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In this Issue

About Our Cover Art 4

Free Pattern..... 4

Map..... 22

Quilt Guild Guide..... 20

Recipes 11, 13, 14, 18, 19

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The Country Register of Ontario
April/May 2025 Issue

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Meet our cover artist:

Deb Dunn

Deb Dunn is an intuitive artist who paints in a whimsical, surrealist style. Self taught, her deep love of home, family and nature is woven into each painting. It is no surprise that nests and birds are a favourite subject.

"A new story to be told ... a new painting to unfold" is her mantra, as each painting begins on paper or canvas by writing down her thoughts lightly in pencil. While multiple layers of paint will cover most if not all, the words are forever intertwined.

The seasons, water, trees, nature, folklore, and the mystery and wonder of it all strongly influences her work. Living in the beautiful core area of Burlington, Ontario, she gathers inspiration and serenity from daily walks along the lake or woodland paths, and often feels she is walking a painting into existence.

Her paintings, illustrations, photography, fibre arts and writing have been featured in national publications. She frequently participates in group exhibits, art auctions and juried shows, and donates art to various organizations.

She welcomes visits to her Etsy shop <https://etsy.com/shop/vintagesparrowstudio> and [Instagram.com/vintagesparrowstudio](https://instagram.com/vintagesparrowstudio)

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Steadfast in Changing Times

by Donna Jo Copeland

I'm writing about spring with ice and snow still on the ground--giving way to mid-winter thaw. Hard to guess what this illusive spring will bring but March in Indiana is a crap shoot. This farmeress is longing for a cool moist calm weather window but my 75-year-old bones yearn for 70 degrees and sun filled days.

Mom never took the flannel sheets off the beds and put away our long johns until at least mid-April. I can remember tugging up long underwear beneath my Easter dress several times.

January went by far too fast. With the very bitter temperatures I spent too much energy keeping body and spirit together, water thawed, firewood carried, barn tightening against strong winds. Had planned to weave on the two looms in the kitchen but I needed to close off all but two rooms due to the cold. And I can't get my hands to work at weaving when it's 48 degrees. Even changed to making Dutch oven salt rising bread as yeast won't raise when it's that cold.

I pursued other fiber activities. knitting, spinning, rug hooking, dyed some locks on the woodstove. Slept most nights in my chair. Us old gals are tough.

Sitting here in my old Windsor chair surrounded by spinning wheels, I look up at cob webs on the ceiling. They will stay 12 feet up until spring cleaning. Mom taught me that spider webs would stop blood flow if needed, just in case.

The deep snow did allow some cleaning. Snow is the best way to clean wool rugs and sweaters. A snow bath leaves them clean, soft and smelling fresh.

Early spring is always a good time to clean out, recycle, share things you no longer need or use. Many of my fiber friends have been hard at it. I'm more of a reorganizer, most farmeresses are. What if I need that very thing in 5 years? I can't just toss old clothes. Buttons, zippers are saved for one day. The cloth is cut up to weave rag rugs. One mess feeds another.

Needing to weed out my old spices, I just couldn't throw them out. So made some dyepots with oregano, rosemary and turmeric. I will dye with most anything.

The internet/technology and I are still feuding. The new phone is a beast. But I have found some homesteading and sheep groups out there. It's neat that some young people are wanting to embrace a simple agrarian life. In the nick of time, I had almost given up hope.

I heard someone say the other day that one of the reasons a woman's childbearing time was limited was so she could become a grandmother and impart her wisdom. I know I certainly learned a great deal from my grands, they had the time and the want to teach. I wasn't done learning when they all passed.

Sadly, my grandkids don't seem to want my knowledge or family history. They had better get their stuff together soon. Before I'm gone. I'm the elder in the family, the keeper of history and secrets. And I know some neat stuff!

In my realm I treasure old ways, knowledge, tools, furniture. And calm, quiet. Listening to sounds now I realize they are just sounds--complaining, selling, influencing. Constantly. I'm thankful we didn't have a TV until I was in the 5th grade and it wasn't turned on often.

I heard the voices of parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, grands, nature and farm animals. I heard the stillness of sunrise and the night music.

It saddens me to think of what sounds kids listen to now.

In my loom house, no electricity, sitting in the middle of the sheep pasture, I work with the sounds of sheep, birds, rhythm of loom and spinning wheel. Peace and contentment, touched by my ancestors. Good work, hard work.

With the new season, new adventures and promises, let's try to take a step back. Listen to the little sounds, be at peace, love. Plant a garden, maybe a rose bush.

No recipe this time, but garden tips instead.

Donna Jo's Garden Tips

-Take plastic feed sacks (pet or livestock), fill with barn leavings, punch a few holes in the bottom. Plant potatoes, easy and easy to harvest. I have grown tomatoes this way too, tying the bags to the fence.

-In sturdy cardboard boxes, fill with barn leavings, plant beans. Easy care

-And if you don't have access to barn cleanings, come down, bring your bags, take all you want!!

Cornwall • Orléans



TWO MINUTE READS TO FLIP OUR SCRIPT
by Kathy J. Sotak

My Life Was Changed By This Gift In Disguise

I was given a special gift last month. The gift was pure magic, but disguised as an everyday household item. Just before Christmas arrived a bulging box pouring out a high-end, name brand blanket.

To be honest, I didn't need a new blanket. My family has more blankets than a household needs. If I dare count, I likely have two or three for every human, dog, chicken and fish on property. Just like you, I have them all. I have hand-crocheted afghans and fleece throws. I have quilts, outdoor picnic blankets, sand-proof beach blankets and even silly ones to wrap and strap around your body. I have former favorites that can't yet be discarded, as their holes and stains are imprinted with memories.

The new blanket didn't care about the others, though. It marched into my life with its own purpose. It was in disguise, daring me to accept a different offering.

It multiplied as I unfolded it, and together we melted into the couch. There was no choice but to embrace together in deep ceremony. Imagine the feeling of a dozen puppy cuddles. Imagine giant angel wings enveloping you in their loving embrace. Imagine tightness you didn't know was there instantaneously dissolves. A miracle from heaven. Under the spell of this magic blanket, my mind switched off and my body melted into original form. My heartbeat gushed out a new elixir that calmed every inflamed bit.

Comfort. That was the true gift I received, but disguised in blanket form. No wonder they call them comforters.

As I let myself be comforted by the blanket, I started asking questions. Do I let myself be comforted enough? Do I let others comfort me, when I am hurting, over-burdened or grieving? This leads me to ask, who are my comforters, the ones I go to for support? Finally, when I am the best one to comfort me, do I even know how to do it?

Sometimes, comfort comes in the way of a friend. Sometimes, comfort comes from the spiritual realm. Sometimes, comfort comes in the way of a comforter or soft sweaters or cozy socks. Sometimes, the best person to comfort you, is you.

How do you comfort yourself? Do you have a favorite sweater or slippers that serves as your comforter? Do you have a special animal, friend or family member? Do you dive into prayer or meditation and seek help from the Source outside of you?

If you aren't sure where to start, try this trick I learned: if you feel a little hurt, vulnerable or sad, simply place one hand on your other forearm, or place your hand on your heart. Then feel into how great that feels.

It can be your own gift in disguise, a built-in comforter that doesn't cost a dime.

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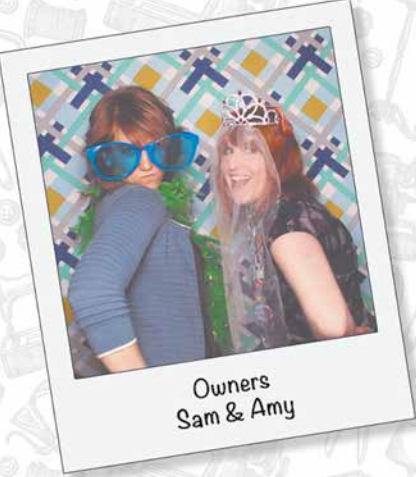
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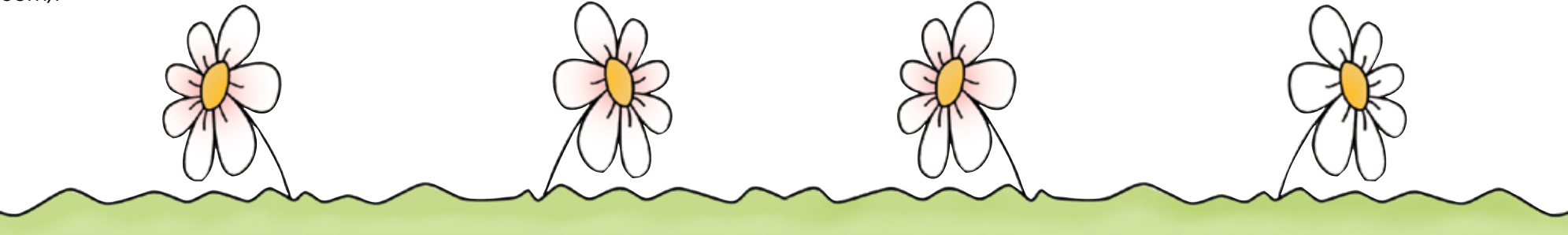
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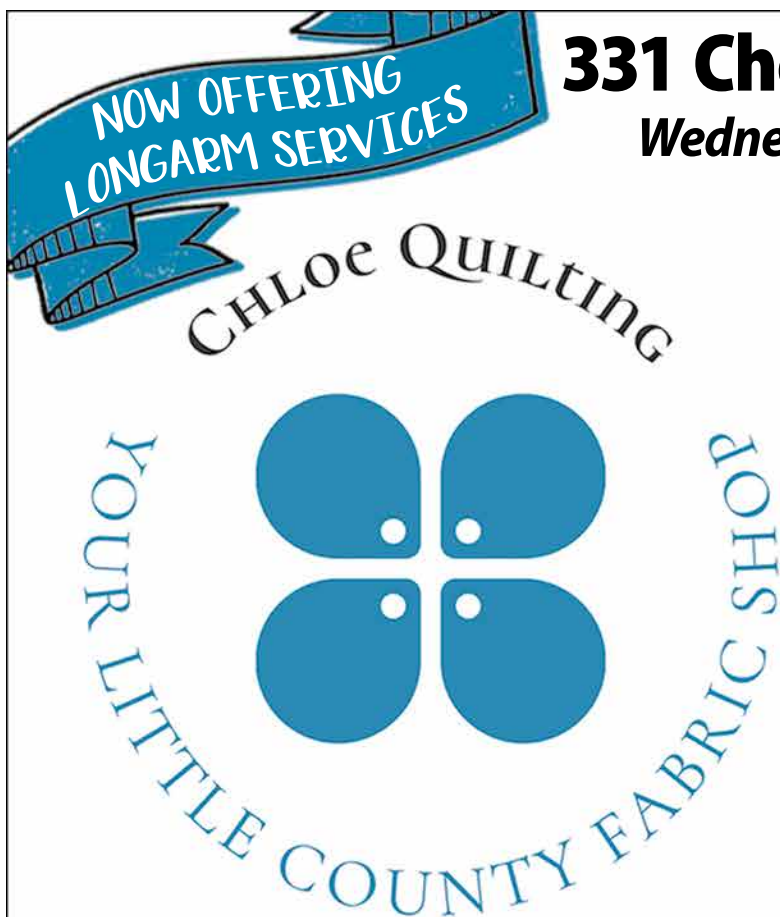
Kerri and I reached a new milestone today. We finished unloading and spreading a pickup load of topsoil into our expanded garden beds. We both felt compelled to grow more food this year but growing a productive garden in coastal North Carolina is a learning experience for me, having grown up in Southeastern Wisconsin. Kerri grew up in Raleigh where red clay is a far cry from the coast's sandy soil.

I was fortunate to have my first garden in Wisconsin. I was a 4-H member and learned at meetings about the different mixtures of fertilizer and soil testing for maximum output. Probably more importantly, we were guided to which variety of vegetables to grow by people who grew food for a living. The Sweet Spanish Onions, Big Boy Tomatoes, and Silver Queen Corn was well suited to our area and to my goal to have everything flourishing at the time of the County Fair. I was mostly in it for the ribbons. Not that that was a bad thing.

Yet I was a careless gardener, unlike my father. Dad enjoyed nothing more than spending time in the garden. Before work or after supper he loved to survey the garden and pull the errant weed or thin out the nonproductive plants. I weeded under duress only. The black Wisconsin soil bailed me out.

In early spring, I spent countless hours behind the rototiller, watching the tines bust up clods of soil into grains. I loved leaning back to restrain the tiller from bouncing along the winter-hardened soil until it had dug its way in deep enough that it could not go further until I let it. Every few feet I would toss aside rocks that came to the surface, wondering where new rocks came from in a space that had been gardened year after year. That well-tilled soil, after the planting was done and the first few weeks of

(story continues on next page)



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(story continued from page 6)

daily watering and looking for growth, did most of the work. Baseball was a much more attractive option for our bunch of rowdy boys and Dad, having supplemented the family income as a semipro pitcher, was an understanding taskmaster.

But that was long ago in a distant place. Plants that grew effortlessly in the Midwest’s rich soil don’t always thrive along the North Carolina coast. To compensate, the growing season starts in February and some crops are produced year-round. We often end up talking to Mom about Kerri’s work in our garden while snow covers the garden space of my youth. When I was a child, it was considered quite a gamble to plant the less hardy crops before mid-May. “Knee high by the 4th of July” was considered the measure of a successful corn crop.

There are lots of reasons to want to grow more of our food this year. Prices rarely go down.

But even more, my daughter’s passing in January makes me focus more on the cycle of life. And, God willing, another grandchild is arriving soon.

My daughter had purchased four new planters and set them up outside her little shed. She was building a refuge for other women suffering with cancer. Books, a sauna, musical instruments and a quiet place to escape to for support were part of her vision. She didn’t get the chance to fill the new planters with soil.

When Kerri and I found some similar planters to put on our underused but sunny front porch, we didn’t hesitate. We added an extra garden bed in the back yard and went down to the landscape supply store up the road. The truckload of rich black topsoil brought back a flood of memories from my youth. It is an act of faith that it will provide even more memories in the future.

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

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Nature's Next Chapter

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

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

Nature's Reawakening

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

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

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

Sharing the Blessings of Spring

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

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

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

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A Tale of Two Cars

by Barbara Kalkis

I admit that sometimes I tend to over-think things but I believe this in a good way. By over-thinking, I can rationalize things that I would otherwise reject as nonsensical behavior and stop myself from an unwise comment.

Case in point: During a trip to Palm Springs my friend’s husband pulled into a parking garage slot next to a gleaming white BMW that was next to a gleaming white Bentley that was next to another gleaming white BMW – all new models. None of this “vintage” stuff.

I’ve seen plenty of BMWs, but the Bentley Continental GT convertible was breathtaking. It was sleek and luxurious, making the BMWs look pitifully commonplace. Admiring its curvaceous lines from a distance – to avoid the motion alarm and police – I noticed that license plate frame simply read, “Bentley.” Huh?

Since the Bentley logo is emblazoned on the trunk for all to see, I nearly slipped into my old habit of asking questions like, “Do you think that’s his dog’s name or his?” Then I stopped, recalling that I was trying to avoid overthinking things and be positive. So instead of chirping something like, “Couldn’t he think of anything clever to say?” (I assume it was a “he” since women make 84 cents to every dollar earned by men), I told myself to consider that the owner might be exercising courtesy to drivers behind him. Just think, if you’re following a Bentley in traffic, the license frame is a clear caution that if you “rear-end” it, you’re going to be “slammed” too – by your insurance company for picking up his repair costs. Or perhaps he chose that license frame because other drivers might not observe that he is cruising in a Bentley. Or maybe their eyes aren’t good enough to recognize the winged logo.

A short time after that trip when I was home again, I pulled into a parking lot just behind my favorite market. It is not used much because the distance to the entrance requires that you walk about 50 more steps than if you park in the front. (There’s that over-thinking thing again.)

As I marched through the lot, I noticed a nondescript older-model beige car that was showing some wear-and-tear. Nevertheless, it was pristinely clean and in quite good condition. Suddenly, the license plate frame caught my attention. No, it did not say “Bentley”! The top of the frame said, “THANKS MOM & DAD.” The bottom of the frame proclaimed, “I LOVE YOU!”

I started to weep. Here was a person who wasn’t boasting, advertising a car dealership, pushing a political agenda, spouting a joke or bragging about their university. No. This person simply made a declaration of love. And if the driver behind her (back to the salary disparity comment) saw the message, it reminded them to tell their parents how much they love them. Or maybe their siblings, spouse, grandparents, children, friends, teachers or whoever.

Many countries celebrate Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Grandparents Day, and Children’s Day. Anyone can celebrate these holidays and then contentedly wait another year to say, “I love you.” Meanwhile, that one driver’s simple message announces it every time the car leaves home. It only takes money to own a Bentley. On the other hand, it takes true emotion and courage to express love in a bold public way. Only one of those car owners showed that capacity.

The most innocuous signs in the most unexpected places can change us. When the message is “I love you,” there’s no need to think about it. Just act.

©Barbara Kalkis, 2025. Barbara spends her time writing, teaching, and working in tech. She’s author of Little Ditties for Every Day...A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

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Retreat Surprise

by Deb Heatherly

In the most basic sense of the word, a retreat is a time in which one steps away from the cares of everyday life to reenergize and reflect. This is the time of year when quilters across the country are looking forward to doing just that. Most attend with friends and travel to various locations across the county to spend a few days laughing and stitching. I've often heard it said, "It's just good for the soul."

I've hosted quilt retreats every spring and Fall for the past fifteen years. I've made some amazing lifelong friends and the ladies who attend have done the same. Everyone keeps in touch throughout the year and it feels like a family reunion when we gather for the next event. Each retreat has its own special moments, but one definitely stands out above the rest.

This particular retreat was actually two back-to-back events, from Monday through Thursday on consecutive weeks. I did not go home between events, so I was on site for almost 2 weeks. It was a crisp fall day and as we were finishing our lunch on day two of the first week, someone said, "there are three kittens outside!" Cat lover that I am, I had to see for myself. And, I just happened to take some chicken from the left overs on my plate.

Sure enough, there they were. Three beautiful little faces peering down from the overhang of a door on a nearby building. They were very leery of this crazy woman who was telling them how beautiful they were while she tried to entice them down for food. They did not budge. Breaking the chicken into small bits, I tossed the pieces up where they felt safe and my little friends hungrily gobbled it down.

This was the beginning, every day after lunch and dinner, I took them bits of whatever had been on my plate. Before long they came down from the roof and would eat about 8 feet away from me. There were two fluffy calicoes and one short haired gray. Since the calicoes were sure to be girls, I assumed the gray one was a boy. When I asked about these precious babies, I was told that the mother had been caught, spayed and adopted, but no one could catch the kittens. They hoped that they could eventually be caught and find homes too. Challenge accepted!

This particular retreat had a 50s theme and I had actually hired an Elvis impersonator to serenade and surprise the ladies at dinner the first evening. With that in mind I named the gray kitten Elvis and referred to the trio as 'Elvis and his girls.'

Each day when I took them food, they got closer and closer with Elvis being the most daring. On Tuesday of week two, Elvis would come within a foot of me. It was that night that I called my husband and said, "I might be bringing home a kitten" and told him what I had been doing.

"How will you get it home if you catch it?" he asked. My answer was that I would just play it by ear.

On the final day, with my car packed to head home, I knew this was my one and only chance. Parking nearby, I went out to the spot where I had been feeding them and sat down to wait. By now they came when I called.

I had saved a lot of chicken for this attempt and to my surprise Elvis came right up to me and started eating out of my hand. As I held out the final piece, I thought to myself, it now or never. Quickly my left hand scruffed the kitten's neck, while my right hand reached under its body. I quickly tucked it under my right arm while I continued to scruff the neck. I really expected growling and hissing but to my surprise Elvis just gazed at me as if to say, "what do you think you are doing?"

This now posed a dilemma and careful thought. If I just put him in the car and drove home, how would I catch him and get him in the house? I really needed a pet carrier to make this a success. Luckily, a friend saw me walking around with my furry capture and called another friend who lived nearby. If I could keep my hands on this baby long enough, a carrier would soon be there.

For twenty minutes I walked around with this little gray body tucked under my arm and whispered in its ear. "Don't worry little one," I said, "You will have a soft bed tonight and will never have to survive on hand outs again." This resulted in more wiggles from my furry friend but not much of a fight.

Once home, Elvis had his own room for several days until a vet appointment could be made. After I knew that he was healthy, I'd introduce him to my two other cats.

Fast forward several days to our visit to the vet. Judging from his size, I had written down 3 months on the form I had to complete but was informed by the vet that Elvis was actually about 8 months old. He was just small for his age. That makes sense when you've been surviving on handouts. Surprise number two came when the vet said, "Congratulations, it's a girl!" Oops, so Elvis will not work and I quickly renamed her Lacey.

That was almost 13 years ago. Her nickname became Lou Lou and she spends most days on the cat tree watching the birds and squirrels outside the window. She is the oldest of our furry kids and she is the boss. After dinner, each night she has trained me to sit in my recliner and hold her while we watch Wheel of Fortune. This is the only time she wants to be held. She has trained my husband to give her treats when she sits on the coffee table and stares at him. And, each night as we turn off the TV, she jumps on the back of my recliner so that I can have the honor of brushing her.

Yes, she is a diva. She went from being a wild child to being the queen of the house and I would not have it any other way. Lou Lou was definitely the best surprise I ever brought home from retreat and she will always be my special girl.

Deb Heatherly is a designer for Creative Grids® rulers and the author of eight popular pattern books. Creative Grids® fans are invited to join her Facebook group, "Grids Girls," for tips and inspiration, and two free mysteries each year. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/770429649800457/>.

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Visit Deb's website at www.Debcatsnquilts.com.

Cowgirl Poet, Quilter, Entertainer



Yvonne Hollenbeck

Pieces of the Past

As time goes marching forward, and it marches oh so fast,
it seems that only memories are all we have that last.
They may be of a loved one, or a special time or place,
or remnants of a wedding dress, some ribbons and some lace.

The chair where mother used to sit and rock her babes at night,
or piece a quilt to keep them warm, and all by oil light.

The photographs of people that we didn't even know,
that have preserved a precious glimpse of life from long ago.

So standing on the edge of life, we oft look back and see
reminders of the days gone past and how things used to be.
We cherish all these tokens made from want and made from will,
and miss the hands that held them once, voices forever still.

We'll treasure that old patchwork quilt that once was on our bed,
and keep around a few good books that some loved one has read.

And it could never matter just how fine new dishes are,
...they never could compare to grandma's good old cookie jar.

We know we can't retrace our steps and live our lives again,
but we can cling to treasures 'cause that's all that will remain.

For all we have are memories, as long as they will last,
in things we cherish most of all ... these pieces of the past.

Chocolate Cream Pie

This is a very rich dessert, at least to us. It's like homemade chocolate pudding in a crust! If you're in a hurry, just use a graham wafer crust instead of a pie crust. I recommend making the recipe first thing in the morning or the day before, as it needs time to set. I know this because I have an impatient husband!

- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 1/3 cup flour
- 3 Tbsps baking cocoa
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 can (12 oz/354 mL) evaporated milk
- 5 large egg yolks, lightly beaten
- ½ cup butter
- 1 tsp vanilla
- Dough for single-crust pie
- Whipped topping and baking cocoa, optional

On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to a 1/8-in.-thick circle; transfer to a 9-in. pie plate. Trim to 1/2 in. beyond rim of plate; flute edge. Refrigerate 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 425°F.

Line crust with a double thickness of foil. Fill with pie weights, dried beans or uncooked rice. Bake on a lower oven rack until edge is golden brown, 20-25 minutes. Remove foil and weights; bake until bottom is golden brown, 3-6 minutes longer. Cool completely on a wire rack.

In a large saucepan, combine the first sugar, flour, cocoa powder, salt, water and evaporated milk. Cook and stir over medium-high heat until thickened and bubbly, about 6 minutes. Reduce heat; cook and stir 4 minutes longer. Remove from the heat. Whisk 1 cup hot mixture into egg yolks. Return all to the pan; bring to a gentle boil, stirring constantly.

Remove from the heat; stir in butter and vanilla. Cool slightly. Pour warm filling into crust. Cool for 1 hour. Refrigerate until set. If desired, top with whipped cream and sprinkle with cocoa to serve.



The Daily Mentality

My house talks to me in the spring. It wants me to open all the doors & windows & let in fresh air, & it says "Clean me!" The hardest thing is to stay focused & not run outside to stare at the garden! ♥

Spring cleaning is GOOD, especially after it's done, after the comforters have been aired; after all the dishes & glasses have been taken out & shined up &

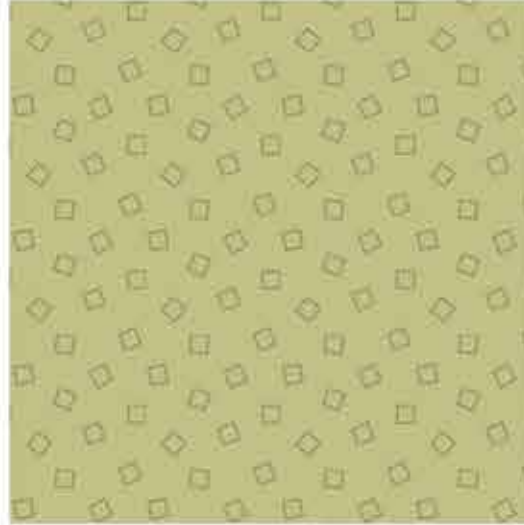
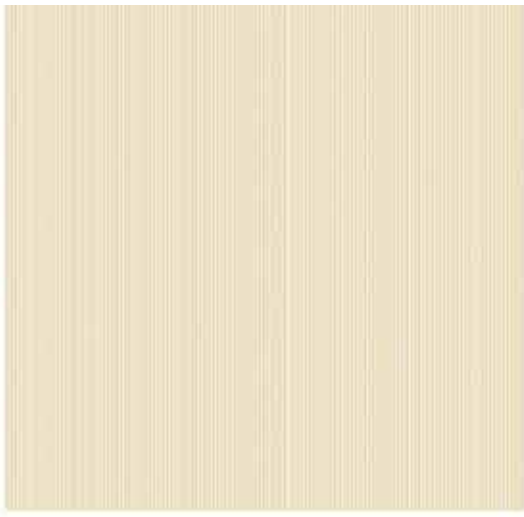
the cupboard shelves are sparkling clean. Then I get to go outside, bring the bird houses out of the barn, & hang a flower wreath on the kitchen door. ♥



SPRING! SPRING! SPRING!

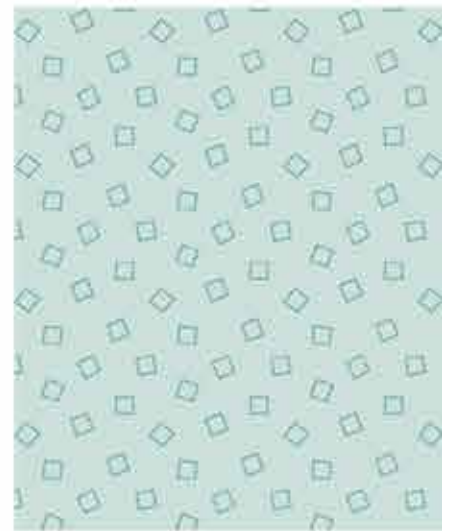
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Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

The Interim

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

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

Nothing could bring restoration. In short, everything was dead and gone. If I want petunias to grow again, I'll have to plant new ones next Spring.

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

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

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

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

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


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




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Creamy Black Peppercorn Sauce

We had a steak that we'd bought on sale, and it wasn't the best. Thankfully, I was testing this recipe anyway. My husband thought it greatly improved the steak!

Cooking spray
2 Tbsp crushed black peppercorns
375 mL can evaporated milk
1 Tbsp beef stock powder or your favourite stock concentrate
1 Tbsp cornstarch
2 Tbsp water

Roughly crush the peppercorns in a plastic bag with a meat tenderizer or rolling pin.

Spray frying pan with cooking spray (or use the same pan you cooked your steak in) and heat over medium high heat. Add peppercorns and cook for 1 minute to release flavour.

Add milk and stock powder, stirring until boiling. Reduce heat and simmer. Combine cornstarch and water and add to sauce, continually stirring for 2 - 3 minutes, until thickened slightly.



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

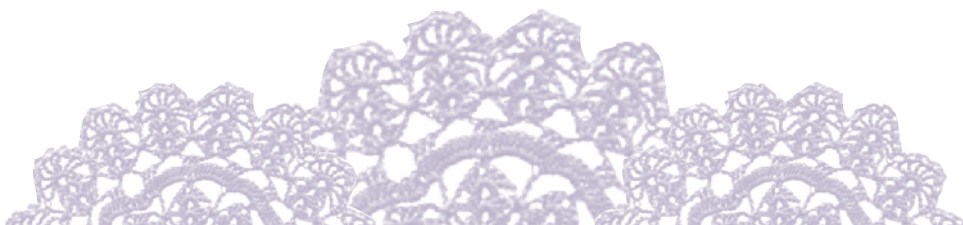
dash of salt (optional)

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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Spring Has Arrived!

by Janet Young

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

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

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

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

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

As we enter this rejuvenating time of the year, my wish for you, is that you will take a deep breath, throw open your windows, and let the celebration begin, for Spring has arrived!

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

*Everything's Coming Up—
Crocuses!*

by Janet M. Bair

I love spring bulbs! Out of the many flowers I have planted over the years, crocuses and daffodils are the most enduring. I can hardly wait to see our purple and yellow hyacinths blooming. Sadly, our tulips have not survived the squirrels' descent upon them.

What is especially fun is that my "spring flower bed" is located right next to our house in a very sunny spot. In January, the daffodils and crocuses shoot their green tips through a frozen earth. Snow doesn't seem to stop their daring rise above ground.

This has been a most encouraging spot in our yard, for when all looks bleak and dead, the daffodils remain undefeated year after year. Surprisingly our crocuses somehow have become scattered all about our front lawn. I know I didn't plant the bulbs in the middle of the lawn. Who moved them? Only the squirrels know for sure.

Last year I counted 32 lavender crocus flowers blooming among the grass. I know I originally planted yellow and white crocuses too but I guess they taste better? because they have disappeared. It has been kind of fun to see where the flowers pop up.

With spring coming, maybe I will get busy like the squirrels. I'll sew some new flowered hot mats or cloth napkins. Or I could create a new wall hanging for the front door. It's time to finish up the larger quilting projects before our two spare bedrooms need to become space for summer visitors. The bedroom I sew in is not air conditioned which makes for uncomfortable quilting days in the summer.

I just finished an orange and yellow quilt top that needs quilting. Our quilt guild sews Comfort Quilts for The Hole in the Wall Gang Summer Camp in CT. The last collection day for quilts is in May. I have two other quilts in process besides the orange one to finish by then.

I thought the lavender quilt I'm working on would be easy. However, I bought the fabric two years ago and didn't realize there wouldn't be enough for the pattern I chose until after I cut it out. I will have to improvise something.

Isn't that what we all do with life—we improvise? Yes, the squirrels may have changed my garden design but it's still beautiful. My quilt will still make some little girl happy with whatever pattern I improvise.

What projects are you working on? What are your plans this spring? Even if they have to be changed around a bit, I hope that you find some colorful ways to make your days brighter.

© Janet M. Bair of Ansonia, CT. You may contact her at librarybair@hotmail.com

3	8	6		4				5
			6			1	7	
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(Sudoku solution on page 23)

Farm Animals and Meadow Muffins

by Nancy Nash

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

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

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

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

Once, though, a farmer came with a truck to take a few cows back home. One heifer ran away from him, evidently overcome with nervousness and fear. She ran to a woodpile and somehow managed to leap astride it, much to the surprise of us onlookers. The woodpile was perhaps four or five feet high - but not for very long. The logs tumbled down, and so did she before gallop away. She remained in the pasture until the next day, when the farmer returned with a favorite food to coax her onto his truck. It worked. The treat distracted her from whatever misgivings she had about that vehicle.

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

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

©2025 Nancy J. Nash who is the author of *Mama's Books: An Oregon Trail Story*. and *Little Rooster's Christmas Eve*, each available on amazon.com. She has a B.A. in English composition from Mount Holyoke College and an M.F.A. in Writing for Children from Simmons College. She can be reached at nancynash341@gmail.com

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A Dairy Tale:

The Joy of Evaporated Milk!

Evaporated milk is a versatile and long-lasting dairy product that has been a kitchen staple for decades. Known for its creamy texture and concentrated flavour, evaporated milk is essentially fresh milk with about 60% of its water content removed. This process results in a denser, richer product that can be used in a variety of dishes and beverages, offering a unique taste and consistency. The production of evaporated milk dates back to the 19th century, but it gained significant popularity in North America during the early 20th century. It became a convenient alternative to fresh milk, especially in areas where refrigeration was not widely available.

In 2024, the evaporated milk market in North America generated approximately USD 1.59 billion in revenue. While specific volume data (e.g., liters or gallons sold) isn't readily available, the figures indicate a stable and modestly growing market for evaporated milk in North America. This growth is driven by factors such as the demand for shelf-stable dairy products and the versatility of evaporated milk in various culinary applications.

During World War II, evaporated milk really stepped up as a hero with its long shelf life and easy transport. It helped provide much-needed nutrition for soldiers and civilians alike. Did you hear about the milk that couldn't hold its water? It evaporated into thin air! The process of making evaporated milk involves heating fresh milk to remove most of its water content. This is done under vacuum conditions to prevent scorching and to preserve the nutritional value. After evaporation, the milk is homogenized to ensure a smooth consistency and then sterilized to extend its shelf life. This meticulous process results in a product that retains most of the nutritional benefits of fresh milk, including protein, calcium, and vitamins A and D. Why was the evaporated milk so calm? Because it knew how to chill under pressure!

Evaporated milk became popular on the prairies for several reasons. One major factor was its long shelf life, which was crucial in areas where fresh dairy products were scarce or difficult to obtain regularly. It was also versatile, usable in cooking and baking, making it valuable for households that needed reliable ingredients. Additionally, its concentrated form meant it was more affordable than fresh milk and could be diluted as needed, stretching food budgets further. These factors combined made evaporated milk a staple in many prairie kitchens back in the day. I confess that at present, I have a shocking amount of evaporated milk in my pantry...the grocery store had flats of it on sale, and both my husband and I came home with a flat! But that's the great thing about it – it will keep until we use it.

In the kitchen, evaporated milk shines in both sweet and savory dishes. It's a key ingredient in delicious desserts like butter tarts, flapper pie, and rice pudding, giving them that rich, creamy goodness we all love. Plus, it shows up in savory dishes like scalloped potatoes, creamy soups, and chowders. It's even a wonderful alternative to cream in coffee and tea, adding that nice touch of flavor without feeling too heavy! Evaporated milk was the go-to for my mom's one cup of coffee per day.

Back in the day, evaporated milk was even used to make homemade baby formula—parents would mix it with water and add sugar or corn syrup to provide essential nutrients. However, nowadays, modern baby formulas are specifically designed to cater to infants' needs.

Today evaporated milk is also used for calorie-reduced cooking because it provides a creamy texture and rich flavor without the high fat content of cream. Compared to cream it has 2% fat rather than 18-35% fat, which contributes to its relatively low calories per cup at 170 calories. Heavy cream can have 800+ calories per cup.

Evaporated milk is an economical choice for Canadian households. Its long shelf life helps reduce food waste, and its concentrated form means

(story continues on next page)

(story continued from previous page)

it takes up less storage space. Popular brands like Carnation dominate the market, but regional brands also produce locally produced evaporated milk.

While I’ve been I’m milking this opportunity, for all it’s worth, I’ll stop making milk jokes; I think they are getting cheesy.

Stroganoff Soup

This was our supper one night while we were putting together the last edition of the Country Register. I can vouch that it doesn’t take too long to make!

- 1 Tbsp butter
- ½ lb. beef top sirloin steak or beef tenderloin, cut into thin strips
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 4 cups beef stock
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 2 cups milk
- 1 can (8 oz.) mushroom stems and pieces, drained OR 8 oz./227 g sliced fresh mushrooms
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- ½ tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp pepper
- 1/3 cup flour
- 1 can (12 oz/354 mL) evaporated milk
- ½ cup sour cream
- 6 oz./170 g uncooked egg noodles or half of a 12 oz. /340 g pkg.

In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add beef and onion; cook and stir until beef is almost cooked through, 3-5 minutes. In a small bowl, whisk water and tomato paste until blended; stir into saucepan. Add milk, noodles, mushrooms, bouillon, thyme, salt and pepper; bring to a boil and simmer 10 minutes or until the noodles are tender.

In a small bowl, whisk flour and evaporated milk until smooth. Gradually stir into saucepan. Return to a boil; cook and stir until thickened, 1-2 minutes. Cook until heated through. Top each serving with sour cream and, if desired, thyme.

Old-Fashioned Oat Bread

This is just plain good bread.
Makes 2 loaves

- 1 can (12 oz/354 mL) evaporated milk
- ½ cup water
- 2 Tbsp shortening
- 2 cups plus 2 teaspoons old-fashioned oats, divided
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 ½ tsp salt
- 1 package (1/4 ounce) active dry yeast or 2 ¼ tpsps
- 1 cup warm water (110° to 115°)
- 5 to 5-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 large egg, beaten

In a saucepan over medium heat, bring milk, water and shortening to a boil. Meanwhile, combine 2 cups oats, brown sugar and salt in a bowl. Add milk mixture; let stand until mixture reaches 110°-115°F. In a small bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water; add to oat mixture. Add 3 cups flour; beat until smooth. Add enough remaining flour to form a soft dough.

Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, 6-8 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour. Punch dough down; divide in half. Shape into 2 loaves; transfer to greased 8x4-in. loaf pans. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 40 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°F.

Brush loaves with egg; sprinkle with remaining 2 teaspoons oats. Bake until golden, 35-40 minutes. Remove from pans; cool on wire racks.

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Tres Leches Cake

I like the cake more after it’s sat for a day, and the flavours have time to develop. Note that the cake will look a bit dry when baked so that it can soak up the milk syrup. I also only use half the frosting recipe when I make it, as this is a rich cake!

- 1 cup flour
- 1 ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 5 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar, divided into 3/4 and 1/4 cups
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/3 cup milk
- 3 MILK SYRUP
- 1 can (12 oz/354 mL) evaporated milk
- 1 can (9 oz/300 mL) sweetened condensed milk
- 1/3 cup heavy whipping cream

FROSTING

- 2 cups whipping cream
- 2 Tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 cup berries, to garnish, optional

Preheat the oven to 350°F and butter a 9x13 casserole pan.

In a large bowl, sift together 1 cup flour, 1 1/2 tsp baking powder, and 1/4 tsp salt. Separate egg whites and yolks into two additional bowls.

Beat egg yolks with 3/4 cup sugar with an electric mixer on high speed, until yolks are a pale yellow (2 minutes). Stir in 1/3 cup milk and 1 tsp vanilla.

Beat egg whites on high speed until soft peaks form (1 minute). With the mixer on, pour in remaining 1/4 cup sugar and beat on high speed until egg whites are stiff but not dry (1 minute)

Pour egg yolk mixture over the flour mixture and combine gently with a spatula.

Gently fold in egg white mixture with the spatula until just combined. Pour batter into prepared pan and spread to even out the surface and bake at 350°F for 30-35 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

SYRUP

In a large measuring cup (or a bowl with a pouring lip), combine the whipping cream, evaporated milk and condensed milk. When the cake is cool, pierce the surface all over with a fork. Slowly drizzle the milk mixture over the cake.

FROSTING

Pour cold whipping cream and 2 Tbsp sugar into a large chilled mixing bowl and beat on high speed 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until thick, whipped and spreadable. Spread over the cake with a spatula then decorate with berries if desired.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL QUILT GUILD

Ajax	<i>Twisted Stitchers Quilt Guild</i> For information about our guild please go to our website twistedstitchersquiltguild.com
Alliston	<i>Quilting Corners Guild</i> We meet at St Johns United Church at 7pm on the first Tuesday or each month, except January.
Almonte	<i>Almonte Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Almonte Civitan Club, 500 Almonte Street Active at 7:00 pm from September through June (no meeting in December).
Ancaster	<i>Ancaster Quilter's Guild</i> We meet at the Marshall Memorial United Church, 20 Gilbert Ave. at 7pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from September to June.
Arnprior	<i>Arnprior District Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Christian Education Centre, 257 John St. N. at 6:30 pm on the fourth Wed. of each month from Sept. to June.
Barrie	<i>Simcoe County Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Simcoe County Museum, 1151 Hwy 26, Midhurst at 1:00 pm on the Fourth Thursday each month except the 2nd Thursday in Dec and 3rd Thursday in June, from September to June. <i>Kempentfelt Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Lion's Gate Banquet Hall on Blake Street, the 3rd Thursday of the month from 7-9pm <i>Barrie Modern Quilt Guild</i> We meet at Grace United Church, 350 Grove St. East the last Thursday of the month, on alternate months from September to May - 7pm and on various Saturdays during the alternate months, for Activities and Workshops, from October to June.
Belleville	<i>Quinte Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Recreation Centre, 116 Pinnacle Street. At 7:00 pm on the first Wednesday of each month.
Binbrook	<i>Binbrook Country Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Binbrook United Church, 2623 Binbrook Rd. 7:30 pm the last Monday of the month from Sept - Nov and Jan - June.
Bracebridge	<i>The Pine Tree Quilters' Guild of Muskoka</i> We meet at 56 Salmon Avenue, Bracebridge, Ontario at 1:00 pm on the 2nd. Thursday of the month from September through June.
Brampton	<i>Brampton Quilters Guild</i> We meet on the 4th Thursday of each month from September to June at 7:30 pm. Meetings are held at Jim Archdekin Recreation Centre, 292 Conestoga Dr, Brampton.
Brantford	<i>Brant Heritage Quilters</i> We meet at St George United Church at 7:30 pm. on the second Thursday of the month.
Brockville	<i>The Thousand Islands Quilters' Guild (TIQG)</i> Meets the 4th Thursday of the month at 7pm both in person and zoom except July/Aug/Dec at the Bethel Christian Reformed Church located at 117 Windsor Dr., Brockville, On K6V 5V5. Library opens at 6:30pm.
Buckhorn	<i>Buckhorn Area Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Hartley Hall, St. Mathews / St. Adian Anglican Church at 9:00 a.m. on the last Wednesday of the month (excluding July, August and December).
Burlington	<i>Halton Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Mainway Recreation Centre, 4015 Mainway Dr. at 7:00 pm on the first Thursday of the month from September through June).
Caledonia	<i>Caledonia Grand River Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at 7pm on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from September through June.
Cambridge	<i>Busy Hands Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Preston Scout House, 1580 Queenston Road at 9:30 am on the third Monday of each month.
Chatham	<i>Chatham-Kent Quilters' Guild</i> 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
Collingwood/ Wasaga Beach	<i>Slope to Slope Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Wasaga Beach RecPlex, 1724 Mosley St, the first Thursday of the month, 7-9 pm, September to June.
Cornwall	<i>Cornwall Quilters Guild</i> We meet at St. Mathews Lutheran Church, 1509 Second St West at 7pm every third Monday evening from September through May.
Courtice	<i>Clarington Quilt Guild</i> We meet at Faith United Church, 1778 Nash Road, Courtice on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 1 - 3 p.m. We are a day time Guild
Dryden	<i>Sunset Country Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at 84 St. Charles Street at 7 pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month.
Dunnville	D.O.T.S. Quilt Guild (Dunnville's Own Tiny Stitchers). We meet at Maple Creek Community Church, 110 Inman Rd. @ 6:30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month from September to June.
Elliot Lake	<i>Elliot Lake Quilt Guild</i> We meet at Gentle Shepherd Church, 3 Ottawa Ave. at 7:00 pm on Tuesdays from September through June.
Elmira	<i>The Elmira Needle Sisters</i> We meet at the Elmira Mennonite Church at 7:00 pm on the fourth Monday of the month.
Espanola	<i>North Shore Pins & Needles Stitchery Guild</i> Meetings are held every 4th Wednesday of the month, upstairs at the Legion Hall, 370 Annette St. at 7 p.m. Sept-Nov & Jan.-May first meeting free
Etobicoke	<i>Etobicoke Quilters Guild</i> We meet at Neilson Park Creative Centre - 56 Neilson Dr. at 7:00 pm on the third Monday of the month.
Georgetown	<i>Halton Hills Quilters Guild</i> We Meet at 8958 Trafalgar Rd, Georgetown, ON L7G 4S5. 6:45pm till 9pm from September till June on the fourth Monday of the month.
Gloucester	<i>Common Thread Quilt Guild</i> We meet at Le Mouvement D'Implication Francophone D'Orléans (MIFO), 6600 rue Carriere in Orleans at 7:30 pm on the second Tuesday of the month from September through June.
Goderich	<i>Goderich Quilters' Guild</i> We meet once a month on the 2nd Tuesday.
Grimsby	<i>Grimsby Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Livingston Activity Centre at 7pm on the third Thursday of the month.
Guelph	<i>Royal City Quilters' Guild</i> 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.
Gwillimbury	<i>Gwillimbury Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Sharon-Hope United Church, 18648 Leslie St. at 1:00 pm on 4th Monday of the month from September through May.
Hagersville	<i>Haldimand Quilter's Guild</i> We meet at the Hagersville United Church at 7:00 pm on the first Monday of the month from September through June.
Haliburton	<i>Haliburton Highlands Quilter Guild</i> We meet at the Stanhope Community Centre, 1095 North Shore Rd, Algonquin Highlands at 1:00 pm on the second Wednesday of each month.
Hamilton	<i>Hamilton Quilters Guild</i> We meet The Church of Resurrection, 435 Mohawk Rd. W.at 7:00 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from September through August.
Ingersoll	<i>Oxford Quilters Guild</i> We meet month at the Ingersoll Creative Art Centre, 125 Centennial Lane (in Victoria Park) at 7:00 pm on the first Wednesday and 9:00 am on the first Thursday of each month.
Kanata	<i>The Kanata Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Glen Cairn United Church, 140 Abbeyhill Dr. at 9:30 am on the second Wednesday of the month from September to June.
Kemptville	<i>Kemptville Quilters Guild</i> We meet pm at the Kemptville Pentecostal Church 1964 County Road # 43 at 7:00 pm on the second Monday of the month (except for holiday Mondays).
Kenora	<i>Lake of the Woods Quilter's Guild</i> We meet at St. Louis Catholic Church, 912 Superior St in Keewatin at 7 PM on the second Thursday of the month.
Kincardine	Kincardine Sunset Quilters Guild. We meet the second Wednesday of every month except July and August, at 10 a.m. in the basement of St. Anthony's Church on Russell St. in Kincardine.
Kingston	<i>Kingston Heirloom Quilters</i> We meet at St. Johns Anglican Church Hall in Portsmouth Village at 9:30 am on the first Tuesday and 7:00 pm on the first Thursday of each month. <i>Limestone Quilt Guild</i> Meeting Area usually is - Kingston Senior Centre, 56 Francis Street, Kingston, Ontario, but we are on zoom right now. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 pm on zoom.
Kingsville	<i>Erie Shores Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Kingsville Arena, 2nd floor at 7p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month.
Kirkton	<i>Huron, Perth Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Kirktown/Wooddham Community Centre at 9:00 am on the second Tuesday of the month from September through May.
Kitchener - Waterloo	<i>The Waterloo County Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Parkside Community Room of the Parkside Arena in Waterloo at 1:30pm and 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month.
Lambton	<i>North Lambton Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Port Franks Hall on the 4th Wednesday of the month.
Lindsay	<i>Lindsay Creative Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at 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	<i>London Friendship Quilters Guild</i> We meet the 2nd Thursday of the month from September to June. The meeting usually runs from 7pm to 9pm. We are located at St. George's Presbyterian Church, 1475 Dundas Street, London, Ontario N5W 3B8. To contact us: lfag.president@gmail.com or our web page: lfag Lonon Friendship Quilt Guild
Manitoulin Island	<i>Island Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Community Hall in Mindemoya at 7:00 pm on the third Thursday of the month from September though June.
Markdale	<i>Queen's Bush Quilters</i> We meet at Annesley United Church, 82 Toronto St. at 7:00 pm on the 1st Tuesday of the month from September to June.
Markham	<i>Markham Towne Quilters Guild</i> General meeting first Thursday of every month (September-June). 11 Church Street, Markham markhamtownequilterquid@gmail.com .

Meaford	<i>Georgian Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Meaford Opera House, Sykes St. at 1:30 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month.
Mississauga	<i>Cawthra Senior's Centre</i> We meet at the Cawthra Senior's Centre at 7:30pm on the first Thursday of the month (except July and August). <i>Mississauga Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Tomken Twin Arenas at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month (except July and August).
Miramichi	<i>Miramichi Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Seamans Hospital at 7:00 pm every Tuesday and 10:00 am every Thursday.
Mount Forest	<i>Four Corners Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex at 7 pm on the second Tuesday of the month from September to June. For more information email 4cornersquiltersguild@gmail.com
Napanee	<i>Heritage Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Strathcona Paper Center at 7:00 pm on the third Tuesday of each month from September through to June.
Newmarket	<i>The Region of York Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Newmarket Community Centre, 200 Doug Duncan Drive on the fourth Wednesday of the month from September through May. <i>Moraine Quilt Guild</i> We meet in the hall at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church - 484 Water Street, Newmarket at 9:30 am - 12 Noon for Social Sew and 1:00-3:30 pm for the Meeting on the first Wednesday of each month year round.
Niagara Region	<i>The Niagara Heritage Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Merriön Community Centre, 7 Park Ave., St. Catharines on the third Wednesday of each month.
Nobleton	A chapter of the <i>Modern Quilting Guild</i> We travel to various locations in Southern Ontario on a rotating basis.
Norwich	<i>Quaker Quilt Guild</i> We meet at 89 Stover St N. Norwich at 9:30 am on the second Monday of the month.
Orangeville	<i>Dufferin Piecemakers' Quilting Guild</i> We meet at the Orangeville Event Centre at 7:30 pm on the third Monday of the month from September through June.
Orilla	<i>Orillia Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at ODAS Park, 4461 Fairgrounds Road, Orillia at 1 PM on the third Wednesday of each month except July.
Orleans	<i>Common Thread Quilt Guild</i> Meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm at MIFO, 6600 Carriere St, Orleans. www.commonthreadquiltguild.ca
Orono	<i>Ganaraska Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Seniors Activity Centre. 200 Station St. W at 7:15 pm on the last Wednesday of the month.
Oshawa	<i>Durham Trillium Quilters'</i> We meet at the Zion Christian Reformed Church 409 Adelaide Ave. E. Oshawa at 7:00pm every second Monday Sept.- June
Ottawa	<i>Ottawa Valley Quilters Guild</i> Our guild 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
Owen Sound	<i>QuiltCo</i> We meet at the Trinity Anglican Church in Old Ottawa South on the second Monday evening of the month except July and August.
Paris	<i>Bluewater Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre, 1900 3rd Av E at 7:00 pm every third Monday from March to December (except May which is on the second).
Penetanguishene	<i>Paris Quilting Bees</i> We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from September to June at the Paris Fairgrounds at 7 PM. For information email: parisquiltingbees@gmail.com . <i>Georgian Bay Quilters Guild</i> Meets every month from September to June at the Penetanguishene Arena, 61 Maria St, Penetanguishene, Ontario. Monthly meetings (except for December & June) are the 4th Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. December & June meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of the month with the June meeting starting at 6:00 p.m.
Peterborough	<i>Kawartha Quillmakers' Guild</i> Meetings are at the Westdale United Church, 1509 Sherbrooke Street, Peterborough on the first Wednesday of each month at 9:30 am.
Perth	<i>Lanark County Quilters Guild</i> We meet at Lions Hall, Perth Fairgrounds at 7pm on the 4th Tuesday of the month.
Petawawa	<i>Pembroke Log Cabin Quilters</i> We meet every 3rd Tuesday of the month during the school year in the basement of 1163 Victoria Street. Our social time begins at 6 pm and meeting at 7 pm. Email: pembrokelogcabinquilters@gmail.com . FB: Pembroke Log Cabin Quilters, Web page: pembrokelogcabinquilters.ca
Pickering	<i>Rouge Valley Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Peace Lutheran Church, 928 Liverpool Road, Pickering at 7:00 pm on the 4th Monday of the month September through May, excluding December.
Port Loring	<i>Argyle Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Lions Den in Arnstein on the second Thursday of the month.
Port Perry	<i>Port Perry Patchers</i> We meet at the Hope Christian Reform Church, 14480 Old Simcoe Rd. in Prince Albert at 7:00 pm on the third Monday of the month, at 7 p.m. from March to December.
Prince Edward	<i>Prince Edward County Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the BCR Church in Bloomfield at 7:00 pm County on the second Wednesday of each month.
Rayside	<i>Rayside Balfour Quilting and Stitchery Guild</i> We meet at the Chelmsford Arena (Upstairs) 215 Edward Avenue, Chelmsford, Ontario at 7:00 p.m. every Monday from September to May.
Renfrew	<i>Quilt Guild Renfrew & Area</i> We meet at the Horton Community Centre, 1005 Castleford Road, Horton from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from September to June.
Richmond	<i>Richmond Area Quilters Guild (RAQG)</i> We meet at the Richmond Legion, 6430 Ottawa Street at 7:30 on the third Wednesday of each month.
Ruthven	<i>Erie Shores Quilter's Guild</i> We meet at the Ruthven-Olinda United Church every third Tuesday.
Sarnia	<i>Sarnia Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Redeemer Christian Reformed Church 5814 Blackwell Sldr, Sarnia at 7pm the first Monday of each month.
Sault St. Marie	<i>Stitches From The Heart Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the Senior's Centre on Bay St at 7pm the last Monday of the month.
Scarborough	<i>Rouge Valley Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Peace Lutheran Church, 928 Liverpool Road, Pickering at 7:00 pm on the 4th Monday of the month September through May, excluding December.
Simcoe	<i>Twilight Quilters' Guild of Norfolk County</i> We meet at the Old Wyndham Church, 30 Glendale Crescent at 7:00 pm on the second Monday of the month.
Stittsville	<i>Norfolk County Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Vittoria & District Community Centre on the first Tuesday of each month except October.
St Marys	<i>The Quilters Club</i> We meet at the The Pretty Street Community Centre at 7:00 pm on the third Monday of the month.
Stony Creek	<i>The Stonetowne Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the End Zone Room of the Pyramid Centre at 9:30 am on the third Tuesday of the month from September to May.
Sudbury	<i>Stoney Creek Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Royal Canadian Legion, 12 King Street East, at 6:30 pm on first Wednesday of the month from September to June.
Sutton	<i>Sudbury & District Quilting & Stitchery Guild</i> We meet at 140 Durham Street at 7:00 pm on every Tuesday from September to April.
Thunder Bay	<i>The Georgina Pins and Needles</i> We meet at the Knox United Church 34 Market Street at 7:00 pm on the first Tuesday of the month from September to June.
Toronto	<i>Thunder Bay Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Calvin Luthern Church on Edward Street at 7:30pm on the 3rd Monday of each month from September to June. <i>Etobicoke Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at the Neilson Park Creative Centre at 7:15 pm on the third Monday of the month. <i>Pieceful Nights Quilters' Guild of North Toronto</i> meets the second Wednesday of each month. During COVID-19 meetings will be held via Zoom. Guests welcome. https://www.pnag.ca . <i>Toronto Modern Quilt Guild</i> We meet at The Workroom Studio, 46 Nobel St Studio 102 at 3:00 pm on the last Sunday of each month.
Waterloo	<i>York Heritage Quilters Guild</i> We meet at the Toronto Botanical Gardens on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from September through May. <i>Yorkshire Rose Quilters' Guild of Toronto</i> We meet at Danforth Mennonite Church, 2174 Danforth Avenue at 7:30 pm on the second Wednesday of the month from September through May.
Whitby	<i>The Waterloo County Quilters' Guild</i> We meet the Albert McCormick Community Centre at 1:30 pm and 7pm on the third Wednesday of each month from September through June
Windsor	<i>Kindred Hearts Guild</i> We meet at the Whitby Baptist Church on the third Tuesday of the month. <i>Windsor Quilters' Guild</i> We meet at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 594, 5030 Howard Ave., Windsor, ON N9A 6Z6 at 9:00 a.m. the first Wednesday of the month from September to June.
York Region	<i>The Moraine Quilt Guild</i> We meet at the St. Andrews Presbyterian Church at 1:00 on the first Wednesday of the month.

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Random Acts

by Maranda Jones

Stages


Songs get stuck in my head, and sometimes I hear the correct lyrics on repeat in my mind. Other times, I make up the lyrics as I go, singing the words that I think are on key with the verified verses, only to be corrected by my children. The kitchen acted as my stage, and today I was certain I had the words right for a change as I sang into the spatula. Maybe it is my inability to sing the correct words and the correct notes that troubles my family most.

This morning's song happened to be "The Butterfly Song," which I learned from my mom as a little girl. I confidently sang "If I were a butterfly, I'd thank you Lord for giving me wings" as we got ready for church. This song I know by heart. My kids have been singing this song at home and in Sunday School since they were young, just like my sister and me. Mom made us a colorful poster for our room with the lyrics and the animals. I can still picture the robin, the kangaroo, and the fuzzy wuzzy bear that would thank the Lord for his fuzzy wuzzy hair. And the crocodile that would thank the Lord for his great smile always looked so charming! Although that robin would thank the Lord that he could sing, I cannot relate to that line of praise. I have never given thanks for my singing voice, and I am positive no one else has either! It does not stop me from singing though, and I just hope that it's a joyful noise to the Lord even though it is not one to those around me.

Perhaps I should sing to butterflies since they cannot hear. A flutter of butterflies would be the perfect audience for someone like me who loves to sing and cannot find the way to the right notes. Maybe my lousy sense of direction has something to do with my pitch accuracy problems. I just cannot find my way. Butterflies could teach me something about this too. They have an impeccable sense of direction and travel many miles. National Geographic notes that monarch butterflies fly 2,500 miles from the United States and Canada to southern California and central Mexico. Billions of butterflies arrive in the mountains of Mexico each year, visiting the same forests as their ancestors.

After the amazing metamorphosis from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis and finally to adult butterfly, these monarchs need protection from predators. Their poisonous bright coloring warns animals not to eat them. While the predator will not die from eating a butterfly, it will feel sick enough to avoid monarchs in the future. The butterflies get toxins from milkweed, their only food source in the caterpillar stage. As they grow, they gain nutrients by drinking nectar from milkweed, clover, and goldenrod.

We also go through stages, drinking milk and later eating solid food, necessary for our nourishment and protection. We grow and learn "as babies in Christ" who are fed "milk, not solid food, because we were not yet able to receive it." As we mature, we seek protection in God's word, develop our senses, and gain more understanding. We should be teaching others the elementary truths and basic principles of God's revelation. Hebrews 5:11-14 reminds us of this, just like Sunday School songs do. Whether it's a butterfly thanking the Lord for its wings or a wiggly worm appreciating its squirm, these spring creatures remind us to give praise. "I just thank you Father for making me, me."



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Carleton Place	Happy Wife	pg. 9
Conn	Creekbank Sewing.....	pg. 17
Cornwall	Auntie Em's	pg. 2, 5
Cornwall	Ron's Fabrics	pg. 5
Espanola.....	Cindy Bee's Quilt Shoppe.....	pg. 21
Floradale.....	Hillcrest.....	pg. 9
Grafton	Cloe Quilting	pg. 6
Hamilton	Hamilton Sewing	pg. 2, 24
Kanata	Maker Savvy	pg. 8
Kemptville	Kemptville Fabric Shoppe	pg. 9
Kingston.....	Stitch by Stitch	pg. 2, 7, 24
Maxwell.....	Threads That Bind	pg. 19



Minden	Remember Me Quilts & More ..	pg. 9
Mulmur.....	The Retreat at the Farm	pg. 16
New Liskeard	Gem Sewing	pg. 21
North Bay	Gem Sewing	pg. 21
Orillia (Severn)	Thimbles & Things	pg. 18, 24
Orleans	Quilty Pleasures.....	pg. 5, 24
Orono.....	Annie's Quilt Shop.....	pg. 9
Ottawa	Sew -Jo's	pg. 2
Perth.....	Perth Fabrics.....	pg. 9
Petrolia	Stitcharie.....	pg. 2, 16
Pincourt	Mad Moody Quilting Fabrics.....	pg. 6
Russell	Quilter's Barn & Gifts	pg. 8
Sault Ste Marie	Life's A Stitch	pg. 21
Shakespeare	The Quilt Place	pg. 18
Sudbury	Gem Sewing	pg. 21
Teeswater.....	Sanity Hill.....	pg. 10
Uxbridge	Quilter's Cupboard	pg. 7
West Lorne	Heather Bell's Sewing.....	pg. 24
Woodville	Bolts & Bobbins	pg. 7

(solution for Sudoku puzzle on page 16)

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

Piecing Life Together
Life

by Barbara Polston

My daughter’s friends were expecting their first baby. She asked if I would make a quilt to welcome their daughter. I have a “go to” pattern for baby quilts. Expectant mom’s favorite color is purple. We selected purple fabrics, mostly with floral motifs in a range of light, medium and dark values. The pattern creates five stars trailing across the surface of the quilt. We selected a pretty pink for those. I’ve made too many of this pattern to count but felt that this one was the prettiest. My quilter helped select a lovely quilting pattern. We created a label with a heartfelt message. The quilt reached 100% finished the week before the baby was due.

Given what had become a tight deadline, my daughter asked me to ship the quilt directly to her friends. It arrived on Friday and was received with absolute delight. Now, all mom and dad had to do was await their daughter’s arrival which had reached the “any day now” stage.

On Sunday night, I dreamt of the young man I dated throughout my senior year in high school. Although our dating relationship ended with my high school graduation, we remained friends. We saw each other at social events. He was a guest at my wedding. After my marriage, as I suppose is to be expected, we drifted apart. Over the years I reconnected with several people from my school days – some sought me out, others I tried to find. It’s been nice to be able to reminisce with them as well as share their current lives. I tried, for many years and on more than one occasion, to find the young man who had been so special to me. Every attempt met with failure.

When I awoke on Monday morning, I decided to try one more time to find him. Searching the internet, his obituary was returned. He passed away five years ago. From what I read, it appeared that he achieved the life he had planned and was well loved. This discovery was saddening and a bit shocking. I fell down the rabbit hole into thoughts of high school and the many people that were such an important part in my life. I wondered if I had reached the stage in life where all I would hear about was the loss of someone else.

Then, on Tuesday morning, I received a text message from my daughter with a photo of her friend’s newborn baby girl, so sweet being cradled by her mom. Life, I understood, is a circle of birth and death that we both witness and experience. Spirits lifted, I’m just glad that the quilt arrived in time to welcome a new life.

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



Spring Showers Bring
May Flowers

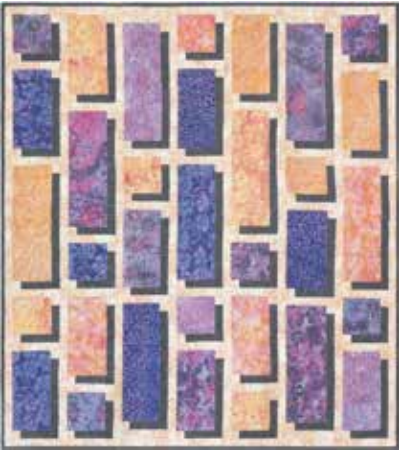
by Marlene Oddie

Introducing a floral batik collection from the newly formed Lumin Fabrics. As one of several subsidiaries, Island Batik is responsible for their batik collections. This new one is called Botanical Dreams and is shipping now to a local quilt shop near you.

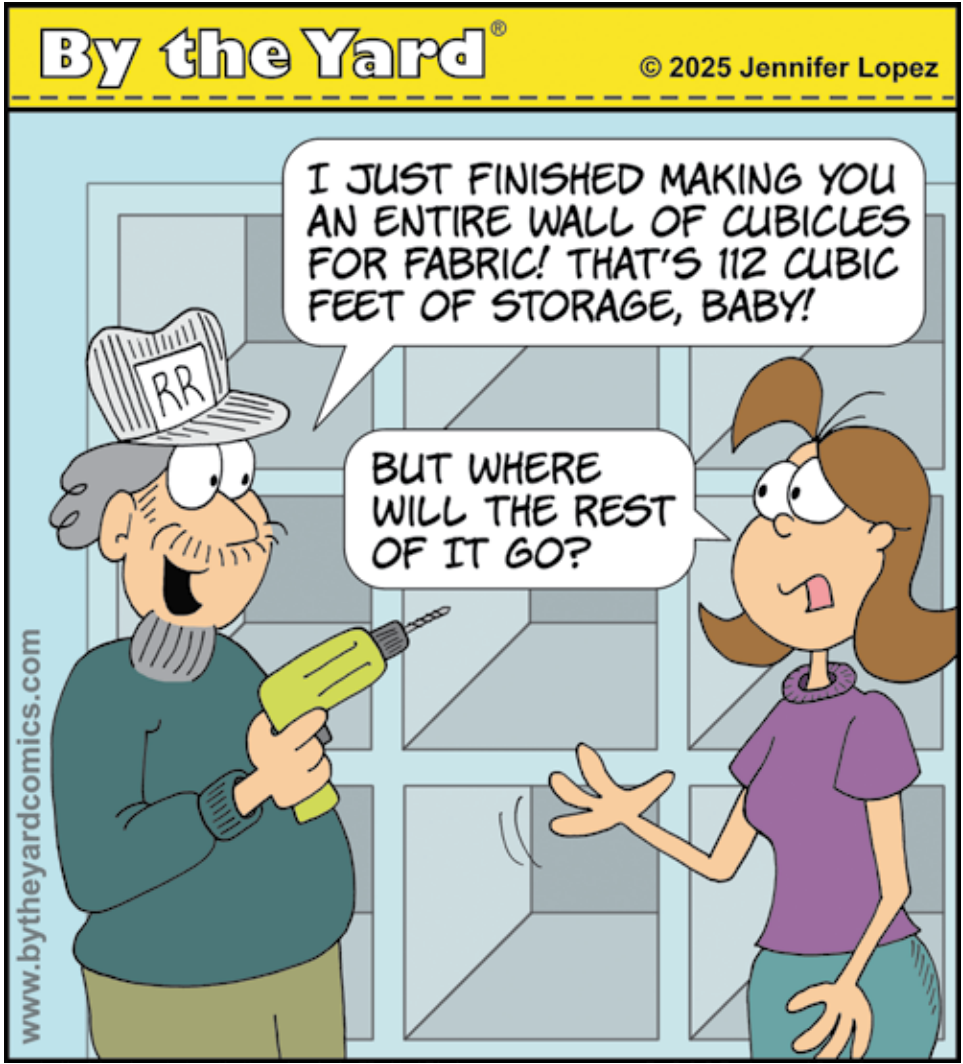
Sometimes we have a fabric stack that we just really don’t want to cut up too much. This design – “City Shadows” – has three sizes of blocks and allows the fabric to be seen on a larger scale, yet it starts with a 10” stack of coordinating prints or at least a 5” x Width of Fabric strip. Just add background and shadow yardage.

The shadow effect helps each element really pop off the quilt. Insider tip: Choose the large “C” blocks first since they will showcase the fabric the most. The pattern has yardage information for this lapsize as well as three larger sizes.

This version of City Shadows was named Flower Boxes –just perfect for Spring.



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>





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