinda gross.

The door stayed locked so we hung out under that eve and watched the storm. Waldo even started to enjoy it. He was soaked, but we had fun.

All of this made me wonder: Why do dogs smell when they get wet?

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Rachel and Grace with their boyfriends on a recent trip.

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Ann’s Lovin’ Ewe

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 am 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 Ulrich 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 retelling.

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.

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Ann Marie Stewart’s novel THE REMNANTS:
One Family’s Escape from Stalin’s Russia comes out October 2026.

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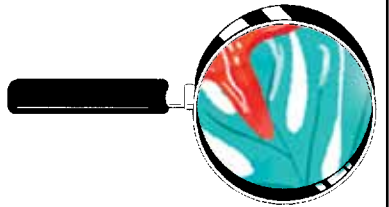
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One person will be drawn from the correct entries to be named in next issue. The correct entry drawn from last issue was from Roberta Fulton of Ruckersville.



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Memories of Mom

by Tammy Page

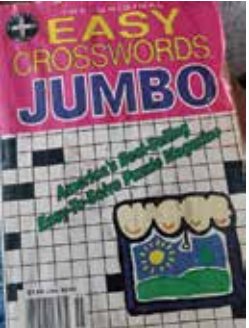
I grew up watching my mom when she had a few spare moments work crossword puzzles. It’s a pastime that has been forgotten by the younger generation.

I recently cleared out my mom and dad’s home after my dad passed away and found new and some old crossword puzzle books. Our whole family was used to seeing my mom picking up a crossword puzzle book when we would gather together or drop in for a visit. There was rarely an occasion such as a birthday, Mother’s Day or Christmas that she did not receive a new book as a gift. Mom was always good with words and an intelligent woman and I can now appreciate the piles of crossword books laid around the house. She would have a couple on her end table beside her recliner and there was usually one on her bedside table and one on the kitchen table while she was preparing a meal. And, of course there might have been one in the bathroom too.

As a child I thought my mom was the smartest mom on the block because she could complete a puzzle in no time flat. If she didn’t have a book she would work a puzzle in the daily Indianapolis Star newspaper. Since finding her books while clearing my parents home, I’ve found myself opening them up and working some myself.

I retired two years ago and at times I don’t have my everyday chores to do or my husband is watching another favorite wartime movie and I curl up in my chair and work on one a little bit. I’ve found that one of my favorite places to relax and enjoy the quiet is on my front porch with a crossword puzzle book in my hand. It’s a chance to get away from the everyday noises of television and phones. I make it a habit to leave my phone in the house and just enjoy the peace and quiet with my own thoughts. I also find it relaxing and comforting to know that I inherited the enjoyment of crossword puzzles from my mom who passed away four years ago. I even found one that had not been finished from 2000 and it was nice that I could finish what mom had started. The one from the year 2000 had some old phrases and meanings of words used today. I’ve found those a little easier to solve because of my age I suppose. I also love seeing my moms handwriting again and before her hands became too shaky to stay in the lines. It makes me feel close to her each time I pick one up and miss her even more.

I know that from now on I will continue to work crosswords and each time it will bring back precious memories.



© 2026 *Tammy Page, who writes from her family farm in Indiana.*

July and August Dates to Remember

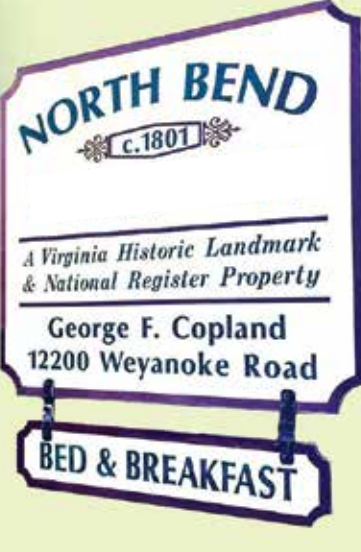
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Become Inspired

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 tricorn 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.



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

Newport News

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GIRLFRIEND WISDOM



God makes
everything
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in its time.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

July 2011

Summer is the time to see Nature in full bloom!

The sky is more blue, the green leaves are in their full glory!
The brightness lifts our spirits and gives us more energy.

Sunlight triggers the release of hormones in our brain.

Those hormones boost our mood and helps a person feel calm and focused. Have you ever noticed that when you walk in nature you seem to notice

Have you ever noticed that when you walk in nature you seem to notice the birds and other nature sounds more clearly? Slowing down to enjoy our neighbor's beautiful flowers is secretly lowering our blood pressure too.

Beauty is often only thought of as external, like a person, a landscape, a moment of grace, but it is clearly connected to the mind, heart, and spirit.

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM: True beauty goes beyond what we see because it shines through in our actions, and our kindness. Let that smile come into full expression the next time you “feel” a thing of Beauty!

Joy & Blessings,

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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Back Porch Break

by Nancy Brummett

Salon Sagas

I had my first manicure in a nail salon when I was in my late fifties. I only went then because my two little granddaughters who were visiting one summer wanted to go. When the woman who answered the phone said she would give the girls a "free flower" I thought that was very kind and expected them to come home with a long-stemmed rose or a carnation but no, it was a daisy painted on each small thumbnail.



That was about 30 years ago, but since then I've become a semi-regular client at several different nail salons. You may think that the best "people watching" may be found at airports, malls, or ER waiting rooms, but I assure you, the clientele at nail salons can be most bemusing and amusing.

People become very loyal to their nail technicians, and I've followed my favorite to three different salons as his job changed, but I've noticed many similarities in terms of clientele at the different locations. It always warms my heart to see a faithful daughter or caregiver bringing in an older woman to get a manicure or even more rejuvenating, a pedicure for her ailing feet and hard-to-cut toenails. I also like seeing men getting pedicures to make their wives happy!

But you can see some strange things in nail salons, too. One time a fortyish business woman was on her phone the entire time she was getting her pedicure. She also had her laptop open on her lap and was conducting business as if she were seated behind a mahogany desk in a high-rise office building. I actually overheard her offering a job to someone. They were negotiating salary, vacation time, job title, etc., and everyone in the salon could follow along with each discussion point. In the end the fellow on the other end of the phone evidently said he'd talk to his wife and let her know, so we were all left wondering if he took the job. It's been a while since I was in the corporate world, but is this the new business etiquette? I hope not.

Keeping up with the life events of manicure seekers is entertaining as well. You overhear that someone wants bright orange because they are headed to Mexico on vacation, or you witness a giggly bridal party coming in to get their nails done for the wedding. Recently two little girls proudly held out their hands to show me the ice blue polish they got because they were to be flower girls in their aunt's upcoming wedding. Much of life can be witnessed in a nail salon, and seeing those two little girls reminded me of two others many years ago. I guess salon saqas can be sentimental, too.

Nancy Parker Brummett is an author and freelance writer in Colorado Springs, CO. Follow her on Facebook, Instagram and Linked In or subscribe to her blog posts at www.nancyparkerbrummett.com.

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North Carolina

Summer Vacation!

by Judy Sharen

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 cobbler.

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 Plain's 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.*

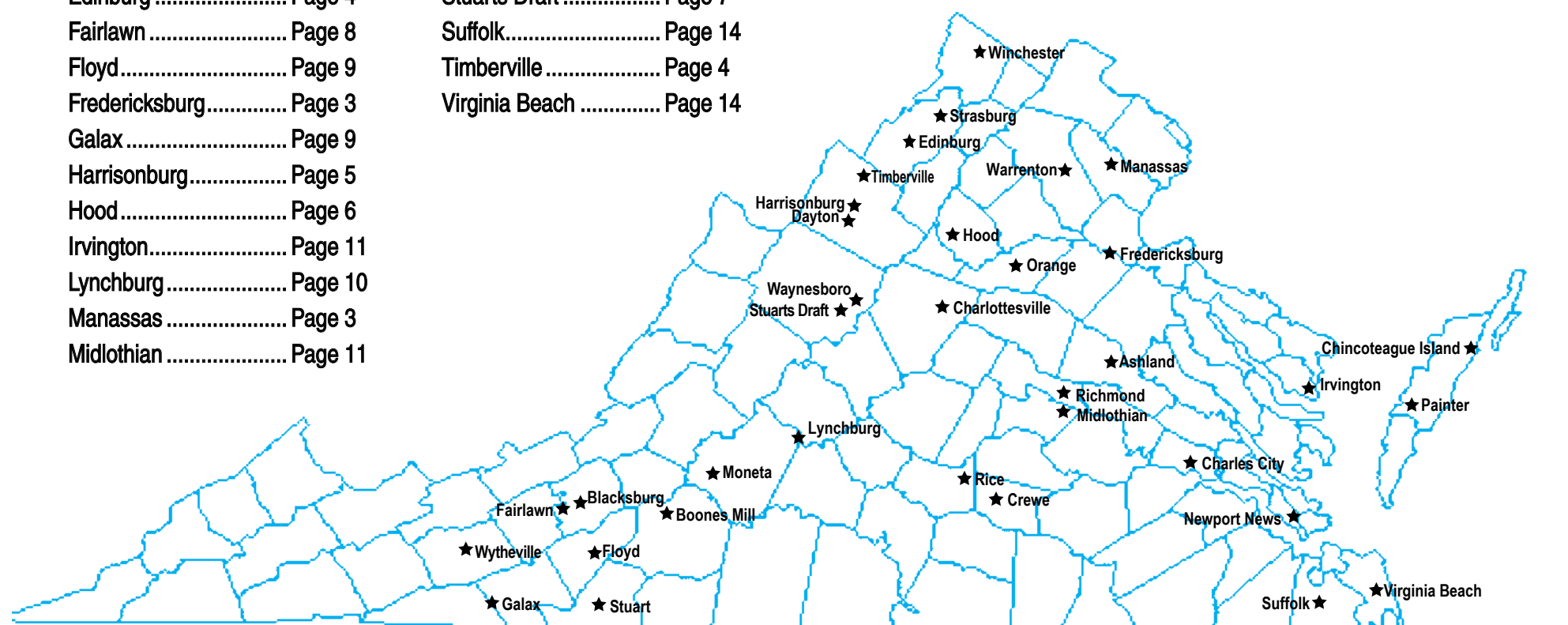
Visit Judy's website judysarher.com *and follow her on Facebook and X.*

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A map of Virginia showing county boundaries in light blue. Major cities are marked with black stars and labeled: Winchester, Strasburg, Edinburg, Warrenton, Manassas, Timberville, Harrisonburg, Dayton, Hood, Orange, Fredericksburg, Waynesboro, Stuarts Draft, Charlottesville, Ashland, and Chincoteague Island.



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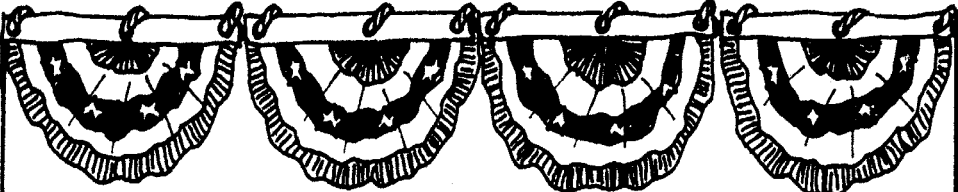
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Life in Skunk Hollow Christmas in July

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.

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