

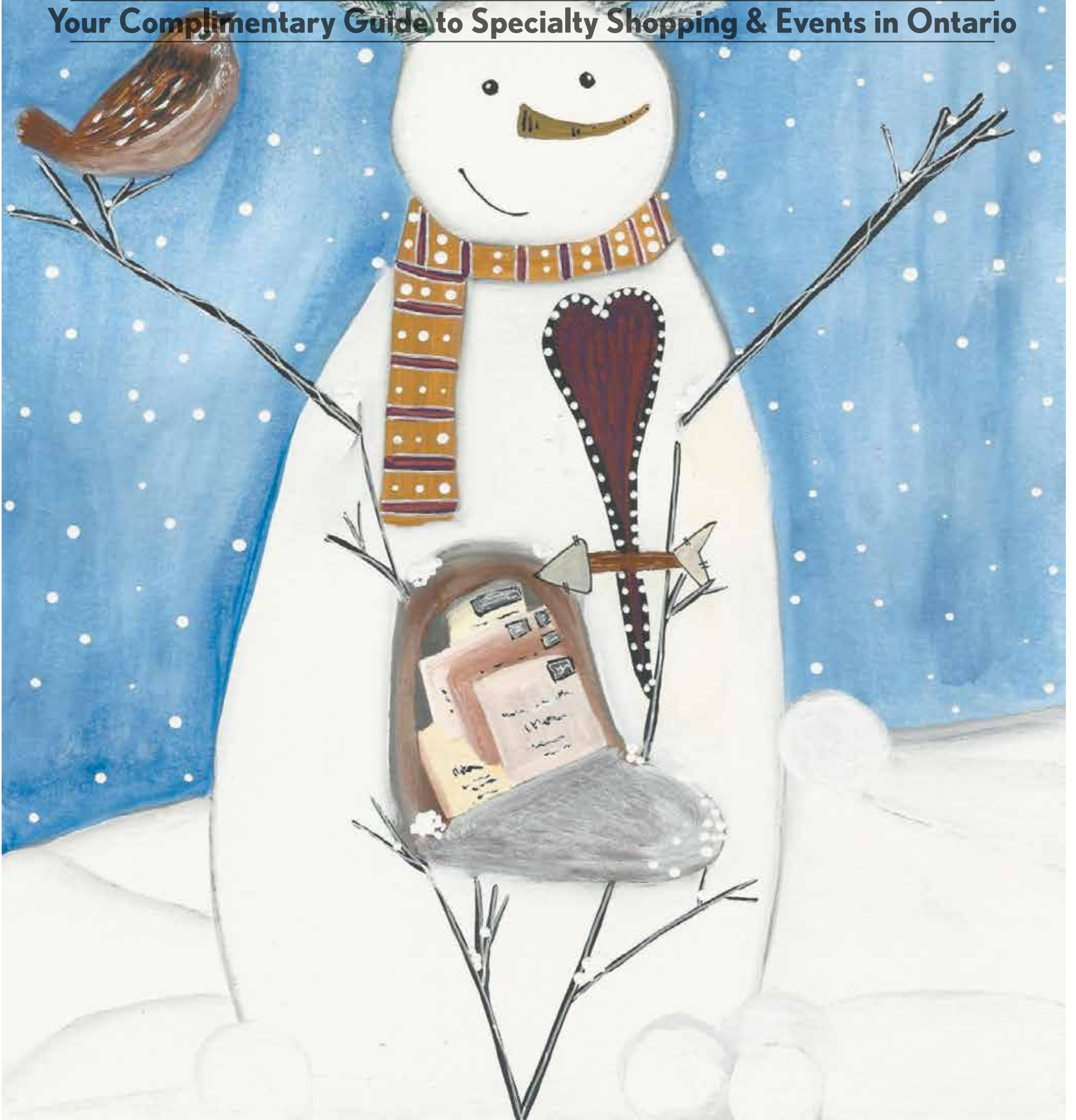
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Deb Dunn



As an intuitive artist, I love working with and exploring a variety of mediums.

The seasons, water, trees and nature strongly influence my work.

My paintings, illustrations, photography, fibre arts and writing have been featured in many national publications. I frequently participate in group exhibits, art auctions and juried shows.

When not creating in my little sparrow studio, I can be found on long walks along Lake Ontario or woodland paths with my husband, camera in hand, taking pictures and enjoying all four beautiful seasons. I often feel I am walking a painting into existence. There is so much beauty to be found listening to the inner wisdom and teachings of the Earth. In gratitude, I paint.

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Borderline Good

Borderline Gift Giving

by Kirby Gust

Christmases have changed for Carl and Mary over the years. When they were first married and just starting out, they needed things, making gift-giving easy. Back when they got married, it was different than it is today. Today's young married couples start with almost everything they need to run a household. This was not the case when Carl and Mary began their life together.

To put things into perspective, one gift they received as a wedding present was a plastic patio dining set. It consisted of a plastic table and four plastic chairs. Carl and Mary used this set as their primary dining table in their kitchen for the first 5 years of marriage. One present they received as a wedding gift changed Mary's life forever. An electric tea kettle with self-shut off. The kettle sat on a corded stand, and once the water boiled, you could remove the kettle to pour out the water without worrying about the cord getting in the way or toppling something over on the countertop. Mary has replaced this kettle and every other one like it with a similar model. As an active tea drinker and cook, she finds this type of kettle irreplaceable.

Other wedding gifts included practical things like bath and or dish towels, so when it came time to come up with Christmas gift ideas, it wasn't a matter of what to purchase for each other; it was more a matter of what they could afford to give each other that they needed.

For their first Christmas together, Mary gifted Carl with a housecoat, or bathrobe, as some call it. Carl had never had the luxury of wearing a robe fresh out of the shower to wick away the excess moisture from his skin or around the house in the late evenings just before bed, and Mary felt odd in hers as Carl got ready for bed, doing such things as brushing his teeth, still dressed in the clothes he had worn all day.

Carl's gift for Mary that first year was a set of good pots and pans. Something he had found listed in a Christmas flyer for 50% off the regular price. Mary was sure grateful for that sale because, without it, Carl would have never been able to afford the set. Until then, Mary had been getting by with odds and ends of cooking sets that her mother didn't use and given to her instead of throwing them in the trash. Some of the pots were made of such light aluminum that when empty, the weight of the wood in the handle would tip them over. Shortly after they were married, Mary made boiled baby beets one night. They had harvested the beets from their first garden together for that night's supper. When it came time to do the dishes, there was nothing Mary could do to get the red colour off the sides of the pot. By Christmas that year, they were still eating orange-pink potatoes, pink rice, and purple broccoli. Each time she used the pot, a little of the red colour from the beets would leach back into the cooking water. At Christmas lunch that year, Carl joked with Mary that she could have used that pot one last time to give a red Christmas tinge to the mashed potatoes.

In the following years, Carl filled Mary's kitchen with the things she needed to make the kitchen her own. These gifts included a stand mixer, good heavy-duty cookie sheets, a set of lovely mixing bowls and a proper kitchen table. The chairs, however, had to wait for another year.

Over these years, Carl found things under the tree like a good set of wrenches, both in imperial and metric, a good handsaw and, one year to Carl's amazement, a router. Mary, however, had neglected to add a router bit to go along with the router, and Carl had to wait until the next time he visited a hardware store before he could use it.

Over the years, Mary gifted Carl enough tools to take good care of their vehicles and do the renovations that their new home desperately needed.

It took quite a few years of hard work and watching their pocketbooks before they could add what they considered luxury items to their gift-giving. One year, Mary gave Carl a nice pair of what were called house socks. She thought it would be a treat for him to wear them around the house instead of his usual tube socks that came in a package of 10. Then, one year later, she went one better, and Carl found a pair of leather slippers under the tree. Before this, Carl had only ever had homemade knitted slippers that lived up to their name because you had to be very careful walking on tile or linoleum with them to prevent slipping and hurting yourself. Carl had never had leather slippers before and now doesn't know how he ever lived without them.

Over the years, Carl tried to spoil Mary with gifts like electric blankets

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and heating pads. Mary, who is forever "freezing," as she puts it, enjoys these gifts greatly.

One gift that Mary gives Carl every year is still, to this day, a bit puzzling to Carl, to say the least. Carl has lost track of how many years this has been going on and has no idea how it ever started, but Mary gifts Carl a box of brandy bean chocolates every year, and every year, Carl takes the brandy beans down to his workbench in the corner of the basement and sets them down and forgets about them. That is until he is working away at his workbench fixing something or other and catches a glimpse of the box out of the corner of his eye. This usually happens in early winter after Carl has finished the outside chores for the year and has time to fiddle away in his workshop. Carl will get up off of his stool and wander over to where the box of Brandy beans has been for 11 or so months untouched by him since he set them down shortly after Christmas. Every time, he will find that the box has not only been opened but that the plastic tray inside with little individual indents for each brandy bean is entirely void of any remaining chocolates.

After this had gone on for about 10 years, Carl decided one year to surprise Mary with her very own box of brandy bean chocolates. He was sure Mary was only buying them for him because she wanted them for herself and wasn't willing to miss out on them by taking the chance that Carl would remember to get them for her.

That particular Christmas morning, Carl waited with bated breath for Mary to open that one special gift. He was sure her face would light up like she was a child again. The type of smile a child has when seeing a new toy for the first time. What Carl found on Mary's face instead was a look of complete and utter confusion. She looked at him and asked, "What are these for?". "Those are those brandy bean chocolates you love so much!" said Carl. "That I like so much?" said Mary. "you're the one that likes them, that's why I give them to you every year. I admit I may snitch a few now and again from your workbench when I'm downstairs doing laundry, but really, let's not be kidding ourselves; they are much more your thing than mine."

Mary still buys Carl "his" box of brandy bean chocolates every year. Carl has learned to check on them more often now. He has noticed from his observations that the box usually stays unopened until around late February. Then, one by one, they slowly disappear until late October, and then, with only one or two chocolates left in the box, they go untouched for about a month. He assumes this is because once Halloween arrives, there are other candies readily available around the house. Carl has no idea when the last few chocolates disappear from the box. Carl knows that every year, the box is empty sometime before Christmas and that the empty box stays there until it is replaced with a new one shortly after Christmas.

Mary's motto, "Everything is better when it snitched," explains her gift to Carl every year. Carl has not worked up the courage to tell Mary that he has somewhat adopted her motto and sometimes, just sometimes, mind you. has one of "his own" brandy beans.



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Memories with Santa Claus

by Kerri Habben Bosman

Towards the end of a year, I sit for a bit and contemplate Santa Claus. Not the one visiting from the North Pole at the mall and not the new decorations in the stores. I just look across the living room and study the form of a 14" stuffed bearded, velvet figure who emerges every December. He spends the rest of the year in a cardboard box that held cans of food 40 years ago.

This Santa has been a part of every Christmas I have ever known.

My great aunt, Aunt Wilma, brought him home in the early 1920's. She was in her early 20's, age-wise. Home then was an apartment in a six family house in Brooklyn, New York that she shared with her mother, three brothers, and a sister, my grandmother. Her father had died suddenly in 1919 when she was 17. She and my grandmother worked as winders in a small knitting mill. Their economic situation was far from prosperous, but somehow there was always enough.

Around the corner from where they lived was a store I've only heard referred to as "the Junkies." I assume it was something like a thrift store. There she found our Santa Claus.

Santa was there the Christmases of 1929 and 1930 that Uncle Henry had to be away at the tuberculosis sanitarium, and he was there through the Decembers my Uncle Bill struggled with a brain tumor in the late 1930's.

Santa listened to the tap of my Uncle Henry's typewriter as he wrote his Christmas correspondence at the dining room table. He was there as my great-grandmother, Nanna, baked and cooked for the holiday. Santa was also there the Christmas of 1958, the first one she wasn't there for.

He was there as the family had grown with marriages and children arriving. One of those children, of course, was my mother. Santa was there for her first Christmas and every Christmas after. He sat upon the piano as Mom played carols and hymns every December growing up and into early adulthood.

In 1967 Aunt Wilma and Uncle Henry moved from the home that our Santa had known for over 40 years. When Aunt Wilma wanted to toss him

out, Mom rescued him. Thus, he has been a part of every Christmas I have ever known.

He was there during my first Christmas in 1973, and he moved to North Carolina with my parents, grandparents, and myself in 1978. He was there through all the changes a few decades bring, including Mom's last Christmas in 2017. Thus, he was saved during the purging of possessions when my husband, Wayne, and I sold my childhood home.

Now Santa has been there for our Christmas celebrations. Wayne's five grown children and their families gather at our house, and we all treasure being together. Santa has seen everyone open their presents, including the knitted and crocheted gifts I make every year with extra love in them.

Our Santa has indeed seen better days. The velvet of his suit is flat and worn, its burgundy red perhaps a bit faded. The once white trim on his clothes is a dull brown in some places and entirely gone in others. His beard is now matted and a yellowish gray, no longer fully glued to his face.

Yet, he exudes more spirit than all the untested, brand-new Santas out there. His fabric face retains every feature with that customary twinkle in his brown eyes. His cheeks are as rosy as if he just arrived on his sleigh.

Our Santa is vibrant with the many decades of December memories that he carries. This Christmas, he will again see what he has seen ever since Aunt Wilma brought him home. He will see love.

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



BATCHES OF A DIFFERENT KIND

by Barbara Conquest

Folk wisdom tells us that time seems to pass more quickly as one ages and I'm beginning to think that, like most folk wisdom, there is a kernel of truth in there somewhere. Wasn't it just a few weeks ago we wrapped our fragile Christmas decorations carefully before putting them away and taking down the tree?

Much of the rush to accomplish the impossible (an immaculate house, to-die-for Christmas baking and the perfect present for everyone on our list) is pushed on us by commercial interests, of course. When we lived in the city, the department stores were displaying Halloween and Christmas items simultaneously. The strains of "holiday music" drifted through the air, while shoppers picked up treats for the little ghosts and goblins, who would appear at their doors October 31. (In fact, I have seen fully-decorated trees in stores as early as September, along with back-to-school). In our small town, commercialism isn't nearly as blatant, but even here we are beginning to plan Christmas events and get-togethers because time is marching on at an increasing rate.

If one feels obligated to have a stock of hostess, emergency and "small" gifts on hand (who doesn't?) and time is galloping past, there must be ways to lessen the stress, save time and add enjoyment to Christmas preparations. Many of us participated in Christmas cookie exchanges, where each member of a defined group makes enough cookies of one kind to provide a pre-set number—usually a dozen—to each member of the group. In return we receive the same number of cookies from other members, resulting in a variety of goodies for everybody. Economy of scale applies here. It is more efficient to make one huge batch of the same kind of cookie than to make several small batches of different kinds.

Why shouldn't the same process be used by quilters and crafters with hand-made "gifty" items instead of cookies? One person in the group might be a whiz at making a particular type of unique ornament, while others might specialize in such items as fast "ten-minute" table runners, sewn coasters, Christmas-print kitchen towels or fancy seasonal pot-holders. Festive reusable gift bags made by one member could be used by all. If a number of group members, say ten, wanted to book a day to get together, they could spend that day working on their specialty projects, trade at the end of the day, and everyone would go home with nine different projects that someone else made in addition to their own. Add a pot luck lunch, or perhaps a celebratory grand finale with wine and cheese and you have the recipe for an enjoyable, productive day spent with friends. How about that?

What's more, you can grin to yourself and feel a little smug as you watch other people coping with crowds and cheesy canned Christmas music as they hurriedly search for the elusive one-of-a-kind gifts you already have stashed away at home! Merry Christmas to you and yours! w

Article © Barbara Conquest, BlueSky Quilting, Tofield, AB

The Christmas Trees That Could Not Be Sold

Many years ago, my father operated a Christmas tree business in Massachusetts. Every October, he would drive his old Studebaker car to rural Vermont or eastern Canada, keeping an eye out for stands of tall and shapely balsam and spruce visible from the road. He was seeking batches of trees he could line up to buy wholesale in early December. He and a few hired men would return to cut them down, bundle them (wrap twine around the branches to keep them from jostling), and transport them back home to sell in open lots in a nearby city. For now, he drove along and kept watch, and when he spotted a promising patch of trees, he would go looking for the owner.

Usually, he found these evergreens in pastures belonging to nearby farmers. Dad offered them a small amount to purchase the trees, coupled with a promise to return in December with a truck and a crew to cut down the trees and take them off the farmers' hands. They were eager to sell and delighted to have more land freed to plant their crops – sparing themselves the tedious and risky work of felling the trees on their own.

One October was different. Driving past an attractive set of trees, Dad pulled up his Studebaker to the closest farmhouse. Stepping out of the car, he noticed the quiet all around him. The porch was dilapidated. Poverty hung like a shadow over the house.

He knocked on the door, and moments passed. A cat ambled by on the porch. Finally, the door creaked open, and an old man with a long, white beard appeared. My father offered to purchase the stand of trees he had spotted, but the man quietly refused.

Too stunned to speak, my dad gazed at the person in the doorway. The man was scrawny, and his clothes were faded and threadbare. Nonetheless, he had the kindest eyes my father had ever seen. It was a kindness that welled up from the depths of his being, at once gentle and steady. Time stood still in the face of the old man's peaceful certainty. The words my father had planned to say slipped away unspoken. He thanked the man and left.

Still puzzled, Dad headed into town for a bite to eat at a small restaurant, where he struck up a conversation with a local resident.

"Why?" Dad asked. "Why wouldn't the old farmer sell his trees? I'm sure he needs the money."

"I know what you mean," came the reply. "But you see, his wife is very ill. Poor woman has been bedridden for a few years now. He looks after her the best he can. Folks hereabouts take turns dropping by with good, hot meals. They've been helping that way for a long time. He can't afford to pay them, so when Christmas rolls around, he gives these families their pick of trees from his woodlot. It's the only way he knows to thank them, I guess. Saves them money they don't have."

At last, my father understood. He never forgot the old man with the long, white beard and the threadbare clothes and the kindest eyes he ever saw.

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The Christmas Wish

by Deb Heatherly

Ok, I'll admit that Little Sam is not the most original name, but what else do you call a cat that looks exactly like another except for size? Little Sam just seemed to fit.

I'm not sure exactly when he made his presence known, but I clearly remember he was very aloof, coming near only when he knew it was dinner time. For a year he watched me, hiding under bushes and watching my every movement in the yard. At the same time, I watched him and wondered if I would ever be anything but a free meal.

Finally, the day came when I was allowed the honor of petting his head while he ate. Eventually I was allowed to pet him for longer lengths of time and even hold him for short intervals. Still, it was very clear that this

(continues on page 8)

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(continued from page 7)

feral would always be guarded and that snuggling and cuddling were just not in his nature. I was ok with that and happy to be his caretaker.

His boundaries defined; it took me by complete surprise when Little Sam brought home a friend. Actually, more than a friend. Little Sam brought home a kitten and decided to play mother. The tiny gray and white bundle of fur seemed almost attached to Sam's side as they walked in the yard, and most afternoons I'd see them curled up tightly as they slept in the sun. Male or female, I had no clue for the mere sight of me sent the little one under the house with Sam in hot pursuit. Where Sam was, the kitten was. These two were never far apart.

Sam was a good teacher and the kitten paid close attention. I watched from the window as Sam taught him to chase bugs, climb trees, and use my car tire as a scratching post. He also learned quickly to go in and out of the kitty door of the heated shelter we had on the property. This building had been built for the feral cats we fed and looked out for and it was on one of the kitten's visits to the shelter that I thought it was a good idea to teach him about human contact.

Let's just say that I was the one that did the learning that day. Although armed with leather gloves and determination, I was no match for Sam's little student. After much hissing, spitting, and growling the little one, who I named Spitfire because of this encounter, jumped out of my hands and out the kitty door he flew.

While I did hold him briefly that day, he was too mad at being caught to realize that I only wanted to show him love. Love was not something he desired or something I could force. It was then that I realized that I might have finally met my match. I would have to learn patience if I ever wanted to earn his trust.

Several months passed and Spitfire was becoming a handsome young man. Each day he came closer to me, and seemed to be learning that I meant no harm, but any wrong movement or loud noise sent him into a hasty retreat.

Christmas was quickly approaching and my only wish that year was for our young charge to like me, or at least tolerate me enough to allow me to touch him. I did not desire presents, just the feel of this sweet kitty under my fingers. I shared this wish with my family, but no one gave me any hope.

Christmas arrived that year with bitter cold and a cutting wind. Late in the afternoon I ventured outside to wait for my 'present.' He always showed up around the same time knowing I would feed him but today there was no sign of him.

Fooled again I thought. He was the smart one, probably curled up in the kitty shelter out of the cold while I sat on the backsteps shivering. Three times I rattled the food bowls and called which had always worked in the past but not today. On this chilly Christmas evening he was nowhere to be found.

With cold hands and a sad heart, I was about to give up when finally, I caught a glimpse of him out of the corner of my eye. Then, as if he had lived there all of his life, he marched right up to me, looked at the food dish, and loudly demanded his dinner. Much to my delight, he was far too busy eating to notice when I simply reached down and picked him up. I thought for a moment that I was dreaming.

I snuggled, I kissed, and I whispered soft words to my furry captive. He glared at me and then settled into the 'torture.' I was thrilled with each glorious second, but I could almost hear him thinking: "Ok, I'm putting up with this but only because its Christmas."

I'd like to tell you that after that night we were best friends, but Sam's kitten, like Sam, had a mind of his own. I was allowed to pet him when it suited him and on other days, I was back to being a free meal.

In the end, I decided I was ok with him being the boss. Watching him mature and seeing the love between him and Sam was a gift in its own. I would love him on his own terms and be content in the knowledge that Sam had taught him the most important lessons of all - where to find food, where to find shelter, and where to call home.

Authors note: Someone recently asked me if I had a favorite Christmas memory which brought this story to mind. Although this took place many years ago, I will always remember it as one of the best Christmas days of my life. Each year I reflect on what my family deemed as my impossible wish and what I fondly recall as my furry Christmas miracle.

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. <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.

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Peaceful Dwellings
by Annice Bradley Rockwell

As the festive, fast-paced excitement of the holidays draws to a close, we are given a chance to create a protective sanctuary of peace to enjoy the season of winter. Winter weekends might find us venturing to nearby antiques shops searching for perfect pieces to add to our room arrangements. Early baskets, blue decorated stoneware jugs, early treen and country lighting are all wonderful investments that add touches of warmth to our indoor vignettes. Tavern tables flanked with wing-back chairs can be moved closer to the hearth now for a cozy fireside arrangement in which to enjoy a piping hot meal of chicken pot pie and homemade cranberry chutney.

Symbols of Comfort

Our outdoor additions can be equally fulfilling. Setting up the evergreen tree that graced our keeping room during the holidays as an outdoor sanctuary for our wildlife can add visual interest and appeal. Adding natural decorations such as pinecones filled with peanut butter and birdseed can provide a special winter treat for our feathered friends.

As the snow falls and blankets the roads, our home takes on a whole new look against the new backdrop of white. Silhouetted against a stark landscape its features often stand out now as a symbol of comfort and shelter against the season’s cold and blustery days.

Shift to Stillness

Being outside in the elements to gather our seasoned wood for the fire, we are reminded of how blessed we truly are to have the safety of home. Unexpected snow days where a depth of snow provides a day off from our normal daily work provides us with time we can spend enjoying the pure beauty of nature. A winter walk enveloped by the stillness of winter is a country treat meant to be savored. Despite its initially withered and worn appearance, the woods are actually quite vibrant and alive. The sun’s radiant rays on the snow create a brilliance that only belongs to winter. As it is enjoyed, we may catch a glimpse of small creatures endeavoring to forage. We might take advantage of a spectacular new view of our maple swamp as its bare trees allow us to see even more of its fringed beauty.

Winter’s slower pace grants us the blessing of quiet time. Along with this calm rhythm often comes the ability to nurture our ideas and plan for the season ahead. Whether it is being excited about beginning a new business venture or repurposing a small room in our home to be used for a hobby we have come to love, the winter season is the ideal time to allow our concepts to come together and take shape. This season embrace the shift to stillness. Take in the slower moments that allow you to enjoy observing the beauty that abounds in nature. And when you experience that beauty, share that wonder 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

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The Sweetness of Life.

by Kerri Habben Bosman

Late last year, I began a special project. My husband, Wayne and I were driving home from Wisconsin after a visit with his 102 year old mother. He asked me how many essays I had written over the years and suggested that Mom would love to read all of them.

And just like that, I was finally inspired to put together a book of twenty years of essays. I have thought of doing this many times before, but as happens with me, bringing happiness to someone I love galvanizes me into action.

In 2003 I began writing what I called "Compass Points." My dad would have turned 90 that year and I wanted to acknowledge that. In my rereading, I discovered a somewhat inept attempt at creative nonfiction. I winced a bit at the sheer sentimentality of it, but I was also affirmed reading my tribute to him. I felt a flash of grief so intense it revitalized me because for a moment I could feel the entire journey.

Thankfully, over the next ten years, each of the ensuing forty essays steadily improved. And a style developed. Although each piece is different, common themes emerged. Every one carries layers of joy, gratitude and love.

I used some of these essays as a portfolio, which brought further writing assignments, including becoming a part of Country Register publications in 2012. Along the way, the style of these articles grew both more concise and cohesive.

As I prepared the book, it took extensive restraint not to change very much. For this version I wanted each piece to be an authentic representation of who I was when it was written. If I made everything perfect, Mom wouldn't feel the whole story. And neither would I.

The specific details carried me back to a time when both my own mother and grandmother were living. I could fully feel the moments, yet it was also like watching a movie. On the surface each essay appears to be about me, but they are also about people I treasured. Their precious presences linger softly between the lines.

I've felt the following quote with ordinary and pivotal experiences since, though I originally wrote those words in the second article after my mother died:

"Sometimes the sweetness of life bends you in half. In those moments you are utterly and fully alive. When you stand up again, you are stronger, breathe more deeply and experience the world with kinder eyes."

And in the ensuing 28 articles the next chapters of my life pour forth. Described in them is how I lived on my own and then the life that Wayne and I share together. I write about him and the family I love like my own. Including grandchildren who become frequent "characters." Most of them are teenagers now and as I reread the articles I realize anew how quickly and how much they've grown.

And, of course, the Mom that inspired me to put a book together is vibrantly there as well. Presently this book is in the works as a surprise for her. She embraces me and everyone with so much love, which brings me to what I've discovered during my project.

I've learned that the details of my life may have changed over the course of twenty years, but that the root of who I am is the same. I still count my blessings every day. I still believe life doesn't have to be perfect to be ideal.

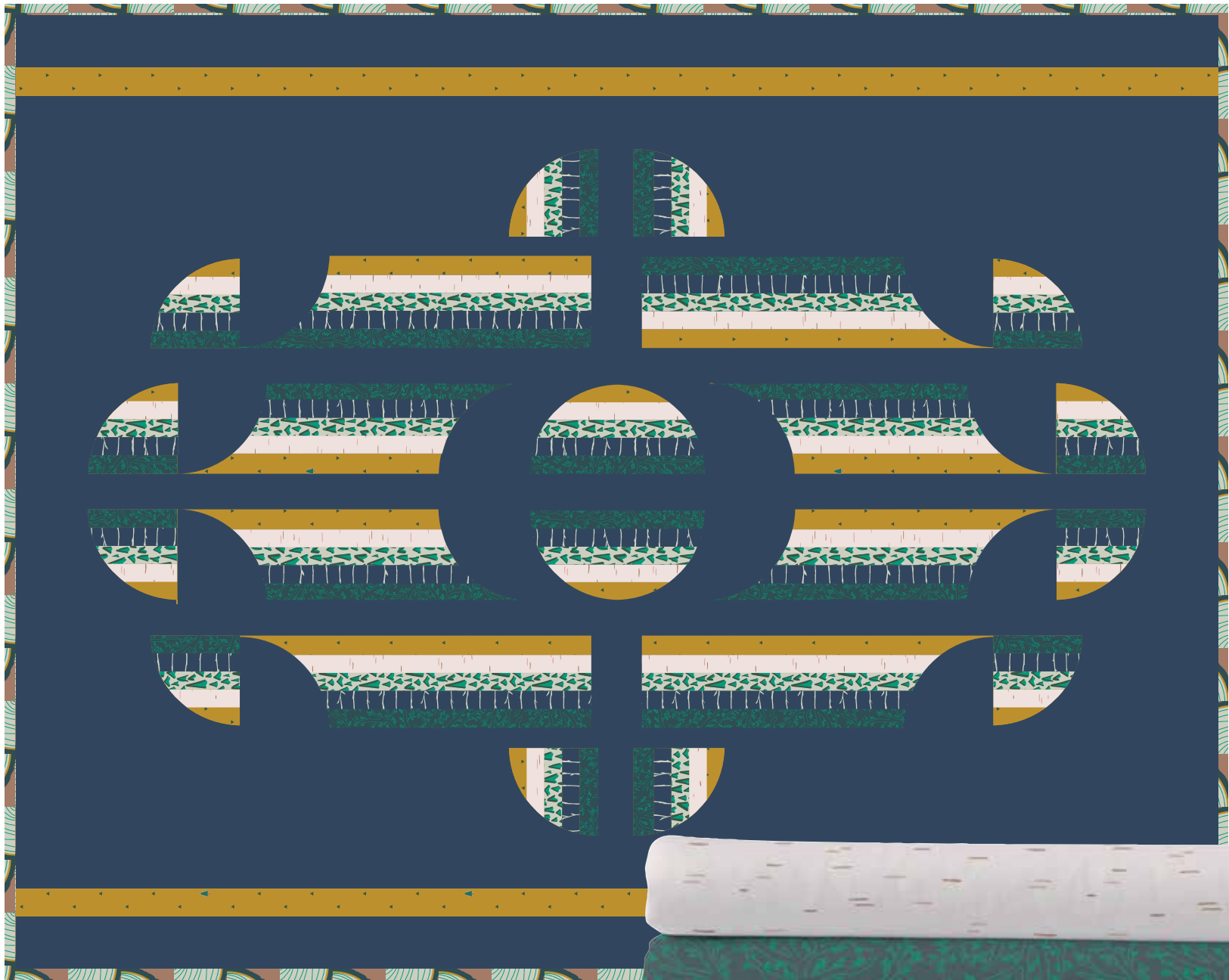
Mostly I have learned that I love exactly the same way. Only with a deeper sense of how huge love truly is. With an open, grateful heart it only grows more. It expands with a redeeming sweetness that sometimes bends me in half.

Kerri Habben Bosman is a writer in Cape Carteret, NC. She can be reached at 913jeeves@gmail.com.

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An After-Thanksgiving Teatime

The holidays are here, creating such a happy time of year!

First, we welcome Thanksgiving with feasting, football, and counting our blessings. Then the joy and excitement of Christmas quickly follow. Between these two holidays, why not plan and enjoy a relaxing "after-Thanksgiving" teatime?

A friend shared that after hosting their Thanksgiving dinner, she and her daughter create a simple teatime for the two of them and perhaps a friend. "It's a time to slow down, relax, and make memories."

The foods and flavors of Thanksgiving are ones that people love to gobble up beyond that holiday. So why not turn your Thanksgiving leftovers into a quick and tasty teatime? By doing so, you can extend the season of gratitude and serve up a festive prelude to Christmas.

As you count your blessings, here are some recipes to consider for your after-Thanksgiving teatime.



Turkey Sandwiches: Take Two

Turkey-Salad Croissants

Delicious to gobble up with leftover, moist turkey.

Gather

- 2 cups diced turkey
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup diced celery
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise (more if you prefer it moister)
- 2 T. cream or milk
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Lettuce leaves, washed
- Large or small croissants

Directions

1. Mix together the turkey, celery, raisins, mayonnaise, cream or milk, salt, and pepper. Chill the mixture for 30 minutes to blend flavors or until ready to fill the croissants.
2. Slice croissants in half horizontally. Fill with a thick layer of turkey salad. Add a lettuce leaf.
3. Wrap and refrigerate the filled croissants until ready to serve.
4. For large croissants, cut the sandwiches in half. Serve smaller croissants whole.

Makes 2 cups filling

Turkey-and-Cream-Cheese Sandwiches

My youngest granddaughter loves these made with raspberry jam.

Gather

- 6 slices white or wheat bread
- 6 slices deli turkey (or leftover homecooked turkey)
- 1/2 cup (about 4 oz) cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/2 T raspberry jam or cranberry sauce (whole berry or jellied)
- Butter

Directions

1. Mix together cream cheese and cranberry sauce or raspberry jam.
2. Spread three slices of bread with the cream cheese mixture. Place 2 slices of turkey on each.

3. Spread butter on the remaining three bread slices. Place them on top of the slices with turkey to close the sandwiches.
4. Wrap and refrigerate the sandwiches until ready to serve.
5. Before serving, trim the crusts. Then cut each sandwich diagonally in both directions to make 4 small triangles.

Makes 12 tea sandwiches

Variation: Turkey Rollups: Substitute three or four 8-inch flour tortillas for the bread. Spread each with the flavored cream cheese, add sliced turkey, and roll up. Wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve. Cut each rollup into six pinwheels.



Festive Cranberry-Orange Scones

My daughter-in-law transforms an ordinary scone mix this way.

1. Using your favorite scone mix, replace the liquid in the recipe with orange juice.
2. Add 1/4 cup white chocolate chips and 1/4 cup raisins.
3. Prepare and bake according to the directions.
5. Optional: While scones are warm, drizzle with a glaze made with 1/2 cup powdered sugar, 1 tablespoon orange juice, and 1/4 teaspoon vanilla. Garnish with small slivers of orange peel.

Praline Pumpkin Pie

Our son's favorite pumpkin pie. Transform an ordinary pumpkin pie recipe by adding this praline layer on the unbaked crust.

Praline mixture:

- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup pecan halves

Combine butter and brown sugar. Cook and stir until the mixture bubbles. Mix in pecans.

1. Spoon the praline mixture onto the unbaked pie crust.
2. Pour the pumpkin filling over the praline mixture in the crust.
4. Bake according to recipe directions.
5. Chill. Serve with whipped cream.
6. Optional: For a new flavor twist, add 1/4 teaspoon maple extract to the whipped cream.



Teas to Please

Consider fall and holiday flavors of tea, such as pumpkin, cranberry, apple, Republic of Tea Ginger Peach, and spicy flavors such as chai. Brew at least one decaffeinated tea. Our family's favorite herbal tea is Celestial Seasonings Country Peach Passion.

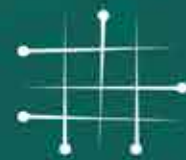
'Tis the season to share a cup of tea with family and friends. Won't you join me?

Lydia E. Harris is a tea enthusiast and the author of three grandparenting books: *GRAND Moments: Devotions Inspired by Grandkids* (2023); *In the Kitchen with Grandma: Stirring Up Tasty Memories*; and *Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting*. All are available online and wherever books are sold.



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Fill in the puzzle so that every row across, every column down and every 9 by 9 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

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(solution on page 23)

Building Harmony

Harmony Christmas
The Effort

by Jeff Cappis

Well, it's Christmas again. I love the traditions and the way it brings people together. Usually you know what to expect. Snow on the ground, a big turkey dinner, family and friends dropping by, and the usual collection of Christmas songs playing over and over. (And over and over...) There are presents to buy and excited children. Inevitably some one knocks over the Christmas tree. Despite all this I find the routine very comforting.

It is a lot of work. Every year, Cathy and I pull out the boxes marked "Christmas" from storage and decorate the house. On this particular day we put up garnishes, set out ornaments, stockings and wreaths. After hours of decorating and drinking eggnog, we finally got to the main event: the Christmas tree. I have to admit, by that time I just want to sit back and watch a good horror movie, but the boss keeps me going.

We were just about done when I asked Cathy, "It's a lot of work and we'll only be pulling it all down and putting it away in a couple of weeks. Why do people go to the trouble to put up a tree in the house anyway? When you think about it, this is a very strange tradition." Somehow I wasn't sure Cathy heard me. "Do you think this is all worth the effort?"

Cathy just smiled as she pulled the very last tree ornament from the box. The ornament appeared to be made of crystal. The lights from the tree danced sparkles all different colors through the glass. The ornament had its own small rainbow around it. This wasn't any ordinary ornament and Cathy always put it on last.

You see, Cathy grew up as one of six children. Every year her mother would make six shopping trips (one with each child) so that everyone could keep their presents secret. Cathy loved that time with her mother. You can imagine that being one of six children doesn't afford you a lot of personal alone time with her.

When Cathy was five, her mother bundled her up with a scarf, coat, snow pants, mittens, boots and a hat for the trip to the department store. It was a chilly day and the trip would take two different buses. Cathy could see her breath on the bus' glass window as she watched the houses go by. It was exciting!

When they got to the department store, she found it was filled with wondrous things. There were clothes and toys and jewelry. They looked at it all. Just her and her mother. Cathy thought she was having the best day ever. But it wasn't over just yet.

They finished shopping and were heading to the door when something caught her mother's eye. There was a small crystal ornament sitting in the middle of a bunch of other odd Christmas items. It somehow stood out. Cathy thought it was beautiful. They both admired it.

"Can we get it for the Christmas tree mommy?" Cathy asked with wide eyes and a big smile. Her mother puzzled for a moment.

"Sorry sweetie. We only have enough money for the bus. If we get this, we'll have to walk home." Cathy didn't think about it, she just put on a great big smile and hugged her mother.

So, they set off. It was probably only a half hour walk, but the air was cold. To Cathy it felt like they were going on an expedition across the north pole. The sun would be going down soon. She had to keep her little legs going faster so they'd get home in time. Their breaths hung in the winter air. The snow crunched beneath their feet. All the while Cathy clutched the bag with the ornament in it. Her mother carried the other twelve. She still managed to hold her daughter's hand.

"It's O.K.," Cathy thought. "Mom is with me." The last ten steps were the hardest. The sun had just gone down, it was cold, snow had blown across their front steps. That front door couldn't get close enough. But they made it. Stepping into the warm house, her mother put down all the bags then smiled at her.

She saw Cathy was still clutching the bag with the ornament. Cathy smiled back at her proudly. They pulled it out and thoughtfully hung it on the tree.

"Was it worth the effort?" her mother asked.

"Oh yes!" Cathy replied. She stroked the ornament then she turned to look at me as if she'd just come back from somewhere. I could tell it all from the look in her eyes. We clinked our eggnog glasses, she curled up in my arms and we admired the Christmas tree.

Yes, it's all worth the effort.

Merry Christmas from Jeff and Cathy at Harmony Acres.

© Jeff Cappis 2023 jcappis@telus.net

Conn • Ingersoll



Easy Pumpkin Pie

This is our household’s default recipe as it’s more highly spiced than many recipes. If you’re not a fan of a bit of a bolder flavour, just cut the spices back by half. The optional toppings can add a bit of pizzazz to a basic pie – I quite enjoy the sour cream topping, but I’m usually outvoted by the pumpkin pie purist in the house!

- 1 (9-inch) unbaked pie crust
- 1 (15 oz.) can pumpkin (about 2 cups)
- 1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ginger
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- ½ tsp salt

Preheat the oven 425°F. Whisk pumpkin, sweetened condensed milk, eggs, spices and salt in medium bowl until smooth. Pour into crust. Bake for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F; bake an additional 35 to 40 minutes or until knife inserted 1-inch from crust comes out clean. Cool.

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS:

Sour Cream: Mix 1 ½ cups sour cream, 2 Tbsp sugar and 1 tsp vanilla extract in medium bowl. After pie has baked 30 minutes at 350°F, spread evenly over top. Bake for 10 minutes.

Struesel: Mix ½ cup packed brown sugar and ½ cup flour in medium bowl. Cut in ¼ cup cold butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in ¼ cup chopped nuts. After pie has baked 30 minutes at 350°F, sprinkle evenly over top. Bake an additional 10 minutes.



Homemade Pumpkin Spice Creamer

This would make a cute little gift for friends, especially if you include a nice mug and a few cookies. Remember to give the creamer a bit of a shake if it’s been sitting.

- 1 cup whipping cream
- ¾ cup whole milk
- 1 can of Eagle Brand sweetened condensed milk
- ¼ cup pumpkin puree
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp ginger
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp ground cloves

Add all the ingredients into a blender or mixer and mix until well combined and smooth.

Transfer the creamer to an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 1 week.

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Do You Want the Whole Story or Just the Condensed Version?

Condensed milk most definitely has its own identity and its not interchangeable with evaporated milk usually. My husband used to get confused when he saw it on the grocery list as he was never confident that he knew the difference between condensed and evaporated milk. To this day, in our house, it's usually just called Eagle Brand® as he knew that meant the sweetened milk!

Sweetened condensed milk is milk from which about 60% of the water has been removed and then heated to 185-194°F, and sugar is added. It isn't a diet food as it is about 45% sugar, and this sugar actually helps extend the shelf life of the product. In some countries, evaporated milk is known as unsweetened condensed milk, so I can certainly understand where my husband's confusion comes from!

Condensed milk has been around for about 200 years. Gail Borden Jr. started manufacturing this long-lasting without refrigeration product after a trip from England after witnessing the death of several children from poor milk from shipboard cows. Borden also introduced the "Dairyman's Ten Commandments" as a condition for farmers to sell him raw milk. They had to wash the udders before milking, keep the barns clean, and scald and dry their strainers morning and night. Between the canning of the milk and the increased hygiene, Borden's milk (Eagle Brand) was well regarded as a safe alternative to raw milk.

Condensed milk is used in various desserts from many cultures – everything from key lime pie to tres leches cake as it adds a smooth, creamy texture.

Did you know you can boil a can of condensed milk in water for about 3 hours to create a dulce de leche (caramel sauce)? I have to share the information that the internet is full of warnings that the can could potentially explode. The secret to preventing that seems to be ensuring the can is covered with water when boiling. I've never had any mishaps, and I've done this many times, but it is a danger. One year, for little Christmas favours, I boiled cans to create dulce de leche and made custom labels for the cans.

Dulce de Leche

1. Bring a large pan of water to a rolling boil. You will need enough water to completely cover the sweetened, condensed milk can.
2. Remove the label from the sweetened condensed milk can – it will come off when boiled anyway.
3. Submerge the sweetened condensed milk into the boiling water using tongs. Hint – if you place the can on its side, it can roll around, and set it right side up in the boiling water can cause it to roll around and make a rattling noise when it cooks.
4. Cook the can for 3 hours – make sure that the can remains covered with water at all times. Add more boiling water if necessary.
5. Using a pair of tongs, remove the can from the boiling water. COOL. It's crucial to cool it down before opening it; otherwise, you could create a geyser of steaming hot caramel when you open the can.

In many parts of Asia and Europe, when drinking hot or cold coffee or tea, sweetened condensed milk is the preferred milk. That reminds me... cold condensed milk is always relaxed because it chills in the fridge.

I'll leave you with this recipe on how to make your own sweetened condensed milk?

1. In a medium saucepan, mix together 2 cups of whole milk and 1 cup of sugar.
2. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Stir to dissolve the sugar.
3. Once boiling, reduce the heat to medium-low. Simmer uncovered without stirring for about 45 minutes or until it is reduced to about 1 ½ cups.
4. Cool. Will keep about 1 week.

*If you want to use a 12 oz. can of evaporated milk, reduce the sugar to ¾ cup and cook for 30 minutes.

Colleen Gust is an avid baker and gardener and lives with her husband outside of Regina, Saskatchewan. Kirby and Colleen Gust are publishers of the Manitoba & Saskatchewan Country Register.



Drumbo • Severn

Creamy Christmas Eggnog

This very rich eggnog comes together quickly and requires minimal work.

- 4 egg yolks
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 Tbsp vanilla extract
- 4 ½ cups milk
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- 4 egg whites
- Additional nutmeg for garnish

In a large mixing bowl, beat the egg yolks until they are thickened and light. Gradually stir in the condensed milk, vanilla, milk and nutmeg. Beat the egg whites until stiff, then add them to the milk mixture. Garnish with additional nutmeg if desired.



Eggnog Pie

This really does taste like eggnog, except in pie form. I use a graham wafer crust, but a pie crust would be fine, too.

- 1 9" prepared pie crust
- 3.4 oz (102 g) vanilla instant pudding mix
- 1 cup of whipping cream + ¼ sugar whipped until stiff peaks form
OR 2 cups of Cool Whip, thawed
- 1 ½ cups of store-bought eggnog
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg

In a medium bowl, combine the eggnog and pudding mix. Beat until thick. Add in the nutmeg. Gently fold in the whipped cream until the mixture is fluffy and pale yellow.

- Spoon the mixture into the pie crust and smooth out.
- Refrigerate for at least 4 hours until firm.



Sea Salt Fudge

To be honest, I'm not great at making fudge. Usually, I end up with never-ending fudge where you cut a piece, but the rest just oozes over to fill up the spot or it turns out gritty. But with this recipe, I've finally found success!

- 1 ¼ cups semi-sweet or bitter-sweet chocolate chips
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup Nutella (at room temperature)
- ½ tsp vanilla
- ¼ to ½ teaspoons sea salt

Spray an 8x8 inch baking pan with cooking spray. Line the greased pan with parchment paper, but keep the paper long enough so that it extends over the edges of the pan.

In a microwave safe, medium-sized bowl, combine chocolate chips, butter and sweetened condensed milk. Microwave on high for 1 minute. Stir, then microwave for an additional minute. Stir quickly until smooth and the chocolate has melted. (You may have to microwave again at 30 second intervals, depending on your microwave strength). Immediately stir in Nutella and vanilla. Stir quickly until all the ingredients are fully incorporated.

Immediately pour the mixture into the prepared pan and smooth the top of the fudge. Chill in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 hours.



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Ajax	<i>Twisted Stitchers Quilt Guild</i> For information about our guild please go to our website twistedstitchersquiltguild.com
Alliston	<i>Quilting Corners Guild</i> We meet at St Johns United Church at 7pm on the first Tuesday or each month, except January.
Almonte	<i>Almonte Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Almonte Civitan Club, 500 Almonte Street Active at 7:00 pm from September through June (no meeting in December).
Ancaster	<i>Ancaster Quilter's Guild</i> We meet at the Marshall Memorial United Church, 20 Gilbert Ave. at 7pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from September to June.
Arnprior	<i>Arnprior District Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Christian Education Centre, 257 John St. N. at 6:30 pm on the fourth Wed. of each month from Sept. to June.
Barrie	<i>Simcoe County Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Simcoe County Museum, 1151 Hwy 26, Midhurst at 1:00 pm on the Fourth Thursday each month except the 2nd Thursday in Dec and 3rd Thursday in June, from September to June. <i>Kempentfelt Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Lion's Gate Banquet Hall on Blake Street, the 3rd Thursday of the month from 7-9pm <i>Barrie Modern Quilt Guild</i> We meet at Grace United Church, 350 Grove St. East the last Thursday of the month, on alternate months from September to May - 7pm and on various Saturdays during the alternate months, for Activities and Workshops, from October to June.
Belleville	<i>Quinte Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Recreation Centre, 116 Pinnacle Street. At 7:00 pm on the first Wednesday of each month.
Binbrook	<i>Binbrook Country Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Binbrook United Church, 2623 Binbrook Rd. 7:30 pm the last Monday of the month from Sept - Nov and Jan - June.
Bracebridge	<i>The Pine Tree Quilters' Guild of Muskoka</i> We meet at the Bracebridge Memorial Arena, 169 James St at 1:00 pm on the 2nd. Thursday of the month from September through June.
Brampton	<i>Brampton Quilters Guild</i> We meet on the 4th Thursday of each month from September to June at 7:30 pm. Meetings are held at Jim Archdekin Recreation Centre, 292 Conestoga Dr, Brampton.
Brantford	<i>Brant Heritage Quilters</i> We meet at St George United Church at 7:30 pm. on the second Thursday of the month.
Brockville	<i>The Thousand Islands Quilters' Guild (TIQG)</i> Meets the 4th Thursday of the month at 7pm both in person and zoom except July/Aug/Dec at the Bethel Christian Reformed Church located at 117 Windsor Dr., Brockville, On K6V 5V5. Library opens at 6:30pm.
Buckhorn	<i>Buckhorn Area Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Hartley Hall, St. Mathews / St. Adian Anglican Church at 9:00 a.m. on the last Wednesday of the month (excluding July, August and December).
Burlington	<i>Halton Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Mainway Recreation Centre, 4015 Mainway Dr. at 7:00 pm on the first Thursday of the month from September through June).
Caledonia	<i>Caledonia Grand River Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at 7pm on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from September through June.
Cambridge	<i>Busy Hands Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Preston Scout House, 1580 Queenston Road at 9:30 am on the third Monday of each month.
Chatham	<i>Chatham-Kent Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at St. Paul's Congregational Church, 450 Park Ave W at 7pm on the third Wednesday each month, except December.
Collingwood/ Wasaga Beach	<i>Slope to Slope Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Wasaga Beach RecPlex, 1724 Mosley St, the first Thursday of the month, 7-9 pm, September to June.
Cornwall	<i>Cornwall Quilters Guild</i> We meet at St. Mathews Lutheran Church, 1509 Second St West at 7pm every third Monday evening from September through May.
Courtice	<i>Clarington Quilt Guild</i> We meet at Faith United Church, 1778 Nash Road, Courtice on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 1 – 3 p.m. We are a day time Guild
Dryden	<i>Sunset Country Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at 84 St. Charles Street at 7 pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month.
Dunnville	D.O.T.S. Quilt Guild (Dunnville's Own Tiny Stitchers). We meet at Maple Creek Community Church, 110 Inman Rd. @ 6:30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month from September to June.
Elliot Lake	<i>Elliot Lake Quilt Guild</i> We meet at Gentle Shepherd Church, 3 Ottawa Ave. at 7:00 pm on Tuesdays from September through June.
Elmira	<i>The Elmira Needle Sisters</i> We meet at the Elmira Mennonite Church at 7:00 pm on the fourth Monday of the month.
Espanola	<i>North Shore Pins & Needles Stitchery Guild</i> Meetings are held every 4th Wednesday of the month, upstairs at the Legion Hall, 370 Annette St. at 7 p.m. Sept-Nov & Jan.-May first meeting free
Etobicoke	<i>Etobicoke Quilters Guild</i> We meet at Neilson Park Creative Centre - 56 Neilson Dr. at 7:00 pm on the third Monday of the month.
Georgetown	<i>Halton Hills Quilters Guild</i> We Meet at 8958 Trafalgar Rd, Georgetown, ON L7G 4S5. 6:45pm till 9pm from September till June on the fourth Monday of the month.
Gloucester	<i>Common Thread Quilt Guild</i> We meet at Le Mouvement D'Implication Francophone D'Orléans (MIFO), 6600 rue Carriere in Orleans at 7:30 pm on the second Tuesday of the month from September through June.
Goderich	<i>Goderich Quilters' Guild</i> We meet once a month on the 2nd Tuesday.
Grimsby	<i>Grimsby Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Livingston Activity Centre at 7pm on the third Thursday of the month.
Guelph	<i>Royal City Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Three Willows United Church, 577 Willow Road at 7:00 pm on the second Tuesday each month from September until June.
Gwillinbury	<i>Gwillimbury Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Sharon-Hope United Church, 18648 Leslie St. at 1:00 pm on 4th Monday of the month from September through May.
Hagersville	<i>Haldimand Quilter's Guild</i> We meet at the Hagersville United Church at 7:00 pm on the first Monday of the month from September through June.
Haliburton	<i>Haliburton Highlands Quilter Guild</i> We meet at the Stanhope Community Centre, 1095 North Shore Rd, Algonquin Highlands at 1:00 pm on the second Wednesday of each month.
Hamilton	<i>Hamilton Quilters Guild</i> We meet The Church of Resurrection, 435 Mohawk Rd. W.at 7:00 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from September through August.
Ingersoll	<i>Oxford Quilters Guild</i> We meet month at the Ingersoll Creative Art Centre, 125 Centennial Lane (in Victoria Park) at 7:00 pm on the first Wednesday and 9:00 am on the first Thursday of each month.
Kanata	<i>The Kanata Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Glen Cairn United Church, 140 Abbeyhill Dr. at 9:30 am on the second Wednesday of the month from September to June.
Kemptville	<i>Kemptville Quilters Guild</i> We meet pm at the Kemptville Pentecostal Church 1964 County Road # 43 at 7:00 pm on the second Monday of the month (except for holiday Mondays).
Kenora	<i>Lake of the Woods Quilter's Guild</i> We meet at St. Louis Catholic Church, 912 Superior St in Keewatin at 7 PM on the second Thursday of the month.
Kincardine	Kincardine Sunset Quilters Guild. We meet the second Wednesday of every month except July and August, at 10 a.m. in the basement of St. Anthony's Church on Russell St. in Kincardine.
Kingston	<i>Kingston Heirloom Quilters</i> We meet at St. Johns Anglican Church Hall in Portsmouth Village at 9:30 am on the first Tuesday and 7:00 pm on the first Thursday of each month. <i>Limestone Quilt Guild</i> Meeting Area usually is - Kingston Senior Centre, 56 Francis Street, Kingston, Ontario, but we are on zoom right now. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 pm on zoom.
Kingsville	<i>Erie Shores Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Kingsville Arena, 2nd floor at 7p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month.
Kirkton	<i>Huron, Perth Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Kirktown/Wooddham Community Centre at 9:00 am on the second Tuesday of the month from September through May.
Kitchener - Waterloo	<i>The Waterloo County Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Parkside Community Room of the Parkside Arena in Waterloo at 1:30pm and 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month.
Lambton	<i>North Lambton Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Port Franks Hall on the 4th Wednesday of the month.
Lindsay	<i>Lindsay Creative Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Celebrations, 35 Lindsay St. N at 1:00 pm every 2nd Monday of the month except for October, December and June.
London	<i>London Friendship Quilters Guild</i> We meet the 2nd Thursday of the month from September to June. The meeting usually runs from 7pm to 9pm. We are located at St. George's Presbyterian Church, 1475 Dundas Street, London, Ontario N5W 3B8. To contact us: lfag.president@gmail.com or our web page: lfag Lonon Friendship Quilt Guild
Manitoulin Island	<i>Island Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Community Hall in Mindemoya at 7:00 pm on the third Thursday of the month from September though June.
Markdale	<i>Queen's Bush Quilters</i> We meet at Annesley United Church, 82 Toronto St. at 7:00 pm on the 1st Tuesday of the month from September to June.
Meaford	<i>Georgian Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Meaford Opera House, Sykes St. at 1:30 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

Mississauga	<i>Cawthra Senior's Centre</i> We meet at the Cawthra Senior's Centre at 7:30pm on the first Thursday of the month (except July and August).
	<i>Mississauga Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Tomken Twin Arenas at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month (except July and August).
Miramichi	<i>Miramichi Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Seamans Hospital at 7:00 pm every Tuesday and 10:00 am every Thursday.
Mount Forest	<i>Four Corners Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex at 7 pm on the second Tuesday of the month from September to June. For more information email 4cornersquiltersguild@gmail.com
Napanee	<i>Heritage Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Strathcona Paper Center at 7:00 pm on the third Tuesday of each month from September through to June.
Newmarket	<i>The Region of York Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Newmarket Community Centre, 200 Doug Duncan Drive on the fourth Wednesday of the month from September through May.
	<i>Moraine Quilt Guild</i> We meet in the hall at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church - 484 Water Street, Newmarket at 9:30 am - 12 Noon for Social Sew and 1:00-3:30 pm for the Meeting on the first Wednesday of each month year round.
Niagara Region	<i>The Niagara Heritage Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Merrion Community Centre, 7 Park Ave., St. Catharines on the third Wednesday of each month.
Nobleton	A chapter of the <i>Modern Quilting Guild</i> We travel to various locations in Southern Ontario on a rotating basis.
Norwich	<i>Quaker Quilt Guild</i> We meet at 89 Stover St N, Norwich at 9:30 am on the second Monday of the month.
Orangeville	<i>Dufferin Piecemakers' Quilting Guild</i> We meet at the Orangeville Event Centre at 7:30 pm on the third Monday of the month from September through June.
Orilla	<i>Orillia Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Royal Canadian Legion, 215 Mississauga St. E. at 1:00 pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.
Orleans	<i>Common Thread Quilt Guild</i> Meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm at MIFO, 6600 Carriere St, Orleans. www.commonthreadquiltguild.ca
Orono	<i>Ganaraska Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Seniors Activity Centre. 200 Station St. W at 7:15 pm on the last Wednesday of the month.
Oshawa	<i>Durham Trillium Quilters'</i> We meet at the Zion Christian Reformed Church 409 Adelaide Ave. E, Oshawa at 7:00pm every second Monday Sept.- June
Ottawa	<i>Ottawa Valley Quilters Guild</i> Our guild continues to meet on the ZOOM platform because of the covid-19 pandemic situation. Our normal in-person meetings will resume some time in 2022. The meetings are usually held the second Monday of every month September to June, at the Riverside United Church, 3191 Riverside Drive, Ottawa ON, K1V8N8. Our email address is ottawavalleyquiltersguild.org
	<i>QuiltCo</i> We meet at the Trinity Anglican Church in Old Ottawa South on the second Monday evening of the month except July and August.
Owen Sound	<i>Bluewater Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre, 1900 3rd Av E at 7:00 pm every third Monday from March to December (except May which is on the second).
Paris	<i>Paris Quilting Bees</i> We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from September to June at the Paris Fairgrounds at 7 PM. For information email: parisquiltingbees@gmail.com .
Penetanguishene	<i>Georgian Bay Quilters Guild</i> Meets every month from September to June at the Penetanguishene Arena, 61 Maria St, Penetanguishene, Ontario. Monthly meetings (except for December & June) are the 4th Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. December & June meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of the month with the June meeting starting at 6:00 p.m.
Perth	<i>Lanark County Quilters Guild</i> We meet at Lions Hall, Perth Fairgrounds at 7pm on the 4th Tuesday of the month.
Petawawa	<i>Pembroke Log Cabin Quilters</i> We meet every 3rd Tuesday of the month during the school year in the basement of 1163 Victoria Street. Our social time begins at 6 pm and meeting at 7 pm. Email: pembrokelogcabinquilters@gmail.com . FB: Pembroke Log Cabin Quilters, Web page: pembrokelogcabinquilters.ca
Pickering	<i>Rouge Valley Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Peace Lutheran Church, 928 Liverpool Road, Pickering at 7:00 pm on the 4th Monday of the month September through May, excluding December.
Port Loring	<i>Argyle Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Lions Den in Arnstein on the second Thursday of the month.
Port Perry	<i>Port Perry Patchers</i> We meet at the Hope Christian Reform Church, 14480 Old Simcoe Rd. in Prince Albert at 7:00 pm on the third Monday of the month, at 7 p.m. from March to December.
Prince Edward	<i>Prince Edward County Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the BCR Church in Bloomfield at 7:00 pm County on the second Wednesday of each month.
Rayside	<i>Rayside Balfour Quilting and Stitchery Guild</i> We meet at the Chelmsford Arena (upstairs) 215 Edward Avenue, Chelmsford, Ontario at 7:00 p.m. every Monday from September to May.
Renfrew	<i>Quilt Guild Renfrew & Area</i> We meet at the Horton Community Centre, 1005 Castleford Road, Horton from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from September to June.
Richmond	<i>Richmond Area Quilters Guild (RAQG)</i> We meet at the Richmond Legion, 6430 Ottawa Street at 7:30 on the third Wednesday of each month.
Ruthven	<i>Erie Shores Quilter's Guild</i> We meet at the Ruthven-Olinda United Church every third Tuesday.
Sarnia	<i>Sarnia Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Redeemer Christian Reformed Church 5814 Blackwell Sldr, Sarnia at 7pm the first Monday of each month.
Sault St. Marie	<i>Stitches From The Heart Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Senior's Centre on Bay St at 7pm the last Monday of the month.
Scarborough	<i>Rouge Valley Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Peace Lutheran Church, 928 Liverpool Road, Pickering at 7:00 pm on the 4th Monday of the month September through May, excluding December.
Simcoe	<i>Twilight Quilters' Guild of Norfolk County</i> We meet at the Old Wyndham Church, 30 Glendale Crescent at 7:00 pm on the second Monday of the month.
	<i>Norfolk County Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Vittoria & District Community Centre on the first Tuesday of each month except October.
Stittsville	<i>The Quilters Club</i> We meet at the The Pretty Street Community Centre at 7:00 pm on the third Monday of the month.
St Marys	<i>The Stonetowne Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the End Zone Room of the Pyramid Centre at 9:30 am on the third Tuesday of the month from September to May.
Stony Creek	<i>Stoney Creek Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Royal Canadian Legion, 12 King Street East, at 6:30 pm on first Wednesday of the month from September to June.
Sudbury	<i>Sudbury & District Quilting & Stitchery Guild</i> We meet at 140 Durham Street at 7:00 pm on every Tuesday from September to April.
Sutton	<i>The Georgina Pins and Needles</i> We meet at the Knox United Church 34 Market Street at 7:00 pm on the first Tuesday of the month from September to June.
Thunder Bay	<i>Thunder Bay Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Calvin Luthern Church on Edward Street at 7:30pm on the 3rd Monday of each month from September to June.
Toronto	<i>Etobicoke Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Neilson Park Creative Centre at 7:15 pm on the third Monday of the month. <i>Pieceful Nights Quilters' Guild of North Toronto</i> meets the second Wednesday of each month. During COVID-19 meetings will be held via Zoom. Guests welcome. https://www.pnag.ca .
	<i>Toronto Modern Quilt Guild</i> We meet at The Workroom Studio, 46 Nobel St Studio 102 at 3:00 pm on the last Sunday of each month.
	<i>York Heritage Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Toronto Botanical Gardens on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from September through May.
	<i>Yorkshire Rose Quilters' Guild of Toronto</i> We meet at Danforth Mennonite Church, 2174 Danforth Avenue at 7:30 pm on the second Wednesday of the month from September through May.
Waterloo	<i>The Waterloo County Quilters' Guild</i> We meet the Albert McCormick Community Centre at 1:30 pm and 7pm on the third Wednesday of each month from September through June
Whitby	<i>Kindred Hearts Guild</i> We meet at the Whitby Baptist Church on the third Tuesday of the month.
Windsor	<i>Windsor Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 594, 5030 Howard Ave., Windsor, ON N9A 6Z6 at 9:00 a.m. the first Wednesday of the month from September to June.
York Region	<i>The Moraine Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the St. Andrews Presbyterian Church at 1:00 on the first Wednesday of the month.



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Making Choices Brings Change

by Barbara Kalkis

Sometimes it seems as if all the wise sayings in the world have already been said by those old standbys: the Bible, Einstein (Did the man ever say anything useless?), Confucius, various Greeks who all seemed to be philosophers and the wisest people known universally as “Mom” and “Anonymous”.

As one year ends and another enters, I realize that Mom and “Anonymous” have given me some of the best guidance. Mom’s advice was practical. If I asked to do something that all my friends were doing, she would reply, “Just because everyone else jumps off a bridge, doesn’t mean you should.” (While teaching me to think before acting, that comment ruined me for diving into pools or running freely into the ocean. I still tiptoe into the shallows and slowly edge my way to the deeper water.)

When Covid struck in 2020, we were forced into solitude and standing 6 feet apart. While online meeting software emerged to save our collective sanity, it was still a time of separation. It seemed that the silver linings to the covid ‘cloud’ were that we could slouch around in our pajamas, watch TV or browse the internet until the need for food drove us into the kitchen and postpone cleaning since visitors were not likely to show up on the doorstep.

That initial shutdown motivated me to develop a fresh philosophy about how I wanted to spend my time (or die of boredom). B.C. (Before Covid), I had been a sometime crafter – a dabbler making greeting cards, writing poetry, commentaries, or letters, sewing, embroidering and perfecting the art of single crochet. (Potholders for everyone at Christmas. Bonus! They double as a face cloth, hot pad, bar cloth and dolly’s winter blanket.)

In those gloomy days, I discovered three wise-saying gems. The first was from the Bible: “In the world you will have trouble but take courage. I have conquered the world.” That saying comforted me. The second saying came from Lorelee in our cardmaking group. She sent an email telling us to embrace “Prolific Creativity.” Her comment inspired me. “Anonymous” provided the third saying. It sits on my desk next to my computer, so I see it every day. The faded paper is curled and brittle. The advice says, “The Three C’s of Life: CHOICES, CHANCES, CHANGES. You must make a choice to take a chance, or your life will never change.”

If you recognize this saying, it’s because it was published in The Country Register. I don’t know the edition or publication date. I do know these words have guided me to focus on choosing activities I enjoy and enthusiastically pursue them. I more readily take chances to do something different. Mostly, I’ve learned that change is refreshing.

As we complete one year and welcome a new one, let’s leverage our “Art Advantage” and resolve to play, create, dream, invent, design, decorate and build more. We love art, let’s live it. Welcome inspiration, seek beauty in the world around us. And if it’s not there, let’s bring it in. Creativity energizes our thinking, opens us to visualize what can be, not just what is. Hobbies keep us searching for new ideas. They spur us to turn our appreciation of the world into art. We simply need to make a date with ourselves to play and be creatively prolific again and again.

A House can be an architectural achievement, but Home is where we find comfort, soothe our spirits and make the choice to set our heart and art free. Go for it. Happy New Year!

©Barbara Kalkis. Barbara spends her time writing, teaching, and working as a marketing consultant. She’s the author of Little Ditties for Every Day: A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

The Fishing Trailer.

by Kerri Habben Bosman

For me, being at the beach in winter is quite affirming. The busy tourist season is past for now. Many of the people there are enjoying their solitude just like I am. The fishing pier is closed for the winter, and the beach is an endless expanse, empty save for the solitude seekers and the dog walkers. The late afternoon light dwindles so softly into evening. There is a dormancy to it all, which is what I value about winter. It gives me extra time to appreciate the gift of each new day.

In May, 2021, my husband, Wayne, and I purchased a second home on the North Carolina coast about three hours from our home in Chapel Hill, NC. At the time, Wayne's daughter and her family lived about three miles from the new house. We loved that they were close by but also knew that could change. The Marines moved them to California this past June. Within that first year, we packed in many wonderful family visits. Often all 18 of us were together, from the nearest to those living farthest away.

In April last year, we all welcomed Wayne's mom, his sister, and his brother-in-law. For four days, we treasured being together, from the youngest at age 4 to the oldest at 101. Our vibrant, family clustered around the table gave me the chance to soak in all the joy. From my chosen space in the kitchen, I thrive on cooking for those I love, while still fully immersed in the delightful chaos that a big family creates. Food and beverages quietly arriving at the right time somehow makes everything flow. Sometimes being an enabler is not a bad thing.

When we bought the house, these special times are exactly what we'd hoped for. We knew we wanted a place at the beach, and we hoped for it to be a gathering spot for family and friends. With everyone having varying schedules and responsibilities, often someone comes on the spur of the moment. So the house is always ready for the next visit. And so are we.

Wayne calls the house "The Fishing Trailer," which causes his grown children to shake their heads. This isn't actually a misnomer; it is a double-wide trailer on a permanent foundation, and he does love to fish. I understand the reverse psychology as well. If someone visualizes an old trailer with the barest of essentials, they'll be pleasantly surprised when they discover a comfortable 1500 square foot home.

Wayne knew that he would be retiring soon, and he'd need a place to set up the tools he'd amassed over the years. So it didn't hurt a bit that a large garage came with the house. It, too, has become a gathering place with music, a dartboard, and an extra refrigerator. Soon it will also hold a 1965 Rambler Convertible that Wayne is restoring.

All the furnishings were included with the house, and we were happy with the taste of the previous owners. We brought in a few things to make it our own, and it meshes well. In the living room is a roll-top desk, the kind like I have wanted for years. It is my own special place in what is the quiet room. This room has evolved into an escape room. When the love gets too loud or boisterous in the rest of the house, it becomes a quiet sanctuary for one-on-one conversation, reading, or napping.

Because we go back and forth so often, we've developed a routine for closing up The Fishing Trailer. Before we move a single thing, we breathe in the essence of the ones who used the rooms. While looking under beds for forgotten socks, fixing a little boy's toy box, and refreshing linens, we can't help but savor every individual moment.

Making memories. Till next time.

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

What's in Your (E-) Mailbox?

by Barbara Kalkis

The successful 4-H Clubs of America state their motto in four key words: Head, Heart, Health, Hands. I respectfully suggest that homeowners adopt a similar succinct motto with words to live by: House. Home. Heart. Hobby. Hassle.

Regardless of its form, shape or size, a House is a structure to live in. It becomes a Home as we infuse it with our personality and create an environment of comfort, security and contentment. Decorating and modifying a home becomes a Hobby. The Hassle occurs when something goes wrong.

Repairs require a written or mental to-do list. It takes time to find the right handyman or contractor. I survey friends about who they hired and listen to their horror stories of delays, mistakes and nightmares that alternate with insomnia. (Theirs and mine.)

One momentous day, I made a major hassle-free repair that changed my life. No, it did not involve cosmetic surgery or purchasing a one-dollar villa in a country that I learned about on the travel channel.

I simply threw out the mailbox next to the front door. (Yes, you are correct. It takes very little to make me happy.) A handyman cut a slot in the wall next to the garage entrance. Now the mail drops into a bin, positioned next to a kitchen-sized waste-basket. I even made certain that the slot is on the passenger side of my car, so I don't have to look at it. I can just concentrate on aiming toward the garage entrance. What a joy! I scan mail in the garage and toss the junk mail directly into the waste-basket. It's refreshing to be rid of it outside the house. Bringing junk mail into the house was like an invasion of privacy and relaxation time.

While I am still on every advertising hit-list in the nation, junk mail is easy to spot. It is addressed to "Kennet," instead of "Kenneth," because the county clerk mistakenly recorded my husband's name when we purchased our home. Despite calls, complaints and flat-out begging, we learned that although we will put men on Mars (Ladies, is there a message in that goal?) there is no earthly way to add an "h" to a name in a government database.

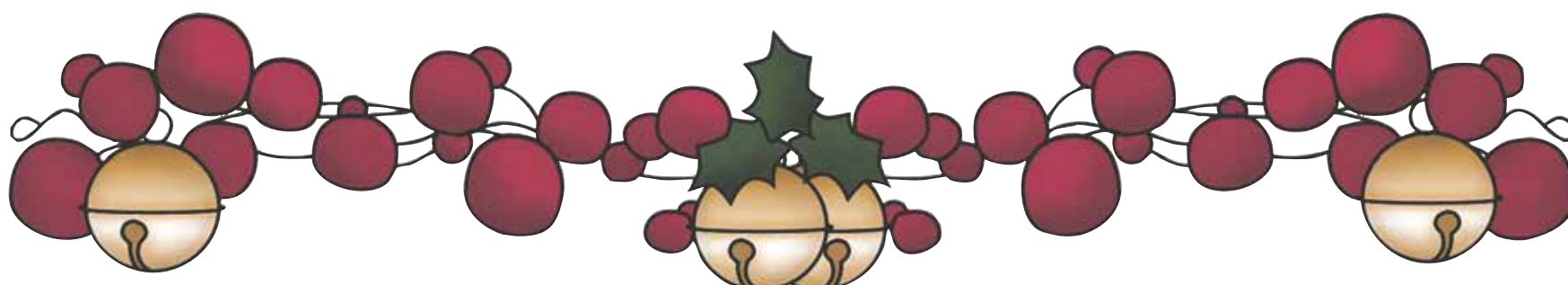
The most valuable lesson I learned from moving the mailbox is that I know what I really search for: An old-fashioned letter or card from a friend. When I receive one, it's like finding a perfect pearl in a bed of oysters. Remember when we always mailed cards and letters to all our friends and acquaintances? They were wishes for birthdays, anniversaries, getting well, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day and just plain "Hello" cards for no reason.

Yes, computers allow us to be spontaneous and dash off an email or a text or post a message. Some e-cards are exquisite, with music and images popping up on every screen. Do you store those electronic messages? If yes, do you print them out to display them? Or do you delete them?

When I find a handwritten envelope, I pull it out of the bin, bring it inside, put other things aside, make a cup of tea, sit down and read and re-read the treasure.

While computers can do many things to help us be efficient and fast in communicating, they cannot replace the emotions conveyed in a paper letter – no matter how many emojis we include. Regardless of where a mailbox is located, a paper card or letter is the best way to fill it. I guess the homeowner motto needs one more "H," for Happiness.

©Barbara Kalkis. Barbara spends her time writing, teaching, and working as a marketing consultant. She is the author of *Little Ditties for Every Day: A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm*. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.



A map of the province of Ontario, Canada, showing the locations of 14 cities. The cities are marked with red stars and labeled as follows:

- Red Lake
- Kenora
- Dryden
- Sioux Lookout
- Thunderbay
- Marathon
- Cochrane
- Earlton
- New Liskeard
- Sault Ste Marie
- Thessalon
- Espanola
- Corbeil
- Sturgeon Falls

Orillia (Severn)	Thimbles & Things	pg. 17
Orleans	Quilty Pleasures.....	pg. 5, 24
Orono.....	Annie's Quilt Shop.....	pg. 9
Ottawa	Sew -Jo's	pg. 2
†Pembroke	Gem Sewing	pg. 20
Perth.....	Perth Fabrics.....	pg. 8
Petrolia	Stitcharie.....	pg. 2, 14
Pincourt	Mad Moody Quilting Fabrics.....	pg. 7
Russell	Quilter's Barn & Gifts	pg. 8
Sault Ste Marie	Life's A Stitch	pg. 20
Shakespeare	The Quilt Place	pg. 16
Sturgeon Falls.....	Buttons	pg. 20
Sudbury	Gem Sewing	pg. 2, 20, 24
Teeswater.....	Sanity Hill.....	pg. 10
West Lorne	Heather Bell's Sewing.....	pg. 24
Windsor	Thimble Quilts & Sewing.....	pg. 2
Woodville	Bolts & Bobbins	pg. 7

'TIS THE SEASON

Words can be found in any direction (including diagonals) and can overlap each other.

N Z O V L W W T P H Z T C G Y L N T H H
W A S W T D C I R I R I W L O R A C O T
T O M V C Y K D P A E N D Y K X J P L J
P J R W E Q N I Z N J S H L L G A T I I
Z A V N O G P N W G O E S L C I J M D A
S I X S A N N G W E I L L O H N G T A Z
B N B H B M S S F L C A O H R G S S Y Z
G C R G E S E D O R E H R Q I E T A G V
S Y N E B O S N N F O P A H S R U E C D
J T R A K Q T C T G V S C X T B N F G T
E X N R T A R E R S A N T A M R T V F G
D N L E E I C C L O T D V J A E S V O A
Y T O H S M V T J T O T S N S A E X N Y
U I H C Y E X I I G S G K O R D H N T D
L R H G E D R N T U K I E S D A C S B T
E I G B N N D P N Y R U M A D O O D N N
T P I G E A I U N C I F T E T R I I T V
I S E D H O R P W Y I X R S F A M I L Y
D G L B V Q R E I N D E E R B W Z A G B
E F S T U C M P S C E L E B R A T E K A

- Angel
Carol
Carols
Celebrate
Chestnuts
Christmas
Family
Feast
Frost
Frosty
Fruitcake
- Gingerbread
Holiday
Holly
Merry
Mistletoe
Nativity
Ornament
Pinecone
Presents
Reindeer
Rejoice
- Santa
Scrooge
Season
Sleigh
Snowman
Spirit
Tidings
Tinsel
Tree
Yuletide

(Sudoku solutions from puzzle on page 14)

1	8	7	9	3	2	6	4	5
3	9	5	4	1	6	7	8	2
6	4	2	5	8	7	1	9	3
7	5	6	1	2	4	8	3	9
9	1	3	6	5	8	2	7	4
8	2	4	7	9	3	5	6	1
5	6	8	2	4	9	3	1	7
4	7	1	3	6	5	9	2	8
2	3	9	8	7	1	4	5	6



GIRLFRIEND WISDOM



Life's Lessons from a Cat!

Stay Alert - you never know when you might need to jump! **Be Curious** - you wouldn't want to miss the little things in life, or the magical wonder of nature!
Take care of yourself - you are the only one who really knows what you need.
Be Patient - you might not get your food exactly when you want it, but your turn will come. **Take Naps** - we all need to be refreshed and see a new perspective on the day. **Show a friend support** just by being with them, no need to say a word, just be by their side. **Practise having an independent spirit**, do your own thing now and then. **Balance** your life between work and play, it is one of the keys to a Happy Life. **Pay attention** to those you love, the rewards are many!
Connection is essential, like a nice stroke down your back.
Get outside! The fresh air, the wind in your hair/fur lifts your spirits.
And finally - Find a **Place of Solitude** to contemplate dust particles in a ray of sunshine coming through a window!
You will never know what you have missed until you try it!

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



3 ingredient Peanut Butter cookies

- 1 egg
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup sugar

Mix all 3 ingredients. Roll into walnut sized balls. Flatten with a fork dipped in flour or sugar, crisscrossing on the top.
Bake at 350 degrees for 13-15 minutes.

Thanks to Deb Heatherly for sharing this easy and delicious recipe!

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hobbylock™ 2.5
overlock machine
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