The Country Register®

Available across the U.S.A. & Canada

Complimentary NORTH & SOUTH CAROLINA AND TENNESSEE Nov-Dec 2026

Your guide to specialty shopping & events in North & South Carolina and Tennessee

Find Tennessee Shops & Events
starting on page 10

The Country Register of North & South Carolina and Tennessee

PO Box 74035, Phoenix, AZ 85087
Toll Free 888.942.8950
Fax 602.866.3136
carolinas@barlomedia.com
www.countryregister.com/carolina



Barb Stillman
Publisher
barb@barlomedia.com

Lolly Konecky
Publisher/Art Director
lolly@barlomedia.com

Patty Duncan
Sales/Office Assistant

Cathy Shoemaker
Graphic Designer

Phyllis Cypert
Sales/Office Assistant

The N. & S Carolina Country Register is published by: Bar Lo Media

The Deadline for the January-February Issue is

December 1 for Ads & Articles

Our feature articles will focus on

Winter Festivals, Boutiques and Markets!

The Country Register is a United States and Canadian network of independently owned and published specialty newspapers for the consumer who enjoys outstanding shopping, events, day & overnight excursions and specialty classes.

Publisher's contact numbers across the USA & Canada for The Country Register

Send $3 to any publisher below to obtain a paper from another area:
* Indicates these editions are available on-line at www.countryregister.com

USA

* Arizona: Barbara Stillman and Lolly Konecky, PO Box 74035, Phoenix, AZ, 85087, 602-942-8950
* California and N. Nevada: Barbara Stillman and Lolly Konecky, PO Box 74035, Phoenix, AZ, 85071, 602-942-8950
* Colorado: Jan & Kim Keller, 11250 Glen Canyon Dr., Falcon CO 80831, 719-866-8570
* Connecticut: Dave & Amy Carter, PO Box 2419, Cumming, GA 30028, 866-825-9217
* Delaware: Merle and Gail Taylor, PO Box 320, Meridianville, AL 32759, 888-616-8319
* Florida: Dave & Amy Carter, PO Box 2419, Cumming, GA 30028, 866-825-9217
* Idaho : Kelsey Ruzicka, P.O. Box 2015, Belle Fourche, SD 57717 605-568-0181
* Indiana: Merle and Gail Taylor, PO Box 320, Meridianville, AL 32759, 888-616-8319

Iowa: Linda Glendy, P.O. Box 6, Tama, IA 52339, 641-751-2619

* Kansas: Kelsey Ruzicka, P.O. Box 2015, Belle Fourche, SD 57717 605-568-0181
* Massachusetts-RI: Dave & Amy Carter, PO Box 2419, Cumming, GA 30028, 866-825-9217

Michigan: Leslie Howell, 2875 Dunkirk Dr., Saginaw, Michigan 48603, 989-751-8860

* Minnesota: Kim & Mickey Keller, 2920 144th Ave NE, Ham Lake MN, 55304, 763-754-1661
* Montana: Kelsey Ruzicka, P.O. Box 2015, Belle Fourche, SD 57717 605-568-0181
* Nebraska: Kelsey Ruzicka, P.O. Box 2015, Belle Fourche, SD 57717 605-568-0181
* Nevada (N): Barbara Stillman and Lolly Konecky, 515 E Carefree Hwy #1128, Phoenix, AZ, 85085, 602-942-8950
* Nevada (S): Glena Dunn, 4568 Carol Circle, Las Vegas, NV, 89120, 702-523-1803
* New Jersey: Merle and Gail Taylor, PO Box 320, Meridianville, AL 32759, 888-616-8319
* New Mexico: Jan & Kim Keller, 11250 Glen Canyon Dr., Falcon CO 80831, 719-866-8570
* N. Carolina: Barbara Stillman and Lolly Konecky, PO Box 74035, Phoenix, AZ, 85087, 602-942-8950
* North Dakota: Kelsey Ruzicka, P.O. Box 2015, Belle Fourche, SD 57717 605-568-0181
* Ohio: Barb Moore, P. O. Box 37, Cable, OH, 43009, 937-652-1157
* Oregon: Kelsey Ruzicka, P.O. Box 2015, Belle Fourche, SD 57717 605-568-0181
* Pennsylvania: Merle and Gail Taylor, PO Box 320, Meridianville, AL 32759, 888-616-8319
* Rhode Island: Dave & Amy Carter, PPO Box 2419, Cumming, GA 30028, 866-825-9217
* S. Carolina: Barbara Stillman and Lolly Konecky, PO Box 74035, Phoenix, AZ, 85087 602-942-8950
* South Dakota: Kelsey Ruzicka, P.O. Box 2015, Belle Fourche, SD 57717 605-568-0181
* Virginia: Dave & Amy Carter, PO Box 2419, Cumming, GA 30028, 866-825-9217
* Washington: Kelsey Ruzicka, P.O. Box 2015, Belle Fourche, SD 57717 605-568-0181
* West Virginia: Merle and Gail Taylor, PO Box 320, Meridianville, AL 32759, 888-616-8319
* Wisconsin: Scott & Jennifer Hughes, P. O. Box 276, Altoona, WI, 54720, 715-838-9426
* Wyoming: Kelsey Ruzicka, P.O. Box 2015, Belle Fourche, SD 57717 605-568-0181

CANADA

* Alberta: Kirby & Colleen Gust, Box 801 Stn Main, White City, SK S4L 5B1, 306-585-0274
* British Columbia: Kirby & Colleen Gust, Box 801 Stn Main, White City, SK S4L 5B1, 306-585-0274
* Manitoba & Saskatchewan: Kirby & Colleen Gust, Box 801 Stn Main, White City, SK S4L 5B1, 306-585-0274
* Ontario: Harriet Ramos, 115-1803 St. Joseph Blvd. Orleans, ON K1C 6E7, 613-424-6420

THE COUNTRY REGISTER, Months of November-December
THE COUNTRY REGISTER is published every other month. Copyright 2026. Reproduction or use, without permission, of editorial or graphic content in any manner is prohibited by law. PO Box 74035, Phoenix, AZ 85087. Subscription price: 1 Year, 6 Issues, $20.00. Single copies: $3.00. The paper is furnished free to the customers at each advertiser.
THE COUNTRY REGISTER is registered as a business trade name and also a trademark in the State of Arizona.

Disclaimer

Articles published in this newspaper, which are contributed from an outside source, express the opinions of their authors only and may not express the viewpoint(s) of the management or staff of *The Country Register*. Such articles that are accepted for publication herein may be edited at the sole discretion of the publisher.

Responsibility for products advertised in this newspaper lies with the advertisers themselves. Though *The Country Register* will not knowingly publish fraudulent materials or fraudulently obtained materials, we are not liable for any damages arising from the purchase or use of products advertised herein. Notification regarding any consumer complaints related to merchandise purchased from our advertisers would be appreciated and would assist in our efforts. Copyright © 2026 by *The Country Register*, PO Box 74035, Phoenix, AZ, 85087.

Index for Nov-December 2026

Special Events 3, 5, 7-9, 12
New Bern, NC 3
Swansboro, NC • Fayetteville, NC 4
Angier, NC • Eden, NC • Wake Forest, NC • Sanford, NC 5
Professional Services 6
Charlotte, NC • Stateville, NC 7
Forest City, NC • Asheveille, NC • Valdese, NC • Asheboro, NC 8
Franklin, NC 8-9
Shelby, NBC • Weaverville, NC • Gastonia, NC 9
Tennessee 10-11
Greenville, SC • Irmo, SC 12
Gaffney, SC • Simpsonville, SC 13
Rock Hill, SC • Anderson SC 13
Charleston, SC • Summerville SC • Walterboro, SC 14
Myrtle Beach, SC • Mt. Pleasant, SC • Longs, SC 15
Giveaway 16

A Country Register Subscription Makes the Perfect Gift!

Have the Country Register delivered 6 times a year for only $20! It's a great way to show someone you are thinking of them!

Send in this form to receive each issue of...

The Country Register
Six issues mailed directly to you for only $20.00

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zip:_____

Phone:_____

This is a Gift ☐

Gift Subscription From :_____ Phone:_____

Send check or money order to:
The Country Register
PO Box 74035
Phoenix, AZ 85087

Start my subscription:
☐ Current Issue
☐

(CAR)



The Country Register has many opportunities for individuals interested in sales and publishing across the U.S. and Canada. If you are wanting to be your own boss and meet some fantastic people, give us a call -888-942-8950 or email us info@barlomedia.com to learn more!

The Country Register is a United States and Canadian network of independently owned and published specialty newspapers for the consumer who enjoys outstanding shopping, events, day & overnight excursions and specialty classes.

The Country Register provides targeted, effective, and affordable advertising for the promotion of Specialty Shops

For more information about publishing The Country Register contact Barb Stillman or Lolly Konecky at 888-942-8950 or info@barlomedia.com, www.countryregister.com

Bee by the River Quilt Show In New Bern, NC April 16 & 17, 2027

Call For Quilt Entries

The New Bern, NC, **Twin Rivers Quilters Guild's** Biennial Quilt Show will be April 16 and 17, 2027, and will be held at New Bern Riverfront Convention Center, 302 S. Front Street in New Bern, N.C. **Bee by the River** is the largest Quilt Show in Eastern North Carolina. This show will offer $5,000 in cash prizes. Non-members may enter a total of three (3) quilts in the show (limit 2 per category) and will receive one (1) complimentary admission ticket for the show. The non-refundable entry fee for non-members is $20.00 per quilt. Please visit https://www.twinriversquiltersguild.com for detailed information and entry instructions. Quilt registration deadline is February 11, 2027.

"Binding Friendships" will feature more than 300 quilts highlighting a wide variety of techniques and talents. Judging competition quilts for this show is NACQJ and NQA Certified Quilt Judge Scott Murkin, M.D. Dr. Murkin is a hospice physician from North Carolina and designs original quilts and has exhibited both nationally and internationally. He has had quilts in numerous publications including *American Quilter, Quilter's Newsletter, Quiltmaker, Quilting Quarterly* and *Great American Quilts*. He estimates he has judged 25,000 quilts in the last 20 years.

Guild members will also present a challenge quilt display with a theme symbolizing friendship and must have a unique binding. During the quilt show there will be Quilts of Valor presentations.

A variety of vendors will be available with wonderful selections of fabrics, books, patterns, and quilting tools.

Twin Rivers Quilters Guild is a nonprofit founded in 1983 that promotes and preserves quilting through education, workshops and exhibits, including its Biennial Quilt Show. The approximately 125 members also donate quilts to nursing homes, women's shelters, children's hospitals, veterans and military medevac flights.



Clutter Happens

Holiday Traditions of Love

by Julie Pirtle



As I get older, the holiday season becomes more cherished. Memories of past gatherings grow sweeter.

Anticipation of being with loved ones again grows dearer.

I think reflection this time of year is common for many. It's difficult to not think about those who are no longer with us. Their laughter and joy live in our hearts. Looking at pictures around the tree and feeling the warmth that was shared by all is palpable when thinking about their absence.

It is interesting to note that for me, most of my memories are based on the family traditions that many of those same people shared with me. The continuation of those traditions is what keeps them part of our holiday joy.

Being of Norwegian descent, I can recall numerous seasons filled with Lefsa making. (If you aren't familiar with this yummy dish, just picture a soft fluffy tortilla made with riced potatoes.)

I can see it like it was yesterday. Grandma rolling out the round dough between white floured feed sack towels and Grandpa making sure they were cooked just right. Grandma loved sharing them with us as they came off the griddle. Topped with butter and homemade raspberry jam or cinnamon and sugar, they were equally delightful.

My Great Grandmother always made simple sugar cookies with colored frosting. Her daughter (my Grandma) continued the tradition, using the same tarnished metal cookie cutters with faded green and red wood handles.

It was always exciting as a kid to see Grandma walk into the house with a box full of those cookies. Angels, trees, bells, Santa…all ready for the taking! I am delighted to say that the tradition is still carried on, even through my own daughter. Five generations of women lovingly keeping the tradition safe.

Also being of German descent, we always opened gifts for each other on Christmas Eve. However, dinner came first and it was usually a Paste (pass-tee) made with potatoes, beef, onions and pie crust. Another tradition from the Norwegian side of the family.

Paste was made in my grandmother's family back in the 20's-30's. They were poor, and it was made out of necessity. They always had flour and lard for the crust and potatoes and onions for the filling. Grandma shared that meat was a luxury and was not often included. Yet, as a modern family, we thought it was such a treat.

Stockings were always filled by Santa and dispersed on Christmas morning. It started out as something for the children but morphed over the years to include the adults in the family as well. The items in the adult stockings sometimes had a joke involved and perhaps a lottery ticket or two!

I am blessed to have many photos of Christmas past. I am most grateful for a photo we took on my brother's long second floor staircase almost three years ago. My parents are on the bottom of the stairs. Behind them are each of us kids with their spouses, children and grandchildren. All seated and smiling. It was the last picture we would be able to take like that.

I watch the next generation of our family carrying out many of the same traditions that they grew up with. It warms my heart and I am proud to have been part of the history they carry on.

With all the traditions (some conscious and perhaps just by habit), it makes me wonder who started them and why? Were they done by necessity? Do they date back further than I even realize? Sadly, the people that could help me with those questions can no longer answer.

This year as your family begins to celebrate together, take a moment to discuss the traditional things your family participates in. Ask the elders if they know more about the start of them. Take a moment to document the answers to be able to share with the generations that follow.

Life is difficult and stressful for many now. Let's all make a promise to bask in the glow of the season and the love we have for each other.

C'mon! We've got this. I know we do.

Julie Pirtle is a Professional Organizer and owner/operator of Clutter Happens in Mesa, AZ. She also works with clients nationally through Video Consultations. The Clutter-Challenged can reach her at clutterhappens@gmail.com, on Facebook:/clutterhappens or her website www.clutterhappens.com.







DesignZ by Doodle
Quilt Shop
Quilting & embroidery supplies,
machines, classes, notions, & more!
We are located at
686 W. Corbett Ave #7 Swansboro, NC 28584
910-613-0700
Store Hours:
Tuesday - Friday 10-5 • Saturday 10-4
Closed Sun & Mon
DesignZbyDoodle.com
/DesignZbyDoodleQuiltShop

Loving Stitches
Quilt Shop
Closed November 25th & 26th,
Happy Thanksgiving!
Closed December 25th & 26th,
Merry Christmas!
Closed December 31st & January 1st,
Happy New Year!
Eastern NC's Largest Quilt Shop
Convenient from I-95 Exit 58
• Authorized BERNINA Longarm Dealer
• Over 7,000 bolts of 100% cotton fabrics & batiks
• We service all brands
• Great selection of Books, Patterns, Notions & Threads
• Huge Selection of Accuquilt Accessories
made to create BERNINA accuquilt Koala
7076 Ramsey St, Fayetteville, NC
Mon-Sat 9-5
(910) 630-3912
www.lovingstitches.net

A Cup of Tea with Lydia



by Lydia E. Harris

Holiday Ginderbread Teatimes

"Run, run, as fast as you can! You can't catch me; I'm the gingerbread man!"

What could be more inviting than the spicy aroma of gingerbread baking? Since young and old savor gingerbread, let's capture the gingerbread man and plan a fun and festive holiday par-TEA or two!

Children's Gingerbread Tea

When I learned the family temporarily staying next door bought a home in my son's neighborhood, I invited them along with my son's family for a gingerbread tea party. The dads were at work and already knew each other from childhood, but the moms and five children (ages 10 to 17) came in order to get acquainted. It was a sunny day, so I hosted the tea outdoors on our deck.



The deck looked festive with red and green fabrics draped over the railing and tied with sashes. A tablecloth with gingerbread men and teapot designs offered a cheery welcome. Red plates, Christmas teacups and felt gingerbread men added to the decor.

My grandkids' new Havanese puppy, Paisley Mae, also joined the outdoor party. She made a good icebreaker for the kids as they played with her in the backyard before teatime. Then Paisley joined us on the deck in her crate.

We started our teatime with a blessing. Then we enjoyed scones and toppings, fresh fruit, strawberry soup, individual bottles of sparkling cider, and herbal tea. Our guests chose Davidson's Children's Tea, a fruity herbal blend, and my family enjoyed their usual Celestial Seasonings Country Peach Passion.



Next, it was time to decorate and nibble gingerbread cookies. I had baked our family's favorite gingerbread (recipe included). Using three different-sized cookie cutters, I made enough gingerbread people so each person could have a family: a dad, mom and two kids. Since both families have dogs, I also placed a Scottie dog (Walkers Shortbread) on each plate.

The neighbor mom brought five small piping bags of homemade cream cheese frosting—one for each child. While they expressed their creativi-TEA with the frosting and sprinkles, I read the "Gingerbread Man" tale aloud. And then, just like the story ends, soon it was "snip, snap"—and the cookies were eaten. But those that got away whole were taken home to enjoy later.

This turned out to be a fun get-acquainted teatime. My daughter-in-law emailed, "Thanks for hosting a fabulous holiday tea. It was good for the kids to meet our new neighbors!" Whether you have new neighbors or not, hosting a holiday gingerbread tea makes a fun par-TEA.

Gentleman's Gingerbread Tea

Children aren't the only ones who love tea and gingerbread. Yes, real men take tea. Sipping tea by the fire makes fall and winter days feel warm and cozy.

My husband, Milt, enjoyed his gingerbread tea as he sat in his favorite burgundy recliner in the living room. I set a wooden tray with gingerbread cake and whipped cream on his lap. He had a choice of three toppings: applesauce, apricot jam, and lemon curd. He sampled all three—but lemon was his favorite. I preferred the apricot jam for an accent. Orange marmalade would taste good too.

Apricot tea tasted just right with the gingerbread cake. If you don't have apricot tea, you could add a splash of apricot nectar to black tea. Chai tea or an orange spice tea would be delicious as well.

I often join my husband for tea. We sit on the sofa, turn on music and enjoy a lady and gentleman's tea together. When the tea and treats are gone, sweet memories linger.

Why not put on your favorite carols, brew a pot of tea and create sweet and spicy memories with gingerbread teatimes? You'll be glad you did. Merry Christmas!

Lydia E. Harris is a tea enthusiast, grandmother, and author of Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting, In the Kitchen with Grandma: Stirring Up Tasty Memories Together, *and* GRAND Moments: Devotions Inspired by Grandkids. *All are available on Amazon or can be ordered from bookstores.*

From Lydia's Recipe File: Grandma Tea's Gingerbread Cookies

Crisp, spicy, and yummy.

Cream together:
- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 1 1/2 cups sugar

Add and beat until light and fluffy:
- 1 egg

Add and mix well:
- 2 tablespoons dark corn syrup
- 1 tablespoon finely grated orange peel

Sift together and stir into creamed mixture:
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Chill dough if too soft. Roll dough 1/4-inch thick between two pieces of waxed paper. Cut into desired shapes. Place 1-inch apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes until lightly browned. Cool one minute before removing from baking sheet. Cool. Decorate, if desired. Makes 2 dozen large cookies or more if they are medium-sized or small.

Quilting & Fiber Arts Marketplace Returns to Sanford, NC January 8th & 9th

Quilters, sewists and fiber art lovers have a date to circle in the new year. The annual **Quilting & Fiber Arts Marketplace** returns to the Dennis Wicker Convention Center, 1801 Nash Street in Sanford, North Carolina, on Friday and Saturday, January 8th & 9th, 2027.

Visitors can browse more than thirty vendors, with crafters coming from North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Virginia. Dozens of beautiful vendor quilts and other creative items will be on display, so there is plenty to admire. It's a chance to meet talented artisans and discover the latest trends, techniques and tools. Also, this year, there will be an assortment of beautiful, finished quilts of different sizes and styles for sale for our non-quilter visitors.





Those who like to learn by doing will find plenty to choose from. Classes and workshops will cover sewing techniques, make-and-take projects, bag making, applique, free motion quilting and ruler work quilting. Lectures and demonstrations will tackle paper piecing and how to select the right quilting materials. New this year, a Barn Quilt making class. Registration for classes is available on the show website, www.fiberartshownc.com.

Prize hunters will want to arrive ready. Thanks to the generosity of Marketplace vendors, multiple prize drawings will take place throughout both days. Each afternoon also brings a grand prize drawing. On Friday, one lucky winner will take home a Bernette 62 Serger valued at $1,999. On Saturday, the grand prize is a Bernina 08 Sewing Machine valued at $2,499. Also, on Saturday we will give away a large vendor-donated gift basket valued at over $500! Every show ticket includes a free entry for both the daily drawings and the grand prize drawing, and attendees receive additional free drawing tickets for each class they attend. You must be present to win all grand prizes.

Planning your visit is easy. Show tickets are $6 cash at the door for one day or $10 for both days and can be purchased in advance on the website. The Wicker Center offers ample free parking, and food will be available on site for lunch, so there's no need to leave in the middle of a good day of shopping.

Whether you're a seasoned expert or a curious beginner, the **Quilting & Fiber Arts Marketplace** promises something for everyone. Come for the inspiration, stay for the classes and leave with new supplies, new ideas and maybe even a new machine.

For more information, visit www.fiberartshownc.com.











Warm Christmas Wishes

Featherweight Poppy
Singer 221 & 222K Featherweight Sales and Service
John L. Bryant • Salisbury, NC
www.featherweight-poppy.com
email: 221fwpoppy@gmail.com
Jan 8 & 9 Quilting and Fiber Art Marketplace, Sanford, NC
Jan 29 & 30 Quilting and Needle Art Extraganza, Statesville, NC

LISA ALLEY LONGARM QUILTING
Piedmont Triad
North Carolina
Hand-guided • Edge-to-edge • Pantographs
Phone: 336-309-9007 • Email: bearhugquiltworks@gmail.com
www.bearhugquiltworks.com

Studio T Quilting
PROFESSIONAL LONGARM QUILTING SERVICES
Tina Schwager
www.studiotquilting.com 919-841-1390
tina@studiotquilting.com CALL OR EMAIL FOR AN APPOINTMENT

Quilting Like Mom
Long Arm Quilting, T-Shirt and Memory Quilts,
Custom and Repair Quilts
Monroe, NC 28174 • Terry Mathieu (704)953-4603
www.quiltinglikemom.com

Storts MARKET
Pincushions • Patterns • Quilting
Charlotte Area
Longarm Quilting Services
Edge to Edge Digital Design
Free Motion Quilting
Custom Quilting
stortsmarket.com
For more information contact:
Lesley Storts
stortsmarket@gmail.com

COME SEE US AT THE QUILTING AND NEEDLE ART EXTRAVAGANZA, STATESVILLE, NC JANUARY 29 & 30, 2027
Twisted Sisters
QUILT SHOP
Find us online
www.twistedsistersquiltshop.com
Twistedsistersquiltshop@gmail.com

U Can Quilt
Quilt Kits for Busy People
Pre-measured, custom cut quilt kits ~ Designed so you can sit and sew!
Come See Us...
Quilting & Needle Art Extravaganza, January 29 & 30, 2027
Statesville Event Center, Statesville, NC
Visit our online store at www.ucanquilt.com for beautiful items
you can sew in an evening and give the next day!
Contact us at ucanquilt@gmail.com • (919) 630-8591

Martha Quilts
Long Arm Quilting, Custom & Specialty Quilts
T-Shirt and Photo Memory Quilts, Restoration & Repair of Quilts
Home 803-607-9103 • Cell 540-471-3602 • marthahuffer@live.com
Service Nationwide * Located in Sumter, SC
Martha V. Oberg

A Primitive Place Magazine
Take a Step Back in Time
Take a step back in time with A Primitive Place, where history comes alive!
Take a nostalgic journey through five beautifully decorated homes, each capturing a different style and spirit of early American life. In each issue, we feature five homes—each one filled with inspiration, history, and timeless design. Enjoy rich articles on antiques, primitive decor, and the stories that celebrate the beauty of the past.
www.aprimitiveplacemagazine.com

Those Were The Days!

Taking a Panoramic View Looking at it from a Wide-Angle Lens

by Jay Mark

Full and honest confession. From my earliest days, I have always been captivated by photography. Based on my age, which I am not revealing, I have used nearly every photographic format – from the classic Speed Graphic, to the Argus C3 35 mm camera, to the single lens reflex, to digital cameras.

For the most part, I have seen it all. Gigantic advancements and improvements. Oh, I almost forgot - the digital phone camera. Like many, I wasn't comfortable with radical changes - only to humbly and fully embrace it over time.

It's not unlike aviation. Think of it. In a century-and-a-quarter we've observed a machine that could barely hang on to a few feet above the earth, to today where a whole community it would seem, can soar through the air for endless hours from one side of the planet to the other side. Photographically, cameras have gone from cumbersome one shot at a time that had to wait for the darkroom to see what was shot. Now, we can take 100s of photos at once. And view them instantly.

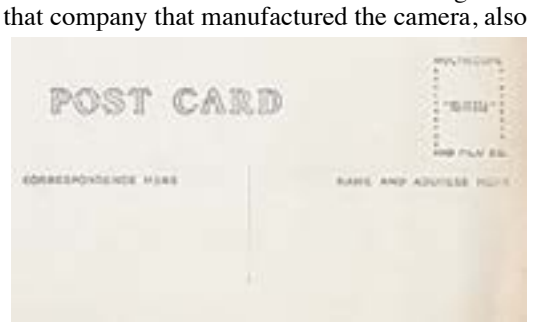
What brought all this to mind was my recent discovery of an unusually undated, panoramic photographic postcard. On its 3 ½ x11" length, are depicted 22 people that appear to be early 20th century college students. That got me thinking about the challenges early photographers faced when attempting to take wide-angle, panoramic pictures.



An odd c1908 photographic, panoramic postcard started a search for how it was made Jay Mark

Printed on the back of the card was a valuable clue as to how this remarkable image was accomplished. It reads "*o*. It told me that that company that manufactured the camera, also produced the film and paper.

In the time after George Eastman introduced his roll-film Kodak camera in 1888, amateur photography exploded. That provided opportunities to develop specialty cameras. In 1896, Peter Nickolaus Angston, a German inventor living in Burlington, Wisconsin, devised a camera with the capability of shooting 160º wide-angle, panoramic photographs.



The manufacturer's imprint, upper right, pointed to the discovery of the circa 1908 Al-Vista panorama camera that took the photo. Jay Mark

He began selling them in Chicago. But soon, his patent was purchased by four Burlington businessmen, who organized the Multiscope & Film Company that by 1901 was marketing Angston's camera under the Al-Vista name.



The ultimate Al-Vista camera was the No.5-F that featured changeable fronts, different size "fan blades" (lower center) that adjusted speed, and case.
Photo: Rob Niederman antiquewoodcameras.com

The camera was a boxy device clad in textured black leather, resembling other cameras of the day. Except where a lens, shutter and bellows would be was a large opening that featured a lens attached to a leather bellow folded into a narrow case.

When activated, the motor-driven lens would scan the image across film held across a curved back. (Animations of the process can be found on YouTube). Amateurs now had their own wide-angle camera. But at a cost. The most expensive was priced at $45 in 1908. That's over $1600 today. Nearly the cost of the new folding iPhone Duo. And other phones that have a panorama mode, which takes all the hassle out of wide-angle photography.

For a brief period, to expand the camera's use, the Multiscope and Film Co. produced a changing front camera that could replace the wide-angle format mechanism and accommodate a conventional lens and bellows. But the steep price virtually assured the camera couldn't keep up with the competition. After 17 years, the company finally folded, so to speak, leaving a unique camera in the dustbin of history.

Because of their rarity, very few Al-Vista's come on the market making their value high. Cameras in functioning condition will begin at over $1000, rising to over $2000.

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

Quilting & Needle Art Extravaganza Returns to Statesville January 29 & 30

If your idea of a perfect winter day involves fabric, thread and a little time to browse, mark your calendar. **The Quilting and Needle Art Extravaganza** takes over the Statesville Civic Center, 300 South Center Street, on Friday and Saturday, January 29 and 30, 2027.

Now in its 18th year, the show is sponsored by **The Quilter's Gallery** of Cleveland, NC, and draws quilters, knitters and stitchers from all over the Carolinas. Doors are open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days, and admission is $8.00 each day.

Everything is under one roof and this is relaxed shopping at its best. Stroll the aisles at your own pace and find fabrics, notions, wools, books, patterns, embellishments, sewing machines and long arm machines. When you need a break, food vendors and an on-site bakery offer lunch or a sweet snack. You can shop, eat, plan and create without ever leaving the building.

Studio Stitch of Greensboro will welcome you at the entrance with Bernina sewing machines, plenty of fabric and ideas to keep you busy for a while. Around the corner, Schoolhouse Quilts has the books and notions you've been wishing for. In the back corner, **The Quilter's Gallery** will have its much-loved fabric packs ready to go home with you.

Several other local quilt shops will fill their booths with fabric and notions, so there's plenty to love for anyone who enjoys time in a quilt shop. Even the smallest purchase tells your local shops that quilters need and appreciate them.

Thinking about a new sewing machine or a long arm quilting machine? Several vendors will let you "test drive" one before you decide. If you prefer something smaller, Featherweight Poppy will happily send you home with a Singer Featherweight. Other vendors will feature wool, embellishments and many more ways to spark your creativity.

Arrive early! The first 100 people through the door each morning receive two chances to win door prize drawings. A Grand Prize will also be drawn at the end of each day. You must be present to win the door prizes and Grand Prizes.

Make a day of it and round out your trip with a visit to lovely downtown Statesville, small-town America at its best. Treat yourself to a new quilting project, then head home ready to get creative in your sewing room.

For More Information, visit www.quiltersgallery.net or call **The Quilter's Gallery** at 704-376-2531 (Cindy) or 704-807-6992 (Patti).



The Sewing Machines Are Out!

by Wayne M. Bosman

The sewing machines are out! This is something that happens fitfully here. Kerri is the one who sews at our house, so when they appear, something important is afoot.

We have a lot of sewing machines. Most of them are mine, but those rarely get used. After 49 years as a mechanic, I retired- mostly. It would have been really hard after a lifetime of fixing things to just stop cold turkey.

Sewing machines are relatively light compared to cars and I can keep a whole bunch of them around without the neighbors complaining. Or more importantly perhaps without Kerri complaining. (I should put in a disclaimer here - Kerri is absolutely accommodating to my many and varied projects. She is not the complaining type. Our neighbors are nice too.)

At any rate, I found that I have an affinity for sewing machines, especially ones about my age. I seem to be a magnet for broken sewing machines that need a little TLC. I buy them, fix them and then give them away to someone who will use them. Not a very good business model, but it keeps me off the streets.

Kerri has only two sewing machines that she works with. One was her mother's Singer 401a. It is the machine she learned on. Every time she sits down to use it she remembers her mother, and it is her belief and intent that some of her mother's love goes into whatever she sews on it. The other machine was my mother's Kenmore 158. The belief is the same. Both machines give her a lot of joy when she uses them. She likes to imagine the previous owners looking over her shoulder while she makes things for the next generation.

Kerri uses sewing machines; I just fix them occasionally. She doesn't sew professionally, she makes things. It is her internal belief that taking the time to hand make something for each of the grandchildren every year lets them know that they are loved. They still get the flavor-of-the-month toy or a gift card that will let them get what they want. That is all well and good, but to make something one of a kind consciously aimed at them individually has a special meaning for her. It is love made manifest.

Of course, sometimes the handmade item will miss the mark. Children are inscrutable and constantly changing, but in the attempt a message is sent. The message goes beyond the usability of the item. The message says "I love you. I see you and am doing my best to support you from afar." If the item goes quickly to the back of the bottom drawer, as sometimes happens, so be it. The message is sent anyway.

But more often, the little handmade item gets used. The pillowcase made of fabric that has scenes of the child's favorite things ends up on the bed. The useful canvas bag that might be just the right size for taking things to the beach is exactly that. The crocheted hats and sweaters get worn and become favorites.

So, there is an excitement in the house and some anticipation as this year's Christmas gifts take shape. Kerri starts this process shortly after Christmas every year, but there is inevitably an acceleration as zero hour approaches.

There are new additions to the list of recipients and last minute inspirations as the children evolve. It is our sadness that Mom is no longer on the list. She passed last year at 104. She didn't need anything before and she definitely doesn't need anything now, at least nothing that can be made on a sewing machine.

We won't be eating at the kitchen table for a few days. Three sewing machines and tools have taken over.

Wayne M. Bosman is a retired auto mechanic living in Cape Carteret, NC.











Schoolhouse Quilts
Shay Guffey & Shawn Parker
309 Sunset Memorial Road
Forest City, NC 28043
Phone: (828)245-9774
Email: info@schoolhousequiltsnc.com
Shop our online store at:
www.schoolhousequiltsnc.com
Shop Hours
M, W, Th, F
9:00-5:00
Saturdays
9:00-2:00
Closed Sundays
& Tuesdays
HOLIDAY CLOSURES:
THANKSGIVING:
CLOSED NOVEMBER 25 - 28
CHRISTMAS:
CLOSED DECEMBER 19 - JANUARY 2
OTHER DATES: REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS UNLESS UPDATED ON ANSWERING MACHINE, WEBSITE OR FB.

Come visit our 10,000 bolts of quality quilting fabric!
Asheville Cotton Co.
1378 Hendersonville Rd Suite B ~ In Beautiful and Historic Asheville, NC
828-277-4100 ~ www.ashevillecottonco.com
Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 5:30pm
BERNINA baby lock JANOME

North Carolina Upcoming Events

Randolph Quilters Guild

"Rhapsody in Blue" 2026 Quilt Show
November 6 & 7, Fri 10am-5pm-Sat 10am-4pm
Randolph Country Senior Center
347 West Salisbury Street
Asheboro, NC 27203
Facebook: Randolph Quilters Guild

Hard Candy Christmas

A Mountain Christmas Tradition
November 27-28, 2026
Friday-Saturday – 10am -5pm
Robert Carpenter Activities Center
1288 Georgia Road, Franklin, NC
Admission $5, Children under 12 Free
For more information visit:
www,MountainArtisans.net

Hard Candy Christmas Show Moves to Franklin, N.C. Nov 27 & 28

A beloved holiday tradition is getting a fresh start in a new town. The **39th Annual Mountain Artisans "Hard Candy Arts & Crafts Christmas Show"** comes to Franklin, N.C. on Friday, Nov. 27, and Saturday, Nov. 28, at the Robert C. Carpenter Activities Center, 1288 Georgia Rd. Shoppers will find original art and crafts at fantastic prices.

This year's featured artist is Betty Hall Spivey, a Georgia artist known for her handcrafted Old World Santas. For 25 years, she has been capturing the charm of Christmas with collectors.

Visitors can also watch two artisans at work. Heather Seaman of Arden, N.C., will demonstrate pine needle basket making, a vanishing craft. Marty Cabe of Macon County will bring his fresh Christmas wreaths and swags and make them as guests watch. Shoppers can choose favorite additions like holly, creeping pine, boxwood and other mountain "finds." Kept cool, the wreaths will last throughout the winter.

Sixty other local and regional artisans will fill the show with handwork in clay, glass, rustic woodcraft and holiday quilts, along with heirloom ornaments and more. Sourwood honey will be on hand too, a perfect mountain take-home.

Ronnie Evans, a solo guitarist and author from Franklin, is retiring this year. He has recorded background music for the show and will autograph his novels.

Hard Candy Christmas runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Admission is $5 for adults, and children under 12 get in free. Concessions are available, and parking is free. **Mountain Artisans'** shows give customers and artisans a place to meet, with amazing collections all under one roof. To learn more, visit mountainartisans.net or call show producer Doris Hunter at 828-524-3405.

Franklin, N.C., in Macon County, is known for its gem mines and beautiful scenery. It is 40 miles from the Cherokee Nation and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Franklin Chamber of Commerce can help plan your visit at franklin-chamber.com or call 866-372-5546.





Blessings

by Deb Heatherly

Unexpected blessings come in many shapes and forms; we just need to look. A beautiful cardinal appearing on a particularly gray day, a lone flower blooming between the cracks in the pavement, a phone call from someone you have not heard from in a long time or a mother bird teaching her little ones to fly. In my case, it's an orange cat named Timmy.

I have written about my Timmy in previous articles but when I think of unexpected blessing, he is the top of my list. From a stray, aloof, long eared creature whose ears I first mistook for orange blooms in the middle of my daffodils, to the funny guy who now loves belly rubs and snuggles. Timmy has taught me to slow down and see the wonder in everyday things. At this time of year, he is enthralled with falling leaves, acorns and any flying bug. He approaches each and every item as if it is the most wonderful thing ever created.



This in turn makes me look at those things a little closer. His wonderment makes me smile at the simplest of things. Yesterday it was the red on a leaf that might be the perfect shade for my next project. For him it was a great leaf to swat and pounce on. Last week it was the unique shape of an acorn that made my mind think about a wonderful applique design. To him this acorn was great for a game of 'how far it can roll.' Even the way he stretches up to 'show me' how to open the studio door when he wants to go out or attempts to tell me about his day, with his unique squeaky meows, make my heart swell. Each day he shows me that many of the things in my hurry-up world that are so often overlooked, are things I should stop, observe and appreciate.

Timmy also brings me 'presents' and I realize they are his way of showing gratitude for the home he now has. Some of these make me smile. Others, not so much. But there too, showing appreciation is something we all need to remember to do. For him, gone are the days of wondering where his next meal will come from or the need to search for a safe place to sleep each night. He is now king of his domain, (my studio) and makes my heart happy by simply being himself. Although I think I rescued him, I sometimes wonder if he was sent to teach me to look at the world in a different way.

In this time of hustle and bustle, maybe we all need to be more like Timmy. Could we be an unexpected blessing? Timmy has reminded me that it does not have to be something big to make an impact. A simple phone call could make the difference to someone feeling lonely. Maybe it could be cooking a little extra and taking a meal to a friend who needs to know you care? What about offering the gift of service such as raking leaves or doing yard work for someone who can no longer do those things themselves? Perhaps you could spend time at your local shelter volunteering to walk the dogs or socialize with the kitties. To the overworked staff your time would make you an angel in their eyes. Even something as simple as spending time over coffee and cookies can truly brighten someone's day.

I will leave you with this thought. In this busy holiday season, take time to ponder how you can be an unexpected blessing. Maybe it's time for us all to think and be more like an orange cat named Timmy. Slow down, enjoy the little things and make someone smile.

NOTE: As I wrote this article, I did so with the studio door wide open to enjoy the beautiful weather. I heard Timmy coming with his 'I'm bringing you something' meow and was too slow to close the door. Timmy's gift today was chipmunk. He carried it like a mother cat carries her kittens and it was not harmed in the least, which was obvious as it scurried under the shelf in the studio. I think Timmy thought I was working too hard and needed to play. Needless to say, work stopped and finding this 'present' took precedence. Not what I had on today's agenda but Timmy always seems to have a plan. Maybe it was time for a break.

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.Debscatsnquilts.com.

Free Pattern

For more fun and creative inspiration visit:
www.JacquelynneSteves.com

Jacquelynne Steves
THE ART OF HOME



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.

a Stitch in Time
QUILT • SEW • CREATE
Your Creative Sewing Center and Quilt Shop
23 Macon Center Dr., Franklin, NC 28734
828-524-3300
Hours: Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-3pm
www.astitchintimenc.com
baby lock
FOR THE LOVE OF SEWING
WWW.BABYLOCK.COM
/AStitchInTimeNC

SANDY'S
COUNTRY CHRISTMAS CRAFTS & VARIETY
2536 W. Dixon Blvd., Shelby, NC 28152
704-471-0015
OPEN ALL YEAR
Monday-Saturday 9 am – 6 pm • Closed on Sundays
November thru Christmas 9 am -9 pm

5 LITTLE MONKEYS
QUILT & SEW
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA'S PREMIER FABRIC STORE
We are still here! We moved upstairs!
32 N. MAIN STREET, WEAVERVILLE, NC 28787 Entrance on 3 Florida Ave
828-484-7200
FIVEMONKEYQUILTS.COM
Open Tuesday-Saturday 10:30-5
Quilt Sampler TOP SHOP



CHARLOTTE QUILTERS' GUILD PROUDLY PRESENTS
CAROLINA LILY QUILT SHOW
Locally crafted quilts on display
Vote for viewer's choice
Local & regional vendors
Raffles & prizes
Member boutique with hand-made items
2027 Opportunity quilt raffle
Demonstrations by expert quilters
9A-5P: FRIDAY APRIL 2 + SATURDAY, APRIL 3
Handicap Accessable & Free Parking
GASTONIA CONFERENCE CENTER
145 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR WAY
GASTONIA, NC 28052
ADMISSION - $10 | STUDENTS AGE 11-17 - $7 | CHILDREN 10 + UNDER - FREE | CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED
Find us on Facebook or online at:
www.CharlotteQuiltersGuild.org

Art of Sewing

111 Jack White Drive, Suite 7
Kingsport, TN 37664
423-246-4520

Artofsewingtri.com



The Staff of the Art of Sewing would like to welcome the NEW ADDITION to our Longarm Quilting Machine Dealership family - the INNOVA Longarm Quilting and Embroidery Machine!

INNOVA has long been recognized as one of the TOP COMMERCIAL GRADE Longarm Quilting Machines for the home quilting business and with the addition of F.T.E. embroidery software the only Longarm that will quilt and do multicolor embroidery designs while the quilt is loaded on the frame!! The machine, frame, electronics, motors, etc. are ALL-AMERICAN made and assembled in Montgomery, Texas.

The Art of Sewing will become a FULL-SERVICE dealership offering, service, frame and component assembly as well as Innova Customer Training in-home as well as IN DEPTH training in our store in Kingsport, TN

Please visit www.innovaquilting.com or www.artofsewingtri.com for more information.

Tennessee Quilts

Over 8,000 Bolts
Large selection of Kaffe Fassett fabrics and Batiks
24-hour ONLINE shopping

February Hill Retreat House





"Arcadia" - Kaffe Fassett Kumon Glass - Available January 2017 - Pre-order available online.

Niemeyer Technique of the Month Carnival Flower Fabric Pack available

Featured in QuiltFolk Issue #4 October 2017 Quilt Sampler 2011 Top Ten Shop!



Our Retreat House

Accommodating up to12 guests, the Retreat is housed in a beautifullyrestored 1832 residence located on a 4-acre city block inthe historic district of Jonesborough, Tennessee.

- 1,000 Square Foot Sewing Studio
- Five Bedrooms, Five Baths
- Fully Equipped Gourmet Kitchen
- Large Dining Room
- Plenty of Porches and Outdoor Spaces



423-753-6644 Toll-free 877-385-0934
tennesseequilts.com 114 Boone St., Jonesborough, TN

Ann's Lovin' Ewe

A Russian Love Story from a Century Ago

by Ann Stewart

My grandparents never kissed until their engagement. What a love story for Valentine's Day!

In 1922, two German Mennonites met in a Bible School in Tschongraw Crimea. My grandmother, Lena Martens, stepped off the train from Orenburg over 1500 miles away only to discover her luggage had been stolen enroute and she would have to attend classes each day in the same brown dress that she'd wash once a week.

She wasn't interested in showing off. Besides, the school frowned on romantic distractions. She hadn't planned on getting married; she'd already helped raise her ten younger siblings, recently fought a battle with typhoid fever and lost her hair, then lost her young father and two little sisters. She would focus on the education she'd so longed for.

Nikolai Siemens, on the other hand, had purchased gold rings before he had even set eyes on Lena Martens. When Nikolai met the sweet girl with a heart-shaped face framed by short red curly hair, he began hoping the ring belonged to her.

But how could Nikolai possibly discover if Lena had a love interest back in her little village of Rodnitschnoje #10? The school had rules: no dating, no marriage, and there must always be six eyes in a room when there were two persons of the opposite sex. In other words, he could never ask her a personal question without someone else listening in.

Nikolai soon solved that problem by bringing his two-year-old niece to Lena's door to witness his odd question, "Is there somebody special back in Orenburg?"

But was this God's will? Nikolai wondered. One day when he saw Lena in the hallway struggling to unlock her door, Nikolai prayed, "Lord if I am to marry her, may I unlock the door." When she handed him the key, he inserted it in the lock, and the door sprung open. She was unaware why he almost skipped down the hall.

He had her ring; but did it fit? When he showed it to his sister, she slipped it on her finger and headed out to visit Lena. "Do you want to try on my ring?" she asked Lena. Ironically, the ring was a perfect fit.

But Lena would never wear it. Stalin had other plans and closed the Bible School and arrested the professors. To release the teachers from prison in Simferopol, students pooled their money, and Nicolai sold the two gold rings.

That summer Lena toiled on the threshing floor in Nikolai's village. As foreman, Nikolai kept an eye on her and asked if she would meet him that evening on the path behind the farms. Though they'd never spent time together alone, she had listened to Nikolai's preaching, sung under his direction, and learned much about him in her two years of Bible School. She wasn't surprised when he took her hand and asked, "Would you take this hand for life?"

She had no idea what was coming. That five years later they would have to flee Crimea and end up trapped in Moscow with Stalin threatening deportation. That her husband would be jailed in Lubjanka and that she'd hide out in a mother/baby home until her third child was born. That she would escape Moscow but would be forced to leave behind a toddler in Crimea. That two years later she would be reunited with her five-year-old first-born.

Or that fifty years later her seven children and twelve grandchildren would gather on their homestead in Blaine, Washington for a family reunion to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary. And that at the church ceremony, their simple love story would be told and the congregation learned why Nikolai and Lena had never worn wedding bands.



And she couldn't know that her children and grandchildren believed in this love story. To celebrate and honor it, they surprised Nicolai and Lena with two golden rings. Two golden rings for the two hands that went through life empty, and two hearts that were full.

Ann Marie Stewart's novel, The Remnants: One Family's Escape from Stalin's Russia, *is out now. To learn more, go to her website and check out the Book Trailer: www.AnnMarieStewart.com. If that's a book that resonates with you, please consider purchasing it on Amazon. Sign up for her newsletter for updates: AnnMarieStewart.com*

C 2026 All Rights Reserved



Advertise your Tennessee Business or Community Events in the January-February Country Register.

As folks travel, they want to know about the FUN SHOPS TO VISIT and EVENTS HAPPENING in Tennessee.
Make your area a destination spot for The Country Register readers to visit!
Call The Country Register – 888-942-8950
Or email: Carolinas@barlomedia.com

Become Inspired

Anticipating the Wonder of the Holiday Season

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

Often one of the most anticipated times of the year, the holiday season is filled with plentiful opportunities to create spaces that welcome and inspire. With themed gatherings planned for family and friends, we often feel a great sense of anticipation to share our creativity and to beautifully transform our homes to suit the season of celebration.

Charming Authenticity



In order to design a seasonal space, we can often use some of our favorite classic antiques accented by elements of nature to surround us with charming authenticity. An antique lift-top mule chest in early red paint can be heightened and enhanced by stacking a smaller antique box in blue on top. Nestling boughs of evergreen between a primitive trencher and a blue decorated stoneware jug adds a balancing touch of nature to our vignette.

Antique sleds that radiantly reveal their use from age can be adorned with a spray of fresh hemlock, red berries and twinkling white lights to brighten the corner of the hearth. Centerpieces created by using a large, divided carrier filled with greens and cones can feature a glass chimney to hold an antique hogscraper or one of our favorite scented country candles like "Orange Clove Pomander" or "Balsam Christmastide."

Early punched tin lighting that has come to represent tradition and comfort can be used to cast the beautiful play of light it was intended to create. Petite cedar trees in various sizes can be placed in crocks, firkins, early kegs or baskets to enliven a seating area or even brighten a country bathroom. Handmade country stockings fashioned from woven coverlets in bright red can be filled with greens and hung on our mantel or an interior door to add texture and color to our rooms.

Embracing the Magic

One of the blessings of the holidays is planning a festive night out with friends to take in the sights and sounds of Christmas. Main streets of small towns become magical and unusually alive on an Open House Night when storefront windows gleam with the glow of Christmas. Through the front windows we can see freshly decorated inviting displays of antiques, textiles, scented candles and decorations that deeply appeal to our country style. As we enter these local shops the music of the dulcimer plays traditional tunes while we take in a cup of hot mulled cider while we browse. We know that the hand-selected purchases we make are even more special because they are local and support the shops that provide us with a sense of genuine connection.

After finding the perfect treasures to give as gifts or the ideal antique to enhance our displays, we can visit a local restaurant that promises to be a memorable part of our night. Taking time to plan a festive, local night out is time well-spent as we share in the abundant blessings of giving.

This season, enjoy the anticipation of creating magic. Transform your home to include the splendor of a country Christmas. Spend a treasured evening with friends embracing the sense of wonder that this spectacular season always brings.

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



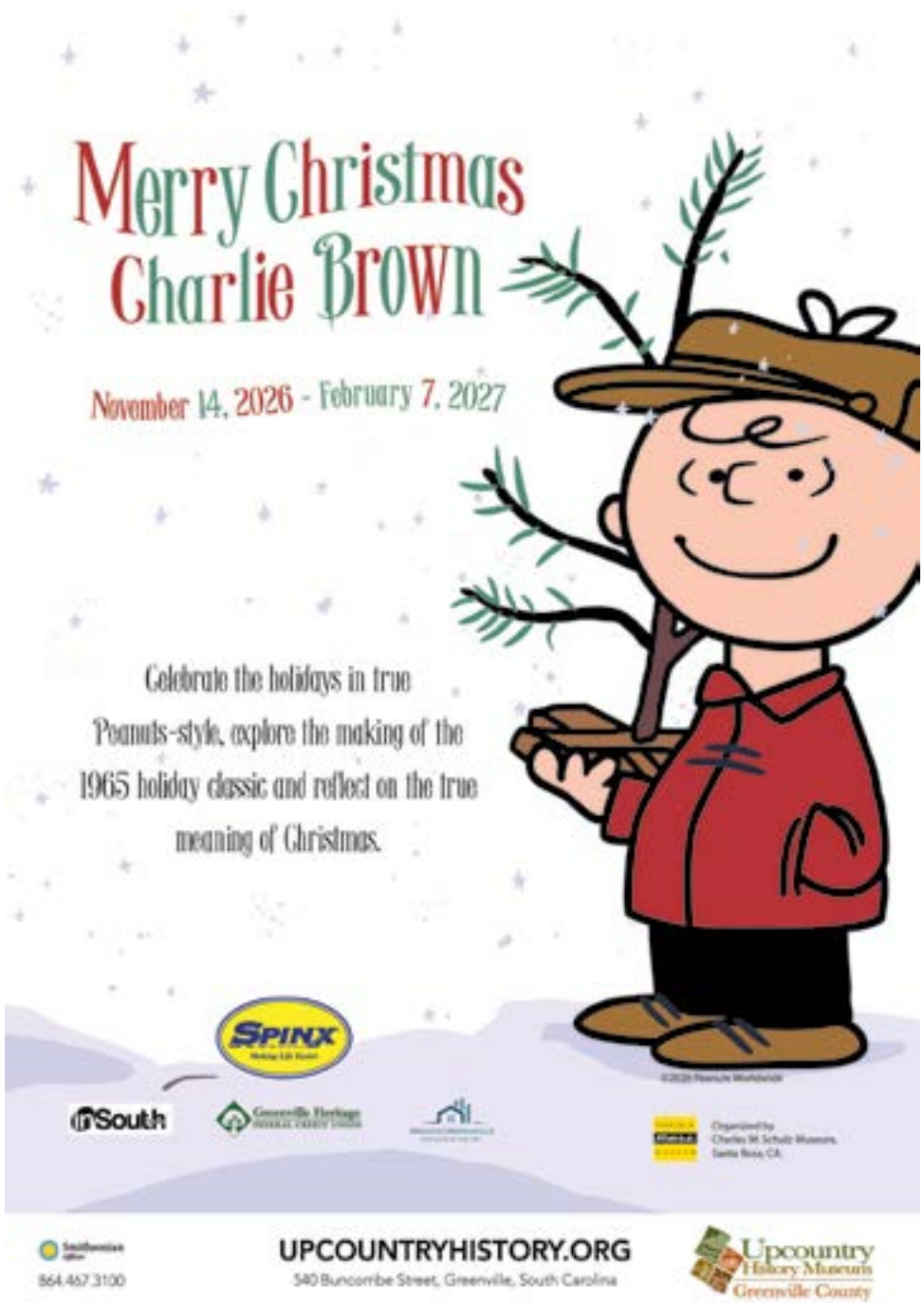














The Holiday Hustle

by Barbara Kalkis

There is no season more intense than the final 92 days of the year. Surely, no one escapes the speed with which the days fly by, like geese honking farewell as they race toward warm weather.

Businesses understand the fourth quarter (Q4) months are the final push to lure customers, raise annual sales, and post earnings revenue "in the black". Artisans ***know*** these days culminate a year of sewing, painting, quilting, knitting, crocheting, making, baking, creating the unique items they will sell before December 31st.

The last quarter begins with sunflower bouquets and brightly colored leaves, corn stalks and pumpkins, craft fairs and harvest festivals. We then pivot to Jack O'Lanterns, ghosts, witches, black cats, scarecrows and Halloween treats for one fun-filled night. The next day, everything orange and black is tossed back into storage to make way for Thanksgiving. Pumpkins lose their scary smiling faces and become fancy décor items in shades of white, sedate sage and – aptly named – pumpkin orange. To live the moment to the max, decorations set the scene for traditional turkey dinner with all the trimmings of stuffing, sweet potatoes, corn, green beans, cranberry sauce – whole or jellied and – what else? Pies! With leftovers stored, we take advantage of Black Friday sales. And that begins the final seasonal crunch.

Our homes become the setting for poinsettias, wreaths, bayberry candles, greeting cards and photos (if one is fortunate), train sets, gaily wrapped secret packages, outdoor light displays and the tree in a place of honor, glittering with decorations.

I think we cram the most energy and effort into making this fourth season memorable. Every one of our five senses seems to be heightened: ***feeling*** the morning chill, ***smelling*** pine-scented trees and wreaths, ***gobbling*** down fresh-baked cookies and milk, ***seeing*** homes sparkle with decorations, ***listening*** to holiday music.

I believe in a sixth sense that is our ***emotions***. When I recall Christmases growing up. I think of our family adventure of driving to a farm to find our pine tree. We would jauntily set off in the snow to find the perfect tree. The "winner" had to be approved by all, so this process was time-consuming. Too small. Too tall. Too skinny. Too "fat" for my father's flimsy saw. Too "bushy" for my mother's dangling ornaments. Too full to push through the kitchen door.

After a thorough search of the woods, we would find the winner. Primarily, because we were all exhausted from trudging through the snow and were as cold as popsicles. Finding our way back to the barn – which some years seemed to an iffy thing (my parents were city people) – we slogged into the barn and rushed to warm ourselves with cocoa and hot apple cider. Satisfied that the main seasonal purchase was accomplished, we'd arrive home to waiting lights and a warming fire.

It's easy to romanticize these last days of the year, but they are truly memorable. In all other seasons, there are special holidays, but those last 92 days cram the most work, memories, emotions, scents and feelings of putting an imaginary "bow" on the gift that is life.

When I was young, I used to stand at my bedroom window and look out into the night, trying to spot Santa Claus entering the neighborhood. Now I stand at my window and look out at the black night and feel the contentment of a year that delivered all kinds of events, but which ended once again in the gift that Life gives us every day. However, you have raced from Autumn to Halloween to Thanksgiving to Christmas to the New Year, Celebrate!

©Barbara Kalkis, 2026. Barbara is a marketing consultant, teacher, and author of "Little Ditties for Every Day: A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm." Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.





The Amish Quilt Gathering

by Shelby Kottemann

I have Amish friends. They're lovely people who, without the allure of modern technology, know how to hold a long and easy conversation, be present and write longhand letters. With them, I've helped watch the children, make homemade noodles and even do laundry the old fashioned way. But what I want to share with you is the time I got to sit in on an Amish quilt gathering.

When I walked in, the home was filled with quiet conversation. The young girls all socialized around the kitchen table while every woman had a seat around the quilt, placing hand stitches with ease. Classic Amish colors of blue, green and black splayed out over the wooden quilt frame in an intricate formation.

When finished, this quilt was going to be auctioned to help pay a family's medical bills in the community.

After some time, one of the girls named Verna, hurried over to her mother, quietly whispering in her ear. Katie stood up, looked out the window and back at the group. All of the animals were out of the barn! The women all stood and peered through the windows out into the field. One horse, two pigs, three cows, four goats and one worried dog were out there grazing and wandering. As the girls ran out to fetch them, the creatures scattered. Chaos ensued. Even the farm dog didn't know what to do.

But along came one of the husbands. His buggy came to a stop in the distance, down the road and we watched him calmly walk out into the pasture toward the horse. The horse didn't run. The husband took the horse by a lead and slowly walked it toward the barn. To my amazement, every species of farm animal followed suit. What a sight! Walking in a line, like kids in a school, came one horse, two pigs, three cows and four goats, in no particular order. Peace was restored on the farm. The women and girls went back inside as I looked on in wonder. All the other animals trusted and followed the horse's lead! I'll never forget it. As for the husband who came home early to see the chaos, you could say he was in stitches!

Shelby Kottemann is an author, teacher, and intuitive counselor. To read her sentimental blog or explore her heart-centered energy work, visit www.inlovesnature.com

KISSed Quilts

Coral Carnival - 2nd Signature Collection

by Marlene Oddie

So honored to be asked to select another signature collection with Island Batik/Lumin Fabrics. This very colorful collection takes inspiration from a carnival by the sea. I grew up on the Monterey Bay and there is an amusement park in Santa Cruz, California. As I considered patterns to feature the collection, these were the types of images that inspired me. Here are the five designs I put together with the collection.

(l-r: Aquarium, Dangling Diamonds, Coral School, Sea Dance and Carnival BOM).



Aquarium is 2.5" strip and 5" stamp friendly, uses the Accuquilt Sea Life Medley Die to create the applique shapes and embroidery designs and Wonderfil's Instant Applique made it super simple to position. Dangling Diamonds is 10" stack friendly and uses the Boondoggle Rulers. Coral School uses the EZPiecing leave-in foundations, simplifying this detailed block piecing. Sea Dance is a fun variation of a snail-trail block. Carnival BOM is a 10 step pattern –pre-order it now to start in January 2027. Find these patterns, pre-cuts and kits on my website.

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.



Life in Skunk Hollow

The Day That Frosty Melted

by Julie A. Druck

This week I undid the house of all its holiday finery and put the Christmas decorations away for another year. That is all except Frosty. I have a vintage plastic blow mold Frosty decoration from the '50s. Every year for decades he stood sentinel next to the front door of my grandparents' home. As a little girl I often had a Christmas picture taken next to him. When my grandfather died 13 years ago, I inherited Frosty and he has proudly stood sentinel on MY front porch for those years. But alas, Frosty has begun to melt.



I noticed how bad he was last night. We had an extremely windy day, and Frosty had blown over. When I went to set him back up, I saw what I have been unwilling to acknowledge for the last several years. Frosty's base was becoming more and more brittle and cracked. My husband has been telling me for a while that Frosty's time has come, but I didn't want to hear it. Last night, I couldn't deny the truth.

It sounds crazy that I'm mourning the loss of a Christmas decoration. But, in my mind, Frosty represents something much more intangible than a hunk of plastic. I lived with my grandparents for three years as a little girl and then for another ten years right next door to them. Their home was a haven of comfort and peace and joy to me. Every day was a holiday with my grandmother. Our supper table always looked like a lay-out from a vintage women's magazine – deliciousness and simple beauty were always on the menu. And when any holiday rolled around, my grandmother went full tilt into making it special in every way. As for my grandfather, he was a bright beacon of warm light who loved me – not for what I did or didn't do – but simply because I was his Julie.

So, you see, in my mind, Frosty is a symbol of all the love and joy I received in my grandparents' home. But as I set Frosty upright again, I knew it was time to say goodbye. I went in and tearfully told my husband that Frosty could go with three stipulations: that he would take one last photo of me with my snowman, that he would dispose of the remains without telling me how or when or where he did it and that he would remove Frosty's little metal shovel and save it for me as a keepsake.



As I contemplated my decision further, I realized that just because Frosty goes, doesn't mean that the memories he represents have to go. I still hold all the dearness and love of my grandparents in my heart that I can access at any time. And so, though Frosty won't be back again someday, he, and all that he stands for, will forever hold a warm place in my heart.

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

SEWEndipitous
Where Unexpected Happiness Is Found In Every Stitch!
1093A Albright Road
Rock Hill SC 29730
(803) 366-1100
SewEndipitous.com
Handi Quilter KANGAROO arrow
Husqvarna VIKING
Tues-Fri 10 AM-5 PM
Sat 10 AM-3 PM

Marietta's QUILT & SEW EST. 2009
Marietta's Quilt & Sew
3421 N. Industrial Drive Simpsonville, SC 29681
mariettasquiltandsew.com
864-962-5353
Now featuring Art Gallery, Ruby Star & Tilda fabrics
JANOME Grace COMPANY Husqvarna VIKING
baby lock Koala studios ARROW
Regular Shop Hours:
Mon.-Fri. 10-5:30; Sat. 10-4; Sun. Closed

Quilting Sew Easy
D. B. A. Ann's Quilt Store
1231 N. Limestone Street Gaffney, SC 29340 864.649.1313
www.AnnsQuiltStore.com
Store Hours: M, T, W, F 10am-4pm | Sat 10am-2pm | Th & Sun closed
Quilting Notions | Long Arm Services | Classes | Fabrics
Handi Quilter
Designed by a Quilter, for Quilters
Quilting Sew Easy

The Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail
UHQT Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail
A self-guided tour that invites you to explore the history of quilting in the Upstate Counties of South Carolina
Guided Tour Information or Other General Inquiries,
Contact Us at: 1.864.723.6603 email: info@uhqt.org uhqt.org
Facebook: /Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail
Funded through the City of Anderson, and the Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens Counties ATAX Commissions









Building Harmony

Christmas '26: The Big Show

by Jeff Cappis

There is nothing like children at Christmas is there? Most of us were kids once so we recognize the wonder in their eyes.

My neighbor Ned has four of the cutest children you've ever met. Three girls and a boy. The oldest, Mandy is five and a half. She's followed by Sandy and Candy. The boy, Randy, is the youngest at two and a half years. Ned and his wife Wendy seem to crank them out like clockwork. They may be a little lazy when it comes to naming their children, but they really are good parents.

Last Christmas they decided to make a video for the children's grandparents and it was a success. They sang "Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer" as they danced around each other and did a little skit. At the very end Randy sang the high note for the big finish. Cute as heck.

Ned wondered why stop there. So, he taught. them "Jingle Bells." Again, they danced around each other and Randy hit the last high note. They were naturals, and when it comes to his children, Ned is a proud father.

One day he met his neighbor Renee on the road and they both stopped to have a friendly chat. Renee asked Ned about his children. Ned beamed and talked about how talented they are. He even showed Renee the video of them singing on his cel phone.

Renee thought they were cute as the dickens. "You know," he said to Ned, "There are a few of us on our road who have nothing to do this Christmas Eve. I was going to have them over for some Christmas cheer. Do you think the kids could do their songs?"

"Sure," Ned smiled. "That would be fun." And so, it began. Ned's children were sort of "booked" for Christmas Eve. Ned even taught them to sing "Silent night" in case everyone liked hearing the first two. They were great. Ned even recorded them and put the videos up on his internet page.

For his part, Renee went about inviting a few of the neighbors and even told them about Ned's kids. He got a great reaction and word started to spread up and down the road about the kids and this party. Renee was pleased. He's a neighborly guy so more's the merrier. Meanwhile, Ned's videos went viral in the neighborhood.

A few neighbors asked to bring their own children so Renee got the idea they could hand out presents to the kids as well. Better yet- he could be Santa Clause! (It's important to note that Renee is a six-foot-three, sturdily built man and an ex-French air force pilot with blue eyes and an accent).



Renee's small get together of about 6 people grew to a Christmas party of 40 people and he was beginning to wonder if they would fit in his house. When another 5 people asked to come, he booked the old fire hall down the road. Now this was becoming a community party and everyone wanted to see these cute kids perform their Christmas songs.

Ned was thrilled. The kids made a game of it and practiced singing their three songs over and over. They got it down perfectly. Ned even made some paper cut out Christmas trees to hang as a backdrop. Wendy made them some simple costumes. Mandy wanted to be a duck; Sandy was a kitty; Candy was an elf; and Randy wanted to be a dinosaur. (Wendy actually made him a puppy costume, but she told him it was a dinosaur. He couldn't tell the difference).

Renee decided to build a small stage so everyone could see the kids. Then he hung a couple of sheets for curtains. One of the neighbors, Stanley, offered to do a little juggling as a warm up act. Everything was set.

On Christmas Eve at precisely 6:00, the doors opened and people began coming in. The fire hall was warm and comfortable. Earlier Renee had laid out a table with coffee, cookies and juices. At this moment though, he was dressed as Santa sitting on a chair in the corner with a small pile of presents. Waiting for the first child.

The rest of us were milling around getting caught up with our friends. It was a very good time. Most of us hadn't talked in months or even years.

Renee got his first child. They put little Jimmy on his right knee. "What's your name?." Jimmy smiled then peed on his leg. Renee gave him a present and handed him back to his mother.

Behind the sheets Ned was putting up the paper cut out Christmas trees while Wendy put the costumes on the kids. They were excited. Randy stomped around like a dinosaur. Stanley had gathered up his rubber juggling balls and was waiting off stage.

After Renee tried drying his pant leg, he sat back down and motioned for the next child. Little Emily. She was two. "Ho, ho, ho. What would you like for Christmas little Emily?" Emily looked up at him with her big blue eyes and threw up in his beard.

Seeing this from across the room, I commented to my wife Cathy that Renee didn't look like he was having a good time. Behind the curtain Ned and company were almost set. Stanley had a drink while he waited. By now we were all into the Christmas cheer.

Again, Renee sat down (without his beard) and motioned for the next child. His name was Timmy. Timmy was four. Timmy had a cold. They put him down on Renee's left knee. "I see you've been a good boy this year Timmy," he said as he handed Timmy a present. Timmy sneezed in Renee's unbearded face. Renee looked at his assistant. "Jeez! How many more kids have we got?"

It was finally show time. The lights went low throughout the community hall except for the small stage with the sheet curtains. Renee stood in front of the stage (without his pants and beard) and introduced Stan the juggling man.

Stan took to the little bit of stage he had in front of the sheets. The space was tight and his juggling was off. Every third rubber ball bounced into the audience. Every time someone would toss it back. This really messed up his routine. Eventually someone tossed the ball back and beaned him right on the forehead. He fell off the stage. The sheets behind him came down revealing the kids.

A duck, a kitty, an elf and a dog who thinks he's a dinosaur.

The girls were okay and began their song and dance. They were in their glory. Randy though, (who'd never seen so many people) got stiff. He stuck his finger up his nose and put his thumb in his mouth. Then he just stared at the audience.

They got through "Rudolf" okay. The girls were having a great time. They kind of forgot the words sometimes and invented a new key but everybody clapped. Then came "Jingle Bells." Much the same but even more adorable. Finally, "Silent Night."

The girls held hands and sang it in the nicest voices they had. At one point Candy got tangled in the sheets and fell down. The other two danced around her. Smart phones were recording everywhere. We were touched.

When it came to the big finish, Randy pulled his finger out of his nose and gave off what can only be described as- a banshee scream. It even startled Randy. His finger went back up his nose, just as the paper Christmas trees peeled off the wall behind him.

The stage lights went down and the house lights came up. The kids got a standing ovation on a somewhat unforgettable Christmas Eve. Ned and Wendy were the proudest of all.

Renee changed his clothes.

There is nothing like children at Christmas is there? May the child in you will always treasure the season. Merry Christmas from Harmony Acres.

© Jeff Cappis 2026 jcappis@telus.net

Giveaway Winners Announced
Enter This Issue's Giveaway!

Congratulations to Leanne Altman of Murrells Inlet, SC, our lucky winner from the September–October issue!

Leanne will enjoy a $25 gift certificate to spend at her favorite *Country Register* advertiser, **Quilting at the Beach** in Myrtle Beach, SC. Leanne told us, "The shop has the greatest select. Ms Judy & Ms Anna have hearts of gold being so helpful!"

We have several winners for the Southern Christmas Show and the Carolinas Renaissance Festival. Tickets will be sent out to each of the winners. Congratulations, we hope you enjoy the events!

We love hearing how our readers use *The Country Register* to discover great shops, unique finds, and special events. There's another $25 gift certificate giveaway in this issue—so enter today and tell us where you like to shop!

Don't forget to take a copy along when you travel around North & South Carolinas and Tennessee this holiday season. Happy exploring! We wish everyone joyous and safe holidays and a very Happy New Year!



The Myth of the Perfect First Quilt

by Steve Baker

There is a quiet little myth that follows a lot of beginner quilters into the sewing room. It says your first quilt should be beautiful. It says your seams should line up, your points should behave, your borders should lie flat, your binding should turn the corners perfectly, and the finished quilt should look like something worthy of a magazine photo. Goodness, that is a lot to ask from a first quilt!

Your first quilt is not supposed to be a masterpiece. It is supposed to be a beginning. It is where your hands learn what your eyes have been admiring. It is where fabric stops being pretty folded yardage and becomes something you cut, stitched, pressed, trimmed, layered, quilted, and finished. That matters.

It is easy to compare your first quilt to the beautiful quilts you see online, at quilt shows, in shops, or in the hands of makers who have been quilting for decades. But those quilts carry years of practice, mistakes, lessons, shortcuts, tools, and experience.

Your first quilt carries something different. It carries courage. It carries the moment you decide to try. And it carries every little pause where you wondered, "Am I doing this right?" and kept going anyway. Your first quilt is not a final exam. It is a teacher.

It will teach you things no video, pattern, or tutorial can fully explain until the learning moves through your own hands. You will discover how fabric shifts while you sew, why a consistent quarter-inch seam matters, and what pressing can do for a block. You will learn that accurate cutting matters, but so does relaxing your shoulders and giving yourself permission to be new.

Some of those lessons will arrive disguised as mistakes, and no, you won't like those parts. A seam may not line up. A point may disappear. One block may somehow end up smaller than all the others. Your quilting stitches may wander. Your binding corner may look less like a miter and more like a tiny fabric argument. That does not mean you are bad at quilting. It means you are quilting.

I will be honest. As a bit of a perfectionist, making my first quilt was an exciting undertaking, but it was also a humbling reminder that learning a new skill can be far more frustrating than I care to admit.

There was a great deal of self-talk happening that people do not usually share. I congratulated myself on the wins when the points aligned, but when they did not, I could be brutal, degrading, and downright punishing with myself. I was arguing with myself instead of being the patient teacher and willing learner I would have been for someone else. That was not fair to me.

Somewhere along the way, I realized I was learning more than how to make a quilt. I was learning how to give myself grace, which may have been the most important lesson of all.

Looking back, I also understand that every mistake taught me why the proper techniques matter. Without those mistakes, I am not sure I could have fully understood how all the pieces of the process work together.

I laugh about it now, but I resisted being exact with my seam allowance because I was convinced, "It will come out in the end." I resisted all that starching and pressing because surely that would come out in the end too. I resisted picking up the seam ripper because somehow that felt like admitting defeat. And I measured once and cut once until buying more fabric finally convinced me there might be something to that old saying about measuring twice.

In the end, I truly understood why things are done the way they are done.

Most of those realizations came slowly, often in the quieter moments after a day of sewing was over, when I had finally stopped berating myself over my perceived shortcomings and my blood pressure had returned to something resembling normal. This was supposed to be fun. And eventually, it was.

Over the weeks that followed, the skills improved. My thoughts became gentler and more forgiving. The inner critic still had plenty to say, but I became much better at deciding how much attention he deserved.

And somewhere along the way, a love for the craft came over the horizon like a beautiful rising sun. I was quilting. It was not perfect. But it was beautiful.

That experience also taught me something else: part of becoming a quilter is learning which things truly need to be fixed and which things are simply the quilt's "personality traits."

A weak seam? Fix it. A block sewn incorrectly in a way that will affect the quilt? Fix it. A slightly imperfect point or a quilting line that took the scenic route? Maybe let that one live.

Your first quilt will probably have a few personality traits. Let it.

One of the most important things your first quilt can teach you is the value of finishing. You can learn far more from completing one imperfect quilt than from abandoning three because they were not flawless.

Care and perfection are not the same thing. Care says, "I will do my best with what I know right now." Perfection says, "My best does not count unless nothing goes wrong." Choose care.

Measure carefully. Cut thoughtfully. Sew patiently. Press with intention and be generous with the spray starch. Ask questions. Pick up the seam ripper when you need it. Fix what truly needs fixing. Mr. Seam Ripper is actually your friend, and not the tormentor with an unusually sharp, pointy finger. Learn to love him.

Then keep going.

Someday, after you have made more quilts, learned more techniques, and collected a few favorite tools, you may look back at that first quilt and notice every uneven seam and wandering corner. But you may also see something far more important. You may see the moment you became a quilter.

So, make the quilt. Make it with curiosity instead of fear. Make it with care instead of pressure. Let it carry the evidence of learning.

Your first quilt does not need to be perfect to be precious. It only needs to be made. And when you make that final stitch, you will have something far more valuable than a flawless quilt.

You will have proof that you began.

Steve Baker is the Director of Marketing at SewEndipitous located at 1093A Albright Road in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Visit www.SewEndipitous.com for more information.









Enter to Win a $25 Gift Certificate

The Country Register is giving away one $25 Gift Certificate to be spent at a local advertising Shop to one of our lucky readers! Use it to go shopping at your favorite *Country Register* advertiser.
The drawing will be held on December 1st and the winner will be announced in our January-February issue. The gift certificate will be mailed to the winner.

Entry Deadline is December 1, 2026
(Names are not sold, given away or used for any other purpose.)

Drawing Entry Form

Name _____
Phone:_____
Address _____
City, State & Zip _____
E-mail address: _____
Name of my favorite *Country Register* advertiser is:
_____
Tell us what makes this advertiser your favorite (required to enter): _____
_____

To enter, complete this form and mail to:
The Country Register, PO Box 74035, Phoenix, AZ 85087
(Photocopy of form is fine. Be sure to answer all questions.)
Or email the information to: carolinas@barlomedia.com
and put "Gift Certificate" in the subject line.

Please tell us about a local North or South Carolina or E. Tennessee Bazaar/Festival, Craft Show, Tea Room, etc that you would like to see advertising in the next issue of in *The Country Register*:
_____
_____
_____

We welcome your comments and/or suggestions about *The Country Register*. Include a note with your drawing entry, send us an email or give us a call at 1-888-942-8950. We enjoy hearing from our readers!

More Than a Tree Topper

by Becky Van Vleet

Every year the same angel takes her place at the top of our Christmas tree. She's made of plastic, more than seventy years old, and a little worse for wear. She still lights up, though her outdated cord is crinkly and twisted. I'm amazed she still works.

But to me, she's far more than an old tree topper. She's a piece of my childhood.



When I was growing up, we always had a real Christmas tree, and decorating it was a family affair. My sisters and I helped hang the ornaments, Mother supervised with a camera in hand, and Daddy tackled the silver icicles. Those slippery strands seemed to cling to his fingers more readily than to the branches. He'd fling them toward the tree, sending plenty to the floor along the way. Getting them to let go of his fingers was half the battle—and part of the fun.

Our tree also held those wonderful bubbling candle lights. Once they warmed up, we watched the bubbles rise inside them. Then, when the decorating was nearly finished, Daddy would place our angel on the highest branch and plug her in. Only then did our tree feel complete.

As a little girl, I loved gazing up at her. I imagined she was singing Christmas carols just to me. She was beautiful. Angelic.

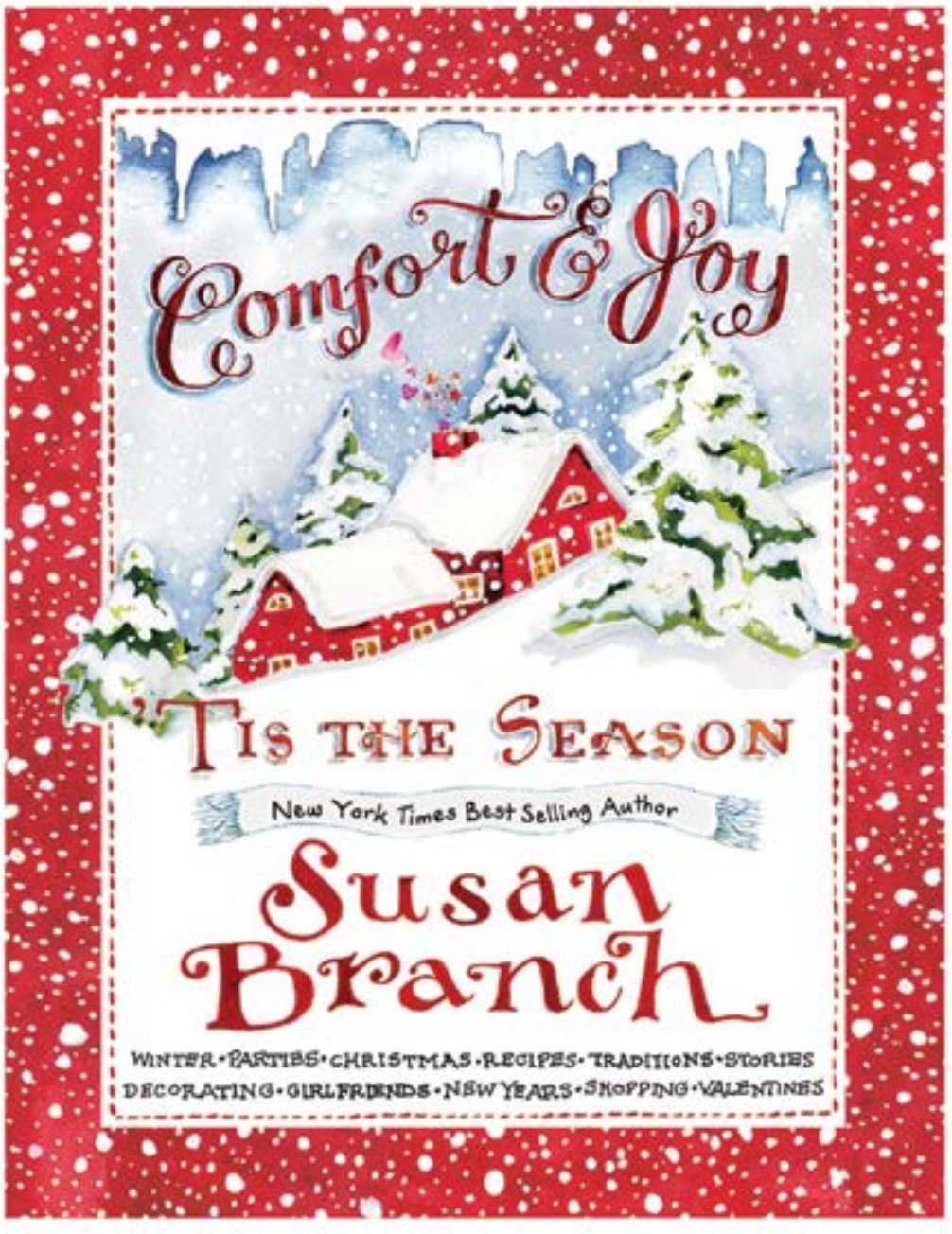
Years later, after I had a family of my own, my father passed the angel topper along to me. I was thrilled. Since then, we've placed her gingerly atop our own Christmas trees, carrying a little of my childhood into each Christmas.

These days, as our grandchildren enjoy Angelina, the name we've given her, one of her wings is broken and held together with Scotch tape. But when I look at her, I still see the angel of my childhood—and I remember Daddy placing her on top of the tree.

If I had to guess, I'd say she cost less than a dollar back in the 1950s. Her value today? Priceless!

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.beckyvanvleet.com.

Peace On Earth



Comfort & Joy

We're excited to announce COMFORT and JOY, a NEW BOOK by NY Times Bestselling Author, Susan Branch! Let Susan fill you with inspiration from Christmas through Winter, right into spring with classic comfort-food recipes, holiday decorating, celebrations, & parties ~ 192 hand-written & watercolored pages, with tons of ideas, quotes, & photographs. Cozy as a favorite sweater, everything to make the season bright!

Available Nov.15 at a bookstore near you. Along with Comfort and Joy, many of Susan's older books, including Autumn and Summer, are back in print & available at bookstores ~ just ask! Order books & read about Susan's cross-country book tour (Nov-Dec) at Susan's website, www.susanbranch.com.