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May/June 2023

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| USA | New Hampshire: Robin Levison, 518-752-6399 |
| Arizona: Barb Stillman & Lolly Konecky, 602-942-8950 | New Jersey: Merle & Gail Taylor, 888-616-8319 |
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Deadline For the July/August 2023 Edition is June 10th!

City Listing

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New Prague.....9	Winterset, IA.....10
New Richmond, WI.....15	Worthington.....4
New Ulm.....8	



Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Fun Events



Kim Keller, Publisher
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kim@countryregisterofminnesota.com
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Special Events

May	
1-31.....	All Minnesota Shop Hop
6.....	Opening Day - Country Craft Shed - Duluth
11-13.....	Anniversary Sale - Quilter's Cottage - Kiester
13-14.....	Shepherd's Harvest - Lake Elmo
21.....	Super Sunday - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
27-29.....	Plant Sale - Country Craft Shed - Duluth
31-June 3.....	Iowa Quilt Festival - Iowa Quilt Museum - Winterset, IA
June	
1-August 31.....	Row by Row Experience - Calico Cat Quilt Shop - Pipestone
15-17.....	The Minnesota Quilt Show - St. Cloud
23-24.....	Valley Days - Lost and Found - Eden Valley
24.....	Quiltistry - New Ulm
24.....	Youth Project - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
25.....	15th Annual Golf Fundraiser Tournament - Majestic Oaks - Ham Lake
July	
28-August 19.....	Quilt Minnesota Shop Hop



AND THE WINNER IS...

Sue Ronchak of Coon Rapids, MN won a \$25 gift card! Sue says Quarry Quilts Quilt Shop in Sandstone, MN is her favorite shop because "They have the most wonderfully friendly, knowledgeable and patient staff!"

Mary Sieverding of Dundee, MN won a copy of The Adventures of Puppy Brian.

Congratulations!

Happy Father's Day

Where in Minnesota?

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

(Answer on page 22 of this issue)



What Connects Us? Recipes!

by Barbara Kalkis

How many cookbooks do you have? I have thirty. That number does not include an ancient recipe box or bulging binders stuffed with, well, recipes. Torn magazine pages sit on the kitchen counter and hide between unopened mail. I scrawl recipes on envelopes while watching a cooking show, thinking I will make them...soon. I especially love regional self-published family and club cookbooks. That's where real recipe gems are found—like gobs, etouffée, chiles rellenos.

Some books were wedding gifts. My mother, who had won many cooking contests, despaired of teaching me to cook because I was "too impatient" and never followed a recipe correctly. (Blame the instructions. It's worse than reading a crochet pattern.) If someone asked what I needed, she answered, "A Cookbook."

My husband thought it was hilarious to receive such a wedding gift before we got married. Afterwards, he noticed that we had some form of pasta every night. That's when he transcended the romance stage and landed in Reality-ville. At Christmas, he gave me a microwave oven and a semester of classes (thereby allowing me to transcend romance and enter Reality-ville.) I can now make a whole chicken in the microwave.

With decades and dollars invested in classes that came with free aprons (remember that article?) and vegetable peelers, I still search for tasty recipes. Exotic herbs and spices expire in the cupboard. Expensive tools wait to be cherished and used. (That's covered. They are listed in my Will.)

Friends come to dinner. They make comments like, "This is interesting." Or, "I never tasted meatloaf like this. What's your secret?" Or, my sisters' blunt, "Where's the salt shaker?"

My nephew's family was more discrete. They gave me elegant wood salt and pepper shakers that stand 8.5 inches high.

The bottom line is that I am still impatient and believe that removing one or two tiny ingredients is okay. (Tarragon. Cardamom. Huh?)

What Draws Us to Recipes? We need food to survive, but recipes aren't just about food. They are about sharing. They connect us. My mother's handwritten recipes continue her legacy of finding joy in cooking for her family and friends. My family's recipes reveal their favorite cuisines, offer a smart shortcut or refresh childhood memories. My friend, Jackie, sent me recipes for chicken cacciatore and chicken marengo. They are favorite make-ahead company recipes that allow her to relax and visit when friends arrive.

My go-to recipe is the Ohio Country Register's Chicken and Wild Rice Chowder. It's easy enough even for me. It has 11 ingredients but it contains only 9 very short instructions. Perfect. And delicious! It joins a collection of The Country Register sauces and the Iowa Country Register's sweet potato soufflé.

The Country Registers' Reader Request. I was going to donate some of my collection but didn't. Couldn't. I wondered why I cherish them. I went to the 'web' for an answer. One site featured "tombstone recipes." From a spritz cookie recipe in a Brooklyn cemetery to a nut roll recipe in Israel, recipes on headstones are common. Why?

I think the answer is that by sharing recipes we share our personal history, traditions, cultures and memories. We connect with each other.

So here's my request: Don't wait for Christmas. Do a cookie exchange now. Share your recipes for hors d'oeuvres, main dishes, side dishes, family favorites, and old standbys when you're short on time and temper.

You'll spark a new idea. You'll share part of yourself. You'll connect people you don't even know. Start now. My scissors are waiting.

©Barbara Kalkis. Barbara is a long-time high-tech marketing and public relations consultant, but her first love is as both a teacher and writer. Her book, Little Ditties for Every Day: A collection of thoughts in rhyme and rhythm, was published in 2021. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.



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Country Register Recipe Exchange
Refreshing Mint Punch

submitted by Patti Lee Bock of New Ulm, MN



2 cups mint leaves - packed
2 cups water

12oz can frozen lemonade
1 quart ginger ale

Bring mint and water to boil - bruise leaves with potato masher. Set aside over night. Strain and discard solids. Add lemonade concentrate and 3 cans of water and ginger ale to mint mixture. Mix well and serve.

Note: put mint and water mixture in a glass container covered in refrigerator over night.



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Stop in and see us this summer during the
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Call for more information!

Mother's Day Trivia

from Rachel Greco

- During the 1600s, England celebrated "Mothering Sunday." Servants would visit their families and bring cakes to their mothers. This custom was called "going a mothering." Each mother received a "simnel" (fine flour) cake. Mothers would then give a blessing to their children.
- Chinese family names are often formed with a sign that means "mother" as a way of honoring their maternal ancestors.
- George Washington has been quoted as saying, "My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her."
- Native American women have been honored with the name "Life of the Nation" for their gift of motherhood to tribes.
- Eve is credited in the Bible as the "Mother of All the Living."
- Ancient Egyptians believed that "Bast" was the mother of all cats on earth and that cats were sacred animals.
- Buddha said, "As a mother, even at the risk of her own life, loves and protects her child, so let a man cultivate love without measure toward the whole world."
- Mother Goose is one of the most popular of all authors for children. Her books and stories have been loved for several generations.
- Some African tribes call themselves "Maharis," which means "Mother-hoods."
- Nine years after Mother's Day was made an official holiday, Anna Jarvis, who had campaigned so hard to make it possible, filed a lawsuit to try to stop the over-commercialization of Mother's Day. She lost her case. Today, cards, letters, candy, and dinners out mark Mother's Day for most families. It had been Anna's hope that the day was one of reflection and quiet prayer by families thanking God for all that mothers had done.



Rachel Greco owns Grandma's Attic, a traditional quilt shop in Dallas, Oregon. A quilt historian, she gives talks on needlework, the role of women in American history, and their connection to fabric. She has written several books and patterns and runs Grandma's Quilt Club, a monthly quilt class where participants collection blocks, learn about quilt history and make new friends. Learn more at <http://grandmasatticquilting.co>.



Ann's Lovin' You

by Ann Stewart

Listen UP!

A red bellied woodpecker persistently punctuated our pastoral peace with it's percussive ear-piercing pecking. Then I learned the truth: my husband was broadcasting recorded tapping from speakers on our side deck to scare away the varieties of woodpeckers ruining our trees!

Whether we like it all or not, sound is all around us. But hearing and listening are not the same. Just as when we look, we don't always see; when we listen, we do not always hear. Hearing is involuntary, but true listening involves paying attention and considering the words.

We always have the opportunity and necessity to reconnect, refresh our conversational skills and renew our friendships. The term "Listen Up!" came from the military, a slang term meaning to listen carefully. But now moms and coaches find it effective to encourage people to pay close attention. We too can UP our listening skills.

University Professor Dr. Heather Holleman teaches these important skills in her book *The Six Conversations: Pathways to Connecting in an Age of Isolation and Incivility*.

It's a short read that needs to remain a handy reference. Holleman describes FOUR MINDSETS in conversation. We can apply these ideas immediately. At our next coffee shop date, we can be curious, believe the best in our guest, express concern, and mirror back by sharing something related to the topic.

Can you imagine if over your coffee conversation, you felt encouraged, knew more about yourself and your friend, and left marveling about something your friend pointed out? Arriving at these THREE FRESH GOALS involves good questions. Dr. Holleman points out SIX TYPES: Social, Emotional, Physical, Cognitive, Volitional, and Spiritual.

If your friend at the coffee shop is struggling to make a decision, Dr. Holleman illustrates each. Try to match each question to the category above.

- How are you thinking about this decision?
- Is this decision becoming hard on your body?
- Who else can we loop into this conversation for advice?
- Can we pray and ask God for wisdom here?
- What emotions is this decision bringing up for you?
- Was that an easy choice? Or How did you decide to do that?

The end of the book holds the biggest treasure: 100 top questions to prompt quality conversation. I'm listing ten I enjoyed and can't wait to try.

1. What is one item you might keep forever?
2. What is something you consider beautiful?
3. What are three things that make you happy?
4. What's the kindest act you've ever witnessed?
5. What is the first book you remember changing you somehow?
6. What job would you be terrible at?
7. What's the story behind the longest you've ever gone without sleep?
8. What's something you didn't want to do but were glad you did?
9. What feels like "home" to you?
10. What did you bring for show and tell as a child?

Now here's two tougher questions of my own: Can you remember the last time you had a conversation where you felt truly fulfilled? Or can you remember a dialogue in which you helped someone through your listening and questioning?

Listen Up! Let's all try to have that type of conversation today.



Luverne • Pipestone

Traveling the Avenue of the Saints

By Carl & Denise Wieman



The Avenue of the Saints start in St. Paul, MN and ends at St. Louis, MO, which makes it 563 miles long. We started this trip in Owatonna, MN, our home town, which is about 65 miles south of St. Paul, MN, although we have traveled that portion many times. We have also traveled the next 240 miles many times per year, along with visiting many of the interesting locations along the way.

We are going to give some suggestions to make this an enjoyable trip with stops along the way of this 563 mile long 4 lane highway that is not part of the Interstate Highway system. The concept of a 4 lane highway from St. Paul to St. Louis was started in the 1980's and the final route was approved in 1990.

The Avenue does include a portion of I-35 and a few other small portions of Interstates with a speed limit of 70 mph. But, mostly the speed limit is 60 or 65 mph making for a more relaxed riding or driving and to give time to sit back and look at the scenery. There is a lot of beautiful scenery along the route as it goes through rolling farm land, hills, rivers, near the Mississippi River and the flat lands with the hills to the west. Some of this area is the Driftless area, which makes for some scenic traveling.

Being this is not an Interstate Highway, it does not have the heavy traffic and the drivers seem to be in a more relaxed driving mode. With the less traffic, many times you may not see another vehicle within a mile or more. There are many interesting and scenic locations to visit along the route. There are no twisty sections like on some routes. This makes it a very different type of route as you will see many different types of scenery along the way that are not close to the road right-away, but may be a few miles off in the distance.

There are many places along the way that provide camping so that you can stop for the night. There are also many small towns that have very reasonably priced hotels. On this trip, we decided to spend a night in Hannibal, MO and spend some time seeing the sites that we will explain later.

There are many places to stop along this route and take in the sites and history of the area. We have visited most of these places through the years, and some more than once. We hope this sparks your interest to check out the Avenue of the Saints, whether it be on your next trip through this area and decide to take a more relaxing route, or you decide to make a vacation along the Avenue of the Saints.

Starting in St. Paul and heading south you are just a few miles from the Mall of America. If you have never been to the MOA, and decide to check it out, you can easily spend a whole day to see the sites in the mall. It is not just about shopping. There are also many places to eat as well. And, we cannot forget the Nickelodeon Universe Amusement Park in the center of the mall. The rides ride wheels, so that when you walk nearby will be quiet. The mall is the largest in the western hemisphere and is celebrating 31 years this year. There is also an underwater aquarium in the basement.

The mall is on the site of the original Met Stadium for the Minnesota Twins. There is a chair high up on the wall that gives the exact location and the chair that Harmon Killebrew hit on his 520 ft. Home Run with the Twins. There is also a home plate marker in the exact location on the floor where the MN Twins home plate was from 1956-1981.

Follow along with us in the next issue of The Country Register as we travel from the MOA and head south to Owatonna and beyond.



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Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski

The Pace of Quilting



I recently sent my quilting friend a text message that made me kind of stop and reflect. The message was describing a day actively engaged in quilt-making activities—yet I had produced no single finished work to share with her. Sound familiar? Or, does it sound strange?

I had worked on seven different quilt projects that day. No kidding! Seven.

But the total amount of time I had spent on those seven quilting projects had only added up to a small number of hours, as I was stealing time away from doing other activities (like grading student papers, reading a book, or taking a walk).

Project #1: Machine-quilted a simple, 14-inch square wall hanging for someone made from a bandana honoring her high school reunion.

Project #2: Basted together a panel of fabric, batting, and backing fabric for a mid-size wall-hanging for someone else's new work office.

Project #3: Pulled fabric out of plastic boxes as I began planning a sudoku puzzle-turned-pattern lap quilt for someone undergoing breast cancer treatments.

Project #4: Drew colored-pencil blocks on graph paper, capturing details from an online video I had seen the night before (two quilt designs I hope to make in the future).

Project #5: Cut fabric from two of the three color families needed for a table runner wedding gift project (the wedding is in a month).

Project #6: Machine-stitched around the upcoming month's gnome—part of a 12-month set of wall hangings (11"x14" finished size) I call Gnome-of-the-Month—for myself.

Project #7: Chopped up another "scrap" bit of fabric (about the size of a fat quarter) into blocks for a full-size quilt my mother commissioned me to make for a woman at church.

A rare day of productivity; a somewhat rare day of scattered directions. Most days I spend quilting are focused—and I only work on one project for a number of hours at a time.

In March, for instance, I presented a thirty-eight inch square quilted wall hanging to someone as a gift, made from over one hundred two-and-a-half-inch squares. I had started cutting squares for that project in October 2022, which meant that it had taken me five months to complete the project.

Over those same five months I started, worked on, and finished about ten other projects between October's start and March's finish. The other projects were quick, or easy, or had an earlier delivery date than the March bridal shower. The heart wall hanging was too special to rush; created without a pattern, the project also required lots of decisions. Measure twice, cut once.

For me, quilting is a hobby. I enjoy quilting when I have spare time—or when I need a puzzle to distract me from stress. There are times my sewing machine sits idle, like an old friend waiting for me to return. Other times, it hums along with life, filling my life with wild productivity.

The true beauty of quilting? We each get to set our own pace.

© Jeanette Lukowski 2023. Jeanette is a mother, grandmother, teacher, and author who lives in Mankato, MN. She is inspired by the lives of strong women. Her email address is: writingfromlife@yahoo.com

Cowgirl Poet, Quilter, Entertainer



Yvonne Hollenbeck

Where Prairie Flowers Bloom

There's a special place I love to go
where prairie flowers bloom;
how I love to see their beauty
and to smell their sweet perfume.

Where the meadowlarks are singing
and the grass is kissed with dew,
as the morning sun is rising
in a sky of purest blue.

You can have your fancy gardens
with the rows of blossoms straight,
laced with walking paths and benches
and arrangements by the gate.

My heart prefers a country lane
that is flanked by prairie sod;
...a wilderness of flowers
that were planted there by God.



Order Yvonne's new book, "A Stitch in Rhyme" at
www.yvonnehollenbeck.com — just \$15 + \$3.50 postage.

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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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Come in and see our summer clearance section!



How can you help save the bees and create an eye catching seasonal display at the same time? Make a bee friendly flower garden! By planting plants that provide nectar and pollen as well as providing shelters in the garden space you will create a new habitat for bees. There are essential elements go into designing a elite bee garden.

Choose plants that attract bees:

Select a variety of flowers that are attractive to bees and that bloom at different times throughout the season. This will provide a steady supply of pollen and nectar. Bees like flowers with good landing platforms, tubular flowers with nectar at the base and flowers with spikes. Bees are most attracted to yellow and blue flowers and they cannot see red! Some great choices would be daisies, snapdragons, sage, goldenrod, purple coneflower, marigold and cosmos.

Provide a shallow water source:

Just like everything, bees require water to survive. However, bees can't swim! Provide a container that is shallow, or add rocks or floating pieces of wood to your bird bath. To avoid providing a breeding ground for mosquitoes add a small fountain to your birdbath to create moving water. Bees, butterflies and other insects love moving water, but mosquitoes don't. They need still water to lay their eggs.

Limit the use of insecticides:

Even organic pesticides can be toxic or even deadly to bees. Limit the use of insecticides in your bee garden. In high doses the insecticide can kill the bee outright. In low doses, when the insecticide is brought back to the hive, can be transferred to other bees in the hive. It may also be passed into the honey where it can alter the development of larvae affecting future generations. Exposure to insecticides may make the bees more susceptible to parasites and pathogens. Although no direct link has been discovered as of yet, it is believed insecticides may contribute to Colony Collapse Disorder.

Provide Nesting Sites for Bees:

Creating nesting habitats for bees is surprisingly simple. While it's commonly known that some bees nest in hives, bumblebees and other native bees also live in other available sites. Bumblebees like ground cover or boxes. Many native bees make nests in old pieces of wood, holes in trees, pithy plant stems or even in the ground. Because of this, don't be too quick to clean out old garden debris. They make great nesting sites for bees. You may also choose to construct a special nesting home for the bees.



Help save the bees by creating a bee friendly flower garden for honey bees, bumble bees and native bees! It's easy, and doesn't cost a ton of money!

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Snickerdoodle Mug Cake

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup + 2 tbsp flour
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 cup milk, at room temperature
- 2 tbsp salted butter, melted and cooled
- 1/2 tsp vanilla

Layering and Topping:

- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon

Directions:

1. In a small bowl whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder and cinnamon until combined.
2. Blend in milk, butter and vanilla until smooth.
3. In a large mug with straight sides add a big scoop of batter.
4. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar.
5. Alternate layers ending with cinnamon sugar.
6. Microwave for 1 - 1 1/2 minutes or until cake is done.
7. Allow to cool for a couple minutes.

Recipe by FiveHeartHome.com

New Ulm



Quilting is big in New Ulm! Join us Saturday, June 24 from 9 am to 5 pm for the bi-annual Quiltistry event! This day showcases New Ulm's rich heritage, beautiful historic sites and the depth of the many talented quilters in the area. Quilts will be displayed throughout the city. Don't forget to visit the three unique quilt shops while in town: *Sewing Seeds Quilt Company*, *Spinning Spools Quilt Shop* and *The Thimble Box*. Plan for a day or stay the weekend!

Experience the outdoor display of quilts located at various historic sites throughout the city:

- Schell's Brewery and Gardens
- Hermann Monument
- Glockenspiel and Schonlau Park
- Wanda Gag House
- The Junique Center
- Brown County Museum

Start and end your Quiltistry Passport at one of the three quilt shops all conveniently located within one mile: *Sewing Seeds Quilt Company*, *Spinning Spools Quilt Shop* and *The Thimble Box*. Complete your passport and receive a 1000 piece Quilt Themed Puzzle.

This event is free and open to the general public. It will be held rain or shine! We encourage you to experience New Ulm through its rich quilting heritage and historic beauty. This event is sponsored by KNUJ Radio, the New Ulm Chamber of Commerce, *Sewing Seeds Quilt Company*, *Spinning Spools Quilt Shop* and *The Thimble Box*.

For more information, visit newulm.com or contact the New Ulm Chamber of Commerce at 507-233-4300

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- Glockenspiel and Schonlau Park
- Brown County Museum
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Start and end your Quiltistry Passport at one of the three unique quilt shops conveniently located all within one mile!

- Sewing Seeds Quilt Company
- Spinning Spools Quilt Shop
- The Thimble Box

Complete your passport to receive a 1000 piece Quilt Theme puzzle!

Plan for a day or stay the entire weekend!



Saturday
June
24th
2023

9am-
5pm

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What in the World is That?

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 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, 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 adorning her home rather than see her parents discard them.

Yes, even a cream separator! 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, she explained exactly what it was and how it functioned to separate the cream from the milk after the cows were milked.

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. Then 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, and once it was full, Mary and Sue would take turns turning the handle around and around, causing the rich, thick cream to 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 the girls' responsibility to keep the separator clean with boiling water so the cream would be free of germs. Young Mary and Sue smiled with pride every time they got a good grade and price for the cream they sold, after it was inspected by Mr. Robertson.

If you live in the Midwest, you may be lucky enough to find a cream separator in the attic or a neighbor's barn. Since this area of the country had a lot of dairy farms, there are often a few separators at any garage sale you might go to. As for me, I have a priceless remnant of pastoral America sitting right in my dining room. Sometimes my grandchildren ask Nana, "What in the world is that?" And I'm happy to talk about 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.beckylvanvleet.com.

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Find your inspiration and reenergize at our annual Iowa Quilt Festival in Winterset, Iowa.

Our expanded IOWA QUILT FESTIVAL, May 3 - June 3, 2023, (which began in 2018 with a one-day event called The Airing of the

Quilts) is on track to become as significant as Madison

County's Covered Bridge Festival, with people attending from all over Iowa, surrounding states, and beyond.

In addition to the 3-day retreat in the historic Winterset Livery, we will have several nationally known instructors teaching May 31 - June 2: Diane Murtha, Patty Fried, and more. Headlining the event is Ricky Tims, nationally known Colorado musician, artist and quilter, presenting his two-day "Quilt Luminarium" from the stage of the restored Iowa Theater on the town square. The Ricky "experience" will have you wanting to jump from your seat and start designing your own quilts!

On Saturday's Airing, quilts are displayed in merchant windows and on porches of private homes, as well as in four bridges. You haven't really experienced Madison County's famed covered bridges until you've seen quilts hanging against their nineteenth-century timbers! You'll get to see top quilts from this year's QuiltCon show and quilts from our museum committee members including Linzee McCray, Jessica Plunkett and Marianne Fons.

Register for this one-of-a-kind event on our website at www.iowaquiltmuseum.org.

Remember:

Mother's Day is May 14th
Memorial Day is May 29th
Flag Day is June 14th
Father's Day is June 18th
First Day of Summer is June 21th

Spontaneous

by Barbara Polston

I don't believe that I am the least bit spontaneous. Everything in my world must be planned and scheduled. Stop for a coffee when out on errands? Not unless it was planned. See an estate sale sign and stop to look for vintage linens, fabric or quilting things? I have, but only after a vigorous internal debate. Most often, I pass by.

Some years ago, for a significant birthday, my oldest daughter got the idea that the family should take me on a surprise vacation. The plan was for them to show up one morning, tell me to pack a bag for a trip to an undisclosed destination, and take off.

When she shared her idea with her sister, my youngest responded, "How well do you know our mother?"

Although they proceeded to plan the surprise, fortunately, it was spoiled and I learned of the trip. I'm so glad I was able to anticipate the trip, be confident that all the details were planned out, and enjoy our family time away. Had this developed as a surprise, I would have gone into a panic mode, unsure of the plan, and worried that details were managed.

There are groups of quilters who participate in making "mystery quilts." In this process, the participant is given just the material requirements. The construction steps, or "clues," are revealed over time.

Participants complete one clue before the next is revealed. As the maker cuts and sews the bits together, she has no idea what the finished quilt will look like until the mystery is solved at the very end. I have a friend who designs mystery quilt patterns. She has created dozens and has a very loyal student following. It probably comes as no surprise, but I have never taken part in a mystery quilt.

When I design a quilt project, no surprise, it is well-planned. I have a clear vision of what the finished quilt will look like. Many projects finish exactly as first envisioned. Some change along the way but, when finished, are still close to the original idea. To the amusement of quilting friends, I asked the math expert in the group for the mathematical formula to lay out a group of fabric squares so they would look random. She responded, "If there's a formula, it's not random." Clearly, I've even tried to plan spontaneity!

I appreciate people who are spontaneous and the freedom they seem to have in living their lives. I appreciate those quilters who are comfortable being spontaneous and improvisational in their quilting. It's just not me.

I overheard a discussion the other day. One person expressed how much she loved approaching travel by being spontaneous. She enjoyed approaching each day with the excitement of not knowing what she would see or experience - going with the flow. Her companion simply replied, "I find it relaxing to have a plan and a schedule." I couldn't agree more!

©Barbara Polston, Tucson, Arizona, February 19, 2023. Barbara Polston, the author of *Quilting With Doilies: Inspiration, Techniques, and Projects* (Schiffer Press, 2015) and *Meet Puppy Brian* (2022 on www.puppy-brian.com), lives in Tucson where she has failed at retirement but is getting more time at her sewing machine. Contact her at barbarapolstonquilter@gmail.com.



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Spring Cleaning!

by Barbara Kalkis

One spring day, years ago, I trotted home from school to tell my mother that my friend, Betty Lou, would not be available on the weekend. She had announced to our play group that her mother was beginning Spring Cleaning. She made it sound like a national holiday. It would be massive WORK, she said. In addition to the customary washing, dusting and vacuuming, her mother insisted on ironing all the family bedding.

Huh? We friends all gasped at this revelation. Looking around, it was clear no one else was ironing sheets and pillowcases. Wasn't it enough to fold them properly?

No. As Betty Lou explained the intricacies of ironing a fitted sheet, we gaped at each other. Clearly, we were all in the same boat (or bed), sleeping on wrinkled sheets that could never match the crispness of bedding ironed by Betty Lou and her mother.

Our group dispersed with businesslike speed to inform our mothers of this flaw in their housekeeping. True, we kids had mandated chores but never attached a name to them. They just translated to "allowance." We did our chores and earned enough money to go to the local Dairy Queen and buy a "Dilly Bar." Or, if we performed an extra task, we could splurge and gorge ourselves on a sundae with two toppings—three if the owner was feeling generous.

Thoughts of a sundae topped with hot fudge, marshmallow and caramel sauces still makes my mouth water. Sadly, I have reached the age of reason, waistline woes and dismal doctor lectures to keep me in line—most of the time. But I digress.

My mother listened to my news. She then stated in the tone she reserved for Rules, Pronouncements and Orders that she only purchased 100% cotton percale sheets and they did not wrinkle. She added that we didn't wait until spring to thoroughly clean the house. We cleaned all the time.

That part was certainly true. My sisters and I were kept busy cleaning our two-story house year 'round. In fact, a vivid memory of falling down the length of the staircase along with the broom is the single reason my husband and I purchased a one-story house.

However, the truth was my mother did make spring cleaning an event. My job was always cleaning the linen closet. This meant ensuring that the sheets were stacked by pattern, color and type, top sheets, bottom sheets, pillows and blankets. Folded sides were to be 'out' so they looked like spines of a book with a "title" facing the closet door. Edges were to be hidden from view. Ditto for the towel cupboard. Guest sheets and towels were in a separate area.

I still follow this pattern today. Sometimes I think it may be my heavenly destiny to manage the linen closets while the other angels are out eating sundaes—with five toppings (whipped cream and walnuts!).



Despite the drudgery to make everything clean and tidy, spring cleaning holds cherished memories. These include: cheerfulness and satisfaction in jobs completed; bonding by working together; helping each other with the lifting or carrying; eating lunch together and ticking off the last tasks for the day. Also, laughing at lost things found; agreeing on things to be given away; feeling pride that our house was in order; hearing our dad compliment us on a job well done; and realizing that, somehow in spring cleaning, we were safe, secure, blessed and fortunate to have a home filled with love.

No, the sheets never got ironed, but loving hands smoothed them. And I still buy only 100% cotton percale. Mom would be proud.

©Barbara Kalkis. Barbara is a long-time high-tech marketing and public relations consultant, but her first love is as both a teacher and writer. Her book, Little Ditties for Every Day: A collection of thoughts in rhyme and rhythm, was published in 2021. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

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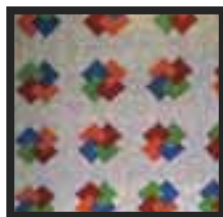
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Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

How Long?

The day we 'preg checked' our cattle, John roused me out of bed very early, saying, "You better get with it or we're going to be late."

Almost immediately, I managed to leave the cozy warmth of our bed and, with my eyes still mostly closed, find my way to the shower. Then I hurried to throw on some clothes, dry my hair and even apply a little makeup before heading out the door. A few minutes later, as we approached the ranch, we could see Jason and Durham, our herdsman and his son, were already out in the pasture rounding up the cattle and herding them into the corrals.

John and I quickly joined Jason and Durham in their efforts and before long John's cousin George Ray arrived. With this crew of experienced help, all the cattle on the ranch were ready and waiting when the vet drove in the yard.

Everyone had a specific job. It was the vet who actually examined each cow to determine if she was pregnant. John was in charge of treating them with Warbex. Jason checked each cow's hooves and teeth. George Ray kept cattle coming from the pens to the lane leading to the treatment area. I 'ran the pipes' by quickly sliding a metal pipe behind each cow so she couldn't backup once we had her in the lane. And Durham helped prod each cow, one by one, into the squeeze chute so treatment could be safely completed and each cow quickly released.

Though our 'system' went quite smoothly and three hours later all 141 cows had been checked, I found the day unsettling. I know ranching is a business that must be operated without emotion, but I sometimes struggle with some of the decisions made by my husband with little or no difficulty. The vast majority of the cows were found pregnant and fit so they were turned out in the large corral. But occasionally, John would direct a specific cow to be released to join a few others off to the side in a small holding pen.

It didn't take me long to figure out the small pen held our 'culls'—the cows that for one reason or another were deemed unworthy to keep on the ranch due to the cost of feeding them through the winter. Our ranch operation is one of having a calf crop to sell every fall. Whether I like it or not, any cow that's found 'open' (not pregnant) must be shipped off and sold. It simply isn't good business to keep and feed a non-productive cow.

In other instances, Jason, after all but standing on his head to pry a cow's mouth open—all the while being careful where his fingers were placed so they wouldn't be bitten off—would announce, "Her teeth are bad." This, too, was reason enough to cull a cow.

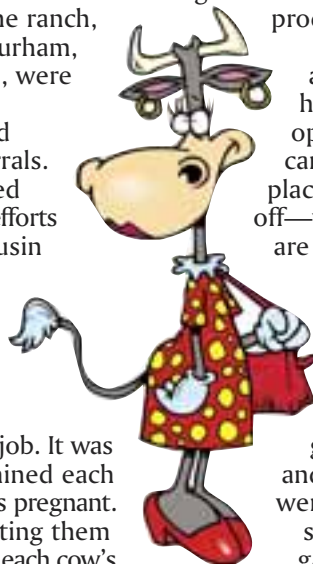
On occasion, I've had an ingrown toe nail, but nothing that could compare to the way a couple of the cow's hooves grew to be totally warped and curled. When these cows were being inspected, I heard someone announce, "This old gal can hardly walk!" And with that, John would pronounce his decree: "We better sell her."

Sometimes, all it took was a look at the records. If a cow was old and raised a scrawny calf this past year, she too was destined to end up in the small pen.

By the end of the day, I realized why I was so unsettled by the harsh realities of the cattle business and the way my husband manages the herd. Any cow that isn't pregnant, has bad feet or bad teeth—or is just old, is sold.

I'm old—so old that when I go to the doctor and they want to know my age, I say, "I don't know. You've got the chart." I not only have bad feet and wear orthotics in my shoes, but my teeth are prone to ache. Why, last year alone I had three costly root canals. It's also a certainty that pregnant I'm not!

With every strike going against me, I can't help but wonder just how long until John will decide to cull me?



By the Yard © 2021 Jennifer Lopez

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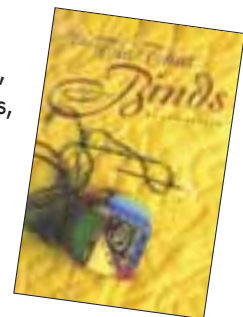
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COUNTRY REGISTER RECIPE EXCHANGE

Shrimp Salad



Submitted by Irene Thompson, La Junta, CO

- 1 package frozen or canned peas (10 oz.)
- 1 package Creamette Shells (7 oz.)
- 1 package frozen shrimp, thawed (10 oz.)
- 1/2 cup sliced radishes
- 1/2 cup diced green pepper
- 1/4 cup diced onion
- 1 jar chopped pimento (2 oz.)
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt

Prepare shells according to package directions and drain. Combine with next 6 ingredients. Mix together mayonnaise and seasoned salt. Toss dressing with salad mixture. Cover and chill. 6 Servings.

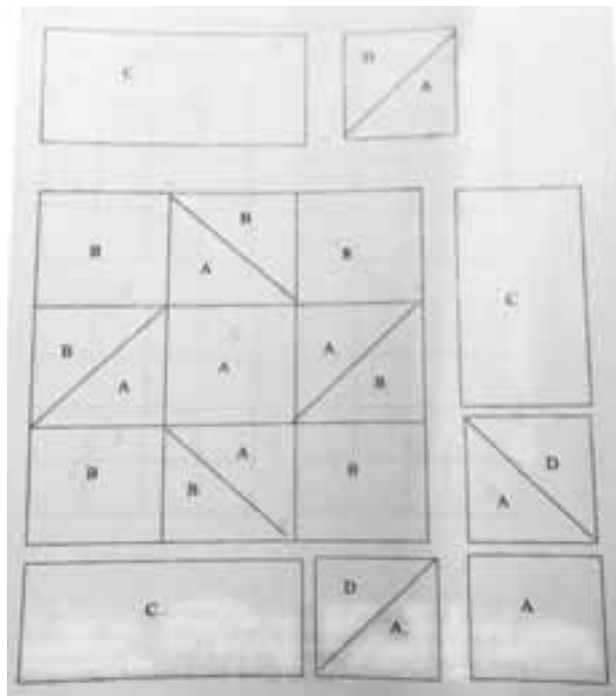


Mystery Quilt

Part 2 of 3

Lay out the block per the diagram, using Four 2 1/2" Fabric B squares and One 2 1/2" Fabric A square along with your half square triangles. Be sure your Fabric A is in the correct position before sewing or you won't see your star!

Sew Fabric C rectangle to your Fabric A/D half square triangle (make 2). Sew 2 1/2" Fabric A square to one of the sections. Assemble per diagram. You will be making 16 of these blocks. They should square up to 8 1/2". You will have a total of 16 blocks.



Twisted Star

Mystery Quilt - 2023

Designed by Ann Jones, Nevada, MO

If you have any questions contact Erica at Nine Patch Quilt & Fabrics, Nevada, MO
ericaskouby@gmail.com or 417-667-7100. Miss one of the parts?
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Piecing the Quilt Top:

Now that you have 16 blocks made, let's put them together. Cut the following for sashing # 1.

Sixteen - 2 1/2" X 8 1/2" of Fabric E

Four - 2 1/2" squares of Fabric A (cornerstone)

Following the diagram, sew Four of the friendship blocks together using sashing strips and cornerstone. You will make Four of these sections. Make sure you pay attention to where your Fabric A blocks are!

Life in Skunk Hollow

by Julie A Druck



Another View of Mother's Day

Sometimes it's really hard to find the right greeting card. In anticipation of Mother's Day, I find myself, once again, trekking to the stationery store for a card that honestly relays my sentiments for my mother. And, as usual, I come home frustrated because nothing is right.

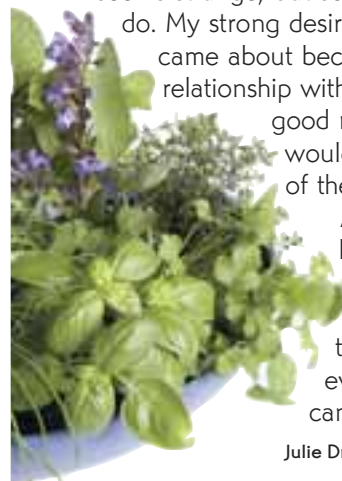
The celebration of Mother's Day has always been a little bittersweet for me. On one hand, I love the day as I anticipate and appreciate the sweet sentiments my children always extend to me. Whether a card, a gift or simply a little text with big love behind it, I know I am loved. On the other hand, I struggle mightily to find some way to express my feelings to my own mother.

Though it's unnecessary to go into specifics, Mom and I have always had a difficult relationship. And though the relationship hasn't been what I would have liked, it's important to me to figure out how it looks for me to honor her. Learning how to "do" our relationship has been a continual process of compassion and perseverance (on both sides, I'm sure). But I've discovered one major part of that process for me has to be to choose gratitude—to look for things within our relationship for which I can be thankful. Choosing gratitude helps me fight against bitterness or resentment. And gratitude reminds me to acknowledge my own inadequacies and failures. It helps keep the playing field level.

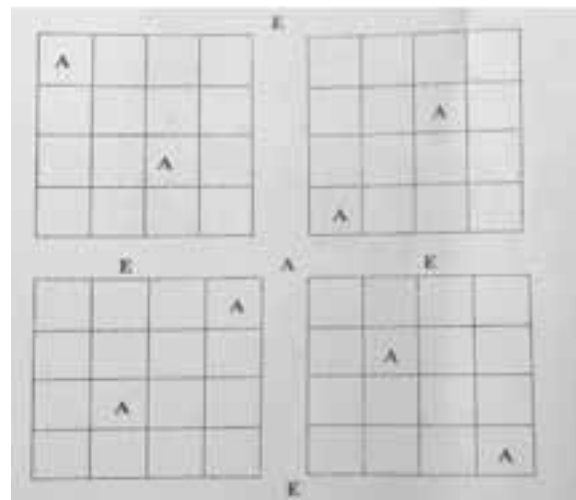
One of the simple things for which I am thankful about my mom is the love and knowledge of plants and flowers she passed on to me. When she was younger, Mom kept many beds of lovely flowers about the yard. I would help her tend them, and she would teach me the names and their habits. Even today, she still loves to line her windowsills with houseplants. Those learning times cultivated in me a love of the beauty of nature. And as a result, I am passing down that same knowledge to our little granddaughter who has inherited our green thumb.

An even bigger thing for which I am thankful is that my relationship with my mom made me very intentional about how I wanted my own family to look. It seems strange, but sometimes what we learn from others is what NOT to do. My strong desire to pour into our children a heritage of love and faith came about because I was determined I wanted a different relationship with my own children. I am immensely proud of the three good men we have raised. And I have often wondered if I would have been as diligent or as intentional in the raising of them if I would have had a more desirable childhood.

And so, I will continue this journey of seeking to honor my mom because she's worth honoring. It's tricky at times, and I've been tempted to give up, but I am determined to continue to choose to be thankful for our relationship. For I've discovered that even if you can't find the right card in the store, you can always choose to write your own.

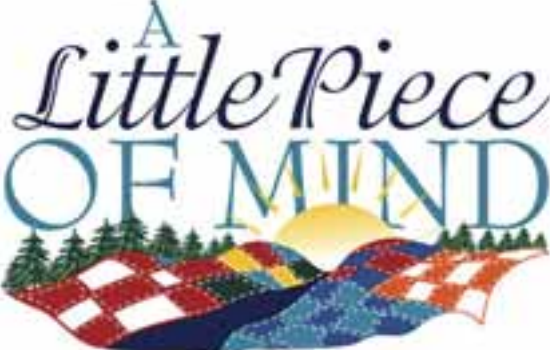


Julie Druck is from York, Pennsylvania, and writes from her farm in Skunk Hollow. She'd welcome your comments at thedrucks@netzero.com.



Make four of these sections, paying attention to where the "A" blocks are.

Once you have these four sections together, out 4 - 2 1/2 x 16 1/2 inch strips of Fabric E and 1 - 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 inch square of Fabric A. Lay the sections out and piece together using the Fabric E for the sashing and the Fabric A square as your setting sashing.



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Sun 6/11: 10 am - 4 pm
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by Janet Young

On May 12, 1908 Anna Jarvis, the originator of Mother's Day, held a memorial service for her mother to honor her for all the work she had done throughout her life as an activist. Before long other states joined by setting aside time to honor mothers. In 1914, President Roosevelt designated the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. From that day to the present, Mother's Day has been alive and thriving—so much so, that Anna Jarvis became so upset over the commercialization of the holiday, she wanted it discontinued. Unfortunately, she passed before she could get her wish. Perhaps Anna had a point. The day was to celebrate the greatness of our mothers, and not be spoiled by offerings of flowers, jewelry etc. If, we would want to honor our mothers today, how would we do so if keeping Anna's original proposal in mind. Pondering over this challenge, I came up with the idea of a hand-written letter. Hand-written because it makes it more personal, but if vision problems exist, then a typed note could suffice.

In that letter, of course, you would express your love for her, and how she sacrificed unconditionally for you. Perhaps you would thank her for all the time she spent with you, teaching you ways to become independent, so that one day you could be on your own. For defending you if the need ever arose. And for being the glue that held your family together even to this day.

If she is an active senior, you might want to compliment her on how you admire her aging gracefully, how she engages in activities and takes pleasure in each new day. If you are beginning to quote your mother even though you said you never would, let her know. She might enjoy the laughter it will bring. These are only suggestions to help you get started.

As a mother I can't think of anything that would be more meaningful, more endearing than to receive a heart-felt note from my adult child. So, perhaps this is the year to let your mother know how much she means to you. Don't assume because she knows it, there is no reason to tell her. You could be highlighting something she never would have guessed you noticed or were touched by.

I would like to end with a light-hearted quote by an unknown author. It goes like this: "If at first you don't succeed, try doing it the way Mom told you in the beginning."

Remember Mom knows Best!

—Janet Young, Certified Tea and Etiquette Consultant, is a founding member of Mid-Atlantic Tea Business Association and freelance writer/national tea presenter Visit her website at www.overtheteacup.com

Country Register Recipe Exchange

Vegetable Medley

submitted by Patti Lee Bock of New Ulm, MN



- 4 carrots - peeled and cut into matchstick sized pieces
- 1 zucchini - cut into matchsticks
- 3 stalks celery - cut into matchsticks
- 1 summer squash - cut into matchsticks
- 2 green onions - sliced
- 1 sweet red pepper - cored and cut into matchsticks
- 1/4 pound green beans - trimmed and cut into matchsticks
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- salt and pepper

Blanch vegetables. Drain and place on paper towels to dry. Once dry sautee the vegetables.



Eden Valley

Don't worry about yesterday or last month. Today is a new day, so renew your mind this morning. Be positive and start fresh.



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

Jalapeno Popper Chicken Casserole

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 2 lbs <u>boneless, skinless</u> chicken breast | 1/2 lb jalapeno peppers (about 5-6) |
| cooked and shredded (about 3-4 breasts) | 4oz sharp cheddar cheese, shredded |
| 1/2 tsp <u>garlic powder</u> | 1/2 tsp <u>paprika</u> |
| 8oz cream cheese, <u>softened</u> | 1/2 cup <u>crumbled</u> crispy bacon |
| 1/2 cup <u>heavy cream</u> or milk | |
| 1/4 cup chicken stock | |

Preheat oven to 375°. Shred the cooked chicken (or use rotisserie chicken). Layer the chicken on the bottom of a casserole dish. Season chicken with the garlic powder and paprika. Whisk together heavy cream (or milk), cream cheese and chicken stock. Spread the mixture evenly over the shredded chicken. Wash the jalapeno peppers and cut the tops off. Remove the seeds if you want a milder version, or leave some seeds if you want more spice. Chop the peppers into diced pieces and spread them on top of the cream cheese. Sprinkle the cheddar cheese on top. Bake the casserole for 20 minutes or until bubbly. Remove from oven and sprinkle with bacon. Return to the oven for 5 minutes. Enjoy all by itself or with your favorite cracker!

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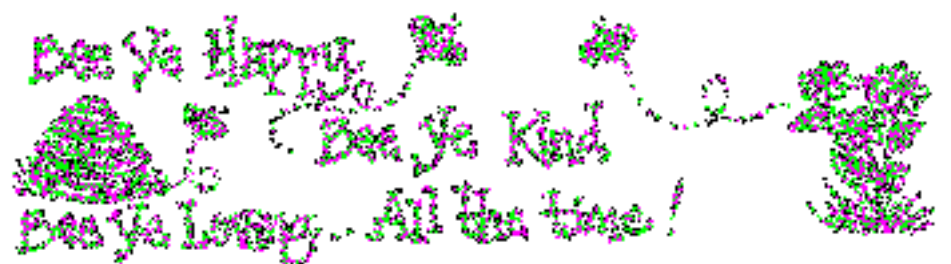
This pattern is free for you to use. Please give the artist credit. Not for commercial use.
 Enlarge this pattern to your desired size. Paint on wood or canvas.
 You can also applique in wool or cotton and embroider the details.
 You can do punchneedle or rug hooking techniques too.
 Whatever craft you choose, have fun!

Designed by Kathy Graham

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St. Cloud



Take your paper with you this summer as you travel the state and stop in and visit the shops in The Country Register! Tell them you saw them here in the paper!

Mark your Calendars for The Minnesota Quilt Show!



The Minnesota Quilt Show, presented by Minnesota Quilters, is returning to the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud June 15 - 17. Returning attendees will find familiar features but will notice some new features. Minnesota Quilters, a statewide organization which provides quilting education, activities, mentoring, and fellowship for quilters, recently introduced a new logo and name for their annual show.

Quilters and those that appreciate the textile arts will find a multitude of activities. Plan a day trip or take a deep dive and register for a multi-day pass. The show begins with Preview Night on Wednesday, June 14, from 7 - 9 p.m. You'll have a chance to meet the teachers, celebrate the winners of the judging, and do some shopping. Show hours on Thursday and Friday are 9 - 6 and on Saturday 9 - 4. A daily ticket is \$16 (\$12 for members). Kids 12 and under are free while 13 - 18 are \$5.

Be inspired by the quilts! You'll find quilts entered by youth as well as quilters that make their living by creating quilts. The Judged Quilt Exhibit draws people from across the country and is judged by nationally certified quilt judges. A variety of styles will be evident - applique, art, modern, pictorial and more. Add in the non-judged quilts that have been entered and you are sure to find some favorites. The Minnesota Quilt Show is also able to bring in several Special Exhibits. Graffiti is the current Cherrywood Challenge and you'll be amazed by the ideas generated around that theme using the same palette of 8 colors.

If learning is a priority, there are several options: workshops, lectures, and presentations on the Learning Stage. Again, a wide variety of topics are available. Advanced registration for workshops is available online but you can buy lecture tickets at the show and the Learning Stage is free.

Shop from vendors that are local and national - all in one spot. If you have been thinking about buying a new machine, this is the place for you with all the top brands represented and ready with show deals. Of course there will be fabric, patterns, notions. You can even bring your scissors to be sharpened while you enjoy the show!

Connecting quilters is one of our goals and so we encourage you to learn about local quilt guilds at our Connect Table, sew a block at Quilting for Others, or hang at our new Sewcial Lounge to learn some tips, work on a project from a class, or encourage new quilters.

For more information visit www.mnquilt.org/mq2023 or call 651-224-3572.



The Minnesota Quilt Show!

JUNE 15 - 17, 2023

River's Edge Convention Center,
St. Cloud

Schedule

Show Hours

- Thursday and Friday, 9 - 6
- Saturday, 9 - 4

Special Events

- Show Preview, Wednesday June 15, 7 - 9 pm, \$12
- Banquet Friday, June 16, 6:30, Susan Cleveland!
- Sewcial Lounge

Ticket Options

Advanced Registration (includes 3 day pass)

\$35 for members and \$45 for non-members

Daily Admission

\$12 for members and \$16 for non-members

Quilt Exhibits

Judged Competition

Non-Judged Quilts

Youth Exhibit

Special Exhibits

Graffiti Cherrywood Challenge, Charm Quilts, Children's Story Quilts, Luke Haynes, and more!

Workshops, Lectures, and Learning Stage

Vendors



www.mnquilt.org/mq2023



Summer Bucket List!

Make the 2023 Summer a Great One!

- Make a sand castle
- Go kayaking or canoeing (yes you can in MN)
- Plant a butterfly garden
- Make a birdhouse
- Hike a new trail
- Take a road trip
- Go whitewater rafting
- Ride a roller coaster
- Bake a fruit pie
- Go camping
- Visit a farmers market

Finding Love in the Mourning Dove

by Kerri Habben Bosman

One reason I like to write these articles is to remind myself what is important. They force me to keep digging until I reach what I want to express. Sometimes I have to push aside a lot of details to achieve that. It is then that I realize once again how much time is spent on the minutia of living.

I don't mean basic maintenance like grocery shopping and doing laundry. These tasks and others like them can become quietly sacred in their own way just by being grateful for having enough. There is much to be said for being dedicated to what needs to be done. It is when all the details begin gelling that I consciously slow down. If I didn't, I might forget that simply being alive is a precious gift. For underneath all that accumulated moss is still the rock itself. A core each of us have that makes us who we are.

Perhaps this introspection is why watching the birds is so relaxing. They, too, have details to tend to, but they never seem in a hurry. My husband, Wayne, and I enjoy seeing them land upon the feeder, from the tiny finches to the bigger blue jay. The chickadee always draws our attention. A male cardinal upon the top of the crook gleams endlessly red, and we find his arrival better than anything we'd ever see on television.

Then there are the birds that feed upon the ground. Each year we have an Eastern towhee couple arrive in the spring. Papa Towhee is striking in his black overcoat, and Mama elegant in her simplicity. When the robins start to appear, it is an extra special day.

But my favorite bird is the mourning dove. Since I was child, I've valued the even coo and steady pace of this bird. Usually there are two of them together and sometimes three. They either fly off in one sudden moment or one ascends and the others follow.

It is both their immense calm and their sudden energy that inspires me. Each bird gently strolls upon the ground, eating until it has gathered enough to fill its capacity. When it is indeed time to fly, they take off with a deliberate and passionate trill.

They never bother any of the other birds and even a nearby squirrel twice its size doesn't cause them to change their path. They just quietly go about the business of gathering as if they know exactly where the next morsel is waiting. A pastel iridescent light glimmers off their feathers whenever they are in the sun. It is then that they seem transformed. One moment they are seemingly drab and the next they are shining.

I try to go about my days and my tasks in a way similar to a mourning dove, ideally with an even pace wherein somehow everything gets done. I haven't perfected this bird's graceful motions in changing course. I slip into a flutter and then catch myself. Yet, there have been pivotal moments in my life when I knew exactly what I had to do and how to do it.

I apply the most important lesson from the mourning doves in how I am with other people. For all our different personalities and paths, everyone can feel gray and drab once in a while. Especially when life's details could overwhelm us. So I try to draw out a bit of light to remind people that they truly shine. Which brings me back to why I write these articles. There is always the increased self-awareness, but being able to share with you and others is part of what keeps me steadfast.

And of course, there is always remembering the mourning doves.

Kerri Habben Bosman is a writer in Chapel Hill, NC. She can be reached at 913jееves@gmail.com.



Random Acts

by Maranda K Jones

Picnic Time

If you could go on a picnic anywhere in the world, where would you go? I would pick the mountains. I would drive to a nice open clearing surrounded by hills all around, wildflowers coloring the sides of the mountains. Find a nice little table under the clear blue sky, spread out the red-checkered tablecloth, and set out sandwiches on cheap white paper plates torn apart at the ruffled edges. We would eat our lunch before the breeze blows in the late afternoon thunderstorm, and then we would drive home in the rain. The wipers would swish back and forth, singing along to the John Denver song on the radio.

Growing up in Colorado with a family who loves to camp made this a common occurrence. We spent most weekends in the pickup, traveling from our home on the plains to higher elevation. While camping we enjoyed many meals outdoors, and each meal seemed to taste even better in the fresh spruce air. There is a sense of accomplishment in cooking on a campfire. Earning that meal after setting up the tent, hiking to the lake and catching rainbow trout is a thrill, but going to the mountains for the day felt different. A picnic was a holiday all its own.

This happened once. I cannot recall the exact location, but I am sure my dad would know. He remembers each trip and lake and the number of fish caught with the smallest of details given. We can ask him one question, and he will recall the entire outing. "Dad, where were we when we sat at that little inlet after walking around the water?" "North Fork." Then he will proceed to tell us how many fish we caught, what the weather was like, and some other significant event that happened. "What was the name of the lake where my line got caught in that tree behind us?" "Rampart." Then he will remind us how many times we have been there and if we have an upcoming reservation to go back. I will have to ask him.

"Dad, where did we toss marshmallows to the chipmunks?" He will know. He will remember our snacking and constant questioning. My sister and I always asked if it was time for lunch yet. He will remember us continually filling our mugs with water from the red and white thermos sitting on the edge of the picnic table. He will remember telling us to walk down the hill with sideways steps and to watch our footing.

He will remember walking between my sister and me, baiting our hooks with red slimy salmon eggs. Either we were too little to do it ourselves or just did not want to reach in the small wide-mouthed jar to get three of them to fit nicely around the barb. I remember the answer to that one! The film stuck to my fingernails, and the squishy texture made me beg for a bobber and a fly. I could spend all day casting and reeling my line. My mom also loves to cast her fishing line out, so she reels in to tighten the slack and check her hook often. That day the four of us sat together, waiting for those tugs and hoping to catch a few.

For whatever reason, we were just there fishing for the day. A little fishing, a little lunch. A picnic. Sitting along the bank, with solid, flat rocks for chairs, we fished together. There was nowhere else to be and nothing else to do. No tent to be set up, no beds to be made, no firewood to gather. We were simply together, giving each other our full attention. That is what made that day feel so special. It does not matter where we were, but I will still ask my dad. He will remember. It is picnic time.



© 2023 Maranda K Jones

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

-Dr. Seuss



Maranda Jones' new book *Random Acts*
is now available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)
The book includes her reader-acclaimed articles from the last decade

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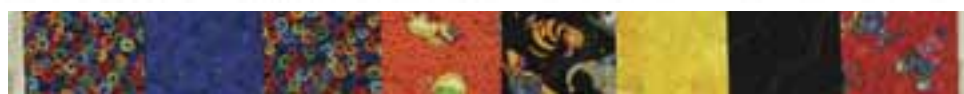
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**MOTHER SAYS
FAMOUS LAST WORDS**

If you don't stop, your face will freeze like that. **I** only have 2 hands. **L**et me kiss it & make it better. **B**ecause I said so. **B**ecause I'm your mother. **G**o ask your father. **E**at it, it's good for you. **D**on't put that in your mouth, you don't know where it's been. **I** don't care who started it. **G**et your hair out of your face. **Y**ou call that music? **C**lean your plate, there are starving children. **M**oney doesn't grow on trees. **I**f all your friends jumped off a cliff would you do it too? **D**on't ever forget that I love you. **Y**ou'll always be my Baby.

Call your mother. ♥ your Mother

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Rush City



This month in Minnesota History

May 25, 1877: During the grasshopper plague, the state offers a bounty of fifty cents for each gallon of grasshopper eggs collected by this date.

June 25, 1977: The first Grandma's Marathon is run from Two Harbors to Duluth. Named for its first major sponsor, the Duluth-based Grandma's restaurants, the race grew to draw over 8,500 participants annually.

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

Wit and Wisdom

The Beauty of Blooming

by Roxanne J. Ferguson

I'm not sure what I like best about spring—the chirping of birds in the morning, the chorus of “peepers” in the evening, the bursting forth of bright green leaves from budded trees, or the parade of springtime flowers as they each take their turn to smile at the sun. They are all refreshing to the soul.

I guess I am most captivated and amazed at the persistence of springtime flowers, so fragile, yet so strong. Little white snowdrops brave the last days of winter by poking their heads through the remaining covering of snow. Following their example, purple, pink, and yellow crocuses dot the newly uncovered flowerbeds and lawn. Soon after, bright daffodils with trumpet-like blossoms play a fanfare of yellow, announcing that spring is really here. Graceful tulips appear in an array of colors, along with fragrant hyacinths, giving their blessing on a new season. If only each variety would come and stay, but they come at their appointed time, grace us with their presence and beauty, and then step back for the next flower to have its turn to shine.

On a walk through the fields and woods, I was greeted by violets of different shades of purple, pink, and white. A shy yellow bell-shaped blossom of the trout lily tried to hide but its spotted leaves gave it away. Deep red trilliums with their ballerina skirts danced among the woodland trees. Even the wetlands were alive with the bright yellow blossoms of marsh marigolds, also known as cowslips.

Another spring flower that I enjoy and that appears in abundance is the dandelion. I love to see the lawn carpeted in yellow. Unfortunately, my husband does not love them as I do and mows them off without a bit of regret. Lucky for me, they are persistent and reappear soon!

I think what impresses me about spring flowers is that they come up every year, often in less than ideal weather. They poke their heads through snow, soil, around rocks, rain or shine. And when they have worked through all this, they stretch their leaves, open their blossoms and display a beautiful flower for the world to enjoy. They fulfill their purpose.



In life, we too have seasons. Sometimes it is hard to push through difficult times, but we know we have to. We stretch; we grow. We have both rain and sun in our lives. If we persevere, we blossom. We become the person God created us to be. Hopefully we bring beauty into the world, touch lives, make a difference, and make the world a better place.

“See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, will he not much more clothe you of little faith?”

Matthew 6:28-30

For information on books by the authors of this column, please contact them at witandwisdomwriters@gmail.com

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A TOUR OF MINNESOTA'S STATE PARKS

Carley State Park



Located in the Bluffland Landscape Region in Southwest Minnesota, beauty and quiet is the essence of Carley State Park. In the spring, delicate bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), and other wildflowers carpet the valley with a profusion of color. Hike along the trail that follows the Whitewater River and take in the grand old white pines. Take a break in the picnic area after

your hike and listen for the sweet song of orioles, song sparrows, house wrens, and indigo buntings.

Carley State Park has approximately six miles of trails that traverse a wide variety of scenery from valley floors to rock ridges. The north facing rock cliffs on the river bluff are home to a rare plant environment known as algific talus slopes. Here, a cold wet microclimate supports a northern plant community uncommon in southern Minnesota. Glacial remnant species, such as Canada yew, cling to existence in the cool microclimate of these slopes.

The north branch of the Whitewater River is a designated trout stream and provides habitat for brown trout. River crossings allow visitors close access to the water and can observe and fish for brown trout.

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



A Cup of Tea with Lydia

by Lydia E. Harris

Watermelon Smiles



My face was as red as the strawberries I picked. By afternoon, my back ached, berry juice stained my hands, and my throat felt parched. I wanted to quit. Just then my father stopped by the berry field with a large chilled watermelon and cut a thick slice for me. What a refreshing treat! That was more than fifty years ago. But whether young or old, many enjoy the bright color and juicy sweetness of watermelon. So, from decorations to featured foods, let watermelon steal the show at your summer par-TEAS.

FOR A CASUAL PARTY:

Enjoy an outdoor party in your yard, or transport your party to the park. Add pizzazz to your table with colorful watermelon-themed paper plates and napkins. I've even found watermelon-shaped candles and watermelon-print fabric that I sewed into a tablecloth. Or let kids make watermelon paper placemats to add to the decor. Draw a half-slice of watermelon on white construction paper. Then let kids color the green rind and red flesh with crayons or markers. Add black oval dots for seeds. Or buy a white paper tablecloth for kids to decorate.

For the menu, here's one idea: lemonade iced tea (see recipe), croissants filled with ham and cheese, assorted garden vegetables, and watermelon slices. Once the half slice of watermelon is eaten, you're left with a smiling rind and a smiling face. For dessert, make "watermelon" cookies from your favorite sugar cookie or shortbread recipe, but tint the dough light red. Roll out the dough, cut circles, and then cut the circles in half. Press mini chocolate chips into each slice before baking. After the cookies are baked and cooled, frost the round edges with green frosting squeezed from a tube. These "watermelon slices" will add a sweet ending to your meal.

FOR A FANCY PARTY:

A crisp white tablecloth with red or green napkins makes a striking table setting. For a centerpiece, use half a small watermelon and place it upside down on a plate. Then make fruit kabob flowers by cutting watermelon and other fruits into flower shapes or balls. Assemble them on skewers, and poke them into the watermelon half.

Or create a show stopper by carving a watermelon into a unique design. For our daughter's wedding, I cut long oval watermelons into scalloped baskets with handles and filled them with fruit kabobs. To welcome our newborn granddaughter, I carved a small watermelon into a baby buggy, poking in paper umbrellas for wheels, then filled it with fruit salad. You could even carve your melon into a teapot. For these ideas and more, go to www.watermelon.org (click on carvings).

Plan the menu around favorite tea foods, and finish with a frosty slice of "watermelon" sherbet made from one of these recipes.

1. Wrap the inside of a medium-sized mixing bowl with plastic wrap. Spread a one-inch layer of green pistachio ice cream or lime sherbet to cover the entire inside surface of the bowl. Freeze until firm. Soften pink strawberry ice cream or raspberry sherbet and mix in mini chocolate chips. Fill the green bowl with the ice cream or sherbet. Freeze until firm. Before serving, thaw slightly, unmold, and cut "watermelon slices" with a sharp knife dipped into warm water.

2. Cut a small, chilled honeydew melon in half and remove the seeds. Fill each half with raspberry sherbet and freeze it until firm. Cut each half into slices or four to six wedges. Press mini chocolate chips into the sherbet. Serve the melon immediately. Freeze leftovers.

If you're looking for a refreshing slice of summer, begin with a watermelon theme and end with happy memories. I'm ready to plan my par-TEA. Won't you join me to make smiles?

Lydia E. Harris is a tea enthusiast and the author of two books for grandparents: *In the Kitchen with Grandma: Stirring Up Tasty Memories Together* and *Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting*, both available at amazon.com and wherever books are sold.



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COUNTRY REGISTER RECIPE EXCHANGE

Apple Bread

Submitted by Irene Thompson, La Junta, CO

1 cup sugar	1/2 cup shortening
2 eggs	1 cup chopped apples
2 cups flour	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 Tablespoon vanilla	1 teaspoon soda
1 1/2 Tablespoons buttermilk	1 cup chopped pecans

Pour into prepared pan and sprinkle with a mixture of 3 Tablespoons sugar and 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Bake 1 hour at 350°. Enjoy!

Country Register Recipe Exchange

Slovak Slices

submitted by Patti Lee Bock of New Ulm, MN

2 cups butter	2 cups chopped walnuts
2 cups granulated sugar	2 cans (14oz) fruit pastry filling
4 egg yolks	powdered sugar
4 cups all-purpose flour	

Preheat oven to 350°. Cream butter and sugar in large bowl until fluffy. Add egg yolks and mix well with wooden spoon. Add flour and nuts. Grease a 9x13 inch pan. Spread half of the dough in the bottom of the pan. Add a layer of pastry filling. Add the other half of the dough over the filling. Bake 35-40 minutes until nicely browned. Cool. Cut into squares. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.

From Lydia's Recipe File: Lemonade Iced Tea

Combine:

- 4 cups brewed Earl Grey tea (Use 5 teabags and steep for 3 minutes; remove teabags.)
- 1/3 cup sugar (or sweeten to taste)

Add:

- 1 cup cold water
- 1/4 cup frozen lemonade concentrate, thawed
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Mix and chill. Serve over ice in frosty glasses. Garnish with fresh lemon slices. Makes 5 cups

Variation: Replace Earl Grey tea with English Breakfast tea.

Frosty glasses: For sweet sips, moisten the glass rims with water and dip them

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GIRLFRIEND WISDOM: Turn on some music and Sing, Sing, Sing like a Bluebird!
Sing in the car - Sing in the shower - Sing at Church - Hum a melody while taking a walk - Become a karaoke Super-Star!
The benefits are important and too many to ignore. This God-given ability is available to all of us. Nature sets the example in many ways and this one is among the sweetest. Composer and songwriter Cole Porter's words are so true: "Be like the Bluebird who never is blue. For he knows from his upbringing what singing can do!"

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



Where in Minnesota?

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Rusty the Dragon in Ogilvie, MN

The fire-breathing dragon with glowing red eyes was built by a retired machinist in his front yard. Rusty stands over ten feet tall and weighs over 1.5 tons.



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Fun Facts about Lake Superior

- All of the other four Great Lakes, plus three more the size of Lake Erie would fit inside of Lake Superior.
- There is enough water in Lake Superior to submerge all of North and South America in 1 foot of water.
- Contained within Lake Superior is 10% of the world's fresh surface water.
- It is estimated there are about 100 million lake trout in Lake Superior. That's nearly 1/5 of the human population of North America.
- There are small outlets through which water leaves Lake Superior. It takes two centuries for all the water in the lake to replace itself whereas Lake Erie only takes 2.6 years.
- It's average depth is 483 feet and a maximum depth of 1,333 feet.
- The average annual water temperature is 40 degrees. It only very rarely freezes over completely. Last time was in 1979. It nearly did in 2014.

Try This...

submitted by Myrna Bianco



How smart is your right foot?

While sitting in a chair, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles.

Now, while doing this, draw the number 6 in the air with your right hand.

Your foot will change directions!

It's absolutely true! And there is nothing you can do about it! I guess there are some things that the brain cannot handle.

You and I both know how stupid it is, but before the day is done you are going to try it again!



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Back Porch Break

by Nancy Brummett

First Inning Moms

The crack of the bat in a neighborhood park has me once again reminiscing about a little leaguer of my own. Back in 1995, the day before I left my job after 16 years, I had to face up to the one task I dreaded most: cleaning out my desk drawer. The contents were melded into one giant rectangle of paper clips, rubber bands, plastic spoons, push pins, cough drops...you get the picture. Within this moraine of corporate life, however, I discovered a treasure: a 3" button with a picture of my son Tim in his little league baseball uniform, wearing a hat three sizes too big and a sideways smile on his 9-year-old face that said, "I don't know if I can hit or catch a ball, but I'm sure going to try."

Working moms and dads know the memories that button evokes. Most of them are positive, because I loved being a part of it all. However, the challenges of being a single mom were great. The schedules were always posted on the refrigerator, but the times seemed impossible to meet. I still warmly remember every parent or coach who volunteered for pick-up duty, letting me opt for the carpool home.

Then there were the afternoon phone calls to the office. "Mom, where's my glove?" "My hat?" "My right shoe?" Followed by the logical next call, "Where's my left shoe?" The next time the phone rang I could pick it up and say, "it's in the dryer," because I knew there was a search going on for the uniform!

Along with the memories comes the guilt, of course. Why was I always so late getting to the games? It was possible for me to leave work on time, but too often I didn't. I actually remember driving down the interstate while slicing oranges into sections on top of a grocery bag on the passenger seat of my car.

Blessedly, our kids tend to grow up to appreciate our best efforts and forgive us for being less than perfect. One Mother's Day while Tim was away at college, I received a card from him that I treasure even more than the button. On the cover is a photo of two little boys in baseball gear. Inside the blank card he wrote: "Just like me, huh? Happy Mom's Day, Mom! Thanks for bringin' the oranges! Love always, Tim."

Gratefully, more and more working moms and dads are entering ball games, recitals, school plays and other activities right into their calendars—and leaving work to attend them! If you're one of these parents, resolve to leave work on time. Be a "first-inning mom" or a "kick-off dad." Be in your seat when the curtain rises. In ten years, you'll never be able to remember what was important enough to keep you at work. I can guarantee it.

Nancy Parker Brummett is an author and freelance writer in Colorado Springs, CO. Follow her on Facebook, Instagram and Linked In or subscribe to her blog posts at www.nancyparkerbrummett.com.



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