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Become Inspired

Decorating, Entertaining and Living in the Early American Style

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

Bringing in the Harvest

As the daylight hours slowly begin to shorten, we begin to shift our thinking toward preparing for the season to come. Our vegetable gardens are likely producing plenty at this point in the year, so taking our gathering baskets out to the raised beds is a country task that brings great reward. Our beans can be harvested to accompany a wonderful homemade meal, or they can be strung by hand and hung over the hearth to dry as a handmade garland to be enjoyed all year. Our heirloom tomatoes can be harvested right off the vine to make a perfect summer sandwich with some toasted homemade bread, creamy mayonnaise and salt and pepper. The abundance of our yield can also be canned to line our buttery shelves with the blessings of our harvest to be enjoyed all year long.



Our herb gardens can also be a huge source of happiness as we plan a morning out in the sun clipping and binding bundles of fragrant herbs to be hung inside to dry. They can be used for enhancing our fall meals or to brighten one of our country displays. Even an afternoon spent clipping wild blooms such as the bright mustard tansy, yellow goldenrod or the purple Joe Pye weed can provide us with plenty of natural elements to enjoy in the beautiful season of fall.

The Warmth of Home

The spectacular sunlight of September is truly a special gift. Although more fleeting than the sultry sun of summer, the beautiful days of early fall are to be enjoyed. Paired with the daytime beauty are evenings characterized by a crisp coolness. Nights come more quickly now, so our home's ambiance stands out as being even more welcoming and warm. Taking time to create warmth in our decorating is time well-spent. Early lighting such as a punched tin hanging lantern or a mirrored sconce casts an inviting glow to warm the corner of a colonial keeping room. An antique floor lamp with a deep red-checked shade can enliven a favorite reading spot for a cool fall evening. And candles such as Pumpkin Butter or Colonial Apple Butter can be used as part of a harvest centerpiece where both their subtle flicker and captivating scent enhance the mood of the room. Gorgeous large wooden trays or boxes in early surfaces like red or mustard can be enjoyed as a focal point for fall. Filled with part of our abundant harvest, it becomes a striking natural element that takes center stage.

Simple Country Joys

Planning a day to surround yourself with the full blessings of fall is a way to connect with friends and make memories to cherish. Wrapping a schedule around a festive fall event can be rewarding and fun. Fall festivals that include local farms and creative artisans can be enjoyed alongside a trip to our favorite antiques shops that might be hosting an outdoor show filled with great antiques, unique food trucks and decorative elements fresh-from-market to enhance our home displays.

This fall, savor the transition to those cooler, spectacular autumn days. Harvest the bounty of your gardening efforts and delight in the simple country joy of creating an ambiance that truly welcomes you home.

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

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WITH THIS AD

Life in Skunk Hollow

Passing on the Baton

by Julie A. Druck

The notation of Grandparents' Day on September 13 recently came across my radar, and upon hearing it, my mind immediately jumped back to my school days. I can remember being so proud that Pop & Mammaw, my maternal grandparents, came to my elementary school to celebrate this day in autumn. From what I remember, they sat in the back of the classroom during the morning, watching as we presented our work. Then, the best part: sitting with them in the cafeteria to share lunch together. What joy that was!

I've written before about my grandparents, particularly my grandfather whose life I had the privilege of enjoying into my '40s. But I lost my grandmother at age 15, when I was just on the cusp of beginning to appreciate her. Mammaw was a force to be reckoned with – she was incredibly organized, detail-oriented, an exemplary secretary, as well as an amazing homemaker. She taught me to type and cross-stitch, how to iron everything (including sheets and underwear, which I DO NOT do – sorry, Mammaw!), how to set a table and how to throw a great party. She made life rich for my sister and me with card games on the screened-in porch and holiday parties and special treats and sleepovers.

I spent A LOT of time with my grandparents. My parents were deeply broken people who struggled to parent my sister and I in healthy ways, so more often than not, we either lived with and/or spent large chunks of time with Pop & Mammaw. They and their home were a place of stability and peace and joy for us. What they gave us was immeasurable, and I will be forever grateful. I recognize that they gave me a tremendous legacy, and I have a deep desire to pass on a similar legacy to my own grandchildren.

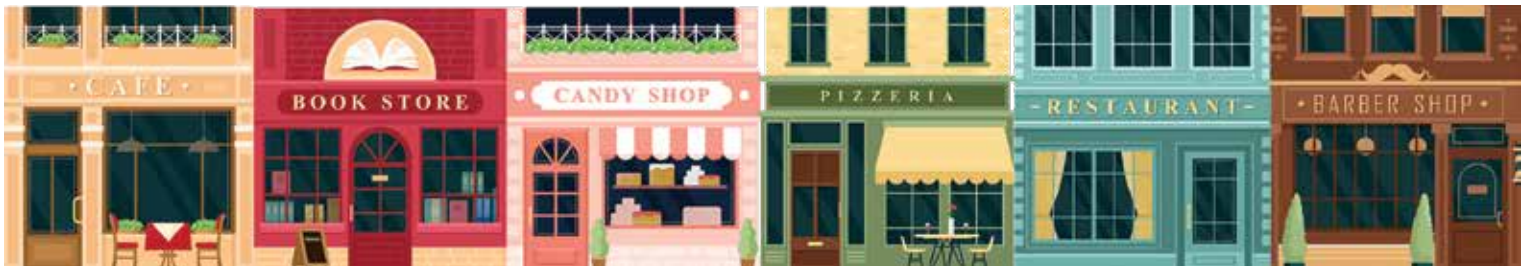
Though my relationship looks very different with my own grandchildren, there are many things that aren't different – one of which is the same desire to pour into them the love and peace and joy that I received. Over the past nine years that I've been blessed to be a grandmother, I have had at times very lucid, almost time-warp moments in the midst of being with my grandchildren - recognizing in those moments that I am literally passing on a heritage. It's a blessing that was poured into my life that I am now "paying forward" as it were, into theirs. It's a tremendous responsibility and a great joy.

I wear a colorful ring behind my wedding rings. It belonged to Mammaw. In fact, it was what they call her "mother's ring" – it contains the birthstones of her children and grandchildren. I didn't wear it for many years because it was too big, but a few years ago my husband encouraged me to have it re-sized. After I realized the joy of wearing it, I lamented not having it adjusted and worn years ago. But the thought hit me that I'm glad I didn't begin wearing it until AFTER I became a grandmother. It's become a visual reminder of the passing of the baton of the beautiful legacy I was given.

I have often wished that my grandmother could have lived to meet my children and grandchildren. But I recognize – that in a very real way – I am introducing her to them. For as I make memories with them in similar ways that Mammaw did with me, I am, indeed, continuing her legacy. I have no doubt, Mammaw would be proud . . . of all of us.

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

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Uber Entrepreneurs Really Are the “Ultimate”

by Barbara Kalkis

We all know about Entrepreneurs. They’re business stars who start a company in some random space, like a garage, basement or living room. Their idea takes hold, so they rent/lease/buy a building and grow their customer base until they are a household name, then a global brand. Next, they “graduate” from entrepreneur to multi-millionaire status and get invited to newsworthy parties, award ceremonies and weddings in far-off places that the rest of us must book at least 12 months in advance with a stiff reservation fee. I wonder how those entrepreneurs have time to jet around the world to fun events. Perhaps they don’t have to work the typical 40 hours a week because they have people to do their day-to-day tasks.

I never really thought much about the mechanics of becoming a global entrepreneur and a jetsetter until I visited my sister who lives in a small town. One day, while she attended a meeting, I set off down the main street to explore and shop for souvenirs. After two blocks, it hit me! There was not one national name-brand above any doorway. It was a mirror image of the small town we had grown up in.

The street was dotted with restaurants, cafes, and diverse shops whose owners had a long local heritage or distant homeland. The Four Hands Bakery derived its name from the baker (wife) and her husband (employee). The jeweler inherited the business. The candy shop chocolates and flavored popcorn treats were produced by area independent businesses.

All those places were fun to pop into and browse around, but it was a tent sign on the sidewalk that stopped me. One side said, “Shopping Counts as Cardio, Right?” The other side proclaimed, “When You’re Broke But You Strongly Support Treating

Yourself”. The messages were humorous, but there was a kind of self-acknowledgement that opening a gift shop was an act of bravery. Or lunacy. Of course, I went in!

The shop nearly sang with unique eclectic, handmade quilted, knitted, embroidered, woven, sewn, painted, carved, metal-worked, brewed, and some batch-manufactured items randomly placed, luring the visitor from display to display. Three times around the shop and chatting with the owner, it dawned on me. This wasn’t just a store. The owner isn’t just a businesswoman. She is an Uber Entrepreneur. In fact, the entire street was the product of people who are Uber Entrepreneurs.

Uber entrepreneurs are not folks who introduce a new app or program or widget that can blast water faster than a fire hydrant, roast a chicken in minutes, or make you healthy by eating specialty foods that you would never eat when your mother cooked them and there’s no way you’re starting now.

Lots of people may have the entrepreneurial gene. But Uber Entrepreneurs are the ultimate. They take the chance to do what they love. They accept challenges. They create a business and own every aspect of it. They’re the ones who work behind the table at craft shows. They are the ones who seek out other Uber Entrepreneurs intently making things for pure enjoyment and the feeling of doing something different, beautiful, startling, strange, humorous, or thought-provoking. They’re the ones who focus their energy on creativity. Money is not the top priority. It can’t be. Their ventures are too risky!

Every time we step into an independently owned shop or visit a church craft show or attend an art festival, we become part of their adventure. We understand that creating something unique isn’t a business. It’s a true calling, wrapped in the spirit of courage.

©Barbara Kalkis, 2026. Barbara is an entrepreneur with her own business and book, Little Ditties for Every Day: A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm. But she’s no match for Uber Entrepreneurs! Write her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

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Golden Autumn’s Gifts

by Barbara Kalkis

Autumn. At last! I will miss you, Summer, but there’s such relief with Autumn’s arrival. Finally, I can accept the fact that the five pounds I promised to shed in May will spend the holidays stuck to my hips. That thought frees me to shred my stack of sure-fire weight-loss tips. Also out: the food journal logging diet victories and confessions of eating ice cream swimming in chocolate sauce, walnuts, and whipped cream.

It’s also time to say goodbye to every summer salad and chilled soup under the sun which looks scrumptious in magazines and easy-breezy to prepare. One famous chef claimed that she just served salads to guests. Easy-Peasy and everyone loved them. Really? Only if I buy ingredients in a bag and dump them all in a salad bowl. Otherwise, I must cook and chill the pasta, corn, rice, or potatoes, and spend hours slicing, dicing and adding all the other ingredients to make the dinner look effortless, healthy, and – bonus! - slimming. I tried that advice, but two hours later I was still hungry and needed a snack – like ice cream. I enjoyed the forbidden snack by reassuring myself that ice cream provides bone-strengthening healthy calcium, which I noted in my food journal.

In Autumn you can stow your trendy charcuterie boards. Like chilled salads and soups, they, too, are wearisome. You can pile them high with cheeses, meats and veggies that require hours of slicing; add condiments spooned out of jars and placed into cuter containers, deli sausages, salamis and cheeses that must be decorated with olives (black AND green), cherry tomatoes, pickled onions and, oh, don’t forget the cracker and bread assortment. By the time I finished with my one-time only charcuterie board, I had loaded three boards and a dozen bowls and was wondering why I just hadn’t popped a chicken in the oven with vegetables and called the meal “done”.

Now, at last, it’s Autumn. My favorite season. Wait. I said that about Spring when I shook off my winter doldrums; Summer when the fresh market vegetables were really fresh; and, flower bouquets were from the garden. Days stretched from early sunrises to late sunsets sparkling with firefly dances and starry skies. Now, before the chill of Winter, Autumn arrives in brilliant color. Out of the closet come the comfy clothes that fit like the summer shorts didn’t. In the kitchen, the microwave goes silent. Heavy pans for cooking “serious food” are pulled out of their summer storage in the oven. It’s the season to cook. Best of all, it’s time for comfort foods like cookies, pies, and cakes.

Autumn is the perfect time for everything from meat to vegetables to cookies and every kind of dessert. We can practice old recipes and try new ones before the holiday season. Magazines, organizations, and even companies enthusiastically support cooking. Wisconsin Energy’s Cookie Book has been published continuously since 1928. Pennsylvania cookbooks feature apple crisp, snickerdoodles and Gobs (or whoopie pies). Some states have an official state cookie, pie, or dessert, while provinces promote iconic foods associated with a region. Think about the popular foods where you live. The foods routinely featured and ordered in a café or restaurant are part of a region’s cultural signature. For me, there’s nothing better than sitting down with a glass of ice-cold milk, a cookie – or 6! – fresh from the oven and watching the sunset.

The warmth of something baked in an oven touches the heart in a way that a tossed salad or cold salami never can.

©Barbara Kalkis, 2026. Barbara divides her time between writing, teaching and consulting. She is a terrible cook but appreciates those home chefs who have perfected the art. Reach her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

KISSed Quilts

by Marlene Oddie

Design Ideas Sometimes Need to Percolate for...20 Years?

When presented with the new fabric collection from Frond Studios - Bells of Ireland distributed by Northcott, I immediately remembered a block design that I developed over 20 years ago. I fortunately found it in an old file cabinet and worked on creating it in Electric Quilt 8 to start playing with it on a larger scale – an entire quilt.

This collection has a beautiful canvas panel for bag making and a couple of different large print running yardage SKUs, but I chose to focus on the more color saturated SKUs combined in a way to make this beautiful Tartan—fussy cutting the printed tartan for the border.

This *On Point Plaid* pattern and the Bells of Ireland collection of fabrics are shipping to your local quilt shop now. If you need patterns, templates, fabrics and/or kits—please ask!

The possibilities for this pattern are endless. Find your favorite plaid color combination, a family tartan, one that works with your personal aesthetic or dream up your own.

I’ve written the pattern in such a way that you are making strata sets and then cutting and reassembling the entire block and the pieced setting triangles. The key is to get your color placement of the block correct so that with the sashings, cornerstones and the blocks it makes a continuous plaid.

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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Building Harmony

Taking the Guy Out of Guy Stuff

by Jeff Cappis

Cathy and I live together out in the country and as a result, we spend a fair amount of time together. Even the most loving couples can feel a strain from time to time so I've developed man based rules to keep harmony between us.

I'd like to pass along a little wisdom to the guys out there.

First off: I've learned that women find their husbands' "Guy" stuff annoying. This is the first thing to keep in mind. You must avoid doing guy stuff at all costs.

Snoring - bad. Chewing with your mouth open- bad. Passing wind- bad. Doing all three at the dinner table- really bad. Also, women do not like to play the "pull my finger" game. They don't think it's funny and sometimes even find it annoying.

Luckily, I have a grandson. He thinks it's hilarious. We pull each other's fingers and pass wind. Sometimes we even play it with the dog. Interestingly, my grandmother would never call it "passing wind," she preferred to call it "fluffing."

Note to the dog: If you know what's good for you, you'll quit fluffing so much around Cathy.

Generally speaking, women are more acutely sensitive to smells that we are. Here's an example of how your wife may find your attitude about this offensive.

One day a buddy of mine came out to visit us. He and I were standing around talking about the septic tank and how it works with the septic field. To show him more, I pried open the lid to the tank and was immediately hit with a horrible smell.

"Whoa," I said to my buddy. "Do you want to smell something really bad?"

"What's it like?" He leaned in and got hit with the same wafting smell. "Holy moly. That's bad!" We looked at each other for a moment and I leaned in a bit to just get another sniff. "Yup, bad," I said. Just to be sure, he gave it another sniff. "Yup."

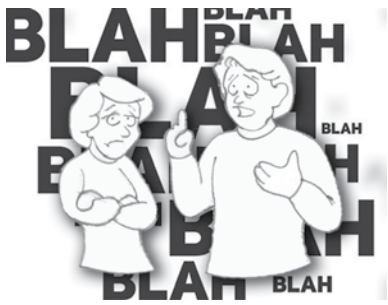
At that moment Cathy stepped outside. "What are you guys doing?"

Now, I should have thought this through but I was just being honest when I said, "We're sniffing the septic tank." Cathy got a kind of disgusted look on her face. It was then that we both realized how stupid this all looked so we began acting like we'd just done something important.

"Yes sir," my friend announced, "Your bio mass looks good from here."

"The tank's structural stability looks good here too," I added so Cathy could hear. Didn't work. Still disgusted, she went inside.

Other crimes against humanity include things like leaving your clothes on the floor, dirty dishes on the counter and talking during her favorite TV show. Especially during the emotional scenes. If you come in to the show late don't ask what's going



on. She doesn't want to explain and you should have been there to watch from the beginning. Here's what I do: just yank out a nose hair so your eyes well up and enjoy the emotional movie with her. She'll think you're a sensitive guy.

Please also note: many women also find guy movies a turn off. If it's full of gun fire, guts, swearing, explosions, general mayhem or Sylvester Stallone - it's a turn off. Instead offer to watch a Meryl Streep movie. As long as you don't snore you can nap through it and you'll both be happy.

Man-splaining is also a no-no. In case you've never heard the term, man-splaining is where you try to impress your wife with your knowledge of the world by constantly explaining it to her.

Truth is she already knows. They are smarter than we are. If you doubt this, ask your wife. She will wife-splain it to you. If you're as smart as you think you are, you'll just nod and agree with her.

Also help out with the housework. If she has to vacuum around you as you sit at the table dropping crumbs on the floor, you're probably already in a problem. I know, I know. A clean and orderly house is probably more of a priority for her than it is for you but the rule is: if you mess it up, you clean it up. You'd be surprised at just how much of a mess you can make just by walking across the house.

Moving on: there is an old saying, "If a man washes a plate and no one is there to see him do it, did it really happen?" If I'm doing house work and Cathy isn't around to see me do it, I always do at least one little thing wrong. That way she knows that I actually was doing something around the house. Doing something wrong is less of a crime than being accused of doing nothing at all.

That leads us to the next big point: Do not appear to be lazy. No matter how much you do, your woman will always be worried about you getting lazy. This is probably because at our core, we really are.

One day Cathy went into town to run an errand. When she left I was sitting at the table reading the news. As her car disappeared down the driveway I decided to get busy so I got up and did a bunch of chores around the house. It was a busy couple of hours and I was pleased with myself for how many things I actually got done. I decided to reward myself by relaxing and finishing the news.

That's when Cathy got home. You have to understand that when she left I was sitting at the table reading the news. When she got home I was sitting at the table reading the news. I tried man-splaining my way out of it, but ultimately people only trust what they see. The dog saw me doing chores but apparently he's smarter than I am too. When she asked him what I'd done while she was gone he just licked himself and went to take a nap in another room.

In short, even the most loving couples can feel a strain from time to time so I've developed a sense of how to keep harmony between us - I know who the real boss of the house is and it's not me.

Peace out.

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WYOMING – DE

Waiting for Eggplant

by Janet M. Bair

Summer memories are what I cling to as fall approaches. While our blueberry bushes weren't as prolific as last years, my mouth still waters when I think of blueberry crisp. The recipe is the one that my mother-in-law used to make in the summers when we went to a cottage in New Hampshire with them.

The cottage they rented each year is on a dead end dirt road on a lake. Harrisville Pond, New Hampshire is a small New England lake or pond which ends at a textile mill. Some of the old mill workers cottages are still there, now turned into summer homes.

Eating blueberry crisp reminds me of the days of picking blueberries from the bushes near the edges of the water. Early chill mornings, dressed in shorts and sweatshirts, my daughters and I would pick blueberries, wading in the water, putting the berries into a little metal measuring cup. In the afternoon, while everyone went swimming, my mother-in-law would be up in the kitchen baking. She would come down for a "dip" in the water but she wasn't much for swimming at that point in her life.

We would have fresh corn, eating on the porch looking out at the water. That reminded me of my grandfather. "Have to eat it the day you pick it," he always said. No store bought corn on the cob for him—he grew his own.

My grandfather on my dad's side grew lots of vegetables and flowers. I remember one time he gave me a bumpy, yellow crooked neck squash to play with.

"It's too tough to eat, but you can have it," he said. I named it Squash Baby and carried it around in my arms like a doll and made clothes for it from napkins. I think I played with it until it rotted.

My grandfather grew string beans—green ones and yellow ones. When the string beans were ripe, sometimes we would just eat a whole plate of string beans and a slice of bread and butter for dinner. He didn't grow eggplant though. He wasn't Italian.

I am waiting for farm fresh eggplant because it is only best when just picked. Eggplant takes a long time to grow in New England so you have to be patient. It is just as well that it ripens in early fall because I have to put the oven on for eggplant parmesan.

My husband and I both love eggplant.

For me, it is a memory of gatherings at my mother's parents house (my other set of grandparents). My mother was the youngest of eight children. When they gathered, my Aunt Adeline would bring a big pan of eggplant parmesan. My grandparents' tiny house filled with lots of loud, laughing people is what comes back to me in that moment when I take the pan of eggplant out of the oven.

As the summer winds down, you will find me at the farm stands, waiting for my perfect, plump, purple eggplant.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven...a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted." Ecclesiastes 3:1,2

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



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Not Just Another Three Day Weekend

by Tammy Page

The first Labor Day parade was held in 1882 and officially became a celebrated holiday in 1894. It is a holiday to celebrate the workers who fought for a safer work place, lower hours worked each day and better pay. For some, it's just another three day weekend but for me, it's a reminder that there are still people who work hard and take pride in the work they do and deserves recognition for their work ethic.

When I was growing up, my sister and I had weekly chores. On Saturday mornings we had jobs to do around the house and could not sit and watch television to watch our beloved American Bandstand until those chores were done. Sometimes, if we were lucky enough for mom to give us dusting or sweeping we could catch a glimpse of it while performing our chores. Now if we had to do dishes or help with the laundry, we had to time it just right and get finished before the 11:00 starting time of our favorite Saturday shows.

As farm kids, our children and grandchildren have grown up as very hard workers. They know they have responsibilities with their animals, helping with the crops and cleaning the house. They've grown up knowing that chores were more important and came before play. They each have fed on their own on cold wintery nights where it wasn't fit to be outside, and when the humidity was so thick you were sopping wet from sweat. They've scooped manure, carried 50 pound bags of feed, lifted bales of hay onto wagons and cleaned out stalls many times. They've trudged through mud losing their barn boots in the process and checked on animals in the middle of the night, sometimes sleeping in a lawn chair while waiting for a sow to have her piglets.

Now, don't get me wrong, there have been times when we've had to have a sit-down discussion with them to let them know the importance of responsible ownership. Sometimes the threat of selling their animals was motivation enough to get them back on the right track and remind them of the rewards in the end.

When our children were raising 4-H animals, they were allowed to sell one of their animals at the fair auction and that money helped them buy their first car. I'm so very proud of our children and grandkids for listening, watching and discovering what hard work means and the benefits from it.

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



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A photograph of various primitive items including a wooden basket with dried flowers, a ceramic jug, and a wooden bowl.

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A colorful illustration of a red barn with a blue roof and a white door.

Celebrate Fall

by Janet Young

As the season transitions from summer to fall, what symbolizes the dawning of this new season? Is it the first frost or the chilly bite in the morning air that signifies it's time to pull out those warm bulky sweaters and socks, as you prepare to attend the first of the season's college football game.

In addition to the beauty that fall brings with the changing of the leaves, there is so much to do before the cold, crisp air of winter sets in. For example, perhaps one more camping trip where you can make s'mores over a smokey campfire. Or, go for a walk trampling over freshly fallen crisp leaves.

Why not go to an orchard to pick apples. Nothing is more fun for the children than to pick the apples and then go home to bob for apples. Or, why not teach the older kids how to make applesauce.

Then, there is a hay ride through a pumpkin patch, where you can pick a pumpkin or two to take home and decorate your front porch. Pumpkins provide a nice decorative touch with a splash of orange throughout the yard and house. What a nice decorative touch to add to your front porch or to any place you want that spark of orange.

Last, but not least why not go through a corn maze. The thrill of going through the maze without getting lost is something that you and your family will recall for years to come as memories are being made.

You know Fall has arrived when Fall beverages begin to appear at coffee shops, fast food places, restaurants etc. Drinks such as apple cider, pumpkin lattes and all things spicy, signify that Fall has officially arrived. And with the ever-increasing morning chill in the air, pots of home-made soup are a welcomed treat for your taste buds.

So, as you cuddle up in a cozy blanket or break out your flannel sheets – plan to enjoy this special season of the year. Come December or January, when the first snow falls, you will be glad you did. So,

CELEBRATE FALL

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

Ideas To Make A Great Quilt Show Even Better

Tips for Success

by Judy Sharer

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

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

To draw even more attendees, some guilds offer a giveaway of quilt-related items every half hour during the show giving back to the attendee. Advertising in local fabric shops, local newspapers, and getting word out to neighboring guilds is crucial. Quilters in the community may not be aware of the guild, so make sure to include a contact phone number or guild email to enticed new members to join - always a plus.

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

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

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

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

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

Judy Sharer is the author of A Plains Life wholesome historical romance four-book series and her new spicy historical romance novel titled Secrets in Room Four published by The Wild Rose Press and available wherever online books and eBooks are sold. Judy's four-book series have a thread of quilting that runs through the family saga story. Visit judysharp.com for more details and watch for the release of her next romance novel in 2027.

PEDRICKTOWN

September Will Always Be School Month

by Barbara Kalkis

I knew from the time I was 4 years old that I wanted to be a teacher. My parents had given me a blackboard on a stand and a box of chalk for Christmas. They set it up in the basement and, from there, I held court over some dolls and a random teddy bear. Being a teacher was my goal because all the other kids in the neighborhood were at least a year older than I and already spent their days there, while I languished at home. The result was that, upon delivering me to school on the first day of kindergarten, my mother was annoyed that I was the only kid laughing and prancing around the teachers instead of crying and screaming, begging not to be left behind.



True to my dream, I became an English teacher for some years before entering the business world and teaching as a side profession. So ingrained was the desire to teach, along with the gratitude of having the joy of it, every September I recall the experiences of being in school.

The jolting reminder happened a few months ago. Our senior class president wrote to invite us all to a reunion. I had completely forgotten about such events. Our class was never known for being a tightly knit group beyond our tiny cliques. Considering a trip to see people I had completely forgotten about nagged at me for weeks.

To make the decision, I looked back to a collection of informally stapled sheets of paper listing short biographies submitted by the class at our 20th reunion. Reading the words of people I had grown up with made me realize how far we had all progressed. Most of us were married – and happily – as attested by the comments about the beauty and gift of love from a special spouse. What also impressed me was that all of us had taken our education well beyond our high school graduation. Not just in certificates and bachelor's degrees, the number of attorneys, doctors, engineers, government representatives, teachers, architects, builders, and business owners was a stunning testament to students driven to graduate degrees and specialty professions. Amazingly, we had all done well.

I wondered what made our class so special from such a little town with seemingly everyday kinds of families. I found the answer in our yearbook's foreword. I don't know who wrote it. I suspect the author was our yearbook instructor. He wrote that formal education required two levels of experience: theoretical concepts and practical participation in actual problems and conditions in adult life. He stated that, "With these tools of knowing and doing, one can make a good living and enjoy a good life."

The unknown author of the yearbook dedication also described the qualities of a good teacher: limitless devotion, involvement in student learning, inspiring leadership, and contributions to student achievements and the school itself.

When I turned to the pages listing the high school staff and their education credentials, I saw that most teachers had graduated with advanced degrees from solid regional institutions versus the famous national glamour schools. Yet, our class of over 200 students achieved prestigious jobs and positions and what one would honestly consider a successful life. Based on our collective achievements, I would say all of our teachers lived up to their charter. To them, I say "thank you!" You did your job well.

©Barbara Kalkis, 2026. Barbara divides her time between writing, teaching, and consulting. She requests that you thank the teacher that helped you be the success you are – at whatever you do. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

From My Farm

by Donna Jo Copeland, farmeress

250 Years of Wool and Counting



It's 100 degrees outside. I'm sitting in front of a fan surrounded by wool yarns, roving and a big piece of burlap. I am recreating a 250 year old textile, something most of us have never seen.

I've always been a history buff. Growing up with great and great great grandparents, aunts and uncles I listened to their stories, watched their hands as they worked. I absorbed like a thirsty sponge never dreaming of where it would lead.

About 5 years ago reading a book on Kentucky long rifles and hunters I came across Rebecca Bryan Boone, Daniel's wife. She was Scottish, Quaker, spinner, weaver, midwife, healer and sharp shooter. In her spare time she

birthed 10 children, raised 8 nieces and nephews. And she never learned to read or write. In the book she was given 2 lines

I set about researching her. It was the Scot/Quaker/Weaver/Spinner that got me. Kindred spirit.

The home textile industry of the 17th and 18th centuries has fascinated me since I saw my first overshot coverlet. Not the fancy Jacquard ones, but the 4 harness overshot beauties. And I began my weaving adventures about 50 years ago weaving those patterns, often spinning the weft yarns. I wove over a dozen full size and then wandered into miniatures, warping with sewing thread.

With Rebecca's spirit. I'm weaving coverlets again. Spinning the weft yarns, dyepots simmering

My ancestors smile and probably share a dram at my efforts. I have found the weaving easy but the consistent spinning is a chore.

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Fall is for Apple Crisp

From my great grandmother's receipt file

Butter a 9x9 dish, cut up about 8 apples, peel if you want. Mix with 2 cups brown sugar, 1/4 cup cinnamon, more if you like. Add 1 stick of shredded butter, a big handful of quick cooking oats and some walnuts. If it seems stiff add 3/4 cup water. Pour into dish, bake at 350 for about an hour.

Serve warm with cream (I used whipped cream)

My sheep seem excited at a new, hundreds of years old, use for their wool.

In one of my books I came across bed rugs, made and used as coverlets on the bed. They were quite common in the 16th to 18th centuries, then as homes became warmer, fell out of fashion. The really neat part is they were hooked with handspun wool yarns onto burlap. In true Scottish means as cloth was far too dear to be cut into strips rather than used for patching clothes. Very clever those old Scots.

Searching I found a few examples of bed rugs in museums. And I was hooked!

As to size they were about 45x65, just enough to lay on the bed. In those days people didn't lay flat to sleep, sort of like sleeping in a lounge chair

So one fine day I set about designing my bed rug. Decided to give it a fall feeling. All those colors, and yes had to include sheep and a crow. Had to be handspun yarns, naturally dyed. A deep dive into my cedar chest stash of yarns began! And at the end it didn't make a dent in the stash. Maybe another adventure awaits.

I budgeted about 6 months of time to hook but surprised myself with how quickly it went. OK I was anxious. I hooked with a big oval quilting frame to hold the piece, a bit at a time. It was heavy. And I hooked the rug in a month! Still spinning the yarn to bind it with.

The bed rug was quite a challenge but I'm so glad I did it. My ancestors and Rebecca's spirit are happy I think. The rug will probably never go on my bed but will hang on the plaster walls in my 1890 farmhouse. A honor to my lineage and my sheep

I do so wish people today would not use acrylic and polyester, go back to healthier natural fibers. They do require a bit of care but so worth the effort. Better for the planet.

Well this Maven of the Old Ways needs to get back to work. Wool doesn't spin itself here!

In peace and kindness.

© 2026 - Donna Jo Copeland writes from her farm, Breezy Manor, Mooresville, Indiana where she tends her flock and creates art from the wool. Being the 14th generation of farm owner/operator, Donna Jo brings alive the struggles of farm life.

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WIT AND WISDOM

by Judyann Grant

One Truly Reliable Source

My newest bird feeder is a high-tech model with a camera and two-way communication system. When a feathered friend lands on the feeding tray, the camera snaps a picture; if the bird lingers, a video is created, complete with chirping, tweeting and fluttering of wings.

If a squirrel or chipmunk stops to pillage the sunflower seeds, I can use the cell phone app to either activate the scare alarm or verbally tell the creature to vamoose. So far, I have only used the feature to talk to my husband when he is outside filling the feeder.

The system also relies on A.I. (artificial intelligence) to identify bird species. The camera captures a small portion of a bird, depending upon where the bird is positioned. It may be the tail, breast, wing or head. Most times the identification is correct, but now and then it's wrong. The funniest misidentification it has made to date was the day I filled the feeder and the camera snapped a picture of my palm. A.I. identified me as an "Eurasian coot"!

Now, an Eurasian coot is a noisy water bird, native to Australia. It has black feathers, a white bill and a white forehead that makes it look bald. Oh, and it has green legs and blueish webbed feet. A quick look in the mirror reassures me that I look nothing like a coot!

Geoffrey Hinton, often called the "Godfather of AI," resigned from his position at Google to freely voice his concerns about the potential dangers of artificial intelligence. Chief among his concerns was the spread of misinformation - fake photos, videos and text generated by AI, that make it difficult to distinguish truth from fiction.

A.I. is only as reliable as the "handlers" who input information. It can be inaccurate, distorted and misleading. You can't trust - or believe - everything you read online.

In this day of questionable technology, there remains one source I turn to time and again for consistent and trustworthy information, inspiration, encouragement, help and hope: God's Word – the one I can hold in my hands. *"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever"* (Isaiah 40:8 NIV.)

-Judyann Grant and her husband Don live across from Lake Ontario in northern New York State. With the help of their children and grandchildren the couple have spent this year celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary with special gatherings and get-aways.

For more from this author, her newest book, "Reflections: Walking in the Light of God's Word" contains one-year of daily devotions and is available by contacting her at: witandwisdomwriters@gmail.com

A Primitive Place Magazine

Take a Step Back in Time



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There are only two seasons:
Autumn – & waiting for Autumn.

In the village store someone says, "I heard the geese go over," & there is a moment of silence. Why this is so moving, I do not know. But all of us feel it.



Let h o o o o went the wind around me, shhh went the leaves. And the church clock rang the hour.

With LOVE from the Heart of the Home & me... Susan Branch

FLEMINGTON - PEQUANNOCK

Autumn: My Favorite Season

by Tammy Page

Do you remember when we layed at the end of our twin beds, on top of the covers with a fan blowing in our faces? I was 6 in 1966 and I remember the August and September temps of the day still reached well over 90 and did not cool down by bedtime. My sister and I would put our baby doll pj's on and lay side by side in our twin beds. We would put our pillows at the end of the beds in hopes the air coming in through the screens would be cooler than the air in our room. We started out talking into the fan making the rumbling sound it makes when you talk near the blades. Our fan had a protective front and back and was made of metal back then. No doubt it also had a wobble and it made a gosh awful rattling noise. The noise would lull us to sleep. But, of course, we had to sing some songs and giggle for a while before mom would come to the door for the umpteenth time to remind us it was time to go to sleep. We would toss and turn and get up a hundred times to re-arrange our pillows just right so that our faces could lay on them at the right height and still it was way too hot and muggy to go right to sleep. By this time, mom would come back into our room and threaten to make us go back to the head of our beds if we didn't quiet down and go to sleep.

In extreme temperatures, our parents just might let us sleep in their room with the window air conditioner, after we promised to go right to sleep. Sometimes on a rare occasion, we were allowed to sleep in the living room where we had a new Westinghouse window air conditioner that cooled the entire living and dining room. We thought we were rich!

Most of our friends were in the same boat, only having a fan or small window air conditioner. It was rare to visit home with central air back then. If one of our friends had central air conditioning, we thought they were millionaires.

By the time morning came around and we had slept in our hot rooms, our hair would be damp and looked like Bozo the Clown. Those days my mom had to put my hair up in a ponytail for school. Schools were hot back then too but thank goodness my school, #82 had 2 sets of walls to wall windows in each classroom that could be opened. Sometimes, if were lucky, only sometimes, our teacher would bring a fan in from home.

This Indiana heat would continue well into October where some other parts of the country were already getting snow. Needless to say, when the cooler temps came, most of us were thrilled. I was especially happy when bedtime was not so miserable. So, I have declared autumn my favorite season where you can leave the windows open, feel a cool breeze and go back to sleeping at the head of your bed.

- © 2025 Tammy Page. Tammy Page writes from her family farm in Indiana.

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Fall Foods You're Guaranteed to Flock Towards

by Laura Taylor

As we start to move into Fall and cooler weather, it's the perfect time to get outside into fresh air. One of the best ways to explore the outdoors while staying out of the hot sun is finding a nice spot in the shade of a tall tree. But honestly, what good is sitting outside for hours if you don't have a sandwich, a drink and something beautiful to look at.

Now what if I told you that the "beautiful" something isn't a typical scenic view or your tablet screen, but rather something rare and exciting and that the snack and drink you bring along could be prepared in less than 30 minutes?

Birds will have their most fiery and colorful backdrop this season, highlighting their feathers and even making them easier to spot. Bird watching can be done from the comfort of a lawn chair in the cool Fall foliage or even from your own backyard if you're lucky, leaving only a relaxing breeze and sounds of nature to enjoy.

As for something to keep you from having to go back and forth for lunch, here are four recipes I promise you'll flock towards this Fall. They feature some of my favorite sandwich and drink classics that are always best when enjoying outdoors.

1. Chicken Salad Sandwich

- Rotisserie chicken
 - Dried cranberries
 - Chopped pecans
 - Mayo
 - 1 tsp Spice World Minced Garlic
 - ½ tsp Spice World Minced Ginger

1. Mix everything together and chill.

2. Serve on croissants or brioche buns.

2. Transfusion

- 1.5 oz vodka
 - 2 oz white grape juice
 - 1 oz cranberry juice
 - ½ oz fresh lemon juice
 - 2 oz ginger beer
 - ¼ tsp Spice World Minced Ginger

• Method

1. Shake vodka, juices, lemon, and ginger with ice.

2. Strain into a tall glass over fresh ice.

3. Top with ginger beer.

3. Turkey-Apple with a Garlic Mayo

- Sourdough or multigrain bread
 - Sliced turkey
 - Sharp cheddar
 - Thin apple slices
 - 1 tbsp Spice World Minced Garlic
 - 2 tbsp mayo
 - Handful of arugula
 - Mix minced garlic into mayo.

4. Cranberry Ginger Mule

- 2 oz vodka
 - 1 oz cranberry juice
 - ½ oz lime juice
 - ¼ tsp Spice World Minced Ginger
 - Ginger beer

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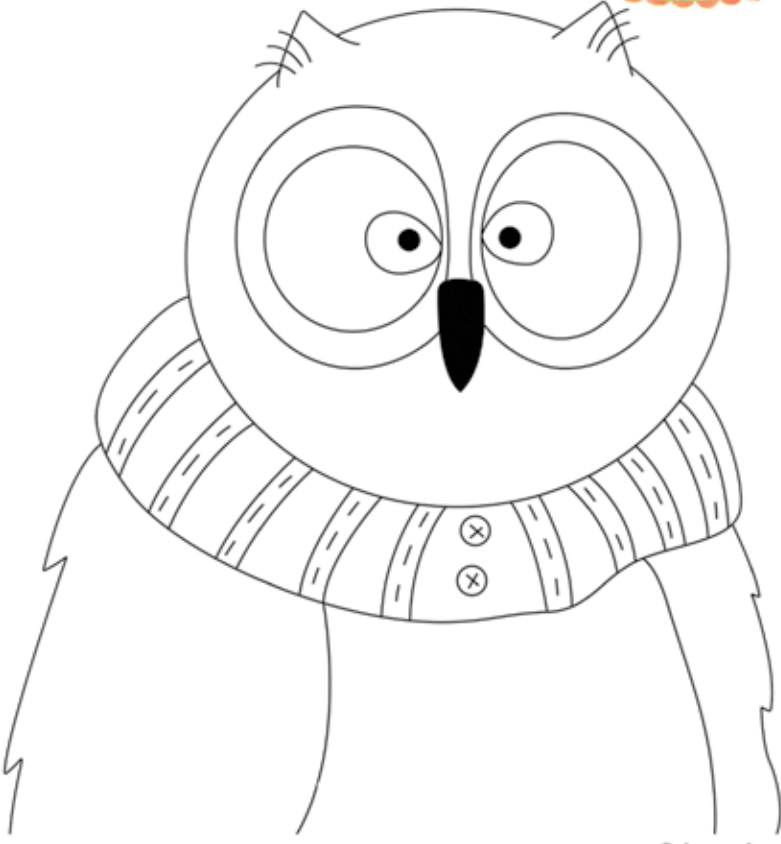


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