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KISSED

Fireworks on Display

by Marlene Oddie

It is that time of year when we celebrate our nation's independence, often with fireworks! Can you believe next year is 250 years? Many years ago I enjoyed seeing the

ger is 250 years? Many years ago I enjoyed seeing the fireworks on the Mall in Washington, D.C. What are you doing to prepare for the celebrations? I've got a quilt that might inspire you!

The Island Batik division of Lumin Fabrics has produced a patriotic batik collection called Jubilee that I thought was just perfect to make into a quilt that some how represented Fireworks.

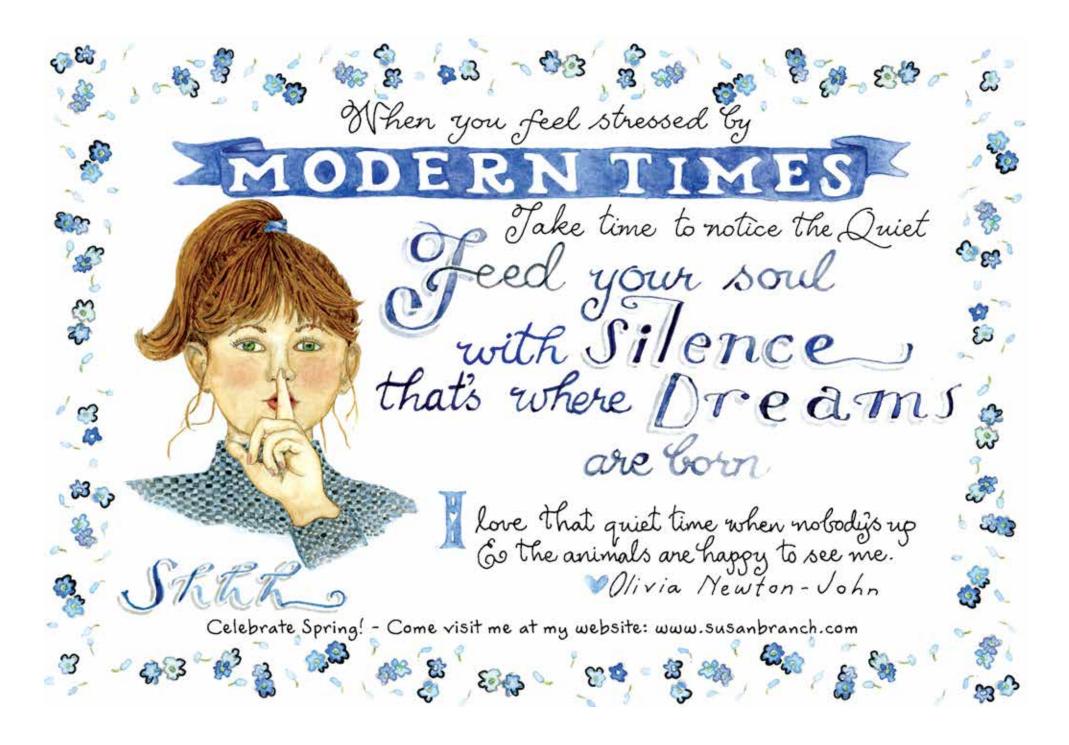
With these fabrics, I created stratas—a collection of strips sewn together like layers. Next step is to cut triangles from the strata which yields two versions of triangles. Use each, paired with a single fabric to get squares. Join four of the same squares to get two different 4-patch blocks and alternate them in the quilt. This is a quick way to show off these fabulous Jubilee fabrics. I imagined the night sky and fireworks exploding in the air.

This quilt design I'm calling Fireworks Display. Ask at your local quilt shop that carries Island Batik fabrics for these fabrics and pattern. You can also find this pattern and some fabrics while supplies last here at KISSed Quilts.

Marlene Oddie (marlene@kissedquilts.com) is an engineer by education, project manager by profession and now a quilter by passion in Grand Coulee, WA at her quilt shop, KISSed Quilts. She quilts for hire on a Gammill Optimum Plus but especially enjoys designing quilts and assisting in the creation of a meaningful treasure for the recipient. Fabric, patterns, kits and templates are available at http://www.kissedquilts.com. Follow Marlene's adventures via http://www.facebook.com/kissedquilts and https://www.instagram.com/marlene.kissedquilts







June / July 2025 Southeastern Region 5



by Janet M. Bair

Summer is upon us with lots of fun gatherings like graduation parties and picnics. One thing to keep in mind when you are bringing a dish to a gathering is being considerate of people's food allergies. Labeling your baked goods, salad or casserole can avoid a scary allergy attack for someone else.

When I was growing up, my younger brother ate a grape jelly on white bread sandwich every day. I had peanut butter and jelly. No one I knew had any food allergies. It was a great surprise to me when, as an adult, I ended up in the emergency room with an allergic reaction to nuts. Today many children develop food allergies, and it is important to read all the labels in order to keep everyone safe.

As a grandparent, I love having my grandchildren over. I used to make a big pan of ziti with mozzarella cheese and everyone was happy. Not anymore. A pasta meal is not an easy meal for my family.

One grandchild is diabetic and regular pasta spikes his blood sugar way too high for hours. Instead, he has chickpea pasta and as many meatballs as he likes.

Our oldest grandchild, age 12, has become sensitive to dairy. He can eat regular pasta but no cheese. I buy a dairy-free cheese substitute which makes him happy.

Then several family members have become sensitive to gluten, so we have: regular pasta, gluten-free pasta, chickpea pasta and gluten-free meatballs. The utensils used to stir the gluten-free pasta cannot touch the regular pasta. Lots of pots and pans!

Our oldest granddaughter reacts badly to even trace amounts of gluten, so my daughter has had to work hard to keep things non-contaminated. For example, she keeps the toaster oven tray solely for gluten-free toast. If you spread mayonnaise on regular bread, don't put the knife back in the jar because the crumbs can contaminate the jar with gluten. She is that sensitive.

This is a difficult allergy because gluten is in everything—salad dressings, gummy bears, French fries, ice cream, most cereals, lots of snacks, pizza, birthday cakes (at other children's parties), and the list goes on. There is gluten in regular PlayDoh so she can't even use that.

We have all learned how to adapt. My 10-year-old granddaughter has learned how to bake out of necessity. When they lived in Brazil, it was difficult and very expensive to get gluten free foods. It is easier and safer here in the US because the labels are stricter but it is still expensive.

I have had fun baking cookies with them using Bob's Red Mill Gluten Free 1 to 1 Baking Flour (\$12 for 2 lbs.) Often people will use almond flour (which I cannot have) but that is also expensive. I finally found Bob's Red Mill Gluten Free Pie Crust mix on sale (\$7) so I am planning on helping my granddaughter bake a pie for the next holiday. She thinks she would like to have her own bakery when she grows up.

These are just a few glimpses of dealing with food allergies in our family. What does everyone eat? Plain meat, fresh vegetables and fruits. When we find gluten free stuffing, we snatch it up because everyone likes turkey. Tortilla chips and salsa or hummus are all fine snacks.

These are just some of the ways our family copes with allergies. My three rules of thumb:

Always read the labels to be safe.

Always bring your own snack to any outing or pot luck dinner.

When in doubt, don't eat it. Better safe than sorry.

Whenever I am at a gathering that involves food, I am very glad when others include labels on their items. Many parents of young children will thank you too!

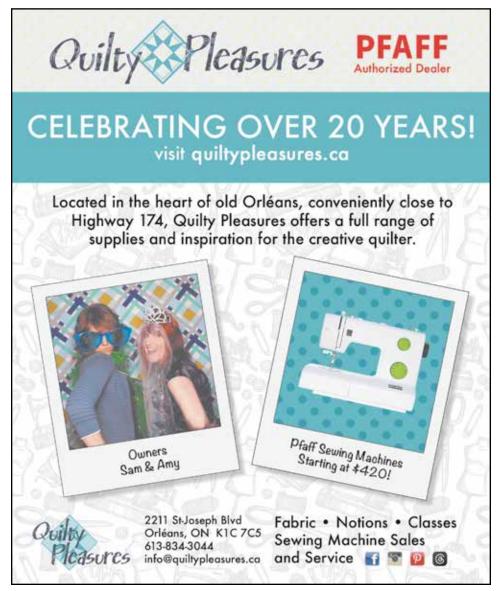
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Lemon Fluff



1 large can evaporated milk-refrigerated over night

1 package Lemon Jello small Juice from 1 lemon

3 Tablespoon lemon juice

1 cup boiling water

Dissolve the Jello in water then add juices to

it and refrigerate for about 1.5 hours or until it thickens

2 packages Graham crackers-cinnamon style if wanted Crush Graham crackers

Then add 1 stick melted butter, making a nice mixture of Graham cracker crumbs

2/3 of crumbs, approximately 2 cups, to line the bottom of a 1/4 sheet Tupperware

*Save the rest to sprinkle over the top

11 oz cream cheese

1 cup sugar

1 tsp vanilla

Beat together then add the thickened Jello mix

Whip the refrigerated evaporated milk until thick Then add the cream cheese mix to the whipped evaporated milk Pour into Graham cracker lined Tupperware

*Sprinkle Graham cracker crumbs over the top

Refrigerate over night

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June / July 2025 Southeastern Region 7

That Old Pink Robe

Becky Van Vleet

I was heartbroken when my beloved mother left earth for heaven in 1977 when I was only 23 years old. My husband and I hadn't even reached our second anniversary yet. It felt so unfair. I'll never forget the day Daddy asked my sisters and me later on to go through our mother's clothes and decide what to do with them. That was an incredibly difficult day. We donated some items, while others we kept as personal mementos. I requested my mother's pink satin robe. It was already missing a couple of buttons, and dangling threads hung from the satin quilting. I can't recall why I asked for it, but I saved it in a drawer for almost 40 years.



Here come the grandchildren. Six granddaughters! As I brought out the robe for them to play dress-up, fond memories of my sweet mother filled my mind. Watching that old pink robe find new life with the little ones made my heart burst with joy. However, with age and gentle play, it has become quite worn. I've had to mend the robe several times. It's much too large for my younger granddaughters, yet they adore its long length and the feel of the satin. The memories of my mother wearing that robe around the house on chilly days are still etched in my mind to this day.

To preserve the cherished garment as a special keepsake, I've removed it from the play clothes and placed it on a dedicated hook in my closet. I'm thrilled whenever my granddaughters say, "Nana, I'm cold. Can I wear your mother's robe?" I hurry to retrieve it for them. I share tidbits about my mother when the robe comes out. How kind she was to others. Her pretty brown eyes. How her homemade macaroni and cheese was the best ever.



solution to the puzzle found on p.11												
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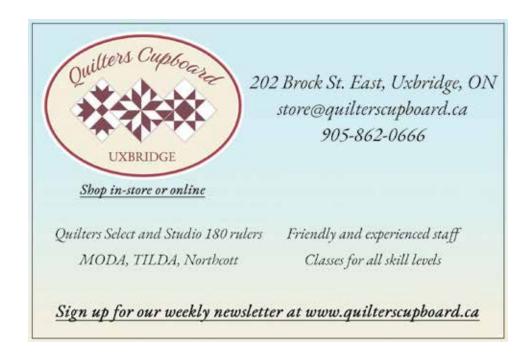
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The memories flood back. And when more than one granddaughter visits at the same time, it's not unusual to have to mediate who gets to wear it. I never imagined this would happen!

Why did I save this old robe? Back then, I wasn't sure why I wanted to hold onto it. But now it makes perfect sense. It holds cherished memories as I watch my granddaughters scampering around in it whenever they feel "cold." It reminds me of my lovely mother, and that's priceless.

I encourage all of you—grandmothers, mothers, daughters, aunts, sisters, and friends—to hold onto a piece of clothing, a quilt, a doll, a teacup, a scarf, or any meaningful keepsake you can pass along to your children or grandchildren. While the item might not seem important now, its value often grows over time. Share the story behind it. Create a cherished memory. Treasure the tale. That old pink robe brings me immense joy even today.







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Whippin' Up Some Fun: The Cool History of Cool Whip

In the world of desserts, one creamy concoction stands out as both a culinary delight and a Midwestern icon: Cool Whip. This fluffy, dreamy topping has been swirling its way into North American hearts since its debut in the late 1960s, bringing joy and a whole lot of whipped goodness to kitchen tables everywhere.

A Whipped Cream Revolution

Cool Whip didn't just appear out of thin air (or thin cream, for that matter). It was born out of a stroke of dessert genius by the food scientists at Kraft Foods back in 1966. They were on a mission to create a more convenient alternative to traditional whipped cream—something that could withstand the summer heat at picnics without turning into a soupy

Cool Whip may look like whipped cream, but it's actually a carefully engineered marvel of food science, and maybe something that is best unknown, as unlike traditional whipped cream, which is made by beating heavy cream until it forms fluffy peaks, Cool Whip is a blend of water, hydrogenated vegetable oils, high fructose corn syrup, and a few other ingredients designed to keep it stable, fluffy. Legend has it that the name "Cool Whip" came from the excited shouts of the test kitchen staff when they finally nailed the perfect fluffy consistency. "Cool! Whip!" they exclaimed, and thus, a creamy legend was born.

Whip It Good:

Now, let's talk about why the prairies has a special place in its heart (and fridge) for Cool Whip. Maybe it's because Westerners appreciate a good dollop of comfort with their pie. Or perhaps it's because Cool Whip pairs perfectly with all those Jell-O salads and casseroles that grace every church potluck and family reunion.

Researching this article I came across this unusual recipe: Cool Whip Pickle Dip. Yes, this exists. Pickle juice and chopped pickles folded into Cool Whip, sometimes with a little ranch seasoning for an extra kick. If you love the sweet-and-sour contrast of dipping Wendy's fries into a Frosty, you might just love this.

One thing's for sure: Cool Whip isn't just a topping; it's a cultural institution. It's the secret ingredient in Auntie Myrtle's heavenly pumpkin pie, and the fluffy cloud that makes any dessert feel like a hug on a plate.

Puns Galore: Whip It, Whip It Good

Now, let's whip up some puns, shall we?

- Cool Whip: When regular whipped cream just won't cut the custard.
- · Cool Whip: The only thing that whips better than a dad joke.
- Cool Whip: Making desserts cooler than the other side of the pillow.

Whether you're spreading it, piping it, or sneaking spoonfuls straight from the tub (no judgment here), Cool Whip is more than just a dessert topping—it's a creamy reminder that life is sweeter with a little fluff on top. So next time you're in the freezer aisle, grab yourself a tub of Cool Whip and whip up some smiles. Your taste buds—and your inner child—will thank you.

Philadelphia No Bake **Cool Whip Cheesecake**

This is a lighter tasting version of cheesecake, so it's perfect for the summer months. I would recommend the lemon rind over the lemon extract, but that's just a personal preference.

- 2 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 Tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp lemon extract (optional), or finely grated rind of 1 lemon
- 12 oz./1 L container Cool Whip thawed
- 1 (9") prepared graham cracker crust
- pie filling or topping of your choice optional

Combine cream cheese, sugar, vanilla, and lemon extract in a large bowl; beat with an electric mixer until smooth and creamy. Fold in Cool Whip. Pour mixture into graham cracker crust and smooth evenly. Top with pie filling and refrigerate until firm, 2 to 3 hours.

Creamy Lemon Pie

If you are a lemon lover, like me, add the lemon rind for additional flavour.

1/3 cup fresh lemon juice, or 1-2 lemons, juiced plus rind

14 oz./1 L can sweetened condensed milk

12 oz./1 litre container Cool Whip, thawed

9" prepared graham cracker crust

Squeeze juice from lemons into a medium mixing bowl. Stir in condensed milk and whipped topping

Pour into pie crust. Chill until set.

Chocolate Éclair Square

We were all surprised by how well this recipe turned out, as none of us particularly cares for eclairs. I think for variation, next time I might try adding some instant coffee into the pudding mix for a tiramisu flavour.

2 cups milk

2 pkgs (3.4 oz./102 g) instant vanilla pudding mix

12 oz./1 L Cool Whip, thawed

1 pkg. (14.4 oz./400 g) whole graham crackers

1 container (12 oz./340 g) whipped chocolate frosting

In a large bowl, whisk together milk and pudding mix for two minutes. Fold in Cool Whip until well-combined.

In a 13x9-in. baking dish, layer graham crackers evenly over bottom. Spread 1/2 of the pudding mixture evenly over grahams, repeat layers. Top with remaining graham crackers. Spread chocolate frosting over top.

Cover; refrigerate at least 3 hours. Cut into squares; serve.

June / July 2025 Southeastern Region 9

Floradale



Root Beer Float Pie

This just tastes retro, and the discussion around the supper table was that it would fit in A&W's product line. I could also see this recipe working with Coke or orange soda.

12 oz./1 L container Cool Whip thawed

3/4 cup cold root beer

½ cup milk

1 pkg (3.4 oz./102 g) vanilla pudding mix

1 graham cracker crust (9")

Maraschino cherries, optional

In a large bowl, whisk together root beer, milk and pudding mix for 2 minutes. Fold in half of the whipped topping. Spread into graham cracker crust.

Spread remaining whipped topping over pie. Freeze at least 8 hours or overnight.

If desired, top each serving with a maraschino cherry.

Icebox Limeade Pie

I remembered this pie from the `80s and had to search out the recipe. You can also use lemonade and pink lemonade for a different version. I grew up without air conditioning, so my mom was all about recipes that didn't heat up the house in the summer.

1 prepared graham cracker crust

6 oz./295 mL frozen limeade concentrate

12 oz./1 L container Cool Whip thawed

14 oz./300 mL can sweetened condensed milk

1 lime juice and zest

Mix the limeade, Cool Whip, sweetened condensed milk, and juice of 1 lime together in a large bowl. Stir until completely combined.

Pour into the pie crust and cover with the plastic lid.

Freeze overnight, at least 8 hours, before serving. Top with lime zest, if desired.

Before serving, remove pie from freezer for 10 minutes for easier cutting.

Pina Colada Pie

Our family finds sweetened coconut a bit too sweet, so I mixed it 50-50 with unsweetened coconut.

1 prepared graham cracker crust

1 packet instant vanilla pudding mix, plus ingredients called for on box

1 cup sweetened flaked coconut, plus 3/4 cup more for topping

1 12 oz/1 L container Cool Whip, thawed

1 can (398 mL) crushed pineapple, drained

Prepare vanilla pudding according to the package's instructions. Add in the coconut and pour into the pre-made pie crust.

In a separate bowl, combine Cool Whip and pineapple, then pour mixture on top of the pie.

Pour the $^{3}\!\!/$ cup of coconut into a small frying pan and cook over medium heat. Keep an eye on it, as it goes from golden brown to burnt in a hurry.

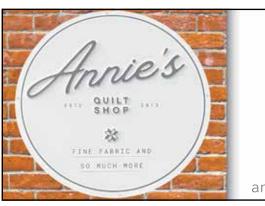
Sprinkle with toasted coconut and refrigerate 3 hours. Serve chilled.

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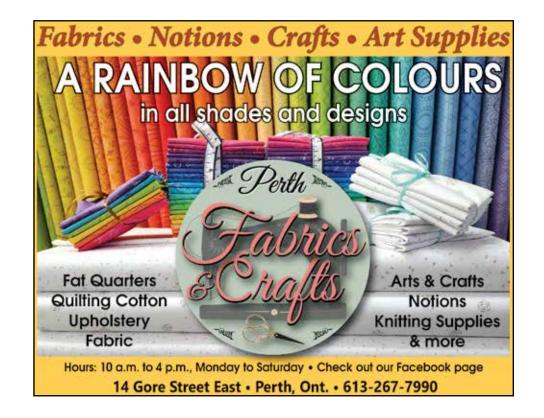


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Signs of Summer in Nature

by Janet Young

There are many ways you can tell summer is on its' way by certain signs in nature. For instance, beginning in April and May fireflies start to appear. Walk at night in an open field, and as if by magic flashes of light begin to appear. It is through these flashes that the bugs are communicating with one another.

But how many remember from their childhood, when the first flash of light appeared in a darkened field, the excitement this would elicit. Most likely you ran in your house to get a jar and lid with holes punched in, so as to allow the bugs to breathe. These were exciting times, for the occasional light in the night air produced a magic all of its' own making. By evening's end, the bugs were released so that they could join the rest of their" friends".

Next comes the butterfly with its' large, colorful wings folded at rest, to open wide when it's time to fly, is a beautiful sight to behold. They are unassuming and gentle, yet children especially want to catch them. If you have ever been to a butterfly house, you see the beauty as they flutter by.

But life for the butterfly has not always been easy. To transform from a caterpillar to a butterfly is very challenging. However, it was the fight that brought this adversity which built a strong, unassuming butterfly. Amazingly, after this transformation, the butterfly just flies on to start its' new butterfly life.

Finally, there is the Ladybug, which is actually a beetle with a bright red body and black dots. This bug is so pretty it has caught the attention of the fashion world to the extent, that on occasion it has designed fashions reminiscent of the colors of the ladybug.

Some people believe there is a religious symbolism like heaven, or angels associated with the ladybug. In addition, the ladybug is associated with good fortune, happiness, and love.

While nature has provided us with a bounty of insects, they all serve a purpose in preserving our natural surroundings. And while, I have chosen some of the more unique or most beautiful examples, there are still more to discover.

I started out with the intent of making us aware that when we see these wonders of nature, it is then that we know summer is on its' way. And by the way, another way I personally, can tell summer is on its' way, is something I experienced while working in my yard today. And that was the honking of geese, announcing that thy have returned after a winter in the south. But that's a story for another time.

It is now time to enjoy the fleeting days of summer, because before too long I will hear the geese honking as they make their flight down south for the winter days that lie ahead.

Have a great summer!

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

King's Hole and the Day Mom Became a Heroine

by Nancy J. Nash

When I was growing up, we coped with hot, humid summer days by reading comics on the back porch while eating popsicles or by a following a path across the pasture to a small brook. King's Hole was the name of the swimming hole that had formed near a bend in this brook. Here the children of our neighborhood gathered on many a summer afternoon. Teenagers dived into the water from a rope swing attached to a big elm tree. Little children played in the sand along the bank, making castles and toppling them for fun. The older ones dog-paddled and donned goggles to pretend they were snorkeling. Mom and a few other parents chatted together.

One day a small boy came by with a teenager, who got distracted. Before long, the boy wandered away from the shallow water where he had begun to play. There was a drop-off in the creek bottom, and suddenly he went in over his head. Other children began yelling that someone was drowning. My mother heard them, searched the spot where he had disappeared, and quickly retrieved him. In a moment he was breathing again, and back under the care of the remorseful teenager.

I had always known that my kind and gentle mother was a wonderful human being. That day she rose to the level of a heroine. I'm sure there were many times in her life when she filled that role, not all of them so dramatic. Once, when I was very ill, she kept watch all night at my bedside. How much of my survival was due to medicine, and how much was due to the loving care and comfort she provided? Love is often accompanied by sacrifice, and her sacrifices that night were hidden in her heart, bearing fruit in due season.

The rest of our days at the swimming hole where my mother rescued a child were peaceful and happy. Today, when I mention King's Hole to a neighbor, I get a smile or a laugh. It was our place, good for cooling off on a hot summer's day, but better still as a setting for forming friendships and for making memories that last all our lives.

©2025 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.

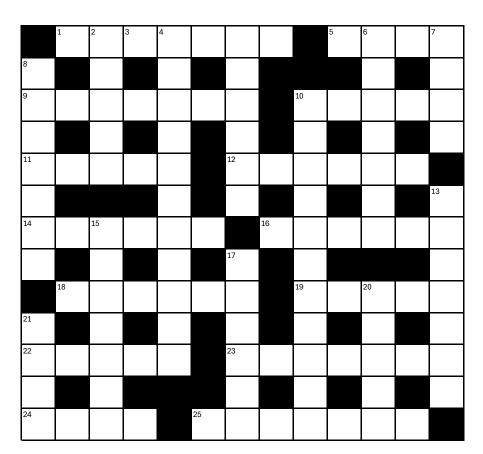
Keeping In Touch

by Cindy and Joe Ashfield <old.stuff@sasktel.net>

It's early May when I sit down with my pen....still "old school" when I gather my thoughts for a column. Spring is such an optimistic time of the year. We seem still to have fluctuating temperatures, accompanied by a little rain or snow, so the tree stands across the road that border the field are blushing green and the tulips and daffodils add a spark of colour to

Still thinking about "buy Canadian", I thought that I would bring it a little closer to home. Some of our made-in-Saskatchewan products have the wheat sheaf symbol on their packaging, although not everything does. With summer around the corner, the farmers' markets will be soon offering their early produce and/or preserves made from last year's harvest. I enjoy the fall craft markets, so I source some of my products there. At one of these markets, I found prize-winning mustard from Gravelbourg. Their variety pack was a big seller at this sale. There are jams and jellies, or pickles, and often local ethnic favourites. I think a standout for me this year was the loaf of bread I bought. This bread came from a bakery in Oxbow, Just Bread, and is also sold at a farmer's market as well as her store and craft markets. I contacted Edith to find out a little more about the variety of bread she offers. She uses organic flour that she sources from nearby farms and mills herself. The loaf I bought was made from wheat & Einkorn flour. Other choices were rve, kamut and spelt. Hike making my own bread and wondered where I could find smaller packages of some of these flours. Axten Farms near Minton, mills and sells a wide variety of grains, and according to Edith, although they are not registered organic grain farmers, they are regenerative. This means that their aim is to regenerate

June / July 2025 Southwestern Region 11



ACROSS

- 1 Sugar (7)
- 5 Rewrite (4)
- 9 This or that person (7)
- **10** Put on (5)
- 11 Happen after (5)
- 12 Mix socially (6)
- 14 Yarn (6) **16** Relaxed (2,4)
- **18** Compel (6)
- 19 Hebrew 'A' (5)
- 22 Extraterrestrial (5) 23 Not in a joined-up writing, perhaps (7)
- 24 Position (4)
- 25 Repudiating (7)

DOWN

- 2 Swellings (5)
- 3 Working together (11)
- 4 Fume (6)
- 6 Educational award (7)
- 7 Christmas delivery? (4)
- 8 Claims to be true (7)
- 10 For no good reason (11)
- 13 Techniques (7)
- 15 Constructed again (7)
- 17 Persons in general (6)
- 20 Ingested (5)
- 21 Boys (4)

(story continued from previous page)

and improve the soil, water and biodiversity of their land..

Did you know that we have cheese makers in Saskatchewan? I see Bothwell cheese on the store shelves, and it is made in Saskatoon. I talked to Shawnda at Crossmount, which is just south of Saskatoon. She makes her cheese in small batches. She makes a wheel of cheese, Belperknolle, which is used shaved. She also makes ricotta. We had a great phone conversation about her journey learning the craft, which I think is a whole other column. Once when visiting my in-laws, my mother-in-law had a bag of cottage cheese (wrapped in cheese cloth, of course) hanging from the outdoor clothesline, dripping. I think it was the whey. It was truly the best cottage cheese that I had ever eaten. Why didn't I get her recipe?! I make my own ricotta cheese with milk, which is available in the local store.

Honey is another easily found Saskatchewan product. We have beekeepers throughout our province. The Tisdale area is well known for this. Honey can be an excellent substitute for sugar. If you have access to the internet, there is lots of advice about how to handle various substitutes in recipes. No computer or smartphone... if you need help, the library has computers for patrons' use. Your librarian is right at hand to help you find whatever Saskatchewan-made product you may be looking for. Amy Jo Ehman has written books about food that you may enjoy. "Prairie Feast" and "Out of Saskatchewan Kitchens" are available at the library. If you plan to travel Saskatchewan roads this summer, you might like to check out "Only in Saskatchewan" by Naomi Hansen. This is a guide to some of the "eateries" that she found interesting.

Of course, there are many other Saskatchewan-made products that I could write about & this time it is about food, but it is time to close this chapter. I will be eating freshly picked asparagus for dinner tomorrow and I think that I see the fall planting of carrots just breaking ground. Looking across the road to the quickly drying up pond, I am seeing all manner of shore birds, who have joined Fred and Ethel, the names we gave the pair of Canada geese who return every year. A flash of yellow caught my eye at the bird feeder, so the American Goldfinches are back. Let's hope that the black oil sunflower seed in the feeder was grown in Saskatchewan.

Til next time in the Register, have a wonderful summer.



Become Inspired Decorating, Entertaining and Living in the Early American Style

Nature's Artful Canvas

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

As the season of spring advances, nature's beauty is on full display all around us. Our country lawns are like an artist's background canvas in a deeper, more vibrant green. Our dogwood trees' blossoms are in full bloom now dotting the surrounding landscape with beautiful pastels of pink and cream. Lilac bushes become heavy with tight abundant flowers that can be picked almost daily now to fill our antique white ironstone pitchers. These wonderful country bouquets of soft purple and white create a wonderful country look on a perfectly weathered and worn harvest table, bringing the scent and sight of spring right into our home.

A Spring Sanctuary

Our herb gardens often become a sanctuary after a long day's work when we find ourselves out in the warm sun preparing our soil and cleaning out our garden beds for the season to come. Hardy varieties of thyme and marjoram see to spring back to life and begin to fill in our open spaces around our stone steps or against the backdrop of a country picket fence.

Spending time making room for more plantings is an afternoon of bliss and it is well-deserved. Planning areas in our herb gardens for colorful annuals for contrast and height, like orange nasturtiums, purple salvia, pink zinnias or bright red poppies is time well-spent as it will add definition and depth to our garden spaces to enjoy all year long.

Nature's bounty can also be savored while on an energizing hike. Walking alongside the babbling brooks and vernal ponds of spring on a soft, winding trail is a country blessing to treasure. Being completely present in the moment, we notice the leaves on the trees showing even more green and the lush bushes along the water's edge seem to soften the scene. Taking time to enjoy nature's gradual transformation gives us a sense of gratitude for all that is around us and we are left with a feeling of complete peace.

Creative Country Transformations

The season of spring often rejuvenates us, providing us with increased energy and motivation to work on new projects and larger country tasks. Our outdoor spaces can now be transformed into a creative extension of our home using our country antiques, a few potted plants and elements found in nature. Establishing an intimate space in which to either entertain or to read our favorite country magazine on a bright spring morning can be a rewarding weekend project. A collection of flat stones can be gathered to arrange a rustic garden patio adjacent to a kitchen clipping garden. A weathered primitive table can be arranged with outdoor Windsor chairs to form a country space for cookouts with family and friends. Country lanterns on stakes can transform our backyard into an inviting spot to spend time sharing stories and making memories. And large sturdy antiques such as primitive kegs and country grain bins can be put to back to use as storage or as serving stations for our country events and gatherings.

This season take time to delight in some of the longest, most satisfying days of the year. Create opportunities to surround yourself with nature and embrace the peace that nature always provides.

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

Feathering a Nest

Nestled in her faded blue recliner, a green aluminum tray straddled her lap and a floor lamp cast a soft glow over her shoulder. Thus ensconced, my mother filled many long North Country nights engrossed in her latest creative challenge. Early schooled in the art of multi-tasking, Mom worked on her craft projects while music from Lawrence Welk, Ed Sullivan or the Loretta Young show hummed from the black-and-white television across the room.

After a full day of caring for home, husband and five rambunctious children, Mom relaxed by engaging her hands in artistic endeavors - aptly applying one of her favorite mottoes - "idle hands are the Devil's workshop."

One year, in the early nineteen-sixties, mom received a "Fad-of-the-Month" Club membership. Each "fad" (craft) was guaranteed to become a "unique creation your family will treasure for years." Once a month, like clockwork, the mailman wedged a rectangular package inside our rural, metal mailbox. It was an exciting time in our household as mail was rare in those days and parcels even rarer. Excitement rumbled through us, akin to Christmas morning. We kids hovered around Mom as she spread the contents of the latest object d'art on the kitchen table. We nosed through the tiny envelopes of beads and pins, cardboard templates, pieces of plastic and Styrofoam, bits of cotton and cloth, and shiny foil bags of glitter and glue - a mish-mash of supplies that awaited transformation into something greater than the sum of their parts.

Our home soon became a repository for bird's nests tucked inside plastic fruit, imitation Faberge eggs, and sequin-studded ornaments. Unaware of it at the time, lessons beyond cutting and gluing, stitching and staining were being instilled in my young heart.

Attaching hundreds of sequins to foam balls with half-inch straight pins, Mom demonstrated perseverance and finishing what you start. No matter how tedious, she never gave up on a project. Watching Mom work, I learned to follow directions and pay attention to details, even confusing ones. Doing so, without second guessing the craft's creator, guaranteed the finished project would look like the picture in the instruction booklet.

When the Fad-of-the-Month Club membership ended, Mom went back to choosing her own projects. She made costume jewelry with seed beads and miniscule safety pins; she knitted sweaters, scarves and hats; she crocheted doilies and bedspreads; she created wall-hangings by gluing thousands of green and amber acrylic crystals into cord-lined, wine-bottle shapes. With latch-hook and yarn she created pillows, rugs and framed art. She finished paint-by-number canvases of seascapes, landscapes, gardens and the Good Shepherd.

Yet Mom's deeper desire, one that eluded me during my growing-up years, was the fine art of feathering her nest - creating a cozy haven for her fledglings to grow and a unique perch from which to try their wings.

One by one my siblings left the nest, then, in 1971, it was my turn. After graduating high school, I found employment as a typesetter at a smalltown newspaper.

At the ripe, know-it-all age of seventeen, being employed in the fastpaced world of publishing in a town of nearly two-thousand people was a heady experience for this rural girl.

Though I continued to live with my parents, my horizons had broadened beyond hearth and home. There was a big world out there and, comingof-age on the cusp of the burgeoning women's lib movement, I relegated homemaking to the ranks of the obsolete. Dedicating one's life to the care and nurture of a family was passé. Women were created for so much more, or so popular culture led me to believe.

Before too long, though, winds of change blew across my life. I had been at the newspaper office for four years when a printer's apprentice was hired. While he learned the ropes of running a print shop, I perfected my flirting skills.

In less time than it takes to say: "time and tide wait for no man" -(another of Mom's favorite mottoes) - I was deeply in love with that browneyed printer boy. An autumn courtship was followed by a spring marriage. We purchased a small cottage on the wooded shores of North Pond, an inlet of Lake Ontario and I went into homemaking overdrive - painting, decorating and crafting knick-knacks for our little home.

I continued working at the newspaper during the day. Nights and weekends were spent helping Don build his own printing business. Two months before our first baby was due, I quit my job to prepare for our bundle of joy.

I traded in my sporty apple-red Mustang for a hefty blue station wagon.

I knit sweaters, booties and blankets for our baby, made polyester-stuffed toys and sewed curtains for the nursery. I devoted myself to feathering a nest for my own family. And I never looked back (though today I wouldn't mind having that apple-red Mustang!)

Now, nearly fifty years, three children, nine grandchildren later, and still deeply in love with my brown-eyed printer boy, I rarely ever sit idly in front of the television. If I'm not reading, I'm working on my latest project crocheting, sewing, sketching, knitting, etc.

Fad-of-the-Month Club creators were right on target. Their simple crafts did become timeless treasures - but in a far greater way than transitory keepsakes. By creating those treasures, my mother planted an overwhelming love of home in my young heart, not with words, but with sequins, glitter and glue. Lots of glue.

Judyann Grant and her husband Don's rural home is situated across from Lake Ontario in northern New York. While both are "semi-retired," Don continues to operate his print shop and Judyann still writes columns and meditations. Her latest book is: "Reflections: One Year of Devotions." Contact the author at: witandwisdomwriters@gmail.com



Focused on Fun

For a number of years now, my grown son has made jokes about our different approaches to life. He describes us as being two different kinds of birds in the same flock: I am the focused goose at the front of the "V," fighting the windshear every mile--while he is the "relaxed" goose, riding the lift. In the "work smarter, not harder" ideology of his younger generation, he challenges me to enjoy the ride rather than fight through negotiations.

The adjustment has been challenging, but I'm already beginning to see some improvements in my physical health and mental outlook since I started down this path! All because I'm trying to focus more on "fun" and smiles now!

First, I attended a class on Color Theory held at a quilt shop. Such a great outing! Part of my course fee included my very own color wheel while the other part introduced me to the woman who explained what it all means in relation to selecting quilting fabrics. Well worth both the time, and the course fee, in my humble opinion.

While we waited for the class to start, I had the opportunity to chat with a fellow classmate. She talked about how she meets her son for lunch every Friday, followed by a variety of classes offered at the quilt store in which we were sitting. How fun! I still work, but she planted the seed: Regular meal visits with family members!

After that, the rewards began quickly accumulating. A lunch-date with my mother, sister, and two others; a comedy show with my son and two of his friends, followed by dinner out; my granddaughter's after-school dance program (which ironically ended 15 minutes after it started), followed by dinner out; two Sunday drives with my son to orchestral concerts in towns an hour's drive away, followed by dinners out.

And then this afternoon, the postal clerk and I shared such an exchange of giggles over a package I was mailing to a friend in another state, because it sounded like a set of maracas clicking away in the cardboard box! "Is it anything fragile?" she asked.

"No, they are just empty wooden thread spools. I am sharing them with my friend, because she is a wood carver. I forgot to take them when I went to visit her last summer, so I'm just mailing them to her now," I explained.

That's when we both acquired the giggle-bug. What might the other postal employees who handled the package along its journey think about the sound they would hear coming out of the box? What other unusual or funny—things do people mail to others? What will my friend think when she retrieves the package from the post office? Or, if porch-pirates snag it—and think they have acquired something really cool? What if someone thinks the contents got broken during the shipping process? Such a lovely random Wednesday.

Smiles are free, and my blood pressure might be lowering.

© Jeanette Lukowski 2025. Jeanette is a mother, grandmother, teacher, and author who lives in Alexandria, MN. She is inspired by the lives of strong women. Her email address is: writingfromlife@yahoo.com







Quilted Heirlooms collection coming to shops this July along with new patterns and...a new Mystery Quilt Along!

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Happy quilting! Ellen



Traveling Teacups

Sundays are a day of rest in our home, and I look forward to these leisurely afternoons to nap and read.

But one Sunday as I curled up on the sofa with a good book, my thoughts turned to Myrtle, our silver-haired neighbor. She had recently moved to a retirement home, and I wondered how she was doing. I smiled as I recalled times we had shared when she lived next door.

"You're my dessert lady," Myrtle said and giggled whenever I brought her warm bread pudding or other sweet treats. But now I couldn't easily stop by to see her.

Laying my book aside, I said to my husband, "Perhaps I should visit Myrtle today and take her tea."

"Good idea," he said with a smile.

I packed a tea basket for two. Inside I nestled china teacups and saucers wrapped in dishtowels, adding assorted teas, sugar cubes, and teaspoons. I would need a thermos of hot water, and, to live up to my nickname, dessert. Myrtle ate mostly soft foods and loved homemade puddings, so I cooked the easy tapioca recipe on the box of tapioca. I also took some spicy homemade applesauce to stash in her small refrigerator.

When I arrived, the curtains were closed and Myrtle reclined in her favorite chair, watching baseball on TV. Myrtle brightened as I opened the drapes. "I've been reading some good books lately," she said.

We chatted and admired her family photos. Then I unpacked the tea basket. Myrtle smelled each tea and chose a pear-caramel tea from France. I placed a doily on her saucer and brewed the tea in her cup. While she stirred in a sugar cube, I scooped warm tapioca pudding into green goblets.

"These goblets are so beautiful," Myrtle said.

I chuckled and admitted, "I bought them at a rummage sale for a quarter a piece."

She giggled at our shared secret, then added, "I hear Jonathan is engaged." Myrtle loved hearing about our son's wedding plans, and I asked questions about her grandkids. Almost forty years separated us in age, but our mother hearts felt close.

Myrtle took the napkin I handed her and read its sentiment aloud: "Friends like you are special and few." She sighed and tucked it aside with the lemon drops and an extra teabag to enjoy later. I snapped a few photos so I could send her one and keep the memory of our teatime fresh for myself. Then it was time to pack my traveling teacups and drive home.

There have been other lazy Sundays when my teacups and I sat idle. But the Sunday we visited Myrtle remains a beloved memory. Yes, it really is more blessed to give than to receive. But by giving, I also received and left full brimming with memories of shared laughter, love, and tea.

Do you know someone who needs love? If so, won't you join me and pack a basket with a traveling tea party? You'll be glad you did.

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

From Lydia's Recipe File:

Easy Tapioca Pudding or Parfaits

2¾ cups milk (whole or 2%)

1 egg, beaten

1/3 cup sugar

3 tablespoons minute tapioca dash of salt (optional)

1 teaspoon vanilla

- 1. Combine all ingredients except vanilla in a large microwaveable bowl.
- 2. Let stand for 5 minutes.
- 3. Microwave on high until mixture comes to a full boil and thickens (about 10 to 12 minutes), stirring every 3 minutes.
- 4. Stir in vanilla.
- 5. Cool. The pudding will continue to thicken as it cools. Serve warm or chilled.

Makes six ½-cup servings. Refrigerate leftovers.

Variation: Tapioca Parfaits. Use goblets or small glasses for individual servings. Alternate layers of pudding and favorite jam or fresh fruit to fill each glass. Top with whipped topping. Serve chilled.



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COLUMN TEACHER COLUMN TAIL AND A SECURE OF THE ACTION OF T



Borderline Good: Borderline Confusion

When Carl turned twenty-eight, his age caught up to his waistline. Carl had worn size 28-waisted pants since he was 18; it never even occurred to him that he would have to buy a different pant size someday. But that is precisely what happened about a month before his 29th birthday. He had a good run there for 10 years at keeping his waistline the same size, but once he turned 28, he started a new trend. He had to once again up his pants to 29 inches on his twenty-ninth birthday, 31 inches on his thirtyfirst, and so on. It was a gradual incline, and he nor Mary really seemed to notice or care. In fact, it was a running joke between the two of them for about 10 years. They would be at a church function or a family gettogether, and someone would ask Carl how old he was; Carl would look over to Mary and ask, "Hey honey, what size are my pants?"

"Let's see... you were born in nineteen fifty-something, and now it nineteen ninety-something..." Mary would ponder, "36...yup, size 36!" would be her conclusion. Carl would turn back to the asking party and say, "If my pants are 36, then so am I," with a laugh. Their fun and games lasted until the realization of the whole affair landed on Carl like a ton of brick the week before his fortieth birthday.

Regular readers of the Country Register know Carl runs a small-town grocery store that sits smack dab on the Saskatchewan and Manitoba Border. Borderline Goods is the store's official name, but thanks to one summer storm many years ago, the "s" was lost to the wind. The sign in front of the store now reads, "Borderline Good." Shortly after the storm, Carl realized the sign was a tourist attraction. That is when he came up with the store's motto..." Our quality service is borderline good; our goods are borderline quality."

The local library branch sits two doors down the street from Carl's store, right beside the local Credit Union. When Carl was approaching his fortieth birthday, he started looking for ideas on how to stop his needing a new pant size every time he made a lap around the sun. When Carl arrived at the library that day, he had a hard time believing he had made the 585 million mile trip around the sun with the Earth, as he had to stop and catch his breath after walking down the street two doors.

Carl only had ten minutes to look for a book on weight loss because he had hung up his "Back in 10 Min" sign on the door at the store. He only needed about 5 of those minutes to come to the realization that books on weight loss were not high on the radar of a small-town library. "we only have so much room," the librarian, Mrs. Phillips, said to Carl when He asked, "and you know how much room we need for the cookbooks." When she said that, Carl knew why he was in the predicament that he was in.

Not finding what he was looking for at the library, Carl turned to the magazine rack when he returned to the store. Carl had seldom ever looked through the magazines he kept in the store other than to read the jokes in the Reader's Digest. He started off going through Good Housekeeping, then Canadian Living. The recipes in Canadian Living led him to start thumbing through a new publication, Fine Cooking. By the time Carl left the store that night, he had not found any helpful information about dropping a few pounds, but he had two or three recipes he wanted to show Mary. One was a way to use zucchinis when they were small and tender, not the size of baseball bats, which was the local custom.

The next day, Carl had more time to sift through all the different titles on the magazine rack. He found many that he never noticed before, even though he was the one that took them out of the boxes every month and put them on display. He got caught up in the articles he was interested in again, not ones to help him stifle his weight gain. He was just about to put aside the issue of Harrowsmith magazine to take home, which had stepby-step instructions on making homemade cheese when he realized that he would have to focus if he was to take his waistline seriously.

He was right when he thought he should stick to the magazines geared toward women. He still had difficulty finding anything helpful, but he enjoyed looking at the pictures in Shape magazine. He jotted down notes from each article that he found helpful and set out a plan for himself. When I say "himself," that is precisely what I mean because nowhere in his plan did it involve telling Mary. That is when the confusion on Mary's part

At first, Mary noticed the leftovers at home were not disappearing from the refrigerator like usual. Had she cooked more than she thought she did? Had they gone bad, and instead of throwing them away, Carl left

(story continues on next page)

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them for her to take care of. That did sound like something Carl would do. She would peel back the tin foil carefully and sniff the contents of the plates. She could find nothing wrong with the food and just started serving up these leftovers for supper. Carl never said a word or complained that they were having the same thing two meals in a row. Slowly, the leftovers became too much, and they became leftovers themselves. Mary had to alter some of her recipes, so they did not make as much as usual.

Carl started hanging out in the kitchen while Mary was making supper; he would try to steer her to use more vegetables and less meat in her dishes. She started to worry about Carl. Was he going through a midlife crisis? She noticed he was losing a little weight. Was he sick? Should she make him go to the doctor? Then, out of nowhere, he joined Mary on her after-supper walks. She had been trying to get him to accompany her on her walks for years. Even though everything Carl was doing was out of the ordinary for him, she had a hard time finding anything wrong with what he was doing; she was glad for the extra time together, but why was he going through the extra effort to spend time with her. Was he worried their marriage was in trouble? Mary was very confused by the whole situation but was too afraid to ask Carl about it.

Then he started to write on the calendar. Carl had been joining Mary for her evening walks for about a month. The days were starting to get longer, and so were their walks. Then Carl began to lap around town on his way to the store. Carl always walked to the store, no matter what the weather. They only had one vehicle, and Mary taught school in the next town over, so Carl had no choice but to walk to work because Mary had the car. Mary was already gone every morning long before Carl would leave for the store, so she had no idea he was leaving even earlier than usual to get in a walk before work. However, she did notice that when they walked together, something made a strange clicking sound every time Carl took a step. That was also when he started writing "smiles" on the calendar. First, it was just a day or two. Monday, June 8th "smiles" Tuesday nothing. Wednesday, June 10th, "smiles," then nothing for a week. Mary wasn't sure if his smiles were meant for her or himself? Maybe he only wrote smiles on the days he was happy? By the end of July, he had written "smiles" on every weekday calendar. Mary was really starting to get worried about him. They had been spending extra time together on their walks. Was he sick of their time together? Is that why he didn't need to remind himself to smile on the weekends?

By early August, Carl had lost enough weight to be noticeable. Mary's friend Alice finally asked her one day if everything was ok. Confused, Mary asked her why she would ask her that. "Come on, Mary, everyone in town has noticed that you and Carl are spending more time together, and Carl has lost so much weight; we all know he is sick. Is it cancer?"

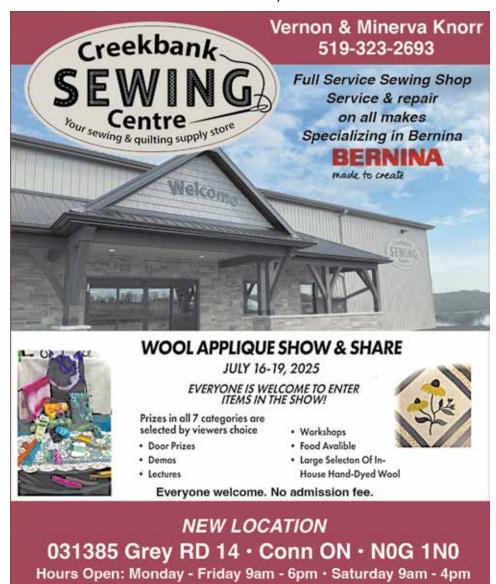
Mary was waiting at the door for Carl to come home that afternoon. "I can take it. Just tell me," she said. Carl, confused, said, "Tell you what." Mary went over everything that he had been doing. And he had a very reasonable answer for everything. "Why didn't you tell me you wanted to lose weight?" she said. "I don't know," said Carl. "I guess I didn't want you to feel like you had to help me, which you would have, by the way, and you would have pushed me too hard, and I would have given up. It's a man thing, you wouldn't understand." "You're right," said Mary. "I don't understand."

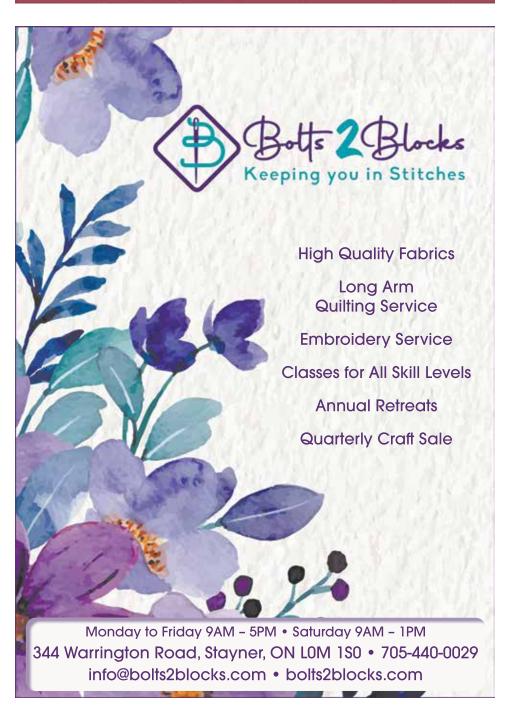
But the one thing I would like to understand is why you keep writing 'smiles' on the calendar?" "I haven't been writing 'smiles' on the calendar," said Carl. "You have to!" snapped Mary. "Look! How can you stand there and say you haven't been writing 'smiles' on the calendar when it clearly says 'smiles" on almost every day?" Carl started to laugh. "It's not funny, Carl if you are depressed and need to remind yourself to be happy." Said Mary. "I bought myself a pedometer," said Carl. "You must have heard me clicking as I walked with you in the evenings?" "Yes," said Mary, "has been driving me crazy trying to figure out what that was." "well, it's a pedometer," said Carl. "some days, I walk farther than others, but I have set a goal to walk a certain distance daily. And I only write it down when I reach my goal." "so when you reach your goal, you're happy about it and write 'smiles" on the calendar?" "No," said Carl. "I don't write 'smiles,' but when I reach my goal, I write down how far I walked...5miles."

Mary and the rest of the people they know were very happy to hear that Carl was indeed still in good health. Some of them were even inspired by Carl and started to walk more and watch what they ate. It could even be said that thanks to Carl, there were new "smiles" all around town.

Borderline Good is a series of fictional stories written by Kirby Gust. The stories are set in a fictional town on the Saskatchewan Manitoba border. All the characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

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TWO MINUTE READS TO FLIP OUR SCRIPT

by Kathy J. Sotak

Staying in the Centre with Sacred Geometry

Fine. Let's talk about the elephant in the room. I don't like talking about the chaos of today's world. I keep my eyes forward, envisioning this beautiful new path in front of me.

All of us are going through hard things. Are you in the mucky chrysalis stage between a caterpillar and a butterfly? Are you being forged in the fire? Are you in a dark pit, not sure how to get out? Are you in that scary contraption, pulled in opposite directions? Or, do you feel like half of the world has gone mad?

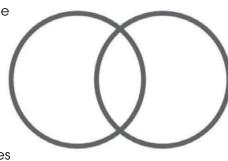
Almost every day I hear about my dear ones' physical pain, mysterious symptoms, serious diagnoses, anxiety, life-altering chapter changes or break-ups. And, I hear about my dear ones' deep joy, miracles, new chapters, creations and limitless expansive themes.

Now, let's assess our news feed. There are divisive, venomous insults being thrown across the aisles, keeping us in divide, judgment and righteousness. And, there are miraculous new discoveries and inventions. Every day there are inspiring new findings from deep within forests and under the ocean.

It is confusing, isn't it? It's as if there are two different realities playing out at once: Light, dark. Heaven, hell. Good, bad. Right, wrong. Forward, backward. Peace, hate. Creation, destruction.

How can we be living in the same world and have such polar opposite experiences?

Six months ago, I came across the Vesica Pisces symbol and it overcame me with obsession. These two slightly overlapping circles are an ancient symbol found in numerous traditions. For some reason I couldn't get the shape out of my mind. It showed itself to me in my dreams, my social media feeds and came into my mind's eye during conversations. Why are these circles stalking me?



"I'll just read more about it," I said, thinking it will give me answers. The Vesica Pisces has significance with Pythagorean mathematical calculations (I'll spare you the numerical detail). It also forms the ichthys (fish symbol) in the Christian tradition. It has been found all over the globe as prehistoric art.

This research just didn't resonate though, and I knew I had to figure it out myself. After weeks of rumination, it dawned on me, pulling me out of this obsession: Deep peace and understanding lives in the centre. We can access it in every moment, today.

Okay, now I've got your attention.

See the centre eye, the overlapping part in the middle? This is where peace lives. The planet's history is a pattern of polarity, playing out again and again. Each generation believes we are changing the world, but I have to wonder, what if the chaos will never go away? What will we do then? What if the answer is simply finding peace, love and joy amidst

Let me explain more. Imagine we are standing on a far edge of a scenario, e.g., on the furthest side away from the centre circle. From that far vantage point, we can't see the far opposite side. We may label this June / July 2025 Southeastern Region 19

Front Porch in the Summer

by Tammy Page

June, the nationally known celebrated month of weddings and love, including my own, also means days of baseball, swimming, working 4-H animals, baling hay and lots of porch sitting. I love my front porch more than grilled hot dogs, more than 4th of July sparklers and almost more that spending time with my grandkids, I said almost.

My front porch is big enough to have two seating areas, and is covered. It has a great north/south breeze and faces the road where I can wave to my neighbors as they drive by. My porch is the best place to sit and feel the sun to warm by aching bones and drink my morning coffee. I also like to read while relaxing there on my settee. I can place my coffee on the side table all the while reading my newest country magazine. My Australian shepherds lay at the edge of the sidewalk keeping me company and watching for me to rise to give them rubs and sometimes a morning treat. On the other end of my 20-foot porch is a well-loved swing. It's so comfy that I have often fluffed up the pillows and laid down for a nap. My grandkids love to sit with me as I read them one of their favorite books, or play riddly, riddly ree, AKA I spy. Oh, the things we could "I Spy" from the front porch. There is a menagerie of trees, flowers, the yard decor, the cows and calves, the dogs and so much more. The rug on the floor invites the grandchildren to bring out their tote of toys and play at our feet as we visit with our friends and loved ones. A gate is installed across the entrance where we can "coral" them while still keeping a watchful eye on the little ones and also keeping the big, excitable dogs off the porch and from grabbing up the children's toys as their own.

Eating a snack on the porch is the perfect spot for our two-year-old twin grandsons who tend to spill and drop crumbs of animal crackers. Of course, they love to reach through the railings and treat one of the dogs with a few of those crackers too. If truth be told, that is probably the reason why the dogs stay so close while we are out on the porch. They know the twins love to share and get lots of thank you kisses and licks from them too.

The porch has also been a refuge when days have been hard. It has given distance from a quarrel with my spouse, solitude from a teenage spat with her boyfriend, a need to have some quiet time and even a time to reflect after the death of a loved one.

No matter the reason, my country porch will always be my favorite place.

© Tammy Page writes from her family farm in Indiana. When not helping her husband with chores, she loves scoring a great collectible at an antique shop and spoiling her children and grands.



(story continued from previous page)

com/.

other side as wrong, crazy or bad. But the closer we come to centre we see both sides equally. We may not agree with the other side, but we can at least see it with more understanding. It is closer to our reality.

We can't get thrown off balance in the centre. We can't get hurt in the centre of the storm.

This new awareness became a game. One by one, I'd take each firm stance I held, my *side*, my *righteousness* on a certain topic and "run it through" the Vesica Pisces symbol in my mind's eye. If I am pointing at others about how wrong their beliefs are, I imagine myself standing on the far edge of the outer ring. Then, I slowly walk closer towards the centre. I feel my body soften and my mind clear out with each step. Now standing in the centre eye, I ask myself, "Can I stay in this calm centre where vision is 20/20?"

This is my transcription of this powerful symbol into human understanding

Lately, when someone asks, "How are you doing, Kathy?", the question is irrelevant. The answer is always the same, at least when I am standing in the centre. The energetic "weather" around me may be clear, cloudy or stormy, but I can breathe peacefully and stand still in the centre, if I choose.

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Maxwell



Last Chance Wool Project Turns Waste into Sustainable Fashion

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A revolutionary new wool yarn project, Last Chance Wool, is hoping to take the textile industry by storm, transforming sheep wool that might otherwise be discarded into sustainable and versatile yarn. This innovative initiative not only saves wool from ending up in landfills but also promotes environmentally friendly practices in fashion and textiles.

Sheep wool, often considered a byproduct in many farming operations, is sometimes discarded due to low prices paid to farmers or lack of processing facilities. However, this new project aims to change that by collecting and converting wool into high-quality yarn. The yarn produced can be used to create a myriad of useful and fashionable items, including hats, mittens, sweaters, socks, and more.

The project's founders Donna Jo Copeland and Yvonne Jones, Sue Speichert and their partner mill Mystery's Meadows Fiber Mill in Humbolt, lowa are keen to highlight the sustainability of wool. Unlike synthetic fibers, wool is a natural, biodegradable material that doesn't contribute to pollution or microplastic contamination in our land and waterways. Its production relies on sheep farming, which can be managed in a manner that supports land conservation and promotes biodiversity.

Moreover, wool is known for its durability and insulating properties, making it a preferred choice for winter garments. Its ability to retain warmth while remaining breathable ensures comfort across various climates. The yarn produced from this project maintains these desirable qualities, offering consumers eco-friendly options without compromising on performance.

The response to Last Chance Wool has been overwhelmingly positive. Both artisans and consumers are eager to explore the possibilities presented by this sustainable material. Local knitters, crafters, and online communities have all expressed their enthusiasm, with many already incorporating the yarn into their creations.

As the project continues to grow, its founders hope to be able to buy wool from local farmers at above market prices (with a focus on 4-H sheep clubs) and to expand their reach and encourage more farmers to participate in wool collection efforts. By turning waste into valuable yarn, they are not only reducing environmental impact but also fostering a greater appreciation for sustainable fashion. This initiative signifies a step forward in responsible consumption and production, paving the way for a greener future in the textile industry.

- Submitted by Donna Jo Copeland. Photos: Top - Dobby, a Cormo wether. Cormo sheep produce exquisite fine wool that is sought after by spinners, knitters, felters and other fiber artists. Bottom - Shearer Yvonne Jones shearing a little Shetland ewe named Loretta. Shetland wool is soft, strong and durable and is a delight to spin and is ideal for knitting.

Ajax

Alliston

Almonte

Ancaster

Arnprior

Lindsay

London

Markdale

Markham

Manitoulin Island

Island Quilters Guild

September though June

Markham Towne Quilters Guild

markhamtowneauilterauild@amail.com

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL QUILT GUILD

Twisted Stitchers Quilt Guild
For information about our guild please go to our website twistedstitchersquiltguild.com

Quilting Corners Guild

We meet at St Johns United Church at 7pm on the first Tuesday or each month, except January.

we meet at 31 sons unlied Church at 7pm on the lifst Tuesday of each month, except January.

Almonte Quilters Guild

We meet at the Almonte Civitan Club, 500 Almonte Street Active at 7:00 pm from September through

June (no meeting in December).

Ancaster Quilter's Guild

We meet at the Marshall Memorial United Church, 20 Gilbert Ave. at 7pm on the 3rd Wednesday of
each month from September to June.

Lindsay Creative Quiliters' Guild

We meet at Jennings Creek Christian Reform Church, 206 Angeline St. N., Lindsay ON at 1:00 pm every 2nd Monday of the month except for October, December and June.

London Friendship Quilters Guild

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 388. To contact us: [fag.president@gmail.com or our web page: [fag Lonon Friendship Quilt Guild

We meet at the Community Hall in Mindemoya at 7:00 pm on the third Thursday of the month from

September mough sails.

Queen's Bush Quilters

We meet at Annesley United Church, 82 Toronto St. at 7:00 pm on the 1st Tuesday of the month from

General meeting first Thursday of every month (September-June), 11 Church Street, Markham

Amprior District Quilt Guild We meet alt the Christian Education Centre, 257 John St. N. at 6:30 pm on the fourth Wed. of each month from Sept. to June. Four Corners Quilters Guild

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

Heritage Quilters Guild **Mount Forest** Simcoe County Quilters' Guild
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.

Kempenfelt Quilt Guild
We meet at the Lion's Gate Banquet Hall on Blake Street, the 3rd Thursday of the month from 7-9pm

Regric Madago Quilt Cuild Barrie We meet at the Strathcona Paper Center at 7:00 pm on the third Tuesday of each month from September through to June. Napanee The Region of York Quilters Guild
We meet at the Newmarket Community Centre, 200 Doug Duncan Drive on the fourth Wednesday of
the month from September through May. Newmarket Barrie Modern Quilt Guild

We meet at All About Sewing 565 Unit 1-M, Barrie Ontario the last Thursday of alternative months from September to May - 7pm and on various Saturdays during the alternate months, for Activities and Workshops, from October to June. Moraine Quilt Guild 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 Quinte Quilters' Guild
We meet at the Recreation Centre, 116 Pinnacle Street. At 7:00 pm on the first Wednesday of each Belleville The Niagara Heritage Quilters' Guild
We meet at Merrion Community Centre, 7 Park Ave., St. Catharines on the third Wednesday of each month. Niagara Region month.

Binbrook Country Quilters' Guild

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.

The Pine Tree Quilters' Guild of Muskoka

We meet at 56 Salmon Avenue, Bracebridge, Ontario at 1:00 pm on the 2nd. Thursday of the month from September through June. A chapter of the *Modern Quilting Guild*We travel to various locations in Southern Ontario on a rotating basis Nobleton **Bracebridge** Quaker Quilt Guild

We meet at 89 Stover St N, Norwich at 9:30 am on the second Monday of the month. Norwich Dufferin Piecemakers' Quilting Guild
We meet at the Orangeville Event Centre at 7:30 pm on the third Monday of the month from September Orangeville Brampton Brampton Quilters Guild 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. through June. Jim Archaekin Recreation Centre, 292 Conestoga Dr., Brampton.

Brant Heritage Quilters

We meet at \$1 George United Church at 7:30 pm. on the second Thursday of the month.

The Thousand Islands Quilters' Guild (TIQG)

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. Trillia Quillers' Guild Orillia Quillers' Guild We meet at ODAS Park, 4461 Fairgrounds Road, Orillia at 1 PM on the third Wednesday of each month **Brantford** Orilla we meet at Obba Paix, 4401 Fairgiotal as Road, Clinia at 1 FM of the finial wearestady of except July.

Common Thread Quilt Guild

Meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm at MIFO, 6600 Carriere St, Orleans. www.

commonthreadquiltguild.ca **Brockville** Orleans 6:30 pm.
Buckhorn Area Quilters' Guild
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).
Halton Quilters Guild
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 Grand River Quilters' Guild
We meet at 7pm on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from September through June.
Busy Hands Quilters Guild
We meet at the Preston Scout House, 1580 Queenston Road at 9:30 am on the third Monday of each month. Ganaraska Quilters Guild
We meet at the Seniors Activity Centre. 200 Station St. W at 7:15 pm on the last Wednesday of the Buckhorn Orono Burlington Durham Trillium Quilters'
We meet at the Zion Christian Reformed Church 409 Adelaide Ave. E, Oshawa at 7:00pm every second Monday Sept.- June Oshawa Ottawa Valley Quilters Guild

Our guild meets both in-person and on the ZOOM platform September to December and April to June and only on ZOOM for the January. February and March meetings. The meetings are held the second Monday of the month. In-person meetings are at the Riverside United Church, 3191 Riverside Drive in Ottawa. Email: ottawavalleyquiltersguild.org Ottawa Cambridge Chatham-kent Quilters' Guild
Meetings are at 7:00 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month. Meetings are held at St. Paul's
Congregational Church at 450 Park Ave. West, Chatham, ON. www.ckquiltguild.com
Slope to Slope Quilters' Guild
We meet at the Wasaga Beach RecPlex, 1724 Mosley St, the first Thursday of the month, 7-9 pm,
September to June. Chatham QuIIICO
We meet at the Trinity Anglican Church in Old Ottawa South on the second Monday evening of the month except July and August.
Bluewater Quillers' Guild
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). Collingwood/ Owen Sound Wasaga Beach Cornwall Cornwall Quilters Guild
We meet at St. Mathews Lutheran Church, 1509 Second St West at 7pm every third Monday evening Paris Quilting Bees **Paris** We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from September to June at the Paris Fairgrounds at 7 PM. For information email: parisquiftingbees@gmail.com. from September through May. from September through May.

Clarington Quilt Guild

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

Sunset Country Quilters' Guild

We meet at 84 St. Charles Street at 7 pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month.

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. Courtice Georgian Bay Quillters Guild

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. Penetanguishene Dryden Dunnville Kawartha Quilltmakers' Guild Peterborough Meetings are at the Westdale United Church, 1509 Sherbrooke Street, Peterborough on the first Wednesday of each month at 9:30 am. Elliot Lake Quilt Guild We meet at Gentle Shepherd Church, 3 Ottawa Ave. at 7:00 pm on Tuesdays from September through Elliot Lake Lanark County Quilters Guild

We meet at Lions Hall, Perth Fairgrounds at 7pm on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Perth The Elmira Needle Sisters
We meet at the Elmira Mennonite Church at 7:00 pm on the fourth Monday of the month.
North Shore Pins & Needles Stillchery Guild We meet at Lions Hall, Perth Fairgrounds at 7pm on the 4th Tuesday of the month.
Pembroke Log Cabin Quilters
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
Rouge Valley Quilters' Guild
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. Petawawa Espanola Norm Shore Pins & Needles Silichery Guild
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 Quilters Guild
We meet at Neilson Park Creative Centre - 56 Neilson Dr. at 7:00 pm on the third Monday of the month.
Halton Hills Quilters Guild
We Meet at 8958 Trafalgar Rd, Georgetown, ON LTG 4S5. 6:45pm till 9pm from September till June on the fourth Monday of the month. Etobicoke Pickering Georgetown Argyle Quilters Guild We meet at the Lions Den in Arnstein on the second Thursday of the month Port Loring Common Thread Quilt Guild
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. Gloucester Port Perry Port Perry Patchers We meet at the Hope Christian Reform Church, 14480 Old Simcoe Rd. in Prince Albert at 7:00 pm on the Prince Edward County Quilters' Guild
We meet at the BCR Church in Bloomfield at 7:00 pm County on the second Wednesday of each month. Goderich Quilters' Guild

We meet once a month on the 2nd Tuesday.

Grimsby Quilters' Guild

We meet at the Livingston Activity Centre at 7pm on the third Thursday of the month. Goderich Prince Edward Grimsby Rayside Balfour Quilting and Stitchery Guild
We meet at the Chelmsford Arena (upstairs) 215 Edward Avenue, Chelmsford, Ontario at 7:00 p.m. every
Monday from September to May. Rayside Royal City Quilters' Guild Guelph Monthly meetings are held at 7pm (Eastern) on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from September through June. Monthly meetings are virtual and feature a guest speaker. A Zoom link to the meeting will be emailed to all members and registered guests the day before the Guild's Meeting. Quilt Guild Renfrew & Area

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. Renfrew Gwillimbury Quilt Guild

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. Gwillimbury Richmond Richmond Area Quilters Guild (RAQG)
We meet at the Richmond Legion, 6430 Ottawa Street at 7:30 on the third Wednesday of each month. from September through May. Haldimand Quilter's Guild We meet at the Hagersville United Church at 7:00 pm on the first Monday of the month from September through June. Haliburton Highlands Quilter Guild 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 Quilters Guild 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. Oxford Quilters Guild Hagersville Ruthven Erie Shores Quilter's Guild We meet at the Ruthven-Olinda United Church every third Tuesday.

Sarnia Quilters' Guild

We meet at the Redeemer Christian Reformed Church 5814 Blackwell Sdrd, Sarnia at 7pm the first Sarnia Haliburton Monday of each month Wonday of each month.

Stitiches From The Heart Quilt Guild

We meet at the Senior's Centre on Bay St at 7pm the last Monday of the month.

Rouge Valley Quilters' Guild

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.

Twilight Quilters' Guild of Norfolk County

We meet at the Old Wyndham Church, 30 Glendale Crescent at 7:00 pm on the second Monday of the month. Sault St. Marie Hamilton Scarborough Ingersoll Oxford Quilters Guild 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. Simcoe on the first Wednesday and 9:00 am on the first Thursday of each month.
The Kanata Quilt Guild
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 Quilters Guild
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).
Lake of the Woods Quilter's Guild
We meet at St. Louis Catholic Church, 912 Superior St in Keewatin at 7 PM on the second Thursday of the month. Kanata Norfolk County Quilters' Guild We meet at the Vittoria & District Community Centre on the first Tuesday of each month except October. Kemptville We meet at the The Pretty Street Community Centre of the list fuesday of each month except Octo The Quilters Club

We meet at the The Pretty Street Community Centre at 7:00 pm on the third Monday of the month.

The Stonefowne Quilters' Guild

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. Stittsville Kenora month.

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 Heirloom Quilters

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. Stoney Creek Quilters Guild

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 & District Quilting & Stitchery Guild

We meet at 140 Durham Street at 7:00 pm on every Tuesday from September to April. Kincardine Stony Creek Kingston Sudbury Limestone Quilt Guild Sutton The Georgina Pins and Needles 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. 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 Quilters' Guild

We meet at Calvin Luthern Church on Edward Street at 7:30pm on the 3rd Monday of each month from Kingsville Erie Shores Quilters' Guild

We meet at the Kingsville Arena, 2nd floor at 7p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month Thunder Bay Kirkton

Kirkton

Huron, Perth Quiltlers Guild

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 County Quilters Guild

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. September to June Toronto Etobicoke Quilters' Guild We meet at the Neilson Park Creative Centre at 7:15 pm on the third Monday of the month Pieceful Nights Quiliters' Guild of North Toronto meets the second Wednesday of each month. During COVID-19 meetings will be held via Zoom. Guests welcome. https://www.pngg.ca. North Lambton Quilt Guild Lambton Toronto Modern Quilt Guild We meet at the Port Franks Hall on the 4th Wednesday of the month

Meaford

Mississauga

Miramichi

August).

Georgian Quilters Guild
We meet at the Meaford Opera House, Sykes St. at 1:30 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month.
Cawthra Senior's Centre
We meet at the Cawthra Senior's Centre at 7:30pm on the first Thursday of the month (except July and

Mississauga Quilters Guild
We meet at the Tomken Twin Arenas at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month (except July and August).
Miramichi Quilt Guild

We meet at The Workroom Studio, 46 Nobel St Studio 102 at 3:00 pm on the last Sunday of each month.

York Heritage Quilters Guild We meet at the Toronto Botanical Gardens on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from September through May. Yorkshire Rose Quilters' Guild of Toronto We meet at Danforth Mennonite Church, 2174 Danforth Avenue at 7:30 pm on the second Wednesday

The Waterloo County Quilters' Guild
We meet the Albert McCormick Community Centre at 1:30 pm and 7pm on the third Wednesday of each month from September through June

Windsor Quilters' Guild
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.

We meet at the St. Andrews Presbyterian Church at 1:00 on the first Wednesday of the month.

We meet at the Whitby Baptist Church on the third Tuesday of the month.

of the month from September through May.

Kindred Hearts Guild

Waterloo

Whitby

Windsor

York Region

We meet at the Seamans Hospital at 7:00 pm every Tuesday and 10:00 am every Thursday

New Liskeard • Sudbury

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SINGER

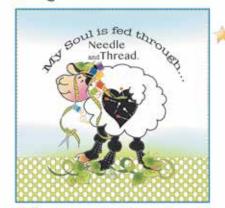
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APPLE ASPARAGUS CLOVER **EMERALD FERN FOREST HUNTER GREEN JADE** LIME MINT **MOSS OLIVE PEAR TEAL** VIRIDIAN

GIRLFRICHD WISDOM



What Feeds Your Soul?

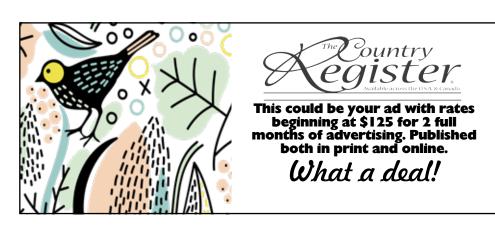
Is it a goal you are working towards? Your home-life? Family? Hobby? Activity?

"Feeding your soul" refers to nourshing the innermost part of your being, beyond your physical and material needs. It is engaging in activites or experiences that bring joy, fulfillment, and a sense of purpose. This could involve pursuing hobbies that ignite passion, spending time with loved ones, seeking moments of solitude for self-reflection, practicing mindfulness, or connecting with nature and art. In essence, it is about prioritizing your emotional and spiritual well-being to find greater meaning and contentment in life. It is a worthy process to take time and ask yourself the question - "What feeds my Soul?" One large hint, that might help answer this question is what activities you were drawn to as a child when just "playing". Is there anything is those childhood playtimes that brings to mind a point of true interest that could be developed into a hobby or current day activity.

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM: Try out one of your childhood activities and see how it feels - if it brings you deep joy, expand that feeling into a current day part of your life - it just might "feed your Soul!"

Joy & Blessings,

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

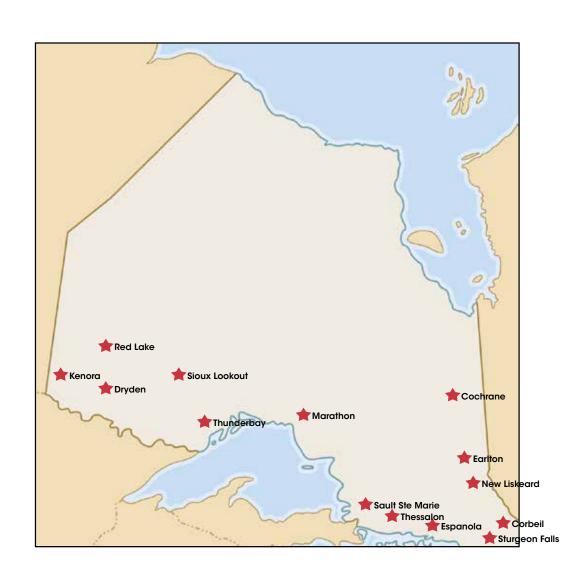


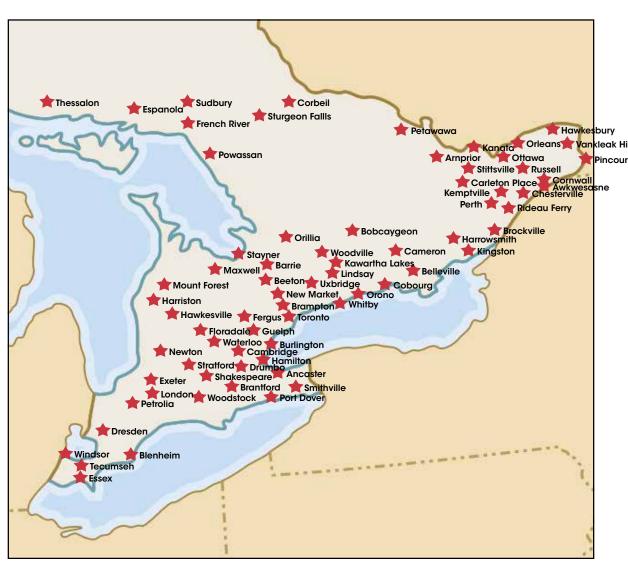




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Garden Havens

by Kerri Habben Bosman

I am writing in what some might call a "she-shed." I call it the office, but it is really my haven. About two years ago, we bought a 10' by 16' shed for all of the "toys" acquired when you live three blocks from the water. Also, for everything lawn and garden related. Once our little building was set in place, I knew we had to get those kayaks in right away. Otherwise, it was quickly going to have hand-sewn curtains for the little windows and extra throw rugs from the house. We jokingly called it the boat house.

Fast forward to January of this year when the kayaks migrated to their berths beside the Intracoastal Waterway. My husband, Wayne, set his floor loom in the living room where two comfortable chairs had been. We had to store them somewhere, right? The wooden clock my dad made in 1982 needed a place to chime. The throw rug is here along with some surplus pillows and a small quilt. And yes, I sewed valances from leftover calico fabric. Their old-fashioned simplicity soothes me in our more modern world, even as I type away on a computer. We are all a bit ironic sometimes.

The best part is the old card table my mother bought around 1970. I put a tablecloth on it, unfolded a plastic chair and now I have a quiet place to write. I needed one.

Last year at this time, I had a creative lapse. I simply couldn't write an article. Thankfully, Wayne submitted an article for that issue. A wordsmith himself, he now looks forward to writing these articles. This fulfillment as a writer makes my moments of frustrating dormancy all worthwhile.

I described my Picasso blue period this way:

I struggled to write because I had thought of everyone else for so long that I forgot how to tap into my own wisdom. The depletion was so gradual that I didn't sense it until it was too late. Creativity needs to be fed and watered. I forgot that and fed everyone and everything else. I planted seeds in our garden, but I forgot to water the plants inside of myself.

Thus, I have come to treasure my haven of a shed. I sit here and listen to Daddy's clock tick along with the tapping of my fingers on the laptop keyboard. From here I can see the garden beds, the well-settled ones and the new ones we just set out this year. New herbs are spreading out. Our sugar snap peas are thriving and the tomatoes we grew from seed are on their way. Zinnias splash redemptive color across our garden beds.

My stepdaughter and I used to consider the pros and cons of being very kind-hearted. It is a gift having a deep capacity to give of ourselves to others. We lamented that sometimes we were perceived as weak, when being softer around the edges actually requires an interior strength. Yet, it is too easy to forget yourself and therein lies the downside. We talked of how to find a good balance.

My stepdaughter too had a shed. She envisioned living long enough with advanced stage 4 cancer to share her healing haven with others struggling with the same illness. She planned a garden around the shed. I promised her some of our zinnia seeds for her planters. It was not to be.

I think of her life as a flower and of all the seeds of kindness she sowed throughout her life. Her blossoming will continue as her children grow into their own gardens and as they give of themselves. And I smile at the tender, tenacious zinnias opening up to the sun.

Kerri Habben Bosman is a writer in Cape Carteret, NC.

You'll Find Her in the Garden

I can see my mother in the garden, red bow in her silver, knotted hair, hoe in hand, her skirt fluttering in the gentle breeze. A garden hose stretches taut along the dusty driveway to the garden, where potatoes, carrots, cauliflower, and frilly leaf lettuce have optimal growing conditions. Root crops grow well in Alaska's sandy soil. However, even with fertile silt and a tall fence to keep out salad-seeking moose, the vegetables must mature quickly; the frost-free season between early June and mid to late August is much too short to bask in the midnight sun unhurriedly.

Ruby Leppke Gaede's roots originated in the wheat fields of Kansas, where she was accustomed to sticky summer heat, waving fields of grain, and a sun that leisurely settled at the end of the plains. In 1955, my father transplanted her to Alaska, where he began his medical practice.

In the village of Tanana, along the Yukon River, she staked out a garden. Sweet peas in a myriad of brilliant colors intertwined in the wire fence surrounding the garden. Potatoes, cabbage, and carrots sprouted within these confines. She tried tomatoes. The Athabascan Indians laughed! The abbreviated summer culminated her hopes in an early harvest, and she was left with green tomatoes and frost-wilted vines.



A brief year's relocation to California in 1960, allowed her warm-weather crops to flourished. Her appetite for fresh produce extended to the peach and mulberry trees in our backyard, as well as the plethora of fruit stands in the San Joaquin Valley. After years of canned fruit and vegetables in Alaska, she was in the Land of Milk and Honey, or at least of watermelons, apricots, and plums.

In 1961, my father accepted an offer on the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska. This time, the farm girl settled onto an 80-acre homestead. After hand-clearing 10 acres for an airstrip with my father, Mom planted a garden. The contest was not only with the diminished growing season, but also with the ever-encroaching grass, chickweed, horsetails, and other persistent natural vegetation.

My mother stored seed potatoes beneath the basement stairs. In spring, they'd go wild, sprouting like octopus tenacles. Mom would cut the potatoes into chunks, each with an "eye." Mark, my little brother, fascinated by this basic level of horticulture, would tag along after her. He'd grab some potatoes, then enthusiastically and randomly dig holes around the driveway, much like an Alaskan Johnny Appleseed. Potato plants sprouted in the oddest locations, which was a source of delight for Mark. Even when a plant yielded massive potatoes in the cats' favorite litter area, Mom forbade him from ever planting there again.

It's been years since Mom died. The rotted log fence around the garden has long since been dismantled. My siblings nudge me into reality. Mishal tells me that in the beginning, Mom didn't wear skirts; instead, she tucked blue jeans into tall, black rubber boots, and wore rubber gloves. Mark says the carrots weren't always plump and crisp and that radishes were wormy. Ruth shakes her head and adds, "Naomi's making up stories."

Nevertheless, sometimes, out of the corner of my eye, I see my mother chopping the chickweed, pulling closed the cauliflower leaves, and thinning out the carrots – in a billowy skirt and a red bow in her hair.

And—there truly are indomitable strawberries that suddenly surprise us all, along the airstrip taxiway.

Find Naomi and her non-fiction Alaska books at www. prescriptionforadventure.com. Some books can be purchased on Amazon. All books can be acquired by calling 303.506.6181. Follow her on Facebook: Prescription for Adventure.





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