

The Maryland Register



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Maryland's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events

March/April 2025

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Maryland's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Premier Events



Kim Keller
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www.themarylandregister.com

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Special Events

March

22-23.....Baltimore Show for Collectors of Arms - Timonium

April

4-5.....Milltown Quilters Quilt Show - Columbia

25.....Everybody's Quilt Guild Quilt Bingo - Westminster

25-26.....Friendship Star Quilters Quilt Show - Gaithersburg





Show us your finished projects!

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

Photo and project details can be emailed to:
info@themarylandregister.com

Or you can mail them to:
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2920 144th Ave. NE
Ham Lake, MN 55304

Yarn 101: Understanding the Basics of Yarn



"Yarn is not just string; it's a path to creativity and expression." – Katherine Dunn

With over 5.79 million metric tons of yarn produced annually it's no mystery that yarn crafts have stood the test of time and continue to be popular today. Standing in front of your favorite shop's beautiful selection of yarn can be overwhelming! With all the different thick- nesses, colors and textures available each yarn brings it own personality to each project. If you are new to the world of yarn crafts it can be helpful to understand the wide array of yarn types available. Let's dive into the wonderful world of yarn!

Fiber content refers to what material the yarn is made from. Each fiber has it's own properties that affects the softness, breathability, texture, durability and feel of the final project. Understanding each type of fiber can help you make the right choice for your project.

- Plant Fiber Yarns: Derived from natural plant resources and offers a light- weight and breathable feel. Common types of plant fibers include cotton yarn, bamboo yarn, hemp yarn, linen yarn and nettle yarn.
- Animal Fiber Yarns: Natural fibers derived from animals and are chosen for their warmth and popular in projects made for winter. Common types of animal fiber include wool yarn, alpaca yarn, silk yarn, angora yarn and cashmere yarn.
- Synthetic Fiber Yarns: Man-made yarn and offers a wide range of colors, textures and weights. Synthetic yarns offer affordability which is a great option for beginners. Some common choices of synthetic yarn include acrylic yarn, nylon yarn and polyester yarn.

Yarn weight determines the thickness of the yarn and affects the gauge or measurement of how many stitches and rows you knit within a specified area of your project. In general yarns are divided into eight different weights:

- Lace: delicate and thin
- Super Fine: Slightly heavier than lace
- Fine: Versatile lightweight
- Medium: An all purpose yarn and go to for different projects
- Bulky: Excellent for cozy winter accessories
- Super Bulky: Some of the heaviest yarns and great for warm projects.
- Jumbo: Heaviest yarn

Yarn ply refers to the number of individual strands twisted together to form one single strand of yarn. Yarn ply affects many aspects of your project including durability, texture, feel, ease of use, stitch definition and pilling.

Texture of the yarn refers to the feel and physical characteristics like how smooth, fuzzy and soft the yarn is. Smooth yarns have a sleek surface that creates a clean defined stitch. Fuzzy yarns are soft and adds warmth to cozy accessories.

Colors of yarn are vast! This is where you can really make the project your own and fit your personality. Yarns come in solid, tonal, gradient or ombre, self striping, speckled, space-dyed and hand-dyed to name a few.

The choices are plentiful to make your unique project your very own and one of a kind! Now go let your personality shine!

Maryland Quilt Guild Listing

African American Quilters of Baltimore (AAQB)
P.O. Box 31528 • Baltimore, MD 21207
www.aaqb.org
Meets at St. Bartholomew's Church • Baltimore, MD 21229
First Saturday of each month

Faithful Circle Quilters Guild
Dedicated to perpetuating the heritage of quilting, sharing the skills and knowledge of quilting and stimulating fellowship and education among those interested in quilting.
Contact:communications@faithfulcirclequilters.com
Website: https://faithfulcirclequilters.com/

Uhuru Quilters Guild
Promote the work and accomplishments of African American quilters and to preserve the traditions, culture and history of quilting.
P.O. Box 47332 District Heights, MD 20747
Meet monthly on 3rd Saturdays at St. Barnabas Episcopal Anglican Church, Upper Marlboro, MD
Website: www.uhuruquiltersguildinc.org

Would you like to have your Quilt Guild listed?
Contact us today to hear how you can get listed as well as receive a discount on any advertising for your guild events!
763-754-1661 • info@themarylandregister.com

Book Review

Such a Wonderful You
by Chris Shea

Artist and author Chris Shea, creator of the popular If God Used Sticky Notes series, presents her whimsical, pen-drawn characters and an inspiring reminder to speak those important, yet simple, words from the heart that are so easy to put off—words like:

"Thank you so much." • "You're amazing." • "I thank God for you."

This charming gift provides the giver with a sweet way to express their gratitude, appreciation, empathy, or affection for a special person in their life.



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You Could Win!

You can register to win a copy of **Such a Wonderful You!**

Clip and mail in this form! If you prefer not to cut up your paper, write the form below on a note card and mail to: The Country Register; 2920 - 144th Ave NE; Ham Lake, MN 55304.

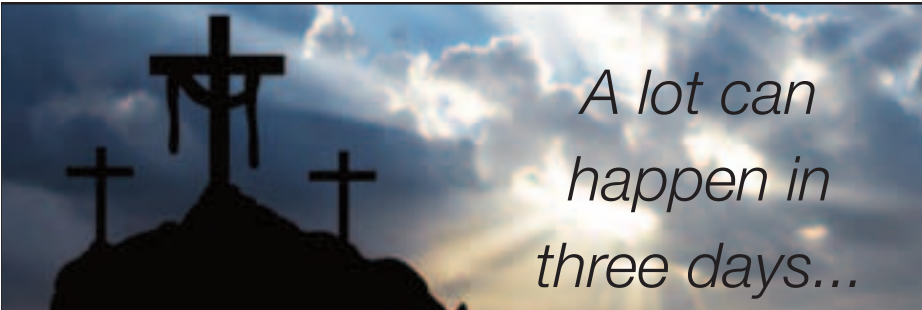
You will be notified and receive your prize by mail! Good Luck!

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Favorite Shop _____





Milltown Quilters Quilt Show

Christ Memorial Presbyterian Church
10600 Shaker Drive, Columbia, MD 21046
(Handicapped Accessible)
April 4th and April 5th 2025
Fri 10-6 ♦ Sat 10-4
Vendors ♦ Sew Unique Shoppe ♦ Peddlers Table
♦ Artisans Corner ♦ Raffle Quilt

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Children under 12 free



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2025 Quilt Show
April 25 & 26, 10-5
April 27, 10-2
Asbury Methodist Village
301 Odendhal Ave · Gaithersburg, Maryland
friendshipstar.org/quilt-show-2025/

Say Goodbye

by Barbara Kalkis

Frosty the Snowman has gone away,
But we are assured he will be back one day.
So, we grit our teeth in the January freezes
With colds and coughs and flu and sneezes.

February arrives with Punxsutawney Phil
Who slumbers through winter but knows the drill.
He'll be poked and prodded by a man with a stick,
And Phil will pronounce a forecast that is wrong but quick.

The Lion and the Lamb vie to enter first in March,
Forgetting that Mother Nature has a secret heart
That make days frigid, warm, sunny or drizzly,
Leaving us sad, happy, morose or giggly.

Spring is unpredictable but so alluring,
Enough to make winter worth enduring.
So, say goodbye to winter's brazen chills,
It's time to laugh with the crocus, tulips and daffodils.

©Barbara Kalkis, 2025



EVERYBODY'S QUILT GUILD

Annual Quilt Bingo


Friday, April 25, 2025
BINGO at 6:30PM
(Doors open at 5:00PM)
Pleasant Valley Fire Co., 2030 Pleasant Valley Rd.
Westminster, MD 21158
\$25.00 per ticket (\$20.00 in advance)
For Tickets in Advance, Please Call:
Francine Hahn (443)756-7451
Prizes include assorted sizes of Quilts and Bags.
Take a chance on our Raffles and Door Prizes.
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Follow us on FACEBOOK @ Everybody's Quilt Guild Events
Handicapped Accessible Permit# 2025-10





Time to "Spring" your clocks forward!

March 9th



THE ORIGINAL 69TH YEAR

BALTIMORE SHOW

FOR COLLECTORS OF ARMS

MARCH 22-23, 2025

Presented by the
Maryland Arms Collectors Assoc.
9603 Deereco Rd., #446
Lutherville-Timonium, MD 21094

HELD AT THE
Maryland State Fair Grounds Cow Palace
2200 York Road, Timonium, MD 21093

PUBLIC ADMISSION

SATURDAY \$15	SUNDAY \$10
Show Opens at 9:00 AM	Show Opens at 9:00 AM
Show Closes at 5:00 PM	Show Closes at 3:00 PM

NEW for 2025 Show!

Sales of C&R (Curio & Relic) Handguns will be permitted!

This includes WWI and WW 2 Military Handguns. Collectable unaltered Colts, S&W, Savage, Ruger, etc. that are at least 50 years old and meet the C&R criteria listed on the back page of this flyer.

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR ATF DEFINITION OF C&R FIREARMS

NO AR / AK RIFLES OR ASSOCIATED PARTS ARE PERMITTED FOR SALE TRANSFER AT THE 'BALTIMORE SHOW'. NO MD-BANNED WEAPONS ALLOWED
(Go to www.mdsp.org/organization/supportservices/licensingdivision for current list)

MARYLAND LAW MANDATES THAT ALL POST 1898 RIFLES, SHOTGUNS and HANDGUNS MUST BE TRANSFERRED BY A FEDERAL FIREARMS LICENSED (FFL) DEALER, INCLUDING AN NICS CHECK.
All Firearm Sells/Transfers are to abide by all Federal, State and Local mandates.

1000 Tables Offered, plus Exhibit Area of Cannons and Other Military Related Items

SHOW DATES FOR THE NEXT 4 YEARS
March 21st & 22nd, 2026 • March 20th & 21st, 2027
March 18th & 19th, 2028 • March 17th & 18th, 2029

Active duty military, scouts and police in uniform enter both days free of charge.
15 Years and under to be accompanied by an Adult. Under 12 free.

www.baltimoreshow.com [MarylandArmsCollectorsAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/MarylandArmsCollectorsAssociation) [@AntiqueArms](https://www.instagram.com/AntiqueArms)

Events: All Mid-Atlantic Shop Hop

Where in Maryland?

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

(Answer on page 10 of this issue)



Recipe: Winter Fruit Salad

submitted by Patti Lee Bock

Ingredients:

- 1 can (20oz) pineapple chunks
- 1 package (3 -1/8 oz) cook and serve vanilla pudding
- 1 qt mixed fresh fruit chunks (apples, bananas, oranges, pears etc)
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
- 1/3 cup flaked coconut
- Whipped topping

Directions:

Drain pineapple, reserving juice. Set pineapple aside. In a saucepan, combine pineapple juice and pudding mix. Cook over medium heat until thickened. Cool. Combine pineapple, other fruit, nuts and coconut in a large salad bowl. Add pudding/dressing and stir to coat. Chill until ready to serve. Garnish with whipped topping if desired.



Countryberries Designs

Mr. Nibbles

*Lots of possibilities
for this cute bunny!*

You can applique him on a pillow, make him into a plant poke or an Easter ornament, paint him on wood or canvas or just sew him into a cuddly stuffed animal.

Enlarge him to your desired size. If you are sewing your bunny, remember to add a seam allowance around your pattern. Use whichever accessories you choose. Not for commercial use. Please give the artist credit.

Have fun!

Designed By Kathy Graham



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www.facebook.com/groups/allmidatlanticshophop to learn all about it.

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SHOP HOP**

Includes the states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The All Mid-Atlantic Shop Hop Magazine will go on sale Mid-May at all participating stores. It's your passport to embark on the Great Sewing Adventure™ across the Mid-Atlantic!





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Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

The Interim

Heralded by cold Arctic wind during a late-summer blast of icy weather, fall arrived a little early last year. It didn't matter that I still had flowers blooming in my yard. The unseasonably frigid weather froze every bit of unprotected vegetation with its scathing record-breaking cold snap.

My pink petunias looked pathetic. Overnight their very life-force was snuffed out at the height of their season to blossom and bloom.

Nothing could bring restoration. In short, everything was dead and gone.

If I want petunias to grow again, I'll have to plant new ones next Spring.

Near the petunias were some vibrant bright orange poppies. The poppies looked even more pitiful than the petunias. The poppies, which had grown large and tall, were transformed overnight into a mound of dark and murky mush.

One big and all-important difference, however, exists between the petunias and the poppies. That difference is a strong and sustaining root system.

When Spring returns, my poppies will grow again. They'll actually grow even bigger and better and brighter because they possess a strong core of inner strength.

Into each life a little rain must fall. Sometimes the rain falls gently to wash the earth and settle the dust. Often, driven by a harsh gale-force wind, the rain pounds down with enough force to erode away every weakness. On occasion the rain is accompanied by frigid temperatures and everything its freezing fingers touch becomes bone-chilling ice. No matter how the rain falls, the storm's passage always replenishes the moisture necessary to sustain and perpetuate growth.

The longer I live, the more I realize life equates to lessons and learning. As my days accumulate into weeks, and months, and years, I've learned and painfully relearned many of life's lessons. One of those lessons is we're all appointed a season to be born, another to grow, and finally a time to die.

In the interim, I'd like to live my life more like the poppies than the petunias. I'd like to possess the stamina to perpetually endure the cold harsh seasons life sends my way with enough inner strength and faith to continually be ready for each new Spring.

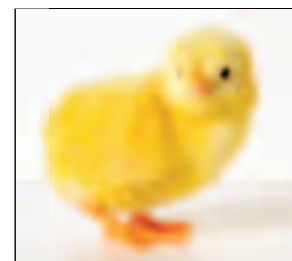


©2025 Jan Keller No reprint without permission Jan shares other pieces of her life in her books, *Pieces From My Crazy Quilt*, and *The Tie That Binds*. These books can be ordered by calling 719-866-8570, or writing: Black Sheep Books, 11250 Glen Canyon Drive, Peyton, CO 80831

Wit and Wisdom

Spring Brings Hope

by Roxanne J. Ferguson



My favorite season of the year is spring. There is a freshness in the air that breathes new beginnings. When the little white snowdrops poke their heads through the wet soil, they seem to say, "Be gone, winter! You have been here long enough!" They are followed by the purple crocus who come with a smile and confidently say, "Spring is on its way!" When yellow daffodils open their smiling faces, we know that spring is here in full force. Then tulips, in their multi-color outfits, celebrate the triumph of spring. "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of the birds is come" (Song of Solomon 2:11,12 KJV Bible)

Birds were returning before the snow had left us. I wondered if they were disappointed when they arrived, but it didn't seem to deter them. Red-winged blackbirds and robins were the first to return. We have since enjoyed many visitors at our bird feeder and they enjoy the seeds we provide.

We have had fun this spring trying something new. We put eggs from our chickens into an incubator, keeping track of temperature and humidity. It was our first attempt at this endeavor and our hatching rate was low, but we were still happy to see a few chicks push their way out of their shells and find their way into the world. The little yellow balls of fluff just show us what determination can accomplish! My father decided those little yellow chicks needed some company. After a trip to the local farm store, he arrived at my house with a dozen chicks, adding a variety of color to my little flock. I have to say, chicks make me happy. They, too, represent the newness of spring. They are fluffy and busy and excited about life!

"Where flowers bloom so does hope." (A quote from Lady Bird Johnson) I would have to add to this...Where flowers bloom and little chicks peep, there is hope! Spring brings hope...hope of better weather and warmer days, hope of changing seasons and that life goes on, hope for better days. We all need hope in our lives. The Bible says, "Blessed is he...whose hope is in the Lord his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them – the Lord, who remains faithful forever." (Psalm 145:5,6)

I don't know about you, but I need hope. I like spring and new life. It reminds me of the hope I have in Jesus. By putting my faith in Him and the price He paid for our salvation, I have hope for new life in heaven and hope for eternity. I hope that you have this hope, too.

© 2025 Roxanne Ferguson lives in northern New York State, between Lake Ontario and the Adirondack Mountains, an area called the Tug Hill Plateau...snow country. Roxanne is a wife, mother, and grandmother of 8. She enjoys gardening, preserving food, music, writing and spending time with her grandchildren. She is active in her church and community. A retired teacher, she wonders how she ever had time to work. (witandwisdomwriters@gmail.com)



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Exploring the World of International Quilt Festivals: A Global Journey of Inspiration Part 1 of 4

by Kim Caskey of Kim Caskey Tours

Quilt festivals are among the most inspiring and visually rich gatherings in the quilt and textile world, celebrating the creativity, artistry and cultural diversity found within quilting. From local guild events to prestigious international exhibitions, each show offers a unique glimpse into the evolving world of textiles and fiber art.

I host many group tours of textile enthusiasts through fascinating countries. We visit destinations such as Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the UK, France, Italy, Japan and parts of Canada, each offering an unforgettable quilting experience. In this series of articles, I will share highlights of quilt festivals, from local guild gatherings with strong community spirit, to major international events featuring juried competitions, themed exhibitions and displays from world-renowned artists.

Local Quilt Guild Quilt Shows



Local Quilt Guild Show

A local quilt guild show is a heartwarming celebration of quilting, bringing together community spirit and artistic expression. Organized by guild members, these shows transform local spaces into vibrant displays of color, texture and pattern, where

quilters of all levels—from beginner to seasoned artists—showcase and celebrate their unique work. Each quilt tells a personal story, while reflecting the collective passion of the guild, making these gatherings a beautiful tribute to quilting as both a craft and an art form.

Guild shows have an open, welcoming atmosphere, often featuring themed categories like traditional, modern and applique quilts, as well as specialty categories such as seasonal quilts or "first quilt show entries." Many shows offer interactive elements, with live demonstrations, workshops and a lively vendor marketplace selling quilting supplies. With raffles, door prizes and a chance to connect with other enthusiasts, local guild quilt shows are as much about community as they are about creativity, inspiring newcomers and experienced quilters alike.

International Quilt Festivals

In contrast, large international festivals like Quilt Canada, the International Quilt Festival in Houston, the Festival of Quilts in Birmingham, and the European Patchwork Meeting in France elevate the art form to new heights. Juried-in competitions at these events highlight some of the world's finest quilts, selected by expert panels for their creativity, technique and innovation. In addition to competitive exhibitions, these festivals often host themed displays and invited exhibitions from renowned textile artists, offering attendees a chance to witness cutting-edge

techniques and trends from around the world.

The process of being juried into a juried competition is highly selective, and acceptance is a significant honor for participants. The selection process begins with an online submission, where quilters submit photographs and detailed descriptions of their work. Submissions are reviewed by a panel of professional jurors, who are carefully chosen for their expertise in quilting, design and textile arts. These jurors evaluate the quilts based on a range of criteria including technical skill, originality, design composition, color use and overall visual impact. Getting juried into a competition, such as these, signifies a quilt meets a high standard of excellence. Accepted quilts are prominently displayed for attendees to admire. Winning entries receive cash awards



Local Quilt Guild Show Bus Tour

and accolades in categories such as Best of Show, Excellence in Hand or Machine Quilting and Best Use of Color. Attending a juried-in competition quilt show is both an inspiration for viewers and an acknowledgment of the incredible talent and diversity within the worldwide quilting community.

The vendor mall at an international quilt festival is a bustling marketplace and paradise for quilting and textile enthusiasts, featuring an incredible range of products from quilt shops, specialty stores and online vendors. Spanning aisle upon aisle, these vendor malls offer everything from high-quality and unique fabrics in every imaginable color and print, to specialty threads, patterns and notions that cannot be found anywhere else. It is a grand meeting place for quilt shop owners, designers and artisans, who bring unique goods directly to festival-goers, showcasing items like hand-dyed textiles, rare imported materials, custom-designed patterns and the latest sewing tools and technology. The mall buzzes with excitement as attendees explore, sample and discover hidden treasures, often finding inspiration in the newest products, innovative kits and expert demonstrations. For many, the vendor mall is a highlight of the festival, where creativity and commerce intersect in a vibrant celebration of all things quilting.

We'll cover **Quilt Canada** and **The International Quilt Festival** in the next issue of *The Country Register*!

Kim Caskey, who is based in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is a professional longarm quilter and owner of Kim Caskey Tours. Kim hosts specialized textile-based tours in numerous international destinations with unique and exclusive textile visits and activities creating memorable experiences for quilters, stitchers, their family and friends. Everyone is welcome on Kim's tours! www.kimcaskey.ca/tours, kim@kimcaskey.ca
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Become Inspired

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

Nature's Next Chapter

As the long months of winter slowly wind down, we begin to notice a welcome shift in our days. Our daylight hours stretch out before us now as if to remind us of the powerful promise of spring. An early spring walk through our yard provides us with glimpses into nature's next chapter as our lilac trees show their new buds and our friendly, vocal robins begin to appear with more frequency. Our herb gardens, which have appeared to be in hibernation all winter long are now about ready to reveal their strength, and remarkably, so are we.



Nature's Reawakening

There is a special energy to spring that is seemingly contagious. As nature reawakens to the glory of spring, we feel a similar need to mirror nature's forward motion. And as we embrace the opportunities to observe the blessings of spring, we become beautifully connected to the joy that it provides.

Spending more time outside rejuvenates us and the cabin fever we had at winter's end is now a distant memory. We have energy now to happily plan fresh projects for our yard-like a new stone patio or an additional raised garden bed to enhance our country yards. We might consider getting baby chicks to add to our flock of chickens to provide even more delight to our days.

A weekend spent on decorating projects like making our own twig wreaths and topiaries or rearranging our porch with welcoming antiques and fresh vignettes often give us a sense of true satisfaction. Our homes can be freshened with the season of spring as well by incorporating elements like handcrafted Easter rabbits and eggs tucked into one of our favorite antique splint baskets. And with country candles in new scents like Lemon Butter or Lavender Fields, our home's interior takes on a whole new feel of spring.

Sharing the Blessings of Spring

This season is the perfect time to plan a special outing with friends to enjoy some special Open House events. A morning spent going out for a country breakfast could be followed by a trip to some favorite antiques shops to find the ideal treasures to round out your displays. Storefront windows might be graced with an antique wheelbarrow in its original surface, filled with faux tulips in muted spring colors. Handcrafted signs in pastel tones might inspire you to create a spring vignette in your entryway. An antique wagon in dark green might be a perfect treasure to bring home to hold some of the pansy plants you purchased on your special day. You might even be inspired by some antique tin or woodenware that could be used as planters or wall hangings in your new displays. Your ideal day with friends might end with a beautiful walk along the boardwalk of a quaint, shoreline town as you reconnect, share ideas and enjoy meaningful memories.

This season, take the time to observe nature's shift to spring. Enjoy the energized pace that accompanies the lengthening days. Make it a point to create something you have always wanted to create. And most importantly, share the transformative power of spring with those you love and when you do you will be reminded of all that nature continues to give.

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

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Spring's Arrival

by Janet Young

Spring, a transition season between winter and summer, is when the world comes alive again, after hibernating for the past three months. It is a time when the days are longer, while the nights grow shorter. And, almost overnight the grass begins to turn green, the leaves begin to bud, and the birds have returned heralding with their glorious chirps to everyone that Spring has arrived!



As we welcome the warmth of a new season, we are mindful of all that this new season brings. For example, if you are a gardener, now is the time to plant seeds in your vegetable garden, or clean out your flower beds and fill them with colorful flowers. It is, also, the beginning of grass-cutting season, preparing your porch or patio for those summertime moments that make your heart sing as you languish in the splendor of a warm summer night, after being couped up all winter long.

After a long, cold winter, Spring brings its' many virtues, as it ushers in an invigorating spirit that makes us come alive. Our tasks while numerous this time of year are accomplished with a new sense of enthusiasm. Suddenly Spring house-cleaning takes on a new dimension, as we fling upon our windows and let the refreshing warm breezes flow through our house.

Our spirits are lifted as we look forward to celebrating Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, and maybe even April Fool's Day. Adding to that list might be making plans for your summer vacation if you have not already done so, or planning your first barbecue.

In addition to all the fun Spring affords, this might be a good time for reflection. For example, how are you doing with you New Year's resolution? It's never too late to renew those resolutions, after all this is a season of renewal.

As we enter this rejuvenating time of the year, my wish for you is that you will take a deep breath, throw open your windows, and let the celebration begin, for Spring 2025 arrives on March 25th!

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

Recipe: Homemade Guacamole

Ingredients:

- 3 avocados
 - 1/2 cup chopped tomatoes
 - 1/4 cup chopped onion
 - 2 tsp minced garlic
 - 1 tbsp fresh chopped cilantro
- 1 tsp salt
 - 1 tsp pepper
 - 1 tsp cayenne pepper
 - 1 tsp chili powder
 - 1/2 tsp hot pepper sauce



Directions:

Combine ingredients and mix well. Chill and serve.

Springing Ahead Without Falling Back

by Wayne M. Bosman

I have not been able to write much lately. Life does that sometimes. The holidays grab my attention, and then after the New Year begins, I get to breathe out again. I figure out where I am and what I might have to say.

This year, life has added even more complications. Shortly after New Year's, my 40-year-old daughter went into the hospital for more chemotherapy, a last-ditch attempt against the cancer she had battled for the last year and a half. The latest obstacle was a bout of pneumonia that had to be treated before any other treatment could take place. It was the beginning of a downward spiral that ended a week ago.

As difficult as all of this has been, I know that I am not the first or only one to deal with a loved one's premature death. My wife, Kerri, and I have been watching my daughter's fitful decline since she received the official diagnosis. We moved to our current home to be able to take care of things for her and her husband and their children. Doing all of the little things that still needed to occur. Being available to pick up her children from school, shopping and preparing meals suitable for her family provided her with some relief knowing that they still were getting what they needed when she could no longer do the things that she loved to do as a wife and mother. As the cancer progressed and she was anchored more and more to the house, she was always happy to get the little messages that we had picked up her son on time and what we were cooking for supper.

Now that momentum, which had become the central focus of our lives, has come to a halt. Life is demanding a new momentum. Life always does. We are all still grieving and will be for a long time, but children need meals. The Marine Corps has gone above and beyond in providing leave for her husband, but ultimately, he will go back to his full-time duties. Kerri and I will settle into the new momentum life demands of us.

That brings me to the theme of this article. While we are still mired in the middle of winter with remnants of last week's snow on the ground, it is clear that it will not always be that way. As the snow melts and we look out the back window at the garden space, our thoughts are already turning toward the next stage. Last year's garden was one of our most productive ever and we are starting to dream of an even better one this year. Seed catalogs are arriving. Plans for starting seedlings indoors are pushing their way to the forefront of our minds.



Of course, some of this is what you might call a defense mechanism. Focus on growth and new life, so the sorrows from what is lost forever don't drag us under. Naturally. There is too much about the end of life that we can't comprehend. To me, the greatest act of faith is to continue to live - to plant seeds that I may or may not ever get to harvest. My mother is 104 years old now. If you ever want to get her talking, ask about her garden and all of the gardens she has tended over the years. Ask her about her mother's garden and the bounty it produced that got her family and many neighbors through the Great Depression.

It won't be long now before the first signs of spring arrive. The silly daffodils that always seem to bloom between snowstorms. Time for me to spring ahead and not fall back.

Wayne M. Bosman is a retired mechanic living in Cape Carteret, NC. His email is wbosman1@gmail.com.



Happy St. Patrick's Day ~ March 17

Farm Animals and Meadow Muffins

by Nancy Nash

Farm animals bridge the gap between the wild creatures of forest and field (like deer and foxes) and the well-loved pets (like dogs and cats) that share our homes and backyards. Growing up in a semi-rural neighborhood, I had quite a few encounters with farm animals.

When I was about five or six, my father acquired fertilized eggs for hatching, and something called an incubator, with lights to keep them warm. I was fascinated. Lo-and-behold, one day tiny chicks began to crack open their eggs and step out, damp and gangly. A few weeks later, they walked around the yard, pecking at insects and running away if we frightened them. My mother taught me how to approach them slowly and hold them gently (an important lesson).

Dad built a chicken coop for the swiftly growing brood. It stood at the edge of the pasture bordering our backyard, and we children carried pails of water when we went to feed and water them. We took our time, watching any chickens outside the coop scratch the dirt for grubs and larger insects. We called their names, inspiring them to look up at us with mild curiosity before continuing their quest for food. When they were inside the coop, my brother often used them as an audience while he rehearsed a talk for school. They were never critical of his presentation. Today, when I mention the early unwavering support he received, he laughs. However, considering that he has long been a superb public speaker, I can't help wondering if their calm presence had something to do with the ease with which he delivers a lecture!

My father's other venture in raising farm animals was renting the pasture to local dairy farmers as a place for heifers to graze during summer months. He maintained the barbed wire fence and kept an eye on things. It was my mother, though, who had a special rapport with these creatures. If they were nearby when she walked along the fence line, they came running. They just seemed to sense that she had a soft spot in her heart for them. Little did they know that she often counted them from the kitchen window to make sure they all were in the pasture. She even noticed features of their looks or personalities and named some of them. When one of the cows gave birth, of course we admired the wobbly little one and cheered its arrival in the world.



Once, though, a farmer came with a truck to take a few cows back home. One heifer ran away from him, evidently overcome with nervousness and fear. She ran to a woodpile and somehow managed to leap astride it, much to the surprise of us onlookers. The woodpile was perhaps four or five feet high—but not for very long. The logs tumbled down and so did mom as the calf ran away.

The next day the farmer returned with a favorite food to coax the heifer onto his truck. It worked. The treat distracted the calf from whatever misgivings she had about that vehicle.

Dad longed for a tractor and eventually acquired one. Among other tasks, after the cows had returned home at the end of the summer, he used it to collect clusters of manure deposited across the landscape. He would take a dung fork and walk alongside a low wooden wagon hitched to the tractor as I drove it slowly through the empty pasture. Every so often, he would tell me to stop until he had loaded a supply of what we called "meadow muffins" onto the cart. Months later, our garden vegetables would benefit from this organic fertilizer.

Before there were tractors, there were horses. Our neighbors had one, though they no longer used it to plow the fields. One day, when I was a young schoolgirl, Dad borrowed the horse to till a few rows of a garden plot. He hitched it to an old-fashioned cart and off we went down the road. At home, I got to ride the horse a moment or two while Dad walked alongside and kept watch of me. Then he hitched the horse to a plow and guided it as the horse pulled it through the soft, dark soil. I got to watch a peaceful scene unfold as the small plot was prepared for planting. A few years later, I took to walking down the road and visiting the horse as it stood by the fence in its pasture home. It was a place to daydream and enjoy the company of a gentle farm animal.

2024 Nancy J. Nash

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



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Carrot Cake in a Mug

- 1 tbsp butter, melted
- 1 tsp oil
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp. Brown Sugar
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 tbsp milk
- 3 tbsp flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- pinch salt
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 cup finely shredded carrots

For The Frosting:

- 1 tbsp softened cream cheese
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp butter, softened
- 1 tbsp powdered sugar

1. Combine the melted butter, oil, sugar, brown sugar, vanilla extract and milk.
2. Stir until blended well.
3. Add the flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon.
4. Mix until just combined.
5. Cook on high for 1 - 1 1/2 minutes. Start with a minute and check for doneness.

For the Frosting:

1. In a small bowl, mix all the frosting ingredients.
2. Allow cake to cool for at least a minute before topping with the frosting.

Recipe by My Outer Life



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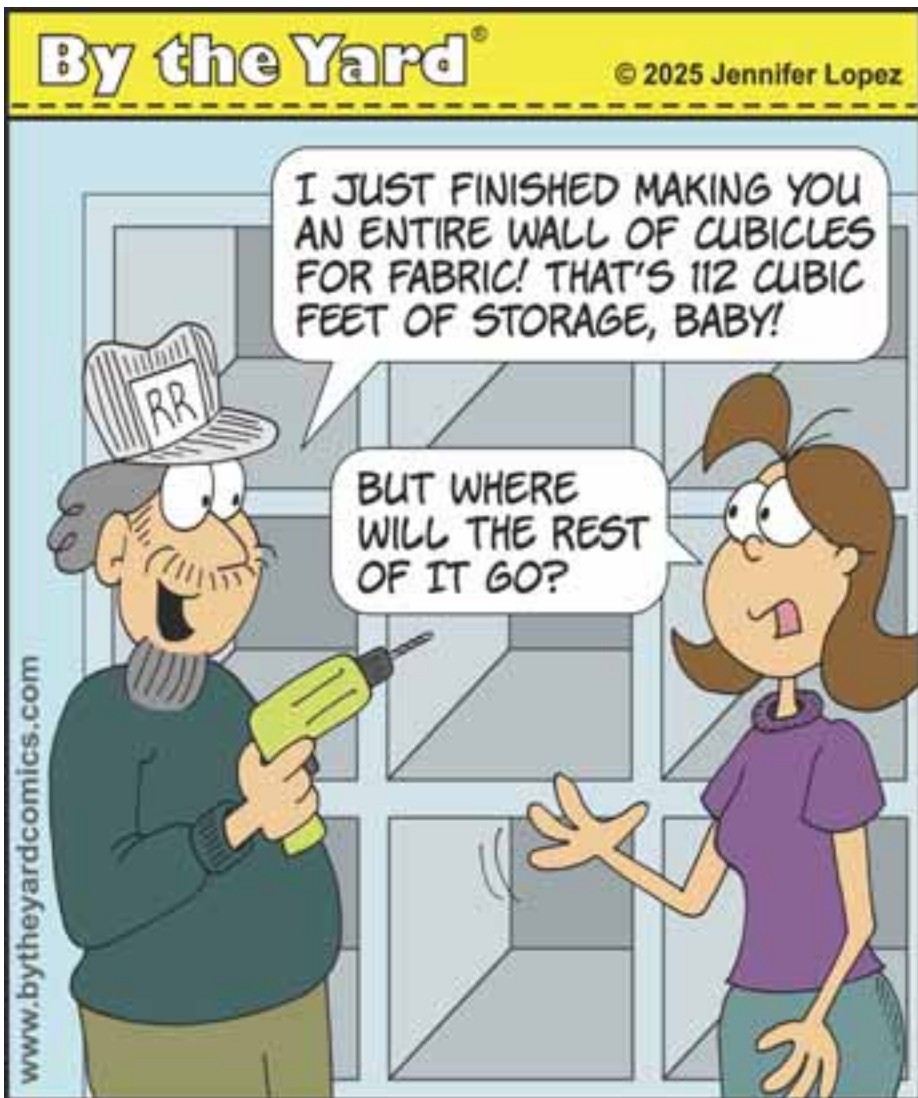


On this day in History

March 12, 1933: President Franklin D. Roosevelt gives his first national radio address called "fireside chats". Over Roosevelt's 12 years of presidency he delivered more than 30 Fireside Chats explaining his hopes and dreams for the nation, build support for his groundbreaking New Deal policies and wartime policies once WWII started. Roosevelt took great care to make sure each address was available and understandable to ordinary Americans.

April 22, 1945: Adolf Hitler admits to all in his underground bunker that the war is lost and suicide is his only recourse. This is after hearing there was no German defense to the Russian assault at Eberswalde.

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