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Calendar of Events

ONGOING

NOV 1 - JAN 31 Historic Textiles & Fancy Goods of La Cloche & North Shore Regions, Blind River, ON

DECEMBER

- DEC 1 - DEC 31** Jingles & Joy, Blue Mountains
DEC 1 - JAN 8 Winter Wonderland and Newmarket Ice Lounge
DEC 2 - DEC 31 Alight At Night Festival 2016 – Upper Canada Village, Morrisburg
DEC 2 Cayuga Santa Claus Parade and Light Up Night, Cayuga
DEC 2 Edwardian Christmas At the Bowmanville Museum, Bowmanville
DEC 2 Holiday Tree Lighting, Hamilton
DEC 2 - JAN 9 Lakeside Festival of Lights, Burlington
DEC 2 - JAN 10 Burlington Festival of Lights, Burlington
DEC 2 Santa's Festival of Lights and Shopping Party, Bracebridge
DEC 2 Mount Forest and Area Santa Claus Parade, Mount Forest
DEC 2 Light Up the Night, Almonte
DEC 2 Annual Tree Lighting & Fireworks Event, Pickering
DEC 2 Celebrate Christmas, Bradford
DEC 2 Santa's Moonlight Shopping Party featuring the Festival of Lights, Bracebridge
DEC 2 Christmas in Pelham – Outdoor Christmas Market, Fonthill
DEC 3 Craftadian Christmas Market, Hamilton
DEC 3 Dunnville Light-Up Night & Christmas Parade, Dunnville
DEC 3 - DEC 4 Ball's Falls Christmas Village, Jordan
DEC 3 Annual Lighted Santa Claus Parade, Port Colborne
DEC 3 - DEC 4 Lang Pioneer Village Museum's Christmas by Candlelight, Peterborough
DEC 3 - DEC 18 Santa Train, Uxbridge
DEC 4 Bracebridge Annual Santa Claus Parade, Bracebridge
DEC 4 Grand Old Christmas Festival, Port Colborne
DEC 4 Burlington's Santa Claus Parade, Burlington
DEC 7 Annual Tree Lighting, Aurora
DEC 7 - JAN 5 Christmas Lights Across Canada, Confederation Boulevard, Ottawa-Gatineau
DEC 9 - DEC 24 The Christmas Story, Toronto
DEC 10 Christmas Market, Port Hope
DEC 10 Kindred presents A Musical Journey from Celtic to Cajun, Welland
DEC 17 A Portage Flyer Christmas, Huntsville
DEC 21 - DEC 24 29th Annual Live Nativity Pageant, Newmarket
DEC 25 Merry Christmas!
DEC 31 Cobourg First Night Celebrations, Cobourg
DEC 31 First Night Celebrations, Richmond Hill
DEC 31 Family First Night, Bradford
DEC 31 Annual New Years Eve Skating Party, Toronto
DEC 31 New Year's Eve in Harmony Square, Brantford
DEC 31 Oshawa Celebrates 2017, Oshawa
DEC 31 - JAN 1 New Year's Eve 2017: Mississauga Celebration Square, Mississauga

JANUARY

- JAN 1** Happy New Year!
JAN 1 Hogmanay at Hutchison House Museum, Peterborough
JAN 7 Celebrate Scarborough- Welcome 2017!, Toronto
JAN 7 - JAN 31 Peterborough Snofest Winter Carnival, Peterborough
JAN 13 - JAN 15 Twenty Valley Winter WineFest 2016, Jordan Village
JAN 13 - JAN 29 Niagara Icewine Festival 2017, St. Catharines
JAN 16 - JAN 22 Toronto Design Offsite Festival, Toronto
JAN 17 - JAN 21 London Wine and Food Show, London
JAN 21 New Year's Levee, Brampton
JAN 24 - FEB 4 Colores de Latinoamrica '17, London
JAN 27 - JAN 29 ReFrame Film Festival, Peterborough

UPCOMING

CELTIC QUILT TOURS

Ireland: June 5-16, 2017 & June 19-3, 2017; Scotland: Sept 13-24, 2107

Dearest Readers,

(Just a short note this time my dearest readers, as I am writing this to you on Black Friday, so I must go shopping!)

Deck the halls and break out that mistletoe! Yes, it's Christmas season once again, and just like every year, I am very excited that my favourite time of year is here!

What do you have planned for this season? Are all your projects done? Home decorated? Gifts bought or made? So hectic, but so rewarding at the same time. I just love it!

It never ceases to amaze me how this season can be so wonderfully peaceful and yet at the same time be so energizing.

Our team here at the Country Register of Ontario wishes you a wonderful, happy, joyous and safe holiday season. May you be reunited with all of your loved ones and may you all share this special time that reminds us of what's really important in life.

Happy Holidays! Merry Christmas!
 Happy New Year!

Thanks and best regards,

Harriet

Meet our cover artist: Richard De Wolfe



The Thousand Islands region of Ontario, Canada, was the perfect backdrop for a childhood filled with adventure for Richard De Wolfe, an artist who still identifies strongly with rural life. The forests, fields, and of course the mighty St. Lawrence River, made the wonders of nature come alive for him.

The art of Richard De Wolfe has been very popular ever since his first one-man show at the age of eighteen. That show was a sell out, supplying him with commissions for many months after. He went on to spend twenty-five years as an illustrator, producing paintings for national and international corporations such as General Motors, Pepsi-Cola, and Sony.

"I believe that working as an illustrator was the best training I could possibly have had. The wide variety of subjects and tight deadlines forced me to hone my skills and become very proficient as a painter. I feel that many of the finest painters alive today are former illustrators," Richard says.

Richard's subject matter is wide-ranging and ever changing. He has painted landscapes and wildlife extensively, but also paints still-life subjects, farm and family scenes, boats, horses and just about anything that catches his eye and imagination. When asked what he wants to accomplish through his art, Richard says, "The important thing is to help people to see what I see and feel what I feel about a subject. What you paint is far less important than how you paint it."

Together with his wife Mary, Richard lives on a horse farm near Kingston, Ontario, where he can study and paint scenes of farm and rural life as well as the wildlife, which is all around him. Richard's work is available in prints as well as originals. He has participated in many prestigious art shows such as Wildlife Habitat Canada Stamp Competition, the Wye Marsh Festival, and Canadian Artist and Photographers in Communication Annual Exhibition. Richard is listed in Who's Who in Ontario.

Richard's originals and prints are available on the web at www.rde Wolfe.com, or by email at info@richarddewolfe.com.

(read more about Richard on p. 14)

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Our Search for Cover Artwork –

Across Canada and the U.S, you can always tell *The Country Register* by it's cover. Our publishers seek to find cover art or photos from the province/state the paper represents. To that end, we are seeking the work of artists from Ontario to feature on our covers. The art must be in good taste and consistent with the theme of the papers.

If you would like your work to be considered, please send an email indicating your interest to OntarioCountryRegister@gmail.com



Free Pattern

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Town and Country Cooking

From Dried to Delicious

By Janette Hess



With December and January come short, cold days and long, even colder nights. Why not warm up your kitchen with a slow-cooking soup featuring dried beans or legumes, and then warm up your insides by slowly savoring each and every spoonful?

This month take time to peruse the dried beans at your favorite market. Pick up some black beans, lentils or split peas. Try some new recipes, and see if you agree with those who say dried is the way to go for nutritious, flavorful soups. Note that in the hierarchy of dried beans, black beans are near the top in terms of prep time, requiring pre-soaking and two or more hours of cooking time. Lentils are near the bottom, requiring an easy 30 minutes or less of cooking time.

The added bonus of slowly cooked, homemade bean soup is that flavors have a chance to build and blend, and you have complete control of all ingredients. Feel free to adjust seasonings to suit your personal taste.

Black Bean Soup

- 1 pound (approximately 2 cups) dried black beans, cleaned and soaked overnight according to package instructions
- Water
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 4 strips lean bacon, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- ½ cup celery, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 cup mild salsa
- 1 box (32 fluid ounces) beef cooking stock (regular or reduced sodium)
- Hot pepper sauce, if desired

In large cooking pot, soak beans overnight in 6 cups cold water. Drain and rinse beans. Add 6 cups hot water, cumin, onion powder and garlic powder. Bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover loosely and simmer for 2 to 3 hours, or until beans are soft. Stir occasionally. When beans are soft, fry diced bacon in non-stick skillet until crisp. Drain on paper towel. Discard all but 1 tablespoon bacon drippings. Sauté onion and celery in drippings until soft, approximately 6 to 8 minutes. Add garlic and continue cooking 1 minute longer. To create soup, add onion mixture to beans, along with salsa and stock. Transfer at least 1 cup of beans and broth to small blender or food processor to puree. Return mixture to pot. Add bacon. Slowly simmer uncovered for up to one hour, or until soup is desired consistency and flavors have blended. Add hot pepper sauce to taste. Makes approximately 10 cups soup.

Serving suggestion: For a nutritional boost, add desired amount of fresh, chopped spinach during the last few minutes of cooking. Serve as soon as the spinach has wilted in the soup.

Split Pea Soup

- 1 16-ounce package green split peas
- 4 cups chicken broth or vegetable broth (regular or reduced sodium)
- 4 cups water
- ½ onion, chopped
- ½ cup diced celery (include tops, if desired)
- 1 clove garlic, diced
- 2 whole carrots, trimmed and peeled
- 1½ cups diced smoked ham (approximately 6 ounces)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Freshly ground black pepper

Rinse and drain peas according to package instructions. Place peas in slow cooker and add broth, water, onion, celery, garlic and whole carrots. Cook at high setting for 2 to 3 hours, or until peas are very soft and carrots are tender. Remove carrots to cutting board. Cut lengthwise and then slice into small pieces. Set aside. Using immersion blender, completely blend peas and liquid. (If immersion blender is not available, use standard blender, but allow mixture to cool before processing in small batches; return to slow cooker.) Add sliced carrots and all remaining ingredients. Cook at low setting for 1 hour. Makes approximately 12 cups soup.

Note: If vegetarian soup is desired, use vegetable broth and omit ham. If meaty-flavored soup is desired, add a ham bone or ham “heel” to split peas while they are cooking. Remove before blending.

Easy Lentil Chili

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 26-ounce jar spaghetti sauce
- 1 16-ounce jar mild salsa
- 1½ teaspoons chili powder
- 1½ teaspoons cumin
- 6 cups water plus more as needed
- ¾ cup dry lentils

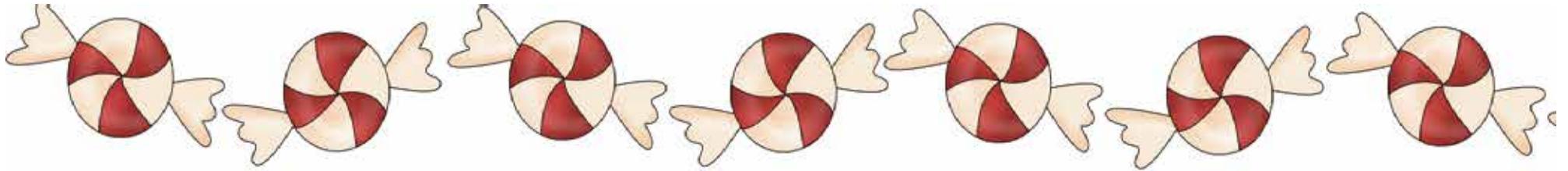


In large pot, brown ground beef. Drain if necessary. Combine all ingredients except lentils and bring to a boil. Rinse and drain lentils according to package instructions; add to pot. Cover and simmer for approximately 30 minutes, or until lentils are tender, stirring occasionally. Add additional water as needed to adjust thickness of chili. Makes at least 12 cups soup.

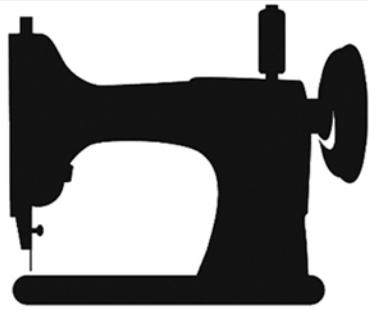
A trained journalist, Janette Hess focuses her writing on interesting people and interesting foods. She is a Master Food Volunteer with her local Extension service and enjoys collecting, testing and sharing recipes.

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- 1 c. fresh cranberries
- 3/4 c. brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1/2 c. flour
- 1/2 c. oats
- 3/4 tsp. cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/3 c. softened butter

Preheat oven to 375°. Butter a square baking pan. Place apple slices & cranberries in the pan. Mix remaining ingred. well & sprinkle over fruit. Bake 30 min. Serve hot w/ice cream or cold with whipped cream.

*"Chill December brings the sleet,
 Blazing fire and Christmas treat."*
 ♥ Mother Goose

"For somehow, not only at Christmas, but all the long year through, the joy that you give to others is the joy that comes back to you."
 ♥ John Greenleaf Whittier

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WHAT'S NEXT



A Holiday Chocolate Tea



When our granddaughter Anna was learning to walk, we enticed her to take a few hesitant steps by holding chocolate candy in front of her. She looked so cute that we took a photo of her at 18 months holding the sign, "Will walk for chocolate."

Anna isn't the only person who loves chocolate. Both young and old think life is sweeter and more bearable with this confection. In fact, John Tullius said, "Nine out of 10 people like chocolate. The tenth person always lies."

Since chocolate is popular and pairs well with tea, enjoy these ideas to host a chocolate-TEA event.

Prepare the setting

It's easy to decorate for a chocolate tea party during the holidays. Simply add a few chocolate touches to your usual decorations. On the table, scatter candy kisses on a festive tablecloth. For a centerpiece, arrange flowers or holly in teapots or tea tins and add a few small Hershey's bars fastened on picks. Or make a candy bouquet with full-size chocolate bars.

If you like, add candles with a chocolate fragrance. I found some at the Dollar Store and at the Chocolate Man, a local store that sells all things chocolate (also online). I even found packets of flower seeds that are supposed to smell like chocolate when they bloom. Candles, seed packets, or truffles would make nice party favors at each place setting.

Have your chocolate and drink it too

Guests will expect chocolate foods at the party, but surprise them with chocolate tea too.

I sipped my first cup of chocolate tea at Myrtle's Tea House in Ridgefield, Washington, near Portland, Oregon. For the dessert course, the menu included four chocolate teas to choose from: Valentine's Blend with chocolate and rosebuds; Chocolate Mint with chocolate flavoring and peppermint leaves; Florence with chocolate and hazelnuts; Soho with chocolate and coconut (imagine a Mounds candy bar).

But you won't need to travel to Myrtle's for chocolate tea. You can buy it in markets and on the Internet. Republic of Tea lists five luscious flavors, including Red Velvet Chocolate and Strawberry Chocolate, which tastes like fresh strawberries dipped in chocolate.

Dove makes three delectable blends: Chocolate Truffle, Chocolate Coconut Macaroon, and Chocolate Mint Cookie (order from <http://www.mycdsite.com>). Check the Internet for more options (e.g., Stash, Bigelow, and Harney & Sons).

With all the chocolate tea choices, you could plan a tea-tasting party and offer several to sample. Serve your favorite chocolate treat or shortbread with the tea.

Just desserts—chocolate of course

Although chocolate tea is satisfying and makes a nearly calorie-free sweet treat, the disclaimer on Myrtle's menu says: "If you really need a chocolate fix, these teas will not do. But they are lovely with a dessert course."

In my travels to tearooms, I've enjoyed chocolate fondue, chocolate satin pie, and chocolate lava cake. So what decadent desserts can you serve?

How about hosting a dessert smorgasbord and asking guests to bring their favorite chocolate goodie? My recipe box includes recipes for

chocolate candies, cakes, pies, cookies, and puddings. You could assign a food category to each guest so you don't get all cookies and can sample a wide array of gourmet chocolate delights. As the hostess, prepare one extra-special dessert, such as chocolate fondue. For a large group, you could even rent a chocolate fountain. Recently, someone gave me one, and Anna, now six, is licking her lips in anticipation.

Of course, you can include other foods in the menu. But I've heard a balanced diet includes chocolate in each hand. With that in mind, I purchased raspberries-and-chocolate jam, which I served with scones. It also tasted yummy spread on crackers and served with sliced cheese on the side. Adding fruit is nice, especially chocolate-dipped strawberries. You can never have too much chocolate!

More chocolate—fun and inspiration

When I shared a simple chocolate teatime with a friend, I included a sweet game: Name the Candy Bar. I bought Baby Ruth, Snickers, Kit Kat, Almond Joy, and other candy and placed chunks of unwrapped candy bars on a plate. Then I asked my friend to guess the name of each kind. She couldn't identify them all by looks, but she got to eat them all.

For a larger party, number each chunk of candy with a small piece of paper attached to a toothpick poked into the candy. Provide guests with paper to write down the names of candy bars. Offer a prize to the winner, such as the book, *I'll Bring the Chocolate: Satisfying a Woman's Craving for Friendship and Faith* by Karen Porter. Karen also sells a darling pink bag that says, "I'll bring the chocolate." For inspiration at the party, you could share thoughts from her book. If you want more chocolate ideas and even a speaker for an event, contact Karen at <http://karenporter.com>.

I'll Bring the Chocolate would make a great Christmas gift along with some chocolates for a chocolate-loving friend. I bought the book and bag for my pen pal.

With these ideas plus your own, I'm sure you can create a teatime that evokes sweet memories. I'm ready for a festive chocolate tea party. Will you join me?

Lydia E. Harris, who holds a master's degree in home economics, wrote the book, Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting (AMG Publishers). Her grandchildren call her "Grandma Tea."

From Lydia's Recipe File:

Three-Ingredient Chocolate Cherry Clusters

During the holidays, we need simple, delicious recipes. These cookies remind me of chocolate covered cherries.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups cornflakes, slightly crushed
- 1/2 cup dried cherries.
- 12 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips (about 2 cups)
- Red and green candied cherries for garnish (or maraschino cherries, well drained)

Directions:

1. Cut each dried cherry in half. Combine the corn flakes and dried cherries in a large bowl.
2. Microwave the chocolate chips in a microwave-safe bowl, 30 seconds at a time, stirring after each time interval, until melted.
3. Pour melted chocolate over cornflake mixture. Gently mix with a rubber spatula until cereal and cherries are completely coated.
4. Drop by heaping tablespoonfuls onto parchment-lined baking sheets. (A cookie scoop works well.) Decorate with candied cherries or another colorful garnish.
5. Let cookies sit in a cool, dry place for about one hour. Store in an airtight container. If desired, serve each cluster in a paper cupcake liner.

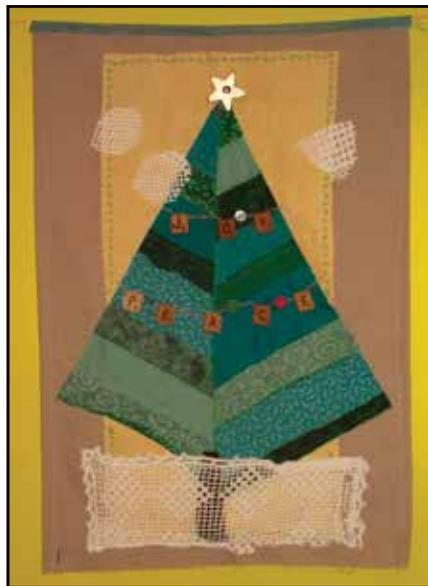


Makes about 2 dozen cookies.

“Tree in the Snow” PRIMITIVE SEWN WALLHANGING

Materials

- Ten or twelve green fabric strips – in a variety of solids and prints. Each strip is 10” long, and width can be any size from 1” up to 2 ¼” (Fabrics can be repeated)
- Wide brown grosgrain ribbon – 8 inches; or other brown fabric (for tree trunk)
- Thread – green, tan, white
- Panel 10” x 18” of rustic fabric in a light color (I used a bumpy linen)
- Panel 17” x 24” of darker rustic fabric (I used khaki)
- Doily (with tears is acceptable), or crocheted bureau scarf, etc.
- Hemp string or other rustic string
- Scrabble letter with hole drilled through front at top edge to hang, in your choice of word (I used JOY, PEACE)
- Random buttons, wooden star painted gold with center hole, brass fastener, dowel, string for hanging.



Sew strips together to form a panel 10” x 16”. Do not sew traditional seams but just overlap each strip on the previous one and top stitch. Flip some strips over so fabric back is sometimes showing.

Trim to even up edges of panel, using rotary cutter if you have one.

Lightly draw a line from top left corner to right lower corner and cut panel along line into two triangles.

Grasp bottom right corner and flip it over while bringing it up to meet top left corner. This will form a Christmas tree shape – very pointed at the top and broad at bottom. (Fabric will be flipped over, but will remain on the right-hand side of the stationary (left) piece.) (See this demonstrated on my blog: LeavesAreFree.tumblr.com/treeshape)

Stitch the two halves together down the center using a wide zigzag stitch. Now both fronts and backs of several materials are showing, and raw edges. Set aside

Position smaller background panel, centering it on larger background panel. Top stitch in place – decorative stitch is optional. Raw edges desirable

Position tree in center of layered panel and stitch around edge of tree about ½” from edge.

Position brown ribbon or fabric as tree trunk and stitch in place.

Cut a piece of doily approximately 4” x 12” for snow. Position over tree trunk, allowing some trunk to show, and stitch into place using matching thread and zig zag stitch around edges and through center if desired. Sew a few randomly-cut doily pieces around tree like snowflakes.

On hemp or other string, thread letters alternating with buttons to spell your word. Lay this across the tree and hand-stitch into place in a few spots. Using a tapestry needle, bring hemp to back of wall hanging and knot.

With a pointed tool or awl, pierce a hole in treetop and secure star with brass fastener or other means.

Hem sides, leave bottom edge raw, fold top to make a rod pocket. Thread a dowel through rod pocket to hang on string or rest on pushpins.

Ann St. Martin Stout writes from Newport NH where she guides her family and home creatively through the seasons. Her blog is www.LeavesAreFree.tumblr.com; Write to her at: leavesarefree@gmail.com

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Holiday Musings Upon a New Decade

by Kerri Habben

Today I received an early Christmas present.

Some time ago I was affirmed when I saw my grandmother in a dream. I was in her home and everything was where it had always been. She came around the corner into the den wearing a nightgown, the blue one with pink flowers.

"You're here." I murmured in wonder from where I sat in the rust chair Uncle Henry bought for Aunt Wilma. I went to her and wrapped my arms around her, enfolding her as a treasure one never expected to hold again. She was solid and real.

"Of course," she answered, embracing me but glancing a bit askance. "Where else would I be?"

Last night I dreamt of her again. We were in her home, she again wearing the same nightgown.

Today I was in a storage area off our garage looking for some supplies. Moving things around, fabric fell from a nearly empty box.

Before me waited the blue nightgown with pink flowers, neatly folded.

With that I was infused with the true spirit of the season.

This is the eleventh holiday season for Mom and I since our mother and grandmother passed away. Huba, as I called her, was the last of our family here, with the rest living in different parts of the country. So for Thanksgiving and Christmas it is just the two of us. We share a home, and we treasure the precious rhythm of daily life all year through.

For those who have faced loss or traumatic change during the past year, the holidays present a unique challenge. Often we see ourselves in strangers and they see themselves in us. Then, perhaps, we are no longer unknown to one another. In our common humanity we are connected by our joys and our sorrows, our resilience and our hopes. We may wear a range of skin colors, emerge from diverse backgrounds, and worship in different ways. Together we are all navigating this precious journey called life.

Back to celebrating holidays. We mail our packages by the first week in December. We write our season's greetings, most of which are sent in due time for their destination. We decorate with special items from over the years. Aunt Wilma's velvet-suited Santa Claus is set out, and Huba's ceramic church graces the front table.

I write my letter to Santa Claus. I never actually mail it. I merely write it to take stock of where I am at the tail end of one year and at the cusp of the next. These last few years I find myself compiling a list of what I treasure rather than what I want. I ask Mr. Claus, who is an example in giving, not to give up on us. That even with all of the strife and sadness in this world, we may yet discover and offer the best of ourselves to each other.

On Christmas we usually go out to eat at a chain restaurant that is open that day. We carry a handmade gift for our server. We call our relatives and friends or they call us. We open our gifts.

Always the moment arrives when we realize the room around us isn't full of people and yet it is. For our loved ones are always with us, even as they are safe and whole in the palm of God's hand.

Thus in our prayerful hearts and houses of memory the past, present, and future breathe a grateful, joyful sigh.

Kerri Habben is a writer, photographer, and crochet instructor living in Raleigh, NC. An avid crocheter and knitter, she learned these skills from her grandmother and mother. Many of her yarn creations she donates to those in need. Kerri has gathered a decade of essays she is working to publish. She can be reached at 913jeeves@gmail.com



Quilters are Quilters WORLDWIDE!

Mixing and mingling with quilters from all parts of the world - combined with visiting beautiful countries and exploring breathtaking sights. What could be better?

Tour hosts (and quilters) Kim Caskey of Edmonton, Alberta and Debbi Cagney of Houston, Texas have been hosting Quilt Shop and Textile Tours through Ireland, Scotland and France for many years. Their travels with quilters (and non-quilters) from all parts of the world, have taken them to some of the best textile mills, quilt shops and historical sites of the world. They have met some wonderful people (aren't all quilters wonderful?), which has allowed them to partner and network with the best of the best around the world.

"It all started innocently enough. 'Let's get together with some Irish quilters, while we're in Killarney', we said, as our first plan - to attend an Irish quilt show with our Celtic Quilt Tours group - was cancelled, leaving us with some free time." Plan B - start the day with a private quilting class on Celtic Knot making, with the effervescent Nikki Foley of Castlemaine, Co. Kerry in the morning, time for lunch of the best fish and chips in town at Quinlan's, a little afternoon shopping in downtown Killarney (or a boat tour of the Lakes of Killarney), and then an evening event to gather with quilters from all over the world ... and thus was born the International Gathering of the Guilds™.

Enter the power of the internet to spread the word to other groups left without a visit to the anticipated quilt show. We instantly began receiving overwhelming response from groups in Denmark, the Netherlands, Scotland, UK, Austria and several groups from the US!

So, let me backtrack a bit, and lead you up to this surreal event. Our 10-day Quilt Shop Tour of Ireland (now an annual event), with group of 47 eager and enthusiastic quilters from Canada and USA, were visiting as many fascinating places as possible - not just quilt shops - in our short time there. We had already been to Apple Tree Crafts in Newtownmountkennedy (yes, that's one word!), Co. Wicklow, where we were introduced to the quaintest of quilt shops, welcoming us from behind its bright pink doors. We had visited the most ambitious of community projects, The Ros Tapestries, which, for over 16 years, a dedicated group of 150+ volunteers (men and women) created 15 - 4.5' x 6' pictorial panels. These exquisite works record and celebrate the events of the Normans arrival to south east Ireland, told in thread. If you ever find yourself in New Ross, Co. Wexford, you must visit. http://www.rostapestry.com/the_panels.htm

Finally able to tear ourselves away from New Ross, we proceeded to Middleton, Co. Cork for a visit with Moya Geraghty and her Patchwork Plus quilt shop. Moya also organized an exhibition of local Irish quilters work for us and we were all made to feel so very, very welcome. Expertly guided by our driver Tony, we traveled on through southern Ireland, eagerly absorbing history lessons and folklore tales of days gone by.

And now the evening is upon us. The room is filling quickly. The ladies from the Netherlands are easily identifiable in their fabulous pink hats! One cannot help but be energized by the pulse in the room. Our evening agenda came together easily, starting with Nikki Foley, owner of the Sewing Shed, Castlemaine, Ireland, who gave the official Cead Mile Failte (100,000 Welcomes), introduced us National Quilt Week Ireland, an annual June week-long-Ireland-wide event. Ann Hill, quilter extraordinaire from Scotland, gave a brief welcome (in that fabulous Scottish brogue) and an overview of her work and quilts made in support of Alzheimer



Scotland. Paula Rafferty, Arts Administrator of the Limerick Prison for Men, spoke about this unique art therapy program, complete with remarkable quilted pieces made by the inmates.

The relationships born on this special night were the genesis of friendships that have continued for years. Upon special invitation from Scottish quilter Ann Hill, we now travel to Scotland every year and explore exciting sights, historical stops and quaint quilt shops in her native land. With Ann's expert guidance, we have continued to offer a unique and exclusive quilt class, pairing our 45 travelers with a Scottish quilter for the world's largest (and most efficient) quilt class! The Gathering of Guilds evening event is held at Hampden Park in Glasgow and gets better and better every year!

With the help of our contacts in The Netherlands, this past September, we traveled to Alsace France for a special tour including 2 full days at the European Patchwork Meeting. This large and prominent quilt festival boasts over 35 individual hanging quilt exhibits - the best of the best in the world, a large vendor mall like no other and is visited by more than 30,000 people every year!

This has most certainly whetted your appetite to travel and explore quilting and textiles in other countries - it's kinda catchy like that! We'd love to have you along for one of our tours, but if not, I encourage you to check out a few shops and textile mills wherever you travel. Quilters are quilters worldwide and you would be very, very welcomed.

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Supplementary Information:

I grew up in Rockport, Ontario, and I was the 15th child in a family of 18 children. It was a case of "yours, mine and ours" and "cheaper by the dozen", just like the old movies by those titles. Both of my parents had seven children each when their first spouse passed away. That gave them a total of fourteen children when they married, although not all of them were still living at home by then. I came along a year later, followed by 3 more siblings, for a total of eighteen hungry mouths to feed. I have always been proud of the facts that even though my dad earned a very modest wage, we were all well cared for and had a wonderful and eventful childhood. My mother never worked outside of the home until my youngest sister was well along in school.

I attended a 2-room country schoolhouse in Rockport, Ontario, and my first teacher, Audrey Newell, encouraged me to draw and paint. In the middle of the eighth grade, the schools were centralized into one at Escott, Ontario. I entered the competition to create a school crest and my design was accepted and is still in use today.

I attended secondary school in Gananoque. At the end of the year that I graduated from high school, I held my first one-man show and sold out everything, much to my surprise and delight. After graduating from high school, I was anxious to pursue a career in art, and I decided to forego further studies. I felt the best way to make a living from drawing and painting must be commercial art (which I knew very little about) and I struck out for Toronto to make my fortune.

I spent many months pounding the sidewalks of Toronto, showing a naïve portfolio of work to an endless string of art directors, many of whom were kindly enough to take a few minutes of their time to give me advice if not encouragement. I refused to give up and finally a studio owner took me under his wing and offered me a job on a new community paper he

was just starting in Markham, Ontario. I worked as a 'go-fer' and salesman and at night the boss would have me come to his home where he taught me basic layout, page assembly and general studio procedures. The next thing he did was to assign one of his experienced artists to come to Markham and work with me until I could handle most of the work myself. Eventually, I graduated to working in the art studio that he also owned in Toronto, where I was first back to sweeping floors, emptying trash cans and watching the pros and what they did. Every night and weekend I spent endless hours practicing my art, then showing the boss, until he finally allowed me to try my hand at finished art for a client. In those days, the big accounts were Sears, Eatons, The Bay, Canadian Tire and a few other large retail accounts. We did black and white line drawings for the most part, for newspaper ads and flyers.

After a few years experience in the studio, I struck out on my own as a free lance illustrator. I worked for many of the same clients and gradually added advertising agencies, production houses, designers and publishers to my list of clients.

In those early years working in Toronto, I married my high school sweetheart, Mary, and we raised our three children, Robert, Amy and Laura, who are all grown now. We lived north of Toronto, on a horse farm that we purchased for Mary to pursue her career as a professional riding coach teaching dressage and hunter disciplines. Our children all competed successfully on the Toronto area riding circuits and Laura showed hunter ponies at the Royal Winter Fair for several years.

In the early nineties, I turned full circle, away from illustration and back to my first love, painting, and began producing works for galleries and limited edition prints. Eventually, I left the Toronto area, and moved back to my roots, opening a small gallery on Division Street in Kingston. It was hard leaving the country life to live in the city, and after two years, we sold our home gallery and purchased an equestrian center at Odessa, where we live today, operating a busy riding school.

My philosophy on art is simple. A painting should move the viewer in a memorable way. It might make you angry, happy, sad, nostalgic, peaceful, humble, thoughtful, or any other emotion you may think of, but it should do something. I am not a creator of modern or abstract art; I like an image that is easily identifiable and conveys a message to the viewer. I want to create paintings that people will value for many generations. I paint the things that I love, often in the form of country life, nature, nostalgia and the boats and scenes of the 1000 Islands where I grew up and return to as often as I can.

We were sad to hear that Richard suffered a stroke in the spring of this year and is currently convalescing at home. He hopes to return to painting soon. We wish Richard a speedy recovery and all the best in the new year!



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Merry little Christmas! by ©Jane Farnham for dashwood studio



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The Knitting Savant

Eating the (Knitting) Elephant – Setting Goals for 2017

By Andrea Springer



My mom will be 80 in a few weeks. She's worn many hats in her life, loves her family, friends and my Dad with a quiet fierceness. Mom believes in God, gardening, and that a kind word, a home cooked meal, or a jar of her homemade jam will cure a lot of what ails us. She is a voracious reader and lifelong learner of new things. She once told us, "When I stop learning, plant me." I think of these words almost daily.

As we move into a new year, it's good to consider setting a few knitting goals. In general, goals are about acquiring new skills or behaviors and should inspire, challenge and possibly scare you a little. They change your "inner dialogue" because you work to achieve something desired, building your self-image in addition to building skills.

Maybe you've got a pattern in your files for something you love – a cabled coat or Fair Isle sweater or a project with steeks. It's beautiful and inspiring but feels too overwhelming to think about starting. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time! Here's a road map to consider for trying something new:

Step One: Goals start big. They're the "elephant" -- a vision of something desired or dreamed. List the projects, activities you dream about, or skills you want to learn.

Step Two: Sometimes we have so many goals, we become overwhelmed and don't start any of them. Look at the list above and choose where you want to focus your efforts during 2017. (Limit your choices to three).

Step Three: What resources are you going to need to accomplish this goal? Supplies? Classes? Instruction?

Step Four: (this is where the "bites" come in) First, decide when you'd like to have this goal accomplished. Write down a short outline of your plan to achieve the goal, remembering to put "first things first." Once your list is finished, put completion dates beside each step.

Step Five: Share this goal with someone! Talk about it, work on it with others – give it light and space to breathe. Goals are dynamic, living things and are much more fun to accomplish when we've got our team cheering us on.

Step Six: Work on challenges or your new skills a little each day. We don't have to do everything all at once.

I'm taking my mom's motto to heart in 2017 and have set a goal to learn to spin. I've started by purchasing a used spinning wheel. It's sitting in my front room, and I've started playing with fiber. I'm extremely awkward, and my first attempts have me shaking my head, but that's not a bad thing. My first "bite" is to schedule instruction time with friends who are already accomplished spinners. It's good to be outside of my comfort zone again, stretching and learning.

So what about you? What goals are you setting for 2017? Give yourself a boost and consider a new challenge. You'll be glad you did!

Andrea Springer blogs at www.knittingsavant.com where she helps folks remember that they have everything they need to be successful in knitting and in life. You can share comments or ideas with her at andrea@knittingsavant.com or follow Knitting Savant on Facebook and Twitter.



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Countryberries Designs

Angel of Peace



This pattern is free for you to use. Please give the artist credit. Not for commercial use. Enlarge this pattern to your desired size. This pattern was designed for wool applique and embroidery but can be needlepunched, hooked or even painted. Try it in pastel colors for a traditional look or dark colors for a more primitive look. Have fun!

Designed by Kathy Graham

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Recipes of Abigail Adams

Abigail Adams could be regarded a 'Super Woman'. She is regarded by many historians as our founding mother, but in addition, for lengthy periods of time while John was away, she bore the responsibility of being the single parent in the household as she cared for her children and also managed the household and farm in a capable manner to feed and clothe the family. Abigail, unlike many women of her time, also did her own washing, cleaning and cooking. After visiting Paris, she returned to the United States with a knowledge of the nuances of fine entertaining and in this regard was a great help to Martha Washington.

In spite of her ability to direct the preparation and presentation of fancy and elaborate meals and receptions, she and President Adams preferred simple home-style fare. Here are some of her favorite recipes:

BEGGAR'S PUDDING WITH SACK SAUCE

PUDDING:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 egg, beaten | 1 cup milk |
| 1/2 cup brown sugar | 1 teaspoon rosewater |
| 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg | 1/8 teaspoon salt |
| 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger | 1/2 cup dried currants |
| 10 slices stale bread in 1" cubes | |

In a large bowl combine beaten eggs, milk, brown sugar, rosewater, ginger, nutmeg, and salt. Add bread cubes and currants; stir well. Turn into a greased 8" round baking dish. Bake in a 350° oven for approximately 25 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center of the pudding comes out clean. Serve hot, topped with hot sack sauce.

SACK SAUCE:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1/4 cup butter | 1 tablespoon brown sugar, packed |
| 1/2 cup dry sherry | 1 tablespoon lemon juice |
| 1 teaspoon lemon peel, grated | |

Melt butter in a small saucepan over low heat. Stir continuously until butter starts to brown, then remove from heat. Add brown sugar; stir until dissolved. Add dry sherry, lemon juice, and grated lemon peel. Serve immediately. Serves 6.

HOT CRAB SALAD

This is extremely simple, and although the price of crabmeat makes it an extravagance today, this recipe makes it a worthy expenditure.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 2 tablespoons butter | 2 tablespoons flour |
| 1 cup milk | 1 lb. lump crabmeat, picked over |
| 1/4 cup pimentos, rinsed, drained & diced | 1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted |
| 4-6 pastry or cream puff shells | |

Make a cream sauce with butter, flour, and milk. Remove from heat and add crab, pimentos, and almonds. Serve in prebaked pastry shells or cream puff shells.

APPLE PAN DOWDY

PASTRY:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 1/2 cups flour | 1/2 cup shortening |
| sprinkle of water | 1/4 cup melted butter |

Blend flour and shortening until mealy. Sprinkle a little ice water over dough, enough to hold together. Roll out to 1/4" thickness and brush with melted butter. Cut pastry in half. Place halves on top of each other. Roll and cut again. Repeat until you have 16 separate pieces piled up. Then chill for 1 hour. Roll pastry again and cut in half. Line bottom of baking dish with one half. Save the other half for the top.

FILLING:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1/2 cup sugar | 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1/4 teaspoon salt | 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg |
| 10 large apples | 1/2 cup molasses |
| 3 tablespoons butter, melted | 1/4 cup water |

Peel and slice the apples. Mix with sugar and spices and put in the pastry lined dish. Combine molasses with butter and water. Pour over the apples. Cover with top crust and seal. Bake at 400° for 10 minutes; then reduce heat to 325°.

"Dowdy" (mess up) the dish by cutting the crust into the apples with a sharp knife. Bake 1 hour. Serve hot with ice cream or whipped cream.

NOTE: It is believed the Newtown Pippin, a late winter apple, was the apple Abigail most likely used. One source recommends using a variety of apples, including Newtown Pippins (a sweet and tart 18th-century variety), Northern Spys (almost as old), and Jonagolds. You can Use any apple of choice.



These recipes are adaptations from various online sources and from *Capital Hill Cooks*.

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Floradale, Stratford



Yesterday the view from our windows overlooking the countryside was gold – grass, trees, stubble in the fields, all gold – punctuated only by the few dark spruce trees we have nursed along since we moved here. This morning all is white. Fields, drooping flowers, lawn furniture and even spider webs on the deck railings are stark white, with only a few of our neighbour's black cattle making a contrast. Although meteorologists are promising the return of slightly warmer temperatures in a few days, it's obvious that the days of fall are numbered and Old Man Winter, as my father used to call him, has given us his first warning: "Get out parkas and boots; change to winter tires; clear away garden remains. Here I come!"

For us as quilters and crafters, the rush to finish making gifts for Christmas begins. Some well-organized people (they do exist, I'm told) have had their projects finished for weeks, or even months. And then there are the rest of us. Although we may be chronically short of time this time of year, there are a few Christmas-project hacks. What about getting together with a few friends to work assembly-line style on their projects and theirs? That might work. What about scaling back the size or complexity? Only you will

know. And then there's the fall-back position: delay, delay, delay! Have a top finished? Give it to the intended recipient with an IOU for quilting and binding, or a gift card from a professional quilter so the giftee can choose the quilting pattern and have it finished it on someone else's schedule, not yours. Have a project only partly finished? Present the recipient with a picture (taken from the pattern) of the object to be finished with a dated commitment for completion. Haven't even started? Try a gift card from a store good for a pattern and/or fabric of the recipient's choice along with your promise to construct said object. This latter tactic can be dangerous, but at this stage we're desperate, right? All these hacks are compromises, but that's life.

Speaking of compromise, years ago when I was teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) to a class of newly-arrived high school students from ten different countries, we ESL teachers found ourselves in a slight dilemma when December (Christmas party time) rolled around. It was our job to acclimatize these students to our celebratory customs without denigrating their own. Many cultures celebrate light or enlightenment at this darkest time of the year, so we incorporated aspects of Diwali, Kwanzaa, Tet, Chinese New Year and Hanukkah -- all representative of students in our classes -- in our celebration, but Christmas with its connotations of light, the star that the Magi followed, and the arrival of the Light of the World, the reason we celebrate, was always in the background. The celebration was a success. Compromise.

It was only in later years that I realized the Christmas-based activity and our culture was the background or foundation which supported the other diverse pieces and displayed them to advantage, much like the background of a quilt supports and emphasizes the blocks, resulting in a unified whole. May we all emulate such quilts! Merry Christmas!

Barbara Conquest writes her column from Blue Sky Quilting in Tofield, AB. © Barbara Conquest.

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Madeline's Musings
by Madeline Lister

Christmas Stocking Capers

Did you ever say, No fair, your stocking's bigger than mine; or, stretchier than mine; or, fancier than mine? Just by chance, did you try hanging your long johns? You know . . . two legs, so you'd get twice as much? And maybe you had a romantic fireplace, with stockings all hung by the chimney with care? I'll bet my last liquorice stick that at the top of your Things I Like Best about Christmas list will be your stocking ritual.

We didn't have a fireplace most places we lived. But we did have our routine. At the crack of dawn, my sister and I would creep around the house, hunting down our stockings like Sherlock Holmes on a top-secret mission. Those lumpy brown hosieries could be most anywhere. In the washing machine, behind the piano, under the kitchen sink. The ultimate challenge came about the Christmas our maternal grandfather arrived for the holidays.

(story continues on next page)

(story continued from previous page)

I was a short 11-year old, Carol a tall 7. Yet Grandpa's huge winter overcoat, hanging on a hook in the hall, just inside the front door, was 'way above our heads. We searched in all the places of which our little brains could conceive, but without success. Heading back to our bed, we plunked down on the stairs 'bout midway up. This was not going well. Head in hands, I gazed down along the hall and watched the snow falling beyond the door's window. And that's when my breath caught in my throat. Something was sticking out above the neck of that scruffy mackinaw, and it wasn't Grandfather's scarf!

Pell-mell, tumble-bumble, like the four little puppies racing down the hill, we landed beneath Grandpa's coat. Gingerly so as not to dislodge it from its hook, we inched our heads up inside the flaps. It must have been quite a sight . . . that behemoth rising above 4 little pajama-clad legs. But we'd found our booty!

The tradition was repeated every year; the hiding, and the seeking. Once tracked down, the stockings' contents were shaken out onto the middle of our bed. We scanned the new colouring books, and wished the crayons were Crayolas. Carol shook her Taffy Bar box, I inhaled my minty Mint Patty. Always there were socks, 'cause we'd outgrown last year's; woolen mittens and caps hand-knit by Mom; lumps of coal from the cellar reminded us we'd not always been as good as we might. And 'way down in the toe, an orange and maybe an apple.

Despite our best intentions, we always became too noisy. From across the hall, we were warned to hush up. And truly, we tried to muffle our giggles, but it was just so hard. Especially when Mom and Dad asked for it . . .

On or about the same Christmas as the coat-caper, we were delighted to find bugles, complete with dangly red tassels, protruding from the tops of our stockings. Inaudibly "playing" our horns, we marched around our room as regimented as a high school band. Unwittingly, we make occasional honks, regained our composure, and kept on with our parade . . . along by the dresser, passed the window, up and across the bed, and over to the door. It was the best Christmas ever.

Today, how my Christmas mornings have changed. Our children decided stockings would no longer work . . . how does one fill pantyhose or sports socks? So, I sewed tea towels into bags, complete with draw cords, and tied them along the banister. Each new grandbaby meant another bag to add to the lot. And just in case we had company, I made a couple extras.

On Christmas Eve, 'long about midnight, the sacks begin to take on odd shapes. Nobody talks, but goes secretively about the business of adding his or her gifts to the growing number of bags. Christmas morning, opening the "stockings" is a free-for-all! While a YouTube fire crackles on the TV, wadded up wrappings fly across the room, everyone tries to show everyone what they've received, and the cats dart in and out of the abandoned clutter. You know, we wouldn't have it any other way.

A very blessed Christmas to you all.

Madeline Lister, Trent Lakes, Ontario

PS I'd love to hear about your Christmas stocking traditions, or maybe you've never "done stockings", and would like to learn how. Just email me at madelinesmusings@gmail.com and we'll start a conversation.

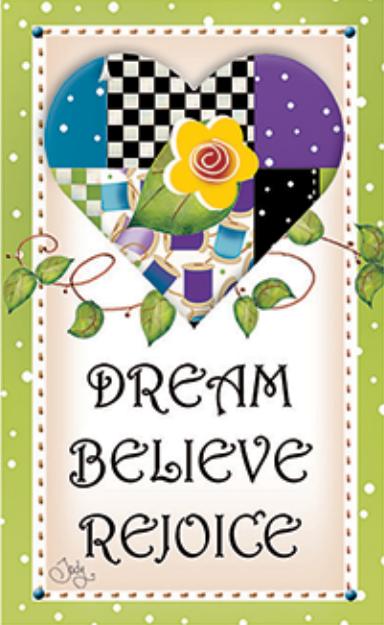


GIRLFRIEND WISDOM

DREAM of a time when everything was good and everybody was filled with JOY.

DREAM of happiness and success for yourself, your friends, and family.

DREAM of a time when our country was thriving with prosperity and appreciation.



BELIEVE in a time when everything is good and everybody is filled with JOY.

BELIEVE in true happiness and success for yourself, all our neighbors, friends and family.

BELIEVE in a time when our country is strong and thriving in every community.

REJOICE whole-heartedly for all the blessings that have come your way. Remember that goodness prevails in its own time through every challenge. **REJOICE** in all the beauty around you. The trees, sunrises and sunsets, the stars in a crystal clear night sky. **REJOICE** in the wonder of babies and small children, their innocence and sweetness. **REJOICE** in laughter as often as you can because it tickles every cell in your body for healing and perfect health.

REJOICE in life and extend love and light to yourself, your family, friends, and worldwide neighbors.

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM: My gift to you is the above magnet design as a reminder to **DREAM, BELIEVE and REJOICE!**

Joy & Blessings, *Jody*

The magnet can also be found on my ETSY website for a Holiday price of \$1.00. Girlfriend Wisdom is written and illustrated by Jody Houghton®. For color files of this writing, contact Jody at: jodyhoughton@msn.com, or website: www.JodyHoughtonDesigns.etsy.com

All Together

by Ethel Melius

If I was to tell you my life story, it would probably span over a century in the making. It would tell of at least four ladies who not only admired me, but vainly tried to help me. I would mention how I lay idle and almost forgotten for about half a century and how I came into being in 1997. My life started quietly, I know not where or when. However, I've been told that my original blocks are made of fabric that dates back to the Civil War era, 150 years ago.

My loving mother was a very meticulous quilter. The pattern she had chosen for me was "Cat's Cradle". Her tiny stitches were many to the inch. Very carefully she cut the fabric for each of my blocks and sat quietly while she hand stitched each piece. She was able to complete 22 blocks for me, which included a "Humble Block". Then all stitching stopped! She was unable to fulfill the dream she had for my being. From here on my life would change in at least four traceable stages. (Each at the hands of a well-intended lady.) The sequences of these happenings is a bit cloudy. But this is how it might have happened. —

Keeping in mind that I had my beginning with a very patient and true quilter — those that followed were careless and hurried. As I was passed from person to person, over many years, I was often ignored and lay idle a great deal of the time. On at least four occasions I would stop long enough

(story continues on page 22)

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Holiday Word Scramble

Unscramble the words. Key is below.

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|--|
| 1. _____ | leves | a diminutive being in folklore given to mischievous interference in human affairs |
| 2. _____ | nrecad | Second of Santa's eight reindeer |
| 3. _____ | gogegn | a drink made from a mixture of beaten eggs, cream, and flavorings |
| 4. _____ | icseilc | a hanging, tapering piece of ice formed by the freezing of dripping water |
| 5. _____ | wfoanksel | a feathery ice crystal, typically displaying delicate sixfold symmetry |
| 6. _____ | tideylue | of or pertaining to the Christmas season |
| 7. _____ | thewra | an arrangement of leaves and/or flowers in the shape of a circle |
| 8. _____ | kfcrituae | a cake containing dried fruit and nuts |
| 9. _____ | wpisohr | show reverence and adoration for a deity |
| 10. _____ | ebmeredc | The 12th month of the year in the Gregorian calendar |
| 11. _____ | rginegte | a polite word or sign of welcome or recognition |
| 12. _____ | edierner | a deer of the tundra and subarctic regions of Eurasia and North America |
| 13. _____ | lhoydia | a day of festivity or recreation when no work is done |
| 14. _____ | osenass | each of the four divisions of the year: spring, summer, autumn, winter |
| 15. _____ | elstni | a form of decoration consisting of thin strips of shiny metal foil |
| 16. _____ | sngdires | stuffing |
| 17. _____ | psnrtese | gifts |
| 18. _____ | eirtnw | the coldest season of the year |
| 19. _____ | iesolmtet | a parasitic plant with white berries, traditionally used as a Christmas decoration |
| 20. _____ | ianrtitdo | an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior |

(story continued from page 21)

to have some of my 22 blocks joined together. On one of the occasions a lady used a very heavy double black thread and with very large stitches, basted five of my mother's blocks together, along with a lavender basket block. Although it looks older than I, I have no idea of its lineage and I don't consider it to be a pleasant addition. Perhaps the lady was unable to detect that my mother had already included a "Humble Block" in me.

On another occasion a lady tried to join five of my blocks by using an ill-adjusted sewing machine. To my five blocks she added an inspiration of her own. It looked like a very large pie that had already been cut into many pieces. (Perhaps this was another "Humble Block"? All of heaven must be happy!)

As I lay forgotten again — I began to fear for my remaining 12 loose blocks. I began to worry they might become lost while we waited. Waited! Waited for what?

The next time we stopped, long enough for anything to happen — the lady using a single white thread, basted the group with the purple basket to the group with the cut-up pie. Then she added three more of my loose "Cat's Cradle" blocks to the group.

So now I was starting to come together! I'm so — HAPPY! I was now five blocks by three blocks, a solid square. I only had nine of my blocks still in danger of getting lost. I was going to come altogether — to be a whole quilt. — Then it happened — the darkest part of my life.

I was placed in a dark cardboard box along with several other hand-stitched blocks and the cover closed tightly down on all of us. Thus we remained for many years. Our box was moved from house to house many times. On occasion the box is opened, only to have the cover firmly placed back over all of us.

Toward the end of my confinement, I realized we had arrived at the home of a quilt maker. Quilts were being made all around us. How I wanted to become part of the action! — But it was not to be.

Our box was now located under a very busy Singer sewing machine. Rarely, we were taken out, admired, always to be placed back in the box with the lid closed down over us. This went on for many years.

Oh joy! In April 1997 I was completed! I'm now five blocks wide and five blocks long. The cardboard box I'd lay in for all those years, was no longer my prison. — I was free — All of my blocks had survived! We were one — a quilt! — But now I've gotten ahead of myself. —

For in March 1997 I was rediscovered by the daughter of the lady who owned the Singer sewing machine. Here my life changed. She had been only 18 when her family moved into a new home and I was placed under the Singer sewing machine. Now she was a grown woman with a family of her own. — But she remembered the box of quilt blocks that had been under her mother's sewing machine and she claimed me as her own. She enjoyed all of me, even the odd blocks that had joined me on my journeys! By carefully studying each of my blocks, she knew my history — just as I have told it to you.

Now she laid out all of my single loose blocks and those that had been joined together — She determined that four of my single blocks were so similar that they now must become my corner blocks.

In order for her to make me complete, as my mother had planned, she too would have to add a block to me. This is what she did: she carefully took apart the blocks that had been in prison with me all those years and made me a "Star Block". She told me that was for my patience — (But I knew better).

Although I traveled a great deal and I met many interesting ladies — I always wished I knew more about my mother. I'm 22 blocks made with such love. All of those tiny-tiny stitches, show she had great plans for me. That star block represents my mother smiling down on me "A Very Happy Quilt — All Together, At Last".

Mrs. Melius is the former eighteen-year-old mentioned in the story. If you'd like to get in touch with Mrs. Melius about her story, she can be reached at 114 Walnut St., Thomaston, CT 06787.

1. elves, 2. dancer, 3. egg nog, 4. icicles, 5. snowflake, 6. yuletide, 7. wreath, 8. fruitcake, 9. worship, 10. December, 11. greeting, 12. reindeer, 13. holiday, 14. seasons, 15. tinsel, 16. dressings, 17. presents, 18. winter, 19. mistletoe, 20. tradition

Smithville



U~Quilt~It

Hello, and welcome to U~Quilt~It. My name is Ginette Pereira, and I've been operating the shop since January of 2016. It's been a dream of mine for a long time to operate a 'brick and mortar' quilt shop, and I had no idea I'd be able to realize that dream so soon.

I've been involved in the fabric arts for most of my life, and finally tried my hand at quilting some 10 years ago. One of my first quilts earned a third place ribbon at the 2008 Hamilton quilt show, and that pretty much sealed my fate. Since then I've developed some skills as a quilter, and upgraded my equipment a few times to the Innova quilter I now use to provide long-arm services for hire.

U~Quilt~It has been a successful quilt shop since about 2006, growing from a long-arm rental business to include fabric sales and classes. The opportunity for me to acquire the business arose in 2015 when Sharon and her daughter Sara offered to sell it, and we finalized the transfer on January 1st of this year.

The shop is located on Highway 20, 8 km West of Smithville. You can spot us by the white horses at the side of the road. Our shop is small, but cozy, and there's lots of parking. We have a couple of areas where your chauffeur can sit and relax while you shop, so take your time and browse. We try to maintain a comfortable, friendly, atmosphere.

My wonderful husband Ron has been a terrific support during my initiation into the retail world. I love telling the story of how we were visiting another quilt shop, and when we left, he told me 'I'd like to do that in a few years when I retire'. While in the store, he had noticed another husband-wife team; she was selling fabric out front, he was in the back doing some long-arm quilting. Being able to start our own business many years sooner than we thought possible was a true blessing. Ron is looking forward to going from part time to full time worker in a few more years.

During this, our first year in business, we were pleasantly surprised to learn we had been nominated for both the Hamilton Spectator Reader's Choice Award and the CHCH Business Excellence Awards. We won both awards for our category, fabric shop; Platinum for the Reader's Choice and Gold for the CHCH award. We are overwhelmed by the response from our customers by voting for us in these awards. We thank you.

During 2016 we've re-shaped the shop to include a larger fabric selection and a roomier shopping space. U~Quilt~It sells Northcott fabrics exclusively. We offer many of Northcott's fabric lines, and try to bring in new lines as they're made available. We also offer full selections of tools, notions, backing materials, batting and pretty well anything you might need for creating your own quilt. Most recently, we have begun selling

Wonderfil cotton threads. We still offer long-arm services for hire.

We also hold regular classes and demonstrations, sometimes hosted by guest instructors. We post messages on our web site, and send e-mails to those who have signed up on our list to offer these sessions.

I'd like to invite you to drop by and visit, whether you are completely new to quilting and looking for some instruction, or are an old hand and would like to share some tips or perhaps lead a class. Ron and I will do our best to make your visit enjoyable and memorable.

Web site: uquiltit.com or find us on Facebook.

-- Ginette Pereira, U~Quilt~It



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Heart to Heart

By Wendy Carmichael Bauld-Artist

As I sit in the grand lobby of the Plaza Hotel in New York, staring at the magnificent surroundings, I find myself asking, "How did a girl from Burlington ever end up here?"

Its not my first time visiting such an incredible hotel but each time I have, I always end up sitting in complete astonishment while glaring at its gracious splendour and lavish attention to detail. I notice the high ornate ceilings and the elegant split staircase ascending to an open mezzanine level and I'm once again awed by its beauty, architecture and ambiance while experiencing the city that never sleeps.

My art career has taken me to some of the most amazing landmarks and many with international recognition. With 2016 coming to an end, I've been reminiscing about some of the other beautiful places that I've had the honour and privilege to visit and many in which I've exhibited my work.

Architecturally stunning, these famous galleries, hotels, churches and iconic landmarks have always fascinated me. I guess that's the artist in me because often when showing my work in a big city, I make it my hobby to visit some of these locations. I find it truly inspiring and sometimes when I paint, I remember how I felt while there and it often propels me forward to my next creative endeavour.

Along this journey many stories have unfolded as to how these remarkable structures came to be, how they were built and who had the vision to create them. The Spilled Blood Cathedral in Russia, the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre in Paris, Westminster Abbey in England, Rosslyn Chapel and Edinburgh Castle in Scotland and even the Vatican are just a few. Such character, so much history and they evoke a feeling that is indescribable. Arches, vaulted ceilings, fluted columns and other embellishments are all part of the list of intriguing engineering details which serve to generate feelings of grandeur and elegance.

However, one doesn't have to travel far to find spectacular architecture. We have many superb buildings right here in Ontario. In December, I'll be attending a conference at Toronto's Royal York Hotel. No matter how busy life gets it's always wonderful to take a little time during the rush of a work week to stop for a moment to sit in one of the big winged back chairs and observe the grand lobby. The alluring charm of this magnificent hotel is mesmerizing because it's almost as if you can place yourself back in another glamorous era. In quiet contemplation my eyes can't help but look up and discover the sparkling chandeliers and the geometrical hand painted ceilings. They leave me breathless. If only they could talk it would be in awe of the list of interesting and fascinating people who have strolled beneath them. Many distinguished guests have made their mark I'm sure, including three generations of the British Royal family.

Upon reminiscing about my travels, I came to realize that you don't need to spend a lot of money nor do you have to travel to the other side of the world to see incredible places because there are plenty to experience in every city. For instance, living in close proximity to Hamilton, I was thrilled to finally be able to visit the beautiful Christ The King Cathedral or the Basilica on King Street. This exquisite gothic Church is a beacon for the City of Hamilton and sits solidly and stately as you pass by along Highway 403. How many times had I driven past this architectural gem in my lifetime until I finally realized I had never stepped inside? I marvelled at its architecture and the fact that I had allowed so much time to pass before I was able to stop in and see how beautiful it really was... it did not disappoint me. All those years and I had never even considered checking it out and yet thought nothing of traveling to Scotland to see the intriguing Rosslyn Chapel.

As a young girl I remember my sister and I going on an outing

with our Brownie troop to Hamilton's Dundurn Castle. As an adult, now its just another one of those places I hardly notice as I drive past it weekly to pick up art supplies. However, along with many other delightful places on my list, I'd like to revisit it once more and view it this time through my adult eyes. I think I'll have a greater appreciation for its history and beauty.

Once the Christmas season is over we'll be getting ready to ring in the New Year. I'm reflecting back at the many special places I've visited but I'm also thinking about many I have yet to seek out. Therefore, I've come up with my New Years Resolution for 2017. I think its time to stop and explore some of the fabulous iconic landmarks in my own backyard. I've decided I'll no longer drive right by some of the pretty buildings along my commute and plan on taking the time to check them out. We live in one of the most terrific places in the world. Right here in the beautiful province of Ontario we have many National Historic Sites, a vibrant arts and culture scene and inspiring places that will keep you close to home in our own safe and fantastic region...and I can't wait to check them out!

Wendy Carmichael Bauld is an international artist residing in Burlington. Please visit www.wendycarmichaelbauld.com or 'like' her on Facebook.



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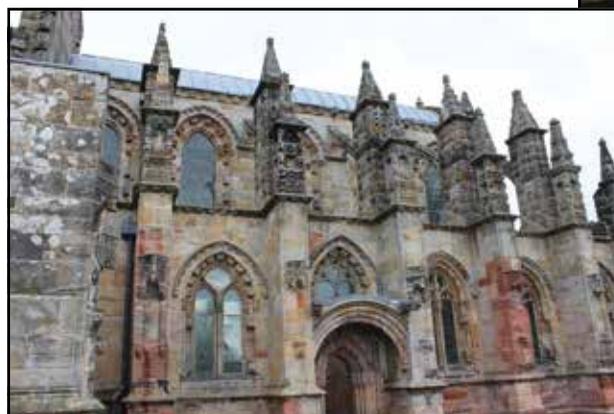
Rosslyn Chapel



Looking Up at the Eiffel Tower



Westminster Abbey



Church of The Savior on Spilled Blood or "Spilled Blood" Cathedral

1930s Depression Frugality/Today's Trendy Recycling

Motto during the Great Depression:

“Repair, reuse, make do — and don't throw anything away.”

I grew up wearing hand-me-downs and, in turn, handing down my clothes. This worked fine with my sisters, but my brother wasn't excited about my white, fake-fur topped figure skates. Now I shop at a consignment store. I've actually purchased scarfs, wool mittens, décor items and other items for gifts.

My town has a used bookstore. I actually give used books as gifts.

I have recycling bins for plastic, metal/tin, glass and paper. My grand boys dig into the bins and, with whoops and hollers, find “toys” for the sandbox or water play. I take plastic bags to recycling barrels at the grocery store. Whenever my adult children or a close friend are getting rid of something, we take pictures and text or email one another to see if there's a taker. This works in reverse, too.

Some people think recycling is something new and modern. It isn't. Here's a list of things my grandparents did during the Great Depression; some of which my parents, youngsters at that time, continued most of their lives. Some still apply to me. Which ones apply to you?

Didn't go out to eat.

Didn't buy processed food.

All leftovers were saved, reheated (and they didn't have microwaves), or reused.

Odds and ends of meat or vegetables ended up in soup.

Bread, oatmeal, crushed crackers, or rice was added to hamburger to stretch a meat dish.

Never filled the sugar bowl to the top in case it would topple over and spill, and sugar would be wasted.

Table scraps were passed along to hogs, chickens, cats and dogs.

Stale bread ended up in bread pudding, French toast and stuffing.

Plastic bags were washed, hung out to dry and reused.

Jars were saved as containers for nails, buttons, leftover gravy and so on.

Never bought paste; made it out of flour and water.

Kerosene was used to “dry clean” woolen clothes.

Small pieces of soap were heated in water and pressed together to form a new, larger bar.

Used gift-wrap was ironed smooth for dresser drawer lining – or to wrap another gift.

When a shoe had a hole in the sole, a piece of cardboard was cut and placed inside.

A sheet worn in the center was split lengthwise and the outside edges stitched together to form a seam down the middle. The raw edges on the outside were hemmed. A sheet beyond salvaging was material for dresser scarves, diapers, dust cloths and anything white, cotton fabric could be used for.

Women's full skirts were cut and redesigned into dresses or

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clothes for children, or for doll clothes, mending or quilts.

Flour, sugar and animal feed came in plain cloth sacks. By the 1940s, manufacturers realized women emptied the flour and used the “free” fabric to make clothes for themselves and their children, kitchen dishtowels, diapers, curtains, aprons and more. The manufacturers responded by using floral and other patterns on the sacks. (In the late 1950s, cloth bags were replaced by cheaper paper and plastic.)

Backs of letter envelopes were used for grocery and to-do lists.

Plant clippings were shared, rather than purchasing a new plant.

Women cut their own hair and that of their husband and children.

Gifts were often crafted, homemade or re-gifted.

The only thing inexpensive was automobile gasoline; hence, taking leisurely Sunday afternoon drives around the countryside were a relatively cheap form of entertainment. Thus came the phrase, “Sunday afternoon driver.”

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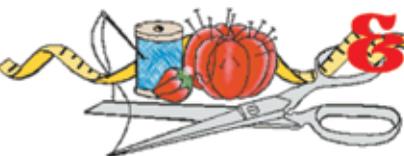
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Sweet Salvage

Holiday Trunk Top *by Marla Wilson*



Salvage Style is all about taking something, destined for the trash, and making it useful or decorative or just plain fun. I think this project does all that. It is the top of an old trunk lid. If it could talk, I am sure it would have many stories to tell.

I cleaned this up and then sprayed it with clear polyurethane, to help retard future rust and give it a little shine. I painted the word JOY on it and sprayed it again. I drilled holes in the top edge and threaded wire through to make a hanger. A garland, sprig of pine or even a wreath can be wired into place at the center of the top. This idea can be adapted to any holiday or your own personal decor.

If you have never been junkin', you should try it at least once. Take a friend or two and spend a day shopping flea markets or garage sales. Keep an open mind and try to see the potential in discarded items. You never know what you might find.

Marla Wilson is the owner of The Rusty Wheel, a gift boutique in Scandia, KS. The shop features her floral designs and repurposed "junk," as well as kitchen and baby gifts, home decor and fashion accessories. Follow The Rusty Wheel on Facebook, or www.therustywheel.vpweb.com or contact her at stumpy1954@hotmail.com

Building Harmony

Christmas Miracles

by Jeff Cappis

We had an old angel that had been perched atop our Christmas tree for years. One year, while decorating the tree, Cathy noticed that the angel wasn't working so well. When it was new, it would swivel from side to side and held a candle that lit her angelic face and wings. Now the wings were bent from years of cramped storage. It didn't swivel any more and the bulb for the candle flickered on and off erratically. This gave it a creepy demon and lightening kind of look.



"I suppose it's time to get a new one," she said.

I agreed. Without benefit of a second discussion, Cathy picked up a new angel at the local department store. It didn't move or anything, but it was cute. The wings lit up like rainbows and it held a candle that made it look more angelic than the old angel. We swapped them out and threw the old one in the garbage.

I got to thinking, though—that angel had been around before any of our grandchildren. When Hannah was ten-months-old, she watched it in awe for hours. The first time I lifted two-year-old Hunter to place it on top of the tree, he bragged about it as if he'd scaled Mount Everest and planted a flag.

At three-years-old, Kane would tell fantastic stories of how the angel would fly around at night and sprinkle "Happy Dreams" on everybody—and maybe some brown sugar on his morning oatmeal.

They even named the angel Mabel. Thinking of all this nearly brought a tear to my eye. How could we so easily cast aside a member of the family like that?

The next day Cathy noticed the old angel was back on the tree again. "What is the old angel doing back on the tree?" she asked.

I tried to look surprised.

"Wow, must be a Christmas miracle," I replied.

Well Cathy isn't stupid. Our grandson Kane couldn't reach the top of the tree so it must have been either me or the dog who put it up there. She started giving me a hard time about getting so sentimental about a thing made of wire and cloth. I got a little embarrassed because, of course, she was right. It went back into the trash and the new angel went back up.

A day later though, I noticed the old angel was back up. I hadn't put it there. I gave a suspicious look at Cathy.

"Wow. It must be a Christmas miracle," she declared. Soon she was confessing: "I remembered how cute it looked new in the store. You insisted on buying it for me and we went on to have the best afternoon of shopping ever."

Actually, it was the only shopping afternoon ever. I hate shopping.

We had a good laugh at ourselves and unceremoniously punted Mabel back into the trash. Imagine, grown adults being so caught up in a dime store tree angel.

That night I had a dream about Mabel. No kidding. She was still in the garbage can, surrounded by wrappers and thrown away trash. All the while, she was looking up at me with her one eye as if to say, "What have I done to deserve this? I did my job for you faithfully every year and endured many hardships. I've lived for countless months in dark boxes just waiting for my two weeks to shine. I've loved your grandchildren."

Well that was it. I sat up in bed. The whole thing was stupid I know, but

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the emotion of the dream just got to me. Cathy woke up to see what was the matter. As we talked, we both started to get misty-eyed over what the end of that angel really represented. But it was just some wire with a bit of cloth. We still had the memories and we'd have to let it go. In part, just to prove to ourselves we really were reasonable grown ups.

The next morning, Christmas morning, Kane woke us to say that Santa had been there. He dragged our droopy-eyed carcasses out of bed to show us the presents. What really shocked the both of us was the sight of Mabel, that old Christmas angel, placed in the tree, but somewhat near the bottom.

"How did that get there?" asked Cathy.

"It must be a Christmas miracle," replied Kane with a smile.

As it turns out, he found it in the garbage. But, seeing as it was the only Christmas angel he'd ever known, there must be some mistake. He put it as high up the tree as he could reach and gave it a new home—in a nice safe and comfortable place in the tree.

That seemed somehow fitting in these traditional and festive times. The old has retired but not gone and the new guard is creating new memories. Now we have two angels watching over us at Christmas.

Merry Christmas from Harmony Acres.

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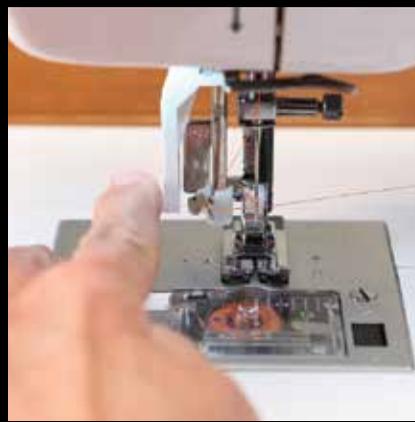
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