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Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events

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May/June 2024

Summer is Here!



Minnesotas Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events



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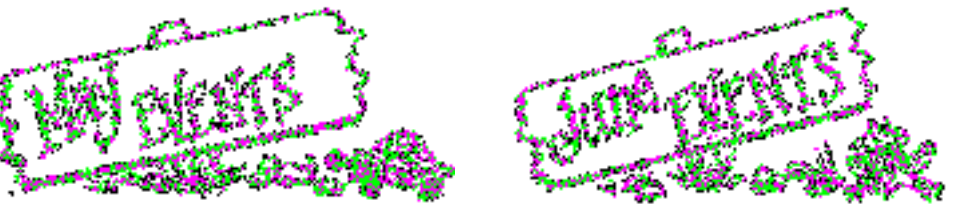
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Special Events	
May	
4.....	Opening Day - Country Craft Shed - Duluth
4.....	Spring in the Valley - Lost and Found - Eden Valley
4.....	Salvage Bag Class - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
10-11.....	Fishing Frenzy Fun Weekend - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
11.....	Arts & Craft Festival - Brainerd - See ad page 8
13.....	Tips and Tricks Luncheon - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
13-17.....	May Blowout Sale - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn
25-27.....	Plant Sale - Country Craft Shed - Duluth
June	
1.....	Spin Fest and Fiber Fair - St. Cloud - See ad page 13
1-Aug 31.....	Row by Row Experience - The Calico Cat Quilt Shop - Pipestone
5-8.....	Iowa Quilt Festival - Winterset, IA - See ad page 20
13-15.....	The Minnesota Quilt Show - Duluth - See ad page 4
21-22.....	Valley Days - Lost & Found - Eden Valley

Months May/June 2024

Volume 30 Number 3

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Deadline For the July/August 2024 Edition is June 10th!

Happy Mother's Day!



This month in Minnesota History

May 13, 1858: The survey for a road from St. Cloud to Breckenridge begins, following the East Plains trail of the Red River carts. The road later became Highway 52.

June 6, 1910: Paper milling in International Falls begins as eighteen tons of newsprint are manufactured.

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



Show us your finished projects!

Tell us all about a project you are proud of! Send in a picture and be featured in a future issue of The Country Register!

Photo and project details can be emailed to:
kim@countryregisterofminnesota.com

Or you can mail them to:
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Where in Minnesota?

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

(Answer on page 15 of this issue)



AND THE WINNER IS...

Christine Ahles of Anoka, MN won a copy of the book
Grand Moments Devotions Inspired by Grandkids by Lydia Harris.

Congratulations!



Mother's Day Rhubarb Delights

by Janet M. Blair

Each year as Mother's Day approaches, I get excited—not because I am expecting any special present for being a mother and grandmother. Living in Connecticut, Mother's Day means that our rhubarb will be big enough to pick.

I like to bake a rhubarb pie for Mother's Day. I know that rhubarb is an acquired taste, but in our family we all love it. We cannot wait for that first taste of flaky homemade pie crust and sugared rhubarb tartness.

My mother-in-law loved rhubarb but couldn't get it to grow in her shady yard. Frustrated, she gave us her five plants about 30 years ago and they have been flourishing in our sun ever since. When she was still alive, I would bake a rhubarb pie for her around Mother's Day. I've sort of carried on that tradition ever since.

Once I have baked that first pie, I move on to other things—since we have a lot of rhubarb. Rhubarb sauce, rhubarb crisp and rhubarb cake usually use up quite a few cups of rhubarb. I found a Strawberry Rhubarb Cake recipe that is so simple even a child can make it. It's perfect for quilting groups, church dinners, or family gatherings.

Mother's Day is also a signal to let us know we can finally plant our garden. Cherry tomatoes grow best. The past few years, little Peter Rabbit or Flopsy have eaten all of our string beans and lettuce, so we have given up on those crops. Our local farm stand sells most of the vegetables we need anyway. Besides, little Flopsy or Peter sure are cute whenever we see them at dusk eating our clover.

Whether you enjoy your Mother's Day planting your garden or baking, I hope you have a beautiful day!

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

STRAWBERRY RHUBARB CAKE

Spray 9 by 12-inch pan.
Layer in this order: DO NOT MIX. JUST LAYER.
4-5 cups rhubarb, cut up into one-inch pieces
1 cup sugar
1 (3 oz.) package strawberry Jello
1 white cake mix
1 and ¼ cup water
½ cup melted margarine
Bake at 350° for 1 hour.



Cloquet • Duluth



All Minnesota Shop Hop
Continues through all of May!
Shop Hop Hours: Mon - Fri · 10am-5pm
Sat 10am-3pm · Sun, May 19th 12pm - 4pm

Fishing Frenzy Fun Weekend
May 10th & May 11th

Minnesota Quilt Show
June 13th - 15th
Mini Bus Tour June 13th

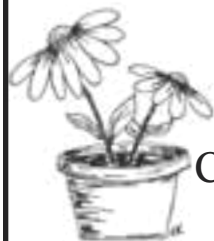
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Country Craft Shed

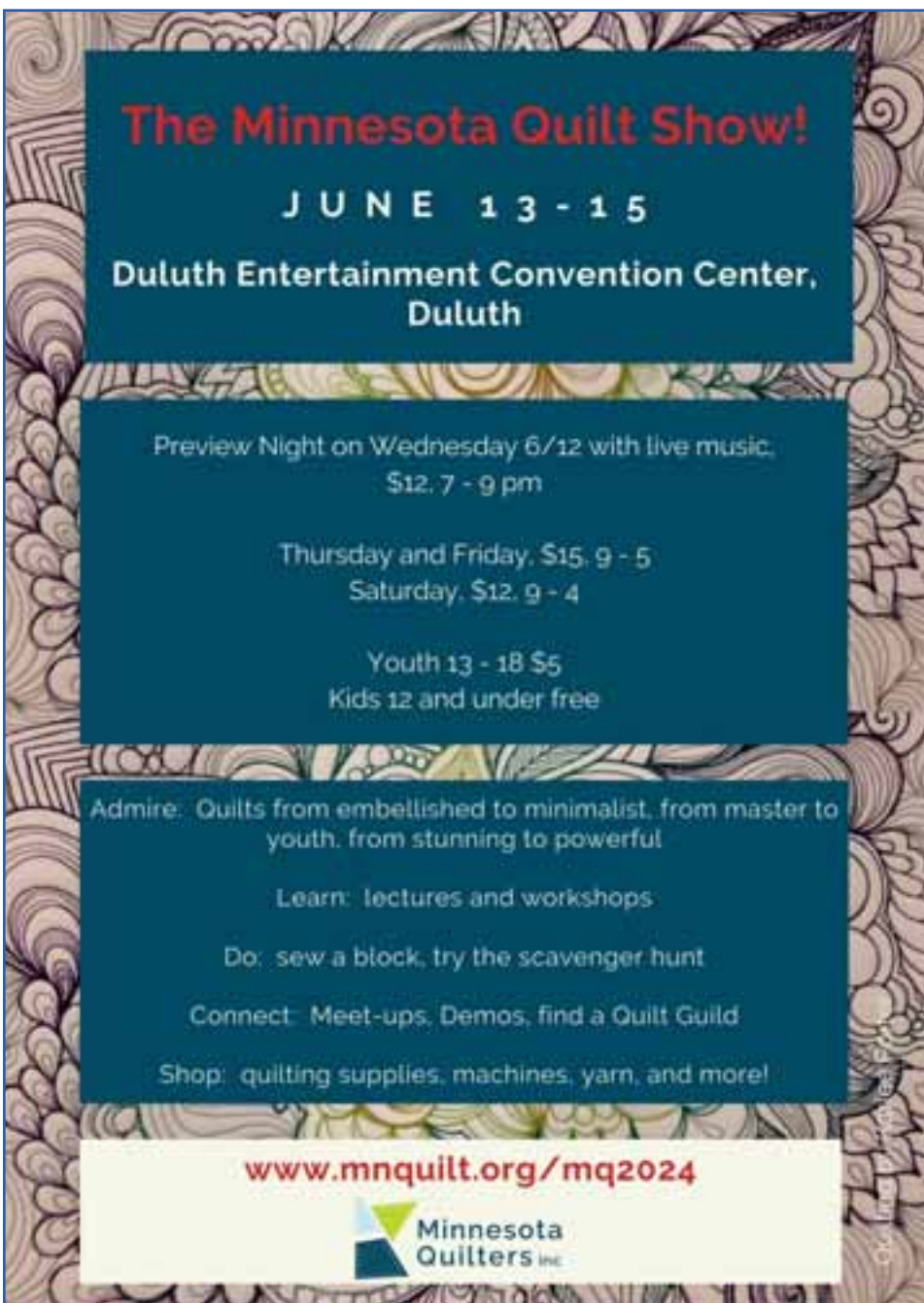
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Plant Sale: May 25-26-27
Fall Opening: September 7
Christmas Sale: Nov 29-30-Dec 1st
Closed the month of August

Save These
Dates!



The Minnesota Quilt Show!
JUNE 13 - 15
Duluth Entertainment Convention Center,
Duluth

Preview Night on Wednesday 6/12 with live music,
\$12. 7 - 9 pm

Thursday and Friday, \$15. 9 - 5
Saturday, \$12. 9 - 4

Youth 13 - 18 \$5
Kids 12 and under free

Admire: Quilts from embellished to minimalist, from master to youth, from stunning to powerful

Learn: lectures and workshops

Do: sew a block, try the scavenger hunt

Connect: Meet-ups, Demos, find a Quilt Guild

Shop: quilting supplies, machines, yarn, and more!

www.mnquilt.org/mq2024

Minnesota Quilters Inc.

The Minnesota Quilt Show

The Minnesota Quilt Show is returning to the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC) June 13-15. The quilting scene in Minnesota is vibrant with quilt shops, guilds, and shows throughout the state. The Minnesota Quilt Show connects quilters in the largest quilt show in the state and is presented by Minnesota Quilters. The show not only has quilts, classes, and vendors, it also has some extra features: quilt appraisals, scavenger hunt, Sewcial Lounge, Meetups, and a chance to contribute to charity quilts at the Quilting for Others area. The show is open 9-5 on Thursday and Friday with admission \$15 and 9-4 on Saturday with admission \$12.

Let's talk quilts, defined as a top layer, a bottom layer, a middle layer that is usually batting, all held together by stitching. While they may all fit the definition of a quilt, the pieces on exhibit range from designs using traditional quilt blocks to abstract designs to pictorial renderings. Anyone can enter a quilt in The Minnesota Quilt Show - from across the state and beyond, to master quilters and youth that are just beginning. The Judged Exhibit has different categories including a new one: upcycled in which the quilt is made from materials that were previously used for something else such as clothing, tablecloths or old quilts. Nationally certified judges critique quilts in this exhibit with over \$20,000 in prize money awarded. The non-judged exhibit also offers a wide range of styles as well as the results of the 2023 Mystery Quilt-along. And not to be missed are the youth quilts!

Special exhibits are brought in from across the country although the most well-known one originates right in Minnesota. Each year *Cherrywood Hand-dyed Fabrics* from Baxter, MN sponsors a challenge focused on a theme and using a limited color palette, inspiring quilters from around the world to create a 20" x 20" original quilt. This year's theme is Monarch with an array of oranges, greens, and black and white. From 472 entries, the following quilters from Minnesota were selected to have their quilts travel throughout the country for the coming year: Lori Adamietz (Judge's Choice award), Terri Bahn, Patricia Basch, Jude Edling, Enid Gjeltlen Weichselbaum, Kim Klocke, Jennifer Kornbaum, Shari Lauren (Honorable Mention), Laura Nisi, Izabela Pokora, Shelli Ricci, Helen Smith Stone (also Minnesota Quilter of the Year), Susan Stevenson, and Cindy Wilson. Ninety of these quilts will be on display. Other special exhibits not to be missed are Vicki Conley's *Inspired by the National Parks*, Carol Hancuh's *And the Beat Goes On*, and the Community Quilt Project created during events hosted by the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery.



Lectures are offered throughout the show with topics including studio design, quilting ephemera, pattern designing, and English Paper Piecing. Tickets are available at the show for \$15. Dozens of workshops are available including a schoolhouse series on Thursday designed just for beginners. You can sign up for those at the show and supplies and kits will be available. You can also take a full day workshop and learn all the steps for making a Disappearing Nine-Patch quilt.

More inspiration can be found in our vendor booths. There will be over 60 vendors including 20 new ones selling sewing machines, fabric, patterns, thread, tools, yarn, furniture, and more! Be sure to make a shopping list! Our diamond sponsor is Bernina represented by *Pine Needles Quilt and Sew* and *Sew with Me*; gold sponsors are *Country Loft Quilt & Design*, *Elna* represented by *1st Sewing Center*, *Janome* represented by *Sew with Me*, and members of the MQ Board of Directors. Silver sponsors are *Cherrywood Hand Dyed Fabrics*, *Jeri's Quilt Patch*, *Juki*, *Threads & Ewe*, and *Wildflower Quilt Co*. Bronze sponsors are *Eye of the Beholder Quilt Design*, *Quirky Quilt Shop*, and *Rosie Girl Quilting*.

Visit our website for more information, to register for workshops, and to volunteer: www.mnquilt.org/mq2024.

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Pancake in a Mug Cake

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 tbsp butter, melted
- 6 tbsp milk
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Directions:

1. Select a wide mug for a fluffy texture.
2. Lightly spray mug with cooking spray.
3. Whisk the dry ingredients in the mug.
4. Stir in the liquid ingredients with a fork.
5. Combine until light and runny with no lumps.
6. Microwave for 80 seconds on medium heat.
7. Continue with 10 second bursts until set in the center.
8. Serve with butter, maple syrup, berries etc.






Photo by Sweet & Tea Sprinkles

Recipe by Sweet & Tea Sprinkles



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June - Sept Hours:
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f i

*Salvage Bag Class
May 4th • 10am-4pm*

*Tips and Tricks Luncheon
May 13th • 10am-1:30pm*

*Youth Series: May 25 • June 29
Monthly Wool Club: May 16 • June 20
Monthly Sew-Ins: May 17-19 • June 21-23*

*Summer Hours starting in June: Monday - Friday 10am-5pm • Saturday 10am-4pm
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Party Lines!

by Becky Van Vleet



My mother was an antique collector, and my sisters and I have been the recipients of her beautiful antiques. One of my treasured antiques from her is a very heavy wall telephone that was common in the 1880s. It's so heavy I have this wooden telephone mounted in a stud. When my grandchildren come over to visit, they always enjoy turning the crank on the right when they pick up the earpiece on the left. And then they say all kinds of things in the mouth piece!

And what a thankful Nana I am to see them enjoy my antique telephone. The only other place they could see one of these things would probably be in a museum, and even then, it would be hands off.

Today, we hold telephones in the palm of our hands, and some of us may even have telephones on our wrists in the form of a watch. Unbelievable!

When I traveled to my maternal grandparents' house as a young girl in the 1960s, I observed how a party line telephone worked. My grandparents "shared" their telephone with a couple of neighbors. One was Mrs. Baker (not her real name).

Here is how a party-line worked back in the day. A party line was a local telephone loop circuit that was shared by more than one subscriber, especially in rural areas in the first half of the 20th century. It was not uncommon to pick up a telephone receiver and hear a conversation taking place. There was supposed to be party line etiquette which dictated never listening in on another person's call. In fact, a party line presented challenges during emergencies if users failed to yield the telephone during a crisis. Each subscriber had an assigned ring, some short, some long and each family had to know their own ring code.

I will never forget the day I picked up the heavy black receiver resting on the cradle of the telephone at my grandmother's house and I heard someone already talking.

"Mamaw, what's going on? Someone is already talking on the telephone!"

"Hang it up, Becky. Don't listen."

And I obediently replaced the receiver, fascinated by this strange phenomenon as my grandmother explained party lines to me.

One day I heard my mother say she was going to call my aunt. Mamaw said, "Be careful what you say, Alberta. You know Mrs. Baker is always listening."

What? I thought to myself.

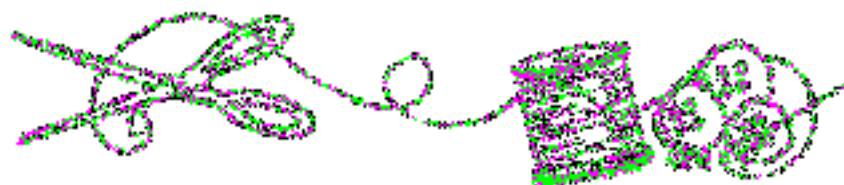
I learned that Mrs. Baker listened in on all the phone calls coming and going from the Thomas family.

Sometimes Mrs. Baker called Mamaw and would gossip about all kinds of things going on in the town. After hanging up, Mamaw would chuckle to my mother and say, "Well, Mrs. Baker evidently listened in on my phone call, otherwise she would not have known about such and such."

Mamaw never allowed me or my sisters or any visiting cousins to listen in on Mrs. Baker's phone calls. That was a big NO. My grandmother was just adhering to honest telephone etiquette, but truthfully, she was also imparting the traits of respect and honesty to her grandchildren.

Oh, those were the days. What I wouldn't give to pick up my cell phone and call my Mamaw Thomas and thank her for these valuable life lessons.

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.



Oklee

Plant a Garden in your Sewing Room!

by Deb Heatherly

My mother has a green thumb. Every year in spring and summer, her yard is a gorgeous display of vibrant colorful flowers. Cars slow down to enjoy the sight, and if they are like me, wonder what secrets she possesses. Bees, birds, dragonflies and one stray bunny, all flock to her yard to enjoy them too.



I somehow did not inherit this gene. Each year I buy seeds, new pots and the very best potting soil. Each year I hope that this will be my year and each year I am wrong. Either the seeds do not come up, or they come up and quickly die. Not enough sun, not enough water, too much sun, too much water. Each year my grand vision is nothing but a dream.

Last year, determined as ever, I decided no more seeds. "This year I'll buy plants", I told my husband. I bought pansies and marigolds and numerous others for a variety of color. I planted them and smiled. Wow,

that was easy! I should have been doing this all along. Feeling confident, I was already planning to buy more plants for a different part of the yard.

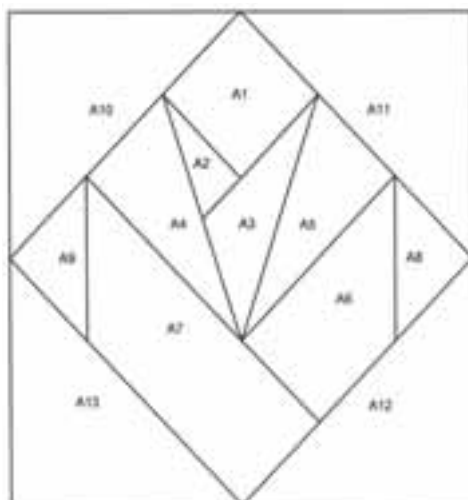
That was until the next morning. Gazing out my window, expecting to pat myself on the back, I stood speechless. Something had eaten my beautiful flowers down to the stems. Only one stray marigold remained.

Only momentarily deterred, back to the store I went. This time I planted and then sprinkled critter deterrent all around the plants. For three days I enjoyed my efforts until a torrential rain washed the deterrent away and the culprit struck again. Nothing survived my unseen late night visitor.

That was it. I gave up and bought some very convincing artificial flowers. (Don't tell my mom), and those artificial flowers looked great all summer long. Yeah me! People slowed to look at my yard too. Little did they know.

This year I'll add to my artificial flower collection and bypass all that other grief. I'll also expand my new gardening talents and "plant" a few flowers in my sewing room. These cute little flowers will never let me down and I can "grow" them in any color I want. Take that mother nature! I may not have my mom's green thumb but I'll still have plenty of flowers to enjoy.

For a flower mini quilt like the one shown, grab some scraps and start stitching. Paper piecing is quick and easy. If you've never tried it, do a google search and I'm sure you can find a tutorial online. Print off one copy for every flower you want to make and increase or decrease the size as needed. I made my paper pieced flowers 6 1/2", then added a 1 1/2" border. Once the border is added, layer with batting and backing and quilt in the ditch, or as desired. Cut (1) 2 1/2" strip for binding and bind just like you do a quilt. Add twine or a metal hanger and enjoy.



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. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/7704296498004571>. The annual Grids Girls summer mystery begins in June and lasts for 8 weeks.

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.Debcatsnquilts.com.

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Sewing Room

by Judy Ann Stupak

I walk into my sewing room and sit down. It's been years. Once this was my sanctuary; my place of escape. When the children went to bed, I retreated to the sewing room for an hour or two of peace. No questions. No begging. No crying. No arguments.

Each piece of fabric called my name. Even organizing it was fun. What would it become? Was it enough? Could I mix this with that? Would it look better with the body of this pattern and the sleeves of another? Should it have buttons instead of a zipper? What about beads or lace?

Most days our kitten would join me. He had his own basket. Even after he outgrew his basket and I had abandoned my precious sewing room, it continued to be his retreat. Somehow he managed to fit his massive body into a little basket, with fur hanging over all the edges.

As a kitten though, he added joy and humor to the room. One of his favorite tricks was to grab the head of a pin, pull it out of the pincushion with his teeth and throw it as far as he could with the flick of his head. Pin by pin he would continue until there were no pins in the pincushion and a pile of pins laying on the floor.

Another favorite past time of his was to play with ribbon. My industrial-sized spools of ribbon were threaded on a rod close to the ceiling. From his perch on the table he would reach up and grab an end with his teeth. He would then jump down, run out of the room and unravel as much of the spool as he could. The work of rewinding and cleaning up was worth the humor. It was our special place.

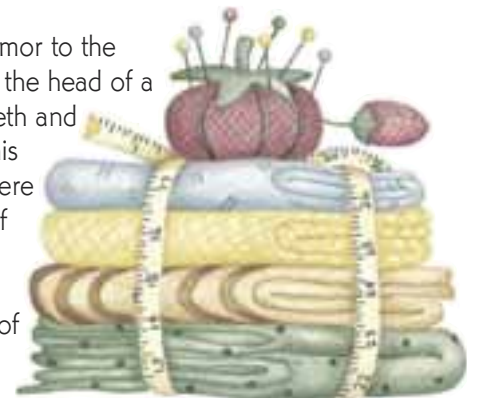
Once this was a place of dreams. I took classes. I learned everything I could. New techniques. New equipment. Could I sell what I made? If I made 1, could I make 10? If I made 10, could I make 100? People complimented my work. Major craft shows solicited my business. Could I make an income doing what I loved?

Now everything is coated with dust. The sewing machines have turned yellow with age. Most of the things I made were given away or donated. Tools, books, and supplies line the shelves in the storage room. Paint, glass, fabric, cement, ornaments. Do I really want to do this again? Can I still create magic? My cat is now a senior. He crawls out of his basket with a dazed look and comes to sit beside me purring. Yes, I remember when this was our room.

Purge. Yes, that is what I need to do. Good-bye to the fabric and lace from the 90's. Good bye buttons and zippers. Good-bye doll making supplies. Good-bye silk ribbon embroidery. Goodbye beads and jewelry making supplies.

But wait. Here are some quilting patterns my mom gave me. The winter before her stroke she made a quilt for each grandchild – 13 in total. My 2 children were fortunate recipients. The quilts were well used and loved. Could I duplicate her quilts? Should I try?

There is a quilt store down the street that I haven't visited for years. Maybe tomorrow, I will see if there are classes coming up. There might be a sale on fabric. Maybe even on machines. Oh boy I can't wait!





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Country Register Recipe Exchange

Cranberry Crispies

submitted by Patti Lee Bock of New Ulm, MN

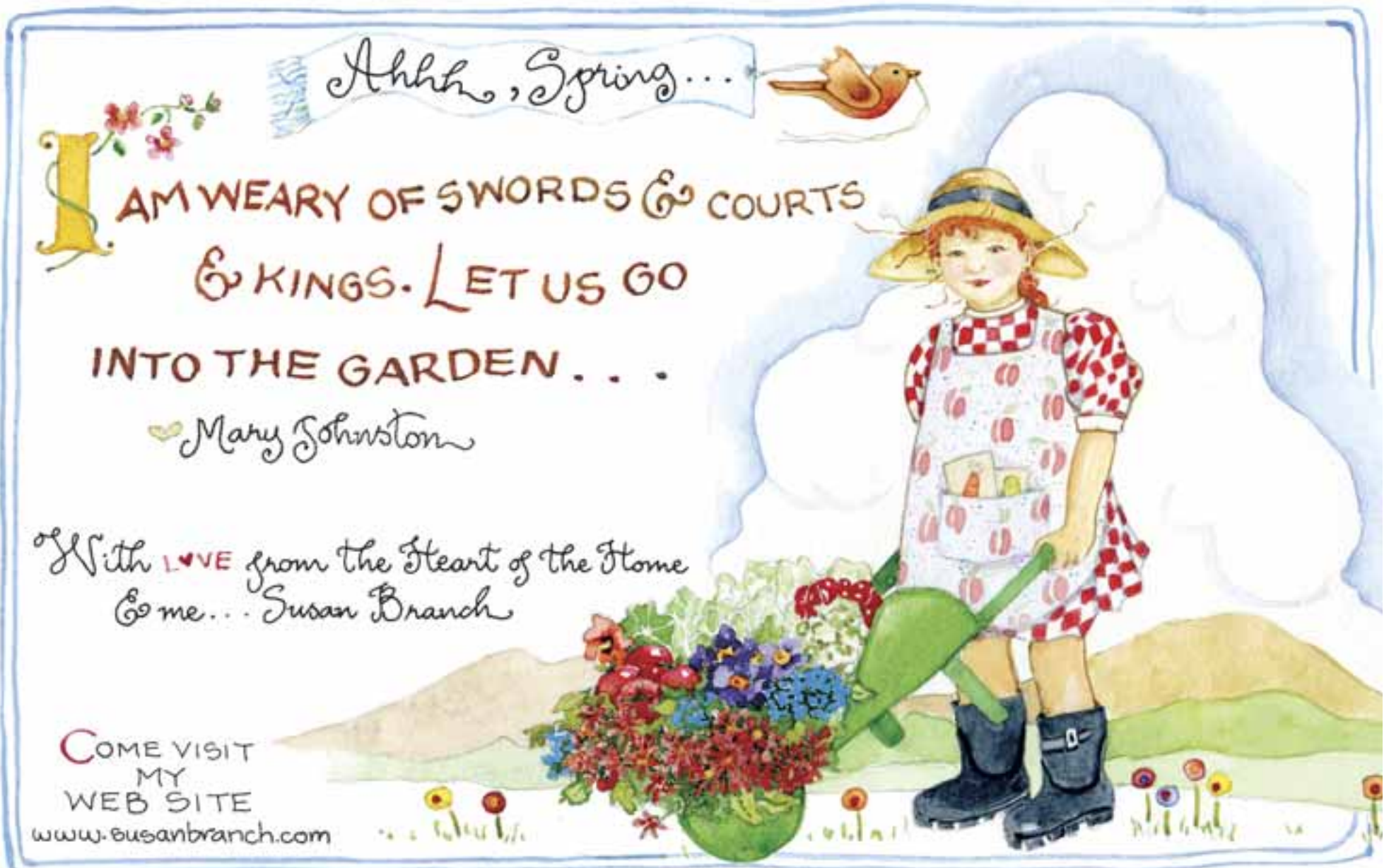


1 package cranberry quick bread mix
1/2 cup melted butter
1/2 cup chopped walnuts

1 egg
1/2 cup dried cranberries

In a bowl, combine bread mix, butter, walnuts and egg. Mix well. Stir in cranberries. Roll in 1 1/4 inch balls and place on cookie sheets. Flatten to 1/8 inch thickness with a glass dipped in sugar. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes.

With gardening season upon us, we are bound to get a grass stain or two on our clothes! How do we get it out? Just soak it in a little bit of milk!



Ahhh, Spring...

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I Only Have Pies For You

by Colleen Gust

Pies are universally beloved for their comforting flavors, flaky crusts, and endless variety. While traditional sweet pies like apple or cherry often steal the spotlight, let's also touch on the world of savory pies, including quiche and pizza, which showcase the artistry and creativity of pie-making, and that's because pie is always a "berry" good idea.



Quiche is a savory classic from France with endless variations and a custard-like filling enriched with eggs, cream, cheese, and various ingredients. From classic combinations like Quiche Lorraine with bacon and Gruyère cheese to modern twists featuring vegetables, seafood, or even tofu for a vegetarian option, quiche offers versatility to suit any palate or occasion. It's also a favorite in this house on hot days in summer as it's lovely with a fresh garden salad.

Let's not forget pizza, although not traditionally categorized as a pie, embodies the essence of pie-making with its circular shape, dough base, and customizable toppings. Originating from Italy but embraced worldwide, pizza offers a canvas for culinary experimentation, from traditional Margherita with tomato, mozzarella, and basil to adventurous creations like barbecue chicken, Hawaiian, and Chicken Tikka Masala. Speaking of Hawaiian pizza, did you know that it is a Canadian invention? Sam Panopoulos, a Greek-born Canadian, created the first Hawaiian pizza in 1962 at the Satellite Restaurant in Ontario. Sam took his experience cooking Chinese dishes, which commonly mix sweet and savory flavors, into creating a pizza with ham and pineapple.

Beyond quiche and pizza, regional variations of savory pies abound across the globe. British cuisine boasts hearty meat pies like steak and kidney or the beloved Cornish pasty, while Australian cuisine is famous for its meat-filled pies, often enjoyed with a dollop of tomato sauce. In North America, pot pies reign supreme, especially post-Christmas and Thanksgiving, when many turkey leftovers get upcycled into pot pies.

With spring here, the tangy and vibrant lemon meringue pie, with its lemon filling and sweet, toasted meringue, offered a refreshing contrast to a heavy Easter meal for us. A French Silk Pie is another favorite with friends – it's what one friend requests instead of cake for his birthday! I'm a massive fan of coconut cream pie – although I usually "cheat" and buy those. Maybe that's why I love them – I didn't have to make it, and that's a huge treat. I guess that's why the pie shop is so popular – It's raking in the dough.

While savory pies are great, nothing beats the specialness of sweet pies. From the comfort of apple pie to the creamy decadence of coconut cream pie, every slice offers a moment of pure indulgence. Sweet pies evoke nostalgia and comfort with every bite and are perfect for any occasion. Remember, when you post a picture of your pie baking on Facebook, it doesn't have to be pie-ture perfect.

Lemon Meringue Pie

I know that lemon meringue filling is traditionally cooked on the stovetop, but I'm a massive fan of the microwave for recipes with an egg base. By using the microwave, you're not standing over a hot stove, and it's a lot more difficult to scorch or curdle the eggs. You can swap traditional pie shell for a graham wafer crust for a more spring-like taste.

FILLING

1 cup granulated sugar
1/3 cup cornstarch
2 cups hot water
3 egg yolks
2 lemons, juiced
1 Tbsp butter
1/4 tsp salt
Baked 9" pie shell

MERINGUE

3 egg whites, room temperature
1/4 tsp cream of tartar
6 Tbsp granulated sugar

FILLING: Put the sugar and cornstarch in a medium microwave bowl. Stir to mix. Stir in the water and egg yolks. * Temper egg yolks by mixing a bit of hot mixture with them before adding. Stir. Microwave on high for 2 minutes. Stir thoroughly. Microwave again for 3 minutes. The mixture should be transparent. Add in the lemon juice. Stir. Microwave for 2 minutes. Add the butter. Stir. Pour into the pie shell. Cool

MERINGUE: Beat the egg white and cream of tartar until stiff froth forms. Add in the sugar gradually while beating until stiff and the sugar is dissolved. Pile the meringue onto the filling, making sure you cover all of the filling. Bake at 350°F for 10-15 minutes until browned.

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Country Register Recipe Exchange

Fruited Cabbage Salad

submitted by Patti Lee Bock of New Ulm, MN



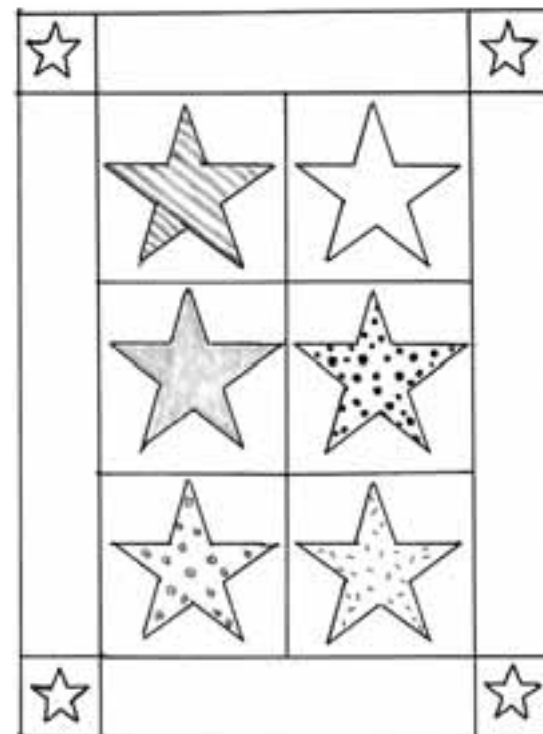
2 oranges, peeled and sectioned	1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
2 apples, chopped	1 tbsp sugar
1 cup seedless green grapes	1 tbsp lemon juice
2 cups shredded green cabbage	1/4 tsp salt
1/2 cup whipping cream	

Mix fruit and cabbage in a bowl. In a chilled bowl, beat the whipping cream until stiff. Put mayonnaise into a bowl, fold in the whipped cream, sugar, lemon juice and salt. Stir into the fruited cabbage mixture.

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KISSed Quilts

by Marlene Oddie
Super Honey Beehive

The new "Honey and Clover" bee themed collection from Northcott appealed to my design aesthetic. After doing some research, I was excited to learn that the word Super is short of Super-structure, referring to the boxes placed together to form a beehive and store honey.

This includes a border print, panel and nine other coordinates plus two Colorworks solids and three Toscana complimentary colors.

In this design, I developed a half hexagon shape that maximizes the use of a 10" square. So, this is a 10" stack friendly design. I chose to use just the fabrics in the collection – including 1 panel and the border stripe/print.

By folding the panel squares in half, you can still use the same template to cut a complete hexagon. This means there are a few Y seams to keep those panels intact. These are quite large hexagons, so it is definitely doable by hand or by machine to sew all of them as complete hexagons. The border stripe is fussy cut and I'm excited about how the hexagons appear to float into the border.

The pattern includes mitering details.

You can find this pattern on my website or ask at a local quilt shop near you. Be sure to tag us if you make this up in these fabrics or something else. Happy Stitching!

Marlene Oddie (marlene@kissedquilts.com) is an engineer by education, project manager by profession and now a quilter by passion in Grand Coulee, WA at her quilt shop, KISSed Quilts. She quilts for hire on a Gammill Optimum Plus, but especially enjoys designing quilts and assisting in the creation of a meaningful treasure for the recipient. Fabric, patterns, kits and templates are available at <http://www.kissedquilts.com>. Follow Marlene's adventures via <http://www.facebook.com/kissedquilts> and <https://www.instagram.com/marlene.kissedquilts>.



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Creamy Pepperoncini Chicken Skillet

recipe by Sweet C's

- 2 tbsp butter

2 lbs chicken cut into thin strips

1 tsp sea salt

1 tsp ground pepper

1 white onion, diced

2 tbsp garlic, diced
- 1/2 cup chicken stock

1/2 cup roasted red pepper, drained and sliced

1 cup heavy cream

1/2 cup parmesan cheese, shredded

1 tbsp Italian seasoning

1/2 cup pepperoncini peppers, drained

In a large pan melt butter on medium high heat. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Add to pan. Brown chicken on all sides flipping a few times for 8 minutes. Remove chicken from pan (chicken may not be 165° in the middle yet and that is fine). Add garlic and onion to the pan. Let brown for about 5 minutes. Add chicken stock and roasted red peppers. Let reduce to about half (about 5 minutes). Turn heat off and slowly stir in cream and parmesan. Whisk rapidly as you add the cream. Slowly bring heat back to medium high. Add Italian seasoning, pepperoncinis and chicken to the pan. Let sauce reduce to half and bring chicken to 165° internally. Remove from heat and serve over vegetables, pasta, rice or alone!

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Random Acts

by Maranda K. Jones

Field Day

Nothing screams "spring is here" like an elementary field day! Kids love this annual event and always look forward to it. They arrive to school smelling like sunscreen, bouncing around in their tennis shoes and athletic gear, sloshing water bottles in their hands. A million questions are thrown at the teacher as she takes attendance. "Is it time to go outside now?" "Can I eat this snack now?" "When is lunch?" "Will we get ribbons?" "Do we still get recess?" "Are my mom and dad coming?" She does her best to answer all inquiries and still keep control in the classroom buzzing with excitement. They put their water bottles, snacks, and sack lunches in her wagon and follow her down to the football field for the beginning of this highly anticipated day.

It's a nice change of pace being outside together. Instead of ceiling tiles and florescent lighting overhead, we have a partly cloudy sky. The sun is shining, the wind is blowing, and their hats are flying away. It is not on today's schedule, but catching their caps in the breeze is an event that keeps us laughing. Zigging and zagging, trying to snag their hats could be enough to wear them out. They are full of energy though and still line up quickly for the first event when the whistle blows.

Whether it's the 100-yard dash, the long jump, or the football throw, youngsters feel the competitiveness rise up inside of them and give it their all. They want to know someone has seen their efforts. "Did you see that?!" They hit the ball off the tee and immediately turn around to ask if you thought it was a home run. They roll the tire as fast as they can, wobbling back and forth, picking it up when it falls down and continue on as they remind you to watch them. "Here I go!" They pass the batons to team members as they round each lap of the track. They root for each other on the field, just like they do inside the building. This group of kids is so encouraging. Encouraging to each other, to their teacher, and to the world. They high-five their friends and cheer for their classmates to finish each race.

And they do finish. They finish their final event for the day and get ready for lunch. They finish the end of the school year with a day of fun and friendly competition. They have grown and shown their strengths. They have overcome obstacles in academics and are ready for the next level. They finish one grade and are ready for another. They have spent so much time together as a class, yet it feels like it was not long enough. Even though it is time to let them go, spring plays tug-of-war in this teacher's heart.



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Maranda Jones' new book **Random Acts**
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Country Register Recipe Exchange

Cucumber Sandwiches

submitted by Lila Liebl



1 - 8oz package of cream cheese, softened
1/2 envelope dry Italian salad dressing mix
2 tbsp mayonnaise

30 slices of snack rye bread
30 thin slices cucumber
dill weed

Combine cream cheese, mayo and dressing mix. Spread on rye bread and top with cucumbers. Sprinkle dill weed on top.

**Where Does
Your Garden
Grow?**

by Barbara Kalkis





Glorious spring is time to make everything new – starting with our gardens. In keeping with the spirit of the season, my kitchen counter is stacked with seed packets. Six flats await planting to copy photos I saw in my stack of magazine garden issues. Only one question nags me: Who weeded all those beautiful landscapes?

I believe that gardening is like home decor: Both require "weeding" and cleaning. Translated, that means plants (and furniture) must meet this standard: Be sturdy, strong, demonstrate a survivor instinct that tolerates hard use or neglect, mostly take care of yourself, and I will love you! And yes, that philosophy includes dandelions and random weeds. No matter how efficiently I dig them out, weeds grow back with more intensity than my pretty-but-delicate hybrids. My approach is now what the French call "laissez-faire." I call it saving my strength.

Gardens I Love.

Growing up in the east, gardens kept time with the seasons like a calendar. In February thaws, my sisters and I cut brown pussy willow branches that revealed tiny buds. These became winter bouquets at home and in school as we waited for catkins to appear. March brought the onion snow – a signal to plant cold-weather vegetables. Crocuses surging above the spring snow launched a parade-like arrival of tulips, daffodils, hyacinth and forsythia. April brought the pansies and azaleas. Spring gardens peaked in May. Every imaginable flower and shrub filled yards and spiced the air. The colors would clash in a quilt but made perfect sense in the garden.

Then I moved west. The seasons have flipped. Golden poppies, purple lupine, camellias and violets fill my winter garden. The grass lawn turns brown in June instead of November. Rosemary and oregano line walkways. A gigantic bougainvillea blooms all year and hosts nests for towhees. In summer's most intense heat, succulents spin out thread-thin spikes that bloom in white, fluorescent pink and sunny yellow-golds.

Leveraging my laissez-faire attitude, giant hydrangeas blossom next to Jade plants next to organic mint next to a lemon bush next to a redwood tree, next to various anonymous succulents purchased on whimsy at markets and hardware stores.

Visiting Arizona's Sonoran desert, gardens take on a new form and meaning. No gardens here with rounded clumps of flower varieties crowding together in a continuous rainbow of colors. Cacti and succulents reign supreme in stark independence. Each variety claims its own space, emphasizing form, shape, outline and personality. Named for their resemblance to hedgehogs, teddy bears, barrels, balls or fence posts, each cactus stands as if dropped on top of the gravelly sandy ground they occupy. Needles warn away curious fingers but welcome birds. Alluring for their height and human-like shapes, the saguaro tolerates wounds of rounded holes where woodpeckers nest. Looking across the landscape, it appears one sees only shades of green and brown: plant and earth in a monotonous duo. But appearances are wrong.

Looking closer, colors emerge: Delicate lavender shading; white, orange and red streaks. Vivacious flowers emerge in phosphorescent colors that are at odds with their prickly homes. In autumn, these gardens provide resting stops for migrating butterflies and birds. Their joyous energy and feeding frenzy transmits itself to humans caught in the scene.

I've learned anything can grow if it's in the right spot. Even people. Pondering gardens as they are and as we dream them to be, it is important to know that our personalities and creative instincts match the place where we are "planted." And the place we thrive in is also perfect ... wherever that is.

©Barbara Kalkis. Barbara spends her time writing, teaching, and working as a high-tech marketing consultant. She's the author of Little Ditties for Every Day: A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm. Her garden is as random as she is. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com

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2 Minute Lift

That Time I Didn't Watch TV for a Year

by Kathy Sotak



My first addiction developed at age twelve. Coming home from school, straight when I got off the bus, I'd grab a snack then switch on the heavy knob on the television (if you heard the satisfying "click" of the knob in your head just now, thank you).

My eyes were glued for the rest of the day. I usually watched two PBS kids shows then turned to sitcoms. I begrudged that 60-minute period when only news

was on (national and local). Then game shows, sitcoms and prime time shows until homework and bed. I had memorized what was on every channel (we only had four) and had every day of the week planned out.

As a parent today, I now know my parents felt hopeless as they watched my curiosities and outer world dissolve. I had been stolen by another world.

My parents became desperate and creative. Out of the blue, my parents gave me a challenge: stop watching television for one whole year, then we'll reward you with \$500 cash.

FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS? As a twelve-year-old in the 1980s, I had no choice but to say a wholehearted yes!

I don't even think it was that hard – or if it was, I forgot. Each day with the knob turned off, I stepped back into this world and back into a kid. I read books, colored, played, walked, explored, then played some more. I laughed, I talked and I smiled. When that 365-day mark came around, my parents gladly gave me five hundred dollars in exchange for my full-color life. What did I do with the cash? I contemplated buying a television as a poor prank to my parents, however I was smart and bought my first computer. It was the late 1980s, and having a computer was instrumental for me, at a time when they were just getting into homes, schools and businesses.

Have you ever done something bold, scary and a little uncomfortable? I bet you have. How did it transform you?

The success I had at age twelve gifted me with grit.

Ah, you know it too.

This grit makes itself known when we need to tap into it. Grit is like a pebble stuck in your shoe but you ran the race anyway. Grit is like that coarse sandpaper that hurts as I type that sentence. Grit is not wanting to be proven wrong. Grit is not wanting to fail.

Grit is you wanting to prove it to yourself above anything else. For an inspiring display of grit, watch the movie "Nyad" on Netflix, the true story of Diana Nyad and her historic swim at age 60 from Cuba to Florida. Then let that inspire you to be the star in your own movie of grit.

Grit is why humans haven't gone extinct. (Well, grit and love. Please reach out to me if you think something else deserves a spot on this list.)

Thank you, grit. You're right there in the bottom of my shoe when I need you the most.

Kathy J. Sotak, founder and writer of 2 Minute Lift




Where in Minnesota?

The answer is...

Otto the Clown located in Ottertail, MN

Otto stands outside of an ice cream shop in Ottertail, MN. He's only visible in the warmer months as they cover him up during the winter to prevent damage from Minnesota's brutal weather.

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM



Sloths are the world's slowest mammals. They even have algae growing in their fur, yet they are three times stronger than humans making them pull-up world champions. Sloths are often considered lazy, but they are actually very patient and aware of their surroundings. They have an amazing sense of smell to make up for their lack of eyesight. They are completely blind in the daylight hours.

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM: A few lessons from the Sloth might bring us more joy in our day. **Slow** does not mean lazy. **Rest** does not mean weak. **Patience** does not mean lack of focus. If one of our senses is challenged, highlight another one, we've been given choices.

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything gets accomplished."

Lao Tzu Joy & Blessings, Jody

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

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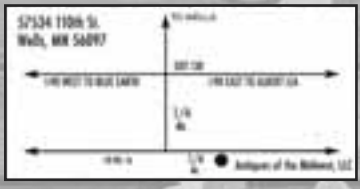
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Wit and Wisdom
The Art of Listening
by Juleann Lattimer

As a child, jump ropes, marbles and squirt guns signaled the arrival of spring. As an adult, it's snowdrops peeking through the snow, driving on bare pavement and sun shining through dirty windows that herald its arrival. But it's the sounds of spring that I most look forward to enjoy.

I love waking up to hungry chirping outside my windows. Close your eyes and listen. Our sense of hearing is fine-tuned when our eyes are closed. Sadly, we're often too busy to listen to nature's voice, or to a loved one's need, or to God's nudgings. Remember, He wasn't in the thunder or the wind, but in the still small voice.

I spend time every morning reading the Bible and praying, but seldom do I take the time to just sit and listen. I once read a book written by a Quaker minister. He wrote about their worship service in the "meeting house". They have a special time set aside to just sit and listen. They give the Holy Spirit time to work in their hearts. Sounds like a good idea. We should try that every day—stop talking and let God do some.

Spring is the beginning of new life. It's the perfect time to put new life in our daily walk with God. Stop, close your eyes, listen . . . sh sh sh.

-In the early 1990's four Christian friends, with a shared interest in writing, began meeting once a month to learn the writing trade. The four were each active in their various churches. As part of an outreach ministry, they decided to write an inspirational newspaper column as a way to reach a wider, and perhaps mostly secular, audience. Contact the authors at: witandwisdomwriters@gmail.com

Happy 100th Birthday!



Pieces From My Heart

 by Jan Keller 

Something to Celebrate!

I recently sat on the end of Mom’s bed as we picked out the blue striped blouse. The color was bright and flattering so it seemed a good choice for the photo we would use for invitations and newspaper articles to let local friends and family know about the 100th birthday party Mom’s children are planning to commemorate the occasion.

Suddenly my eyes drifted to a large bouquet on a table near her closet. The bouquet is a keepsake from a party I hosted for her on her 75th birthday. On that occasion I asked each of her invited friends to bring a single long-stemmed artificial flower. Using the flowers her friends gave her that day, we created a ‘Younger Than Springtime Bouquet’ she could enjoy over the passage of time.

I asked Mom who of all of her friends she wished could be at her 100th birthday party. Quickly she answered, “Bernie,” who was Mom’s best friend in high school. They were in the band together, as well as being on the basketball team and in the pep club. Growing up in eastern Colorado a hundred years ago is a time she treasures with precious memories.

~~~~~

Mom’s parents, Ora Lee and Eva I. Street were married on June 29, 1914 in Binghamton, NY. They homesteaded on 160 acres of land in Yuma County, near Kirk, CO. Her parents were truly pioneers and initially close to destitute—but they hung on and proved up on their land.

Mom had a brother, Edwin Lee, and a sister, Edna Leona. The twins and born in 1915. Mildred (Millie) Beala Street was born on May 25, 1924. She was nine years younger than the twins. Mildred was the name of her mother’s girlhood friend and her fraternal grandfather had read a story about an Indian girl named Beala.

By the time Mom was born, things were better for the family. Instead of a sod house, they lived in a new four-room frame house—with one clothes closet and a full unfinished basement. Living conditions had really improved in the new home, but they still didn’t have a furnace, bathroom, electricity, or a phone. The home was heated by a coal heater and the kitchen cook stove. Mom recalls the house would get so cold during winter nights that the water froze in the water bucket and her mother made a cap to keep Mom’s head warm. In the evenings they could read thanks to the kerosene lamp and every day they had to wash the soot residue from the chimney. They bathed in a tub placed in front of the kitchen cook stove. Their toilet was an outhouse.

Since their nearest neighbor lived more than a mile away, Mom remembers being lonely. She learned to entertain herself by stringing buttons from the button box and playing grocery store and school.



Dad & Mom with Bob, Lois & Jan—1949



Photo by Jan Keller

Millie Frank  
Happy 100th Birthday!

In 1929, at age five, she started first grade at Fox School, which was three miles from home. There were two other girls in her grade—Ona, Lola and Mom. She recalls her favorite stories were “Little Gustave” and “Billy Goats Gruff.” Mom rode her horse, Nellie, to school. At recess they played Red Rover, softball, tag, and when it snowed, Fox and Geese.

Mom’s chores included going into the pig pen to pick up several bushel baskets of cobs to burn in the cook stove. The cobs burned up fast so it took a lot of them to cook a meal. In the morning after she milked the cows, she drove them to the pasture before she went to school. After school she would drive the cows home and milk them. After separating the milk from the cream, she bucket-fed the skim milk to around 20 young calves. When they all came running at once, it was quite a trick. Her least favorite chore was washing the cream separator. Mom says one day she didn’t wash it. When her dad discovered the dirty separator, he asked if she wanted a spanking then or later. She naturally said later, hoping he would forget—but he didn’t. That was the only spanking he ever gave her.

Mom looked forward to the mailman coming everyday, as well as going to Kirk on Saturday afternoons. Most folks sold their cream to the local creamery and shopped for their weekly groceries on Saturday. This was when Mom could see her friends and get an ice cream cone or a nice-sized sack of candy for five cents.

In 1937 Mom started ninth grade at Kirk High School. She looks back on those days as some of the happiest of her life. She couldn’t date until she was 16, but her parents would take her to the barn dances and other area activities. This was during the “Big Band” years—music Mom still loves! During her senior year, she was voted Queen of the 1941 Carnival. There were 18 in her class—the largest class to ever graduate from Kirk High School.

The next year Mom attended Colorado State College of Education (now the University of Northern Colorado). That year she met Oliver Goldsmith. They married August 20, 1942, in the United Presbyterian Church Parsonage with two attendants.

Oliver and his three brothers and their father were in the dairy business—including farming, milking, processing the milk, and milk delivery. The dairy was very small at first but grew to be quite large and included wholesale deliveries to stores, hospitals and schools. Goldsmith Dairy ceased around 1970.

Mom and Dad had three children: Robert (Bob) Dale Goldsmith, Lois Maxine (Goldsmith) Burbach and Janice Marie (Goldsmith) Keller.

Soon after Mom and Dad married, Dad was called by the Draft Board to enter the Army for World War II. During his physical, they found a heart murmur, caused by childhood Rheumatic Fever. He was classified 4-F—unable to serve.

Mom and Dad were married over 24 busy, happy years when, at age 44, he had open heart surgery in 1966 to replace his damaged valves. Dad died during the procedure.

Mom then went to work as an inhalation therapist at the Weld County Hospital for one year. Then for 18 years she worked as a receptionist and book-keeper for two ophthalmologists.

Mom met Robert Vernon Frank and they were married April 12, 1969. Robert served in the Korean War (1952-1954). He was a farmer/dairyman and later a realtor and a successful land investor. They have been married 55 happy years.

One day Mom recalls her mother asking, “How did you find two such good husbands?” I don’t know how Mom answered, but she told me that she paid attention to the way they treated their mothers.

I believe Mom has had the best of two lives.

Mom thinks she was very lucky—and she thanks God for everything.

~~~~~

I can’t help but think back on that 25-year-old ‘Younger Than Springtime Bouquet’ on the table in Mom’s bedroom—a reflection of just some of the women Mom most admired over her lifetime. Now those longtime friends are gone—and sometimes I’m certain, just like that young girl growing up on the expansive eastern Colorado prairie, she gets lonely. But when her family gathers in her honor, there will be three children and their spouses, six grandchildren and their spouses, 17 great-grands and their five spouses or significant friends, and three great-great-grandchildren. It will be a joyous day! A day 100 years in the making. Certainly a day worthy of celebration!



Mom & Robert’s
1969 Wedding Photo



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Introducing Our Younger Generation to Quilting

By Patty Legg Duncan



I recently had the opportunity to take my nine-year-old granddaughter, Peyton, to one of the many quilts shows happening this Spring in Arizona. Although attending a quilt show was not on top of Peyton's list of things to do that Saturday, she agreed and off we headed to the show. At the check-in desk, she was given a ballot to vote for her favorite quilt of the show. I was so proud of her as she took her voting duty very seriously. As we walked down the aisles looking at all the different quilts, I asked Peyton to write notes for me on the ones I liked. She did the same for the quilts she liked. This particular show had a great variety of quilts with many different techniques that I appreciated. Surprisingly, Peyton seemed interested in the different techniques as I explained them and why I liked each one.

As we were walking down row 5 or 6, Peyton ran down the aisle and said, very enthusiastically, "This is my favorite!" As she pointed at her "favorite," I realized why she liked it so much. It was a perfect artist interpretation of her dog, an American Bullie named Trout. This quilted wall hanging is a fabric collage made by Barbara Green, Palo Verde Patchers in Sun City West. The pattern is "Dazzling Dogs" by Jane Haworth. We continued to enjoy the show while she made notes for me and each time, we saw a different quilt that stood out to me, she would ask, "Is this the one you're going to vote for?" Finally, I selected my favorite and we took our ballots to the desk to put our votes in the ballot box.

As we were driving home, Peyton said "I had fun. Can I go with you to another show?" I was probably smiling ear to ear as I loved hearing she wanted to go again.

Peyton has always been very artistic and interested in all forms of crafts. Often when she is spending time at my house, she will ask if we can work on a craft. I would be so thrilled if someday she asked me if she could try quilting. If she did that would mean, we would have four generations of quilters on my maternal side of the family. You see, even though I do not quilt now, I did quilt when Peyton's mom was her age and even served as the President of the Cabin Branch Quilters in Burke, Virginia. My mom quilted and crafted most of her adult life. Her expertise was applique and hand quilting. The last quilt she made is a beautiful Baltimore Album styled applique using "Hawaiian" quilt block patterns. I proudly display it in my home. Her mom, my grandmother, quilted more for utilitarian purposes rather than a creative project. One of my grandmother's scrap quilts is displayed in the fall as it matches my décor at that time of the year.

So, remember, the next time you are headed off to a quilt show, or perhaps even a quilt shop, think about inviting someone of the younger generation to accompany you. You never know, you might be introducing a young person to the treasured art form of quilting.

Patty Duncan enjoys family history and genealogy as a hobby. She also enjoys small town history, photography and is an avid scrapbooker, digital storybook maker and quilter on hiatus. She lives in Glendale, Arizona, where she spends a lot of time spoiling her grandchildren. Patty works in the sales department of The Country Registers of Arizona, California, Carolinas, Tennessee, Nebraska, Oregon, Washington and Idaho.



Watch the Magic
Mystery Quilt - 2024
Designed by Ann Jones, Nevada, MO

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PART II:
Piecing the Quilt Top (Option #1):

- Following the diagram below, piece together like a nine patch. Make four sections.



- We're now going to take these four sections and sew them together like a 4 patch, turning them so the dark patches form the center diamond. See Diagram below for guidance.



- This completes the baby quilt version of this Mystery Quilt. Quilt and bind as desired. Thanks for joining me! If you want to make a bigger quilt, leave the quilt top as above (don't quilt it!!) and look for Part III in your next Country Register.

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Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski



Color Theory

As I round out the last of the five Disappearing 9-Patch table runners I am making for family and friends with the same anchor fabric, I realize it's time for me to really learn some quilting Color Theory lessons.

Not suggesting that my color choices for the five different runners have been bad! I've just been really surprised by the dramatic differences between them.

My quilting practice was something I embarked on kind of by accident. As a youth, I had made most of my own clothes; my foundations began, then, with the leftovers from those projects. Sort of.

Actually, I first jumped into the pool of quilting when I purchased a quilt from a quilt store: a wall hanging with animals that still graces my living room. (Three years ago, I discovered a quilting friend in another part of the country had purchased the same kit—made with different background fabric colors—at the same time. All those years of thinking I had an “original,” this was the first time I really started thinking about kits and pre-cuts.)

Anyway, although my journey began with a pre-assembled kit, I was later encouraged to use the leftovers from my garment-making days as my grandmother had—and here's the box with those practical pieces, my mother said.

Self-taught as I was, I applied my clothes-making color matching-and-coordinating skills to my quilts. Looking at just one tree at a time, I created a very colorful forest! Yep, most of the quilts I make are deemed “busy,” or “vibrant,” or whatever other nice euphemism kind people select. I point out how the piece next to each carries through some common color, but when you step back to look at it as a whole...the term “scrappy” quilt is often the defining label.

Sigh.

My defense of being practical and using from what I have is often deemed to be great for quilts being donated to kids, or other charities, but.

I never liked the “but,” because I never really understood what I was doing “wrong” in the assessor's opinion. Until I finished the fourth of the five table runners—and realized that I could not see the design when I stood a few feet back. The previous three table runners had “popped” from that same distance, because the contrast between fabrics had been greater. This, then, was my “ah HA” moment, at last.

Color theory is different between garment making and quilting. I'm sure there are lots of books, online videos, and even classes which teach these principles. (My email box might even get flooded with suggestions of sources or classes from wonderful readers once this article gets published.)

I guess I didn't realize there was so much to learn about quilting. I've heard about Blenders; I've heard about balancing out yellow in quilts. While I've heard a lot, I never understood the value [ha ha, punny] of these comments.

In the meantime, I must use up more scrappy leftovers!

© Jeanette Lukowski 2024. 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



Become Inspired

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

A Blessing Beyond Measure

The beauty of spring at its absolute peak is a blessing beyond measure. Large spans of green countryside are dotted with large white dogwood blooms. The powerful scent of lilacs waft through the air on one of our first sunny walks through the yard. And our days are ever warmer and long. When we think of having “spring fever,” these are the days we typically dream of.

As we walk along the gray stone paths of our herb gardens, we witness even more spectacular beauty. Peeking out from within the kitchen garden is our sweet marjoram coming back to us in full force. The hardy lemon balm in vibrant green will soon be tall and fragrant. And our catnip, only a small tuft in May, will soon become a perfect napping spot for our country cat who enjoys a spring day in the sun as much as we do.

Country Places of Solitude

Our garden beds can be refreshed and amended to be ready for our selected seeds of beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, and snap peas for our country garden. And cascading, colorful flowers of yellows, reds and purples can be mixed in with our vegetable plants to add the perfect visual appeal from the bend in the road.

Antique accents such as rustic wooden totes, early gardening tools and woven bee skeps add an element of the past to our garden displays. Tall hand-hewn posts with tin lanterns can be a perfect weekend project to add a warm welcome to our garden entrance. Country seating areas created out of large twig furniture and natural large stone can provide us with a place of solitude to enjoy the beauty of our gardens. Fencing made of natural elements can also serve to establish a simple, yet attractive space adding charm and dimension to our yards.

Sharing the Bounty of Spring

As we gain momentum in the months of spring, we can become easily energized by all we have accomplished. And this spectacular season of longer, brighter days is the perfect time to make meaningful memories and enjoy time outside together. Hosting a small, country picnic or a larger evening barbecue is a fulfilling way to celebrate the bounty of spring. Shared gratitude for all of nature's gifts will naturally nurture us as we reflect upon the genuine beauty that abounds.

--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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Garden Keepsakes

by Kristine Walden

Have you envisioned having a beautiful, lush garden but felt discouraged by space limitations? Welcome to the world of container gardening! Whether your preference leans towards vibrant blossoms, robust foliage, garden vegetables or fragrant herbs, your envisioned garden is merely a pot away! Acquire an assortment of plants and nestle them into unique containers such as enamel-ware pans, crocks, or vintage wash tubs. Think outside of the box to create unique, eye-catching displays. Nourish your plants tenderly and witness your miniature paradise flourish. Below are five creative ideas that you can incorporate into your own garden:



Vintage Wagon - Are your grown children's toys just taking up space in the garage? Turn a vintage wagon into a container garden. Fill it full of plants, flowers, or herbs. You don't have an old wagon? Use an old Tonka truck! Place a small potted plant in the box to achieve a similar look.



Bicycle & Basket - That old bicycle looks absolutely stunning in your yard when you place some brightly colored flowers in the basket. If your bike doesn't have a basket, don't worry! You can attach one to the front handlebars with wire. Change out the contents in the basket with the seasons - tulips in the spring, geraniums and a flag in the summer, mums in the fall, and Christmas greenery in the winter.



Crocks - Don't be afraid to bring old crocks or jugs outside. If you don't have any, you can find inexpensive ones with cracks, chips or other imperfections at garage sales or online.



Child's Tricycle - When they outgrow it, don't throw it! Keep the memory of childhood alive by placing a pot of colorful flowers on the seat. You now have a beautiful new plant stand keeping childhood memories alive.



Vintage Wash Tub - Don't take that old wash tub to the dump! It's great for planting ferns, geraniums, and even strawberry plants! They are also perfect for making that cute, little fairy garden you've always wanted to make.

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