

The background of the entire page is a detailed illustration of two brown rabbits with white markings on their faces and chests. They are sitting in a garden filled with various flowers, including white daisies, red tulips, and pink blossoms. In front of them are two decorated Easter eggs: one is green with a floral pattern of tulips and stars, and the other is yellow with a floral pattern. The rabbits are looking at each other with interest.

# *The Country Register*

Available across the U.S.A. & Canada

Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events

March/April 2025

*Free!  
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Happy Spring!



Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events



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**2920 - 144th Ave NE**  
**Ham Lake, MN 55304**  
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## Months March/April 2025

Volume 31 Number 2

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Special Events	
<b>March</b>	
4&8.....	Jelly Roll Rug Class - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
7-9.....	March Mania - Antiques of the Midwest - Wells
14-16.....	Monthly Sew-In - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
<b>April</b>	
1-May 31.....	All Minnesota Shop Hop
9-12.....	Country Roads Shop Hop - Michele's Quilt Shop - Blue Earth
9-12.....	Country Roads Shop Hop - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn
9-12.....	Country Roads Shop Hop - Quilter's Cottage - Kiester
9-12.....	Country Roads Shop Hop - Prairie Quilting - Windom
11-12.....	12th Anniversary Celebration - Quilt Haven on Main - Hutchinson
11-12.....	28th Anniversary Spring Open House - Past & Present Antiques - Waseca
25-27.....	Monthly Sew-In - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
26-27.....	Sunshine Bus Tour - Sewing Seeds Quilt Co. - New Ulm
26-May 3.....	Crossing Borders Shop Hop - Sewing Basket - Luverne
26-May 3.....	Crossing Borders Shop Hop - Calico Cat Quilt Shop - Pipestone
26-May 3.....	Crossing Borders Shop Hop - Prairie Quilting - Windom
28.....	Super Sunday - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
<b>May</b>	
18.....	Super Sunday - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
<b>June</b>	
7.....	St. Cloud Spin Fest & Fiber Fair - Rocking Horse Farm Knitshop - St. Cloud



Happy Easter!

# Where in Minnesota?

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

(Answer on page 14 of this issue)



# Minnesota Quilt Guild Listing

Your  
Guild Logo  
Here

Your Guild Name Here  
Your Quilt Guild Address  
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Your Guild Meeting Location  
Your Guild Meeting Days

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# Yarn 101: Understanding the Basics of Yarn



“Yarn is not just string; it’s a path to creativity and expression.” – Katherine Dunn

With over 5.79 million metric tons of yarn produced annually it’s no mystery that yarn crafts have stood the test of time and continue to be popular today. Standing in front of your favorite shop’s beautiful selection of yarn can be overwhelming! With all the different thicknesses, colors and textures available each yarn brings it own personality to each project. If you are new to the world of yarn crafts it can be helpful to understand the wide array of yarn types available. Let’s dive into the wonderful world of yarn!

**Fiber content** refers to what material the yarn is made from. Each fiber has it’s own properties that affects the softness, breathability, texture, durability and feel of the final project. Understanding each type of fiber can help you make the right choice for your project.

- Plant Fiber Yarns: Derived from natural plant resources and offers a light-weight and breathable feel. Common types of plant fibers include cotton yarn, bamboo yarn, hemp yarn, linen yarn and nettle yarn.
- Animal Fiber Yarns: Natural fibers derived from animals and are chosen for their warmth and popular in projects made for winter. Common types of animal fiber include wool yarn, alpaca yarn, silk yarn, angora yarn and cashmere yarn.
- Synthetic Fiber Yarns: Man-made yarn and offers a wide range of colors, textures and weights. Synthetic yarns offer affordability which is a great option for beginners. Some common choices of synthetic yarn include acrylic yarn, nylon yarn and polyester yarn.

**Yarn weight** determines the thickness of the yarn and affects the gauge or measurement of how many stitches and rows you knit within a specified area of your project. In general yarns are divided into eight different weights:

- Lace: delicate and thin
- Super Fine: Slightly heavier than lace
- Fine: Versatile lightweight
- Medium: An all purpose yarn and go to for different projects
- Bulky: Excellent for cozy winter accessories
- Super Bulky: Some of the heaviest yarns and great for warm projects.
- Jumbo: Heaviest yarn

**Yarn ply** refers to the number of individual strands twisted together to form one single strand of yarn. Yarn ply affects many aspects of your project including durability, texture, feel, ease of use, stitch definition and pilling.

**Texture** of the yarn refers to the feel and physical characteristics like how smooth, fuzzy and soft the yarn is. Smooth yarns have a sleek surface that creates a clean defined stitch. Fuzzy yarns are soft and adds warmth to cozy accessories.

**Colors** of yarn are vast! This is where you can really make the project your own and fit your personality. Yarns come in solid, tonal, gradient or ombre, self striping, speckled, space-dyed and hand-dyed to name a few.

The choices are plentiful to make your unique project your very own and one of a kind! Now go let your personality shine!



# AND THE WINNER IS...

Patti Bock of New Ulm, MN and Sandra Gareis of New Ulm, Mn each won a copy of *Such a Wonderful You!* Patti picked up her copy of *The Country Register* at *The Thimble Box* in New Ulm and Sandra picked up her copy at *Sewing Seeds Quilt Co.* in New Ulm. Congratulations to our winners!

# Book Review

## Landslides: The Warnings Were Clear

by Doris Guggisberg



Jenna Nelson and Todd Miller were perfectly content in their single lives until their widowed parents told them they had been dating online. Virginia Nelson and Craig Miller didn't expect to find love at a dating service, but being a Christian, Craig accepted it as God's plan for his life. Virginia, still angry over the death of two husbands, didn't see it that way. Becky Stewart, Todd's sister hated her dad for not doing everything he could to save her mother from cancer, her bitterness causing a huge rift in her marriage to Ron. Virginia liked to buy lottery tickets for her friends, and when someone in the family won the ten million dollar jackpot with one of her tickets, things got interesting. And through it all, Pastor Collins of Holy Bible Lutheran Church tried to keep up with the ever secretive Millers. Romance and humor, anger and tragedy all share in this story of Christ's redemption in Atlanta, Georgia, with a little side trip to Las Vegas.

# You Could Win!

You can register to win a copy of **Landslides: The Warnings Were Clear!**  
Clip and mail in this form! If you prefer not to cut up your paper, write the form below on a note card and mail to: The Country Register; 2920 - 144th Ave NE; Ham Lake, MN 55304.  
You will be notified and receive your prize by mail! Good Luck!

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## Recipe: Homemade Guacamole

### Ingredients:

- 3 avocados
- 1/2 cup chopped tomatoes
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 1 tbsp fresh chopped cilantro
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1/2 tsp hot pepper sauce



### Directions:

Combine ingredients and mix well. Chill and serve.

## Free Pattern

For more fun and creative inspiration visit:  
[www.JacquelynnSteves.com](http://www.JacquelynnSteves.com)



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.

## The Daily Mentality

My house talks to me in the spring. It wants me to open all the doors & windows & let in fresh air, & it says "Clean me!" The hardest thing is to stay focused & not run outside to stare at the garden! ♥

Spring cleaning is GOOD, especially after it's done, after the comforters have been aired; after all the dishes & glasses have been taken out & shined up &

the cupboard shelves are sparkling clean. Then I get to go outside, bring the bird houses out of the barn, & hang a flower wreath on the kitchen door. ♥



SPRING! SPRING! SPRING!

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

WWW.SUSANBRANCH.COM



# Become Inspired

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

## Nature's Next Chapter

As the long months of winter slowly wind down, we begin to notice a welcome shift in our days. Our daylight hours stretch out before us now as if to remind us of the powerful promise of spring. An early spring walk through our yard provides us with glimpses into nature's next chapter as our lilac trees show their new buds and our friendly, vocal robins begin to appear with more frequency. Our herb gardens, which have appeared to be in hibernation all winter long are now about ready to reveal their strength, and remarkably, so are we.



## Nature's Reawakening

There is a special energy to spring that is seemingly contagious. As nature re-awakens to the glory of spring, we feel a similar need to mirror nature's forward motion. And as we embrace the opportunities to observe the blessings of spring, we become beautifully connected to the joy that it provides.

Spending more time outside rejuvenates us and the cabin fever we had at winter's end is now a distant memory. We have energy now to happily plan fresh projects for our yard-like a new stone patio or an additional raised garden bed to enhance our country yards. We might consider getting baby chicks to add to our flock of chickens to provide even more delight to our days.

A weekend spent on decorating projects like making our own twig wreaths and topiaries or rearranging our porch with welcoming antiques and fresh vignettes often give us a sense of true satisfaction. Our homes can be freshened with the season of spring as well by incorporating elements like handcrafted Easter rabbits and eggs tucked into one of our favorite antique splint baskets. And with country candles in new scents like Lemon Butter or Lavender Fields, our home's interior takes on a whole new feel of spring.

## Sharing the Blessings of Spring

This season is the perfect time to plan a special outing with friends to enjoy some special Open House events. A morning spent going out for a country breakfast could be followed by a trip to some favorite antiques shops to find the ideal treasures to round out your displays. Storefront windows might be graced with an antique wheelbarrow in its original surface, filled with faux tulips in muted spring colors. Handcrafted signs in pastel tones might inspire you to create a spring vignette in your entryway. An antique wagon in dark green might be a perfect treasure to bring home to hold some of the pansy plants you purchased on your special day. You might even be inspired by some antique tin or woodenware that could be used as planters or wall hangings in your new displays. Your ideal day with friends might end with a beautiful walk along the boardwalk of a quaint, shoreline town as you reconnect, share ideas and enjoy meaningful memories.

This season, take the time to observe nature's shift to spring. Enjoy the energized pace that accompanies the lengthening days. Make it a point to create something you have always wanted to create. And most importantly, share the transformative power of spring with those you love and when you do you will be reminded of all that nature continues to give.

--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 St. Patrick's Day ~ March 17

## UP NORTH QUILT SHOP

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• Jelly Roll Rug Class: March 4 • 5pm-8pm & March 8 • 10am-4pm •  
(\$50 plus materials)

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## This month in Minnesota History

**March 27, 1905:** The Aerial Bridge, spanning the Duluth Ship Canal, carries its first passengers across the harbor inside a carriage suspended from the bridge's framework. The system would be replaced with a lift bridge in 1930.

**April 12, 1923:** St. Paul's first automatic traffic signal, on a pedestal about ten feet high, begins operating at Fifth and St. Peter Streets.

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

your friendly quilting place

## Spring Sale

Come shop the deals, while they last! We're making room for lots of new spring fabric. Some of the deals include: \$6 one yd cuts // \$15 three yd cuts // \$20 five yd cuts // \$2 panels // \$1 FQs // 50% & 30% select fabrics // end of bolt discount on batiks



It's time for the 4th annual shop hop! It runs all of April & May. Magazines include free patterns, maps & shop directories. They are available now! You can also pre-purchase the exclusive fabric & take it home in April.



1731 W Superior St. Duluth, MN 55806  
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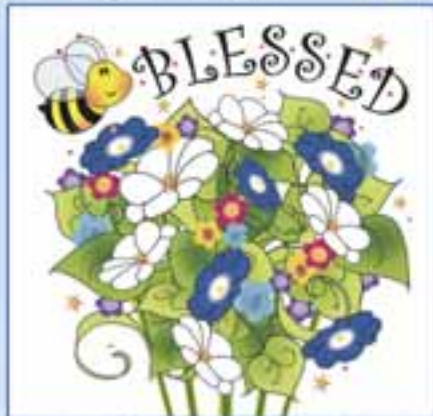
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## GIRLFRIEND WISDOM



"Bless You" is often heard after a sneeze,  
 even from a stranger in the grocery line. It feels really good and kind when we  
 hear "Bless You"! How about the phrase "A Blessing in Disguise" referring to  
 something that at first appears bad or unlucky but is actually good. We love it  
 when that happens! "Count your many Blessings name them one by one..."  
 an age old hymn from 1897 is a perfect practise to make a special effort  
 to appreciate the good things in one's life. The Irish have a well-known blessing:  
 "May your troubles be less, Your Blessings be more, and nothing but happiness  
 come through your door." A wedding blessing: May your marriage always bring  
 glory to God, joy to one another, and Blessings to your family for many gener-  
 ations to come." A House Blessing: Bless this house, O Lord we pray, make  
 it safe by night and day.. Bless these walls so firm and stout, Keeping want and  
 trouble out... Bless this door that it may prove, Every open, to Joy and Love..."

### GIRLFRIEND WISDOM:

May you add your own blessing to these examples each and every day!

Joy & Blessings,

Jody

Girlfriend Wisdom is written and illustrated by Jody Houghton®.  
 Color files of this writing and artwork are available: www.JodyHoughtonDesigns.etsy.com

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## Of Time and Tides

by Kerri Habben Bosman

One afternoon last October most of our family was gathered on the beach. Most of the men were fishing, most of the women were sitting and talking, and the youngest grandson and I were building a miniature fortress some distance away from the others.



Quinn and I took turns going to the water's edge to get wet sand for our creation. We also gathered sea grass, shells, and small bits of driftwood to press into the walls of our fort. We were immersed in our work. After all, whether you are seven or fifty-one, playing in the sand is captivating and affirming.

We took our time, packing the walls and smoothing them as the ocean waves grew closer. Suddenly

Quinn stopped working and looked at me very earnestly.

"I don't think this is a good idea," he said. "The water is going to come and take everything away."

I paused, studying his serious eyes. I listened to the ocean, thinking first that an entire philosophy book could be written based on his statement. What I was really waiting for was the right words.

"Yes, it is," I answered. "But we will always remember this moment, our fort, and how we made it together. The tide cannot take that away. I think we should keep building it anyway."

"Okay," he said.

So, we continued on.

I have thought of this day many times since as my stepdaughter continued valiantly on in her battle to survive cancer. She did her best to thrive, packing all the goodness and love she could in the eighteen months after her diagnosis. Our family consciously made memories-going to the beach, watching her kids' sporting events, and often just sitting and being together. She loved to make charcuterie boards to feed our big family as we watched football games. We played yard games, like corn hole and bocce. When the time came that she was no longer strong enough to take part, she was still right there with us. Her spirit remained dauntless.

We all knew that the tide was coming in. How fast and how soon, that we didn't know. So, we just kept treasuring the next thing we did together, knowing that these times would sustain us when we needed them to. They are now our real-life fortress.

For my stepdaughter, the tide came in on January 23rd.

Yet, for all of us who love her, she will never fully leave us. She loved all of us so steadily and with an inherent and unending kindness. It was simply the way she lived. Along with those gentle ways, she carried within her a resolute strength that bolstered those around her.

I will forever see her in everything she loved, most especially her three children. I will see her in the graceful motions of the hummingbirds that come to our feeders. I will hear her in our laughter when our family is all together.

I will feel her essence especially when our family is on the beach. She loved the ocean with a quiet and enduring passion. She happily spent many hours just sitting on the sand, watching the waves. She also loved being on the water, enjoying her stand-up paddleboard. She was happiest, though, when it was all of us together, taking in the sand and sea.

Perhaps during this new time, we'll all gather on the beach. It is highly likely that Quinn and I will build another creation even as we know the water will take it back. For we will always remember. And we will always love.

The tide cannot take that away.

So, we continue on.

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

## Bird & Brain DESIGNS

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### Easter Egg on Branch Tea Towel

Design by Robin Knapier



Enjoy this Embroidery project from Bird Brain Designs as a GIFT for you or Someone Special. Embroider a decorated Easter Egg hanging on a branch on a tea towel. Make something beautiful and embroider in just an afternoon or an evening.

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Print out the embroidery pattern and get to work.

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#### Transferring Instructions

- Wash and dry your Tea Towel in the machine before embroidery.
- Iron your towel with a steam iron plus some spray starch.
- Place the design pattern on a light box or in a bright window, tape down.
- Place the guest towel over the pattern. Tape securely.
- Trace the Design Transfer Pattern onto your towel with a Brown Pigma permanent marker.

#### Alternate method I used to transfer design:

- Print the Design Transfer Pattern on Transfer-Eze with your copier.
- Pull the printed film off the paper backing and finger press onto your towel.
- Embroider through the Transfer-Eze film and towel - works wonderfully!

#### Embroidery Instructions

- Lines are Back Stitch, dots are French Knots (wrap twice) and loops are Lazy Daisy.
- Back Stitch brown stems, green leaves and violet ribbon.
- Add French Knots on ribbon in violet and 2 pink on branch stem.
- Back Stitch the egg with light blue and egg shell with yellow.
  - From the top of the egg add 3 pink lazy daisies.
  - Back stitch 2 rows of green and yellow zig-zags.
- Make 4 Straight Stitch Stars in violet, pink, turquoise and green.
- On the egg shell, add a row of pink Straight Stitches and French Knots.
  - Add 2 rows of light blue Back Stitches.
- Make pink Lazy Daisy flowers with yellow French Knot center and green stems.
  - Add 2 rows of turquoise Back Stitches.
- Finish your tea towel with scattered violet French Knots.
- Remove the Transfer-Eze in warm water according to the instructions.

#### Materials Needed

- 1 Yellow Stripe Towel
- Transfer-Eze to transfer design OR
- Brown Micron Pigma Pen to transfer design
- 2 yards DMC #8 Perle cotton color 208 Violet
- 1 Yard DMC #8 Perle cotton color 302 Brown
- 2 yard DMC #8 Perle cotton color 792 Yellow
  - 2 yards #8 Perle Cotton color 899 Pink
- 2 yards DMC #8 Perle Cotton color 3328 Light Blue
- 2 yards DMC #8 Perle cotton color 3396 Green
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- 1 tbsp butter, melted
- 1 tsp oil
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp. Brown Sugar
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 tbsp milk
- 3 tbsp flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- pinch salt
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 cup finely shredded carrots

### For The Frosting:

- 1 tbsp softened cream cheese
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp butter, softened
- 1 tbsp powdered sugar

1. Combine the melted butter, oil, sugar, brown sugar, vanilla extract and milk.
2. Stir until blended well.
3. Add the flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon.
4. Mix until just combined.
5. Cook on high for 1 - 1 1/2 minutes. Start with a minute and check for doneness.

### For the Frosting:

1. In a small bowl, mix all the frosting ingredients.
2. Allow cake to cool for at least a minute before topping with the frosting.



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## What in the World is That Thing?

by Becky Van Vleet

I have been blessed to have this beautiful "thing" in the corner of my dining room for a number of years which boasts of a nostalgic time period on rural farms. (Refer to the photograph.) But, what in the world is that thing you ask? I really would not be able to answer this at all if not for my mother and other family members explaining this vintage domestic good to me.

First, my mother. She loved antiques in my growing up years, and especially if she had a memory of one's use in her family. So as her parents gradually got rid of things they were no longer using, she let it be known that she'd love to have certain items in our home rather than see them discarded. Yes, even a cream separator—that's what this thing is. After she freed the old separator of rust and had it painted and fixed up a bit, she donned her newly acquired farm item with artificial greenery, much like I have today, and placed it in the corner of our kitchen. And when company asked, what in the world is that thing, she explained exactly what it was and how it functioned to separate the cream from fresh milk from the cows.

A few years ago, I learned a little more about the Thomas family cream separator from my twin aunts, Sue and Mary.

My aunts shared that their father, my grandfather, bought some cows when they moved to a new house in 1942 in rural Indiana. Shortly thereafter, he purchased the cream separator to sell cream. The separator had three containers that were used during the separation process. The top container was used to hold all the whole milk from the cows, and once it was full, Mary and Sue would take turns turning the handle around and around. The rich, thick cream would separate from the whole milk and flow out of one of the spouts. The skim milk would flow out of the other spout.

It was Sue and Mary's responsibility to keep the separator clean with boiling water so the cream would be free of germs. The young twins smiled with pride every time they got a good grade and price for the cream they sold, after it was checked by the local inspector.

If you live in the Midwest, you may be lucky enough to find a cream separator in someone's cellar or a neighbor's barn. Since this area of the country has a lot of dairy farms, there are often a few separators at any garage sales you might stumble upon. As for me, I have a priceless remnant of pastoral America sitting right in my dining room. When we have company, it is not uncommon for someone to ask, what in the world is that thing? And I'm happy to talk about family memories and the good old days any time I can!



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](http://www.beckyvanvleet.com).

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## Life in Skunk Hollow

by Julie A Druck

A Lesson From the Trees



I came across a story about a man who purchased a piece of property to build a home alongside a large lake. The location was heavily wooded, so he had the majority of the trees bulldozed and the land cleared, leaving only a few choice specimens. Not long after that, a soaking rain that lasted for days, poured over and saturated the site. Following the rain came heavy winds, and many of the choice trees that the man had left standing, fell over. He had not realized that the roots of those trees were intricately intertwined with the trees he had bulldozed. Their root systems had been compromised by the massive upheaval of the ground. Without the strength of their fellow trees, the choice ones were destroyed as well.

Upon reading the conclusion of that story, my mind jumped to a scene I had viewed a few days prior. I had been watching the funeral of President Jimmy Carter which took place on a frigid cold January day. As the color guard was waiting outside the National Cathedral until it was time to move the casket into the church, there were several military men standing near the hearse with flags. One man held the Flag of the President. I should probably say that he held ON to the flag. In the intense cold and wind, it was taking every ounce of his strength and power to not be whipped about. In fact, several times he was blown sideways. He would fight against the wind and get back to his original position, only to be blown sideways again. My heart went out to him.

Then I noticed the young soldier who held the American flag. He, too, was fighting to stand still and hang on to the flag. But I realized that he wasn't struggling as much because the other two members of the color guard were literally pressed up against him, infusing him with their strength as well. He was fighting to hold onto the flag, but he was able to stay in place because of the added strength of his comrades.

Connecting these two stories is the thread that there is strength in numbers. It's easy to get blown off course or toppled over when we are left on our own. We need the strength and encouragement and help of one another if we're going to remain upright.

As we move into spring, I look forward to paying a little more attention to the trees that are beginning to bud around our farm. In the past, I've recognized some of their contributions to my life – their sap's perseverance to provide us with the sweet deliciousness of syrup, their abundant crowns shade us from the summer's heat, and in autumn we are awed by their flaming beauty. But this spring, I want to acknowledge the trees' gift to us that's hidden from view – the reminder that our intertwined roots are what make us strong. I want to follow their example, and diligently and persistently work at weaving my connections with others, so that when the rains and winds come, we all remain standing upright – stronger, because we are being held up by each other.

--Julie Druck is from York, Pennsylvania, and writes from her farm in Skunk Hollow. She'd welcome your comments at [thedrucks@netzero.com](mailto:thedrucks@netzero.com).

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Yvonne Hollenbeck

### Pieces of the Past

As time goes marching forward, and it marches oh so fast,  
 it seems that only memories are all we have that last.

They may be of a loved one, or a special time or place,  
 or remnants of a wedding dress, some ribbons and some lace.

The chair where mother used to sit and rock her babes at night,  
 or piece a quilt to keep them warm, and all by oil light.

The photographs of people that we didn't even know,  
 that have preserved a precious glimpse of life from long ago.

So standing on the edge of life, we oft look back and see  
 reminders of the days gone past and how things used to be.  
 We cherish all these tokens made from want and made from will,  
 and miss the hands that held them once, voices forever still.

We'll treasure that old patchwork quilt that once was on our bed,  
 and keep around a few good books that some loved one has read.

And it could never matter just how fine new dishes are,  
 ...they never could compare to grandma's good old cookie jar.

We know we can't retrace our steps and live our lives again,  
 but we can cling to treasures 'cause that's all that will remain.

For all we have are memories, as long as they will last,  
 in things we cherish most of all ... these pieces of the past.

Order Yvonne's new book, "A Stitch in Rhyme" at  
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Yvonne Hollenbeck, from Clearfield, SD, performs her original poetry throughout the United States, captivating audiences in her wake. She is one of the most published cowgirl poets in the West and is not only a popular banquet and civic entertainer, but also co-writes songs with many western entertainers. Yvonne also pens a weekly column in the "Farmer-Rancher Exchange" and writes articles about life in rural America in various publications throughout the West. For more information, visit <https://www.yvonnehollenbeck.com>



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# Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

## The Interim

Heralded by cold Arctic wind during a late-summer blast of icy weather, fall arrived a little early last year. It didn't matter that I still had flowers blooming in my yard. The unseasonably frigid weather froze every bit of unprotected vegetation with its scathing record-breaking cold snap.

My pink petunias looked pathetic. Overnight their very life-force was snuffed out at the height of their season to blossom and bloom.

Nothing could bring restoration. In short, everything was dead and gone.

If I want petunias to grow again, I'll have to plant new ones next Spring.

Near the petunias were some vibrant bright orange poppies. The poppies looked even more pitiful than the petunias. The poppies, which had grown large and tall, were transformed overnight into a mound of dark and murky mush.

One big and all-important difference, however, exists between the petunias and the poppies. That difference is a strong and sustaining root system.

When Spring returns, my poppies will grow again. They'll actually grow even bigger and better and brighter because they possess a strong core of inner strength.

Into each life a little rain must fall. Sometimes the rain falls gently to wash the earth and settle the dust. Often, driven by a harsh gale-force wind, the rain pounds down with enough force to erode away every weakness. On occasion the rain is accompanied by frigid temperatures and everything its freezing fingers touch becomes bone-chilling ice. No matter how the rain falls, the storm's passage always replenishes the moisture necessary to sustain and perpetuate growth.

The longer I live, the more I realize life equates to lessons and learning. As my days accumulate into weeks, and months, and years, I've learned and painfully relearned many of life's lessons. One of those lessons is we're all appointed a season to be born, another to grow, and finally a time to die.

In the interim, I'd like to live my life more like the poppies than the petunias. I'd like to possess the stamina to perpetually endure the cold harsh seasons life sends my way with enough inner strength and faith to continually be ready for each new Spring.



©2025 Jan Keller No reprint without permission Jan shares other pieces of her life in her books, *Pieces From My Crazy Quilt*, and *The Tie That Binds*. These books can be ordered by calling 719-866-8570, or writing: Black Sheep Books, 11250 Glen Canyon Drive, Peyton, CO 80831

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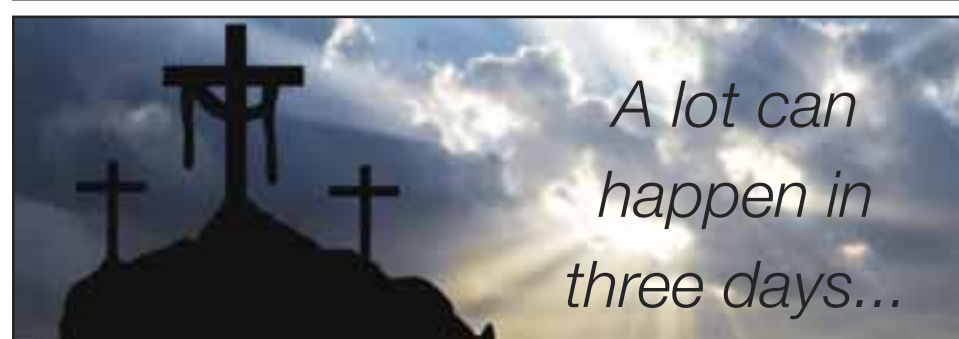
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Wit and Wisdom  
Spring Brings Hope  
by Roxanne J. Ferguson



My favorite season of the year is spring. There is a freshness in the air that breathes new beginnings. When the little white snowdrops poke their heads through the wet soil, they seem to say, “Be gone, winter! You have been here long enough!” They are followed by the purple crocus who come with a smile and confidently say, “Spring is on its way!” When yellow daffodils open their smiling faces, we know that spring is here in full force. Then tulips, in their multi-color outfits, celebrate the triumph of spring. “For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of the birds is come” (Song of Solomon 2:11,12 KJV Bible)

Birds were returning before the snow had left us. I wondered if they were disappointed when they arrived, but it didn’t seem to deter them. Red-winged blackbirds and robins were the first to return. We have since enjoyed many visitors at our bird feeder and they enjoy the seeds we provide.

We have had fun this spring trying something new. We put eggs from our chickens into an incubator, keeping track of temperature and humidity. It was our first attempt at this endeavor and our hatching rate was low, but we were still happy to see a few chicks push their way out of their shells and find their way into the world. The little yellow balls of fluff just show us what determination can accomplish! My father decided those little yellow chicks needed some company. After a trip to the local farm store, he arrived at my house with a dozen chicks, adding a variety of color to my little flock. I have to say, chicks make me happy. They, too, represent the newness of spring. They are fluffy and busy and excited about life!

“Where flowers bloom so does hope.” (A quote from Lady Bird Johnson) I would have to add to this...Where flowers bloom and little chicks peep, there is hope! Spring brings hope...hope of better weather and warmer days, hope of changing seasons and that life goes on, hope for better days. We all need hope in our lives. The Bible says, “Blessed is he...whose hope is in the Lord his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them – the Lord, who remains faithful forever.” (Psalm 145:5,6)

I don’t know about you, but I need hope. I like spring and new life. It reminds me of the hope I have in Jesus. By putting my faith in Him and the price He paid for our salvation, I have hope for new life in heaven and hope for eternity. I hope that you have this hope, too.

--© 2025 Roxanne Ferguson lives in northern New York State, between Lake Ontario and the Adirondack Mountains, an area called the Tug Hill Plateau...snow country. Roxanne is a wife, mother, and grandmother of 8. She enjoys gardening, preserving food, music, writing and spending time with her grandchildren. She is active in her church and community. A retired teacher, she wonders how she ever had time to work. (witandwisdomwriters@gmail.com)



## Springing Ahead Without Falling Back

by Wayne M. Bosman

I have not been able to write much lately. Life does that sometimes. The holidays grab my attention, and then after the New Year begins, I get to breathe out again. I figure out where I am and what I might have to say.

This year, life has added even more complications. Shortly after New Year's, my 40-year-old daughter went into the hospital for more chemotherapy, a last-ditch attempt against the cancer she had battled for the last year and a half. The latest obstacle was a bout of pneumonia that had to be treated before any other treatment could take place. It was the beginning of a downward spiral that ended a week ago.

As difficult as all of this has been, I know that I am not the first or only one to deal with a loved one's premature death. My wife, Kerri, and I have been watching my daughter's fitful decline since she received the official diagnosis. We moved to our current home to be able to take care of things for her and her husband and their children. Doing all of the little things that still needed to occur. Being available to pick up her children from school, shopping and preparing meals suitable for her family provided her with some relief knowing that they still were getting what they needed when she could no longer do the things that she loved to do as a wife and mother. As the cancer progressed and she was anchored more and more to the house, she was always happy to get the little messages that we had picked up her son on time and what we were cooking for supper.

Now that momentum, which had become the central focus of our lives, has come to a halt. Life is demanding a new momentum. Life always does. We are all still grieving and will be for a long time, but children need meals. The Marine Corps has gone above and beyond in providing leave for her husband, but ultimately, he will go back to his full-time duties. Kerri and I will settle into the new momentum life demands of us.

That brings me to the theme of this article. While we are still mired in the middle of winter with remnants of last week's snow on the ground, it is clear that it will not always be that way. As the snow melts and we look out the back window at the garden space, our thoughts are already turning toward the next stage. Last year's garden was one of our most productive ever and we are starting to dream of an even better one this year. Seed catalogs are arriving. Plans for starting seedlings indoors are pushing their way to the forefront of our minds.



Of course, some of this is what you might call a defense mechanism. Focus on growth and new life, so the sorrows from what is lost forever don't drag us under. Naturally. There is too much about the end of life that we can't comprehend. To me, the greatest act of faith is to continue to live - to plant seeds that I may or may not ever get to harvest. My mother is 104 years old now. If you ever want to get her

talking, ask about her garden and all of the gardens she has tended over the years. Ask her about her mother's garden and the bounty it produced that got her family and many neighbors through the Great Depression.

It won't be long now before the first signs of spring arrive. The silly daffodils that always seem to bloom between snowstorms. Time for me to spring ahead and not fall back.

Wayne M. Bosman is a retired mechanic living in Cape Carteret, NC. His email is [wbosman1@gmail.com](mailto:wbosman1@gmail.com).



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### Recipe: Poor Man's Potato Salad

submitted by Patti Lee Bock

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- 1 can (16oz) whole potatoes, drained and cubed
- 1 hard boiled egg, diced
- 3 tbsp mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp onion, chopped
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper

#### Directions:

In a medium bowl, combine potatoes and egg. In another bowl, combine mayonnaise, onion, mustard, parsley, salt and pepper. Stir into potato mixture. Chill.







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## Everything's Coming Up-Crocuses!

by Janet M. Bair

I love spring bulbs! Out of the many flowers I have planted over the years, crocuses and daffodils are the most enduring. I can hardly wait to see our purple and yellow hyacinths blooming. Sadly, our tulips have not survived the squirrels' descent upon them.

What is especially fun is that my 'spring flower bed' is located right next to our house in a very sunny spot. In January, the daffodils and crocuses shoot their green tips through a frozen earth. Snow doesn't seem to stop their daring rise above ground.

This has been a most encouraging spot in our yard, for when all looks bleak and dead, the daffodils remain undefeated year after year. Surprisingly our crocuses somehow have become scattered all about our front lawn. I know I didn't plant the bulbs in the middle of the lawn. Who moved them? Only the squirrels know for sure.

Last year I counted 32 lavender crocus flowers blooming among the grass. I know I originally planted yellow and white crocuses too but I guess they taste better(?) because they have disappeared. It has been kind of fun to see where the flowers pop up.



With spring coming, maybe I will get busy like the squirrels. I'll sew some new flowered hot mats or cloth napkins. Or I could create a new wall hanging for the front door. It's time to finish up the larger quilting projects before our two spare bedrooms need to become space for summer visitors. The bedroom I sew in is not air conditioned which makes for uncomfortable quilting days in the summer.

I just finished an orange and yellow quilt top that needs quilting. Our quilt guild sews Comfort Quilts for The Hole in the Wall Gang Summer Camp in CT. The last collection day for quilts is in May. I have two other quilts in process besides the orange one to finish by then.

I thought the lavender quilt I'm working on would be easy. However, I bought the fabric two years ago and didn't realize there wouldn't be enough for the pattern I chose until after I cut it out. I will have to improvise something.

Isn't that what we all do with life—we improvise? Yes, the squirrels may have changed my garden design but it's still beautiful. My quilt will still make some little girl happy with whatever pattern I improvise.

What projects are you working on? What are your plans this spring? Even if they have to be changed around a bit, I hope that you find some colorful ways to make your days brighter.

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



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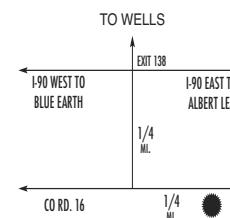
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# Exploring the World of International Quilt Festivals: A Global Journey of Inspiration Part 1 of 4

by Kim Caskey of Kim Caskey Tours

Quilt festivals are among the most inspiring and visually rich gatherings in the quilt and textile world, celebrating the creativity, artistry and cultural diversity found within quilting. From local guild events to prestigious international exhibitions, each show offers a unique glimpse into the evolving world of textiles and fiber art.

I host many group tours of textile enthusiasts through fascinating countries. We visit destinations such as Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the UK, France, Italy, Japan and parts of Canada, each offering an unforgettable quilting experience. In this series of articles, I will share highlights of quilt festivals, from local guild gatherings with strong community spirit, to major international events featuring juried competitions, themed exhibitions and displays from world-renowned artists.

## Local Quilt Guild Quilt Shows



Local Quilt Guild Show

A local quilt guild show is a heartwarming celebration of quilting, bringing together community spirit and artistic expression. Organized by guild members, these shows transform local spaces into vibrant displays of color, texture and pattern, where

quilters of all levels—from beginner to seasoned artists—showcase and celebrate their unique work. Each quilt tells a personal story, while reflecting the collective passion of the guild, making these gatherings a beautiful tribute to quilting as both a craft and an art form.

Guild shows have an open, welcoming atmosphere, often featuring themed categories like traditional, modern and applique quilts, as well as specialty categories such as seasonal quilts or "first quilt show entries." Many shows offer interactive elements, with live demonstrations, workshops and a lively vendor marketplace selling quilting supplies. With raffles, door prizes and a chance to connect with other enthusiasts, local quilt guild shows are as much about community as they are about creativity, inspiring newcomers and experienced quilters alike.

## International Quilt Festivals

In contrast, large international festivals like Quilt Canada, the International Quilt Festival in Houston, the Festival of Quilts in Birmingham, and the European Patchwork Meeting in France elevate the art form to new heights. Juried-in competitions at these events highlight some of the world's finest quilts, selected by expert panels for their creativity, technique and innovation. In addition to competitive exhibitions, these festivals often host themed displays and invited exhibitions from renowned textile artists, offering attendees a chance to witness cutting-edge

techniques and trends from around the world.

The process of being juried into a juried competition is highly selective, and acceptance is a significant honor for participants. The selection process begins with an online submission, where quilters submit photographs and detailed descriptions of their work. Submissions are reviewed by a panel of professional jurors, who are carefully chosen for their expertise in quilting, design and textile arts. These jurors evaluate the quilts based on a range of criteria including technical skill, originality, design composition, color use and overall visual impact. Getting juried into a competition, such as these, signifies a quilt meets a high standard of excellence. Accepted quilts are prominently displayed for attendees to admire. Winning entries receive cash awards



and accolades in categories such as Best of Show, Excellence in Hand or Machine Quilting and Best Use of Color. Attending a juried-in competition quilt show is both an inspiration for viewers and an acknowledgment of the incredible talent and diversity within the worldwide quilting community.

The vendor mall at an international quilt festival is a bustling marketplace and paradise for quilting and textile enthusiasts, featuring an incredible range of products from quilt shops, specialty stores and online vendors. Spanning aisle upon aisle, these vendor malls offer everything from high-quality and unique fabrics in every imaginable color and print, to specialty threads, patterns and notions that cannot be found anywhere else. It is a grand meeting place for quilt shop owners, designers and artisans, who bring unique goods directly to festival-goers, showcasing items like hand-dyed textiles, rare imported materials, custom-designed patterns and the latest sewing tools and technology. The mall buzzes with excitement as attendees explore, sample and discover hidden treasures, often finding inspiration in the newest products, innovative kits and expert demonstrations. For many, the vendor mall is a highlight of the festival, where creativity and commerce intersect in a vibrant celebration of all things quilting.

We'll cover **Quilt Canada** and **The International Quilt Festival** in the next issue of *The Country Register*!

Kim Caskey, who is based in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is a professional longarm quilter and owner of Kim Caskey Tours. Kim hosts specialized textile-based tours in numerous international destinations with unique and exclusive textile visits and activities creating memorable experiences for quilters, stitchers, their family and friends. Everyone is welcome on Kim's tours! [www.kimcaskey.ca/tours](http://www.kimcaskey.ca/tours), [kim@kimcaskey.ca](mailto:kim@kimcaskey.ca), 1-780-288-9008.





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## Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski

### Reunions



When I think of the word, "reunions," the first images which come to mind are high school and family reunions. Although I have attended a number of family reunions over the years, I have never attended a school reunion. Was I invited to one? Great question.

This past weekend, my grown son and I attended an event which came very close to that sense of a high school reunion: the annual Show Choir Dinner Show at his high school.

It's been about twelve years since he last performed a show with his high school's show choir, but they had a year for the record books: after more than 15 years of the program, his group made it all the way to the National's Level of competition (after attaining 1st place in the Regional's competition).



As many do, my family eventually moved out of that community. My son left shortly after graduation, while I stayed only a few more years.

This, then, was our first return to the show choir circuit. We had talked about catching a competition in other towns over the years, but it's difficult to locate the schedule information without connections. We walked into the high school, wearing our spirit jackets with pride, and chatted with the strangers seated with us at the dinner table.

The show was nice. The dinner was nearly a carbon copy to what I had helped serve twelve years earlier. The team singers and dancers, however, looked so much younger.

While eating, one of our table mates (a current team member's parent) handed me the small flyer which had been sitting closest to her plate; it was announcing an "All Show Choir Reunion" this coming summer. She encouraged us to take it, as my son was the only alum of the program sitting at our table. On the long drive home, though, my son said while he might go to see the performance, he will not participate in the three days of rehearsals and such. "It will be fun," he explained, "to have them see me, and see that I'm not dead."

"What? Why would you suggest they think you are dead?"

"Because I'm not on social media. No one has kept in touch with me. In fact, the only person I've even seen from high school in the past ten years is..."

What do we gain, or lose, as the communication styles change from one generation to the next? Like my son, I have no social media accounts. I call my mother regularly, keep in touch with a small collection of people through text messages, and send a larger group of people the annual Christmas letter update.

My mother, who has never sent a text message (and can no longer recall how to access email), attends her high school AND college reunions. Invitations arrive in her mailbox, or come as phone calls from a committee chair.

We have my daughter to thank for this one; she sent me a text message.

## Say Goodbye

by Barbara Kalkis

Frosty the Snowman has gone away,  
But we are assured he will be back one day.  
So, we grit our teeth in the January freezes  
With colds and coughs and flu and sneezes.

February arrives with Punxsutawney Phil  
Who slumbers through winter but knows the drill.  
He'll be poked and prodded by a man with a stick,  
And Phil will pronounce a forecast that is wrong but quick.

The Lion and the Lamb vie to enter first in March,  
Forgetting that Mother Nature has a secret heart  
That make days frigid, warm, sunny or drizzly,  
Leaving us sad, happy, morose or giggly.

Spring is unpredictable but so alluring,  
Enough to make winter worth enduring.  
So, say goodbye to winter's brazen chills,  
It's time to laugh with the crocus, tulips and daffodils.

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## 2 minute Lift

by Kathy J. Sotak

Cleaning My Ears:  
The Hearing Method That Changed My Life

My father passed away this past year, marking a new chapter: both parents are now ancestors, whispering their wisdoms through the ethers instead of the phone line. I still feel them though, guiding me along my own yellow brick road with their hands gently on my shoulder.

If you are in this category too you know that the first holiday season is like no other. It is emptier. There is a deep wanting filling your space. It is just not the same as it was.

Amidst my sadness, I'm thankful that I received full peace on my father's life while he was still alive. There are no lingering regrets or mysteries to solve.

It wasn't always like that though. It took me most of my life to figure out my dad. He was a farmer and rancher, therefore worked from sun-up to sun-down. Because of his hard work ethic our primary conversations were at supper time. And those conversations were pretty lame, like "How was school?" "What gas mileage are you getting?" or "Let's play a game of cards."

I wanted to have rich conversations with him like I did with my mother. We could talk for hours and we were a lot alike. She was a writer, and I am now a writer. She was a photographer, and I am now a photographer. She found joy and curiosity all around her. For example, my mother brought me into her world of noticing wild baby's breath growing in the prairie ditches, or watching the tiniest of spiders weaving their home in the corner window. Most impressive, she could notice a hurting heart from friends and strangers alike, then did her best to share compassion and peace to brighten their spirit.

Naturally, when my mother died 21 years ago, I wanted to communicate with my dad just like I did with mom. I just could not figure out how to communicate with him though.

A few years ago, it dawned on me. He had been communicating this whole time – but I wasn't listening. You see, he did not communicate like my mother. He spoke in his own way: not through his words – he communicated through his actions.

I started watching his actions instead of his words, and a whole new relationship opened up. I listened as he loved unconditionally. I watched as he forgave those who hurt him. I saw how he let the little things go – all of them. Yes, he shook his head at some of us sometimes, but he never said a word in judgment. He knew it was our life's choices, and instead likely said a quiet little prayer. Above all of this, I watched as he gave thanks to God and Jesus throughout his life.

I rewound time even further to look back on his life with these new ears of mine. Despite working farmer and rancher hours, he ended early some days when it came to service work. He was an elder of his church, serving a vital role in the spiritual health of the community. He volunteered in many non-profit organizations and local services, such as being a volunteer fire fighter. My dad would always help others when it was the right thing to do and he had the means to do it.

Now that he is gone, I heard his wisdom loud and clear: every day God is expressing itself through our hands and heart.

We have no choice but to reflect on our own lives: how are our actions imprinting our legacy?

Let's not add to our new year's resolution list. How about we simply give gratitude for what we're already expressing through our hands and heart. Also, who do we have a hard time hearing today in our life? Let's take these expanded ears to them and I bet we will hear clear as a bell.



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

## Garlic Parmesan Chicken and Potatoes

recipe courtesy of Better Homebase

## For the Chicken:

4 boneless chicken breasts  
1 tsp Italian seasoning  
1/2 tsp paprika  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/4 tsp black pepper  
1 tbsp olive oil

## For the Potatoes:

1.5 pounds baby Yukon Gold or red potatoes, halved  
3 tbsp olive oil  
4 garlic cloves, minced  
1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/4 tsp black pepper

Prepare the Chicken: Pat the chicken dry with paper towels. In a small bowl, mix the Italian seasoning, paprika, salt and pepper. Rub the chicken breasts with olive oil and coat evenly with the seasoning mixture.

Prepare the Potatoes: In a large bowl, toss the halved potatoes with olive oil, garlic, parmesan cheese, salt and pepper until evenly coated.

Assemble on the Pan: Place the seasoned chicken on one side of the prepared baking sheet. Spread the potatoes evenly in a single layer on the other side.

Bake: Roast in a 400° preheated oven for 25-30 minutes. Flip the potatoes halfway through. Check chicken internal temperature ensuring it reaches 165°. In the last 5 minutes of cooking, sprinkle some extra parmesan cheese over the chicken and potatoes.

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## Spring's Arrival

by Janet Young

Spring, a transition season between winter and summer, is when the world comes alive again, after hibernating for the past three months. It is a time when the days are longer, while the nights grow shorter. And, almost overnight the grass begins to turn green, the leaves begin to bud, and the birds have returned heralding with their glorious chirps to everyone that Spring has arrived!

As we welcome the warmth of a new season, we are mindful of all that this new season brings. For example, if you are a gardener, now is the time to plant seeds in your vegetable garden, or clean out your flower beds and fill them with colorful flowers. It is, also, the beginning of grass-cutting season, preparing your porch or patio for those summertime moments that make your heart sing as you languish in the splendor of a warm summer night, after being couped up all winter long.

After a long, cold winter, Spring brings its' many virtues, as it ushers in an invigorating spirit that makes us come alive. Our tasks while numerous this time of year are accomplished with a new sense of enthusiasm. Suddenly Spring house-cleaning takes on a new dimension, as we fling upon our windows and let the refreshing warm breezes flow through our house.

Our spirits are lifted as we look forward to celebrating Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, and maybe even April Fool's Day. Adding to that list might be making plans for your summer vacation if you have not already done so, or planning your first barbecue.

In addition to all the fun Spring affords, this might be a good time for reflection. For example, how are you doing with you New Year's resolution? It's never too late to renew those resolutions, after all this is a season of renewal.

As we enter this rejuvenating time of the year, my wish for you is that you will take a deep breath, throw open your windows, and let the celebration begin, for Spring 2025 arrives on March 25th!

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Call for more information!

## Recipe: Winter Fruit Salad

submitted by Patti Lee Bock

### Ingredients:

- 1 can (20oz) pineapple chunks
- 1 package (3 -1/8 oz) cook and serve vanilla pudding
- 1 qt mixed fresh fruit chunks (apples, bananas oranges, pears etc)
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
- 1/3 cup flaked coconut
- Whipped topping

### Directions:

Drain pineapple, reserving juice. Set pineapple aside. In a saucepan, combine pineapple juice and pudding mix. Cook over medium heat until thickened. Cool. Combine pineapple, other fruit, nuts and coconut in a large salad bowl. Add pudding/dressing and stir to coat. Chill until ready to serve. Garnish with whipped topping if desired.

