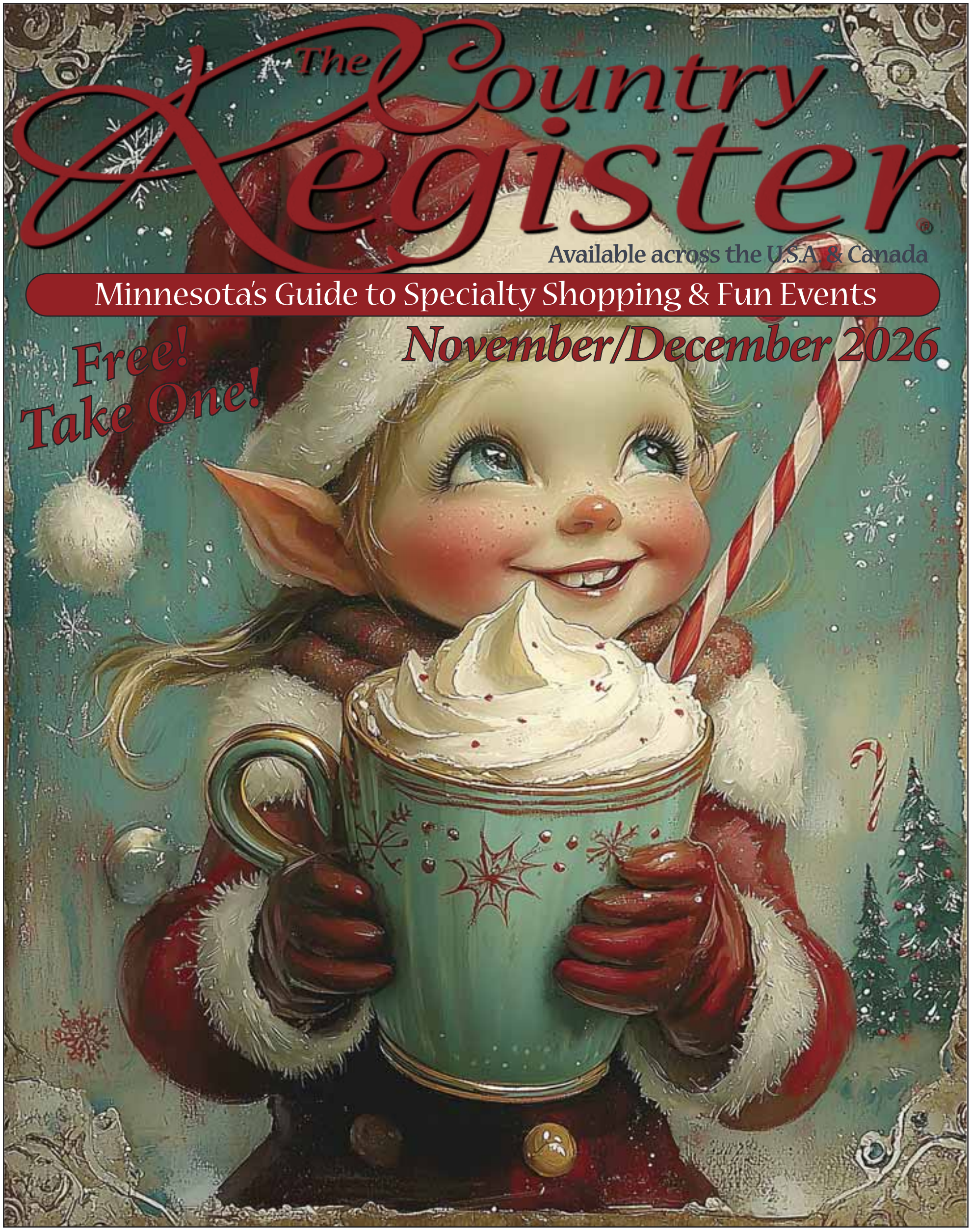
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Minnesota's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events



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Months November/December 2026

Volume 32 Number 6

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Special Events

November

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6....Christmas Arrives - Farmer's Daughter - White Bear Lake
10-14....9th Anniversary Sale - Antiques of the Midwest - Wells
12-14....Deer Camp Retreat - Quilt Haven on Main - Hutchinson
12-14....Holiday Open House - Quilter's Cottage - Kiester
12-14....Christmas Open House - Lost and Found - Eden Valley
23-28....24th Anniversary Celebration - Michele's Quilting and Sewing - Blue Earth
26-31....Pre-Inventory Sale - Quarry Quilts and Yarns - Sandstone
27-Dec 1....Sample Sale - Quarry Quilts and Yarns - Sandstone
27-29....Christmas Sale - Country Craft Shed - Duluth

December

12....Free Motion Class - Quilt Haven on Main - Hutchinson

Happy Thanksgiving





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Life on My Farm

by Donna Jo Copeland

Pockets Filled with Thankfulness



A year like no other, 2026, As I sit at my old kitchen table in my crumbling farmhouse, sipping tea, munching on homemade bread and peach jam, I try to remember to be thankful. Good Lord yes, I'm scared! Barely getting by.

I take a deep breath, fold my hands, call up my ancestors. Centering on their strength, their resolve, their love, their faith in tomorrow.

A vision of my grandmother's apron pocket comes to mind. I never knew exactly what she kept in there...clean hankie, horehound candy, keys. Often during the day, I would see her, far off look in her eyes. I think now she must have been giving thanks, maybe praying, maybe remembering.

So, I shall sum up the year in pockets.

In one pocket I will put those most dear to me, my animals. They sustain me. Give me reason to rise in the morning, bringing me smiles, ready for feed and hugs. The companionship of my cats and dog. The wonderful wools from my goats and sheep. Fresh eggs from my hens. A very full pocket.

In another pocket I will carry my family and my kin. Their strength and love. Promise of generations and adventure. An odd assortment of personalities, but they are mine.

My health and love of fiber and hard work go into another pocket. So thankful I am able to care for my animals, pursue my fiber work, somehow keep body and soul together. Glad I rise with a smile on my face no matter how hard the day ahead.



Another pocket is for my realm, my wee farm. The wonders of trees, plants, streams, rocks and fertile soil. The hum of bees. Birds. Wild things. Dragonflies in my garden, fireflies in the summer nights. Hoar frost on fence lines. Diamonds in the dew. A place untouched by chemicals and little technology.

In another pocket I must put my love of reading, my quest to learn history, to find out why and how. Books to keep me company on sleepless nights. Stories to wander in on summer afternoons. Knowledge of the ages, printed on paper, bound up with the stuff of life.

Friends should have a pocket, for they are dear to me. Some wander in and out of my life. Others are always there. I rely on their listening, help, love and loyalty. I don't judge them, ask only understanding for I am a feral crone.

A pocket must be for our country. What it was and will be again. Change is inevitable but we have lost sight of compassion and respect. I am thankful there are still people who hold to morals and honor. May we gain ground in the coming year, thankful for our aged history.

And being a farm child, farmers must have a special pocket of thankfulness. I can feel their fear, disappointment. Please let them gather strength, resolve, our support. I am so thankful for them, large and small, family farms. The farmers made and still keep this country. The greedy who abuse them can go to compost.

In another pocket I have to put those who protect us...soldiers, policemen, firemen. The everyday heroes. I'm thankful they feel led to serve, help us, one another. May they stand tall with honor.

My heavens, my pockets are full. I have much to be thankful for as the year ends. And as Christmas approaches, I have Christmas wishes. Those I won't list here. You make your own list and fill your own pockets of thankfulness.

Let's be a little kinder, less judgemental, gentler, more caring, more loving. Sharing Peace and Blessings.

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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Become Inspired

by Annice Bradley Rockwell



Anticipating the Wonder

Often one of the most anticipated times of the year, the holiday season is filled with plentiful opportunities to create spaces that welcome and inspire. With themed gatherings planned for family and friends, we often feel a great sense of anticipation to share our creativity and to beautifully transform our homes to suit the season of celebration.

Charming Authenticity

In order to design a seasonal space we can often use some of our favorite classic antiques accented by elements of nature to surround us with charming authenticity. An antique lift-top mule chest in early red paint can be heightened and enhanced by stacking a smaller antique box in blue on top. Nestling boughs of evergreen between a primitive trencher and a blue decorated stoneware jug adds a balancing touch of nature to our vignette.

Antique sleds that radiantly reveal their use from age can be adorned with a spray of fresh hemlock, red berries and twinkling white lights to brighten the corner of the hearth. Centerpieces created by using a large divided carrier filled with greens and cones can feature a glass chimney to hold an antique hogscraper or one of our favorite scented country candles like "Orange Clove Pomander" or "Balsam Christmastide."

Early punched tin lighting that has come to represent tradition and comfort can be used to cast the beautiful play of light it was intended to create. Petite cedar trees in various sizes can be placed in crocks, firkins, early kegs or baskets to enliven a seating area or even brighten a country bathroom. Handmade country stockings fashioned from woven coverlets in bright red can be filled with greens and hung on our mantel or an interior door to add texture and color to our rooms.

Embracing the Magic

One of the blessings of the holidays is planning a festive night out with friends to take in the sights and sounds of Christmas. Main streets of small towns become magical and unusually alive on an Open House Night when storefront windows gleam with the glow of Christmas. Through the front windows we can see freshly decorated inviting displays of antiques, textiles, scented candles and decorations that deeply appeal to our country style. As we enter these local shops the music of the dulcimer plays traditional tunes while we take in a cup of hot mulled cider while we browse. We know that the hand-selected purchases we make are even more special because they are local and support the shops that provide us with a sense of genuine connection.

After finding the perfect treasures to give as gifts or the ideal antique to enhance our displays, we can visit a local restaurant that promises to be a memorable part of our night. Taking time to plan a festive, local night out is time well-spent as we share in the abundant blessings of giving.

This season, enjoy the anticipation of creating magic. Transform your home to include the splendor of a country Christmas. Spend a treasured evening with friends embracing the sense of wonder that this spectacular season always brings.

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

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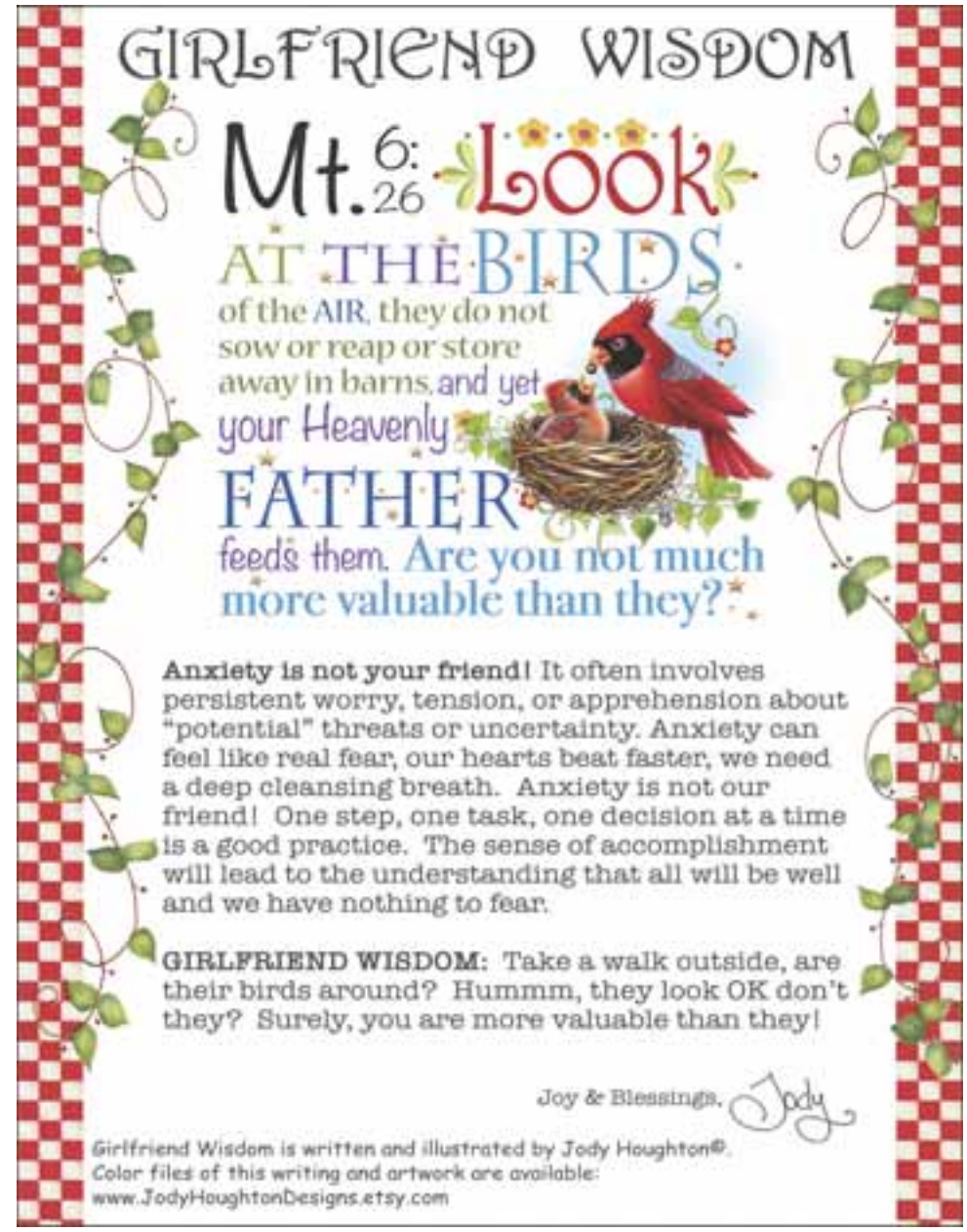
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Over the Tea Cup

by Janet Young

Dreams Do Come True



Dashing through the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh, those are the words to a well-known Christmas song - Jingle Bells, written in 1857 by James Lord Piedmont. This song was not intended to be a Christmas song. In fact, it was first sung in a Thanksgiving church service. Piedmont wanted it to be a lively tune that celebrated sleigh racing. Before long, it soon appeared as a Christmas song even though it never mentioned Santa, reindeer, snowmen, or any other secular symbols of the holiday. So, why did I start this article referencing Jingle Bells? Let's begin.

When my mother was growing up, it had been her life-long dream to go on a one-horse open-sleigh ride. This was a secret I never knew about until one day, she happened to mention how she wished she would have had the chance go on that ride. By now she was in her eighties, and her chances of ever having that wish come true was slowly diminishing.

That is, until one November day I happened upon a local newspaper that talked about a local fire station hosting a Christmas Open House replete with Santa, crafts, entertainment, and last but not least one-horse open sleigh rides.

My immediate thought was how would they be able to do this. The event was to be in early December. However, in Central Pennsylvania the chances of having snow, was so unpredictable, especially since there was no weather forecast predicting snow.

As the date approached, excitement was cautiously building because I still did not know how they were going to do this. We entered the fire station, and were amazed by all the festivities. We listened to the various chorale groups. And before long the big moment arrived.

It was a cold winter night, so my husband stayed inside with my mother while I went outside to wait in line. Before long, it was our turn to get in the sleigh. We bundled up in a cozy warm blanket and off we went around the grounds of the fire station.

How did we do this when there was no snow on the ground? Well, due to the ingenuity of a kind soul, we were transported in the sleigh that had wheels placed on a platform that the sleigh could safely and comfortably rest upon. And yes, it was driven by two horses.

While this may not seem like such an idyllic sleigh ride, let me tell you, in the darkness of the night, you would have never known you were not flying over the hills of snow. There was magic in the air that night. All because my 85-year-old mother had finally realized her childhood dream. With a smile on her face, and my heart filled with love, I knew that this would be a night she would forever cherish.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

© Janet Young is a Certified Tea and Etiquette Consultant, Co-Founder of Mid-Atlantic Tea

Lemon Cheese Cake Mug Recipe



Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup lemon cake mix
- 1/2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp vanilla yogurt
- 3 tbsp water
- 1oz cream cheese
- Whipped cream for topping
- Lemon zest for topping

Directions:

1. Mix cake mix, oil, yogurt and water in mug.
2. Push cream cheese block into the center.
3. Microwave on high for 2 1/2 minutes.
4. Top with whipped cream and lemon zest.

Recipe by The Bitter Side of Sweet

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Looking for that perfect one of a kind gift for the person that has everything? A subscription to The Country Register is just what Santa ordered! Receive each issue of the paper in the mailbox all year long! See page 2!

The Sewing Machines Are Out!!

by Wayne M. Bosman

The sewing machines are out! This is something that happens fitfully here. Kerri is the one who sews at our house, so when they appear, something important is afoot.

We have a lot of sewing machines. Most of them are mine, but those rarely get used. After 49 years as a mechanic, I retired- mostly. It would have been really hard after a lifetime of fixing things to just stop cold turkey.

Sewing machines are relatively light compared to cars and I can keep a whole bunch of them around without the neighbors complaining. Or more importantly perhaps, without Kerri complaining. (I should put in a disclaimer here - Kerri is absolutely accommodating to my many and varied projects. She is not the complaining type. Our neighbors are nice too.)

At any rate, I found that I have an affinity for sewing machines, especially ones about my age. I seem to be a magnet for broken sewing machines that need a little TLC. I buy them, fix them and then give them away to someone who will use them. Not a very good business model, but it keeps me off the streets.

Kerri has only two sewing machines that she works with. One was her mother's Singer 401a. It is the machine she learned on. Every time she sits down to use it she remembers her mother, and it is her belief and intent that some of her mother's love goes into whatever she sews on it. The other machine was my mother's Kenmore 158. The belief is the same. Both machines give her a lot of joy when she uses them. She likes to imagine the previous owners looking over her shoulder while she makes things for the next generation.



Kerri uses sewing machines; I just fix them occasionally. She doesn't sew professionally, she makes things. It is her internal belief that taking the time to hand make something for each of the grandchildren every year lets them know that they are loved. They still get the flavor-of-the-month toy or a gift card that will let them get what they want. That is all well and good, but to make something one of a kind consciously aimed at them individually has a special meaning for her. It is love made manifest.

Of course, sometimes the handmade item will miss the mark. Children are inscrutable and constantly changing, but in the attempt a message is sent. The message goes beyond the usability of the item. The message says "I love you. I see you and am doing my best to support you from afar." If the item goes quickly to the back of the bottom drawer, as sometimes happens, so be it. The message is sent anyway.

But more often, the little handmade item gets used. The pillowcase made of fabric that has scenes of the child's favorite things ends up on the bed. The useful canvas bag that might be just the right size for taking things to the beach is exactly that. The crocheted hats and sweaters get worn and become favorites.

So, there is an excitement in the house and some anticipation as this year's Christmas gifts take shape. Kerri starts this process shortly after Christmas every year, but there is inevitably an acceleration as zero hour approaches.

There are new additions to the list of recipients and last minute inspirations as the children evolve. It is our sadness that Mom is no longer on the list. She passed last year at 104. She didn't need anything before and she definitely doesn't need anything now, at least nothing that can be made on a sewing machine.

We won't be eating at the kitchen table for a few days. Three sewing machines and tools have taken over.

Wayne M. Bosman is a retired auto mechanic living in Cape Carteret, NC



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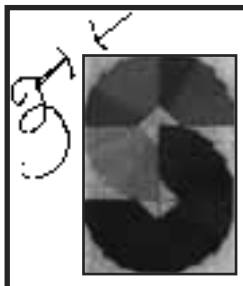




Minnesota Backyard Birds

Northern Cardinal

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Where is it?

(Answer on page 15 of this issue)



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We're excited to announce COMFORT and JOY, a NEW BOOK by NY Times Bestselling Author, Susan Branch! Let Susan fill you with inspiration from Christmas through Winter, right into spring with classic comfort-food recipes, holiday decorating, celebrations, & parties ~ 192 hand-written & watercolored pages, with tons of ideas, quotes, & photographs. Cozy as a favorite sweater, everything to make the season bright!

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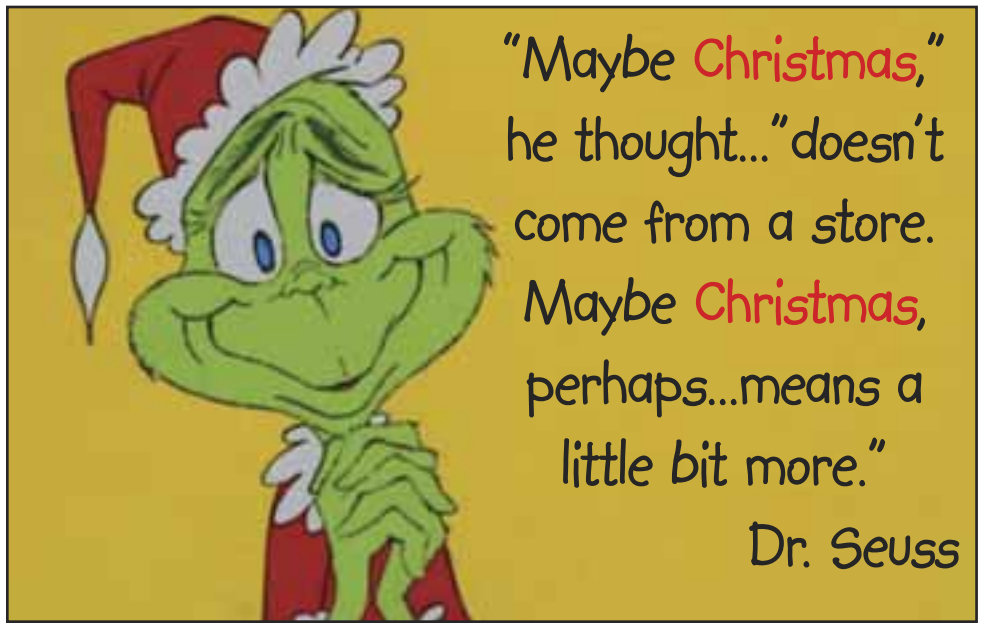
BRAIN GAMES

This lock has a 3-digit code. Can you unlock it using these hints?

(Answer on page 14)



0	9	3	One number is correct and in the right place.
3	2	8	One number is correct but in the wrong place.
7	0	4	Two numbers are correct but in the wrong place.
5	2	9	Nothing is correct.
2	3	1	One number is correct but in the wrong place.



The Art of Writing a Christmas Letter

by Judy Sharer

Did you know there is an art to writing a Christmas letter? At least when I was young and still writing letters to Santa Claus there was a method in my wording. I'd always start with the toy or item I wanted the most. Notice, I said toy or item. As I grew older my list changed from all toys to more grown-up necessities.

Instead of trying to explain in detail, I'll share one of my letters to Santa as best as I can remember.

Dear Santa,

I hope you and Mrs. Claus are doing well and that all the elves and reindeer have had a good year also. I am well. I caught the chickenpox in June during summer vacation, so I didn't get to miss any days of school like my best friend Lorie. She got to miss almost four weeks, but she still had to do all the work. I guess having them during vacation was OK.

I plan to watch as many Christmas specials as I can fit into my schedule. I know the elves are busy making presents and I am busy making some presents for my family too. Grandma let me use some of the buttons in her button tin and I am gluing them onto picture frames to give to all my aunts and uncles. Mom said I can give the frame to both of them with my school picture inside. I think they will be all right with one gift for both of them. At least I hope so.



This year I have a few things I really would like. The number one thing is a camera with film and flash bulbs. If you can bring me the camera, feel free to mention the film and flash bulbs to my parents and other family members. You can never have too much film. And don't worry I'll act surprised when I open their packages. Next, I'd like a Spirograph. Not a Spirotot for ages 3-7. I feel I am old enough to handle the bigger set with more designs. This way I won't have to ask for the larger version later. I'll already have it and know how to use it. I would also like a few new books to read. As you know, Santa, mysteries are my favorite. And I'd like some blue and green yarn to knit a new hat that I saw on one of the girls at school. I asked, and Grandma already said she'd help me make it. Did I mention I wanted a camera and film? I can make do without as many flash bulbs, but the camera and film are very very important. Well, that's it for my list this year. Thank you for reading my letter and after the new year look for a thank you note that Mom makes me write to everyone after Christmas.

I wish you and Mrs. Claus a wonderful holiday. Don't eat too many cookies before you get to my house, because I'm making chocolate chip cookies just for you. If you can't eat them all, you can take them home to share with Mrs. Claus. I'll understand.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Your friend

Judy Sharer

Now that's a well composed letter to Santa! And yes, I did get a camera and plenty of film for Christmas that year.

Judy Sharer is the author of a wholesome historical romance four-book series set in Kansas during the 1850s and 60s titled A Plains Life. Her newly released spicy historical romance novel titled Secrets in Room Four is set in a small town in northwestern PA, post-civil war. All are published by The Wild Rose Press and available wherever online books and eBooks are sold. A Plains Life series has a thread of quilting that runs through the sweet family saga story. Visit judysharer.com for more details.

12 Days of Baking



Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Can't Fail Fudge

submitted by Freda Jansen

2 tbsp butter
1 2/3 cup sugar
2 cup miniature marshmallows
1 1/2 cup chocolate chips
2/3 cup evaporated milk
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp vanilla
1/2 cup nuts

Combine milk, butter, sugar and salt in a saucepan. Put on medium heat. Bring to a full boil and cook 4 1/2 minutes stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla, chocolate chips and marshmallows. Stir until melted and combined then add in nuts. Pour mixture into greased 8" pan.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Peanut Butter Cookies

submitted by Freda Jansen

1 cup butter
1 cup peanut butter
1 cup sugar
1 cup brown sugar (packed)
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla
2 1/2 cups flour
1/2 tsp salt
3/4 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp baking powder
Chocolate stars

Beat butter and peanut butter until creamy. Add the sugars, beating throughly after each. Mix in eggs and vanilla and then add the rest of the ingredients. Mix well. Shape into balls, about 1 inch in diameter. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Flatten in crisscross tops using a fork. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Top with a chocolate star.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Crockpot Christmas Crack

submitted by Alicia

24 ounces white chocolate almond bark broken into pieces
12 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips
12 ounces chocolate bar, or chocolate bark
5 cups salted dry roasted peanuts
Sprinkles (optional)

Spray inside of crockpot or insert a crockpot liner. Line 2 baking sheets with silpat liners or wax paper and set aside. Place almond bark pieces on bottom of crockpot. Add peanuts, chocolate bark and chocolate chips. Place lid on crockpot and set on low for one hour. Remove lid and stir mixture to cover peanuts with chocolate mixture. If there are still chocolate pieces that haven't melted, place lid back on and continue to cook. Stir every 15 minutes until all the chocolate is melted and can cover the peanuts. Using a cookie scoop or two tablespoons, scoop a heaping tablespoon of the candy mixture onto the lined baking sheets. Immediately add sprinkles and let set until completely cooled and chocolate is set. Store in airtight container.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Chocolate Amaretto Biscotti

submitted by Eldene Walterman

1/2 cup butter, softened
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
3 tbsp amaretto
1/2 tsp almond extract
2 1/4 cups flour
1/4 cup cocoa
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt
1 cup sliced almonds, toasted

Preheat oven to 375°. Grease and flour a baking sheet. In large bowl cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs, amaretto and almond extract; beat until smooth. In medium bowl combine flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add dry ingredients to creamed mixture. Stir until soft dough forms. Stir in almonds. Divide dough into thirds. Allow 3" between loaves on prepared baking sheet. Shape each into a 2x9 inch loaf. Bake 20 minutes or until loaves are firm. Cool 10 minutes on baking sheet. Cut loaves diagonally into 1/2" slices. Lay slices flat. Bake 6 minutes, turn slices over and bake 6 minutes longer. Transfer to wire rack to cool. Store in cookie tin. Makes 4 dozen cookies.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Moravian Sugar Cookies

submitted by Patti Lee Bock

1/2 cup margarine, softened
1/2 cup shortening
1 cup sugar
1 cup brown sugar, packed
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/8 tsp salt
1/2 tsp baking soda
2 tbsp buttermilk
4 cups all-purpose flour

Cream margarine and shortening with sugars. Add eggs, vanilla and salt; mix well. In a small cup, add baking soda to buttermilk. Let sit one minute, then add to the sugar mixture. Add the flour and mix well. Divide dough in half and chill up to 2 hours. On a floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8 inch thickness and use 2-inch Christmas-shaped cookie cutters to cut dough. Bake at 375° for 5-7 minutes or until firm. (Do not overbake or expect them to turn brown).

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Christmas Butterfinger Balls

submitted by Carly

1 cup creamy peanut butter
4 tbsp unsalted butter, softened
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
1 1/2 cups finely crushed Butterfinger candy
8 oz red candy melts
8 oz green candy melts
1-2 tsp coconut oil
Holiday sprinkles

Mix the peanut butter filling. Add the peanut butter and butter to a large mixing bowl. Beat until smooth and creamy. Mix in the vanilla extract. Gradually mix in the powdered sugar until everything is combined. Fold in the finely crushed Butterfinger candy until evenly distributed. The mixture should be thick enough to roll into balls. Scoop about 1 tablespoon of the mixture at a time and roll it to form smooth balls. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Refrigerate the balls for about 30 minutes, or until firm. Place the red and green candy melts in separate microwave-safe bowls. Microwave in 20–30 second intervals, stirring between each interval until smooth. If the coating is too thick, stir in a little coconut oil or vegetable shortening. Using a fork or dipping tool, dip half of the Butterfinger balls into the red candy coating and the remaining half into the green coating. Let the excess coating drip off before placing them back on the parchment-lined baking sheet. While the coating is still wet, sprinkle the balls with extra crushed Butterfinger pieces or holiday sprinkles.

12 Days of Baking

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Creamy Apple Pie Dip

submitted by Cooking Chew

8oz cream cheese, softened
1/3 cup brown sugar
1 cup whipped topping
21oz apple pie filling, chopped
1/2 tsp cinnamon

Beat the cream cheese and brown sugar with an electric mixer in a medium bowl until smooth. Beat in the whipped topping on low. Chop the apples in the pie filling into small pieces, then gently fold into the cream cheese and brown sugar mixture. Transfer to a serving dish, sprinkle with cinnamon and serve with graham crackers, cookies and fruit as dippers.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Raspberry Swirl Mini Cheesecakes

submitted by Brooke Nelson

12 mini graham cracker crusts
8oz cream cheese, softened
1/3 cup sugar
1 large egg
1/2 vanilla extract
1/4 cup sour cream
1/3 cup fresh or thawed raspberries, mashed and strained
1 tbsp powdered sugar
Optional: fresh raspberries and mint

Preheat oven to 325˚. Line a mini muffin tin or use liners. Beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Add egg, vanilla and sour cream. Mix until just combined. Spoon batter into crusts, filling about 3/4 full. Stir mashed raspberries with powdered sugar. Drop 1/4 tsp onto each cheesecake and swirl with a toothpick. Bake 12-15 minutes until centers are set but slightly jiggly. Cool, then chill 1-2 hours before serving. Garnish with fresh raspberries and mint.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Sand Cookies

submitted by Patti Lee Bock

1 cup butter
2/3 cup brown sugar
1 egg
2 cups flour
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp almond extract or vanilla

Cream butter and sugars together. Add egg and mix with wooden spoon. Add flour and baking soda and stir. Add almond extract or vanilla and mix well. Drop approximately 1 heaping tablespoon full into each greased muffin tin. Bake at 250˚ for 18 minutes.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Sugar Snails

submitted by Jennifer Anderson

1 sheet refrigerated crescent dough
1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
1/3 cup sugar
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp vanilla extract
Powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Prepare the sugar filling: In a small bowl, mix sugar and cinnamon. Stir in vanilla. Assemble the snails: Unroll the dough on a clean surface. Brush evenly with melted butter, then sprinkle the sugar mixture over the top. Roll and slice: Starting from the long edge, roll the dough into a tight log. Slice into 1-inch rounds. Bake: Place slices cut-side up on the prepared baking sheet, spacing slightly apart. Bake for 15–18 minutes, until puffed and golden. Finish and serve: Cool slightly, then dust with powdered sugar if desired. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Chocolate Mint Bars

submitted by Patti Lee Bock

1 cup butter
4 squares unsweetened chocolate
2 cups sugar
1 cup flour
1 tsp vanilla
1/2 tsp salt
4 eggs
1 cup chopped walnuts
3/4 cup powdered sugar
1 tbsp water
1/4 tsp peppermint extract
green food coloring

Preheat oven to 350˚. Grease a 13x9 baking pan. In a small saucepan over very low heat, melt butter and chocolate, stirring occasionally. Pour butter mixture into large bowl. Add sugar, flour, vanilla, salt and eggs. With mixer at low speed, beat ingredients until blended. Stir in nuts. Pour chocolate mixture into pan. Bake 35 minutes. Cool pan on wire rack. In a small bowl mix powdered sugar, water and peppermint extract with a spoon until icing is smooth. Add green food coloring. Drizzle icing over cooled chocolate layer in pan. When icing is dry, cut into 32 bars. Cover and refrigerate.

Country Register 12 Days of Baking
Cranberry Crumble Bars

submitted by At Home by Heather

Shortbread Crust:
1 cup unsalted butter, room temp
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup light brown sugar, packed
1 large egg, room temp
2 tsp vanilla
3 1/4 cups flour, spooned and leveled
3/4 tsp baking powder
1 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp kosher salt

Cranberry Filling:
2 1/2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
2/3 cup sugar
1 tbsp cornstarch
1 tbsp orange zest
1 tbsp orange juice
1 tsp vanilla

Vanilla Glaze:
3/4 cup powdered sugar, sifted
4 tbsp whole milk or heavy cream
1/2 tsp vanilla

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together the butter and sugars until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the egg and vanilla, mixing to combine well. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. Add the dry ingredients and mix just until the dough starts to pull away from the sides of the bowl. Do not over mix. Set aside roughly 2 cups of the dough (loosely packed) and reserve to use on the top of the crumble. Press the shortbread dough into the an 8 x 8 baking pan lined with parchment paper. Use your hands or the flat side of a measuring cup to press it evenly into the corners of the pan. Bake at 350°F for 15 minutes, or until the edges are slightly golden brown and the center is just set. Do not over bake. Remove the pan from the oven and allow the crust to cool slightly while you make the cranberry filling. In a large bowl, mix together the cranberries, sugar, cornstarch, orange zest and juice and vanilla. Pour the cranberry mixture over the pre-baked crust. Use your hands to break up the remaining 2 cups of shortbread dough into smaller, flat pieces. Place them randomly on top of the cranberry filling, leaving space between them for the cranberries to peak through. Bake for about 45 minutes, covering the top of the pan with aluminum foil for the last 10 to 15 minutes of baking time so that the crumble does not turn too dark. Remove the bars from the oven. Place the pan on a wire rack and cool completely before adding the vanilla glaze. Vanilla Glaze: Whisk together the powdered sugar, milk (or heavy cream) and vanilla. The glaze should be thin enough to run off a fork but not so thin that it's transparent. If the glaze is too thick, add more milk. If too thin, add more powdered sugar. Drizzle over the top of the bars once cooled. Slice into squares.

Blue Earth



Recipe Word Search

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

Eggnog Cheesecake

recipe from Food & Wine

Crust

- Cooking spray
- 2 cups gingersnap crumbs
- 1/2 cup finely chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tbsp melted butter
- 1 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt

Filling

- 3 (8oz) packages cream cheese (room temp)
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup refrigerated eggnog
- 2 tbsp all-purposed flour
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg

Toppings:

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 3 tbsp powdered sugar
- 2 tsp bourbon

Instructions:

Prepare the crust:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly coat a 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray; set aside. Stir together gingersnap crumbs, pecans, melted butter, sugar, and salt in a medium bowl until evenly combined. Press into bottom and 1 1/2 inches up sides of prepared springform pan. Bake in preheated oven until light golden, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack, and let cool completely, about 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F.

Prepare the filling:

Beat cream cheese with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating until each is combined. Add brown sugar, eggnog, flour, vanilla, salt, and nutmeg, beating until just combined, about 2 minutes, stopping to scrape down sides of bowl as needed. Pour into prepared crust. Gently tap springform pan on counter 3 to 5 times to release air bubbles. Bake at 325°F for 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 250°F (do not remove cheesecake from oven), and bake at 250°F for 45 minutes. Turn oven off (keep door closed); let cheesecake stand in oven for 45 minutes. Remove cheesecake from oven (center of cheesecake should be almost set and jiggle slightly); let cool on a wire rack until room temperature, about 2 hours. Cover cheesecake, and chill until cold, about 6 hours. Run a knife around outer edges of cheesecake to loosen from sides of springform pan; remove sides of springform pan. Beat heavy cream, powdered sugar, and bourbon in a large bowl with an electric mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Dollop whipped cream evenly over chilled cheesecake. Garnish with additional nutmeg, and serve. Store cheesecake in an airtight container or wrapped in plastic wrap in refrigerater for up to 3 days.

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The Amish Quilt Gathering

by Shelby Kottemann



I have Amish friends. They're lovely people who, without the allure of modern technology, know how to hold a long and easy conversation, be present and write longhand letters. With them, I've helped watch the children, make homemade noodles and even do laundry the old fashioned way. But what I want to share with you is the time I got to sit in on an Amish quilt gathering.

When I walked in, the home was filled with quiet conversation. The young girls all socialized around the kitchen table while every woman had a seat around the quilt, placing hand stitches with ease. Classic Amish colors of blue, green and black splayed out over the wooden quilt frame in an intricate formation. When finished, this quilt was going to be auctioned to help pay a family's medical bills in the community.

After some time, one of the girls named Verna, hurried over to her mother, quietly whispering in her ear. Katie stood up, looked out the window and back at the group. All of the animals were out of the barn! The women all stood and peered through the windows out into the field. One horse, two pigs, three cows, four goats and one worried dog were out there grazing and wandering. As the girls ran out to fetch them, the creatures scattered. Chaos ensued. Even the farm dog didn't know what to do.

But along came one of the husbands. His buggy came to a stop in the distance, down the road and we watched him calmly walk out into the pasture toward the horse. The horse didn't run. The husband took the horse by a lead and slowly walked it toward the barn. To my amazement, every species of farm animal followed suit. What a sight! Walking in a line, like kids in a school, came one horse, two pigs, three cows and four goats, in no particular order. Peace was restored on the farm. The women and girls went back inside as I looked on in wonder. All the other animals trusted and followed the horse's lead! I'll never forget it. As for the husband who came home early to see the chaos, you could say he was in stitches!

Shelby Kottemann is an author, teacher, and intuitive counselor. To read her sentimental blog or explore her heart-centered energy work, visit www.inlovesnature.com

Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski



Fabric Postcards

Texting with a quilt friend recently, I identified a new reason I love the quilt store fabric shop hop.

My "selective memory" hangs onto the details of where or how I acquired much of the fabric in my stash. "This piece," I might say to someone as I pull it out of the storage box, "came from this cute little white shop in _____, and this fabric (referring to another piece I'm pairing the first fabric with) was something I picked up at quilt guild in _____."

Never mind how long these fabrics have been stored in the stash. For instance, I was working on a cute little wall hanging for an engagement party in July. The design had me recalling some mosquito fabric I had purchased during a shop hop. Knowing how I began organizing my fabric stash during COVID, I quickly checked the shop hop website for that state—and found out it would be in the 2016 box.

There, you see, is part of the fun I get from participating in fabric shop hops. Lured by the incentive of quilting related prizes to be gained when completing a specific set of stores, I typically begin the hop on my couch as I research the corresponding internet web page. A list is created, prioritizing which region(s) to visit based on the completion-prize.

When the shop hop begins, I pop into the most local shop to confirm which stores are participating based on the official passport (printed list of shops).

After that, I begin planning a route. Stacking reasons for traveling in any direction are considered; weather is another aspect. Since the passport materials stay in my car for the duration of the shop hop, spontaneity still exists—but planning is arguably more fuel-efficient. I know shop hopping means a commitment of time, as well; a long-weekend hop is definitely more intense than a two-month-long hop; driving distances need to be considered as well.

Did our forebears consider time and distance when they set off for opportunities "out West," way back when? Thinking about the history of quilting—and the many quilters who passed this craft along so people like me can hop into our cars to chase fabric—I think about the threads which connect us.

Before the introduction of so much technology, postcards were purchased and dashed off with brief messages to friends and loved ones. Messages like "Wish you were here," and "We had such a fun day here today!" filled people's mailboxes around the world.

In a similar fashion, I am reminded of trips taken when I pull fabric out of my stash. The cute little white shop…the interesting ways hay is cut when harvested. (Round bails, square bails, or little haystacks the Amish still create by hand.) The fabrics I purchased along the way remind me of those sights.

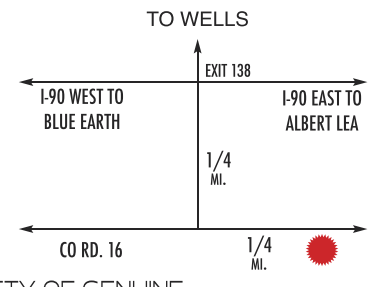
This year, some quilter shared their travel-postcards at the state's quilt show: Snapshots of trips taken over a decade, celebrated in fabric form!

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

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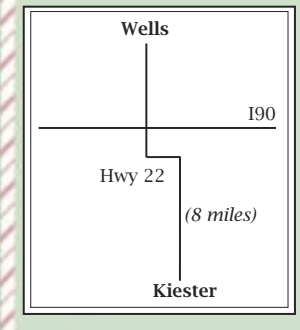


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Why Do Leaves Change Color?

by Colleen Gust

As autumn sweeps in, summer trees trade their greens for a dazzling display of reds, oranges, and yellows. This annual transformation is more than just a visual treat—it's a fascinating process rooted in plant biology.

Leaves owe their green color to chlorophyll, the molecule responsible for photosynthesis. As daylight shortens and temperatures drop in fall, trees begin to shut down food production, causing chlorophyll to break down. With the green pigment fading, other pigments—carotenoids and anthocyanins—emerge. Carotenoids, present all summer but masked by chlorophyll, reveal brilliant yellows and oranges.



The story of the red hues, produced by anthocyanins, is more mysterious. Unlike carotenoids, anthocyanins are manufactured by some trees in the fall, just as the leaf is about to be shed. Interestingly, this process requires energy at a time when the tree is preparing for dormancy. Scientists are still not entirely sure why trees expend valuable resources to make these red pigments. Theories abound: some suggest the red acts as a sunscreen, protecting leaves from excess sunlight and allowing more nutrients to be reabsorbed before the leaf drops; others think it deters pests or signals unpalatability to insects.

Beyond their beauty, fallen leaves have numerous practical uses. In gardens, you can shred them to create nutrient-rich mulch or add them to compost bins, enriching soil for the next growing season. Leaves also make excellent insulation material for tender plants, protecting roots from winter frost. Wildlife benefits too—many insects and small animals use leaf litter as habitat or a food source during colder months. Creative projects abound as well: leaves can be pressed for art, used in natural dyeing, or incorporated into autumn-themed crafts.

So, while filling pumpkin-shaped leaf sacks is a fun tradition, the humble autumn leaf offers much more—both in ecological value and creative potential. The colors of fall are not just a fleeting wonder, but part of a rich natural cycle that benefits gardens, wildlife, and humans alike.



On this day in History

November 1, 1800: President John Adams, in the last year of his only term as president, moved into the newly constructed President's House, the original name for what is known today as the White House. Adams had been living in temporary digs at Tunnicliffe's City Hotel near the half-finished Capitol building since June 1800, when the federal government was moved from Philadelphia to the new capital city of Washington, D.C. John and Abigail Adams lived in what she called "the great castle" for only five months. Shortly after they moved in, Thomas Jefferson defeated Adams in his bid for re-election.

December 30, 1903: A fire in the Iroquois Theater in Chicago, Illinois, kills more than 600 people. It was the deadliest theater fire in U.S. history. Blocked fire exits and the lack of a fire-safety plan caused most of the deaths.During the matinee performance 27 of the theater's 30 exits were locked. One of the calcium lights seemed to have sparked a fire backstage. The cluttered area was full of fire fuel-wooden stage props and oily rags. When the actors became aware of the fire, they scattered backstage. An asbestos curtain was to be lowered that would confine the fire but when it wouldn't come fully down, a panic began. It later turned out to be made of paper so it wouldn't have helped in any case. Soon, all the lights inside the theater went out and there were stampedes near the open exits. When the back door was opened, the shift of air caused a fireball to roar through the backstage area. Most of the 591 people who died were seated in the balconies. There were no fire escapes or ladders to assist them and some took their chances and jumped. The bodies were piled six deep near the narrow balcony exits. In fact, some people were knocked down by the falling bodies and were eventually pulled out alive from under burned victims.

Information found on www.history.com



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Blessings

by Deb Heatherly



Unexpected blessings come in many shapes and forms; we just need to look. A beautiful cardinal appearing on a particularly gray day, a lone flower blooming between the cracks in the pavement, a phone call from someone you have not heard from in a long time or a mother bird teaching her little ones to fly. In my case, it's an orange cat named Timmy.

I have written about my Timmy in previous articles but when I think of unexpected blessing, he is the top of my list. From a stray, aloof, long eared creature whose ears I first mistook for orange blooms in the middle of my daffodils, to the funny guy who now loves belly rubs and snuggles. Timmy has taught me to slow down and see the wonder in everyday things. At this time of year, he is enthralled with falling leaves, acorns and any flying bug. He approaches each and every item as if it is the most wonderful thing ever created.

This in turn makes me look at those things a little closer. His wonderment makes me smile at the simplest of things. Yesterday it was the red on a leaf that might be the perfect shade for my next project. For him it was a great leaf to swat and pounce on. Last week it was the unique shape of an acorn that made my mind think about a wonderful applique design. To him this acorn was great for a game of "how far it can roll." Even the way he stretches up to "show me" how to open the studio door when he wants to go out or attempts to tell me about his day, with his unique squeaky meows, make my heart swell. Each day he shows me that many of the things in my hurry-up world that are so often overlooked, are things I should stop, observe and appreciate.

Timmy also brings me "presents" and I realize they are his way of showing gratitude for the home he now has. Some of these make me smile. Others, not so much. But there too, showing appreciation is something we all need to remember to do. For him, gone are the days of wondering where his next meal will come from or the need to search for a safe place to sleep each night. He is now king of his domain, (my studio) and makes my heart happy by simply being himself. Although I think I rescued him, I sometimes wonder if he was sent to teach me to look at the world in a different way.

In this time of hustle and bustle, maybe we all need to be more like Timmy. Could we be an unexpected blessing? Timmy has reminded me that it does not have to be something big to make an impact. A simple phone call could make the difference to someone feeling lonely. Maybe it could be cooking a little extra and taking a meal to a friend who needs to know you care? What about offering the gift of service such as raking leaves or doing yard work for someone who can no longer do those things themselves? Perhaps you could spend time at your local shelter volunteering to walk the dogs or socialize with the kitties. To the overworked staff your time would make you an angel in their eyes. Even something as simple as spending time over coffee and cookies can truly brighten someone's day.

I will leave you with this thought. In this busy holiday season, take time to ponder how you can be an unexpected blessing. Maybe it's time for us all to think and be more like an orange cat named Timmy. Slow down, enjoy the little things and make someone smile.

NOTE: As I wrote this article, I did so with the studio door wide open to enjoy the beautiful weather. I heard Timmy coming with his "I'm bringing you something" meow and was too slow to close the door. Timmy's gift today was a chipmunk. He carried it like a mother cat carries her kittens and it was not harmed in the least, which was obvious as it scurried under the shelf in the studio. I think Timmy thought I was working too hard and needed to play. Needless to say, work stopped and finding this "present" took precedence. Not what I had on today's agenda but Timmy always seems to have a plan. Maybe it was time for a break.

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.
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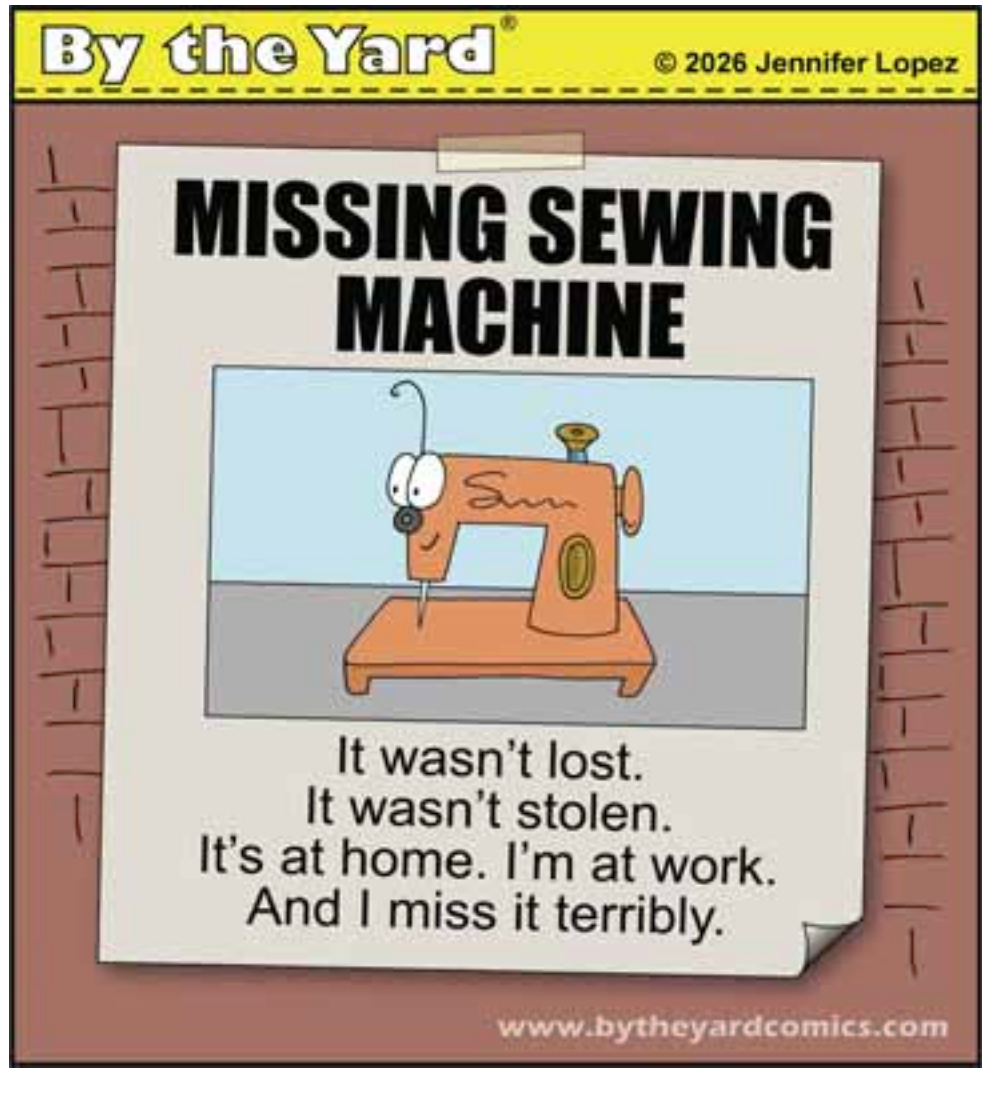
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