

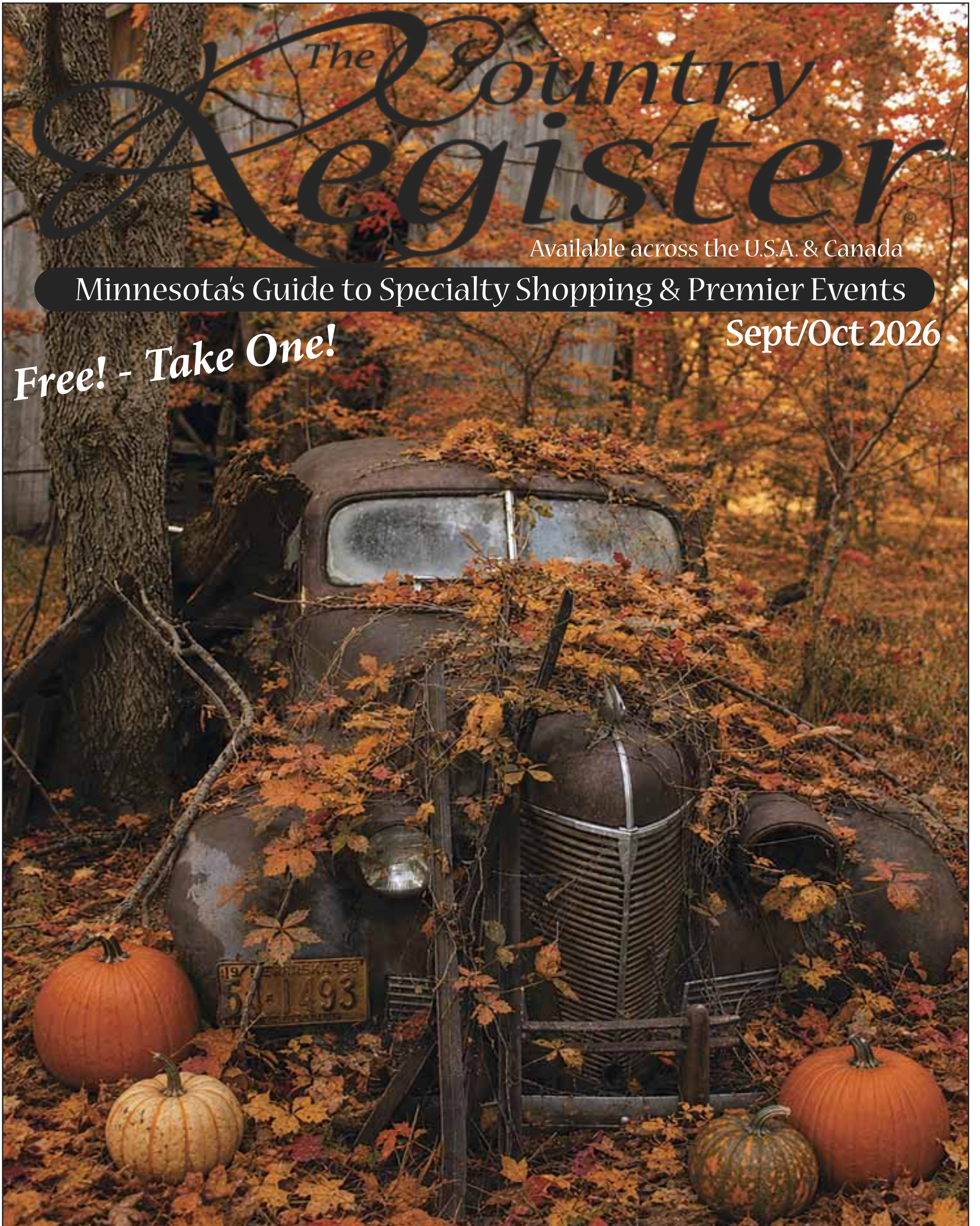
The Country Register

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Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events

Sept/Oct 2026

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Happy Fall Y'all!



Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events



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Find more information at www.countryregister.com*

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Months Sept/Oct 2026

Volume 32 Number 5

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Deadline For the

November/December 2026

Edition is October 1st!

City Listing		
Arlington.....	13	Milford, IA.....10
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Cook.....	18	New Ulm.....6,7&13
Cloquet.....	16	Northfield.....5
Duluth.....	17	Oklee.....20
Eagan.....	15	Owatonna.....5
Eden Valley.....	12	Paynesville.....13
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Special Events	
September	
5.....	Fall Opening - Country Craft Shed - Duluth
8-13.....	Quilter's Business Academy - Woodland Ridge Retreat - Menomonie, WI
10-12.....	Back to School Retreat - Quilt Haven on Main - Hutchinson
12-13.....	Hill City Quilt & Fiber Arts Show - Hill City, SD
18-20.....	Monthly Sew-In - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
19.....	Jelly Roll Party - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
24-26.....	Des Moines Area Quilters Quilt Show - Des Moines, IA
October	
2-4.....	Monthly Sew-In - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
2-9.....	Northwoods Quilt Trek - Creations Quilt Shop - Duluth
2-9.....	Northwoods Quilt Trek - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
6-8.....	Featherweight Festival - Quilt Haven on Main - Hutchinson
12-17.....	13th Anniversary Celebration - Quarry Quilts - Sandstone
16-17.....	Anniversary Sale - Quilter's Cottage - Kiester
16-18.....	Monthly Sew-In - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
November	
5-7.....	Hometown Holiday Road Trip - Thimble Box - New Ulm
5-7.....	Hometown Holiday Road Trip - Sewing Seeds - New Ulm
5-7.....	Hometown Holiday Road Trip - DeAnn's Country Village - Litchfield
5-7.....	Hometown Holiday Road Trip - Cabby's Corner - Gibbon
5-7.....	Hometown Holiday Road Trip - Sweetwater - Paynesville
5-7.....	Hometown Holiday Road Trip - Sew Quilty - Arlington
5-7.....	Hometown Holiday Road Trip - Quilting Grounds - Glencoe
6.....	Christmas Arrives - Farmer's Daughter - White Bear Lake
12-14.....	Holiday Open House - Quilter's Cottage - Kiester
13-14.....	36th Annual Festival of Trees Open House - DeAnn's Country Village - Litchfield
27-29.....	Christmas Sale - Country Craft Shed - Duluth

Happy Halloween!



17th Annual
12 Days of
Holiday Baking

Send in your favorite holiday baking recipes including cookies, cakes, appetizers, main dishes, etc!
Entries will be included in the November/December issue in the 12 Days of Holiday Baking special!

Send your recipes to
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EMBRACING A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

by Janet Young

Where did the summer go? It seems as though our hot sunny days are quickly changing to cooler evenings, and our days are slowly becoming shorter. Perhaps there is still time to go on one more vacation before you have to switch gears and start shopping for school supplies.

But what if instead of trying to pack more things into the end of your summer routine, you spend the last few vacation days unwinding until you have arrived at a comfortably relaxed state. With a calm demeanor, what better way does that prepare you for the ensuing chaos that is sure to come when your children go back to school.

Actually, this might be the perfect time to sit down with your children and start planning ways to cope with the upcoming school year. This is especially important if your child is in sports, a cheerleader, or in the band. Are any of these activities going to cause a scheduling conflict? Now is the time, before the busyness of the new school year comes at you fast and furious. If your children were involved in these same activities last year, now would be the time to review how last year played out. You may want to ask your children for ideas on how you might improve the flow of things. What would they like to see change, if anything.

Is your child beginning the school year at a new school? Are they entering Middle School or High School for the first time? This would be a great opportunity to let them express their fears or concerns. And this would be the time to let them know you are on their side. That you are there for them, and that they are not alone, and it is okay to be anxious over a new situation. Everyone feels that way, and that this is a normal reaction. After your planning meeting comes to a close, celebrate however you choose.

Above all else, as hard as it might be, look for ways you can sit down at the dinner table at the end of these busy times...and without any cell phones. This may be the biggest challenge, but in the end it will make a world of difference. This could be the time to console the child who didn't play so well that day, or perhaps his team lost their game. Whatever you talk about, it should be a reflection on their day. Life is short. It won't be long before your children will be gone. And it is then, that you will have time to enjoy the empty nest syndrome, where peace and calm will reign before you begin the next chapter of your life...Grandparenthood.

Embrace the new school year. The best is yet to be.



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Where in Minnesota?

Somewhere in Minnesota the image to the right can be found.
Where is it?

(Answer on page 16 of this issue)



A Nice Remembrance Twenty Years Later

by Kerri Habben Bosman

As I was contemplating ideas for this autumn article, two things happened. First, I dreamt of my grandmother, who passed away twenty years ago on September 6th. Even though I feel her with me every day, I almost never dream of her. Second, I went to the doctor for my annual wellness check. I came away from both these events with gratitude and a renewed awareness of all my grandmother gave me.

In my recent dream my grandmother was as she was towards the very end of her 99 years. While she passed away at the hospital, in this manifestation she was resting in her bed at the assisted living facility. We were holding hands, gazing steadily at one another. Even as I realized she was dying, I also had that surreal feeling when you know you are in a dream. I made a semiconscious decision to not awaken, so that I could fully feel her essence longer.

I was alone with my grandmother when she died in 2006. Outside of gradual aging in her 90s, she was fortunate to enjoy good health (save for elevated blood pressure and high cholesterol) until 99 ½. Then she developed aplastic anemia, wherein her white blood cells and platelets stopped working. It was, at least, a peaceful way for her to leave this world behind. I sang hymns to her at the last. She stopped breathing during Amazing Grace, as I sang the line, "and grace shall lead me home." Even now if I unexpectedly hear that hymn, tears overtake my eyes.

When I was nine months old, I started calling my grandmother, "Huba." I said it with a short "u" sound. She embraced my nickname for her, and throughout the years she became "Huba" to my friends and even adults who came into her life.

Huba made the best mashed potatoes in the world. "I beat the hell out of them," she used to say as a genuinely sweet smile emerged. Every time I mash potatoes, I hear her voice.

She crocheted from the time she was eight years old, making beautiful and warm things that turn houses into homes. Over her 91 years of needlework, she gave much of what she made away to family, friends, and to those in need. One of her favorite phrases as she grew older and older was, "it will be a nice remembrance."

I was nine when she taught me how to crochet. Therefore, Huba is in everything that I make. She taught me how to give with an open heart, so I, too, give away much of my crocheting. My work is her living legacy.

Huba cared for her husband and her sister through long illnesses when they were both in wheelchairs, and she never lost her joyful and playful spirit. Somehow she always had more to give.

Which brings me to my doctor's visit. Huba does indeed have more to give, even after two decades. All of the tests they did were normal, save for my cholesterol level. I learned that I have her high blood pressure. Though I suppose I should be a responsible adult and claim it as my own. No medication at this point, but a check-up in six months.

After a few internet searches, I see many breakfasts of oatmeal and refreshing drinks of green tea in my future. As well as more walks than I usually enjoy around the neighborhood. Thankfully, I read that nearly everything I like to eat, including potatoes, is good for monitoring cholesterol. One article said to add fiber to my day, which surely must mean that all my yarn and crocheting helps too.

A grandmother's love and a little amazing grace won't hurt either.

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

We Want to Hear from You!



Do you have something fun and/or interesting to share with us? We'd love to hear from you! We'd want to share your great stories, fun craft or quilt projects, yummy recipes, beautiful poetry etc.

Stories of the past are always so engrossing!

Send us an email, give us a call or send us something in the mail. We look forward to hearing from you.

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM

just
IMAGINE
live simply **DREAM** give **LOTS**
be **BIG LOVE** laugh **GRATEFUL**

Just Imagine if we Lived Simply, had Big Dreams,
shared our Love, was Grateful for everything,
and Laughed alot ~

How would we experience our world today?

This question is worth some time and contemplation.

The definition of contemplation is inspiring - concentration on spiritual things as a form of private devotion - an act of considering with attention - the act of regarding steadily.

Contemplation about anything is pretty rare today. When was the last time you spent a considerable amount of time thinking about anything? We live in a fast pace world and we often want tasks or decisions to be resolved even faster.

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM

Find a comfy place and simply "contemplate" on one thing of your choice. It might be a challenge - be patient with yourself - Give yourself some Grace!

Joy & Blessings,

Jody

Girlfriend Wisdom is written and illustrated by Jody Houghton®.

Color files of this writing and artwork are available: www.JodyHoughtonDesigns.etsy.com

New Ulm



On this day in History

September 16, 1893: The largest land run in history begins with more than 100,000 people pouring into the Cherokee Strip of Oklahoma to claim valuable land. With a single shot from a pistol the mad dash began, and land-hungry pioneers on horseback and in carriages raced forward to stake their claims to the best acres.

October 4, 1927: Sculpting begins on the face of Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills National Forest of South Dakota. It would take another 12 years for the granite images of four of America's most revered presidents, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, to be completed. Washington's face was the first to be completed in 1934. Jefferson's was dedicated in 1936, with then-president Franklin Roosevelt in attendance, and Lincoln's was completed a year later. In 1939, Teddy Roosevelt's face was completed.

Information found on www.history.com



I'm just here for the pumpkin pie!

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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for a friend?

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

Life in Skunk Hollow

by Julie A. Druck

Passing on the Baton



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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From Sketch to Stitch: How the Ashli Quilt Came to Life

By Kathryn LeBlanc

People often ask where quilt ideas come from. Sometimes it's a vintage quilt, a beautiful fabric collection, or a traditional block. Other times, it's something far less expected.

In this case...an acrylic lipstick organizer.

One morning, my friend Ashli from Quilt2EndALZ.org sent me a photo and asked, "How would you turn this lipstick case into a quilt block?"

My response? "Challenge accepted."

I started studying the organizer, focusing on its angles and repeating shapes rather than its purpose. Before long,



I was sketching ideas in EQ8 (Electric Quilt 8), where those clear acrylic compartments evolved into rows of colored squares set on point, and connected by sashing & corner stones, to create a striking lattice design.

One idea led to another, and before I knew it, an entirely new quilt had emerged.

With Ashli's blessing—and because she inspired the challenge—it was only fitting to name the finished pattern Ashli.

One of the things I love most about quilt design is that inspiration can come from almost anywhere: a tile floor, a garden gate, the shadow cast by a staircase—or, in this case, a lipstick organizer. As quilt designers, we learn to look beyond what an object is and instead see the shapes, lines, and patterns hidden within it.

The next time something catches your eye, take a second look. You never know—it just might become your next creative project.

The photos below show the journey from: the original lipstick organizer, to the digital EQ8 design, to the finished Ashli quilt. The link to the printed quilt pattern is here: <https://authorkathrynmykel.com/store/ashli-printed-pattern/>



Kathryn LeBlanc (also known as best-selling author, Kathryn Mykel) is a creative force in the quilting world. A talented pattern designer and storyteller, she blends her passion for textiles with her love of mystery and heartwarming tales. Through both her sewing patterns and fiction novels, Kathryn inspires quilters and readers alike to embrace creativity, community, and connection. www.quiltandfiction.com www.facebook.com/DragonflysQuiltingDesignStudio/ www.instagram.com/dragonflysquiltingdesignstudio/ Newsletter: <https://authorkathrynmykel.myflodesk.com/magazinequilters>



A Lamp, A Kindness, A Legacy

by Becky Van Vleet

There is a lamp in my home that does more than give light. It sits on a table in my living room, its glow warm and steady in the evenings, the kind of light that softens a room rather than brightens it. The lamp is more than an object. It's a presence. It's been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Its story begins more than sixty years ago, in a simple act of kindness.

My father received the small lamp after church one day when he and my mother were delivering groceries to a woman in need. The woman, grateful and wanting to offer something in return, struck up a conversation with my father. Somewhere in that exchange, they discovered a shared thread—their families had come from Czechoslovakia. That connection must have felt immediate and personal—like finding a piece of home in an unexpected place. The lamp, which she'd brought to America from Czechoslovakia, was her way of saying thank you for the groceries. Of course, my humble father declined the offer at first, but the woman insisted he have the lamp.



I don't know what the lamp meant to her before that day. But in giving it away, she passed along more than an object. She passed along a gesture of gratitude, a recognition of shared roots, and a quiet acknowledgment of kindness received.

The lovely multi-colored globe lamp with a sturdy brass base found its place in my parents' home, where it became a part of the background of my childhood. It was always there, lit in the evenings, steady and unassuming. It was simply one of those constants that make a house feel like a home. Only later did I come to understand that it carried a history far older than my own memories of it.

Over time, as so many things do, the lamp was passed down to me. Now it sits in my home, continuing its quiet work. When I turn it on, I sometimes think about the path it has taken. From a woman who crossed an ocean, to my father delivering groceries after church, to the home I live in today. It has outlasted changes in houses, in generations, in the rhythm of everyday life. And still, it does what it has always done: it gives light.

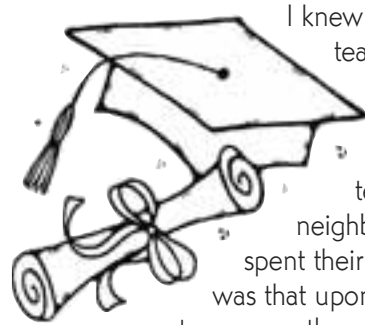
A bag of groceries. A shared conversation. A simple gift given in gratitude.

These are not the moments that make headlines, but they are the ones that endure. They travel quietly through time, carried in objects, in memories, in stories passed from one person to another. This lamp is one of those stories.

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

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 high school 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 at 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 Forward. 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 glamor 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 is a terrible cook but appreciates those home chefs who have perfected the art. Reach her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.



Search for the underlined words in the recipe in the word search below!

Copy Cat Chick Fila Chicken Tortilla Soup

recipe from Delish

- Ingredients:
- 2 (15oz) cans white beans, divided
 - 2 tbsp neutral oil
 - 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
 - Kosher salt
 - Black pepper
 - 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 - 1 tbsp ground cumin
 - 1 tbsp smoked paprika
 - 1 tsp chipotle chili powder
 - 1 (15oz) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes with green chiles
 - 1 (15oz) can black beans, drained unrinsed
 - 4 cups low sodium chicken broth
 - 2 tbsp masa harina

- 4 cups shredded cooked chicken
 - 1 cup frozen corn kernels
 - 1/4 cup full-fat sour cream
 - 3 tbsp fresh lime juice
- Tortilla Strips:

- 4 corn tortillas sliced into strips
 - 1 tbsp neutral oil
 - Kosher salt
 - Fresh cilantro, shredded cheddar, avocado etc for toppings

Instructions:

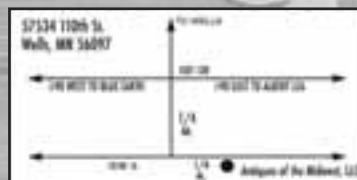
In a blender or food processor, blend 1 can white beans plus their liquid until smooth. Over medium heat, heat oil in heavy pot. Add onion and cook, stirring, until softened; season with salt and pepper. Add garlic, cumin, paprika, and chili powder and cook, stirring and adding more chili powder if needed, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes; season with salt and pepper. Add reserved pureed beans, black beans, broth, and remaining 1 can white beans and their liquid. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened and flavors have melded, about 20 minutes. In a small bowl, mix masa harina and 2 tablespoons water until combined; stir into soup. Add chicken and corn; cook, stirring occasionally, until heated through, about 10 minutes. Stir in sour cream and lime juice; season with salt and pepper, if needed. Preheat oven to 400°. In a small bowl, toss tortilla strips with oil, adding a little more oil if needed, until well coated. Spread on a baking sheet. Bake strips, checking at the 7-minute mark, until crispy, 8 to 10 minutes. Top soup with cilantro, avocado, cheese and tortilla strips.

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Antiques of the Midwest, LLC
facebook**Pieces From My Heart**

by Jan Keller

Brittle with a Bite!

Pistachios. Is there a more delicious nut?

There are pistachio groves near Alamogordo, New Mexico, and each time I'm in the area, I'm tempted to stop to buy some at the producer's retail outlets.

Recently my friend Maryann, who lives in Alamogordo, came for a weekend visit. As an extra-special treat, she brought some raw pistachios as a gift. Immediately, I had brittle on my brain!

It was about a month before I got out my heavy candy-makin' pan and assembled the necessary ingredients. I had researched via internet and found three recipes of special interest. After careful review of the ingredients and directions, I took elements from each recipe and concocted my own.

One of the recipes talked of stretching the brittle as it was barely cooling. My friend Norma stretches and pulls her peanut brittle and I know it's a highly coveted holiday treat. I love it. It was a no-brainer the stretching recipe was destined to become my primary recipe. Based on the other two recipes, I decided I would add cream of tartar and cinnamon, as well as a couple of spices to give that special bite.

In no time brittle was cooked and it was time for the stretching. My sister-in-law Connie was visiting. I recruited her help to pull sections of candy until it took on an iridescent sheen. After quickly re-buttering our fingers, we'd move on to another barely-touchable glob of the molten goo and repeat the process.

Everyone who's tasted the brittle has raved, so, from one nut to another, I'm pleased to share the recipe with you. Warning: this may be addicting!

**JAN'S BRITTLE WITH A BITE**

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 cups sugar | 1 cup light Karo syrup |
| 1/2 cup water | 2 cups pistachios |
| 1/4 teaspoon salt | 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar |
| 1/2 teaspoon vanilla | 1 tablespoon butter |
| 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper | 1/2 teaspoon chili powder |
| 1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce | 1 tablespoon baking soda |

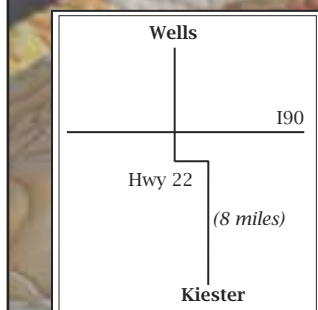
In a large heavy pan, combine sugar, Karo syrup and water. Boil this mixture until it reaches 238 degrees on a candy thermometer. Then add pistachios, salt and cream of tartar. Continue to cook, stirring frequently. When the boiling mixture reaches 290 degrees—hard crack—remove the pan from the burner and add vanilla, butter, cayenne pepper, chili powder and Tabasco sauce. Quickly stir together then add baking soda. Mix well and, working quickly, pour out onto a couple of



buttered cookie sheets. Spread with a spool. Beginning with the outer edges, with well-buttered fingers begin to pull and stretch until it's very thin and a section breaks away. It's a good idea to have a sheet of foil where you can put the pulled pieces of candy. When well-cooled, store in airtight containers or sealed plastic bags. The pistachios in this recipe could also be substituted with peanuts, cashews, or any desired combination of nuts. Good stuff—and when pulled thin, not hard on teeth.

©2026 Jan Keller No reprint without permission Jan shares other pieces of her life in her books, *Pieces From My Crazy Quilt*, and *The Tie That Binds*. These books can be ordered by calling 719-866-8570, or writing: Black Sheep Books, 11250 Glen Canyon Drive, Peyton, CO 80831**Quilter's Cottage**

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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 desert, 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.



Cookies & Cream Mug Cake

Ingredients:

- 4 tbsp flour
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 3 tbsp milk
- 2 tbsp melted butter
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 crushed Oreo

Directions:

1. In a microwave safe mug, mix all ingredients.
2. Microwave on high for 1 minute 10 seconds.
4. Let cool for 1 minute.
5. Add an extra Oreo on top after cooking.



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Happy Fall
Y'all

A Cup of Tea with Lydia

by Lydia E. Harris

Any Day Is Grandparents Day!

Fall usually means back to school, back to work, and back to scheduled routines. It's also back to Grandparents Day—which is celebrated on the second Sunday of September each year. This year it falls on September 13. But my husband and I don't need an official holiday to celebrate with our grandkids. We enjoy time with them as often as we can.

When our grandkids arrive at our home, I often ask them, "What day is it today?"

Their usual reply is, "Funday!" Any day with them is fun for all of us.

Recently, when they arrived, they answered, "Workday!" That's because Anna, 12, and Owen, 16, along with their mom, had offered to help us with house-cleaning and yardwork.

We can still have fun," I said, as I began to sing *Whistle while you work*.

Work they did—and with a good attitude! After they vacuumed and washed the floors, cleaned the bathrooms and dusted furniture, our home almost shone "like the top of the Chrysler building," as Miss Hannigan says in *Annie*. The yard looked better, too.

Of course, it wasn't all work. We took time for tea and treats, enjoying the sunshine on our deck while sipping their favorite peach herbal tea.

"These cookies taste good," Anna said when she took a bite of the chocolate chip cookies I'd baked the previous day.

I also served oatmeal cake, gluten-free chips and fresh strawberries, which they love eating dipped into sour cream and brown sugar. They think it almost tastes like dipping them into caramel sauce.

Their help that day was a win-win situation. They were planning to attend an out-of-state church camp in a month so I wrote out a check to help cover some of the cost.

"That's a lot of money," Anna said when they started to leave.

"Thanks for helping us," I said and smiled. "Do you know what else you were doing?" They waited for my reply. "You were laying up treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20).

They drove away smiling and I smiled as well when I stepped inside our clean home and I knew God was smiling, too.

Any day is Grandparents Day. And any occasion can turn into a tea party with fun memories that linger and bless others and ourselves.

Lydia E. Harris enjoys serving tea to family and friends. Her books for grandparents are: *Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting*, *In the Kitchen with Grandma*, and *GRAND Moments: Devotions Inspired by Grandkids*. All are available at amazon.com or can be ordered through local bookstores.

Recipe: Maple Pumpkin Pecan Cheesecake

submitted by Shirley Ross

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup butter or margarine, Melted
- 1 1/4 cup graham cracker crumbs
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 3 (8oz) pks cream cheese, softened
- 1 (14oz) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 (16oz) can pumpkin
- 3 eggs
- 8oz maple syrup, divided
- 2 1/2 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Directions:

Preheat oven to 300°. Combine butter or margarine, graham cracker crumbs and sugar; press mixture firmly onto the bottom of a 9" springform pan. In a large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese until light and fluffy. Beat in sweetened condensed milk. Add pumpkin, eggs, 1/4 cup maple syrup, pumpkin pie spice and salt. Bake about 75 minutes or until the surface of the cake is springy when lightly touched. Allow the cheesecake to cool. To make the glaze, combine remaining 3/4 cup maple syrup and whipping cream in a saucepan. Heat mixture until boiling. Allow to boil rapidly for 12-15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in pecans. Allow to cool slightly before pouring over the chilled cheesecake.



From Lydia's Cookbook—In the Kitchen with Grandma:

Popcorn Cake

(Fun to make with grandkids)

GATHER WITH GRANDMA

- 3 1/2 quarts (14 cups) popped popcorn
- 1/2 cup butter (one stick), melted
- 1 10-oz package miniature marshmallows
- 20 unwrapped caramels, cut in half
- 2 cups favorite small candies, such as candy corn, M&M'S®, gumdrops, or a mixture of candy.

1 cup lightly salted or honey roasted peanuts or mixed nuts (optional)



MAKE WITH GRANDMA

Lightly grease an angel food cake pan with butter or nonstick cooking spray. Measure the popcorn into a large container that holds at least five quarts. Mix in nuts and candy, except the chocolate candy. Measure the chocolate candy into a separate bowl to add later, otherwise the chocolate will melt and turn the cake brown. In a large saucepan or microwave-safe bowl, melt the butter and caramels together until the caramels are soft, stirring with a wooden spoon. Add the marshmallows and melt them completely. When melted, pour the marshmallow mixture over the popcorn mixture. Mix the cake with a wooden spoon. After the mixture cools slightly, stir in M&M'S or other chocolate candy. Press the popcorn mixture into the cake pan using wax paper or fingers greased with butter. Press down until the cake is compact. Refrigerate the cake for an hour or until firm. Remove the cake from the pan and place it on a plate. Serve at room temperature. Slice with a serrated knife. To keep the cake fresh, wrap it tightly with plastic wrap or foil or place it in an airtight container. This cake is best eaten in a few days. Wrap and refrigerate the uneaten cake to prevent it from becoming sticky.

SERVES 12 TO 16

Tip: For popcorn—use plain popcorn, kettle corn or lightly salted and buttered popcorn. You can buy it already popped if you prefer. (A package of 5.5 ounces of popped popcorn will give you 14 cups.) See cookbook for variations.

Happy fall, y'all!

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Over The Teacup
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



Minnesota Backyard Birds Hairy Woodpecker

SIZE: 9 inches

MALE: Black and white with a white belly. Black wings with rows of white spots. Long black bill. Red mark on the back of head.

FEMALE: Same as male, but with no red mark on head.

MIGRATION: Non-migrator

NOTE: Much larger than the Downy Woodpecker with a much longer bill.



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One Truly Reliable Source

by Juleann Grand



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



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Pumpkin carving hacks to save time, reduce mess and keep your jack-o-lantern fresh!



- Cut the bottom instead of the top.
- Use a hand mixer to detach pumpkin guts.
- Use cookie cutters with a mallet to effortlessly stamp out shapes.
- Use an electric turkey carving knife.
- If a piece breaks off accidentally, use superglue and/or a toothpick.
- Coat all exposed, freshly cut edges with a thin layer of Vaseline.



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Where in Minnesota?

The answer is...
Burger Family in Mountain Lake, MN



Mama, Papa, Teen and Baby Burger are located at the A&W Restaurant in Mountain Lake, MN. The family had previously been at an A&W in Pipestone and then a used car lot. The used car lot where the Burger Family stood used to be the A&W restaurant. The restaurant then sold the Burger Family to a local couple, who displayed them next to their driveway for over 30 years. They moved the Family back to the former restaurant site in 2017. Baby Burger has been missing the burger since the 1970s. The family was moved to it's current A&W Restaurant in 2022.

Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski



Quilt Auctioning

Last month, I attended my very first "live" quilt auction (which meant in-person, in-the-moment bidding).

Although I make, and gift, a variety of quilts and quilted household items, I honestly never knew about donating these finished projects to organizations for fundraising auctions. Was I not paying attention? Or have these events just become more popular?

Prior to COVID-days, I attended a live auction of Navajo woven rugs in New Mexico. Knowing nothing about the community into which I had recently moved, I attended the auction as a way to observe-and-learn. I'm sad to say I don't recall many of the details from that day, beyond the pre-sale opportunity to view the tables of rugs and such on tables on the stage; I remember the area of the auditorium in which I sat; I remember leaving the live auction after about an hour, and walking through the many vendor tables in the lobby before I exited the building. I just don't remember the winning bids, nor sizes of any rug.

I think the individual weavers of the rugs were paid a portion of the proceeds collected from the auctioning, but I cannot state this as fact. (Again, new to town = knew no one I would be comfortable asking my naïve questions.)

Jumping forward a few years, I moved to Minnesota with quilting fabric shops sharing flyers for "local" events. I learned about a variety of quilt shows and quilt auctions over the years, but never went to an auction until last month.

Thanks to an office-volunteering stint with a summer camp, I learned about their hosting an annual live quilt auction mid-summer. Curiosity took over, so I went—to observe-and-learn. (Sensing a pattern with me? You wouldn't be wrong.)



The purpose of this particular mid-summer auction was to raise funds for camp scholarships to be offered to the next summer's group of registering campers. A number of the quilts and quilted-items were available for bidding online, while a separate number of quilts were only available during the live auction. I was able to tour the building in which all of the items were displayed before the live auction began (where I also saw the many items being offered through the online portion of the auction I had viewed the day before), then headed outdoors to the lakeside stage and benches for the live-action portion of the fundraising.

Turns out, auctions are really interesting to watch! Just like nearly everything else in life, there are many different ways of viewing auctions, organizing auctions, and even distributing the proceeds from the sales generated during auctions. Similar to raffles, for instance, the "suggested value" of each quilt was revealed before the bidding began—but that's where the comparison to raffles ends. People win raffle quilts based on random odds, after all, while each auction bidder "controls" the odds simply based on how much they were willing to pay for the quilt.

I'm going to check out another camp's quilt auction tomorrow.

© 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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I Am 75, After All

by Wayne M. Bosman



I have never been one to celebrate my own birthday, possibly because there have been so many. That may be why I was shocked when my 8 year old grandson looked up at me and said, "Grandpa, did you know we're having a surprise party?"

Well, it was my birthday and almost all of my children were there and 7 of my grandchildren, but I thought that was serendipity, not planning. That two of my sons were busy at the grill and a few

hundred local oysters were waiting to be steamed did not strike me as abnormal. We're a large clan and sharing food is a time-honored ritual. When a few of my friends arrived, I was tickled. Apparently my children and my wife, Kerri, thought that turning 75 was special, and of course it was.

Since then, I have used the phrase "I am 75" shamelessly. I use it as a quick defense when I lose the word for one thing or another. I have decided that I no longer have to be the main "muscle" when heavy things need to be moved. "You guys get this one, I am 75 after all". Before that, I felt a little guilty asking for help with anything. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger was part of my credo.

What is apparent to me now is that at this point in my life, what doesn't kill me feels like it is trying to and that maybe taking a break isn't the worst thing. I am 75, after all.

Genetically I have been very gifted. Mom's side of the family, who I most take after, have been graced with long active lives. When Mom passed last November at 104, she had only spent the last 2 years in serious decline. She was still doing charity work, albeit in a much reduced role into the last year of her life. Her brother George, my godfather and hero, was still hooking his boat to the car and driving 3 hours to the family cottage into his 90s. He would spend a week fishing and preparing his catch to distribute to family and friends. Mom held her breath when he went on those outings, but he lived a full life and it wasn't his driving that finally got him. If I have any targets and expectations they provided them to me.

Further, as recently as a year ago, before I let my beard grow, I would often have to show my driver's license to get a senior discount at some stores. Maybe it was store policy, or the cashier was trying to make me feel good, but I chose to believe what I chose to believe. I am 75, after all.

The hard part of being 75, besides the glasses and hearing aids, is reading the obituaries. Most of us have had friends who died young, but my friends are too old for that now. The grim reaper has absolute job security and the older I get, the better the odds that my time will be due. Maybe that is one of the reasons that I stopped celebrating my birthday. Whistling in the dark... I'm 75, but I can still whistle after all.

My son-in-law, who was raised by his grandparents, is always amazed by my ability to work hard at 75. Sometimes he comes by and finds me on my back under a car, hopping up quickly to get more tools or parts just like I did for 49 years of my work life. Old habits die hard and I only see the job that has to be done. Till later, every muscle in my body is sore. I let him lift the heavy stuff now. I am 75 after all.

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



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Recipe: Taco Salad
submitted by Patti Lee Bock

Ingredients:

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 head lettuce, shredded
- 3 tomatoes, diced
- 1 small can green olives, sliced
- 1 small can black olives, sliced
- 8oz corn chips
- 8oz cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup French dressing

Directions:

Brown ground beef; drain off grease. Put in a large mixing bowl and combine lettuce, tomatoes, olives, corn chips and cheese. Add dressing. Toss gently. Chill before serving.




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Become Inspired!

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 scone 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 its subtle flicker and captivating scent enhance the mood of the room. Gorgeous large wooden trays or boxes in early surface 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

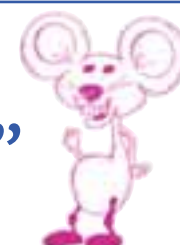
Planning a day to surround yourself with the full blessings of fall is a way to connect with friends and make memories to cherish. Wrapping a schedule around a festive fall event can be rewarding and fun. Fall festivals that include local farms and creative artisans can be enjoyed alongside a trip to 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

“Why fit in when you were
BORN to stand out?”

-Dr. Seuss



Happy Fall Y'all!

Who Knew That Quilting Could be Dangerous?

by Deb Heatherly

As quilters nothing is better than sewing pieces of fabric together to make wonderful creations for our family and friends. Our quilts add beauty and comfort to those who receive these special labors of love. Choosing just the right colors and patterns for each project is a feeling that only another quilter can appreciate.

But who knew this passion could be dangerous?

I am very aware that a rotary cutter must be treated with respect. Having once dropped one that impaled itself in my wood floor only inches from my bare foot, I am extremely cautious with this tool. In fact, it's probably why I have not sewn barefooted in years.



This type of situation stays in your memory bank and apparently when I am teaching, I tell this story and stress this fact a lot. So much so, that I once had a beginner student ask timidly after I opened the class with a short introduction of safety precautions, if she could just use scissors.

This was a 4-week class and it took at least one entire class to reassure her that all would be well. She finally understood that I would not only teach her to quilt but would also teach her proper precautions for this handy tool. Soon she became a confident rotary user and was cutting up a storm. My next task was getting her to realize that learning to make a 4-patch did not make her an expert quilter and that we had many new things to learn. Getting her to try half square triangles took several more classes. She said she was perfectly content to make 4-patches forever.

And then there were my sweet girls in kids club. I did not let these students, age 8-10, use a rotary cutter. Instead, I had them focus on basic sewing skills using fabric I had precut for each class. They learned how to thread their machines, clean out the bobbin area, wind a bobbin and how to sew a straight line. My goal was that they learn to follow my written instructions, see pinning as not a chore but a helpful step and to sew slowly and accurately. They learned to sew pillowcases and small, useful projects that could be completed in a single class. The thrill of accomplishment was what I was striving for as I hoped to instill in each of them a lifelong love for sewing.

But I apparently over stressed that sewing over a pin could be dangerous. I explained that the needle could break if it hit a pin and fly up into their faces and that this very thing had happened to me in the past. My first hint that maybe I had overdone that lecture was the next class when 3 of them showed up in goggles.

Speaking of pins and needles, my first husband swore that I dropped them in the carpet at just the right angle so that they would inflict the most pain as they found their way into his feet. He once asked, while pulling a needle from his foot that contained green thread, if this was a reminder to buy lettuce, peas or some other green food item when he went to the store. He thought he was being funny. (Maybe that's why he was husband # 1.)

That brings me to my most recent dangerous activity. It's one I am sure I will tell about in a future class and haunt some unsuspecting student.

Picture it. A quiet day, the TV playing and me happily stitching. What could be better? Yes, I was on a deadline sewing a sample for a new ruler release and yes, maybe I was stitching a little faster than normal, but progress was being made and I was a happy quilter. I was actually pressing my very last block and had picked up the iron to press the final seam when something being said on the TV caught my attention. I must have glanced away just long enough that the iron did not come down on my block, but instead on my left hand. By the time I could move the iron, two blisters appeared. There may have been some technical language when the iron hit my fingers but my sister assured me that it was okay because in times like this, "Oh crap," just does not do it.

Then adding insult to injury, when I googled "what to do when you burn your hand with an iron," I learned that the cold water I immediately placed my hand under was not the preferred method of treatment. I also learned that the ice I had tossed in a Ziploc bag to place on my aching hand was another no-no. Who knew that medical experts say lukewarm water is preferred over anything cold?

My thought...maybe whoever wrote that little bit of wisdom had never been on a deadline and ironed his hand while sewing.

Stay safe my stitching friends! Stay alert to all of the dangers in your sewing room but keep on stitching. There's someone out there just waiting for your next fabulous creation.

Deb Heatherly is a designer for Creative Grids® rulers and the author of eight popular pattern books. Creative Grids® fans are invited to join her Facebook group, "Grids Girls," for tips and inspiration, and two free mysteries each year. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/770429649800457/>. Shop Owners are invited to join her group just for you, "Grids Girls for Quilt Shop Owners Only" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/273593657256524>. Visit Deb's website at www.Debcatsquilts.com.

Free Pattern

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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.

Recipe: Peanut Butter Finger Bars

submitted by Margaret Haase

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/3 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup oatmeal
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- 2-3 tbsp milk

Directions:

Combine butter, peanut butter, sugar and brown sugar. Mix well. Add egg, vanilla, salt and baking soda. Beat until fluffy. Add flour and oatmeal. Spread in a 9x13 cake pan. Bake at 350° for 10-15 minutes until lightly brown. Remove from oven and sprinkle chocolate chips on top. Then spread. Place in refrigerator to cool and set chocolate. Mix powdered sugar, 1/4 cup peanut butter and milk. Spread over bars.



Brain Games Answers

3 letters: Let, Rue, Rut, Set

4 Letters: Lure, Lust, Lute, Rest, Rule, ruse, Rust, True

5 Letters: Lures

6 Letters: Luster, Rustle

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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. Gladys Taber

Whoooo went the wind around me, shhh went
 the leaves. And the church clock rang the hour.

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