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Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Fun Events

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November/December 2022



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The Country Register began in Arizona, in the Fall of 1988, to provide effective, affordable advertising for shops, shows, and other experiences enjoyed by a kindred readership. Since then the paper has flourished and spread. Look for the paper in your travels.

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Months November/December 2022

Volume 28 Number 6

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Deadline For the Jan/Feb 2021 Edition is December 10th!

City Listing

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Special Events

November

- 3-5.....Primitive Gatherings Bus Tour - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn
- 4-5.....Christmas Open House - Past & Present Antiques - Waseca
- 5.....Doug Leko Class - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
- 10-12.....Hometown Holiday Road Trip
- 10-12.....Christmas Open House - Lost & Found - Eden Valley
- 11.....Christmas Arrives - Farmer's Daughter - White Bear Lake
- 11-12.....North Iowa One-Stop Shopping Spree - Clear Lake, IA
- 14-19.....Customer Appreciation Open House - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
- 15-19.....5th Anniversary Sale - Antiques of the Midwest - Wells
- 25-26.....Black Friday and Small Business Saturday Sales - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
- 25-27.....Christmas Sale - Country Craft Shed - Duluth
- 25-27.....Christkindlsmarkt - Excelsior
- 26.....Small Business Saturday Sale - Quilt Haven on Main - Hutchinson
- 30-Dec 3.....Holiday Hop Shop Hop - See ad page 20

December

- 2-3.....Junk Bonanza - Shakopee
- 3.....Christmas Open House - Quilter's Cottage - Kiester
- 14.....Mazze's Birthday Party - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
- 26-31.....Pre-Inventory Sale - Quarry Quilts & Yarns - Sandstone

January

- 6-8.....Sargent's Nursery Quilt Show - Pumpkinberry Stitches - Red Wing



AND THE WINNER IS...

Beth Robinson of St. Paul Park won a \$ 25 gift card! Beth says *What's Brewing Quilt Shop* in Wabasha, MN is her favorite shop because "The very wide variety! They owner is very friendly and charming!"

Holly Bloom Rogers of St. Paul and Nancy Houberty of White Bear Lake each won a copy of the *By the Yard Comics Calendar!*

Congratulations!



Happy Thanksgiving!



*From our
Family to Yours
Happy
Thanksgiving
and Merry
Christmas!*

The Country Register

Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Fun Events



*Kim Keller, Publisher
2920 144th Ave. NE
Ham Lake, MN 55304
763-754-1661*

*minnesota@countryregister.com
www.countryregister.com/mn*

Where in Minnesota?

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

(Answer on page 18 of this issue)



Thank you to everyone who submitted recipes to be included in The Country Register's Annual 12 Days of Baking! Bonus this year...a baker's dozen of recipes!
Merry Christmas!
Happy baking!!

Win a \$25 Visa Gift Card!

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(include town) _____

Please make sure to tell the shop owners you saw their ad in *The Country Register*! It's the only way they know you saw them here and that their advertising dollars work!

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Excelsior

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1/2 TSP SALT WATER AS NEEDED 2 LARGE EGGS
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Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski

Following Her Lead

I have a friend I met a few years ago who never ceases to inspire me. We met at a quilt guild meeting (my first time attending), and now we mostly visit and share via cell phone messaging.

My humble beginnings as a quilter started with flannel baby quilts I would make for 'friends' children. Then I expanded to incorporate leftovers—which my mother called 'remnants'—from whatever garment I had sewn, inspired by my grandmother who had crafted tied quilts for her family. (My mother has one in a closet; the few others which still exist are distributed among my grandmother's other children.)

Unlike my friend, who is a third or even fourth generation quilter, I regard myself as a self-taught quilter. Ergo, I attended that first guild meeting to find out why quilt guilds exist.

Only able to attend for three meetings before the world shut down with Covid, she and I would frequently chat on the telephone; then one day she invited me over to her front yard for a quilt show. I returned home from the visit with one of her leftover quilt blocks, and a new design and inspiration to chase after.

Months later, I moved out of state. Time to locate a new quilt guild!

The more I have been quilting, the more I have been learning. I feel like I could have a trunk show for beginners, walking them through my many experiments: the polyester-blend half-square triangles throw I made from a bag of unfinished projects rejected by others before reaching my lap after an aunt passed; the denim-and-flannel rag-style throw I made from a bag of someone's denim discards; the corduroy-and-flannel rag-style throw salvaged from another's bin of remnants; the flannel-and-heavyweight cotton quilt I made from fabric passed on from somewhere. And the table runners. And the wall hangings. And the myriad of other projects made and gifted.

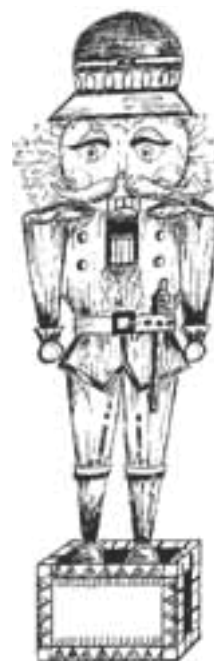
The challenges I am presented with are the most fun, though. One quilt store held monthly meetings to share the newest fabrics, patterns, and products with us. In exchange for attending, we were each given a coupon for a percentage off of our purchase for the next three days. I bought a bit of fabric that way. And, I participated in the contest-challenge of creating a project using a fat-quarter she provided. (We each got different fat quarters. I assume they were from bolts she had already sold out of.) Although I didn't win the contest, I love the project I created!

Back to my friend. The projects she makes are masterpieces which makes my projects feel all the more amateurish. She won a blue ribbon this past summer at the guild's quilt show; the photo she shared reveals its beauty.

Last week, my friend shared the photo of a bargello table-runner with lacey crocheted doilies she had tatted to represent falling snowflakes. Stunning!

I sent back a photo of my first Log Cabin block.

Will I ever reach her level?



2022 Excelsior Christkindlsmarkt

Popular German Christmas event
Thanksgiving Weekend November 25, 26 and 27

EXCELSIOR, MN — Our 18th annual Excelsior Christkindlsmarkt. Location next to Excelsior Brewery, in the East Parking Lot.

Inspired by traditional German open-air Christmas markets, the event brings a cherished tradition with local charm and a festive holiday atmosphere to Excelsior. It features a variety of food and beverages, artisan crafts and other products from dozens of vendors, entertainment including visits from Father Christmas, Mrs. Christmas, and carolers (socially distanced from the crowd), kids events and live Alaskan reindeer, Frozen princesses, Magic Christmas Show, Balloon Artist, German Narren Mask Program, Christmas String Concert, Christmas Rockabilly Concert and German vocalist/guitar entertainer Troy Fleming, Christkind the golden angel, Saturday night: German St. Martin Children's Lantern Parade, and Caroling music groups.

New attractions include Father Christmas sitting inside his own tent, allowing children to talk closely with him in a safe manner. Entertainment on stage.

Also, the Cannonball Holiday Lights Cruise returns, featuring dozens of cars decorated with Christmas lights that will gather in downtown Excelsior, cruise from there by neighboring towns, senior living centers and health care facilities, and end back in Excelsior.

Safety protocols will include hand sanitizing stations.

Those interested in attending are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance through Eventbrite. Those interested in volunteering please sign up on the website Sign up genius, Volunteers will receive free ticket and Christkindlsmarkt stocking hat.

"We're more excited than ever about this year's event," Mackenzie says. "The out-pouring from people all over the area saying, 'we REALLY love this event.'"

2022 Excelsior Christkindlsmarkt Food & Beverages

Artisans

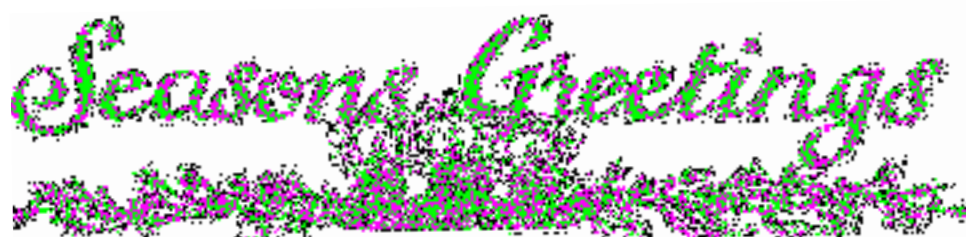
- John Hein Woodcarver
- IBurg's
- Plumeria Alpacas
- Alpha Knife Woodworks
- Stick it to Winter
- Shangri La
- Design & Imports by Peach
- Simple-Trends
- JES Natural
- Lakeshore Candle
- Coloring Your Own
- Syndicate Sales
- True North Home
- Wagz N Pure
- Hardware Iron
- Harmon Farms
- Bella Vida
- Mixly Cocktail
- SoFull Chai
- Fallon Art
- Picking Posies
- Scent & Psyche
- Minnesota Krampus
- Renewal by Anderson
- Leaf Filter
- Held's Nursery Birch Deer's
- Girls Crazy Glaz
- Mean Green

Food Artisans

- Ruhland's Strudel Haus
- Bubushka's Polish Foods
- Got Cheese (Wisconsin cheese and meat snacks)
- Luther Enterprises Mini Donuts
- Natasha's Pierogi's
- Northeast Pretzel
- German Gluhwein by the Coalition
- Kindercocoa (German hot coco)
- Cane & Cotton, Cotton Candy
- Fusion Rolls
- Honey
- Cindy's Cinnamon Roasted Nuts
- Maple Syrup-Farm to Table
- Sugar Butter Cookies
- Kona Coffee "Hawaiian Coffee"
- Kalahara – Peanut Brizzle
- Heise Pronto Pups



Contact: myrle@excelsiorchristmas; 952-292-8898



Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

Turkey Talk

Turkeys wouldn't win the prize for being God's most beautiful creation. They're really a rather disgusting and ornery creature, even while prancing around the barnyard. Their highly praised fanned tail feathers are actually tattered and torn—if any remain after the bird fights through all its initiated squabbles. Does the poor turkey even realize that behind its puffed chest is a ragged rear?

The turkey is the perfect example of false pomposity so it's no wonder the word turkey has become a synonym for a jerk.

The turkey that will grace holiday tables across our country hardly resembles the scavenger birds eaten by our forefathers, which were exceptionally thin—weighing a meager 10-pounds. When a pilgrim was fortunate enough to kill the critter, eating the gamey, stringy bird became a real trial. If not careful, a tooth could be broken on bits of buckshot.



Even though today's turkeys are injected with butter, wired with timers, stuffed full of dressing, and scientifically groomed to weigh up to 40 pounds, they remain foul fowl because they're also injected full of artificial chemicals and drugs to speed growth while living in their ultramodern artificial environment.

In spite of all the advanced technology that's designed to improve and perfect the turkey, the poor critter still must endure the humiliation of a caste system. In the grocer's freezer case, exposed for all the world to see, turkeys are divided according to apparent quality. The extra-fancy double-breasted birds command a greater premium than the pitiful and pathetic generic 'Grade C' fowl that could be missing a portion of its wing or has a small nick cut into its skin.

Who are we mortal humans to be so demanding of ultimate perfection in our turkeys?

Who among us is perfect—lacking any physical or emotional scar, impairment or deformity?

If I were coldly and nakedly displayed for the turkey that I am, my imperfections and scars not only would be visible, but glare out with blinding intensity!

This holiday season, because I know myself to be a fallible turkey, I am grateful God loves and accepts me ... just as I am!

When I realize I've been pompously strutting around with a puffed chest and a ragged rear, I find consolation in the following little anonymous poem:

*If God can love turkeys, then He can love you,
Cause you are a turkey, and I am one, too.*

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Life is like a quilt, pieced together from a unique patchwork of memories, friendships, joys, and challenges. In each of these books, syndicated columnist Jan Keller is down to earth and refreshingly transparent as she opens the door to life's dreams, triumphs and struggles in a heart-warming way that will touch you forever. You'll love the way she spins 'yarns' that



weave the pieces of a treasured tapestry into a vivid depiction of life and love



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The Artificial Tree

by Nancy J. Nash

On a marble-topped table near the bay window of her living room, my widowed grandmother displayed her house plants. I suspect that this stately and practical table came from the elderly man who owned the house before my grandparents. They were too poor to afford a house, but he gave them his in exchange for their taking care of him as his health declined.

Sometime during Advent, my grandmother would move the plants and replace them with a small spruce or balsam. Presents would mysteriously appear underneath. But one year, she supplanted the fragrant greenery with a tree that was less costly and easier to maintain. Realizing that she was aging, her son had thoughtfully brought her an artificial tree that could be displayed year after year during the Christmas season.

But as she grew older, so did the tree, and eventually, it fell apart. Years of use had taken their toll. Grandma declared that she would not have a tree that Christmas. It was too much work. She told us she just did not have the energy to set it up and decorate it.

One day, shopping in a nearby city, I happened to walk into a Salvation Army store and spot a very small artificial tree. It was slightly worn but still quite lovely, with red bows and tiny packages affixed to its branches. I don't remember the cost, but it could not have been more than a couple dollars. It did not require decorating and could easily be placed on the table in the bay window.

I purchased it and presented it to my grandmother, whose face lit up in joy and gratitude. The tree may have been artificial, but the love between us was real. As it turned out, she passed away the next February. The tree became mine.

Each December, the little tree finds its way to a table in my home. In October, a Christmas cactus finds its way from the porch where it spends its summers to a wooden stand indoors. The cactus was given to my grandmother in the 1920s when she and my grandfather first moved into the house with the marble-topped table in the bay window. During the Christmas season, the cactus diligently blooms. The tree and the cactus sit near each other, reminding me that I will see my grandmother again.



2022 Nancy Nash of Amherst, MA. She has a B.A. in English composition from Mount Holyoke College and an M.F.A. in Writing for Children from Simmons College, with two books listed on Amazon.com (Mama's Books: *An Oregon Trail Story* and *Little Rooster's Christmas Eve*).

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Become Inspired!

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

SETTING THE STAGE FOR JOY

As the year advances and the holidays approach, there is a natural excitement in the air as we begin to prepare for a season of joy. Crisp, cold sunlit days are the perfect time to host a wreath-making event with family and friends. From gathering evergreen boughs in the woods and foraging for red berries and cones to finding the perfect Buffalo plaid ribbon to make our own bows, creating festive wreaths for our own home or to give as gifts is a day well-spent. A late fall evening might be an ideal time to create joyful memories making deliciously scented homemade gingerbread ornaments to be hung on the family Christmas tree. When we fashion pieces by our own hand surrounded by people we love, we all feel a special connection to the season.



SPLENDOR OF THE SEASON

As our favorite Christmas carols play in the background, we can happily plan to prepare our home's interior for a season of giving. Cozy new arrangements of our wing-back chairs and country antiques can make an inviting new spot to gather. An early dry sink in original blue can be used to hold a petite Christmas tree alight with a string of lights and handcrafted coverlet stockings. A six-board blanketchest in a red wash might now hold an early trencher with cedar boughs, southern pinecones and fresh-clipped rose hips from the old stone wall. The ideas for how to cultivate a naturally warm ambiance of Christmas seem to be endless when we give ourselves the sacred time to create.

GLEEFUL GATHERINGS

Our anticipation for the season is always enhanced by knowing we will be sharing it with those we hold dear. Hosting a special evening meal as a prelude to Christmas is a special country joy. Creating candlelit pathways to our country homes using glass mason jars filled with sand and white votives provides a perfect country welcome for our friends. Guests will be inspired by the snug and cozy appeal of the glowing candles in each window of our home as evening approaches. Piping hot mulled cider spiked with cinnamon, clove and allspice simmering on the woodstove is a perfect warming treat as guests arrive. Homemade hors d'oeuvres that we have always wanted to make can be enjoyed on this special night. A country dinner of pork tenderloin with our homemade cranberry-apple compote can be enjoyed alongside vibrant string beans from our summer garden dotted with butter and fresh herbs. And a satisfying dessert of apple pan dowdy with fresh whipped cream can be a delicious end to our country feast. Without a doubt, hosting a holiday open house is a gift to all.

TRADITIONS TO KEEP

Many of our most cherished memories of the holidays come from our long-held traditions. Whether it is keeping our tradition of hosting an annual open house to using our grandmother's special recipe for pork stuffing, we are in fact protectors of the past when we keep these traditions alive. They are soulful blessings to our family and to our friends and they are meant to be shared. Equally powerful, is the idea that we can keep the memory of ones we have lost alive through these tender traditions of love. Whether it is lighting a candle in their memory on Christmas Eve or giving to others each year in their memory, traditions keep us connected to our powerful past and they continue to shape us into exactly who we are meant to be.

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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Life on Breezy Manor Farm

by Donna Jo Copeland, farmeress



Just Flat Out Thankful

Sitting at my kitchen table on the last day of September it's hard to visualize November. The past few fall days here in south central Indiana have been story book, nearly perfect. Dry breezes to hasten the crops, one more hay cutting, no frost yet. Roses, asters, sunflowers and mums still flourish. You want a heavy wool sweater for morning chores, a tank top at noon and the sweater again at eventide.

Of course, with fall approaching winter, comes the very long list of chores to be done NOW. Windows to close, winter curtains to hang, wood stove and flue to check, another load of firewood, barn to tighten up, one more load of hay. Then there still are fleeces from the spring shearing to skirt, wash, dye, spin and then knit, hook, and weave. Plotting the last few warps for Lady Mary in the loom house before the weather turns too cold to weave in there.

For the chickens—the window needs replaced, more plastic on the door, clean out and new shavings on the floor, new straw in the laying boxes. Dress those three young roosters.

The sheep list includes barn cleaning and tightening up, roof check, hoof trim, water tank heaters checked.

Bunny barn needs wind proofed, cages cleaned, winter water dishes washed and put out.

Dog houses need cleaned and new winter beds.

And as for me, check canned goods and staples, air out wool blankets and flannel sheets. I am the end of the chore list. Farmeresses always are.

Yes, there is a great deal of activity but there is also gold in Indian Summer days, the winding down of fall, the call of winter. The fogs and mists are denser, deeper shadows. Pumpkins and dried corn stalks decorate porches. We pause and should give thanks.

Being mindful of our blessings is nearly a lost art these days. Oh, I can hear my grandparents in those words. False sense of deserving and greed seem to be upper most in the minds of most people. They have forgotten how to understand and appreciate simple blessings. The vivid colors in a leaf as it floats down to the ground, big fluffy clouds on the horizon, the fragrance of decaying leaves in the crisp morning air. And I am so thankful for my animals, those big eyes, tail wags, soft baas, and snuggles. The old phrase, may you always have enough, resonates through my soul and for the most part has been lost in the echoes of time.

In the eyes of the world I have very little. I am extremely thankful for what I do have and the life I have made. Hasn't been an easy path. My animals, my health, my talents, my friends and family see me through. One of my guild sisters on my birthday (yes 73....) said, a life well lived. I am trying my best.

Every night I thank Mother of All for my blessings, and I count them. Most nights I fall asleep before asking for anything. I am simple, my wants and needs are few. And I smile when my sheep call me to the barn for breakfast and supper.

I do hope each day is a bit better than the last. There is promise in the sunrise and may the sunset bring you peace.

As the years pass the holiday season becomes less holiday. More like a time to just get through. Living alone with my animals, our daily routine remains. I will spend a bit with friends, a meal with family. With only the woodstove for heat I can't be gone long. I am needed here. During the covid lockdown I made a Christmas list, got it out the other day and read it again. Nothing to change. I am either very boring or content.

The end of 2022 will mark a new year coming. The weather this year has been a horrid challenge for many of us. Perhaps the disbelievers will come to understand the harm they are doing to our world, our home.

If anything, Santa please fill their stockings with common sense.

And now a recipe:

APPLE BUTTER BREAD

Use any banana bread recipe, mine is from the 1966 Better Homes and Gardens cookbook. Instead of bananas use 1 cup of apple butter and ¼ cup of applesauce. Mix as directed. Pour into a parchment lined bread pan, bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. I sprinkle extra cinnamon sugar on top before baking.

Donna Jo Copeland writes from her farm, Breezy Manor, Mooresville, Indiana where she tends her flock and creates art from the wool. Being the 14th generation of farm owner/operator. Donna Jo brings alive the struggles of farm life.

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The tradition of football on Thanksgiving began in 1876.



There was pumpkin but not pumpkin pie at the 1st Thanksgiving.

The first Thanksgiving was in

1621

The 1st Thanksgiving was held over 3 days between Pilgrims and Wampanoag Indians.

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Crow Wing State Park



Crow Wing State Park has a rich history. At the confluence of the Mississippi and Crow Wing rivers, the oxcart trade between Winnipeg and Saint Paul grew for a quarter of a century. A 1957 archeological investigation uncovered many of the old town site foundations. This spurred a push to preserve the site, and Crow Wing State Park was officially established in 1959. Both the town and the park were named

Crow Wing for their location at the confluence of the Mississippi and Crow Wing rivers.

Along the Main Street Crow Wing Self-guided signs along the trail allow you to learn about Crow Wing State Park's fascinating history, including fur-trading posts of the 1820s, the Red River Oxcart Trail, and the village known as "Old Crow Wing." In the 1860s, this bustling center of trade and travel boasted a truly "international" population of over 500 people. When the railroad bypassed the community in favor of a river crossing where Brainerd is today, the village of Crow Wing faded



into history. This important site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Beaulieu House still stands today. This is the only structure of that era still standing north of St. Anthony Falls.

According to 19th century historian, William Warren, Crow Wing State Park was the scene of a major battle between the Dakota and Ojibwe in 1768. From the Chippewa lookout you can see over a mile upriver. Local lore says that this may have been the vantage point for the Ojibwe scouts as they watched for the arrival of Dakota warriors. The Ojibwe were successful



in their attack on the Dakota warriors who had earlier taken captives from Big Sandy Lake. The victory established Ojibwe control of the area. A nearby interpretive panel at the site of the Battle of Crow Wing describes the location's significance.

The Crow Wing State Park is a nature lover's delight. From camping to hiking to historic sites, there is so much to explore! Tour prairie, pine, and hardwood forests. View the Mississippi River from historic and picturesque "Chippewa Lookout." At the confluence of the Mississippi and Crow Wing rivers, novice canoeists can paddle the calm waters of the Crow Wing and Mississippi Rivers. Plan your visit to this park today!

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KISSed Quilts

Mountain Ridges

by Marlene Oddie



When Island Batik announced the Blue Ridge Mountain collection, I was excited to design with it using AnglePlay[®] templates to get some wild ridges! Look for this collection at your local quilt shop.

The fabric collection has leaves, pine needles, berries, trees, bark, pebbles, raindrop spots and wildlife—including forest animals, dragonflies and hummingbirds. The colorations are all shades of brown and blue, some tone on tone and others with both colors.

On one beautiful blue-sky day here in Washington, our 'Coulee walls' had to double for 'blue ridge mountains' so I could photograph this quilt in the wild.

This quilt pattern is a reward to the person who has collected all the AnglePlay[®] templates and would like to use more than just one or two in a single project. There are seven templates used (from Sets 1, 2 and 5). Two AnglePlay[®] borders give it the unique framing.

The Mountain Ridges pattern and AnglePlay[®] templates are available at KISSed Quilts.

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>.



Happy Thanksgiving!

Give yourself a good
Jolly Little Christmas!

My Christmas Wish Is for Tradition

by Barbara Kalkis

I'm a great believer in change. Change kicks us out of the ruts of old habits. It forces us to see things from a new perspective. It stretches our imagination. In business, it is essential to survival. Yes, change is good. I'm all for it. But not at Christmas time.

At Christmas, I want tradition—like heirloom family ornaments on a green tree that is real or fake, as long as it's green! Not red, blue, metallic silver or gold. I crowd my house with red and (full disclosure) white poinsettias and pinecones nestle in evergreen boughs and wreaths on every flat surface. Angel ornaments dangle next to bells just in case Clarence in *It's a Wonderful Life* was correct about bells ringing every time an angel got its wings.

I love houses cloaked in red, green, blue and yellow lights, interspersed with strings of white fairy lights. (Thank you, holiday clearance sales.) These traditional colors comfort as well as cheer me. They symbolize the enduring constancy of the Christmas message: Peace and goodwill.

However, change has invaded Christmas holiday culture. Designers have introduced decorations in colors that don't symbolize the season. Blues morphed into aqua, turquoise and navy. Red faded to cotton-candy pinks. Yellow invaded nature's rich blue-greens to become drab olive tones. Gold darkened to burnished brass and brown. Not to be left out—white must include hints of mint, blue, yellow and every other hue imaginable. It's like trying to select a paint color for the house.

At the same time, technology has bequeathed us with programmed flashing electronic lights. They dance in dizzying designs against the house. It's like staring at a broken neon sign.

Buzzing fans—busily bloating electric bills—pump up gargantuan plastic snow people, larger-than-life elves (always scary) and deer with blank stares. Forget the kids, it's enough to give adults nightmares.

Technology has even consumed the Christmas card tradition. Tired of selecting the perfect image and saying for the annual greeting card? Do you find that nothing extraordinary happened in the year to make letter-writing worthwhile, let alone having someone read it? No problem! Simply visit a website, select a picture with moving images and a message to match. Type the recipient's name and address, add your credit card number and voila! Instant card. No stamps, no hassle printing labels, no jogs to the post office. Click, click and you are finished. Easy-peasy.

I look at these cards once, email a thank-you and delete them. They are not real. They are convenient.

How's this for a change: Traditional paper Christmas cards—purchased or handmade—that can be taped to walls and doors, creating a collage of holiday images that reflect the personalities and tastes of friends and family. I keep and re-read Christmas letters that talk about the everyday events that made the year memorable. Photos of the kids, the dogs, cats and—yes—horses that relatives and friends have acquired over the year create a link that closes distances.

It's trendy to be innovative, bold, attention-getting but traditions 'center' us. It's like trying a new recipe for company dinner. You can use exotic new ingredients but underneath the spices, garnishes and gravies, guests can relax knowing that they are eating good old familiar chicken.

We live in a constantly changing world. We must adjust every single day. That's life. But, maybe this Christmas, we can cherish tradition: like making a card, crafting decorations, or writing a Christmas letter about the routines that are life's real blessings.



© Barbara Kalkis. Barbara is a teacher, high-tech marketing consultant, and author of *Little Ditties for Every Day: A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm*. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

Make Your Own Scrap Fabric Bowls & Containers

by Judy Sharer

This is a way to use up your scrap fabrics and make a usable container. Here is what you'll need: coordinating fabrics for the inside and outside of the container, or just use all scrap pieces. The product you will want to purchase is Elmer's Art Paste. It comes in a 2 oz. box and you can mix the entire package or half a box at a time. It will stay useable for three or four weeks if kept in a tightly sealed container. This is a messy project so you might want to put down an old vinyl tablecloth to work on first for easy clean up.

This process is similar to Papier Mache except with fabric and Elmer's Art Paste. Instructions: You can use a blown-up balloon which you will pop when finished to make a bowl or find a mold to use that the finished container can slide off of such as a flared vase or square glass container. I used a square jar once that worked very well and a tall olive bottle worked well too. Curved shapes will not work. Wrap the mold with clear plastic wrap and make it as smooth as possible. Tape to the glass surface if necessary.

Next, cut enough fabric into strips or pieces to wrap around the mold. Dip the fabric and coat it completely with the art paste, but not dripping wet. Remember the first layer of fabric you use will be the inside of your container and be visible when you slide the dried container from its form or pop the balloon. If you are color coordinating the inside and outside of your bowl make this fabric match or contrast with your final two layers of fabric. After the first two layers are applied let it dry completely before adding the next two layer. Drying takes time, and overnight is best. I make several bowls or containers at the same time. Then I usually have one that is dry to work on.

Once you have two layers of your inside fabric completely covering the form with no holes showing through to your mold you can start the next two or three layers with not so pretty or as nice fabric. This fabric will not be seen and can be of any cotton or cotton/blend. If you are using a thinner fabric you may want to add another layer.

The last two layers are the designer fabric or the coordinated fabric you will see as the outside of your container. Make sure all the layers are dry before applying the last fabric added, which is the binding around the top so no raw edges are showing. I make my binding just like I make binding for a quilt with a double edge on both sides. Pop the balloon or slide from the mold before applying the binder around the top edge to finish your bowl or container. Make sure the binding is coated in paste completely before fitting to the top edge. Apply and let dry. Add one last coating of paste to the entire outside and inside of the bowl and let dry once more and you're done!

I hope you enjoy making a scrap bowl or container today and I bet you can't make just one. A great way to use up fabric scraps and have fun!

Judy Sharer is the author of *A Plains Life* series published by The Wild Rose Press. Book One, *Settler's Life*, Book Two, *Second Chance Life*, and Book Three, *Civil War Life* are now available wherever online books and eBooks are sold. Judy's sweet historical romances have a thread of quilting that runs throughout the family saga series. Visit Judy's website for more details. judysharer.com Judy's fourth book in this series, *Love Challenged Life* will be released fall of 2022.

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-Donna, Melissa & Jojo



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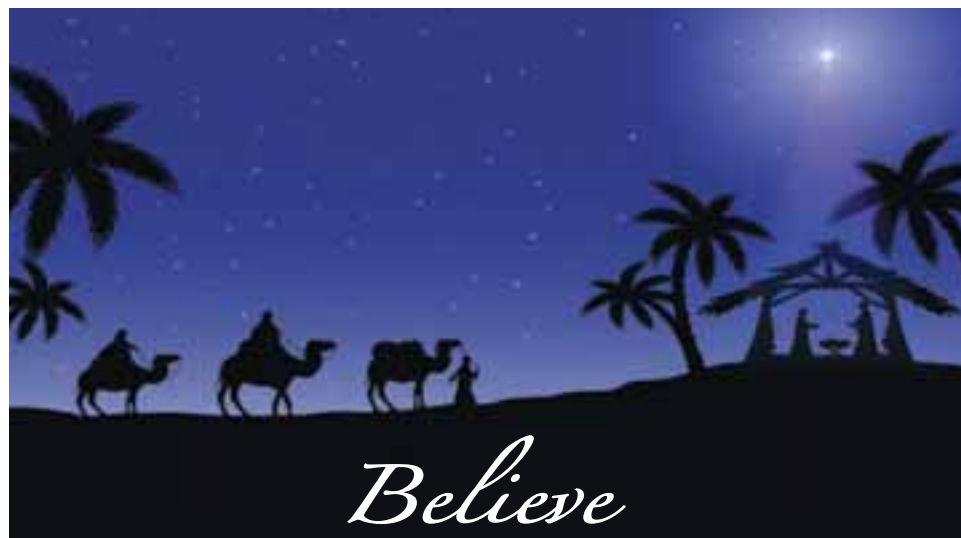


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Thankful for My Blessings

by Tammy Page

At the time of the year when we are celebrating being thankful for our many blessings, and yes, I have many to be thankful for, blessings and the celebration of Jesus, I reflect back on my career in social services. Helping people with food, rides, a shoulder to cry on or a listening ear has always come easy for me. I enjoy making people happy and don't we all need some more happiness in today's world?

I have no idea how I became an advocate, what road I took or why I do what I do but, none the less I am one. One for the battered wives of over the road truckers, one for children who don't learn their colors before kindergarten because mom is too busy trying to keep the home calm and happy for her partner's sake. How I got here is not as important as to why I continue to work long, tireless hours, running back and forth to hospitals, police stations, and shelters. I guess I've always had the "middle child syndrome" of being the independent thinker and doer, and to plead another's cause so I shouldn't be surprised that I ended up being an advocate for those less fortunate. I suppose being an independent thinker I feel that everyone deserves a certain level of care, a peaceful home and school life and help at times when they so desperately need it.

I didn't start my career as an advocate, but in a way, I've advocated for someone or something most of my life. As a child I was always making sure classmates were included in school activities. In high school I advocated for those who were left out or mistreated so it must have been a quality I already possessed and didn't know it. After high school I got a job working at a bank returning non-sufficient funds checks which was not all that glamorous, but it gave me a chance to advocate for customers who might have made a mistake in their accounts. I always felt bad when I had to charge people who I knew were struggling financially so at times I would give them a call in hopes they could rectify it and not get charged a fee.

After having our third child, I went back to work part time in the "people business" again. For the next 24 years I've problem-solved, assisted, maintained, and planned for people. If you look the word, "advocate" up in the dictionary (do people still use those?), you will see it means to defend or maintain a cause. That's me to a T! My husband always tells me I can't save everyone nor can I bring them home. He knows me well. I would, if permitted donate more of my time, my money, and myself to those who need a helping hand once in a while. Now I know in my head I cannot do all these things but, in my heart, I want to help each and every one without crossing the boundaries of being an advocate instead of being a friend. There are times when feelings of worry and helplessness overcome me and it's very frustrating that others don't feel the same way I do. Why can't others lend a hand or give someone a ride or donate to a good cause? I must obey boundaries as an advocate but as a human being I do not. Why can't I help a single mom with two children who could use transportation to the food stamp office? Or donate some of my own blankets and home goods to a family having to start over? Again, as a child of God, I will offer what I can, when I can.

So, during this holiday season, please think of others and the troubles they may be facing. Say hello to a stranger in the fast food line, hold a door open for the lady with bags, her purse and her child in her arms. Give generously to the bell ringers or the local Christmas Giving Tree and be an advocate that you and God can be proud of.



—Tammy lives on a working farm with her family in IN, farm animals and many pets. She enjoys writing, decorating and collecting vintage homewares.



**SHOP LOCAL
This Holiday
Season!**



Random Acts

by Maranda K. Jones

December Rose

In the many blocks we walked, we saw and heard the Christmas spirit in many forms. Window displays in every store, sharing the spirit of the season. Festive songs choreographed dances with lights above our heads, strung from building to building. Kindness among strangers in a city reputed to be rough seemed to be running rampant. Then we experienced that for ourselves celebrating in New York City.

J. M. Barrie said, "God has given us our memories, that we might have roses in December." This quote from Peter Pan's author comes up in books and online so much that I began to take notice. It even showed up in a cookbook I was using. For some reason, this phrase kept appearing. I could not ignore it. I used it to embellish a scrapbook page that is now hanging in my parents' dining room.

The background is a decorative sheet of paper full of red roses from corner to corner atop a square clipboard. On top of that, photos from a girls' trip my mom planned for my sister and me show our cold smiling faces. We are bundled up in coats, scarves, stocking hats, and boots as we visited New York one December.

The camera captured so many fond memories from that week in the city. One photo shows us on the ferry to Ellis Island. The Statue of Liberty holds her torch high above her head and ours, but little warmth is felt from that light source while we are on the water. Surrounded by buildings with even more lights around us, we are standing next to each other in Times Square, admiring the glow of billboards, screens, and flashes everywhere. Rockefeller Center hosts ice skaters and its huge evergreen elegantly dressed for the holidays.

Another photo zooms in on my sister and me posing next to celebrity headshots after our dinner at Sardi's, the best place to eat before a Broadway show, known for its caricatures of movie stars. We are smiling next to drawings of Hank Azaria and David Hyde Pierce, stars in their own right, who were currently starring in the production of Monty Python's Spamalot. We enjoyed the show and wanted a picture with its stars. We were not sure ours were going to turn out...



As we exited the theater the night before, our mom said we should watch for celebrities. Knowing that we should always listen to our mother, we heeded her advice and took our time making our way through the crowd. Sure enough! Outside the door, Hank Azaria took some photos and visited with fans. A few minutes later, David Hyde Pierce arrived and did the same. We asked for a photo, and he welcomed us next to him. Another woman offered to take the picture, and I handed her my camera. We smiled, waited for the flash, and nothing happened. My camera was frozen.

I froze too. It felt like time stood still while I stood there flustered. All of these thoughts were forming in my mind as I tried to warm the camera just enough to take one more snapshot. I did not want to waste this man's time. I did not want to detract from anyone else's celebrity sighting. A crowd was forming. I felt rushed. I was so disappointed that my camera was too cold to work. I was wondering if anyone would ever believe that we met these actors while we were in NYC. I was sad that my TV-watching mom would not have photographic evidence of meeting the Niles Crane from Frasier, one of her favorite shows. Her celebrity-sighting skills created an experience that would be turned into a memory. A rose in December.

Then the woman offered to take our picture with her camera and email me the photo. We posed again with a gracious and patient actor, remembering every second of this exchange. I shared my email address and wondered if I would ever hear from this woman. Maybe she just wanted us out of her way so she could have a turn. Maybe she saw how much it meant to us and would follow through. She did not owe us anything. She would not have to go through of all the steps it once took to upload and download photos. We were simply strangers walking up and down the same street.

Fast forward a few weeks, and mail from an unknown sender arrives in my inbox. Through blurry eyes, I see what I think is a picture taken on Broadway. Tears were welling up as the image downloaded. Sure enough! It was our photo. The photo we did not expect to develop. Staring at my screen, I saw what most often is only felt with the heart. I now have photographic evidence of the Christmas spirit and faith in humanity.

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A Special Christmas Gift

by Gayle Cranford



Being the first grandchild on both sides of my family, I was spoiled by grandparents, aunts and uncles. One aunt was only five years older than me and we actually played together as children. Merle was a shade older than she.

He doted on me, giving me gifts that encouraged my creative side and lovingly teased me constantly. His nickname for me was to reverse my first and middle names, calling me "Annie Gayle." Of course, he was my very favorite indulgent uncle.

I grew up in a musical family that had organized a blue grass band that played for square dances and local radio stations. Merle played a dobro, what we kid used to call a Hawaiian guitar. The whole family encouraged my taking piano lessons, but Uncle Merle's encouragement meant the most to me. He occasionally bribed me to play the piano for him with coins, but I would have gladly done it without the monetary enticement.

I began taking piano lessons when I was nine years old. About three years into taking lessons, Uncle Merle asked me "The Flight of the Bumble Bee." He promised a five-dollar bill if I would master that piece. If he was teasing me, I didn't know and considered his bribe.

That Christmas, my parents bought me a two-wheeler bicycle that was complete with saddle bags on the back rack. Inside one saddle bag was the sheet music for "The Flight of the Bumble Bee." Imagine the surprise of receiving that particular sheet music! I got the message and was encouraged to learn it with the help of my piano teacher, Leo O'Brian.

Memory prevents me from remembering just how long it took me to learn it, but learn it I did...much to the surprise and amazement of my piano teacher and, most of all, my Uncle Merle, who paid the promised five dollars which was a lot of money in the mid nineteen forties.

About that time, my mother (who was a pianist) was asked to perform a piece at a local Protected Home Circle family get-together. She was encouraged to ask me to perform as well and for both of us to have encores prepared.

That PHC meeting was held in the large second floor ball room and the attendees were seated mostly along the walls opposite the piano. Mom played her piece and encore. Then, it was my turn and I was very nervous.

My first piece was an appropriate piece for a beginner to play, Minuet in G by Ignacy Jan Paderewski, a simple but lovely piano piece. Polite applause followed and I bowed and sat down again to play my encore, "The Flight of the Bumble Bee," which totally took the audience by surprise. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see many of the attendees were straining to watch my young fingers accomplish that difficult piece.

Thanks to Uncle Merle and his bribe, I had persevered to learn it.

Many years later, then widowed, after having fifty years of marriage, I received a very surprising phone call from Uncle Merle and Aunt Doris, his wife, from New Mexico where they had lived for many years, raising their six children.

Uncle Merle got on the phone and asked me if I still played "The Flight of the Bumble Bee." When I answered that I hadn't even played the piano for years, he, laughing, remarked that my learning that piece had cost him twenty dollars!!!

In his mind, the five-dollar value through all those years was the equivalent to the current twenty dollars. And, in his growing dementia, he had truly remembered or deal from so long ago.

-Gayle writes from her home in Florida, where she lives with his daughter. At the age of 87, she is often referred to as "the energizer bunny." She enjoys writing letters to the editor and spending time with her daughter and granddaughter.

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

Fergus Falls • Oklee

Salted Carmel Apple Spice Mug Cake

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp apple pie spice
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 3 tbsp sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 1/2 tbsp unsweetened applesauce
- 2 tbsp milk
- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp water
- Carmel sauce



Directions:

1. In a small bowl, whisk together the dry ingredients.
2. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients
3. Add the wet ingredients.
4. Whisk everything together (excluding the carmel sauce) until combined and no lumps remain.
5. Pour batter into a microwave-safe mug. You want enough space for the cake to rise without pouring over.
6. Microwave mug cake for 1 minute and 50 seconds on high.
7. Remove from microwave.
8. Drizzle with carmel sauce on top and enjoy!

Recipe by Table for Two by Julie Chiou





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12 Days of Baking...Baker's Dozen!

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Angel Salad

submitted by Janet Huls of Sibley, IA



- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 4 egg yolks | 1-2lbs marshmallows, diced |
| 2 tbsp butter | 1 cup whipped cream |
| 1 tbsp vinegar or lemon juice | 1/4 cup chopped nuts |
| 1/3 cup milk | 1/4 cup crushed pineapple, drained |
| 1/2 tsp salt | |

Combine egg yolks, butter, sugar, vinegar or lemon juice, milk and salt in top of double boiler. Cook stirring until thick. Add marshmallows; cool. Fold whipped cream into mixture, then add nuts and pineapple. Put mixture in flat baking dish. Chill in refrigerator until firm. Cut in squares and serve on lettuce leaf.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Santa's Whiskers

submitted by Shirely Ross of Alexandria, MN



- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 cup butter at room temp | 2 1/2 cup all purpose flour (sift before measuring) |
| 1 cup sugar | 3/4 cup finely chopped red & green candied cherries |
| 2 tbsp milk | 1/2 cup finely chopped pecans |
| 1 tsp vanilla | 3/4 cup sweetened shredded or flaked coconut |

Mix butter and sugar together. When creamy, beat in milk and vanilla. Stir in flour one-fourth at a time, mixing well after each addition. Mix in candied cherries and pecans. Divide dough in half and shape each half into a cylinder 10" long and about 2" wide. Roll each in coconut, then wrap in wax paper and chill 2 hours or longer. Heat oven at 375°. Slice dough into 1/4" rounds and place 1" apart on ungreased baking sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes until edges are lightly browned. Cool.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Holiday Wreaths

submitted by Freda Jansen of Paynesville, MN



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1/3 cup butter | 1 tsp green food coloring |
| 1 pkg (10oz) regular marshmallows | 6 cups corn flakes |
| cinnamon candies | |

In a large saucepan, melt butter over low heat. Add marshmallows and stir until completely melted. Remove from heat and add food coloring. Add corn flakes. Stir until well coated. Using buttered fingers form as wreaths. Dot with cinnamon candies. You can use frosting to hold candies on!

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Coconut Snowdrops

submitted by Lila Liebl of Albert Lee, MN



- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| 2 cups all purpose flour | 1/4 cup milk |
| 1 cup flaked coconut | 1 egg |
| 1/2 cup sugar | 1 tbsp vanilla |
| 1 cup sweet cream butter, softened | |

Preheat oven to 350°. In 3 qt. mixing bowl combine all ingredients. Beat at low speed scraping sides of bowl often until well mixed (1-2 minutes). Drop dough by rounded teaspoonful 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake near center of oven for 12-15 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool completely. Sprinkle with confectioner's sugar.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Cranberry Kissel

submitted by Patti Lee Bock of New Ulm, MN



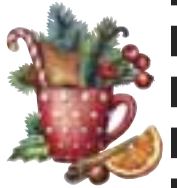
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 4 cups cranberries | 1/2 tsp cinnamon |
| 2 cups water | 2 tbsp cornstarch |
| 2 cups sugar | whipped cream for topping |

Put the cranberries into a sauce pan with the water. Boil until berries pop (about 10 minutes). Crush the cranberries thoroughly and strain them. Place the cranberry puree in a saucepan and add the sugar, cinnamon, cornstarch and a little water mixing well the whole time. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring constantly, and cook for 5 minutes. Place in the refrigerator to cool. Serve in individual glasses with whipped cream.

**Serve hot or cold with whipped cream. You can use raspberries, red currants, black currants or blackberries instead.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Snow Balls

submitted by Janet Huls of Sibley, IA



- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 2 cups flour | 1 cup butter |
| 1/4 cup sugar or 1/2 cup powdered sugar | 2 tsp vanilla |
| 1/2 tsp salt | 2 cup nuts (chopped pecans) |

Make into balls and bake at 325° for 45 minutes or less. Cool. Roll in powdered sugar.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Walnut Potica Cookies

submitted by Lisa Diehl Forman of Edina, MN



- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Cookie Dough | Filling: |
| 1 cup butter, softened | 1 egg white |
| 1 Package (8 oz) cream cheese, softened | 1 tbsp butter |
| 1/4 cup white sugar | 1/2 cup milk |
| 1 tsp vanilla extract | 1/3 cup white sugar |
| 2 cups flour | 1/4 cup brown sugar |
| 1/2 teaspoon baking powder | 2 1/2 cups ground walnuts or pecans |
| | 1 tsp cinnamon |

Making the Dough:

Cream together the butter and cream cheese until light and fluffy. Beat in the sugar and vanilla extract until thoroughly incorporated. Slowly add in the baking powder and flour until a soft dough forms. Divide the dough in half, wrap in wax paper or plastic wrap and chill for at least 2 hours (longer is just fine but use within 2 days).

Make the Filling:

In the top of a double boiler, place the egg white. Heat the double boiler so that the water in the bottom is simmering (not a hard boil), place the top with the egg white over the simmering water and whisk constantly until the egg white becomes foamy and opaque. Remove from heat. In another saucepan, combine the butter, milk and sugar. Heat until the butter melts and the sugar dissolves remove from heat. Fold in the egg white. Add the walnuts and allow to cool.

Assembling & Baking:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Roll the dough out to 1/8" thickness and cut into even square. Spread a small amount of filling on each piece of dough and roll up like miniature cinnamon rolls. Place seam side face down on baking sheet. Parchment paper works great as Potica cookies will not stick to the paper. Bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes OR until edges turn golden brown. Cool on baking sheet for 2 minutes before removing to wire racks to cool completely. Can either sprinkle with powdered sugar or can make a powdered sugar drizzle, if desired. I prefer the drizzle! Store uneaten cookies in an airtight jar or freeze for up to one month.

12 Days of Baking...Baker's Dozen!



Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Butter Tarts

submitted by Lorie Grasty of Burnsville, MN



- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup brown sugar
- refrigerated pie crust, divided
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp butter (more if you want a softer filling)

Soak raisins in warm water and drain (about 10 minutes). Mix sugar and egg. Add raisins and butter. Combine well. Press pie crust into small muffin tins and add small amount of raisin mixture (about half full). Bake at 450° for about 12 minutes.
**May also add 1/2 cup coconut or chopped walnuts.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Cherry Fruitcake Bars

submitted by Lila Liebl of Albert Lee, MN



- 2 cups Bisquick baking mix
- 2 cups cut up mixed candied fruit
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 cup snipped dates, if desired
- 1/4 cup margarine or butter
- 1 cup chopped nuts
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 can (14oz) sweetened condensed milk)

Heat oven to 350°. Mix baking mix and sugar. Cut in margarine thoroughly. Press mixture with floured hands in ungreased jelly roll pan 15 1/2" x 10 1/2" pan. Bake 10 minutes. Sprinkle coconut over baked layer. Layer candied fruit and dates over coconut. Sprinkle chopped nuts over fruit. Drizzle milk over top. Bake until light golden brown (25-30 minutes). Cool completely and cut into bars.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Turkey and Dressing Casserole

submitted by Elden Waltermann of Stewartville, MN



- 4 cups chopped turkey
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 8 oz breakfast sausage, browned crumbled
- 1 container (8oz) sour cream
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup finely chopped celery
- 1 package Stove Top Stuffing mix
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

In a large bowl, combine turkey, sausage, onion, celery and black pepper. Add soup, sour cream, milk; stir until well blended. Spoon into greased 9"x13" baking dish. Combine stuffing mix per package instructions. Spoon in cheddar cheese. Spoon over turkey mixture. Bake 350° for 45-50 minutes.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Light as a Feather Gingerbread

submitted by Lila Liebl of Albert Lee, MN



- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1/4 tsp ginger
- 1 beaten egg
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg

Combine first 5 ingredients. Sift dry ingredients together and add to first mixture. Bake in 8-inch square pan for 35 minutes or until done.
**The batter is thin, do not add more flour.



Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Kris Kingle Cookies

submitted by Shirely Ross of Alexandria, MN



- 1 cup butter or Oleo
- 1 1/2 tsp cream of tarter
- 2 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp baking soda, dissolved in 2 tbsp milk
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 5 cup flour

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Roll very thin. Sprinkle with sugar. Bake at 375°.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Kiss Candy Cane Blossom
Sugar Cookie

submitted by Lisa Diehl Forman of Edina, MN



- 1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 2 cups flour (all-purpose)
- 1 cup sugar (granulated)
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1 egg
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1-1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp milk
- 1 package Hershey's Kisses Candy Cane Mint Candies
- Red or green sugar crystals, granulated sugar or powdered sugar

Heat oven to 350°. Remove wrappers from approximately 48 candies. Beat butter, granulated sugar, egg and vanilla in large bowl until well blended. Stir together flour, baking soda and salt. Add flour ingredients to butter mixture, alternating with milk, beating until well blended. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in colored sugar. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 8-10 minutes or until edges are lightly browned and cookie is set. Remove from oven. Cool 2-3 minutes. Press a candy piece into center of each cookie. Remove from cookie sheet to wire rack. Cool completely.

Note: to keep the shape of the white Hershey Kiss, place the kiss on top of the cookie when you pull the cookie sheet from the oven. White chocolate melts quicker than dark chocolate.

This sugar cookie recipe is similar to the peanut butter blossom cookies, but nice for people with peanut allergies!

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This month in
Minnesota
History

November 9, 1913: Day two of the three-day Great Storm of 1913, which kills 251 people on the Great Lakes (forty-four on Lake Superior) and sinks seventeen boats.

December 2, 1858: The term "Land of Lakes" is first applied to Minnesota in the St. Anthony Falls newspaper the *Falls Evening News*.

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

5th Annual Holiday Hop

November 30th - December 2nd
9:00am - 5:00pm
Saturday, December 3rd
9:00am - 4:00pm

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Bertha Corbett: Originator of Sunbonnet Sue

by Rachel Greco

Most historians agree that Bertha Corbett is probably the originator of the Sunbonnet Sue quilt pattern as we know it today.

Born in Denver, Colorado in 1872, Corbett was a student in Chicago at the School of Normal and Applied Art. Afterwards, she studied with Douglas Volk in Minneapolis, Minnesota; then with Howard Pyle at the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1910, she moved to Los Angeles and married George H. Melcher.

Corbett stated that she first got the idea for the Sunbonnet Babies around the turn of the 20th Century. During a social gathering of artists, one of her friends observed that a faceless figure did not display emotional expression. She recalled seeing a small girl whose face was hidden by a large sunbonnet and remarked that she did not think a face was necessary in making a figure expressive. The other artists challenged her to prove her point. Bertha picked up a pen and the first Sunbonnet Baby was born.

In 1900, Bertha Corbett self-published her first book. In 1902, she collaborated with Eulalie Osgood Grove on *The Sunbonnet Babies Primer*, a series that continued for decades. In 1905, they published a second book and *The Overall Boys* came into being.

Corbett continued to illustrate her Sunbonnet Babies. They appeared in postcards, verse, a popular comic strip, and holiday greeting cards.

They even adorned advertising and promotional literature, including the popular and still marketed Dutch Cleanser.

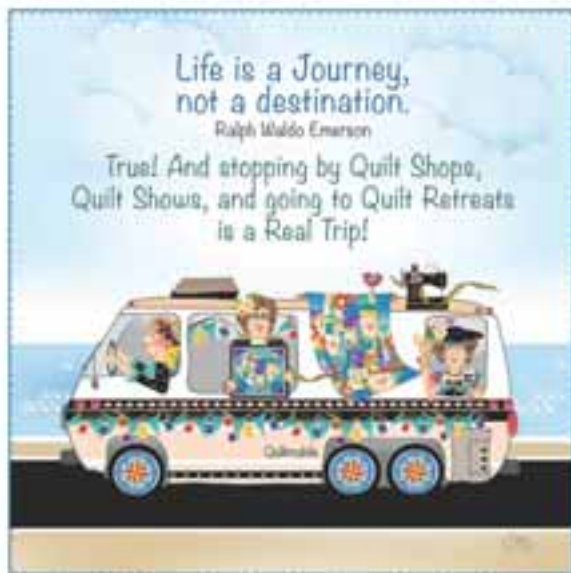
In an article written in the September 1907 issue of *The Housekeeper*, Corbett remarked, “The babies are so very young to be made to earn a living for me.” She spent most of her time devoted to the creation and distribution of her “babies.” Two of her babies, Molly and Mae, figured prominently in many of her sunbonnet illustrations.

Quilters have been using Corbett’s Sunbonnet patterns for appliqué and embroidery work for well over 100 years. And though Bertha herself passed away in California in 1950, her designs continue to be a popular choice for many quilters today.

Rachel Greco owns Grandma’s Attic, a traditional quilt shop in Dallas, Oregon/ A quilt historian and avid reader, she gives talks on needlework, the role of women in American history and their connection to fabric. Rachel has written several books and patterns, and runs Grandma’s Quilt Club, a monthly quilt class where participants collection quilt block kits, learn about quilt history, and make new friends. Contact her at <https://grandmasattic-quilting.com>



GIRLFRIEND WISDOM



Joy in our day is a choice we make! Who we see, what we do, what we think about, can all effect our attitude and energy levels. If we hold the saying in our minds - **Too Blessed to be Stressed, or, I could choose peace instead of this....we can find joy.** I have read that we can't have two emotions at the same time so choosing Blessed, or thoughts of Gratitude will keep the stress away.

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM: It is a fast pace world and things can get carried away. As soon as you catch yourself worrying about something, or complaining about something, quickly look at a picture of your grandchildren, or a beautiful flower, or hum a little tune. Choose a different thought, choose a peaceful thought, choose Blessed instead of Stressed. You will know when you have been successful because you will naturally take in a great big deep Breath of Life and you will feel Joyfully Blessed!

Joy & Blessings, *Jody*

Girlfriend Wisdom is written by Jody Houghton®. For color files of this writing contact Jody at: jodyhoughton@msn.com or www.JodyHoughtonDesigns.etsy.com



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

Christmas Soup
recipe by Alton Brown

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 pound <u>Kielbasa</u> , sliced | 2 tsp <u>kosher</u> salt |
| vegetable oil as needed | 1 pound red potatoes, cut into cubes |
| 8 cloves of garlic, minced | 6 ounces fresh <u>kale</u> , |
| 1 pound dried red <u>kidney beans</u> , | washed, rinsed and torn into 1-inch pieces |
| <u>soaked</u> for at least 4 hours overnight | 2 tbsp red wine <u>vinegar</u> , plus more to taste |
| 2 quarts <u>unsalted</u> chicken broth | 1/2 tsp <u>freshly</u> ground black pepper |

Brown the kielbasa in a 7-quart dutch oven and set over medium-low heat until it has rendered most of its fat, about 15 minutes. Remove the kielbasa from the pot and set aside. If you do not have at least 2 teaspoons of fat, add enough vegetable oil to make 2 teaspoons. Cook the garlic in the fat for 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly to prevent the garlic from burning. Add the beans, chicken broth, and 2 teaspoons of salt. Cook, covered, for 45 minutes. After the 45 minutes, stir in the potatoes, cover and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Toss the kale into the pot, cover and cook for an additional 10 minutes, or just until it is tender, but not mushy. Sprinkle with the vinegar and pepper and stir to combine. Return the kielbasa to the pot and cook just until heated through. Taste and adjust seasoning, adding more vinegar and salt as desired. Serve hot.



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Christmas Gnome



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Designed by Kathy Graham

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Christmas Hot Cocoa

- 1 14 oz can of sweetened condensed milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 6 cups milk
- 1 tsp vanilla or peppermint oil
- 2 cups milk chocolate chips

Pour all ingredients except chocolate in a large pot on the stove top on medium heat. Keep stirring for 2-3 minutes until mixture is well blended. Turn heat to low. Add chocolate chips and stir occasionally until melted.

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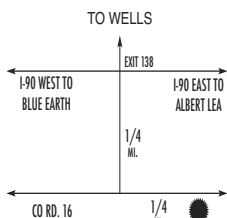
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One Big Gift

by Becky Van Vleet

With close to seventy Christmases behind me, I have many memories of this special holiday that have been set aside to celebrate the birth of our Savior. My parents, from the Greatest Generation, started some traditions that carried over to my own family. And you can imagine my delight to watch my adult children carrying out some of the same traditions in their families today.

One such tradition stands out as I go down memory lane. In 1993, my husband lost his job. When Christmas rolled around, money was tight. What little we had was earmarked for food, clothing, and shelter. Only the necessities.

Instead of fretting about the lack of Christmas presents, I decided we needed to be positive and focus on what we could do, not what we couldn't. Out of prayer, thanksgiving, family love, and creativity, I birthed giving gifts from our hearts that Christmas. Always the teacher, I used this time for teachable moments for our four daughters, ages five to fifteen.



We traded out store shopping for homemade presents. No Pinterest back then. We didn't even have the internet. But we had our imaginations, no cost involved. I was amazed at the ideas our daughters came up with, even helping one another, and talking about their secret gifts behind closed doors.

We got creative when we planned our own family recital with singing and musical instruments. Our voices, violin, clarinet, and saxophone came together for the best Christmas songs I've ever heard, even with "off notes" and a mistake here and there. But it didn't matter. Our recital endeavor came from our hearts. We even made a plan to go Christmas caroling and take our voices to others.

Our idea to make our own Christmas presents and focus on our hearts was not original. No, it wasn't. Our parents had learned to give gifts from the heart and make things from home during the Great Depression. Simple and homemade gifts repeated again during World War II with the government mandated rations and push for the war bonds.

Cloth dolls and teddy bears created from socks delighted little children. Grandpas whittled toys from wood. Lip smacking could be heard a mile away when popcorn balls, straight out of the kitchen, were made, even when sugar rations pinched holiday baking.

Yes, our Christmas of 1993 still stands out to me. Our family discussions surrounding the true meaning of Christmas ramped up. We were focused on Christ's birth and His plan of salvation more than the usual glitz, glitter, and glamour of the commercialized holiday. The tradition of homemade gifts continued in our family after that particular year as our daughters grew up.

Today, almost thirty years later, instead of store-bought gifts in our much bigger extended family, we make contributions to missionaries and other good works in honor of each other. Volunteering for Operation Christmas Child through Samaritan's Purse and making goodie bags for the homeless keep us busy around the holidays. We continue to visit nursing homes and sing Christmas carols as we reach out to others.

The heartache of a lost job in 1993 turned from ashes to beauty. Fortitude, family love, and a can-do spirit wrapped us up together in one big gift, and it still does to this day.

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.beckyanvleet.com.

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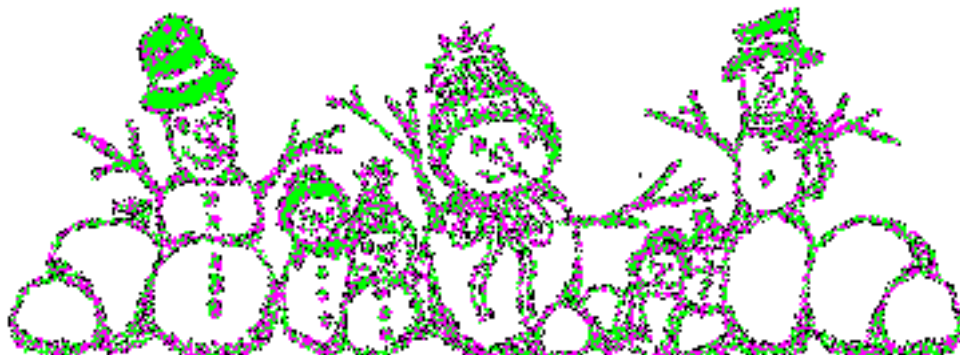
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