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January/February 2022

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Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Fun Events



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Months January/February 2022

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**Deadline For the March/April 2022
Edition is February 10th!**

And the Winner Are...

Barbara Bultman of Faribault, MN won a \$25 gift certificate! Barbara says *Past and Present Antiques* in Waseca, MN is her favorite shop because of "the variety and selection of items is amazing and they have such nice people working there!"

Nichole Carter, Sue Beeman and Lila Liebl won a copy of the *By the Yard Comics* calendar!
Julia Lepsch won a copy of *Essentials of Quilt Judging!*

Congratulations!

♥ Happy Valentine's Day ♥

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365 New Days - 365 New Chances

Where in Minnesota?

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

(Answer on page 13 of this issue)



Remember Presidents' Day



Monday, February 21st

Special Events

January

- 1.....Anniversary Sale - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn
- 7.....Plum Creek Quilter's Quilt Show - Red Wing
- 22.....Support Your Local Quilt Shop - Gone to Pieces Quilt Shop - Kimball
- 22.....The Circus is Back in Town - Quilt Haven on Main - Hutchinson
- 22.....The Circus is Back in Town - DeAnn's Country Village - Litchfield
- 22.....The Circus is Back in Town - Gone to Pieces Quilt Shop - Kimball
- 25-31.....9th Anniversary Sale - Sewing Seeds Quilt Co. - New Ulm
- 30.....Touchdown Sale - Quilted Dog - Cloquet

February

- 4-6.....Quilt Games Retreat - Old Alley Quilt Shop
- 7-26.....Triple Dlight on the Crafty Old Prairie - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn
- 11-12.....Sweetheart Days - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
- 13.....Super Bowl Sunday Sale - Gone to Pieces Quilt Shop - Kimball
- 14-15.....Sweetheart Sale - Quilt Haven on Main - Hutchinson



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Life in Skunk Hollow

by Julie A Druck

Created to Create



My daughter-in-law, Abby, and I recently spent a very creative day together at the family cabin. It began in the morning when Abby developed a recipe for a cranberry topping that was baked on top of a wheel of Brie. After photographing the results for her blog, we slathered the amazing combination onto thin slices of French bread and called it breakfast. Later that morning we attended a ladies' gathering where someone had prepared a devotional to present, another arranged a lovely seasonal display of delicious treats for us, and a third led us in a craft session of diamond-dusted Mason jar lanterns. From there we went back to the cabin and proceeded to adorn a small pine tree with goodies for the birds. Threaded cranberries, garlands of popcorn and small pinecones painted with peanut butter became delicious treats for the birds and sweet beauty for us.



As I later reflected on our day, I realized that woven throughout was an on-going conversation on creativity. It began at the ladies' gathering when one of the women sitting down to begin the craft warned us not to expect much from her as she isn't creative. Abby and I, who are both passionate about encouraging others in finding their creative

outlets, immediately began to assure this lady that all people are creative in one way or another. We asked a few questions to help tease out areas in which she has an innate ability to make something beautiful. She acknowledged that she does love to set a pretty table for her family's meals. A joy-filled light came to her face as she realized that she is, indeed, creative.

Abby and I picked the thread of our creative conversation back up as we decorated the tree. She asked me if I ever feel like bursting if I don't sit right down and put my hands to some creative endeavor. I assured her I did, and that I believe if we don't listen to that calling to creativity, it's actually a detriment to our lives. As humans, we have a physical body that needs rest and care, and a mind that needs stimulated and exercised. And we each have our own personality, which is displayed through the creative way we go about things. People often believe creativity only manifests itself through a paintbrush or a camera. But creativity shows up in nearly as many ways as there are different personalities. Our oldest son is incredible at writing computer code to make machines do all manner of things. The mechanic who is currently re-crafting the transmission of our farm truck is creating. And our accountant friend finds orderly beauty in the arranging of numbers. All of us have some ability and desire that calls us to create.

I shared also with Abby that cultivating our creativity is good, not only for our own wholeness, but also for the good of others. Using our creative gifts blesses and encourages others in a multitude of ways, some of which are very practical and some are simply to remind us that in beauty, there is hope.

So, the next time you are tempted to utter, "I'm not creative," think again. Do a little soul-searching and look for areas which combat that myth. Then deliberately use that creativity for the benefit and joy of yourself and those around you.

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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A TOUR OF MINNESOTA'S STATE PARKS

Wild River State Park

Wild River State Park is located along 18 miles of the beautiful St. Croix River. St. Croix River Valley was first occupied by nomadic people 6,000 years ago. For thousands of years, the valley was home for the Dakota and Ojibwe Indians. Samuel's Fur Post and Connor's Goose Creek Post were active in 1847. After Minnesota became a territory in 1849, a military road was constructed through the park. It was part of the route from Hastings to Lake Superior and a portion of it is still evident today. The great white pine logging era resulted in the building of Nevers Dam in 1890. This dam operated until 1912. The park was established to protect the natural and cultural resources and to provide recreational opportunities along the St. Croix River. The park's name "Wild River" is derived from the fact that the St. Croix River was one of the original eight rivers protected by the U.S. Congress through the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. Nearly 5,000 of the park's total 6,803 acres were donated by Northern States Power Company.

Wild River State Park attracts people who enjoy camping, hiking, horseback riding, canoeing, interpretive programs, self-guided trails, and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Day visitors can enjoy a leisurely paddle down the St. Croix River from the Sunrise river access to the southern park river access. The park provides opportunities for semi-modern camping, group camping, equestrian camping, backpack camping, and canoe camping. Visitors who want modern amenities can reserve the guest house which provides a living room, dining room, kitchen, and fireplace. The park also has six camping cabins which include bunkbeds, a table, and benches.

If it's wildlife you enjoy, Wild River provides habitat for a variety of wildlife including hawks, owls, eagles, beaver, raccoon, fox, coyote, otter, mink and deer. Common in the waters of the St. Croix are Northern pike, walleye and smallmouth bass.



Information from www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks. Visit the website for more information, pictures, hours and fees.

♥ Happy Valentine's Day ♥

A Cup of Tea with Lydia

by Lydia E. Harris

Serving Tea with Love

As we turn the 2022 calendar pages, one of the first holidays is a day of love. What could be nicer than starting the year showing love and kindness over a cuppa' tea? Here's my recipe to pamper guests and make them feel loved as you share tea.



PREPARE a lovely setting. A prepared place makes guests feel welcome and valued. Tablecloths, colorful napkins, china teacups, nice silverware, a pretty teapot, glowing candles, and background music create a welcoming ambiance. The setting doesn't have to be stuffy, fluffy, or formal; it can be casual and homey. (Just something a little more than mugs of hot water and a teabag.)

ADD Tea-licious foods. A variety of tasty foods in different colors, shapes, and textures makes guests feel special. If possible, prepare them beforehand, and serve them attractively. If serving only scones and tea, serve the scones warm, and select a special tea blend, such as Harney & Sons Valentine's Day tea. If you know your guest loves a certain food, why not serve it? Also, respect guests' dietary needs. My neighbor emailed she was dieting and didn't want much. I set out a miniature three-tier silver tray with dainty foods. She nibbled a few tidbits and said, "This was perfect."

To put "heart" into your teatime, try one of these tasty ideas for Valentine's Day or anytime:

- Prepare turkey sandwiches with cranberry heart centers. (See recipe.)
- Cut scones into medium-sized hearts with a cookie cutter, brush them with melted butter, and sprinkle with red-colored sugar before baking. Serve with red jam or jelly.
- Serve a "heart-TEA" bowl of soup garnished with toast hearts. Lightly spread bread slices with butter, sprinkle with garlic powder, and cut into hearts. Toast and place on soup just before serving.

SPRINKLE in special touches. If desired, pamper guests by using doilies, place cards, napkin rings, and perhaps a homemade menu. Include a small surprise at each place setting such as a long-stemmed rose, a decadent truffle in a nut cup, or a pretty teaspoon. I keep inexpensive gifts on hand for this purpose.

BLEND in listening ears. In the busyness of life, people appreciate someone who listens, cares, and accepts them without trying to fix them. Uplifting, meaningful conversation from the heart makes guests sense they are loved. Laughter, when appropriate, adds cheer to the mix.

ADD a heaping portion of time. Sharing your time makes others feel valued. You've already put time into the preparation. One friend burst into tears when she saw the prepared table and asked, "You did this for me?" There is also the relaxed atmosphere while sipping tea. "You acted as though you had all the time in the world for me," one guest reflected. If possible, invite people when you have several hours for a leisurely teatime, because love is spelled "T-I-M-E."

SERVE with a hospitable heart. Welcome guests at the door instead of hollering, "Come in! The door's open." Serve them graciously, attending to their needs. Asking, "Could I pour you another cup of tea?" makes guests feel special. Then walk them to their cars when leaving.

People feel loved when they are pampered. And they'll remember how we made them feel much longer than they'll remember what we served.

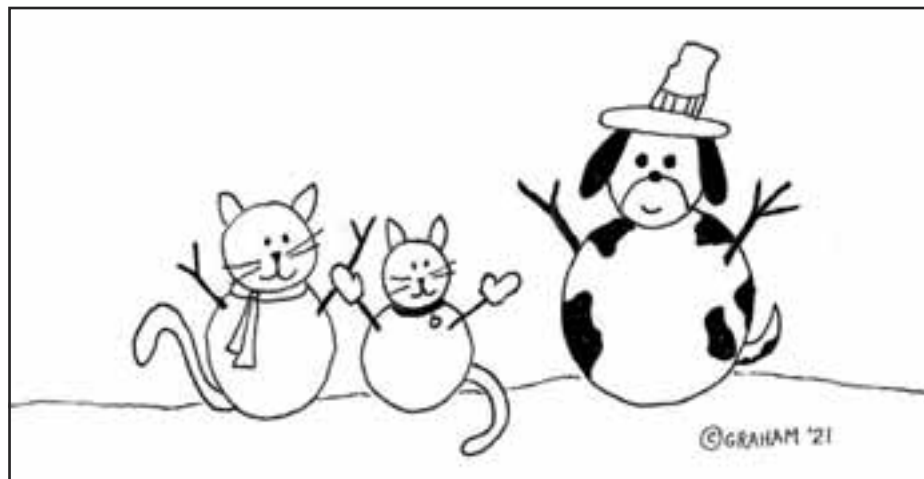
I'm ready to combine these ingre-TEA-ents and put my heart into serving tea to a friend. It will be a gift for me as well as my guest. Will you join me?



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Designed by Kathy Graham



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From Lydia's Recipe File:

Turkey-and-Cranberry Tea Sandwiches

Easy to make. Guests will gobble them up.

Ingredients

- 4 slices wheat bread
- 4 slices white bread
- 8 slices deli turkey
- 1(16 oz.) can jellied cranberry sauce
- Mayonnaise

Directions

Lightly spread wheat bread with jellied cranberry sauce. Top each with two slices turkey. Lightly spread white bread with mayonnaise. With mayonnaise side up, cut out four tiny hearts with a 3/4-inch cookie cutter (found in kitchen stores), one in each corner of the slice. Place the white bread on the turkey, the mayonnaise side down. Slice cranberry sauce the thickness of bread. Cut out tiny hearts from the cranberry sauce, and slip them into four heart-shaped holes cut in the bread. Trim crusts and cut into four square sandwiches. Makes 16 sandwiches.



Lydia E. Harris is a tea enthusiast, grandmother, and author of Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting and In the Kitchen with Grandma: Stirring Up Tasty Memories Together.



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

Life-of-the-Party Snack Mix
 recipe from Gooseberry Patch Crockpot Recipes

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 2 cups <u>bite-size</u> crispy <u>wheat</u> cereal | 2 tbsp grated parmesan <u>cheese</u> |
| 2 cups bite-size crispy <u>corn</u> cereal | 1 tsp garlic salt |
| 2 cups bite-size <u>crispy</u> rice cereal | 1/2 tsp <u>seasoned salt</u> |
| 3 cups thin pretzel sticks | 1/3 cup butter, melted |
| 13 oz jar mixed <u>nuts</u> | 1/3 cup <u>Worcestershire sauce</u> |

In a large bowl, mix together cereals, pretzels and nuts along with parmesan cheese, garlic salt and seasoned salt. Pour butter and Worcestershire sauce over mixture; combine gently with hands. Pour into a slow cooker; cover and cook on low setting for 3 to 4 hours. Spread hot snack mix onto baking sheets lined with paper towels; let dry for at least one hour, letting the towels absorb excess moisture. Store in airtight containers.



A Story of Life and Crossword Puzzles

by Kerri Habben Bosman

My husband Wayne and I finished a crossword puzzle book today. We spent many enjoyable hours sitting at the kitchen table completing all 104 puzzles. All for \$4.99 plus tax. Perhaps being happy about these things makes us seem old and cheap. We prefer the description “tenured and resourceful.”



We began doing crossword puzzles in July 2021 when we visited Wayne’s Mom. She gets the newspaper every day and we found that we enjoy doing puzzles together. We found some books that aren’t the most difficult and yet they aren’t the easiest by any means, either. I think a little bit of the attraction for both of us is that we are carried back to sitting with Mom sipping coffee in her timeless and cozy kitchen.

We are also constantly learning in this way. We discover what we already know and merely needed a catalyst to be released in our brains. Sometimes this information is something we both know. Yet, we also discover something new from each other. Once in awhile we are inspired to research a topic we never thought much about before.

Often times we say the same answer at the same time. We have common backgrounds of information and we also each have different areas of expertise. We grow amused at often repeated clues, laughing at ourselves when we cannot remember that French river or what currency is used in Latvia.

Mostly we start a puzzle together. We use black pen instead of a pencil. Wayne tells me to write because he says my handwriting is better. If we make a mistake, we work around the wrong letters and write over them as we get the right ones. It doesn’t always look perfect but we patiently work through it.

We occasionally cheat a little bit but only when we’ve entirely exhausted our knowledge. That and when every remaining clue is so obscure that we would never know it even if we tried for hours. Then we look in the back of the book.

Sometimes one of us begins a puzzle and works on it alone until we’ve filled in all the answers we know. We pay attention to how the other is working, watching to see if they want to finish the puzzle all by themselves. If that is the case, we will wait for the other to ask for help.

It is then that a quietly amazing thing happens. We rescue each other. For example, if I have looked at every clue two or three times and am at a total loss, I say to Wayne that I require his brilliance. He answers, “Well, I don’t know about that but I will help you with the crossword puzzle.” Then, most of the time, he puts in one clue and suddenly there is one that I know. Then he gets another and so do I. And, before we know it, the puzzle is finished.

It has not escaped us that life is like doing a crossword puzzle. Some of the answers arrive easily and others take a little time to find out. Sometimes we literally don’t have a clue but we keep trying. There are the moments that pure intuition takes over and it all falls into place. Other times, we figure out what went wrong and how to fix it. Life doesn’t have to be perfect to be ideal.

Each puzzle of life is filled in steadily and gratefully—one blank space, one day at time. We work together, sharing strength and joy with each other.

Now we have 104 more puzzles in a brand new book. We have hours of entertainment, all for \$4.99 plus tax. Remember, we’re not old and cheap. We’re tenured and resourceful.



Tuffet Pin Cushion Tutorial

The Art of Home

by Jacquelynne Steves

This is my Tuffet Pin Cushion tutorial. Are these the cutest, or what? I can't get enough pin cushions, and judging by Pinterest, neither can anyone else (wink.)

These adorable little pin cushions remind of the "tuffets" that were going around the internet a couple of years ago. I got this idea because I've been saving up those little tiny dog food cans (when you have a little tiny dog, you accumulate a lot of those!) I hated to throw them away, and early on I got the idea that they'd be just the right size for a pin cushion base. Now, if you don't have little tiny dog food cans lying around, you have a couple of options. You could:

A. Get yourself a little tiny dog, or B. Substitute a similar sized can.

(I happen to prefer option A, I'm just sayin'!!) Keep in mind that if your can is a slightly different size, you may need to cut your fabric circle a little smaller or larger to accommodate. You can go crazy making these, using up all your little bits of fabric and trim and buttons....

I've used a combination of rice/beans and polyester filler for the stuffing. If you like to use crushed walnut shells, etc. that's fine, too. See this blog post about different types of stuffing for your pin cushions.

You will need:

-Circle pattern download and print from: www.jacquelynnesteves.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Tuffet-Pin-Cushion-pattern-Jacquelynne-Steves.pdf

-Small can (about 3 1/2 oz), cleaned and dried with label removed

-Scraps of fabric, ribbon, rick rack, trim, etc.

-Buttons

-Embroidery floss, wool thread, twine, or other decorative thread

-Spray paint (optional)

-Tacky glue

-Strong sewing thread (like hand quilting thread)

-Sewing needle

-Filling for pin cushion, such as rice/beans/sand/crushed walnut shells, etc.

If desired, spray paint the can and allow to dry thoroughly.

Glue fabric strip and/or trim to the can.

Cut a circle of fabric. Use sewing thread to make a running stitch all around the circle, about 1/4" from the edge. Place a ball of polyester filling in the center and pull the thread to tighten. Add more polyester filling until the "tuffet" is packed quite tightly. Tie off the thread securely.

Cut a piece of embroidery floss 31" long. Bring the thread through the bottom of the tuffet, leaving a 4" tail, and come up through the top center of the tuffet.

Bring the thread over the top, back through the bottom, and again through the top, pulling it a little taut. (A)

Continue around the tuffet in this way. (B) Tie off the thread with the thread tail that you left at the bottom (C)

Trim off excess thread. (You can also just skip this whole entire step, and make a "muffin top" pin cushion instead of a tuffet!)

Cut an 8" piece of embroidery floss and attach the button- bring the thread through the top of the tuffet, through the bottom and then back up through the top. Tie a knot on the top and cut off the excess.

Fill the can about 2/3 full of rice or beans. Place glue along the top edge of the can. Carefully "squish" the tuffet slightly and insert into can. Allow glue to dry.

Decorate your pin cushion with some cute and colorful pins. They are really the finishing touch to make your pin cushion irresistible!

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Quilting with Barbara

by Barbara Conquest

Happy New Year!

It is satisfying at this time of year to consider the past year with its ups and downs and place it firmly behind us, while anticipating what the new year may bring—new projects, new experiences, new relationships...

But consider this: perennial plants require a period of dormancy to produce flowers in season; farmers leave some fields in fallow periodically; we all need rest to be productive. This year, instead of treating winter as something to be endured while waiting for spring, let's value the cold months for what they really are—nature's "time out." We all need some quiet time for reflection and renewal to be productive.

To begin my personal dormancy, I plan to stop "doom trolling." You know... scrolling through news feeds first thing in the morning to see what horrible events have occurred overnight. They are never in short supply. This practice can darken your whole day before you even get out of bed. Who needs that?

The joys of down time in winter are ours if we take time to notice and appreciate them. The perky blue jays at the bird feeder, their feathers a sharp contrast to the white snow. Cozy hours spent reading in front of the fireplace. The laughter of neighbor children making snow angels. The exhilaration of a clean downhill run. The sense of wellbeing after a walk outside. Time to oneself after the frantic holiday rush.

And before we know it days are lengthening and seed catalogues begin to arrive in the mail, and we are ready to break out of dormancy rested and refreshed.

P.S. People dealing with young children on a continuing basis (e.g. parents and elementary teachers) are more likely to regard winter as the time of fixing stuck zippers and persuading children to wear their coats and boots. I've been there and done that. Be assured your dormancy period will come!



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This month in Minnesota History

January 12, 1888: A major blizzard strikes the state, hitting western Minnesota especially hard and causing the deaths of between 100 and 150 people, many of them children on their way home from school.

February 10, 1763: In the treaty ending the French and Indian War, France transfers to Britain the territory that would become Minnesota.

From The Minnesota Book of Days (Minnesota Historical Society Press)



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-Donna, Melissa & Baby Jojo

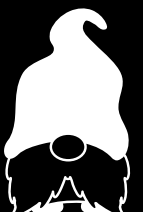
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Random Acts

by Maranda K Jones

Sweet Valentine



You are loved. Remember those buttons, pins, or one of fifty pieces of flair the servers were required to wear when working at TGIFriday's restaurants? My mom had one in her collection that always made me smile when I read it. I interpreted that message as "I am loved" when I saw it on her dresser. In addition to feeling that sentiment myself, I wondered who I would want to wear that pin around. Who would I want to see that pin on my shoulder of my denim jacket if I borrowed it from Mom? To whom would I want to aim that affectionate feeling? Many people in my life deserve my love and gratitude, and I am working on making that better known.

Dr. Gary Chapman says we each have a different language of love. In his popular book series, he describes five categories of ways we feel accepted and appreciated. Acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time, words of affirmation, and physical touch cover almost all of us to some degree. And then there's my oldest daughter who has discovered another one of her own.

Presley's language of love is dessert. Her sweet tooth is undeniable and usually unsatisfied. My mom and I took her on a trip with us. Just the three of us: three generations of girls. We would take her anywhere she wanted. She did not care where we went as long as we ate as many desserts as possible. She shared cotton candy with Grandma, popcorn with Mom, and kept her cookies and ice cream close. Five days and twelve delicious desserts later, sweet memories had been made.

My aunt and uncle have always connected with Presley, speaking languages of love in a way she understands and embraces. Uncle Benny has been her go-to guy from the beginning. He laughs, listens, and lends a hand. With his calm demeanor, my uncle supports her when she is crying and upset. One evening at dinner when she was two years young, she was crying for a reason that was unexplainable by anyone, and I was trying to calm her down with no success. He picked her up and instantly relieved her of whatever her woe was. Ten years later, and they still make her feel loved with their presence.

Aunt Jerri knows what book series my daughter is reading and makes sure she has the next novel before she finishes the present one. Not only does she encourage her love of reading and supply her with abundant reading material, my aunt goes above and beyond. She reads the books too so she can talk about them with Presley. She researches the author's websites for additional information that my daughter may enjoy. When she finds a recipe that goes along with the book, Jerri makes that treat for Presley and delivers the gift beautifully wrapped with ribbon and a handwritten note making sure Presley knows she is loved.

May you and your sweet valentine also receive the message "You are loved."

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Back Porch Break

by Nancy Brummett

Love is a River



An old adage states that it's better to be a river than a lake. That whatever resources come to us should not stop with us but flow through us on their way to bless others. Certainly this is true of any love we receive in our lives, from whatever source. Love mustn't stop with us. It must move through us. Through our words, our actions, our thoughts, our touch, our caring, our hoping. It must move through us to others—and to the world as a whole.

I'm not proud of the fact that I have felt somewhat discouraged and hopeless this past year. My despair is because so much hate is being spewed into our world from many directions. Hate based on emotion and fear, not facts. I'm not proud of it because that's not how my God would have me respond to this outpouring of hate. Rather He would ask me to flood it with an outpouring of His love, flowing through me.

So this Valentine's Day, I'm going to take love more seriously than ever before. The romantic movies, the chocolates, the roses, the dinner out won't cease to delight me, but they won't fully satisfy me either. I want to seek love at the deepest level. I want to be sustained by the love that knows no end. The love that sacrificed all. For only such profound love can wash away such a vast amount of hate and confusion.

God IS love (1 John 4:16). So I'll ask Him to help me show love in a million little ways. I'll ask Him to help me hold my tongue. I'll ask Him to remind me that without forgiveness I am nothing. And that I can forgive others because He first forgave me. I'll remember all the lavish love He's sent into my life and believe that I can love others because He first loved me. I'll ask Him to help me spend time with people of all persuasions and beliefs in peace, because He tells me that all people are worthy of love.

I know. This isn't the paper doily, construction-paper-heart kind of Valentine love. But it truly is the love the world needs now. May it flow through us all.

Nancy Parker Brummett is an author and freelance writer in Colorado Springs, CO. "Like" her author page on Facebook, or learn more about her life and work at www.nancyparkerbrummett.com.



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Maranda Jones' new book *Random Acts* is now available at amazon.com
The book includes her reader-acclaimed articles from the last decade

Eagan

The Friendly, Lovable Chickadee

by Lesley R. Nuttall



The Chickadee is a small bird, with a big personality. Every species of Chickadees have their own special identity. Weighing less than an ounce, at 4 – 5 inches long, their tail helps with their balance. A group of Chickadees is called a banditry, because of their mask like appearance.

There are 65 species of Chickadees across this earth. The USA has 7 species, while Canada has 5, with their song of mirth. Canada has Black Capped; Mountain; Chestnut Backed; Grey Headed and Boreal. The USA has 2 more – Carolina and Mexican, which is factorial.

The Black Capped Chickadees are the most popular in Canada and the USA. Their color is a black cap and bib, white cheeks and belly, with back and tail of grey. These little birds are very smart, and have a good memory and brain. They will go to the other side of a tree to avoid sun, wind and rain.

In the summer, they eat berries, suet, insects and seeds. As they don't migrate in winter, they rely on finding insects and larva in trees. Chickadees can retain heat by fluffing up their feathers. They can also drop their temperature, to save energy in bad weather.

In the winter – compared to summer, they need 10 to 20 times the amount of food. Chickadees lay eggs, mid April to June, and usually have only one brood. This cheery little bird emphasizes danger to others, by the number of dee, dee, dees they sing to friends, sisters and brothers.

They spend time with their flocks, to feel protected. Which makes each Chickadee feel safer and respected. We can all be birdwatchers and help the Chickadee, by providing some seeds this winter don't you agree?

Lesley R. Nuttall is the Author of *Secrets of Party Planning*.

She also loves writing poetry about nature! Lesley lives in Thunder Bay, ON, Canada with her husband.

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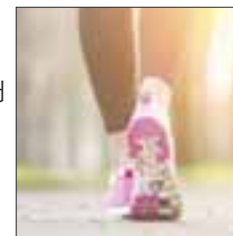
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Ann's Lovin' Ewe

by Ann Stewart

Walking into the New Year



Get ready for the new year. It doesn't take a resolution, but it might mean splurging on new shoes.

My friend Barb and I began walking along our local wooded trail. We didn't plan how far we'd walk, or how often. We just walked. That continued for days, months, and now years logging thousands of miles in conversation and prayer. Every day I get up twenty minutes before the sun rises and drive to the bike trail with my excited English Shepherd Finnie. Barb and I walk four miles to the next town, then turn around and walk back. It takes about two hours.

We've laughed and cried and prayed; she knows everything about me and vice versa. We've survived the various seasons, witnessed a snow squall, savored the fall leaves, and nibbled on mulberries and wineberries along the trail. At one stop, a farmer grows a mammoth great pumpkin. In the trees, spiders spread their dew-laden webs, and squirrels knock down black walnuts at our feet. Twice we thought we saw a bear (one was a black fence, and the other a cow!). Finn captured a groundhog on one expedition. Summer isn't always our favorite with the East coast humidity, but we press on.

Though it's always a fun adventure, we both have the same motivation: we want to be physically active grandparents.

The physical benefits are astounding. Research indicates it's good for your eyes, lowering the risk of glaucoma, and cloudy lenses. It reduces the risk of cancer and diabetes. Your heart will benefit with lower cholesterol and blood pressure. Exercise improves blood sugar levels and helps lower the risk of obesity. It boosts your energy by increasing the oxygen flow to your body and benefits vascular stiffness and inflammation by lubricating and strengthening the muscles that support your joints.

Harvard Health, June 10, 2021, cited the following five benefits of walking. "Counteracts the effects of weight-promoting genes, Helps tame a sweet tooth, Reduces the risk of developing breast cancer, Eases joint pain, and Boosts immune function." A University of MD study showed exercise improved memory. And when you go to bed at night, you'll have a better night's sleep.

If the physical and mental benefits are not enough, walking improves your creativity and mood, calms you and wards off depression. During Covid when quarantining was at its height, though Barb and I stayed physically apart, we walked the trail in close discussion. At a time when we could have been feeling sluggish and discouraged, we were invigorated by discussing books, family, worries, and joys and keeping ourselves psychologically healthy.

It's a benefit socially as well. You'll meet new friends and have more friends and more opportunities to talk!

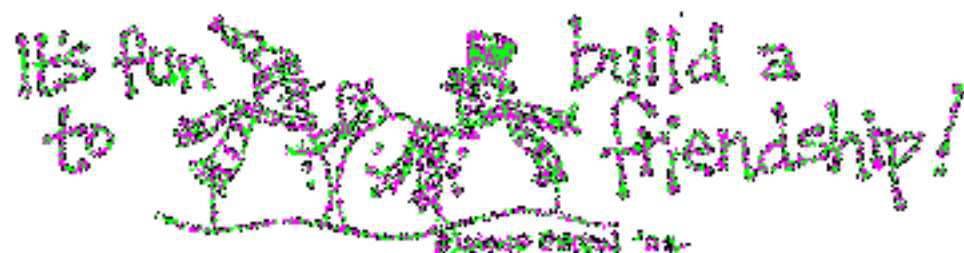
Perhaps one of the best arguments is that if you keep moving, you'll keep moving. With fewer disabling injuries you'll keep moving into your future.

Start small. Pick a nearby location and time, find a friend with whom you can be accountable, and buy a new pair of shoes. Getting dressed for the job means you're serious. If it's not too late, ask for a FitBit or a Garmin or buy yourself a belated Christmas present that will last for years and add a little fun to your excursions.

Some of you may be in the throes of winter. Start with laps at the local mall and graduate to the outdoors when the weather allows.

Unfortunately, I have only six more months of walking with Barb. We'll enjoy a few more snowfalls, and freezing temperatures, and then the buds on the trees before she moves to Texas. But I'll keep walking on the trail. Just need to find another future Grandma for the journey!

© 2022. Ann's second novel OUT OF THE WATER launched October 19. You can love on Ann from "Ann's Lovin' Ewe" by purchasing a book to read



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- 2 cans Cinnamon rolls
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
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- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup heavy whipping cream (half & half works too)
- 3 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- Icing from cinnamon roll packages

Directions

In a large glass bowl, melt butter with sugar. Beat in eggs, cream, cinnamon, nutmeg and vanilla. Open canned cinnamon rolls, slice each cinnamon roll into fourths. Place cinnamon roll pieces into the bowl of egg mixture and toss to thoroughly coat. Then pour the pieces, coated in egg mixture, into a greased 9x12 casserole dish and spread out evenly. Use any leftover egg mixture to coat the casserole. Sprinkle with pecans and then bake on 350° on a low rack for 35-40 minutes or until brown. Remove casserole from oven. Warm icing from cinnamon rolls in microwave for 15 seconds; pour evenly over bake.

How many words can you find in the word

Submitted by Shirley Ross

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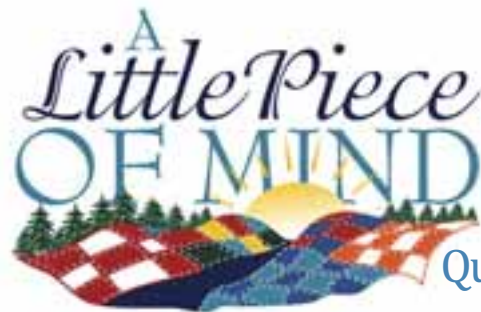
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Writing from Life

by Jeanette Lukowski

Cookies or Bread?



When I was young, I was introduced to some fancy cookies a German lady made. The lady's daughter and I were classmates from Kindergarten through 8th grade, and we were in girl scouts together, so I saw the cookies appear at least once a year at potluck meals or seasonal parties. I never paid attention to the details, though, as I was just a child. For me, it was all about the chocolate cookies. Since hers were not chocolate—featuring red or orange jams or jellies rather than chocolate—I would pass them by.

During Christmas visits to my mother's home after I got married, I finally ate a few of the German lady's fancy cookies. Little blonde folded cookies with raspberry or apricot jams, sprinkle-covered with powdered sugar, these cookies quickly became memorable culinary treats.

My mother said these cookies were called [ko-LOCH-keys], but I could never find their recipe in my favorite Betty Crocker cookbook. Forced to rely on my mother's connection to the German lady for my occasional taste, I've spent more years thinking about the cookies than actually eating some.

This past summer, then, while driving around the state seeking cute new fabric stores to visit as part of Minnesota's annual shop hop, I looked through the car's windshield and saw "Kolacky Bakery" in big red and white letters on the side of a brick building.

Could it be?! Those yummy cookies I remember the Germany lady making? The bakery was closed that day, though, so I made a mental note to go back some day.

It was a pretty fall day in mid-October when I finally made the 45-minute drive back to that bakery.

I walked in, inhaled the lovely scents of fresh-baked—wait, bread? Where are the cookies?

"Oh, the kolacky are all right there," the young clerk smiled, pointing to a cabinet display full of what looked like dinner rolls rather than cookies.

Seeing the confused look on my face, the clerk continued. "We make the closed kind. They come in all of these flavors: Apple, Apricot, Cherry, Poppy Seed, Prune, and Raspberry. What can I get for you?"

My brain was still frozen on their not being cookies, so I told the clerk to help the other customer first.

Well, I ended up purchasing too many of those bread-filled kolacky, because I wanted to explore a variety of flavors. (Unlike cookies, I couldn't simply purchase one of each.)

Returning back home, I conducted some internet research: Kolache, Kolacky, Kolaczki. Czech, Polish, Russian. Oy vey. No wonder I was confused!

Like the English language itself, our country is pretty amazing in how it has incorporated other regions' foods and traditions. Patchwork quilts also follow an interesting path of adaptation: artistic or functional, they might be hand sewn, machine-stitched, machine-quilted, or tied.

It's winter now; I'm sitting on the couch, wrapped in a cozy flannel patchwork quilt which I made last year, eating the last of my bread treats. (Poppy seed.)

Happy Winter

by Janet Young



Winter is upon us. With falling temperatures, shorter days, and frosty mornings invites the snow. As the soft snow gently and ever so softly blankets the ground, I wonder if you might go back in time and recall your childhood memories of sledding down the hill, ice skating on the pond, or enjoying a nice cup of cocoa to warm your soul.

Of course, those memories can be brought to life once more as you engage in outdoor fun with your children or grandchildren. Other fun examples might be to have a snowball battle after you build your snowman, then lay in the snow to make those infamous snow angels. The world has become quieter. Slowed as the saying goes, "As slow as molasses in January."

Perhaps this is one of the gifts that one of our four seasons brings. For it provides us the opportunity to slow down and perhaps lets us pause long enough so that we begin to take inventory of our life. By now the majority have made New Year's resolutions, so now is the time to take stock in what goals you have made for the upcoming year. Have you included spending more time getting to know your teenager a little better? Or, for that matter, no matter what age your child might be, spending time with them on an ongoing basis. And while we are at it, please don't forget to include your spouse in that; perhaps, you need to spend more quiet time together.

Yes, winter can be a depressing time of year with its dark days, and early nightfall, but it can also be a time to gather round the table and enjoy the delicious aromas such as gingerbread, pumpkin spice, cinnamon, and many other spices emanating from the assortment of beverages and/or food placed before you.

While the challenge is real, won't you take a moment to entertain the idea that snow can bring you joy, if only, you take the time to look upon its beauty and begin to contemplate the mystery of such a heavenly gift. So, how will you spend the next snow day off from work and/or school?

Happy winter!

Bubbles and Friendship

by Becky Van Vleet

"There are friends, and there is family, and then there are friends that become family." (unknown)

I ran across this quote recently, and my childhood friend, Claudette, came to mind. Without coming right out to reveal our ages—women just don't like to do that—I will tell you that we have been friends for more than sixty years.

Our friendship actually began through our parents at church. Walter and Alberta, Claude and Becky were as thick as gravy on mashed potatoes. With seven daughters between the two couples, our families' friendship flourished as we spent time together at church and in each other's homes for many years.

As a young girl, I looked up to Claudette who was almost one year older than me. I cracked up laughing at her witty pranks. I always asked her advice on things because I just knew she would have all the answers. We ended up as college roommates, and later we stood at the altar in each other's weddings.

There is one childhood memory that I continue to remember to this very day, and it's all about bubbles!

When I would go over to Claudette's house after church on Sundays, I would help wash and dry the dishes with her if I happened to be at her house when it was her turn. Of course, we always hoped it would be her sisters' turns so that we could go play. But when it fell upon us to clear the table, stack the dishes, fill the sink with bubbly water, well, we took on this chore without too much complaint. No dishwashers in the 1960's.

In fact, when dishwashers came out later, both our mothers said, "We don't need dishwashers. We have our daughters!"

Claudette always washed and I always dried. I never questioned this, it's just the way it was. Claudette would squeeze the liquid soap bottle under the running tap water like I squeezed the ketchup bottle—way too much. The result? Bubbles galore. Those bubbles would be all over the place—the floor, the countertops, even on her, sometimes on me. I stood next to her to remove each dish from the rinse water to place in the drainboard to be ready for drying and putting away. But in truth, only the first couple of dishes really got "rinsed" because the abundant bubbles she created immediately invaded the rinse water.

Whether the dishes truly got the rinse they needed, it didn't matter. This was a time that two friends talked about everything under the sun: crushes on boys, school, our parents, our sisters, our teachers, and who would win the World Series.

Ahh, such fun memories from long ago, bubbles and all. I wish young girls could wash and dry dishes together today. They don't know what they're missing!



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 eight grandchildren. Becky is a children's picture book author, and her website is devoted to family stories and creating memories: www.beckylvanvleet.com

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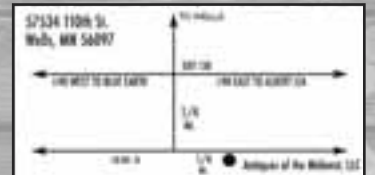
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Country Register Recipe Exchange

White Bean Soup

submitted by Patti Lee Bock



- 1 1/2 cups dried white beans
- 1/2 cup olive or vegetable oil
- 2 medium sized onions - peeled and chopped
- 1 stalk of celery - chopped
- 2 garlic cloves - crushed
- 1 large carrot - scraped and minced
- 2 tomatoes - peeled and chopped
- 1/2 tsp crushed dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- salt and pepper

Soak beans overnight or for several hours. Drain and add 8 cups water. Bring to a boil. Lower heat. Cook slowly, covered. Meanwhile, heat oil in skillet. Add onions and celery. Saute until limp. Add garlic, carrot and tomatoes. Saute 5 minutes. Stir into beans. Add thyme and bay leaf. Season with salt and pepper. Continue to cook until beans and carrots are tender - about 1 1/2 hours.

Remove bay leaf before serving!



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The Lost Locket

by Carol Nixon



In 1921, a Golden Retriever Breeding Farm was established in a small town named Monroe, located in the western corner of CT. When litters became 3 months old, they were taken away from their mothers and sold for handsome profits. One male and female from different litters were kept on the farm. It is 100 years later and the farm is still in existence.

Chloe was from a litter of five; being the sole female. Her brothers were frisky and mischievous; always digging holes. Chloe followed in their footsteps. She soon picked up their bad habits, not digging holes, but enlarging them. Her coat was golden, as her brothers, but her uniqueness was a white patch on her nose. The present owners had a 10-year-old daughter named Emlyn. Chloe became her favorite. They were inseparable. Emlyn taught her numerous tricks and games. She even brought Chloe to Show and Tell at school.

One day during their game of hide and seek, Chloe never came to find Emlyn. Rain the day before left the brother's holes filled with mud. Chloe had fallen into an oversized hole, unable to get herself out of the water. Emlyn heard her yelping. She found her scratching around a rock and pulling on a tin box. Emlyn picked up Chloe, felt the tin box and placed it in her coveralls. Running back to the farm, Chloe had her bath, then Emlyn. After supper was done, the two raced upstairs to get under the covers.

That night Emlyn had trouble sleeping. She remembered the tin box. Her coveralls would be thrown in the wash the next morning. She and Chloe crept down the stairs and then to the basement stairs to get the tin box. Without waking the household, they were once again in Emlyn's room. She opened the tin box only to find a small red velvet box. Chloe began to lick the dirt off the tin. Emlyn found a heart shaped golden locket, so beautiful, she began to cry. The locket was empty with no picture. On the left of the locket was the name Kathleen. The back of it had 1921 with an angel. There was an old piece of paper under the locket with a small note that read, "Should I ever lose this, may the finder wear with great love."

Ten days from the finding of the locket, Emlyn's Auntie Kathy had passed away. Whoever Kathleen was 100 years ago must have been so sad when she lost her locket. Emlyn had her dad cut a small picture of her Auntie Kathy and glue it into the locket. She would never take it off. Miracles just don't happen on Christmas Day, they even happen on VALENTINE'S DAY!

Carol Nixon A.K.A. Auntie Ca'h: Children are our lifeline and writing in a diary to my nephew, is inspirational, and my reason for writing short stories. My persona is 66 year young still dressing in blue jeans and sweatshirts with a bobbing blonde ponytail. I am a collector of antique dolls, coins, stamps and flags.

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For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. - Jeremiah 29:11

Happy New Year from your Country Register!

Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

“Ladies and Gentlemen and Children of all Ages—Welcome to...
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I could almost hear the ringmaster distinctly making his loud proclamation when my husband strolled around a miniature hand-crafted circus on a recent visit to The Ringling Museum in Sarasota, Florida. The Ringling is located on the 20-acre estate originally purchased by John and Mable Ringling in 1911. To use the word miniature, however, is deceptive! This 44,000-piece scale replica (3/4" to the foot) of The Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus as it was produced from 1919 through 1938 covers over 3,800 square feet is housed in a 148-foot display case inside the circus museum. When my husband first saw it he mused, “I had my first cotton candy when my folks took me to see a circus in Colorado Springs.”

The model circus took over 50 years for Howard Tibbals to build and was truly a labor of love. The model is called the Howard Bros. Circus—but only because several times Howard requested permission to use ‘Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus’ throughout his model only to be refused. Howard’s circus was featured in the 1982 World’s Fair in Knoxville, TN and then was exhibited in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, MI as well as the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, WI. Now



it ironically has a permanent home at The Ringling, where for the first time it can be displayed in its entirety!

Harold Dunn went to great detail when crafting his circus and it is meticulously accurate. Emulating the real circus, Harold’s model arrived on a train with its 152 wagons placed on his 57 flatcars. When the real circus arrived in any destination, the wagons with the

cookhouse tent (for the circus performers were unloaded first—and so it was for the miniature version. Every component needed for a travelling circus with its tent to accommodate 12,000 people was included, down to 7,000 folding chairs and bleachers in the big top and spectators to fill them. In addition to every imaginable circus animal, there are the stands where souvenirs were sold on the midway. Everything!

If you look closely at the left front area in the top photo you’ll see the ‘fat lady’ dressed in a red dress. I couldn’t help reflecting on the “She’s Too Fat Polka” a song made popular in years past by Arthur Godfrey and later by Bobbie Vinton. I’m certainly not implying we shouldn’t be considerate of the feelings of others yet it seems today our society has gone overboard with political correctness.

Also scattered throughout the miniature big top were clowns. Today clowns have become frightening, evil and scary! Such a sad perversion from Lou Jacob’s

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Country Register Recipe Exchange

Popcorn Salad

submitted by Lila Liebl

1 cup celery, finely chopped	1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1 can water chestnuts, drained and sliced	1 1/2 cup mayonnaise (not salad dressing)
1/2 cup chopped onions	1/4 cup sugar
1/2 lb bacon, fried and crumbled	

Mix all ingredients and refrigerate overnight. Just before serving add 6 cups of popped popcorn.

famous Ringling clown character who literally had to unfold his large frame to pull himself out of his miniature clown car as the folks in the audience laughed with glee and wonder.

I love the unsophisticated innocents of this bygone era—and after a 146-year run, the world-famous Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus closed for good in 2017. No matter how old or young you were, whenever the circus came to town cotton candy was sold and the acts were mesmerizing and magical.



John and me at The Ringling Museum

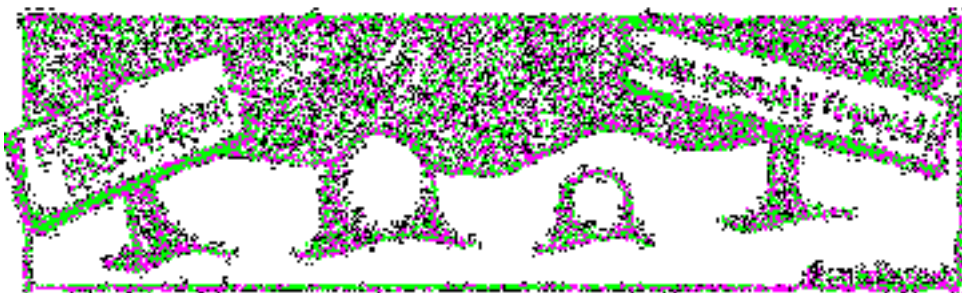
Country Register Recipe Exchange
Honey-Oat Granola Bars

submitted by Shirley Ross



- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4 cups quick-cooking oats | 1/2 cup sunflower kernels |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 3/4 cup melted butter |
| 1 cup salted peanuts (chopped) | 2/3 cup honey |
| 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips | 1 tsp vanilla |

In a large bowl, combine the oats, brown sugar, peanuts, chocolate chips and sunflower kernels. Stir in the butter, vanilla and honey. Mixture will be crumbly. Press into a greased 15x10x1 inch baking pan. Bake at 350° for 15-20 minutes or until brown and bubbly. Cool and cut into squares.



Circus Grocery List

In advance of the Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus arriving for a one-day engagement in any location, this is a typical grocery list that had to be ordered to feed the 1,300 workers and performers (including the animals).

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • 2 barrels of sugar | • 226 dozen eggs |
| • 30 gallons of milk | • 285 pounds of butter |
| • 36 bags of table salt | • 350 pounds of salad |
| • 50 bushels of potatoes | • 1,300 pounds of fresh vegetables |
| • 110 dozen oranges | • 2,220 loaves of bread |
| • 200 pounds of tea and coffee | • 2,470 pounds of fresh meat |
| • 3,600 ears of corn | |

As spectators in one location were watching the circus, the cookhouse was being packed up and loaded onto the train. Once the train got to the next destination, the cookhouse was the very first tent set up on the circus lot. Before sunrise workers had the tent erected and breakfast cooking. Soon the air was filled with the aroma of hot cakes, sausage and eggs.

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Become Inspired

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

Restful Reprieve

After the festive holiday season is behind us, we are blessed with the restful reprieve of winter. The frozen landscape's stark silhouette against a dramatic winter sunset appears as nature's new masterpiece for us to take in and enjoy. The remarkable stillness of winter is somehow tangible and can be felt deeply as we reconnect with nature and thus, reconnect with ourselves.

Peaceful Planning

The depth of winter provides us a welcomed opportunity to creatively plan projects that we are hopeful to carry out. We can take plenty of time now to envision fresh designs for spring gardens, we can carefully create a template for a primitive patio fence, or we can plan to transform an unused room in our home to be a wonderful workshop or a private crafting space to carry out projects throughout the year. As we quiet our minds to plan, we also have the benefit of enjoying the calming comforts of a snug country home.

Coming in from the Cold

Coming in from the cold to start a crackling fire with kindling and logs seasoned from the year before is a satisfying blessing a country homeowner can truly enjoy. Sitting hearthside in our favorite wingback chair as our fire provides protection from a wicked wind makes us feel a sense of self-reliant bliss. A homemade meal of tender Yankee pot roast seasoned to perfection with herbs we have dried in summer paired with a pie made from the harvested apples of fall tops off a perfect winter's eve.

Our early punched tin lantern casts a kaleidoscope of stars upon the once-unadorned ceiling of our keeping room emitting the traditional scent of bayberry. The gentle, rocking cadence of our ticking mantel clock as we soak in the fire's warmth adds to the familiar and welcomed feeling of home.

Wintertime is a season to be cherished for all the simple blessings of peace it provides. There is something timelessly restorative about winter that affords us time to plan, time to enjoy and time to dream. This winter, savor the slower rhythm of the season. Revel in the beauty of nature's majestic and sweeping views. And as you gaze upon Her gift of complete transformation, you may intuitively perceive a complete transformation of your very own.

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

★ Happy New Year! ★

Mac and Cheese in a Mug

- 1/3 cup elbow macaroni pasta uncooked
- pinch salt
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/3 cup whole or 2% milk
- 1/2 cup finely shredded cheese pre-packaged

1. Combine the macaroni, salt and water in a large mug (about 2-cup capacity).
2. Microwave for 4 minutes total, stopping every minute to stir the pasta and allow the boiling water to settle.
3. Check to make sure all the water is absorbed and add up to 30 more seconds of cooking time, if necessary.
4. When the water is all absorbed, add the milk and cheese.
5. Return to the microwave for 1 more minute.
6. Stir the mixture to combine the milk and cheese with the cooked pasta.
7. Allow the pasta to cool for a couple minutes before enjoying.



Recipe by Feel Good Foodie

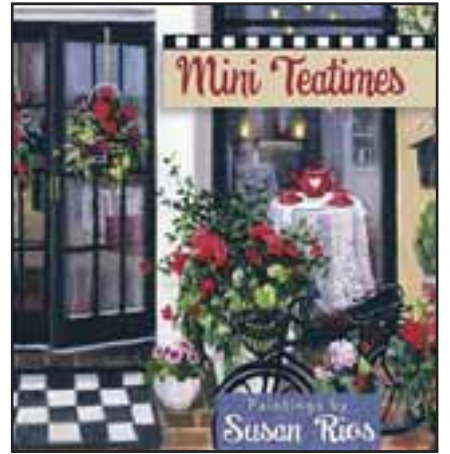
Book Review

A Little Sweet Tea

Paintings by Susan Rios

Refreshment can be found anytime and anywhere thanks to this wonderful collection of original reflections, inspiring quotes, and delicious recipes selected from some of artist Susan Rios' favorite teahouses. New paintings from Susan welcome readers to discover blessings big and small, from the gift of quiet afternoons to the delight of friendship celebrations.

Sized and designed with gift-giving in mind, this small but substantial invitation to tea's pleasures holds 16 recipes and countless words of encouragement. For tea lovers and anyone longing for a sip of renewal, style, comfort, laughter, and gratitude.



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