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Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Fun Events

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*November/December 2025*





Merry Christmas!



Minnesotas Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events



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**Months November/December 2025**

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**Mary Ellen Dorman of Makinen, MN won a copy of Brown Family Favorites Cook Book. Mary Ellen submitted multiple recipes to the paper to be entered in the drawing!**

**Congratulations Mary Ellen!**

**Special Events**

**November**

6-8.....Hometown Holiday Road Trip - The Thimble Box - New Ulm  
6-8.....Hometown Holiday Road Trip - Sewing Seeds - New Ulm  
7.....Christmas Arrives - Farmer's Daughter - White Bear Lake  
7-8.....Festival of Trees Holiday Open House - DeAnn's Country Village - Litchfield  
8.....Quilt Show Fabric Rummage Sale - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn  
8-9.....Pull a Pin Discount - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn  
11-15.....8th Anniversary Sale - Antiques of the Midwest - Wells  
13-15.....Homemade 4 the Holidays Shop Hop - Michele's - Blue Earth  
13-15.....Christmas Open House - Lost & Found - Eden Valley  
24-29.....23rd Anniversary Celebration - Blue Earth  
28-29.....Black Friday & Small Business Saturday - Quilt Haven - Hutchinson  
28-29.....Black Friday & Small Business Saturday - Quilted Dog - Cloquet  
28-30.....Christmas Sale - Country Craft Shed - Duluth  
28-Dec 2.....Kick of the Holiday Season- Quarry Quilts - Sandstone

**December**

1-13.....Anniversary Sale of Caring - Prairie Quilting - Windom  
3-6.....8th Annual Holiday Hop - See ad page 8  
3-6.....Holiday Hop Shop Hop - Thimble Box - New Ulm  
3-6.....Holiday Hop Shop Hop - Sewing Seeds - New Ulm  
3-6.....Holiday Hop Shop Hop - Michele's - Blue Earth  
3-6.....Holiday Hop Shop Hop - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn  
4-6.....Junk Bonanza - Shakopee  
5-7 & 12-14.....Christkindlmarkt - Waconia  
13.....Holiday Open House - Quilt Haven - Hutchinson  
26-31.....Pre-Inventory Sale - Quarry Quilts - Sandstone

**January**

30-Feb 1.....Winter Games Retreat - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn



Happy Thanksgiving!



November 11th

# VETERANS DAY

A TIME TO REMEMBER

by Nancy Nash

On a Sunday morning several years ago, my brother, who was visiting Belgium, decided to attend a church in Brussels. As he was leaving the service, an elderly Belgian man approached him and began to speak in French. My brother replied in French that he was a visitor from America. The man instantly switched to English and declared emphatically, "I was here. Christmas 1944. The liberation. The Third Army. General Patton. A magnificent army. Thank you."

He was referring to the heroic effort of Patton's unit that marked the turning point of the Battle of the Bulge, contributing to the defeat of the Nazi war machine and thus to the end of World War II. His gratitude was unending.

I was not born until after World War II, but I had a chance to observe how it had affected older generations. My parents and their neighbors learned what their priorities were while enduring the turbulence and uncertainty of war. They embodied their values, living simply, honoring their Maker, and cherishing family and friends for the rest of their days.

My mother always drew Veterans Day to our attention. She informed us that it was originally called Armistice Day to celebrate the truce that occurred at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918, effectively ending World War I.

Years ago, in our small town, I sometimes walked up and down the street with my grandmother. Along the way, we would occasionally meet Ruth, a friend of hers. Ruth had never married, but she would smile and ask after my mother (whom she had known when Mom was a little girl). She would chat with me and ask about the other grandchildren, expressing genuine interest.

Grandma told me that Ruth had been engaged to a man who died fighting in the First World War. She was a high school graduate who could barely support herself. She lived in a house with relatives. Yet I don't remember detecting a trace of disappointment, bitterness, or envy of others' blessings. From time to time, I would see her at the local library, sweeping or mopping for a few hours, always ready to greet me with a bright, contented smile.

This Veterans Day, remember the young soldier and his beloved and so many like them. Who can measure the worth of their sacrifice? It is priceless. And like the old man in the church in Belgium, let us give thanks for whatever peace and freedom we have enjoyed.

© 2025 Nancy J. Nash, who is the author of *Little Rooster's Christmas Eve* and *Mama's Books: An Oregon Trail Story*. She holds a B.A. in English composition from Mount Holyoke College and an M.F.A. in Writing for Children from Simmons College. She may be reached at [nancynash341@gmail.com](mailto:nancynash341@gmail.com).

City Listing			
Blue Earth.....	5,8	New Richmond, WI.....	11
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## Where in Minnesota?

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

Where is it?

(Answer on page 10 of this issue)





For unto us a child is born.

Isaiah 9:6

## Woven Fabric Hot Pads

By Deb Heatherly

Here's a great project for any time of year.

**Cutting for one hot pad:** Finished 7" x 7"


- (12) 4" x 7" strips (6 each of 2 colors OR use 12 different fabrics for a scrappy look.
- (1) 7" square for backing
- (1) 2 1/2" x WOF strip for binding
- (1) 6 1/2" square of Insulbrite

**Directions:**

- Fold the 4" x 7" strips in half and press.
- Fold both long edges to the center and press. Fold again and press. Strips should be 1" x 7" after pressing.

**On the backing wrong side, find and mark the center.**

- Working from the marked center, place 6 folded strips as shown. Sew 1/4" from the edge to hold them in place. Note: *If using only 2 colors, place 6 of the same color.*
- Slide the 6 1/2" square of insulbrite under the strips.
- **Optional:** If you weave tightly the insulbrite will not show through, but you can add a 6 1/2" piece of fabric, right side up, on top of the insulbrite and under the strips if desired.
- Weave the remaining 6 strips as shown. Sew 1/4" from the edge to hold the woven strips in place.
- Trim and straighten edges as needed.
- Add binding.



Deb Heatherly is a designer for Creative Grids® rulers and the author of eight popular pattern books. Creative Grids® fans are invited to join her Facebook group, "Grids Girls," for tips and inspiration, and two free mysteries each year. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/770429649800457/>. 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](http://www.Debcatsnquilts.com).





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Believe  
Merry  
and  
Bright  
Jingle All the Way  
Oh  
Holy  
Night  
Let it Snow  
Twinkle  
Candy Canes  
Silver  
Bells  
Tell it  
on the  
Mountain

# Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

## The Native American Cranberry

With the holidays approaching, my mind went back to a trip we took several years ago to Cape Cod. That was all it took to arouse my curiosity about cranberries—those beautiful red and tasty-tart delights that are synonymous with the coming festivities and family gatherings.

When John and I drove past the dry bogs, I wondered how they would appear when the ripe and ready cranberry bogs were flooded and ready for gathering. There were bogs everywhere, and cookbooks were likewise plentiful in every gift shop we visited.

Cranberries reach their peak color and flavor intensity and are ready for harvesting between mid-September until around mid-November. A typical harvest would be around eight million barrels (each barrel weighs 100 pounds). Besides Massachusetts, I learned over half of each year's crop of cranberries are grown in New Jersey, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin.

Cranberries are trendy because they're high in Vitamin C, free of fat and cholesterol, low in calories and sodium, and relatively high in fiber—and just what the doctor ordered. Sweet or tart, whole or jellied, in breads, desserts or sauces, cranberries are not only healthy, but versatile and tasty.

The cranberry also played an important part in American history. As one of America's native fruits (along with the Concord grape and the blueberry), cranberries were part of the diet of the Native American Indians who lived along the Eastern coast and woodlands hundreds of years before the Pilgrims landed. It was the Indians who taught our forefathers about the culinary possibilities and medicinal properties of the wild cranberry.

Today, cranberries are available all year long (juiced, dried and frozen) and have broken out of their traditional role as a Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday condiment. A trip down the grocery aisles reveals cranberry juices, baked goods and mixes, cereals, salad dressings, marinades and jellies.

A favorite cranberry treat is to beat an egg white until frothy, roll each in the egg white and then in sugar. Pop them on a cookie sheet and put them in the freezer. Once frozen, transfer them to a container and put them back in the freezer. When you're needing a bit of a snack, pop the tasty-tart delights into your mouth. YUM!

**Here's a cranberry recipe that's perfect for any holiday gathering:**

### CROCK POT WILD RICE WITH CRANBERRIES

1 1/2 cups wild rice, uncooked	28 oz. chicken or vegetable broth
1 Tablespoon butter, melted	4 oz. sliced mushrooms, undrained
1/2 teaspoon salt	1/4 teaspoon pepper
4 green onions, sliced	1/2 cup slivered almonds
1/2 cup dried cranberries or more to taste	

Mix all ingredients except almonds and cranberries in a crock pot. Cover and cook on low for 4 to 5 hours or until wild rice is tender. Meanwhile, cook almonds in an ungreased heavy skillet over medium-low heat for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring frequently until they start to brown. Stir the toasted almonds and cranberries into the rice mixture. Cover the crock pot again and continue cooking on low for 15 minutes.

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



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**Holiday Hop Shop Hop**  
December 3rd - 6th

**Homemade 4 the Holidays Shop Hop**  
November 13th - 15th



# Pocket Full of Crafts

by Marie

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## Collections

by Shelby Kottemann



I'm not a pack rat. You might say I have "collections." Recently, I collected my favorite cozy socks so that when they inevitably go out of fashion, I'll have no worries. My feet will be warm forever! On a shelf in my closet rests a small bag filled with my favorite lipstick, that was discontinued! I'm so glad I have my collection!

I don't just collect small things. My great-grandmother's tea cart stands across the room from me, serving as my coffee bar. The morning sun is shining on the small oak kitchen table where my family sat together for 26 years. In the windowsill beside it sits a geode I found tucked at the back of my grandpa's bookshelf, the last remnant of him after my uncle cleared their home out for sale. It's always been near me.

Some of my collections are for creating. Like some adorable stickers from the 90s that are prime for scrapbooking and pique my interest just as much as they did when I was a child. There's a collection of authentic vintage fabric scraps sitting on my sewing table right now. Some are the leftovers from colorful aprons and homemade dresses. Others are printed flour sacks from the 1930's. My great-aunt, Vera, gave them to me one day.

"These were my mother's. I want you to have them because I know you're the one who will do something with them," she said with resolve.

Indeed I am. I'm currently making a quilt from them. I'm going to give it to my mom for Christmas so that she can snuggle up with her grandma's love. I even found the "Shower to Shower" powder that Grandma H used every day. With a light dusting, the quilt will bring back that comforting memory too.

I'm what they call an old soul. Throughout my life, I've had more close friends in their 80s than of my own age. There's Marvin, the retired farmer, Jeanne, the wise artist. There was Bill, the WWII Navy veteran; Yuvonne, the church pianist; Dave, who could have been a great comedian. With my gravitational pull toward this salt-of-the-earth generation comes more loss. I keep my collection of memories with them written in a notebook. I don't ever want to forget how special they were.

You see, collections can be so much more than clutter. I don't want the things I love to go away, so in my own way, I keep them, like that family kitchen table. I give them new life, like Grandma H's scraps. I honor them, like the stories of my old friends. To me, they're collections of all the love I've encountered in my 32 years of living. I imagine as I grow older, my collections will only grow more meaningful to me—and larger!

**GIRLFRIEND WISDOM**

**Friendship is a Found Treasure!!!**

In all cultures, friendships are important relationships throughout a person's life span. It is always characterized by companionship and shared activities. Friendships can enrich your life in countless ways. Good friends teach you about yourself and challenge you to be better. They encourage you to keep going when times get tough and they celebrate your successes when a project is completed or a goal has been reached. Friendships are healthy for our mind and soul. A good friend is truly a found treasure!


**GIRLFRIEND WISDOM:**  
Friendships also need to be nurtured. Is there a long-time friend you haven't connected with lately? Time flies by so quickly, take a moment and text or call that special friend to let them know that you are thinking of them. Most of all, schedule time for lunch, a walk, or an activity to grow and add valuable memories with that good friend. You will be twice-blessed when you do!

Joy & Blessings,  
Jody

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



New Ulm



# The Thimble Box

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Hometown Holiday Road Trip  
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## Eggnog French Toast in a Mug



- 1 slice of bread, cubed (preferably day-old)
- 1/4 cup eggnog
- 1 egg
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- (optional) powdered sugar and maple syrup


1. Whisk together the eggnog, egg, cinnamon and vanilla extract.
2. Add the cubed bread.
3. Stir until the pieces are soaked in the mixture.
4. Microwave on high for 1 to 1 1/2 minutes or until the egg mixture is fully cooked and the bread is soft and custardy.
5. Let it cook for a minute.
6. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and drizzle with maple syrup.

Recipe by Simplify

# Wit and Wisdom

by Judyann Grant

## Seasons of Life



As summer follows spring and winter follows autumn, seasons are part of the natural rhythm of life. Sitting outside one glorious October morning, I watched yellow, sunlit leaves cascade out of the maple trees. For weeks their leafy green had faded while the color buried deep within was slowly revealed. Now, with the change complete, it was time for the trees to let go.

The Lord's timing was perfect as I neared the finish line of writing my book of devotions. After investing many seasons of my life into the work, it was time to let go and send it into the world to accomplish what God had planned for it long ago.

My book, *Reflections: Walking in the Light of God's Word* is one year of daily devotions that combine memoir and meditation as I share my faith journey. The Lord has been my Guide since childhood. He is the light on my path, teaching me truths to live by, offering strength and comfort for those times when the world came crashing in, and assuring me that mistakes aren't insurmountable but can become stepping-stones to greater understanding.

Each entry in *Reflections* helps readers see how our extraordinary God works in the ordinary events of life. The 366-daily readings include a verse as well as a prompt to help readers strengthen or share their faith.

*Reflections* is a terrific gift for anyone seeking to see the hand of God in the circumstances of life, to trust Him more and to know Him on a deeper level.

© Judyann Grant is a member of the lady's writer group, Wit and Wisdom. The group have been longtime contributors to The County Register. for more information and/or to order the book please contact me at judyannggrant1976@gmail.com



# 8th Annual Holiday Hop

December 3rd - 6th  
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Life in Skunk Hollow

by Julie A Druck

Piercing the Darkness with the Winter Solstice

December 21—the winter solstice—marks the shortest day and longest night of the year. I never remember marking this day in any way before, but last year I was inspired to do so by a magazine article. It mentioned that some people light lanterns and hang them as a way to symbolize the return of light and celebrate the end of the darkest day of the year.

I decided to put thought into action and made up some simple lanterns with plastic cups, LED tea lights, and a hole punch to let twine and light through. On went my coat and boots, and out into the longest night of the year I went. After considering which tree would be in the best view from my windows, I chose to adorn a small apple tree that's in the tiny orchard my son and his wife planted. Shivering, I quickly hung up the eight lanterns which jauntily swung in the cold night's breeze. Standing back to view my handiwork, I was thrilled with the magical sight. I backed up a bit more, grabbed my mug of tea out of the snow and sipped, admiring the pinpricks of light. My gaze then traveled even higher, and I realized that the stars, too, were shimmering in the inky black sky. I enjoyed the quiet beauty for a few minutes more before hurrying back into the warm house.

Shucking off my coat, I quickly ran upstairs to our bedroom loft to peer out the tiny pocket windows. There in the darkness I could just make out the swinging speckles of light. All through the evening, I peeped out at that little tree. Funny though it seems, I felt a small sense of pride toward those little lanterns – swaying in the wind, bravely shining out into the vast darkness. I was surprised at



how such a simple little exercise encouraged my heart. It reminded me that no matter how dark it gets, the light we choose to exhibit—no matter how small – will always pierce the darkness. In fact, darkness can never overcome light because light is more powerful. That little bedecked apple tree was a symbol to me that though the world often seems like a very dark place, I have the power to light up my little corner of it. May you, too, look for ways to bravely shine forth in the darkness and celebrate the promise of the return of the Light.



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

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## Christmas in 1952

by Nancy J. Nash

When watching television was starting to become a habit for Americans in the 1950s, there was a popular weekly program called "This is Your Life." Usually each episode featured a clueless celebrity who had unknowingly been lured into an auditorium in Hollywood abuzz with a live audience. The unsuspecting celebrity was often accompanied by a not-so-clueless family member or friend who had casually suggested that they take in the show. Then, as they sat in the audience, an emcee approached and surprised them, announcing "So-and-so, this is you life!" The emcee escorted the celebrity to the stage, where what ensued was a panorama of appearances by acquaintances old and new, each initially hidden from view and ready to recount an event from the past. As they spoke, the celebrity tried to guess their identity. Tears, laughter, and hugs followed.

In 1952, the Christmas Eve episode did not feature a celebrity but an unknown woman from tiny Monowi, Nebraska named Ruth Eiler. Ruth was the middle-aged mother of nine children, three of whom were overseas in military service. One by one, old friends and relatives filled the stage, along with Ruth's former husband and a number of grandchildren. Amazingly, and to Ruth's complete surprise, the three sons who were serving their nation abroad appeared onstage at the end of the program. With the assistance of the Defense Department, the TV producers managed to get them temporarily released from duty (including one stationed in Korea) to take part in the TV show and share Christmas with the rest of the family.

The program was a tribute not only to Ruth but to other parents of children in uniform during the Korean War. It was a reminder of the courage and sacrifices of parents and of the homespun closeness of many families who lived through poverty and war times in the first part of the twentieth century. Imagine being farmers who moved about with only horses and wagon for transportation. Imagine walking almost five miles to school. One of Ruth's daughters later commented that they were happy and didn't think of themselves as poor.

Many years after this TV episode was aired, I met Ruth's son Keith, who had become a distinguished military officer and scholar. He was known for being quiet, soft spoken, courteous, and a joy to be around: a true officer and a gentleman.

More recently, a cousin of mine visited Elsie Eiler in Monowi, Nebraska. Elsie is a daughter-in-law of Ruth. Having outlived her husband, she is the sole resident of Monowi and its mayor—at the age of 94.

The world has changed since Christmas, 1952, but some things endure. This Christmas, let us think of a baby born in poverty, surrounded by livestock, and laid in a manger on a night 2000 years ago. May this child, who grew up to make a willing sacrifice of himself for our sakes, transform our hearts into temples of love and joy.



© 2025 Nancy J. Nash, who is the author of Little Rooster's Christmas Eve and Mama's Books: An Oregon Trail Story. She holds a B.A. in English composition from Mount Holyoke College and an M.F.A. in Writing for Children from Simmons College. She may be reached at nancynash341@gmail.com.

## Ladling Out Love for 105 Years

by Kerri Habben Bosman

In a drawer in my mother-in-law's kitchen lives a large, well-worn ladle. It has been serving soup and stews for decades. These days Mom doesn't actually cook so much anymore, but she still enjoys being part of the preparation. After all, just because you are nearly 105, doesn't mean you can give up a lifetime of ladling out love. Perhaps because you've prayerfully and intentionally loved for that long, it is as natural as breathing in and breathing out.

I fell in love with Mom the first time I met her six years ago this December. She was young, then. Only 98 and days shy of her 99th birthday. My then boyfriend, Wayne, took me to Wisconsin to meet his mother, and one of her grandsons and the youngest great-grandson also came with us. Quinn was barely two then. When we entered the home where Wayne was raised and where Mom has lived since 1946, Quinn wiggled out of his dad's arms. Mom's eyes and mine had just locked and we'd smiled at each other. When Quinn darted forward, I took a deliberate step back. Both of our smiles deepened, and I knew that she knew the most important thing about me from that simple action. That I love with a humble and whole heart.

We still mention that moment to one another sometimes. How we both felt the instant connection between us, born of our love for Wayne but also because we quickly learned we are woven of the same type of cloth. One that drapes and soothes but also has a hint of malleable steel in it when needed. One that stretches but doesn't break.

Since that first visit, we've been to Wisconsin many times. I say thank you every day that I came to be her daughter-in-law. We've cooked together, sat for hours at her kitchen table looking through recipes, and stood side-by-side at her sink, washing and drying dishes. She has shared the stories that shaped her, including the happy times, the trying times, and the tragic times.

This year marks another milestone. Wayne's dad passed away fifty years ago this November 30th. Mom has been a widow since she was 54 years old, two years older than I am now. Yet the ring her husband gave her still embraces her finger, and she speaks of the first time she saw him like it was yesterday. From all she has told me, I sense the core of who he was through the man Wayne is today. During their marriage, they had six children, four still living. December 17th is Mom's 105th birthday, and enduring love and steady faith still radiate from her.

Wayne's parents started a company along with building a family. Bosman Monuments has now been in the memorial business since 1957. Mom was a pivotal part in the success of the company, helping the bereaved. She ladled out so much love that customers often became friends. All the while, she fed her children home-cooked meals they will always remember, sewed some of their clothes, and canned fruits and vegetables from their garden.

For many years she was an organizer and volunteer at a soup kitchen, cooking and serving. It is one thing to devote yourself to feeding your family, but her ladles of love served strangers. Except to her they weren't strangers. They were hungry people given a meal with heart and hope within it. She learned to do this watching her own mother feeding people in need during the Depression.

When we stay with Mom, I cook a lot and leave frozen meals for after we go home. I use her soup ladle as often as I can. After all, I have a legacy to live up to.



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





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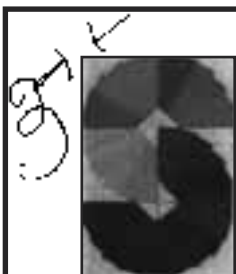
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## Preserving Your Family's Heritage

by Patty Legg Duncan

In 2002, my sister and I began a heartfelt journey to uncover and preserve our family's history. For over 20 years, we dedicated ourselves to collecting stories passed down through the generations, recording important dates and creating a life history scrapbook that celebrates both our paternal and maternal roots.



In 2004, I enrolled in a class at my favorite local scrapbook store to create a scrapbook of recipes. Each week, the instructor provided themed materials for us to design pages featuring the week's recipes. Each used a 8.5" x 5.5" pieces of colorful cardstock as the base, and after class, we would slide our completed recipe cards into plastic sleeves in our notebooks.



As the class progressed, the teacher invited us to submit our favorite recipes. She would then transform them into beautifully designed pages, complete with themed embellishments, for our upcoming classes. Inspired by this creative process, I decided to preserve our family's cherished recipes by making personalized cookbooks as Christmas gifts for my sisters and daughters. Thus, the "Legg Family Recipe Book" was born.



Each book began with a custom-designed title page and divider cards for different sections. I created recipe cards for our family favorites – appetizers, sides, entrees, snacks, and desserts. Many of the cards included are not just the recipes, but also the family stories behind them. For example, tucked into the pocket with my mom's Easter Deviled Egg recipe is a funny family anecdote that adds sentimental value to that recipe.



Over the next five years, I continued to craft new recipe cards for birthdays and holidays and gifted them to each family for their book. I even created two additional books for a social club I belong to, compiling favorite recipes from fellow members. We raffled these off as part of our fundraising efforts.

In total, I have created five recipe scrapbooks each containing over two hundred treasured recipes. They now sit proudly on my bookshelf, nestling among my other cookbooks.



These recipe scrapbooks have become more than just collections of meals, they are vibrant, creative keepsakes that preserve the flavors and stories of our family's heritage. They serve as a delicious reminder that food is more than sustenance, it is a connection to our past and a gift to future generations.

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



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# Become Inspired!

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

## Home for the Holidays

There is so much joy in creating country ambiance within our homes. The warm glow of flickering candles in our windows as the evening creeps in, is a welcomed sight on a cold, crisp day. Newly arranged vignettes of our favorite primitive antiques suggest a changing of the season and a shift to a time of gathering and celebration. Our homes become a perfect backdrop for our decorating ideas. An early tavern table might be an ideal spot to showcase a primitive red sled as a riser, decorated with fresh greens and tall glass candle jars filled with cranberries and large ivory pillar candles to enjoy all season long. Crocks with beautiful cobalt blue designs might be utilized as vessels to hold a twinkling country decorative tree with our homemade gingerbread men ornaments to brighten a corner of our quaint kitchen. Our upholstered country furniture can be rearranged to create new hearthside spaces that welcome cheerful conversation and sharing



### SPIRIT OF GOOD CHEER

The holiday season is the perfect time to gather and take part in the spirit of good cheer. With the daylight hours at their shortest of the year, a special evening dinner can be made even more festive when we can enjoy all of our home's seasonal splendor. Our fresh balsam trees and candle centerpieces transform our home into a place of warmth and wonder. With special care, our homecooked meal can be savored in our tavern or the keeping room in the spirit of earlier times. Eating a homemade meal like roast pork with cranberry and onion chutney by the fireside in a unique setting helps to create a memorable night to be enjoyed.

### KEEPERS OF TRADITION

These meaningful joys can easily become welcomed and anticipated each year. As the keepers of tradition, we delight in taking a night off during our busy weeks to spend baking a vibrant variety of classic cookies to be appreciated by our family. And the simple satisfaction of making an extra batch of our handmade gingerbread ornaments to be tied onto our country gifts at Christmas time is a soulful blessing to cherish.

Dressing up in our best warm winter attire to join the local carolers as they make their way from one colonial home to the next in our charming country town's village is another fun way to keep our cherished traditions alive. So, this holiday season consider taking part in some of the tried-and-true events within your hometown. Gather with neighbors young and old to share the magic of Christmas traditions. As you do, you will provide those around you with the reminder that taking part in the ways of the past often provides us with comfort and peace. It is one of the most treasured gifts of the season that we can give.

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



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# Grandpa's Maple Tree

by Wayne M. Bosman

Planting a tree is in some ways a major act of faith. Often when an adult plants a tree, a thought passes through their mind that they may not even be alive when the tree reaches maturity. That is one of the reasons that garden stores supply half-grown trees and deliver them with heavy equipment. Instant gratification and assurance of success. This story is not about one of those trees. Rather, this is about a tree that was almost an afterthought that succeeded mightily.

When my father returned from World War II, he and Mom lived for a while in an apartment in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He was a laborer at one of the local factories, which were all very busy during the post war boom. He was a farmer at heart, and they dreamed of having some land out in the county to raise the children who were still just part of the dream. Dad's nephew was willing to sell him 10 acres adjoining his farm at a very good price, so all they needed was a house. Fortune smiled on them. A local church wanted to put in a bigger parking lot, but there was already a house on the property. The house was not very old and it had been built by a building contractor for his own use. He built it to last forever. They made a deal to buy it and have it moved to the rural location.

Dad's family pitched in to get the house ready to move. Mom learned to use the tractor to dig a basement. She laughs now to think of her 26 year old self running the tractor and hauling loads of dirt. Dad and his brothers poured the concrete and built the cement block walls for the basement. The house was placed over their work and lowered into position. Their work must have been good, because almost 80 years later it is sitting as securely as the day it was finished. That was 1946.

I didn't come into the picture until 1951, the fourth child out of an eventual six. By that time, most of the landscape was in its' prime. Four apple trees, one cherry and one plum were already producing fruit. Dad's garden covered a full acre and we ate well. Mom's garden had flowers that ensured something was in bloom from spring to fall. We ate from the currant bushes before they had a chance to ripen and got to the raspberries even before the birds could. But this story is about Grampa's maple tree, isn't it?

Grampa—Mom's father—was already getting old by the time the house was planted. He couldn't run a tractor or do any physical labor. He didn't drive, so he and Grandma came out sometimes on Sunday after church to survey the progress. One Sunday they brought with them an maple sapling. It had been a volunteer that had sprung up in their back yard, the beneficiary of the good soil they had nurtured for 25 years. He suggested it would provide good shade for them someday. It was planted before the rest of the fruit trees were even purchased. It was always referred to as Grampa's tree, and it still is. I had to dig through some long ago memories to find out the story of the tree.

The fruit trees are long gone. The plums went first. I was still a child then. One by one the apple trees died off; only the memories remain of climbing in the "Monkey tree" and eating (and throwing) apples. But Grampa's maple tree, from a spindly little sapling, still towers over the yard of the house that Mom has lived in for the last 78 years.



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

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## Shortbread Cookies

recipe from Maryellen Dorman

- 12 oz butter, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp salt

Preheat oven to 350°. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, mix the butter and sugar until they are well combined and fluffy. Add the vanilla, and mix to incorporate. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour and salt, then add them to the butter/sugar mixture. Mix on low speed until the dough comes together. Transfer to a surface dusted with flour and shape into a log. Wrap in plastic and chill for 30 minutes or more. After the dough has chilled well, let it rest outside the fridge for 10 minutes; then slice and place on a parchment lined cookie sheet. (Sprinkle with sparkling sugar, if desired.) Bake 20-25 minutes, until edges just begin to brown. Cool to room temperature.

Variations: Sift 1/2 cup of cocoa with the flour for chocolate shortbread. Add some chopped pistachios for a nutty version. Dip the shortbreads in chocolate for an elegant touch. Place the cookies on parchment after dipping until the chocolate sets.





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December 13

"Make & Take" project  
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**'TIS THE SEASON**  
**Blueberry Corn Cakes**  
SERVES 4

Crisp-edged, with maple syrup - YUM!

2/3 c. flour	2 Tbsp. canola oil
1/2 c. yellow cornmeal	1 c. milk
3 Tbsp. sugar	1 egg
1 Tbsp. baking powder	1 c. blueberries (FRESH OR FROZEN, NOT THAWED)
2 Tbsp. cinnamon	maple syrup, heated
1/4 tsp. salt	

On a lg bowl, whisk together first 6 ingred; whisk in veg oil until lumps are gone. Add milk & egg & stir until just blended. Gently fold in blueberries. Drop batter by spoonfuls into hot oiled skillet; use back of spoon to spread batter in pan; cook over med. heat. When edges are crisp & brown turn & do other side. Keep warm in 250° oven. Serve in a puddle of hot maple syrup.

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Blend the crust ingredients well and spread into a greased 9x13 pan. Mix the custard ingredients together until smooth and spread on top of graham cracker crust. Bake at 350° for 15-20 minutes or until custard is set. Allow to cool and spread one can of blueberry pie filling on top. Spread whipped cream on top of berries and cool baking dish in refrigerator for at least a few hours.




12 Days of Holiday Baking

Country Register 12 Days of Baking

Nut Rocha

submitted by June Becklin



2 cups butter

2 cups sugar

2 tbsp light corn syrup

1 pkg milk chocolate chips

1 cup finely chopped toasted nuts (any kind you like)

Line a 10x15 pan with foil. In 3 quart saucepan melt butter. Stir in sugar, corn syrup and 1/3 cups water. Cook over medium-high heat to boiling, stirring until sugar dissolves. Avoid splashing onto sides of pan. Clip on candy thermometer. Cook over medium heat to 290°. Pour into prepared pan, spread evenly. Cool 5 minutes or until top is set. Sprinkle with chocolate chips, let stand until melted and spread to cover. Top with nuts. When completely cool, lift out by foil and crack into pieces.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking

Old-Fashioned Egg Nog

submitted by Shirley Ross



8 egg yolks

3 cups milk

1 cup sugar

4 whole cloves

1 cup cream

1 tsp hazelnut extract

1/2 tsp nutmeg


1/2 tsp cinnamon

Add egg yolks to a small bowl and whisk until light and frothy. In a medium sauce pan over medium-low heat, combine milk, sugar and cloves. Bring to a low simmer, stirring constantly. Remove about 1 cup of the milk mixture and slowly pour it into the egg yolks, whisking constantly. Pour egg-yolk mixture into sauce pan, whisking constantly. Cook until mixture thickens slightly. Remove cloves. Mix in cream, hazelnut extract, nutmeg and cinnamon. Chill for 4 hours before serving.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking

Marshmallow Window Cookies

submitted by Freda Jansen



1 pkg pastel marshmallows

2 cups chocolate chips

1 cup chopped walnuts (optional)


1/2 cup butter (cubed)

Place marshmallows and nuts in a large bowl, set to the side. In a heavy saucepan melt chocolate chips and butter over low heat. Pour over marshmallow mixture. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour stiring occasionally. Shape marshmallow mixture into a 12 inch roll and wrap in waxed paper. Refrigerate for 4 hours or until firm. Unwrap and cut into 3/8 inch slices.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking

San Marcos YoYo Coffee Cake

submitted by Wayne M. Bosman



1/2 cup butter or margarine

1 cup sugar

3 eggs

2 cups sifted flour

1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp baking soda

1 cup sour cream

1/2 cup white raisins

Pecan topping:

3/4 cup brown sugar

1 tbsp four

1 tsp cinnamon

2 tbsp butter or margarine


1 cup chopped pecans

Cream butter and sugar until smooth. Add in eggs and beat well. Sift together flour, baking powder, and baking soda and add to creamed mixture, alternating with sour cream. Mix in raisins and spread the batter into a 13" by 9" greased pan. Cover with pecan topping. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking

Christmas Cherry Balls

submitted by Mary Ellen Dorman of Makinen, MN



1 cup butter or margarine

1 cup powdered sugar

2 cups sifted flour

1 cup ground almonds or walnuts

1 tsp vanilla


18 candied cherries

Cream butter and sugar. Add the rest of the ingredients. Roll a ball around 1/2 cherry and bake in 325° preheated oven for 35 minutes.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking

Red Velvet Cookies

submitted by Mary Ellen Dorman of Makinen, MN



1 cup shortening

1 cup sugar

3/4 cup packed brown sugar

3 large eggs, separated, room temp

2 tsp red food coloring

4 cups flour

3 tbsp baking cocoa

3 tsp baking powder

1 tsp salt

1 cup buttermilk

2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

Frosting:

1 1/2 cups butter, softened

3 3/4 cups confectioners' sugar

1/8 tsp salt

3-4 tbsp 2% milk

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, cream shortening and sugars until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolks and food coloring. Combine flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt. Add ingredients to the creamed mixture alternately with buttermilk, beating well after each addition. In another bowl, using clean beaters, beat egg whites until stiff peaks form. Fold into batter. Fold in chocolate chips. Drop by spoonfuls 2 inches apart onto greased baking sheets. Bake until set, 12-14 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool completely.

For the frosting, beat the butter, confectioners' sugar and salt until blended. Add just enough milk to achieve desired consistency. Then crumble 8 cookies and set aside. Frost remaining cookies; sprinkle with cookie crumbs.



Country Register 12 Days of Baking

Cream Cheese Cake Mix Cookies

submitted by June Becklin



1 vanilla cake mix

1/2 cup butter

8 oz cream cheese

1 egg

1 tsp vanilla extract

2-4 tbsp powdered sugar

Allow butter, cream cheese and egg to come to room temperature by sitting out on counter for 1 hour before making cookies. Preheat oven to 350° and prepare baking sheets with parchment paper or use a silicone liner. In a large mixing bowl using a hand mixer or mix using a larger stand mixer cream softened butter, cream cheese, egg and vanilla for 2-3 minutes. Mixture will be fluffy. Add cake mix and mix until combined. Chill cookie dough for 30 minutes in refrigerator. Use a small cookie scoop and place cookie dough on baking sheet leaving 2" apart. Bake for 9-11 minutes or until edges of cookies are light golden brown and center is set. Allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for a minute or two before moving to a wire cooling rack. Carefully dust cookies with powdered sugar as a garnish.



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Drinking from  
My Saucer



anonymous

I've never made a fortune and it's probably too late now.  
But I don't worry about that much, I'm happy anyhow.

And as I go along life's way, I'm reaping better than I sowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'cause my cup has overflowed.

I don't have a lot of riches, and sometimes the going's tough.  
But I've got loved ones around me, and that makes me rich enough.

I thank God for his blessings, and the mercies He's bestowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong, my faith wore somewhat thin.  
But all at once the dark clouds broke, and the sun peeped through again.

So God, help me not to gripe about the tough rows that I've hoed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'cause my cup has overflowed.

If God gives me strength and courage, when the way grows steep and rough.  
I'll not ask for other blessings, I'm already blessed enough.

And may I never be too busy, to help others bear their loads.  
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer, 'cause my cup has overflowed.



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## Golden Christmas Coins

by Janet M Bair

Chocolate money! How rich we felt as children, when my brother and I got gold foil-covered chocolate coins in our Christmas stockings! We looked forward to them all year. There was something magical about having money you could eat. We saved them for a while too, eating them slowly.

At the time, money held little meaning for me. My parents bought what I needed and because we lived in the country, there were no city display windows to ogle over, and we didn't watch much TV.

With little money or access to stores, I grew up making my own Christmas presents and cards. I would make up a puppet show or song review for my brother and I to do for our parents. I made small loom pot holders, embroidered doilies, and made various Girl Scout projects using natural materials. Who needs money when you can make it yourself?

As a result, I seldom look for expensive items for gifts. Being retired and living on a fixed income, my first inclination is to look for an experience our family can share, preferably for free. Many local libraries offer holiday concerts, movies or crafts programs with no charge. One library near us presents a one-man show of "A Christmas Carol" every year that is very entertaining.

A favorite of mine is touring the Osborne Homestead Museum (Derby, CT) when it is all decorated for Christmas. The local garden clubs each select a room to decorate according to a specific theme. Whether it is music, children's stories, nature or "Christmas Around the World" the creativity and talent these groups have shown are a delight to see.

We also search for special light displays to visit. One year when we were in Florida for Christmas, we took all the grandkids to see a special home that was decorated with dozens of light-up figures outside, complete with a snow machine. A costumed Santa and the Grinch welcomed the long line of guests on their street.

When we get together with our four grandchildren, I always plan a special craft we can do, as well as a cookie baking session. One year I sewed green stockings for each child. Then they Mod Podged all sorts of trims to decorate them to create their own individual stockings. We've also painted lots of wooden ornaments with glitter paint over the years.

Reading Christmas stories out loud to them is one of my favorite things to do. To me, it is priceless. I also enjoy reading many Christmas novels during the season for my own pleasure.

It is easy to get swept away in the high cost of gift giving in this season. All month I keep going back to Matthew 2:11 "And when they (the wise men) were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

The most important thing is to worship the Savior. Whether we have real gold or chocolate "gold," He simply wants our love and for us to spread His love to others.

How ever we spend our coins, let us make golden memories with our families and friends this year.



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## Christmas Gift Suggestions:

by O. Arnold submitted by Shirley Ross

- To Your Enemy - Forgiveness
- To an Opponent - Tolerance
- To a Friend - Your Heart
- To a Customer - Service
- To All - Charity
- To Every Child - A Good Example
- To Yourself - Respect





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Thanksgiving  
and Merry  
Christmas!

