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The Country Register

Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events



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Months March/April 2026

Volume 32 Number 2

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Special Events

March

- 13-15.....March Mania Sale - Antiques of the Midwest - Wells
- 14.....Prosperity Hens Class - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls

April

- 1-May 31.....All Minnesota Shop Hop
- 10-11.....13th Anniversary Celebration - Quilt Haven on Main - Hutchinson
- 10-11.....New Ulm Quilt Show - New Ulm
- 10-11.....New Ulm Quilt Show - Sewing Seeds Quilt Company - New Ulm
- 15-18.....Country Roads Shop Hop - Michele's Quilting and Sewing - Blue Earth
- 15-18.....Country Roads Shop Hop - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn
- 15-18.....Country Roads Shop Hop - Prairie Quilting - Windom
- 15-18.....Country Roads Shop Hop - Quilter's Cottage - Kiester
- 25-May 2.....Crossing Borders Spring Fling Shop Hop - Prairie Quilting - Windom
- 25-May 2.....Crossing Borders Shop Hop - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn
- 25-May 2.....Crossing Borders Spring Fling Shop Hop - Sewing Basket - Luverne

June

- 6.....St. Cloud Spin Fest & Fiber Fair - Rocking Horse Farm

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

De-Clutter, Design or Ditch It? Spring Cleaning's New Rules

by Barbara Kalkis

For many of us winter means snow, sleet, blizzards, frost, fierce winds, gray days and black nights that make the stars beam like searchlights. We know that one warm sunny January day doesn't mean spring has sprung. Whether the groundhog sees his shadow or not, we know spring doesn't arrive on February 2nd. Frivolous March may come in like a Lamb but will breathe Lion-like cold before it ends. Growing up, we also knew when Spring truly arrived. It was the day we spent "Spring Cleaning" every inch of the house.

Times have changed. I am now influenced by Influencers and Authorities whose number exceeds weed varieties. These experts inform us that there's more to spring cleaning than cleaning. They encourage us to "style," "design," "organize," "de-clutter" or "edit" our homes. Suddenly, cleaning has become secondary to examining our entire living space for defects.



The more zealous connoisseurs command us to dispassionately "Purge" our homes of things we foolishly thought were necessary to our comfort and contentment. One purging style is "Japandi," the blended Japanese/Scandinavian minimalist design concept. Furniture seems to float in mostly empty spaces. It's a look to love if you don't have kids or someone who loves his 200-pound recliner and side table perfectly aligned with the TV screen.

"Purging" requires us to set aside emotions and be coldly logical. (No, you do not need 10 vases of various sizes. Save two and toss the rest. After all, how many times do you fill your house with bouquets anyway? Or buy one green plant and water it, then you won't even need one vase. Voila!) Choose a theme and discard anything that doesn't fit into it. Do lots of sofa pillows comfort you? Or are they clutter? The answer we're looking for here is "clutter." Let your visitors dangle their too-short legs from the sofa. They'll be impressed by your design skills, while keeping their visit brief.

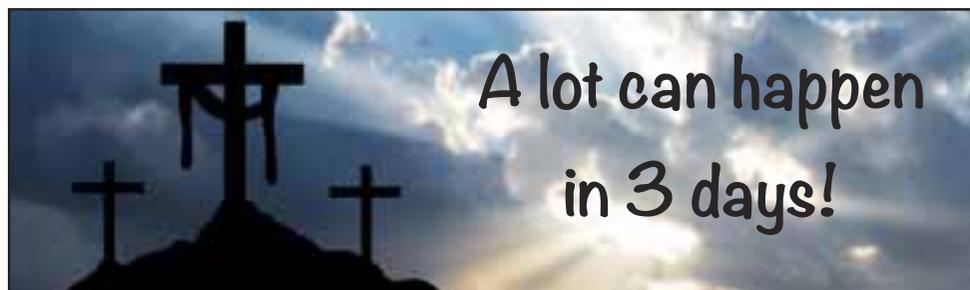
One authority defines cleaning as "tidying." I like the term but am uncomfortable that it means I'm sloppy. Instead of urging us to haul out brooms, mops, cloths and spray cans, we must first "commit" to tidying up. I disagree. When you can scribble notes with your finger on surfaces, it's cleaning time. News that company's coming is also great incentive.

"Editing" allows us to select what to keep and what to toss. Eliminate one thing and replace it with something else. But isn't having more things better? Editing may result in buying something new and keeping the old item too. Evaluating every item in the house indicates considering pros and cons. No dice. It requires too much analysis and emotion making decisions.

"Declutter" is the kind way of saying you have too much stuff. Determine what you don't need and get rid of it. Some experts apply the strictly logical 80/20 rule: Keep the 20% of clothes you wear all the time and donate the 80% languishing in your closet. This rule does not appreciate that I would wear those 80% skirts and pants if I had not gained weight. I like a one-two-three approach best. "One" means "throw it out." "Two" means bag it, put it in the garage and if I don't rescue it before the season is over, out it goes. "Three" means keep it – at least for now.

It seems the best approach to spring cleaning, decluttering or organizing is to fill your home with the things you love and will care for. It also pays to keep giant garbage bags handy for when the cleaning mood does strike you.

Barbara Kalkis ©2026. Barbara divides her time between writing, teaching, and the world of high tech. She's author of Little Ditties for Every Day...A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.



Where in Minnesota?

Somewhere in Minnesota the image to the right can be found.

Where is it?

(Answer on page 12 of this issue)



On this day in History

March 4, 1918: First cases reported in deadly Spanish Flu pandemic. Just before breakfast Private Albert Gitchell of the U.S. Army reports to the hospital at Fort Riley, Kansas, complaining of the cold-like symptoms of sore throat, fever and headache. Soon after, over 100 of his fellow soldiers had reported similar symptoms, marking what are believed to be the first cases in the historic influenza pandemic of 1918, later known as Spanish flu. The flu would eventually kill 675,000 Americans and an estimated 20 million to 50 million people around the world, proving to be a far deadlier force than even the First World War.

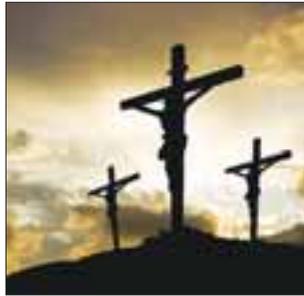
April 18, 1906: The Great San Francisco Earthquake topples buildings and ignites fires. At 5:13am an earthquake estimated at close to 8.0 on the Richter scale hits San Francisco. Brick buildings and wooden Victorian structures were especially devastated. Fires immediately broke out and because broken water mains prevented firefighters from stopping them, firestorms soon developed citywide. Almost 30,000 buildings were destroyed, including most of the city's homes and nearly all the central business district.

All Minnesota Shop Hop

Wit and Wisdom

The Garden

by Juleann Lattimer



Tree branches rustled at the touch of the soft breeze. Stars dotted the night sky as the moon's glow shined like a spotlight, illuminating the figure of a man stooped over on his knees. Hands clenched at his chest, his face searching the heavens. A thick silence filled the air, except for the lone cry of an anguished voice, pleading upwards towards the sky. Just beyond the shaded walk lay three men, fast asleep. It was a strange picture—one struggling in deep despair, three sleeping in silent serenity.

Have you ever struggled in that shadowy garden—facing something that will not be resolved? Can't be fixed? No way out? All alone? You're not.

The One who anguished on His knees that night in the garden didn't stay there. A few hours later He went to the cross, from the cross to the grave, but He didn't stay there either. He arose on the third day, and has secured a place for us with Him in heaven. Because of this, even though we sometimes find ourselves in a dark shadowy garden, we're never alone. He is with us and has promised, **"I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."** Hebrews 13:5

I know. I've been in that abandoned garden. The world collapsing, life changing, struggling to hang on, but ... **"Jesus is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever."** Hebrews 13:8 I've found His promises to be true.

If you enjoy reading articles from the Wit and Wisdom Writers such as Juleann, you may also enjoy the books authored by the group. Contact the authors at: witandwisdomwriters@gmail.com.

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ALL MINNESOTA SHOP HOP



Raucous Wildlife and Slimy Salamanders: What's So Great About Spring?

by Nancy Nash

Spring peepers send forth their high-pitched bell-like calls in March in my part of New England. Their constant repetition of "peep in, peep out" is both cheery and soothing, as the male chorus frogs (a type of tree frog) inflate the vocal sacs in their throats to attract females. They may begin in February but then have to interrupt their nightly chorus until warmer weather becomes more consistent. Occasionally they are deafeningly loud and raucous.



Growing up, we had a pasture behind our house with a marshy area dubbed "the swamp," where I joined my young neighbors in "expeditions" and sometimes went by myself. I had heard hordes of spring peepers on March evenings although not earlier in the day. But once I was lured by the calls of a few daytime peepers and had traipsed down to the swamp to investigate when suddenly the sound stopped. Evidently the tiny frogs were frightened. What should I do? It seemed like my eavesdropping expedition was doomed to failure - until I kept still for moment. Guess I'd better just crouch on a tussock and quietly peer into the grasses and shallow water for any sign of life.

I heard a peep here and a peep there from a few stray frogs, but none made an appearance. Where were they? If I moved in the direction of the sound, it would immediately cease. Careful, though - bogs are slippery, and boots fill quickly with cold water. Ugh! I had to content myself with actually having heard a few peepers close up.

Frogs continued to fascinate, and my friends and I decided to scout for frogs' eggs and the tadpoles that hatched from them.

We found lots of eggs encased in jelly-like sacs among the marsh grasses. After a few weeks, polliwogs, as we called the tadpoles, emerged and swam around our little "swamp." We weren't sure what type of frog they were, but what did it matter? We excitedly observed as they grew limbs and lost their tails, part of the process of maturing into full-fledged frogs. Peering into murky waters, we had front-row bogs to view them! I'll bet our schoolteachers were impressed by our brush with metamorphosis.

A number of years later, I was working in the town of Amherst, Massachusetts when yellow-spotted salamanders attracted attention. In winter, members of this declining species lived on a hillside overlooking Henry Street. Every spring they would clamber down the hill and cross this small country road to find a vernal pool where they could mate and lay eggs.

However, they had fallen on hard times. Traffic had increased on Henry Street to the point where it was hazardous for them to cross the road. Some local residents decided to place a couple tunnels under the road to help the small amphibians find their way to the spring wetlands.

I was among those humans who ventured forth in the rain on a chilly April night to help guide the salamanders to the entrances of the tunnels. My companions and I were ecstatic when a number of salamanders entered and emerged safely on the other side of the road. Success! But why were some of them still reluctant to enter the underground pathway? The obstinate, ungrateful little critters! The night was rainy and cold and dark, and we volunteers were thinking how nice it would be to go home and have a cup of tea.

In time, a few of the human helpers came up with a solution. They decided to modify the tunnels' original design to allow in more moisture and natural light. Contrary to public perception, salamanders are not slimy but require moisture to keep them from drying out. The natural light may help them navigate. These days they show their appreciation by using the tunnels more freely. Whew!

Recently, I have been reading Sheila Carroll's Nature Study Companion: Simple Ways to Discover Wonders Near and Far. She makes a case for allowing children to wander about the landscape, discovering and observing and developing curiosity. She also suggests that nature study helps them develop wholeness, character, and life skills. Looking back, I'm not sure exactly what I gained from my encounters with frogs and salamanders, but my friends and I are still enchanted whenever we hear a chorus of spring peepers calling in a meadow or spot a migrating yellow-spotted salamander on a rainy spring night.

Vermonters call springtime "mud season," when the snow finally melts and bare ground becomes visible. As messy as spring can be, there is something about the milder air that frees us and reaches our souls. Owlets are born, skunks have their babies, and mother possums show up with little ones. It is a time of emerging life and a time of contentment. I hope the spring peepers are raucous this spring, and may the yellow-spotted salamanders make it safely across Henry Street!

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Nancy is the author of Mama's Books: An Oregon Trail Story and Little Rooster's Christmas Eve, both available at Amazon.com. She has a B.A. in English composition and an M.F.A. in Writing for Children from Simmons College. She can be reached at nancynash341@gmail.com.

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How to Document Your Quilt

by Rachel Greco

Every quilt has a story. Some we know and some we don't. You may know all about the quilter who made your quilt, but will those who come after you? One of the most valuable parts of a quilt is a written history of provenance, a written record of ownership of a work of art, used as a guide to authenticity or quality.

If you have inherited a family quilt (or made one yourself), you will want to document it. If you have any old family quilts you are keeping in the closet, it is probably time you took them out and documented what you know about them. There's a lot of information to gather, and it won't get any easier as time passes. Before memories fade and you forget what you know about them, here's what you should record. Write down as much as you know using all of the criteria listed.

If the quilter is still alive, talk with her or him about when and how they made the quilt. If possible, get a picture of her/him with the quilt and record any memories that you have. (Did you sleep under it as a child?)

If the quilter is no longer living, try to find those who remember them. Make sure you have the full name, where they lived, birth and death dates (years) and any stories about her/him that people remember. If there is special information about the quilt, record that as well. Document as much as you possibly can (picture of the quilter, copy of obituary, picture of the quilt from the past, etc.)

Add any history of how you received the quilt. Include names and biographical information of everyone who owned the quilt. Once you have recorded the history, keep a notebook or journal, register it with your local Guild or Historical Society's registry project, and keep it with the quilt.

The following is a list of the information you will want to record when documenting your quilt:

Maker's Name. Write down the maker's name, birth date and death date (if they have passed). Record this person's relation to you if there is one. Using the rule: who, what, when, where, why and how, write down what you know about this person.

Name of the Pattern. Write down any names you know for the quilt, including the popular references, and the name the quilt was referred to by your family.

Condition. Write down whether the quilt is excellent, good, fair, poor or deteriorating. Make a note of any stains or holes, what kind they are and where they are located. Write down any repairs that are made with the date made, if known.

Technique. Is this quilt pieced by hand or machine, embellished, stuffed, painted or stenciled, signed with ink, embroidered, etc.?

Construction Style. Does this quilt have a scalloped edge? Is it square, curved or cut-out at the corners? What are the borders? What type of binding was used?

Is it a quilt top only? If finished, did the quilter use hand or machine quilting, ties or tacks? Does it have all three layers? Is it thin or thick? Try to determine what type of batting was used.

What types of quilting designs were used? Were they straight lines, outline, stenciled or shapes? What color thread was used?

How is the back put together? Is it one piece of fabric or more? What colors or patterns? Is there a label? Is it signed or is there anything quilted into the quilt?

Types of Fabric Used. Is it cotton, silk, wool or of an unknown mixtures? Do your best to determine the fabric type.

Overall Quality. Professionals and collectors have personal scales for rating a quilt. You might record whether this quilt is your favorite or most prized quilt or any other information that would help you.

Estimate the Date. Try to be specific. If you know a date, write it down. If you aren't sure, give any dates for when you have owned the quilt and anything anyone said when they gave it to you or you purchased it from someone.

Where was the quilt made? How did it come to you?

Does the quilt have any special historic or family significance? Was the quilt

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made for a particular event or person? Were the fabrics or design chosen for a specific reason?

Does the quilt have any dates or lettering on it? What does it say?

Do you have any documentation about the quilt or quilt maker such as letters, pictures, or diaries? Write down and include as much information as possible about the quilt and quilt maker.

Take Photographs. Take pictures of the whole front and back. Take several close-ups of the details and workmanship. Use natural light if possible. Take more pictures that you think you'll need; then pick the best ones that showcase your quilt.

Memory Pocket. You can make a muslin label for your quilt using a pigma pen to write information on a square or rectangle of muslin. Stitch this carefully to the back of the quilt, sewing only through the backing, not the face of the quilt. You can also make a memory pocket with a front, back and flap to use for storing your documentation papers. Sew to the back of the quilt as you would a label. Record basic information on the pocket itself, including "Remove Before Cleaning."

And finally, if you believe that this quilt has special significance to you, you might want to find a certified Quilt Historian near you who can help you by appraising the quilt. Most charge a fee; however, the information they give you could prove invaluable.

Remember, you may think your own quilt is significant only for you; however, generations to come may value your thoughts and documentation more than you will ever know.

Rachel Greco owns Grandma's Attic, a traditional quilt shop and a large online store in Dallas, Oregon. She has written several books and patterns and runs Grandma's Quilt Club, a monthly quilt class where participants collect quilt blocks, learn about quilt history, and make new friends. Learn more at <https://grandmasatticquilting.com>

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Did I Do That?

By Deb Heatherly

Some of us may be old enough to remember that question coming from the mouth of Steve Urkel, played by Jameel White, on the television show Family Matters. In 1989 he was slated for a single appearance, but the character was so well received that it became a break out role for him that lasted until 1998. You could not help but laugh at this line and the many others that became his trademark.

When I had my quilt shop, I often heard this question in another context. Time and time again it was said by customers picking up their sewing machines after they had been serviced. They were referring to the Ziploc bag of lint that our repairman always attached to their machines. The bags were a gentle reminder that their machines needed a little more love between projects.

When I saw some of these bags, I wondered to myself how the machine was still running. Many times, I heard, "It was running just fine and all of a sudden it refused to sew correctly." After seeing those bags, it was easy to figure out why.

Sadly, this happens to all of us. We are so excited about starting the next project that we forget about the lint that gets trapped inside the machine from our fabric and threads. It really is a good idea to clean out the bobbin area after each quilt and take the machine in for a professional cleaning once a year. Doing so helps the machine run smoothly and helps us continue to create for years to come.

Think of it like owning a car. The car needs oil changes, new wiper blades, new tires, etc. from time to time so that it can continue to get us from one place to the next. (Like your local quilt shop or the next shop hop!) Proper maintenance can help ward off costly repairs. (Money we could have spent on fabric at the local quilt shop.)

Knowing all of this, I was recently the one who was surprised at the amount of lint I cleaned out of my machine. I was on a deadline for several new patterns and had simply moved from one quilt to the next without stopping to clean. In fact, if I had not spotted lint trying to escape from the nether regions of the machine when I had to change my bobbin, I would probably still be stitching along.

"Ok, fine, I'll clean you out" I said.

Timmy, my furry studio helper sat quietly watching as I pulled out clump after clump and a few times a little paw tried to help.

"This is not good" I told him. "Mom has got to do better and I vow to clean after every quilt from now on."

He just looked at me and purred.

Funny, so did my machine after its little bit of pampering.

Deb Heatherly is a designer for Creative Grids® rulers and the author of eight popular pattern books. Creative Grids® fans are invited to join her Facebook group, "Grids Girls", for tips and inspiration, and two free mysteries each year. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1770429649800457/>. Shop Owners are invited to join her group just for you, "Grids Girls for Quilt Shop Owners Only" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/273593657256524/>. Visit Deb's website at www.Debcatsquilts.com.



Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

It Happens All The Time

The worst of all possibilities has happened. Members of the family can go home. Medicine's administering hands are no longer needed, and the medical professionals can move on to other patients.

It happens all the time. In fact, it's so commonplace that when a funeral procession passes us along the street, we, engrossed in our private world of worry and care, may hardly turn our heads to notice. We might not even give so much as a passing thought to those poor souls in that procession who are toting their loved one and a heavy load of grief out to some cemetery.

It happens all the time.

It's so usual.

It's so commonplace.

It's so ordinary ... ordinary, that is, until it strikes those we know, those we care about, those we love. Then it is ordinary no more. Then it comes roaring into our experience like a runaway freight train. Then it explodes upon us with a pain and a despair of frightening intensity.

It doesn't matter what the illness or how long the suffering. In an instant the sunniest place in all the world is immediately transformed into dark and gloomy despair. At that time, when everything is so very discouraging, friends reach out with the encouraging gift of their presence.

Sometimes there may be enough in a handshake, a warm embrace, a hand on the shoulder, or a soft smile. Sometimes that's enough to keep heart from breaking and hopes from dying. But sometimes, those gestures just aren't enough. And in those times, we need to learn and remember the ministering power of tears.

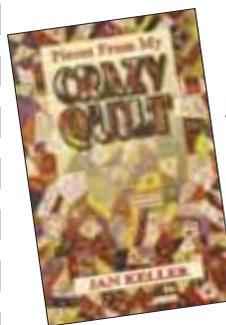
Tears are our most profound expression of sympathy for those about us, as well as our most blessed emotional release.

In life we'll all see joy and we'll all see pain—but may we never see the pain that can kill the joy of being supported by those who express their love and share their tears.

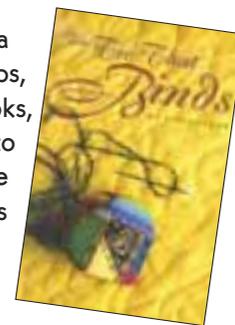


©2026 Jan Keller No reprint without permission Jan shares other pieces of her life in her books, *Pieces From My Crazy Quilt*, and *The Tie That Binds*. These books can be ordered by calling 719-866-8570, or writing: Black Sheep Books, 11250 Glen Canyon Drive, Peyton, CO 80831

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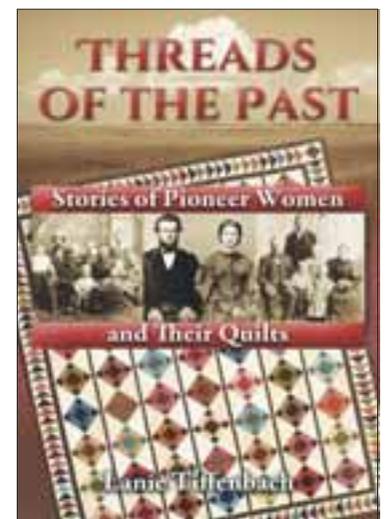
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BOOK REVIEW

THREADS OF THE PAST:

Stories of Pioneer Women and Their Quilts

by Lanie Tiffenbach



Lanie Tiffenbach has been both an avid genealogist and an avid quilter for many years. She has combined her two passions in the writing of her historical fiction novel, *Threads of the Past*, allowing her immigrant ancestors to tell their stories in their own "voices" in the form of letters or diaries.

Based on extensive genealogical and historical research, seven courageous pioneer women detail their families' immigration to the New World and the dangers, hardships, isolation and terrible losses they found on the raw frontier of Minnesota, as well as their simple joys and successes. Their stories span a time period from the 1850s through the 1930s, and are at the same time heartbreaking and heartwarming, but always grounded in love of family. The book is illustrated with over 100 wonderful vintage photos.

The evolution of quilting in America from the 1850s through the 1930s is woven throughout the stories, with each woman having a special quilt representing her particular era. The women's love of quilting is the "thread" that ties the stories together. In earlier times quilting was a blessing and a joy for women, as it gave them a creative outlet and produced something of beauty in the midst their hard lives. Equally important, their quilting bees relieved their isolation and loneliness and brought them together in friendship with other women. And these things are still true of quilters today!

While this novel will be of special interest to quilters and genealogists, the pioneer women's stories of bravery, faith and endurance will touch the hearts of all women.

***Threads of the Past* can be ordered on Amazon.com or you can email Lanie at tiffenbach@gmail.com.**

Over The Teacup
The Beauty of Rainy Days

by Janet Young

Light rain has begun to fall, and here we are on the first week of April, preparing ourselves, to experience what traditionally has been one of the rainiest months of the year. As you watch the raindrops slide slowly down the window, have you ever stopped to think about the beauty rain brings forth—especially in the springtime. Could it be because everything is painted beautiful. The trees look brighter. The flowers are more colorful. And rain sends a signal to the grass that it is time to wake up and start growing.

Have you ever heard the rhythmic sounds of raindrops cascading on your roof? Before long that sound, much like White Noise creates a sound so soothing, before you know it you are fast asleep.

Even in literature, rain symbolizes life, purity, being born, and cleansing. Even songs have been sung about rain. For example, *A Rainy Night in Georgia* may not be a happy representation of rain, however there is the Pop song, *I Love a Rainy Night*. This is a catchy tune as the title implies extolling the virtues of rain. In the movies, Gene Kelly was famous for that dance scene to *Singing in the Rain*. And last but not least, children's nursery rhymes talked about rain in *Rain, Rain Go Away*, and *It's raining, It's Pouring*. There are many celebrations of rain.

Perhaps the next time it rains, you will have an attitude of gratitude. Because rain also supplies us with our much-needed water, that basically sustains life. I'd say that is a very important reason to embrace rainy days. So, don't let those raindrops get you down.

Instead, the next time it rains why not become like a child again. Grab your raincoat (if it is a cool day), an umbrella, and your boots. Then go for a walk in the rain. While you're at it, why not stomp your feet in a puddle or two, or if you are in a secluded area, why not dance in the rain. It will lift your spirits, and put a smile on your face.

And perhaps one of the most rewarding aspects of rain is when we get that occasional glimpse of the rainbow. I leave you with this quote from Gilbert K. Chesterton: "If you want a rainbow, you have to put up with the rain."

HAPPY SPRING!



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

Hoppy Easter!

The Alaska Good Friday Earthquake: March 1964

by Naomi Gaede-Penner

I don't recall the new Easter dress I wore in 1964, nor do I recall Mom searching for eggs at the two grocery stores so we could dye them. All I remember is being terrified. In March 1964, our family lived on a homestead outside Soldotna, Alaska, on the Kenai Peninsula, where my father was one of the first permanent physicians. My parents, three siblings (ages 6, 8, and 12), and I (age 13) experienced the Alaska Good Friday earthquake, which I remember well.

(The following story adapted from "Alaska Bush Pilot Doctor." As told by my father.)

There were no pressing medical needs on this Good Friday holiday, so my medical partner and I decided not to hold clinic. Instead, I was working in the back woods cleaning up fallen timber and digging trenches to divert water away from the house. This was an awkward time of year with old, dirty snow mixed with sand and gravel; Alaskans called it "breakup." The combination of daytime 25- to 40-degree temperatures melted the snow into slush, and then overnight lows of 5 to 10 degrees froze the slush back to ice. The still frozen ground beneath the surface prevented the daytime water from draining properly and small lakes formed around the house. Homesteaders who did not have gravel roads parked their vehicles by a main road and slogged a mile or more in boots to get home.

"Elmer!"

I looked up and saw my wife, Ruby, coming toward me.

"One of your OBs is on the phone."

The pregnant woman had been fortunate to get through on our telephone line, shared with a number of other people. Sometimes I'd pick up the phone and hear a teenage girl just listening to her boyfriend breathe, or so it seemed. There had been times when I needed to make a critical call and had to break into a conversation, introducing myself as Dr. Gaede. Obviously, there wasn't much privacy or confidentiality.

Within a few minutes of the telephone conversation, Mrs. Smith gave me, and anyone else who might have been listening, an experienced progress report on her condition. This was not her first baby. Without hesitation, I told her I'd meet her at the clinic around 5:15 p.m.

I changed my work clothes, singed from winter brush fire burning, and headed out the door.

"If this is the real thing, I won't be back for supper," I called to Ruby.

The VW micro-bus skated over the water on ice road, then across the bridge that spanned the Kenai River. The bridge was the only one connecting the lower Kenai Peninsula towns to the main part of the Peninsula.

Mrs. Smith met me in the clinic parking lot and took her muddy boots off at the door. She had driven herself to town. Chances were that her husband was in the oil-field, and a friend was watching her other children.

"It's a mess out there!" She shook her head and held her stomach. "I didn't plan on having a baby at breakup when the roads are so bad."

I began my evaluation. Blood pressure normal; fetal heart rate normal. The baby's head was low. I needed to call a nurse right away.

Abruptly, the room swayed. I grasped the examining table to steady myself. Was I dizzy? I sat down on the nearby tall stool. The movement continued, now with a distant rumble and a stronger force. I looked at Mrs. Smith. Our puzzled eyes met.

Earthquake!

"Let's get out of here!" I shouted above the din and helped her off the table. I held on to her arm, and we careened down the hall to the emergency ramp door, which I deemed most solid.

The shaking intensified. As we looked out the door, I saw tall spruce and aspen trees whip violently back and forth until their tops nearly touched the ground. Like the sound of surf, the roar became deafening. The post office across the street jumped alive and gyrated on the convulsing ground. Cars lurched crazily on the road. I'd never been in an earthquake like this before.

In horror, I watched a jagged crack open a foot in front of a car, then suddenly clap shut. The smell of sulfur filled the air. The ground rolled and groaned in agony.

After four never ending minutes, the nightmare stopped — or so I thought. "I'm going home," said Mrs. Smith in a shaky voice. "I don't want to have my baby right now."

She walked over to her boots, then out the front door to her car, and drove off. The large clock on the wall hung crookedly and had stopped at 5:36. I pushed back the furniture in the waiting room, which had danced out of place, then called Ruby. The phone was dead. I had to get home.

Just as I opened the front door, a state trooper pushed in. The muscular man with

neatly clipped hair looked wild-eyed and uncertain.

"Doc, you've got to stay. Emergencies will be coming in!"

I'd never seen him so frantic and wondered what he knew that I didn't. I had no idea about my family's safety, but I'd been ordered to stay at my post as a physician.

Later, Ruby told me of her experience. She had heard a loud thud and then felt a jolt, as though something large had run into the house. She and the children were sitting at the supper table, and even when they realized it was an earthquake, they expected it to subside, as earthquakes had done before. When the shaking and noise increased, she feared the house would crumble.

"Let's get out of here!" she'd screamed.

She and our children had made their way drunkenly toward the front door. Unable to maintain their balance, they had collapsed onto the cold ground, without shoes or coats. Trees had swayed like feathers. The ground had rumbled and split open, emitting swamp gas from the shallow fields below. After hour-long minutes, they'd returned to the house. The only damage she found was water sloshing out of her suds-saver tub in the laundry room and a fallen flower pot.

She had tried to call me, but when she picked up the phone, all she heard was a woman screaming hysterically. Ruby had told her that she was scared, too, but the phone lines were dead, and no one could be reached. As the evening shadows crept in, Ruby had found candles. Remarkably, after several hours, electricity was restored, and she turned on the radio — to the shocking news from a Seattle station that no one knew what had happened to Anchorage.

In the clinic laboratory, I found a battery-operated radio. I was surprised by the difficulty in finding stations. Instead, there was a lot of static. This was a big state. Certainly not all stations were down.

Finally, I tuned into a Seattle station. Gradually, and with jaw-dropping disbelief, I learned what had happened in Anchorage, 150 miles away. The announcer's reports were graphic and grim, and sent chills down my back: houses and people had been swallowed up, bridges were destroyed, and entire streets had dropped below the surface. The extent of the damage in Alaska had only begun to be assessed.

At that moment, no one knew the earthquake had registered 9.2 on the Richter scale, making it the strongest earthquake recorded in North America. Nor did they know the epicenter was 100 miles east of Anchorage.

The Good Friday sun slipped away. Hour by hour, the reports became worse. Aftershocks added to everyone's trepidation. A new report informed us that the earthquake had churned up a tidal wave. Our homestead was three miles from the beach, and even at that distance, we were close to sea level, and water could rush inland. In the utter blackness, no one would be able to see it coming.

The next day, I drove home. This was not the same town I'd driven through the day before. Signs lay crumpled on the ground, buildings had slits down their sides, and streets were cracked. I was relieved to see the bridge across the Kenai River was still intact, unlike 141 or 204 in other parts of the Kenai Peninsula, which left many small towns isolated.

Two days later, on Easter, the Anchorage Daily Times began publishing lists of casualties in Anchorage and showed pictures of buckled downtown buildings, cars fallen into yawning pits, burst water mains, snapped power poles, and houses sloughed off the bluff down to Cook Inlet. Governor Egan estimated damages in Anchorage alone to be at \$250 million, which he said was conservative.

Unlike Anchorage and the coastal towns, Soldotna was in pretty good shape. There was no major structural damage, and because there was no city water or sewer, no main lines were broken. Within the week, we would hear cargo planes overhead bringing food and supplies to the nearby town of Kenai.

The following day, the Times provided instructions for Anchorage residents regarding gasoline, food supplies, fuel oil, water, and field toilets, mail delivery, typhoid shots, and schools. Casualty figures increased, although actual bodies could not be found for those swallowed into the ground. More than 2,000 people were homeless. In coastal towns on and near the Kenai Peninsula, docks were ripped loose, and crushed boats littered waterways and beaches. In some places, the land table had dropped.

The Easter church service took on a new meaning as I thought of the initial count of 104 or more people killed and the grieving of those who had lost these loved ones. I hoped they would receive spiritual comfort. I thought of the biblical Easter story, where an earthquake shook the enormous rock from the entrance of Jesus' tomb. The guards attending this tomb were frightened and confused — and I could certainly understand why. This would be an Easter that our family, and other longtime Alaskans, would never forget.

A week later, Mrs. Smith returned, and the "Earthquake Baby," born during breakup, did arrive.

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Boston Cream Pie in a Mug

- 1 box Angel Food Cake mix
- 1 box vanilla cake mix
- Water
- 2 chocolate squares
- Shelf safe vanilla pudding snack cup
- Non-stick spray
- Gallon ziplock bag



1. Combine the two boxes of cake mix in a gallon ziplock bag and mix thoroughly.
2. Lightly coat the inside of the mug with non-stick spray.
3. Add 3 tablespoons of cake mix to the mug.
4. Mix in 2 tablespoons of water.
5. Drop two chocolate squares into mix.
6. Add 1 tablespoon of pudding into the center of the batter.
7. Microwave on high for 40 seconds to 1 minute. Watch carefully.
8. You can eat right out of the mug or transfer to a plate and then spread the chocolate around!

Recipe and picture by The Monday Box



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Recipe: *Chili* submitted by Patti Lee Bock

Ingredients:

- 8oz ground veal
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tbsp minced onions
- 1/8 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 12 oz tomato juice
- 1 tsp chili powder
- green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 can kidney beans
- dash pepper

Directions:

Combine all ingredients and simmer until juice is cooked down and slightly thickened. About 1/2 hour.



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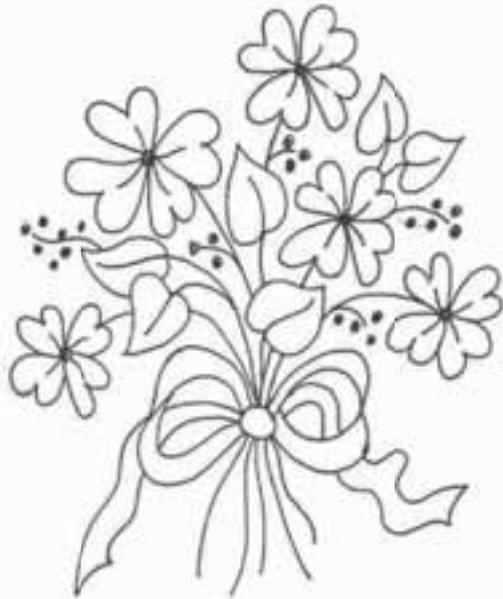
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Happy St. Patrick's Day

Shamrock Bouquet Tea Towel

Design by Robin Kingsley

Design Pattern to Transfer to Tea Towel



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Enjoy this Embroidery project from Bird Brain Designs as a GIFT for you or someone special! Embroider a bouquet of Irish shamrocks tied with a ribbon 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.

We have put together a packet with the Sage Green Tea Towel and Perle Cotton, for you - \$6.00.

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 Green 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 and dots are French Knots (wrap twice).
 - Back Stitch stems and leaves with Dark Green.
- Back Stitch the Shamrock heart shapes with Medium Green.
- Add the ribbon in coral Back Stitch with a Satin Stitch 'knot'.
 - Finish your tea towel with yellow French Knots.

Materials Needed

- 1 Sage Green Towel
- *Transfer-Eze* to transfer design **OR**
- Green Micron Pigma Pen to transfer design
- 2 yards DMC #8 Perle cotton color 352 Coral
- 1 yard DMC #8 Perle cotton color 742 Gold
- 4 yards DMC #8 Perle cotton color 3395 Dark Green
- 4 yards SMC #8 Perle cotton color 3377 Medium Green
- 5" or 7" locking Embroidery Hoop (our Morgan Hoop is the BEST)
 - Crewel embroidery needle

30 Bags in 30 Days



It's spring cleaning time! It's a perfect time to declutter and freshen up the house all at once. All of us want a cleaner, calmer home but don't want to lose a weekend to do it. 30 Bags in 30 Days takes bite-sized daily tasks and keeps it fun and manageable! Divide up what you want to donate, recycle, sell or toss. Take one bag a day for 30 days and see how much you can do!

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Kitchen Cupboards | 16. Under the Beds |
| 2. Kitchen Pantry | 17. Toy Box |
| 3. Under Kitchen Sink | 18. Desk Drawers |
| 4. Kitchen Drawers | 19. TV Cabinets |
| 5. Junk Drawer | 20. Laundry Room |
| 6. Cleaning Supplies | 21. Old Magazines |
| 7. Fridge and Freezers | 22. Paperwork |
| 8. Linen Closet | 23. Art & Craft Supplies |
| 9. Bedroom Closet | 24. Holiday Decorations |
| 10. Nightstands | 25. Storage |
| 11. Shoes | 26. Car |
| 12. Master Bathroom | 27. Garage Shelves |
| 13. Guest Bathroom | 28. Board Games |
| 14. Medicine Cabinet | 29. Purse |
| 15. Make Up | 30. Electronics |



Wildflower Seed Bombs

Looking for a fun Earth Day project? Try these simple and fun wildflower seed bombs!

What you will need:

- Construction paper
- Food processor/blender
- Wildflower seeds
- Silicone mold (optional)



Start by tearing your construction paper into small pieces. You can use different colors to make different colored bombs! Soak the paper in water for about 20 minutes. Drain off most of the water and place paper pieces into a blender. Squeeze out any excess water. The paper should make a bit of a paste and still be moldable. Add the wild flower seeds to the paper and mix with your hands. Press the seed/paper mixture into your favorite silicone molds or roll into balls. Let the seed bombs to completely dry.

You can store the bombs until ready to plant! Store them in a paper or burlap bag with air flow. Once you are ready to plant them just toss them out where you want them, water them and watch them grow!

Shawl We Dance?

by Wayne M. Bosman

One of the things that first attracted me to Kerri were the old-fashioned shawls that she usually wore in both summer and winter. They were not the sort of thing that everybody wore, but she seemed to have one for every occasion or outfit. Though we met at social dance events where people were routinely playful, Kerri was more reserved than most, which I found intriguing. The shawls, though, that was a thing. I assumed that they were handmade, which also said something to me about her. Quiet but independent. Neither following the crowd nor trying to lead it. She was a more than competent dancer, but somehow whenever we danced together, I would say something that caused her to lose her place. It became an easily achieved challenge for me to cause a misstep in the course of a dance, sometimes remarking how the shawl matched her eyes. She wore a lot of blue. I had been dancing for almost 20 years and she less than one year, so maybe it wasn't so nice of me to break her concentration like that, but it was only a dance after all...

This went on for most of a year before I got a chance to ask her out. After an initial hesitation, she consented and the rest is history. But this is about the shawls really.

Kerri learned to crochet when she was 9 years old. Her mother and her grandmother were both avid handcrafters; it was natural for her to follow in their footsteps, or handsteps as it were. Kerri's mother had passed before we met. I soon discovered the inspiration behind the shawls that I had seen. The patterns went from very simple to extremely elaborate, with colors that covered the entire spectrum. The yarns were of all varieties, chosen for each project by function, form and whimsy. Wools from all over the world were included, along with cottons and occasional acrylics. As time went on, I developed an appreciation for the textures of the finer ones, getting subtle satisfaction from the softness and slight oiliness that came from the lanolin. How something could be gauzy and warm at the same time was a minor revelation.

Then came the giving. Kerri had often made shawls, blankets, hats without any idea who they would ultimately be for. Whether they ended up with a waitress or a young mother or child was a mystery to be solved at the correct moment, when gift and receiver appeared together. Those moments were and are met with the feeling that a certain grace exists and she gets to have a part in it. Her mother taught her that.

But back to the shawls.

At a certain point, it was time to clear out her mother's house. Hundreds of handmade items. Many, many shawls. Serendipity stepped in. My sister, Linda, is very active in her church groups in southeast Wisconsin. One of the groups provides prayer shawls for elderly or homebound people in the parish. Kerri's mother's shawls, made with love and care, found new destinations where they were needed and appreciated. Since then, a steady stream of prayer shawls and lap robes, handmade with love, have found their way to new owners. God willing, they will continue to do so.

But don't be concerned that Kerri is going to run out of shawls soon. We recently were waiting at a favorite restaurant when another patron admired the shawl Kerri was wearing. I joked that she had 40 more like it at home. A day or so later, Kerri took inventory. 56 shawls in the closet at that time with a few more destined for a Civil War exhibit at the History Museum. The blue ones match her eyes.

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





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Recipe: Seven Layer Fiesta Dip
submitted by Patti Lee Bock

Ingredients:

- 16oz refried beans
- 16oz sour cream
- 1 pkg taco seasoning
- 2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 cup tomato, chopped
- 1/2 cup green onion, sliced
- 1/2 cup black olives, sliced
- 1 cup prepared guacamole

Directions:

Spread refried beans in shallow serving dish. Mix sour cream and seasoning mix until well blended. Spread over refried beans. Top with cheese, tomato, onions, olives and dollops of guacamole. Serve with tortilla chips.





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“Perspective”

by Shelby Kottemann

When I was in the fifth grade, Mrs. Wilson assigned our class an assignment to interview with a person who lived at least 50 years ago. I chose my grandpa. Born in 1926, Shelby lived through many times I'd never known yet feel connected to. We sat down one evening and went over the assigned questions, which he answered simply. I learned that Papa grew up on a farm with his four brothers and sister. He recounted that when the boys got into trouble, his Paw would pull a switch off the old willow tree. His mother was sweet till her dying day and a sought-after favorite among all her grandchildren. Papa was a WWII veteran of the Pacific. He met grandma at church and married her right out of high school. He spent his career at a company that makes farm and mining equipment, called Caterpillar, and carpoled with friends, as people did back then. It was a treasure trove of family history. Yet, there was another question in particular that stuck with me. It was clear that my Papa had thought about it before. The question was, “What’s a modern convenience that you’re grateful to have now?”



In reply, Papa stood up and walked over to the wall, gesturing with the turn of a dial. “That I can walk over to the wall and change the thermostat.” He sat down with a look of relief and satisfaction. Papa went on to describe how he and his brothers chopped firewood and all kept warm under layers of heavy wool quilts at night. They didn’t dare get out of bed till morning for risk of losing the heat trapped under the covers. He remembered how, as they went to sleep, they could see their breath in the moonlight through their bedroom window. On sweltery summer nights, the family migrated onto the front porch, sleeping in the open air in hopes of a breeze.

What a concept to be so hot that you sleep on the porch or so cold you can see your breath in your own bedroom! And yet, that was now only 100 years ago! Without history and reflection, we can quickly lose touch with all the simple things we have to be grateful for. There are just so many conveniences we have in our lives today that we don’t have the lived experience to fully appreciate.

I think about what simple gifts I want to be aware of. At the end of a long day, I get to melt into a warm, steamy shower. When I make dinner for my fiancé, I have a full-sized oven and open counter space to work with. My pickup truck has heat on chilly drives. I never want to lose touch with the countless comforts I have to be grateful for. In that lies a constant sense of abundance.

P.S. Yes, my grandfather is my namesake!

Shelby Kottemann is an author and started Loves Nature LLC with a mission to help others connect their lives with their hearts. Her email is contact@inlovesnature.com. To learn more, visit her website www.inlovesnature.com.



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TEA?

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Joy & Blessings,
 Jody

Girlfriend Wisdom is written and illustrated by Jody Houghton®.
 For color files of this writing, contact Jody at:
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HOPPY SPRING

by Janet M. Bair

It's always fun to look at new spring fabrics. Soft yellows, greens and pinks set my imagination going. What can I make with this? If it's too cute to leave in the store, I will often splurge and just buy half a yard. I can always make a doll dress for my granddaughter or cloth napkins for our dinner table.

By far, the hardest spring patterns to walk away from are the bunny prints. If they are lop-eared bunnies, the ones with the long floppy ears, I am sold.

I grew up a cat lover but my husband and daughter are allergic to cats. However, they are not allergic to rabbits. Thus, began my long love affair with bunnies. Their soft droopy ears, their cute constantly wiggling noses and their overall fluffiness make them a good petting substitute for a cat.

Bunnies are silent. They never talk back or offer critical comments. They are a peaceful pet to have. I took care of three different bunnies over the course of twenty years. Cupcake lived eleven years, Blackie three, and our littlest dwarf lop, Snickers or Snicky five years.

Although they often sit very still, they are surprisingly swift. When we let Snicky out of his cage, he would race down the hall and zoom under our bed right to the middle. No matter how far I stretched my arm under the bed, he always evaded me. Defeated by five pound of sneaky black and white fluff, I would walk away. Eventually he would come out from his hiding place.

To commemorate my bunny chasing days, this spring I am going to put a backing to a panel of bunnies and ducklings romping through the grass. It will be a good reminder that even though the snows have been deep this winter, spring always comes. The seasons flow onward.

Although it seems that all the bunny decorations in the stores have little to do with the real message of Easter, they are still fun to look at. I guess bunnies are used because they literally hop for joy. And isn't that what the season is all about? Not only do the days get longer and warmer, but we can rejoice in that Jesus is risen and the tomb is empty.

After His resurrection, "Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them!...They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!" John 20:19,20 (TLB—The Living Bible)

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Letters Worth Writing Home About

by Kerri Habben Bosman

Since I could write, I have loved writing letters. One of my favorite gifts as a child was new stationery, the kind that came in a pretty box with matching paper and envelopes all bound together by a ribbon. I was the kid that couldn't wait to write "thank you" letters.



It helped that I saw family writing letters. Dad often used his clipboard with watermarked paper on top of a ruled guide so that each line he wrote would be properly spaced. His handwriting was exceptional, having grown up when penmanship was an indicator of character. Uncle Henry, who lived across the street from us, always had his old Royal typewriter on their dining room table except for family dinners. I loved using his typewriter. I'd leave him a note if he wasn't in the room and then the next time I came over one was waiting for me. When he died in 1992, I placed a typed note in his suit pocket. It read: "I came by to see you today. I pray that I shall live well enough to see you again."

Ten years later by coincidence, I became pen pals with the son of someone Uncle Henry knew in the 1930's. I never met Harold in person, but we were both writers. We sent works-in progress for the other's suggestions. We wrote for 12 years.

When I was 20, my dad suggested I write to the widow of a captain he'd worked with before retiring after 40 years as a ship dispatcher. He thought we'd have a lot in common. We did, and we telephoned and wrote letters for over 20 years. When Dad died in 2001, I called Jane, ready with the prepared speech I'd used in the "letting people know" calls. Except that when I tried to talk to Jane, my throat suddenly became a glob of wet marbles. Her response to my garbled words has stayed with me. "Old shipmates are always old shipmates."

Perhaps the most important letters I have ever written are the over 700 letters sent to my mother-in-law. I wrote to her at least two times a week from when I first met her in 2019 to her passing in late 2025 at the age of 104. She lived 1,021 miles from us in Kenosha, Wisconsin. My letters shared all that was happening for us and all of our family here. Most of us rely on emails and texts now, but Mom didn't. She needed letters to be read and reread with a cup of tea and a cookie or two.

In person I called her "Mom," but in my letters I addressed her as "Mary," her given name. By the time Wayne and I married in 2020, she was 100 years old and had long been "Mom," and "Grandma Mary." With most of her peers no longer with us, I wanted her to see herself as she'd been her whole life.

Her letters were written on handmade cards with pictures and details of the kids, namely her grown grandchildren, their spouses and ever growing great-grandchildren. She knew when laundry was in the dryer and what was for dinner. She knew how the garden was growing and how each of us was evolving too. Most importantly, she knew she was a part of each of us all the time. Each letter ended with: "Wayne sends his love, as do I. We think of you every day."

Selfishly perhaps, I miss writing to Mom. At 104 she had earned a peace beyond our temporal and limited world. But I am also comforted because old shipmates in our sea of life will always be old shipmates. And I pray that I shall live well enough to see her again.

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



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by Annice Bradley Rockwell

AWAKENINGS OF GLORIOUS SPRING

When the winter snow has finally melted away, our country yards take on a weathered and worn appearance. With our days getting noticeably longer, we are drawn outside to observe the quiet changes that abound. Slowly but surely as the days advance, we begin to see the subtle awakenings of glorious spring. After a long winter of relentless cold and unpredictable storms, we are no doubt grateful for the blessings all around us. The amiable sound of our robins' return, paired with the soft scent of warm earth give us a feeling of being in harmony with nature as we too notice a similar shift within ourselves. Cleaning our yards on one of the first warmer days feels remarkably rewarding as we look at our now-tidy landscape as a blank canvas for the rejuvenating season to come.

PROUD PROCLAMATIONS OF SPRING

Soon, as if right on cue, our bright yellow daffodils will make their presence proudly known as the perfect proclamation of spring. They are a symbol of a promise kept and their beauty brightens our days. Somehow the shift in the season helps us to gain momentum in creating new splendor in our yards and homes. Taking a full day to clean our country porch is a day well-spent. And creating a display around a spring theme can hearten our efforts. Our country door can be adorned with a handcrafted birdhouse in robin's egg blue and our porch windows become the perfect place for petite twig wreaths decorated with everlasting florals to enhance the welcoming scene. Our weathered porch barrel can be topped with an antique lantern that comes on right at dusk to create country ambiance.

In our yards, our dogwood and magnolia trees can be put to good use as a place to hang our country birdfeeders. We might even try our hand at fashioning our own sculpted birdseed and suet designs to hang outside as well for our feathered friends who are always appreciative.



INSPIRING REFLECTIVE SCENES

The interior of our homes can be enlivened by some simple, yet artful vignettes to inspire. Our antique redware storage crocks can be filled with tulips and placed on a hooked runner with a floral design next to our fireside wing-back chair. Handcrafted rabbits purchased at our favorite country shop can be placed beside an antique treen trencher filled with primitive grass and painted and aged eggs. Hand-poured candles in scents like Lemon Butter and Lavender Cream are an ideal accompaniment to our country spring surroundings.

This season, take time to appreciate the beautiful return of spring. Feel the strength that comes with coming through the season of winter. And reward yourself by creating spaces that reflect the symbolic power of the promise that Nature always keeps.

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





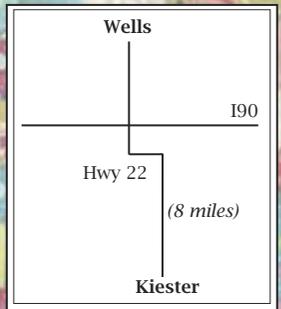
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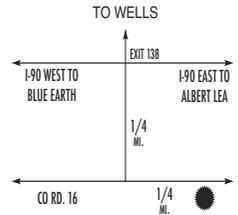
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Hoppy Easter!

Recipe: Iowa Party Bites

Ingredients:

- 30oz frozen hashbrowns
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup crumbled bacon
- 1 tbsp onion powder
- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- 1 tbsp dried parsley
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tsp dijon mustard

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400°. Defrost frozen potatoes. Once the potatoes are thawed, break them up into small bites. Add cheese and mix evenly. Add onion powder, garlic powder, parsley, black pepper and salt. Mix evenly. In a separate small bowl combine sour cream, mayonnaise and mustard. Pour over potato mixture and mix together. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Scoop potato mix into balls and place evenly on cookie sheet. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until golden and crispy.



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

Carrot Cake Cupcakes
recipe from The Pioneer Woman

Cupcakes:

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup sour cream, room temp
- 3 large eggs, room temp
- 2 cups flour
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 2 cups grated carrots
- 1/2 cup pecans

Frosting:

- 1/2 cup salted butter, room temp
- 1 (8oz) package cream cheese
- 5 cups powdered sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 350°. Line 2 (12 cup) muffin pans with 18 cupcake liners. In a large bowl, whisk together the sugar, vegetable oil, sour cream, and eggs. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Add the flour mixture to the egg mixture and stir until just combined. Fold in the carrots until just combined. Divide the batter evenly among the prepared muffin cups, filling each about 3/4-way full. Bake the cupcakes until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 20 to 22 minutes, rotating the pans once after 18 minutes. Allow the cupcakes to cool 5 minutes in the pans before transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely, about 30 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F. Place the pecans on a baking sheet and bake until fragrant and lightly browned, 7 to 9 minutes. Allow to cool completely before coarsely chopping.

For the frosting: In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and cream cheese on medium speed until smooth, 2 to 3 minutes. With the mixer on low speed, gradually add the powdered sugar and vanilla. Increase the speed to medium and beat until fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes. Spread or pipe the frosting on the cupcakes and sprinkle the pecans on top.

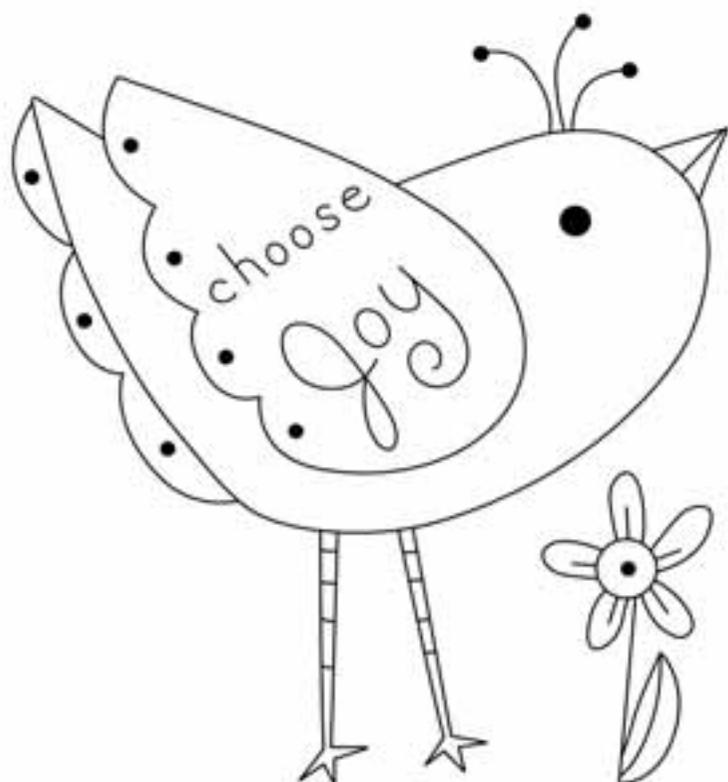
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 F R O S T I N G N T M T A P K S A R Q H
 X E G D T V W X R O Q K F H I T G X E E
 E F F N B H W C N E E C A F E Z A S Q E
 X S I G I H V N I S D X X D W W D P S S
 G N J S T P U F I S Y O T E T B L R T E
 E A K V O T P A K Z D H E K X Q K I Q P
 B R Y D M J R O P E C A N S W A C N R C
 V T B E M E D I H C K N A H Z Y I K O Q
 L S G Q W D W Z E C U B K C M B P L T T
 D T L Y X W L F N M A Y L V Q A H E A A
 K J T T P O X S T O R R A C H T T I T D
 C O M B I N E D K S T P F T R T O X I E
 N T R S X D E R E D W O P C M E O F N R
 V J W U C Z A O F C Y O R Z L R T V G B



To be kind is more important than to be right. Many times what people need is not a brilliant mind that speaks but a special heart that listens.

Free Pattern

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Free Embroidery Pattern – May not be sold or used for commercial purposes. Use this pattern for embroidery, wool applique, punch needle or rug hooking, painted projects or whatever your imagination can dream up! Reduce or enlarge pattern as desired.

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Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski

Read More Books



I am an avid book reader. Are you? My go-to genres are always subject to change, but tend to lean towards Fiction more than any other. Sure, I've read a Science Fiction or Fantasy novel from time to time, but when I heard Margaret Atwood describe her novels as being more Speculative Fiction than Science Fiction, I paused.

In a world which doesn't seem to change too quickly—but when the changes come, they feel too sudden and disruptive to me—the increasing numbers of categories by which books are catalogued has felt somewhat overwhelming! As a child, the public libraries I visited in Chicago seemed to have two groups: Fiction on one side, Non-Fiction on the other side, and Plays—I later discovered—were found in a file cabinet near the circulation desk. Three groups.

As I grew older, I started to notice sub-categories: Mystery, which was my teenaged go-to, and Biographies, which helped with school research projects (like my fascination with Amelia Earhart).

These days, I walk into a brick-and-mortar bookstore, and see categorical labels extending into the twenties? Or more? Granted, the bookstore has double (or triple) the square footage of those public libraries of my youth, but still. In libraries from coast to coast, the Fiction novels are universally catalogued alphabetically, while Non-Fiction works are still catalogued according to the Dewey Decimal System.

I credit book clubs and college campus speaker presentations with expanding my reading horizons to now recognizing—and reading—sub-categories such as Historical Fiction (and the aforementioned Speculative Fiction).

If I'm being completely honest with both myself, and you, I was never a fan of history. In school, history classes meant nothing more to me than memorizing names and dates. Sometimes, places. I didn't care about "Charles becomes Henry" in France during the 16th century; I was just irritated that "IX" was followed by "III"? No mnemonic device to help me remember that.

Reading Historical Fiction, surprisingly enough, has changed me. Last month, for instance, I was reading a fictional work about women who served as nurses during the Vietnam war, and this week I am reading a novel presenting the perspective of the daughter of a historical figure from the turn of the century. Never claiming to be based on actual transcripts of conversations, or explaining why a historical figure made any of the particular decisions he or she is recorded as making, the experiences of humans possibly impacted by those decisions are explored.

Thinking back to my earlier comments about Amelia Earhart, for instance, what if there was a book written from the perspective of an imagined neighbor, childhood classmate, or even love-interest of the missing pilot? While the novel wouldn't tell me what happened on that day in July of 1937 when she disappeared, might it not be fun for readers to imagine how flight training exercises with twenty- or thirty-year-olds felt before, during, or after her historic solo flight?

Maybe I should write it.

© Jeanette Lukowski 2026. Jeanette is a mother, grandmother, teacher, and author who lives in Alesandria, MN. She is inspired by the lives of strong women. Her email address is:

Recipe: Pittsburgh Pepperoni Dip
 submitted by Patti Lee Bock

Ingredients:

- 1 can cream of celery soup
- 1 pkg (16oz) diced pepperoni
- 1 pkg cream cheese

Directions:

Melt all ingredients together in a crock pot. Stir often. Cook for at least an hour.

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