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Nevada (N): Barb Stillman & Lolly Konecky, 602-942-8950

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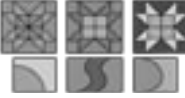
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# GIRLFRIEND WISDOM



## KIND

Kindness is a type of behavior marked by acts of Generosity, or Concern for Others... without expecting praise, or reward in return.

Kindness holds special powers! It can improve relationships because it fosters trust and strengthens bonds between people. It enhances well-being. An act of kindness can boost our own happiness and feelings of joy. Kindness promotes empathy. It allows individuals to understand and share the feelings of others. As we change to another season and possibly change our daily schedules, it is an opportunity to change a few small things.

**GIRLFRIEND WISDOM:** Increase opportunities to be a little kinder each day. Life will be a little sweeter, relationships will become a little stronger, and more joy will enter your day! This wisdom comes from a perfect source: "So in everything you do, do unto others as you would have them do to you." Seems pretty simple that we would like people to be kind to us so that's what we should be to them!

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)

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## Become Inspired

by Annice Bradley Rockwell  
A Transformed Tapestry

The season of fall is a time of perpetual change. The height of the summer has now given rise to the abundance and magic of fall. All around us nature provides reminders that there is beauty in letting go. As the days become shorter, we are often drawn inward, with a deep appreciation for what surrounds us. As we see the trees in our landscape transform into tapestries of amber and fiery red, we cannot help but feel grateful for one of the nature's most spectacular soulful displays.

### Bringing in the Harvest

In our own country yards, we find similar abundance and change. Our gardens and fields are filled with huge pumpkins, butternut squash, acorn squash and produce that can be harvested and preserved to be enjoyed during the colder days to come. Tall cornstalks can be picked and nestled around our colonial Boston-style lamp post or used to fill our large country wagons or kegs in our outdoor fall displays. Our homegrown pumpkins and gourds can be picked at their peak and brought indoors to enhance the beauty of an early hewn trencher or an antique splint harvest basket. Bringing the splendor of the season into our homes lends a natural beauty to our days and is a country joy that we often crave on these brisk days of fall. Even small country pleasures like having the golden glow of a Pumpkin Bread or Colonial Apple Butter candle on your harvest table on a rainy fall day is a delight for our senses. And taking an afternoon to turn a bushel of our very own Macintosh apples into homemade apple pies as a surprise dessert for a Sunday family meal is yet another gift of the season of fall.

### Capturing the Magic of Fall

Spending time outdoors in the cool country air is another way to embrace this season of change. A family day of raking leaves or making a country scarecrow from hay, a Buffalo plaid flannel shirt, overalls and straw hat is the perfect way to share in having fun and making memories. On a clear night of a harvest moon, friends and family can gather to enjoy a beautiful bonfire as the happy conversation brings everyone together in celebration of fall.

This season, embrace the country magic that fall always provides. As nature transitions to a grand display of wonder, let it ignite awe and inspiration. And as you reflect on the gifts of the season, share that abundance with those you hold dear.

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



# A Cup of Tea with Lydia

by Lydia E. Harris

## Recipe to Pamper Guests

"I feel so pampered," my friend said as she lingered over tea at my dining room table. Another time, a friend commented, "I feel elegant," as she sat at my teacart draped with blue tablecloth and placed beside the cozy fire. Since she was dressed casually in slacks and a turtleneck, I knew she wasn't referring to her attire.

These comments made me wonder, What makes guests feel pampered? Based on my experiences and responses from fellow tea-sippers, here's my recipe to pamper guests.

### 1. PREPARE a lovely setting.

Wherever you serve tea, a prepared place makes guests feel welcome. Tablecloths, colorful napkins, china teacups, nice silverware, a pretty teapot, glowing candles and background music create a welcoming ambiance. The setting doesn't have to be stuffy, fluffy or formal; it can be casual and homey. (Just something more than teabags and mugs of hot water.) What easy ideas do you have to create a lovely tea setting to welcome others for tea?

### 2. ADD delicious foods.

A variety of tasty foods in different colors, shapes and textures makes guests feel special. If possible, prepare them beforehand and serve them attractively. Or, if serving only scones and tea, select a special tea blend and serve the scones warm. If you know your guests' favorite foods, include them. Also, respect guests' dietary needs. My neighbor emailed me that she was dieting and didn't want much. I set out a miniature three-tier silver tray with dainty foods. She nibbled a few tidbits and said, "This was perfect."

### 3. SPRINKLE in special touches.

Pamper guests by using doilies, place cards, napkin rings and perhaps a homemade menu. You could also include a small surprise at each place setting such as a long-stemmed rose, a decadent truffle or a pretty teaspoon. I keep inexpensive gifts on hand for this purpose. When one friend came to tea and saw the lovely setting, she burst into tears and asked, "For me? No one has done something special like this for me before."

### 4. BLEND in listening ears.

In the busyness of life, people appreciate someone who listens, cares and accepts them without trying to fix them. Uplifting, meaningful conversation from the heart and perhaps offering to pray for them makes guests sense they are loved. Laughter, when appropriate, adds cheer.

### 5. INCLUDE a heaping portion of time.

Sharing your time makes others feel valued. You've already spent time preparing. Now create a relaxed atmosphere while sipping tea. "You acted as though you had all the time in the world for me," one guest said. If possible, invite people when you have several hours for a leisurely teatime, because love is spelled "T-I-M-E."

### 6. SERVE with a hospitable heart.

Welcome guests at the door. Serve them graciously attending to their needs such as asking, "Could I pour you another cup of tea?" Later, when they are leaving, walk them to their cars and thank them for coming.

Early fall is a great time to plan a teatime to celebrate Grandparent's Day (September 7) or back to school. The cheery fall colors of orange and gold will create a welcoming ambiance for family or friends. Whatever the theme or focus, guests will remember how we made them feel much longer than they'll remember what we served. So, let's combine these ingre-TEA-ents and pamper family and friends over a cuppa' tea.

Happy fall, y'all!

### From Lydia's recipe file:

#### Chicken-Cashew Salad

Modified from a recipe previously served at  
Elizabeth and Alexander's English Tea Room in Bothell, Washington

#### Ingredients

|                                          |                           |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 cups cooked chicken, cubed             | ½ cup chopped celery      |
| ¾ cup pineapple chunks, drained          | ¾ cup grapes, cut in half |
| ½ cup chopped water chestnuts (optional) | ½ cup mayonnaise          |
| 1 teaspoon curry powder or to taste      | 1 teaspoon soy sauce      |
| ½ cup cashews                            |                           |

#### Directions

In a large bowl, combine chicken, celery, pineapple chunks, grapes and water chestnuts. In a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, soy sauce and curry powder to make the dressing. Spoon dressing over the chicken mixture and stir until evenly coated. Chill. When ready to serve, garnish with cashews.

Serving suggestion: Place individual servings of salad on a lettuce leaf or in the center of a cantaloupe slice. Serve with a croissant and fresh fruit on the side.

Makes about 6 servings.

Lydia E. Harris is a tea enthusiast and the author of three books for grandparents: *GRAND Moments: Devotions Inspired by Grandkids*, *In the Kitchen with Grandma: Stirring Up Tasty Memories Together*, and *Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting*, all available at amazon.com.





# Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

## Autumn Leaves

The distant horizon greets me as I walk through a landscape painted with the rich warm tones of gold, crimson and bronze. The gentle autumn breeze, even on a sunny day, possesses an unmistakable chill.

Overhead, the leaves clinging desperately to barren branches rustle a melody of greeting as I pass. With an accompanying percussion rhythm, the brittle fallen leaves scrunch into countless dried bits as they cushion my steps.

I like the gentle, warm and sunny autumn days known as Indian Summer. The out-of-doors beckons. I long to take respite from the busyness of day-to-day routine to recreate my being.

My lungs expand with exhilarating fresh brisk air. The stress, worry and frets of the day are exhaled, releasing me from their exhausting drain on my energy.

Hidden in the grass out under a big willow tree I spot a cottontail. With lop-ears tucked down close to his body, he blends in with the natural terrain. Except for his large, acutely perceptive and frightened eyes, I might not see him.

Once I'm past, the furry animal relaxes his tense muscles and hops off in the opposite direction.

High overhead in a large oak tree, a pair of squirrels bicker at one another. I smile and think, "Those two must be married."

The red robin is gone, but a V-formation of high-flying geese honk their way across a clear azure sky. Their migration south is a predictable sight of the season.

Autumn can appear a dreaded drab time, focusing on death, dying and the stark reality of the severe elements. The wildflower blossoms lose their bright blush and the wild grasses are no longer green. Their apparent life force has been snuffed out by a freezing blast from the north wind.

Survival of the fittest is the governing role of nature. Through the long cold winter, the old or weakened animals will succumb, falling victim to harsh decree.

At the appointed season, the quiet darkness of death is natural. Even welcome.

Just as day follows night, spring will follow a winter of rest. Seasons turn into years. Years accumulate into lifetimes. The future will belong to the progeny.

Geese will make a return flight when winter is past. The blades of grass will sprout and flowers will grow and bloom anew. When the robin returns, a nest will be built high in a tree, barely visible, hidden amidst the strong branches and fresh growth of lush green leaves. In the spring, prolific signs of new life will be witnessed throughout the realm of nature.

But today, as I walk through a landscape painted with the rich warm tones of gold, crimson and bronze autumn leaves, I feel a cold wind that follows the setting of the sun. The wind whisks past and stings my unprotected cheeks.

Wishing I could retreat to a sanctuary of immunity, I am reminded of the revitalizing necessity of a time to rest.



©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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## COUNTRY REGISTER RECIPE EXCHANGE

### Apple Bread

*Submitted by Irene Thompson, La Junta, CO*

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

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

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## The Portrait

by Wayne M. Bosman

I've been thinking about Mom. Specifically, about maybe having a portrait done of her. Which version of her is the question.

Definitely not the 104 year old version. That would only show the worn and weakened one. The one who has lived so much and so long that time has become a fluid mystery instead of a march of even beats that one could even dance to. At this point, her eyes often have a pensive look and one can tell that she is thinking of someone long gone or something that happened so long ago that the details of the event require effort to reconstruct. When she speaks, it is clear that at times the reconstruction did no go well. Names of people she has loved intermingle with those she still does love, and my father and I are in one sentence, only to be replaced in the next by my grandchild and then my brother's stepson, but it is still the same story being told. No. A portrait of the 104-year-old Mom would not be fair to her memory.

How about how she was when I was a child? With four sons and a daughter, she was always busy with something, yet I can picture her sitting at the telephone table talking to her mother. We would time their calls by how many TV shows it took. I loved sitting in the kitchen after drying dishes talking to her about everything and anything. Those years are a blur to me now, and it would be hard to capture one image for a true portrait. Any pictures of those times would also have Dad in them, as they were very much a team.

Before my siblings and I arrived, Mom was still the same person, she just wasn't "Mom" yet. I have seen pictures of her from her high school years when you could see the first glimpses of the beautiful woman and person she would become. She had a wholesome beauty and the same eyes and smile that showed up in her pictures as a toddler. Part of the portrait is definitely from those years. But not all.

I've seen those eyes looking back. The years fall away when she tells the story of meeting Dad. Her best friend, Margie, didn't approve of him at first because he drove too fast. Mom was smitten. He was tall and good looking. He smoked a pipe, just like her father. Mom's eyes are young again when she talks about those early years, watching Dad pitch in semi-pro softball games and going fishing with him out at the lake.

I can see pictures of her driving the tractor digging the basement for the house that she has lived in for almost 80 years. She shakes her head-"Can you imagine ME driving a tractor!?" Of course we all can.

She has been doing what needed to be done for her whole life. When Dad opened the monument business she became the bookkeeper and salesperson. She spent countless hours on the telephone comforting widows, some of whom would still be calling her 20 years later just to talk. She visited the old people at nursing homes, never seeming to notice that the people she was visiting were younger than she was. She attended funerals of her friends, and eventually of her friends' children. She buried children and grandchildren of her own.

So the portrait. Life isn't really made for portraits, is it?

Just as a drop of water is part of a wave and a wave is part of an ocean, we can't separate out one moment from a life and then say "This is that person." As my Irish forbears would say, "It is, but it isn't."

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



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## COUNTRY REGISTER RECIPE EXCHANGE

### Fast Fixin' Fruit 'n Cake

*Submitted by Sherry Harper-Woolf, Carlsbad, NM*

1 package cake mix

1/2 cup water

1/4 cup oil

2 eggs

1 can pie filling (20-23 ounce)

Pour oil in 13"x9.5"x2" pan. Cover bottom. Put cake mix, eggs and water in pan. Blend with fork for 2 minutes. Spread evenly. Spoon pie filling over the batter. Stir enough to make marbled effect. Bake at 350° for 35-40 minutes. Test with a toothpick.

NOTE: Can use cherry, apple, blueberry, lemon, pineapple, pumpkin, peach, blackberry, or strawberry pie filling; white or yellow cake mix.  
For Black Forest version, use chocolate cake mix with cherry pie filling.





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# Cowgirl Poet, Quilter, Entertainer



Yvonne Hollenbeck  
Prairie Patchwork

There’s a faded, handmade quilt on the sofa in her room,  
and she always had it neatly folded there;  
and when I’d ask about it, a smile came on her face;  
it pleased her so to think that I would care.

She’d open it and tell about the making of each block,  
and each one had a story of its own.  
It was made when she was young and was living on the ranch  
in a sod house that she called her “prairie home.”

It was made from scraps of fabric from feedsacks she had saved,  
or from worn-out clothes her children had outgrown;  
and every single block in that pretty patchwork quilt  
just seemed to fit together like a poem.

The pink block was the color of the early morning dawn,  
and that crimson one like sumac in the fall;  
yellow was the color of her roses by the gate,  
and lilac was her favorite one of all.

The dark one made her think about those dry depression years  
when all the hills were parched and dirty brown.  
Gray was like the rain that fell the day her husband died,  
it was after that she had to move to town.

She said that life itself is like a patchwork quilt,  
of births and deaths and all things in between;  
and just when you are thinking that everything is fine,  
along comes something new and unforeseen.

Just like her personal diary, as if she’d written in a book,  
with the dawning and the passing of each year;  
it seems her hopes and sorrows were recorded in each stitch  
and each time that I read it brought a tear.

The story of her life, she said, was stitched in that old quilt;  
on a corner on the back she signed her name;  
then called it “Prairie Patchwork” . . . she wrote that on there too,  
as a tribute to her life there on the plain.

Order Yvonne’s new book, “A Stitch in Rhyme” at  
[www.yvonnehollenbeck.com](http://www.yvonnehollenbeck.com) — just \$15 + \$3.50 postage.

© Yvonne Hollenbeck; 2025

Yvonne Hollenbeck, from Clearfield, SD, performs her original poetry throughout the United States, captivating audiences in her wake. She is one of the most published cowgirl poets in the West and is not only a popular banquet and civic entertainer, but also co-writes songs with many western entertainers. Yvonne also pens a weekly column in the “Farmer-Rancher Exchange” and writes articles about life in rural America in various publications throughout the West. For more information, visit <https://www.yvonnehollenbeck.com>

## Longmont Quilt Guild Recognizes National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

by Karen Jardine

The Longmont Quilt Guild, celebrating its 20th anniversary, is more than 250 members strong and a very active organization. We have a large outreach program that provides quilts to numerous organizations in the Longmont, Colorado community and beyond.

The Guild highlights Pink Quilts during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. We started presenting Pink Quilts to breast cancer survivors in 2007 and continue to do so annually. Between 2007 and 2024, we have created and presented 188 Pink Quilts. The pink-themed, quilt block design is usually unique every year and all recipients are nominated by a Quilt Guild member. Although, nominees are not limited to Guild members, they also include family and friends of Guild members, all who are affected by breast cancer. Our Pink Quilts are presented each year at our October Guild meeting in a special ceremony.



Monique Plamondon, Pink Quilt Chair, and Donna Busching, Outreach Chair, display one of the Pink Quilts to be presented in October.

To support the Outreach programs, as well as other guild activities, Longmont Quilt Guild’s major fundraiser for the year is an online Quilt Auction, held in October. A special preview of many auction items is available for viewing at our annual Quilt Show at Boulder County Fairgrounds, also held in October. For more information about the Longmont Quilt Guild and our Outreach programs, go to [longmontquiltguild.org](http://longmontquiltguild.org).

## Trick or Treat

Halloween Word Scramble

Unscramble the words. Key is below.

- |           |            |                                                                 |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. _____  | ohorhoro   | shock or fright                                                 |
| 2. _____  | goebynma   | fictional scary person, used to frighten children who misbehave |
| 3. _____  | ctirk      | joke or other act of deception                                  |
| 4. _____  | tauendh    | place frequented by ghosts                                      |
| 5. _____  | adenlc     | wax object with a wick in the middle                            |
| 6. _____  | sthgo      | haunts a house                                                  |
| 7. _____  | natelnr    | type of lamp                                                    |
| 8. _____  | nbolig     | small, ugly, mischevious creature that caused trouble           |
| 9. _____  | tsomntoeb  | large upright stone placed at the head of a grave               |
| 10. _____ | olbdo      | red liquid running through veins and arteries                   |
| 11. _____ | tkesonel   | person’s inner frame of bones                                   |
| 12. _____ | etsfiavl   | celebration or special event                                    |
| 13. _____ | etermecy   | where dead people are buried                                    |
| 14. _____ | paritipaon | transparent, ghostly figure                                     |
| 15. _____ | arlkcw     | a male witch                                                    |
| 16. _____ | migtenarh  | scary, bad dream                                                |
| 17. _____ | raithwccft | magic practised by witches                                      |
| 18. _____ | atrte      | candy collected on halloween                                    |
| 19. _____ | npkra      | trick or practical joke                                         |
| 20. _____ | kbrosctiom | used by witches to fly                                          |

1. horror 2. bogeyman 3. trick 4. haunted 5. candle 6. ghost 7. lantern 8. goblin 9. tombstone  
10. Blood 11. skeleton 12. festival 13. cemetery 14. apparition 15. warlock 16. nightmare  
17. witchcraft 18. treat 19. prank 20. broomstick







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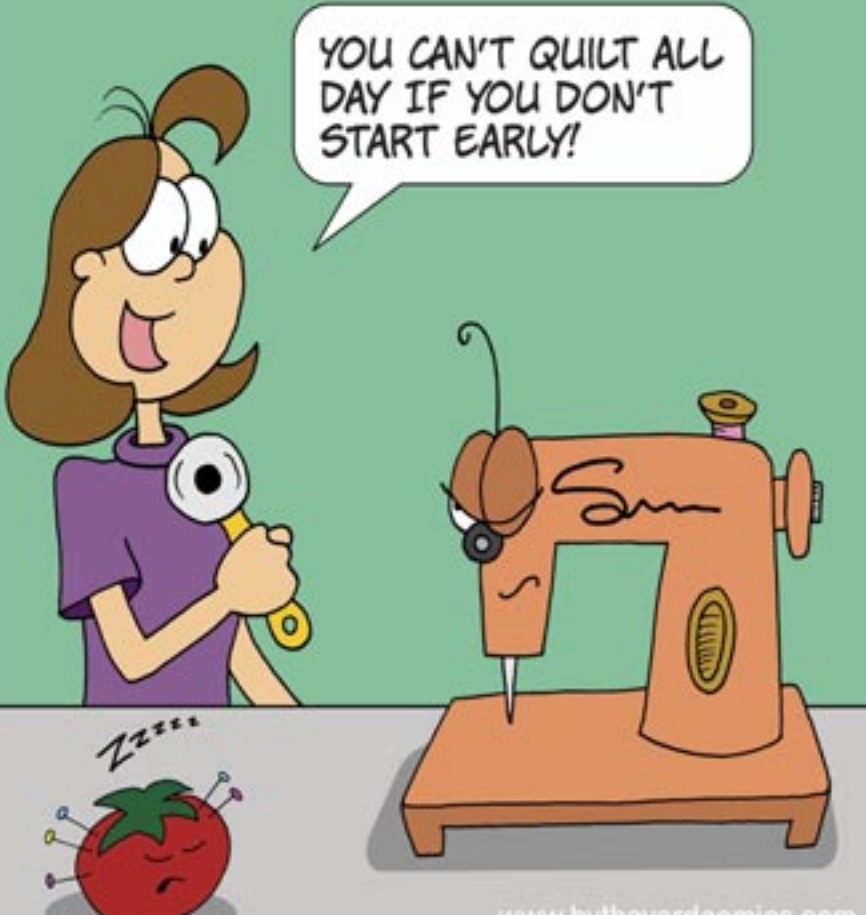
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## Over the Teacup

### Fall—A Season of Beauty

by Janet Young



Fall signifies the end of summer—with its' cooler mperatures, and longer nights. But it also brings a ason of beauty with the changing of the leaves. A ndscape of red, yellow, and gold leaves, beautifies ir surroundings. And when the wind blows and virls the leaves to the ground, it provides a play- ound for young and old alike to play in the leaves. playing in the leaves is not your cup of tea, just walking over the crisp fallen aves lets you know that fall has arrived.

With the cooler temperatures, you may find you are staying home more, rapped in a cozy blanket or a warm sweater. To add to that coziness, now may e the time you light your first, of the season fire, in the fireplace.

With a warm, cozy atmosphere, you may find yourself reading a book or atching your favorite TV show, or football, while enjoying a mug of hot apple der, or a mug of pumpkin latte'.

Because Fall is a transitional season, take advantage of this slower time and flect on what or on whom you are thankful. By doing so, you will be in a etter position to handle the upcoming holiday season, which we know to be etty hectic. No matter how hard you try to keep the holidays on a low key, mehow it just doesn't turn out that way, for the majority of us that is.

Fall invites us to enjoy our harvest. Whether you raised your own food, or atnd Farmers Markets, you will have an array of fresh fruits and vegetables to joy, as well as decorative touches. Pumpkins, gourds, even the leaves them- lves can all be used to add decorative touches to our tables, on our mantles, or even outside by the front door. Who says Fall is only a season of beauty! Fall, also can have a dark side when we begin to prepare for Halloween, which just shows the versatilely of this time of the year.

Before long the cold winds will blow. So, while you can enjoy the fleeting days of Fall, get outside and walk through a corn maze, or take a hay ride, and last but not least go to the pumpkin patch, and pick out a pumpkin or two.

And remember, Fall is a season of beauty!

© Janet Young is a Certified Tea and Etiquette Consultant, Co-Founder of Mid-Atlantic Tea Business Association, and prior owner of Over The Teacup

## Countryberries Designs

### Autumn Scarecrow



This pattern is free for you to use. Please give the artist credit. Not for commercial use. Enlarge this pattern to your desired size. It can be appli- qued in cotton or wool by hand or with fus- ible web. Embroider the details. If you're a painter, create this design with acrylic paints on canvas and varnish to protect. Try this pattern as a punchneedle design or as a hooked rug. Have fun!

Designed by Kathy Graham

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### COUNTRY REGISTER RECIPE EXCHANGE

#### Better Than 'Homework' Cake

Submitted by Bobbie Gulick, Las Cruces, NM



- 1 package German chocolate cake mix
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounce)
- 1 jar of carmel ice cream topping (12 - 12.5 ounces)
- 1 container frozen whipped topping (8 ounce)
- 3 bars English toffee candy (1.4 ounce bars)

Mix the cake mix using the directions on the box and bake in a 13" x 9" pan (glass is better). Cool for about 45 minutes when done. Poke holes across the top of the cake with a fork. Pour the can of sweetened condensed milk all over the top of the cake. Then pour the carmel topping all over the cake. Top with whipped cream topping then sprinkle the chopped up toffee candy over the top of the cake. Chill for about 2 hours and serve.

Great for kids to help make to celebrate good report cards.

### COUNTRY REGISTER RECIPE EXCHANGE

#### Easy Apple Pie

Submitted by Irene Thompson, La Junta, CO



|                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 1/2 lbs. baking apples | 1 1/2 Tablespoons brown sugar |
| 1 cup white sugar        | 1 cup flour                   |
| 1 teaspoon cinnamon      | 1 teaspoon nutmeg             |
| 3/4 cup melted butter    | 1 egg                         |

Preheat oven to 350°. Use your favorite pie shell. Sprinkle brown sugar over apple slices and toss. Once thoroughly coated, pour into pie shell. In bowl combine sugar, flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, butter and egg. Mix well. Spread the mixture evenly over the tip of apple slices and cover with top shell. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until the apples have cooked and the topping is golden brown.



## On this day in History

**September 21, 1780:** American General Benedict Arnold meets with British Major John Andre to discuss handing over West Point to the British, in return for the promise of a large sum of money and a high position in the British army. The plot was foiled and Arnold, a former American hero, became synonymous with the word “traitor.”

**October 8, 1871:** Flames spark in the Chicago barn of Patrick and Catherine O’Leary, igniting a two-day blaze that kills between 200 and 300 people, destroys 17,450 buildings, leaves 100,000 homeless and causes an estimated \$200 million (in 1871 dollars; more than \$4 billion today) in damages. Legend has it that a cow kicked over a lantern in the O’Leary barn and started the fire.

Information found on [www.history.com](http://www.history.com)



## Back-To-School Memories

by Judy Sharer

Whether still in school or a graduate from years ago, everyone has back-to-school memories!

In the small town where I grew up in Western Pennsylvania, my parents knew everyone, primarily because my father was the elementary principal and my mother a third-grade teacher. As you can imagine, I couldn’t get away with anything.

Although summer seemed short to us, our parents were always ready for us to return to school. Back to school shopping started early. I had to try on all my old clothes to see if they still fit and then it was trudging store to store for outfits and shoes. In my town in the 60s until 7th grade all of the girls were required to wear dresses. I wished I were a boy so I could wear pants. In 8th grade the rules changed and girls were allowed to wear the new popular style pantsuits. In 9th grade, we were allowed to wear denim jeans. Finally, I could sit on the floor and feel comfortable! And those mandatory one-piece gym uniforms! Not very attractive.

Each new year brought the anticipation of a new teacher, new books, and a new classroom. I looked forward to catching up with old friends and making new friends, but the first day back always tied my stomach in knots.

In my small town, I walked about five blocks to elementary school. Then when I got old enough, nine or ten I believe, I was allowed to ride my bike. Actually, it was my sister’s hand-me-down bike, but I was glad to have a set of wheels.

After school, my girlfriend and I would stop at a local gas station/store on our way home if we had a few pennies in our pocket. We would get penny candy to eat to tide us over until supper. And bottles of soda pop were taken from a large cooler with a sliding lid and a cap opener in the front.

For the most part, I liked school, especially the year I was old enough to get my driver’s permit. I didn’t have my own car, but lucky for me my siblings were out of the house by then and I could use the family car, with permission of course, when I really wanted to go somewhere.

High school brought school dances, evening football games and other sports, my first real boyfriend, and then on to college. While exciting, college had its own ups and downs. Finding and buying my textbooks was stressful the first few times. Finding the right building and classroom and being able to get to the next class clear across campus on time was nerve-wracking. Keeping my grades up so my parents would continue to pay my tuition always hung over my head. When my grades dropped one term, finding a job to help me pay my own tuition was an experience. And then there was juggling my time between campus life and studying while living at home.

Wow! Sometimes, I’m amazed I survived my school years, but when you’re young you don’t let anything stand in your way. Hopefully you’re fondly thinking of some of the things you did in school right now. Maybe this walk down memory lane will prompt you to pick up the phone and call an old school friend to share a memory or just to say hello and reminisce.

© Judy Sharer is the author of a historical Civil War era romance series titled A Plains Life, published by The Wild Rose Press. Book One, *Settler’s Life*, Book Two, *Second Chance Life*, Book Three, *Civil War Life* and Book Four, *Love Challenged Life* are available wherever on-line books and eBooks are sold. Look for her newest title *Secrets in Room Four* coming this winter. Visit Judy’s website for more details. [judys Sharer.com](http://judys Sharer.com)





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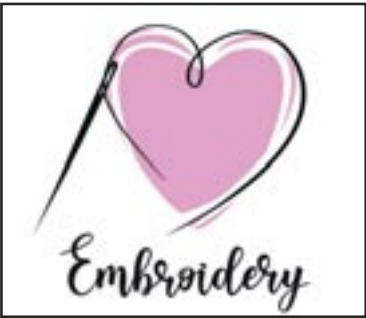
## Piecing Life Together

by Barbara Polston

### Traveling

Most of us, I believe, plan to travel, whether that’s for business, family obligations or pleasure. I’m planning a trip to visit my oldest daughter and will be flying. In addition to all the things that need to be packed – clothing, toiletries and the like – whenever I travel, I spend quite a bit of time thinking about what I will be bringing along to fill spare moments.

There is always a book or two to read on the plane. On this trip, I’m bringing the latest selection of my book club. I expect I will be done with the reading and ready for our meeting, occurring the evening after I return home.



What seems to occupy most of my thoughts is what sewing or crafting project will come along. There are several things that must be considered. One of the first things is the size of the project. With airlines charging for additional bags or too much weight, this is important. Currently, I have some finishing handwork that needs to be done on two good-size quilt projects. Either would take up quite a bit of valuable suitcase space or require a second suitcase

and additional baggage charges. Shipping the projects ahead of time seems like an unnecessary expense and risks them getting lost in transit, going or coming back. Neither of those projects seem like good options for this trip but would be strong contenders if I were driving. If I had a quilting project that could be broken down into small units of handwork, such as an English Paper Piecing project, that would be a good choice. Unfortunately, I don’t have such a project planned for the near future, so that won’t work either.

As luck would have it, I am ready to start a new counted cross stitch project. I was gifted another embroidery project, Japanese sashiko, that is ready to go and I am anxious to try. Both projects fit nicely in my embroidery bag and won’t take up very much space in my suitcase. These will be coming along with me, giving me plenty of things to work on while I’m away and relaxing with my daughter. She is thinking she will work on some embroidery projects while I’m there, a plan we are calling mother-daughter parallel crafting. She was gifted with the same Japanese sashiko kit and I’m wondering if we will truly be in parallel, working on the same project but bringing our individual interpretations to the work. I am looking forward to a bit of a surprise.

Safe travels! Happy stitching!

©Barbara Polston, July 2025. Barbara is the author of *Quilting with Doilies: Inspiration, Techniques, and Projects* (Schiffer Press, 2015) and a series of children’s books inviting young children to share in *The Adventures of Puppy Brian* ([www.puppybrian.com](http://www.puppybrian.com)). Barbara lives in Tucson, Arizona where she has failed at retirement, but is getting more time for sewing in a variety of forms. Contact Barbara at [barbarapolstonquilter@gmail.com](mailto:barbarapolstonquilter@gmail.com).

## Pumpkin Apple Cinnamon Mug Cake

**Ingredients:**

- 4 tbsp flour
- 2 tbsp pumpkin puree
- 1 tbsp applesauce
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- pinch of nutmeg
- pinch of salt

**Directions:**

1. In a microwave safe mug, mix flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt.
2. Stir in pumpkin puree, applesauce and oil until smooth.
3. Microwave on high for 1 minute 15 seconds to 1 minute 30 seconds.
4. Let cool for 1 minute.
5. Top with powdered sugar, whipped cream, cinnamon and/or chopped nuts.



Photo by The Recipe Mingle

Recipe by The Recipe Mingle



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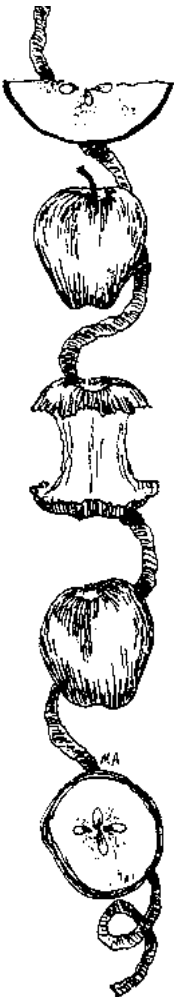
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# Saving Grandmother's Treasures

by Janet M Bair

I inherited some lovely "whitework," machine embroidered, small tablecloths after my 95-year-old mother died this year. I found them wrapped in tissue paper in her bottom dresser drawer. Edged in eyelet, the cloths were beautiful but badly yellowed and stained.



One of my quilting friends told me how to get them white again. Her daughter is a chef and they clean their chef outfits this way. I boiled a large pot of water, took it off the stove, and dissolved Oxiclean into the water. I then soaked the tablecloths for twenty minutes. They came out really clean! The fabric appears to be heavy cotton sheeting, although I am not sure if this method would work on a more fragile fabric such as muslin.

As I was stirring the cloths with a large wooden spoon in the boiling water, I felt transported back in time. For so many other women over the years, "wash day" involved heating water in a large kettle outdoors on an open fire and stirring the clothes with a stick to get them clean. I have the luxury of a glass topped electric stove.

I am sure these cloths were my Italian grandmother's so they are almost a hundred years old. After raising eight children, she left very few possessions behind. Rather than put them back in a drawer, I decided to collage/quilt them into a wall hanging. I have limited wall space, so I had to cut the best pieces to keep (a few stains didn't come out).

I love collages. I decided to hand stitch a crocheted doily onto the wall hanging, since I had several doilies from my other grandmother. Then I cut up two stained handkerchiefs edged with pink tatting. I added a folded lace-edged handkerchief in one corner. This will give my daughters and granddaughters an idea of the lovely embroidery you seldom see any more.

When I first showed the cloths to my quilting friends, we weren't sure if the embroidery was done by hand or by machine. The stitches are so even it appears to be machine done. I decided to do a little research to see if that was possible.

White embroidery thread on white fabric has been around since the 1500s but it became very popular in the late 1700s and even more so in the early 1800s. Hand sewn cottage piecwork provided a small income for women in Ireland, Scotland, France, and India. A variety of laces were made for women's accessories such as collars, chemisettes, bonnet frills, caps, and underwear. A most popular item was a baby's robe.

India was a primary source of cottons and embroidered goods during the Georgian and early Regency periods. But with the Industrial Revolution, the United Kingdom took over as a source of cotton textiles. A hand embroidery machine was invented in Switzerland in 1828. By the 1850s, machine embroidery was equal to hand embroidery.

I think we take machine made lace for granted today, because in the past if you wanted a beautiful trim for your clothing, you had to make it yourself or find a talented person to do it for you.

No stories remain from my family regarding what was saved. I can only guess. My Italian grandmother died when I was nine. But I am pretty sure the hand tatting on the handkerchiefs was done by my other grandmother. I am planning on showing this piece in our spring quilt show so that others can enjoy the beauty of white embroidery on white, a lovely art which should not be forgotten.

## A Family Secret

by Nancy Nash



Not long ago, I visited a large family at their home in the country. Although the setting was ideal for outdoor play, the day was quite hot and humid, and the children were confined to the house. Noise swirled about me, and the atmosphere seemed to veer toward chaos as eight children milled about.

I had the typical adult reaction of anticipating that something would go wrong - until I noticed that the household seemed to secrete function like a well-oiled machine. To my knowledge, there were no major conflicts. I there were minor flare-ups, I didn't notice. While I held the baby, the four-year-old quietly assumed responsibility for holding the book I was to read to her and turning its pages. The two-year old cheerfully crawled beside me on the other side. Was it possible all three of them could share my attention without a murmur? What were these kids up to?

At lunch, I heard the mother quietly instruct the two-year-old about speaking kindly to his sister. I thought back to an earlier visit, when his mother had told him he could have an apple to eat. He had immediately gone to a floor-level cupboard door in the kitchen and removed a fruit from a bin before giving it to his mother to cut into bite-size pieces. His demeanor had told me that he felt himself part of the family, freely participating in feeding himself in a peaceful manner.

Remembering this event gave me pause. In other households, I'd seen two-year-olds mischievously climb onto counters to raid cookie jars, obviously risking scoldings and exile to their rooms. I'd seen little ones given permission to grab washed fruit from a bowl on the kitchen table any time they wanted. But this seemed different. Someone had thoughtfully stored the bin where it was accessible to one and all - even the seventh-born child, still a toddler. He wasn't simply grabbing a snack that had already been prepared for him. He was becoming part of the workings of this family in their kitchen, each entrusted with a measure of freedom and guided in using it responsibly. Perhaps he felt the kind spirit of the person who had stored apples at his level. Perhaps all the children did.

Once during my visit, I saw an older brother step behind the four-year-old, who was pedaling a plastic vehicle across the floor. He gently pushed the vehicle for a short distance before resuming his own activities.

I sat on the sofa to think and attempt to connect the dots. We humans (both children and adults) are not perfect, yet simple acts of thoughtfulness can clear the way for harmony among us. In the country home I was visiting that day, kindness given and expected was part of the spiritual mix that enabled eight children to play indoors in close quarters on a hot day without pandemonium erupting. Loving kindness was the secret to the well-oiled machine hiding in the chaos.

I closed my eyes to better try to understand. For some reason, I imagined holding a giant bottle of bubble mix and blowing through a wand, generating loops and circles of bubbles that gently bounced and glided from room to room (A single act of kindness can have a similar on-going effect.) The huge bubbles envisioned had patches of iridescence but otherwise were almost invisible, like kindness planted by a parent in a child's heart.

Kindness has a mysterious power that runs along a path we can't predict. Children sense it, and they are content to pursue it and share its secret life.





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# Life in Skunk Hollow

by Julie A Druck

A Year with Jane Austen

This year being the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birthday, I was inspired to celebrate this lady and her outstanding works of literature. Over the last few months, I've taken to reading some of her novels that I hadn't read before, attending special Jane Austen events at libraries in our area, watching some of the films and British television productions of her works, and listening to historical fiction based on her life. I've taken a virtual tour of Austen's home in Chawton where she crafted the majority of her books and have been reading biographies of her, as well as a compilation of some of the letters that she wrote to others. And last but not least, culminating with her December 16th birthday, I hope to have a special tea party commemorating the event—I'm sure my granddaughters would be happy to attend.

Not only do I love the language and themes of Austen's writings, but I'm fascinated with the time period in which her works were set—that of the Regency Period from 1811 to 1820. Through her books and the period movies I've watched, I am utterly fascinated by a radically different lifestyle than our own very casual culture. I don't wish to discount the difficulties of the period relating to the many issues surrounding class distinction, the plight of the poor, and the legal limitations that greatly affected women. But I can't help admiring the beautiful empire waist dresses, graceful dance steps, gorgeous country estates, and the genteel manners of the period.

As I've immersed myself in the world and works of Jane Austen, I've been pondering some of the themes and patterns that have shown themselves to be noticeably prevalent in her stories:

- Manners matter. The beauty of the bows and curtsies in greetings, the discretion in conversation and respectful demeanor, and the chivalrous behavior of gentleman make me wish those things were more prevalent today. Oh, of course, there were (and are) the manipulative George Wickhams and unprincipled John Willoughbys, but their contrasting presence clearly highlights the beauty that's found in the thoughtfulness and kindness of the words and manners of most of her characters.
- Beauty is more than skin deep. Though I love the light and flowing dresses of the period, as well as the curling hairstyles, what makes my favorite Austen heroines most beautiful in my eyes are their characters. Elinor Dashwood is my favorite—her simple physical beauty is greatly enhanced by a gentle spirit and selfless devotion towards her loved ones. Jane Bennet has beauty of face but her kind heart that is always looking at the best in others is what draws me to her. Contrast those characters with the arrogant Mrs. Elton and the spoiled Emma Woodhouse (before her humbling reality check in self-awareness), and it's clear the best kind of beauty is found deeper than on the surface.
- Simple pleasures provide joy and contentment. I never tire of reading of the pastimes of Austen characters. From strawberry picking parties to needlework by the fire, from long walks along country lanes to holidays by the seaside, the pastimes of her characters remind me that one doesn't need to attend a fancy ball (though they had those, too!) in order to find pleasure.

So, I will continue my celebration of all things Austen. More importantly, I hope some of what's best about her characters will rub off on me. For who doesn't want to be more courteous, more beautiful, and more content?

Thanks, Jane—and Happy Birthday.

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



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### COUNTRY REGISTER RECIPE EXCHANGE

#### Farm House Ham Chowder

*Submitted by a reader*



|                                       |                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1/2 cup chopped celery                | 1/2 cup chopped onions     |
| 1/2 cup chopped sweet red pepper      | 2 tablespoons butter       |
| 1 envelope ranch dressing mix         | 1/4 cup flour              |
| 2 cups frozen hash browns, thawed     | 4 1/4 cup milk             |
| 2 cups cubed cooked ham               | 2 cups frozen corn, thawed |
| 2 ounces shredded smoked gouda cheese | 1/4 teaspoon thyme         |

In saucepan saute onions, pepper and celery in butter until crisp and tender. Stir in flour and dressing mix. Mix until smooth. Slowly add milk and bring to a boil, cooking and stirring for 2 minutes or until thick. Add potatoes, corn, ham and thyme. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered 8-10 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese before serving.

NOTE: Can substitute broccoli for potatoes or add clams for the ham.

### COUNTRY REGISTER RECIPE EXCHANGE

#### Great Pumpkin Dessert

*Submitted by Christi Palmer, Greeley, CO*



|                                                                   |                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 can solid pack pumpkin                                          | 1 can (12 ounce) evaporated milk |
| 3 eggs                                                            | 1 cup sugar                      |
| 4 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice                                     |                                  |
| 1 package (18 -19 ounce) yellow cake mix — regular or gluten-free |                                  |
| 3/4 cup butter, melted                                            | 1 1/2 cups chopped walnuts       |
| Vanilla ice cream or whipped cream                                |                                  |

In a mixing bowl, combine the first 5 ingredients. Transfer to a greased 13" x 9" x 2" baking pan. Sprinkle with cake mix and drizzle with butter then top with walnuts. Bake at 350° for 1 hour or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Serve with ice cream or whipped cream.

Can be made gluten-free. YIELD: 12-16 servings

## I Love Fall Table Runner

by Deb Heatherly

Do you start counting the days midsummer until you can pull out your fall decorations? I certainly do! There's something comforting about the oranges, yellows, golds and reds of my favorite season. My front porch features mums, sunflowers, scarecrows, pumpkins and of course, an abundance of leaves. I love collecting garlands made of silk leaves and additional single leaves to mix in with all the décor. The entire look always makes me stand back and smile.

Once the outside is complete its time to do a little decorating inside. This year I designed a quick and easy table runner to add to my seasonal display and I'm happy to share that pattern with you.

- For 4 blocks you will need:**
- 1/3 yd. Light Background (or a variety of light backgrounds)
  - 1 FQ each Red, Gold, Yellow, Orange
- From each FQ of red, gold, yellow, orange, cut:**
- (3) 3 1/2" squares, (1) 3" square, (2) 4" squares for HST, (1) 1" x 5 1/2"
- Light background:**
- Cut (1) 3 1/2" x WOF strip. Sub-cut (8) 3 1/2" squares
  - Cut (1) 4" x WOF strip. Sub-cut (8) 4" squares for HST
- Backing** 1 yd.
- For traditional binding**
- Cut (3) 2 1/2" x WOF strips OR use a pillow turn method that requires no binding.
- Directions:**
- Draw a diagonal line on the back of the 4" light background squares.
  - Pair right sides together with the red, gold, yellow, and orange 4" squares.
  - Sew 1/4" from the line on both sides of the line. Cut on the line to yield (4) HST of each color. Press seams toward the color.
  - Trim to 3 1/2".
- For leaf stem:**
- Cut (4) of the light background 3 1/2" squares diagonally 1x to yield (8) triangles.
  - Center and sew on opposite sides of the 1" x 5 1/2" red, gold, yellow and orange strips. Press seams toward light background.
- Trim to 3 1/2" making sure the corners with red, gold, yellow and orange are centered.
- Make 4 blocks as shown pressing seams as indicated by the arrows. One of each color. Blocks should measure 9 1/2".

• Stagger the leaves and sew the blocks together as shown.

Make and use traditional binding OR pillow turn the runner. To pillow turn, place backing (right side down) on top of the runner, then place batting on top of the backings. Sew all the way around the runner leaving a 4" opening in the center of one of the blocks to turn.

Trim the backing and batting before turning through the opening and trim the corners to reduce bulk in the points.

Hand stitch the opening closed and press. Top stitch 1/4" from the edge all the way around if desired.

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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# Life on My Farm

by Donna Jo Copeland, farmeress

## Thankful for Fall

*Beyond the purple hazy seas  
Of summer's utmost mysteries  
There lies a land long lost to me  
The land of used to be...*

Written by James Whitcomb Riley over a century ago, the poem memorized in the 5th grade, comes alive for me every late summer.

Especially so now that I'm 75, sipping iced tea on hot afternoons the long-ago days bring smiles. Late summer, early fall for country kids were filled with simple pleasures, and chores of course.

No idleness as garden produce needed canned, hay baled, fences repaired, getting ready for the coming winter. And then there was school starting the day after Labor Day. Gosh the summers went by quickly.

City kids just don't understand the magic of quiet, crickets, lightning bugs, soft breezes. Sadly, with the isolation and technology of today, few people embrace simple farm life, live the magic.

The air and sky at summers end change. Cornflower blue carries white fluffy clouds on the horizon. A hint of damp leaves begins to waft on evening breezes. Even the sunshine is softer, more golden.

In this crazy unsure world, my wee farm is my refuge, my magic place. I can lose myself in caring, watching my animals. Always lots of fiber work needing done. The looms and spinning wheels isolate me from the chaos.

The sheep are newly sheared and now their fleeces need processed. Goats and bunnies will be sheared one more time. Fences need checked. House and barn need attention. And this year I have some late chicks...brooder house to be repaired and varmint proofed.

As I have Fall shows and the Wool Shed is open until Christmas, woolen goods need to be made for sale. Looms and spinning wheels will hum, dyepots simmer. And I am so thankful the brutal heat of summer has eased. I love working in jeans and flannel shirts. It's my fashion statement.

As much as I love to spin and weave, rug hooking has claimed the top spot for now. Finding new ways to incorporate wool, different fabrics, textures in my designs. For me my hooking has very few rules, let's me experiment, combining techniques. My very soul is excited when I work with wools produced right here. The wool production team seems proud too.

Pride in things made from your own realm, well made, sustainably produced, honoring the planet, caring for Mother Nature. We all should find a path, a way to make, do, and be proud. Be kinder to ourselves, the planet, each other.

Remember the hippie motto: Peace, Love.  
Maybe I'm regressing. Might even dig out my old bell bottom jeans, sandals (remember Dr Schools wood sandals, I still have mine), and tie dye shirt to wear. Who knows what I might find in the back of the closet or North room? Mysteries?? Memories?

Let's make this fall season one of love, peace, mystery and thankfulness. Be a little more tolerant, more caring. Find a creative outlet, maybe rug hooking. Wool has that awesome ability to soothe, calm, connect with other wool users. And then there are those wonderful sheep, their gentle eyes and that luscious fleece.

### MOM'S APPLE DUMPLINGS

Recipe for pie crust, rolled into a rectangle, cut into 3" x 5" rectangles. Butter each piece.  
Peel and core 2 or 3 apples, cut into 4 or 6 slices. Put a slice on each dough piece, liberally sprinkle cinnamon sugar. Roll up, place in greased 9" x 13" pan. When all dumplings are made, sprinkle brown sugar over them, add about 1 cup of water. Bake at 350 for about 45 minutes. Serve with homemade ice cream.



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.

# Do You Have a Favorite Blanket?

by Becky Van Vleet



Over the years, I've owned countless blankets, quilts, Afghans, and throws galore. Many have held a special place in my heart. Some have traveled around with me from house to house, room to room, serving various purposes along the way.

When I was a child, I had a baby blanket that became quite worn over time, yet I refused to give it up, not even for a cookie bribe. I rubbed the corner under my nose at bedtime. I recall having a doll blanket or two.

Now that I've reached my golden years, I have a new favorite blanket. It's very old, and the color is a faded coral. It seems moths have taken a liking to it over the years, leaving behind a few small holes. This wool blanket is coarse, scratchy, and thin.

Oh, how do I cherish this blanket. It originally belonged to my father who received it during WWII when he joined the Navy and attended boot camp. As he journeyed from California to the Philadelphia Naval Yard to board the USS Denver CL58, this blanket was packed in his seabag.

During 1942-1945, my father, Walter Troyan, served as a young gunner on this cruiser, enlisting at age seventeen. The blanket certainly felt the vibrations of battle as the whole ship endured shimmies and shakes with the fire of its guns against enemies in the South Pacific.

After the global war ended, my father held onto the blanket, using it in his home with his new bride. Back then, nothing was discarded, not even a small war-time blanket.

If only this blanket could talk! It would recount its journey from boot camp to a warship, from one home to another, the countless bodies it warmed, the beds it lay on, the boxes it was packed into for moves, and the hands that folded it over the years.

Today, this is my favorite blanket. I snuggle up with it and remember my father's sacrifices during WWII. It's so old, faded, and dotted with small holes, but what a comfort it is to me today.

Becky Van Vleet, a retired school administrator, lives near Colorado Springs with her husband, Troy. They are the parents of four grown children and enjoy spending time with their nine grandchildren. Becky is a children's picture book author, and her website is devoted to family stories and creating memories: [www.beckylvanvleet.com](http://www.beckylvanvleet.com).



# Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski

## Photographs Tell



My winter project is defined; I'm just nervous about starting it, because I don't want to make the "wrong" decisions once I begin. The project? Sorting through the many boxes of family photographs.

When the children were young, I took photos of them by the dozens. First smiles, first crawls, first haircuts, first days of school. Duplicates were made, sent off to grandparents, and placed chronologically into photo albums. I loved freezing those moments with photographs!

Now, as I try to downsize, the boxes of duplicate photographs and negatives from the film take up almost more space than the collection of photo albums full of selected photographs. A friend suggested scanning the photographs—to save space—but why do I need more duplicates? Additionally, once finished scanning, am I supposed to throw the printed versions of the photographs away?

For me, photographs tell the stories. Unlike the news programs at 5 p.m., 6 p.m., or 10 p.m., my photographs don't contain any graphic images. Rather, I can flip through photo albums and reflect on the journey I have taken through life; I can see places I have traveled, and people with whom I spent time. Such lovely memories!

The photographs also tell of the history. Where I lived, who I called friends, what we looked like when first married, who was there when children were born, who was there celebrating birthdays with cakes and parties, and loved ones who only remain in memories and old photographs.

Sure, there are unflattering pictures. Removing photographs from the albums seems wrong, because that would alter history. Unflattering clothes, outdated hairstyles, and records of someone's former weight contain honest representations of how lives have been lived. But, to keep photographs of someone holding a cigarette years before they quit smoking, the prom date who married someone else, or photos of that abusive ex-husband?

Thinning the collection by gifting photographs to the children who are now circling 30 years of age is an idea, but involves a different set of decisions. Do I create individual photo albums for them? Or, do I just hand them boxes containing packets of duplicate photographs and film negatives, allowing them to scan old photographs as they wish? (One child has stayed off of social media platforms like I have, while the other shares more online than I likely ever want to know.) Do I then also cull photographs out of my existing photo albums, and re-organize with other photos to backfill the holes?



What about photographs family members have sent me over the years? Do I give them back? I have been rather surprised and confused, in recent years, receiving old school photos and such of my children being returned. Is this something that everyone is doing?

Oy. I think it's time to sew something instead.



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

Amish Beef and Noodles  
recipe courtesy of Delish

- |                                                |                                               |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 4 tbsp vegetable oil, divided                  | 1/2 tsp freshly <u>ground</u> black pepper    |
| 2 pounds <u>beef roast</u> , cut into 2" cubes | 2 large <u>yellow onions</u> , finely chopped |
| 2 tbsp all-purpose flour                       | 8 cups low-sodium beef broth, <u>divided</u>  |
| 4 tsp <u>kosher</u> salt, divided              | 12oz wide egg noodles                         |

In a large pot over medium-high heat, heat 2 tablespoons oil. Place beef in a large bowl and toss with flour, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Add half of the beef to pot and cook, turning occasionally, until browned on both sides, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer beef to a plate; repeat with remaining 2 tablespoons oil and beef. Reduce heat to medium. Cook onion and 1/2 teaspoon salt, stirring occasionally until just tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Return beef to pot and add 6 cups of broth. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until beef is tender enough to shred with a fork, 2 to 2 1/2 hours. Transfer beef to a large plate and shred with 2 forks into bite-size pieces. Pour remaining 2 cups of broth into the same pot and bring to a boil. Add noodles and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 7 to 8 minutes. Return beef to pot, toss to combine, and season with remaining 1 1/2 teaspoons salt as needed. Divide beef and noodles among bowls. Serve topped with lots of pepper.

