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At the end of the year there is something about the dwindling light and drifting leaves. Gratitude is ever-present but, in autumn, I treasure time even more deeply. My husband Wayne and I wistfully remove the feeder after the hummingbirds leave on their southern journey. It surprises me that January slipped into April. April eased into August. Once school starts, the months fly by.

2020 was an exception to my customary autumn sensations. With the pandemic starting, that year possessed its own surreal reality. However, for Wayne and me, there was a precious silver lining to this unique time.

The three grandchildren who live closest to us came to our house one day a week when remote school began in August 2020. Isaac was in 8th grade, Laurel in 6th and Naomi in 4th. Throughout the rest of the school year and throughout the summer, this time together continued.

It helped all of us to have a change. I would pick them up in the morning between their classes so that they could get settled in before the next ones. Isaac claimed our bedroom as his spot, Laurel spread out in the TV room and Naomi either sat on the sofa in the living room or with me at the kitchen table.

Every day that they came over, their favorite fruits waited along with healthy snacks and some not so healthy ones. Omelets and grilled cheese sandwiches appeared upon request. They quickly discovered their grandfather's stash of candy, gradually eating most of it but kindly leaving one or two pieces for Wayne to find when he came home from work. Of course, we didn't spoil them too much, just the right amount.

We set up the table in the TV room as an art table and kept paint, markers and canvases at the ready. Isaac, who loves America's national parks, depicted his favorite places. The girls were often more impressionistic in their creations. We bought a second-hand dollhouse. The girls used everything from toothpicks to leftovers in my sewing basket to make things for it. Isaac and Naomi played our piano, much to our delight. Laurel wasn't quite as appreciative of their talents.

I learned that I could effectively have a conversation with each of the kids, work on an article and cook-all at the same time. I had not had my own children so this was a bit of revelation to me. Being a 'bonus grandparent' to our seven is one of the first blessings I count every morning and every night.

In between classes, we'd also bake something together. Laurel loves to bake and is exceptionally good at it. At Christmas and Valentine's Day we made sugar cookies and decorated them all together. Most every Tuesday, their grandmother came over for an hour or two and often we'd all have tea. It became one of our small rituals we shared together.

I carefully planned dinners and desserts we all enjoyed together when Wayne came home. We sat at the kitchen table and the conversation was a delicious music of the children's voices-usually all of them at the same time in a timeless symphony of sharing. Then we'd have about two hours before it was time to drive them home.

The kids are back in school, fully present with their teachers and their friends. We still spend time with them but we miss when our hearts felt the pulse of their daily lives. We treasure that we were given this gift.

Our grandchildren are not unlike the hummingbirds-beautiful in their flights and intuitive on their journeys. Every season of their lives is a time for us to love them even more as they grow and change in amazing ways.

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

Meet our cover artist: Bernadette Deming

Bernadette Deming was born and raised in New York, where she currently resides. She and her husband, Marty, live on 100 peaceful acres surrounded by wildlife. She loves spending time with her three children and their friends. She prefers the simpler things in life and enjoys decorating with twigs and bird nests, eggs and leaves, and things from nature. Bernadette's hobbies are bird watching and gardening. She also collects ice cream and old-fashioned candy themed antiques.

Bernadette has painted all of her life and remembers painting on stones when she was a child. At the age of twelve, she participated in her first craft show and has been creating things ever since. Bernadette likes to sculpt clay Santas and snowmen, but her true passion is painting. Her artwork is best described as American primitive. She enjoys painting with acrylics and she looks forward to developing new ideas and having a ball painting! Bernadette looks for inspiration everywhere and tries to find humor and whimsy in everyday life. She thanks God for the gift that He has given her and she appreciates the happiness that her work brings to others. Her best friend says that Bernadette's paintings make her smile . . .she occasionally tries to "steal" artwork when she comes to visit!

To view Bernadette's art prints, go to www.PennyLanePublishing.com or call Penny Lane Publishing at 800-273-5263 for more information.







As the holiday season approaches, we're all thinking about shopping sprees and finding just the right gifts for family and friends. My mind

takes me back to a number of years ago when

our family packed up our house and set out for an adventurous move from the Midwest to Colorado. As we prepared, our older three daughters were busy with final sleep-overs and farewell parties. Our youngest daughter, Tavia, age six, was having a difficult time saying good-bye to her best friend, Katie.

To distract her and ease the loss, I took Tavia to Target one afternoon to select a farewell gift for her friend prior to our move. As we entered the toy section, my young daughter immediately discovered the stuffed animals, and within a brief moment, she grabbed a furry brown lion. She proudly made her choice known to me by hugging the little animal and stating how she'd found the perfect gift for Katie.

Normally I would have been quick to get out of the store and move on to the next errand. However, I was not convinced that this plain, brown furry thing of sorts was the appropriate farewell gift. I just knew my daughter's friend probably had about a hundred stuffed animals. So, I convinced Tavia that we needed to spend a bit more time and peruse the toy shelves a little more carefully before making a final decision. I remember how she followed me up and down the toy aisles in a meandering fashion, submitting to her mother's will, but still holding tight to the little lion.

After pointing out several other suggestions which I thought were certainly better since I was THE MOM, my little daughter emphatically blurted, "Mommy, I really want to give this lion to Katie. I have already put my love in it!"

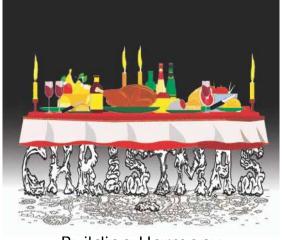
Stupefied, I humbly gazed down at my daughter hugging the lion, and I immediately realized she had, indeed, selected the perfect gift. Her love was in the gift.

Will we find the perfect gifts for our family and friends in our frenzied shopping sprees? Will our eyes land on just the right item as we scan stores on the internet? Maybe some of us will—but I am thinking how meaningful this new Christmas season could be if our gifts come from the source of love.

Can we sink love into gifts of outreach into our communities? Our fire and police stations enjoy snack baskets, cookies, and thank you notes for sure. Local soup kitchens and our Care and Share always appreciate donations of our time. Libraries and animal shelters can always use helping hands. Nursing home residents feel loved and valued with visits. The list goes on.

With love-infused gifts, I don't think we can go wrong. Many can be the recipients of our perfect gifts filled with love from our hearts.

Becky Van Vleet, a retired school administrator, lives near Colorado Springs with her husband, Troy. They are the parents of four grown children and enjoy spending time with their eight grandchildren. Becky is a children's picture book author, and her website is devoted to family stories and creating memories: www.beckyvanvleet.com.



Building Harmony Cleaning Up Christmas by Jeff Cappis

Every Christmas it's the same. We rush around doing our shopping; we spend weekends putting up trees and lights. There is the children's Christmas show at the school and, ultimately, someone dresses up like Santa.

These are all fun things that get us into the spirit and all geared towards making memories. We do make memories to be sure but how many Christmases do we actually remember? Personally, I think Christmas is more about cleaning up the mess.

Before you start calling me a Grinch, let me explain.

For my wife Cathy, Christmas is about a million things and all of them climax to a great Christmas dinner. I get this. It is one of the few times the entire family can get together, to connect and, hopefully, no one gets hurt. More than anyone else, Cathy's heart goes into making Christmas special and God love her, she works for it.

We pull out the Christmas decorations, decorate the house and make a mess. We wrap presents, listen to Christmas music, string popcorn and make a mess. We feed some of the popcorn to the dog and he makes a mess. Although these things are all fun, ultimately, we are left constantly cleaning up messes.

It is a constant parade of cookie crumbs, loose tinsel, candy cane wrappers, floor stains, bits of paper and a dog covered in scotch tape and bows. It's not Christmas if you aren't cleaning up glitter everywhere. This goes on for two weeks before Christmas and one week after.

Then comes the big day. The kids are tearing up the place on a Christmas high. Shredded wrapping paper is flying everywhere. (A lot of it stuck to the dog.) Ornaments and tinsel are falling off the tree. The house becomes full of packaging, manuals, batteries and small cables of every description. In the midst of all this chaos, we have to clean up the joint and prepare for the messiest deal of all—the Christmas dinner.

Even with all this preparation, Christmas afternoon is the time we take this house we have worked so hard to keep clean—and drop a bomb on it.

This is one of the places Cathy shines the most. She starts maybe a month earlier by picking out a turkey and all the fixings. The turkey weighs almost as much as she does but she manages to clean and jerk that sucker into a cart, a car and, finally, the freezer.

A few days before Christmas, the turkey is in the fridge thawing and she begins to prepare fixings. All the while she is still shopping and wrapping presents.

Preparing for Christmas dinner is an organized, military style, clean as you go event. If you don't clean as you go, it will take a month to eat your way out of the mess. The kitchen becomes a symphony of gravy, potatoes, turkey drippings and salad dressing.

Even the dog (who is still covered in scotch tape, paper, tinsel and bows because no one had the time to clean him) is doing his bit to ensure the floor is clean of any food that drops down there. Man, that dog is a trooper. Anyway, the place turns into a disaster. There are dishes and utensils I don't even have names for dirtied and scattered everywhere. Despite this, it all looks good in the dining room.

That's when the moment arrives. We all sit down together for a delicious meal and we share. I can tell how Cathy loves this. It's really her moment and I would never take that away from her. We all talk frankly about our feelings on things and what we are doing. There is warmth there in Cathy's special time. It's a good place to be.





Then it's time to clean up this environmental disaster.

After all that, when the offspring go back to their homes and the grandchildren have gone back to their toys, Cathy and I spend an hour or two trying to put our house back in some kind of order. It's a lot of work. My God, the dishes alone fill the sink and dishwasher.

Now, you might think I'm complaining but I'm really not. You see, these are the times Cathy and I spend working together. We talk about the day and the family. We share our thoughts and feelings about the season and even life. All of this brought together by a single common goal—to clean up the mess and keep our home comfortable.

Afterwards, we relax and exhale. It's then we can enjoy the Christmas that's left around us. Like we've arrived. I doubt we will remember these individual moments much but they do bring us closer together and that lasts a lifetime.

So, Cathy and I and every one else at Harmony Acres wish every one of you the Merriest of Christmases!

Be well and have a Happy New Year!

- (And take the time to clean up your messes.)
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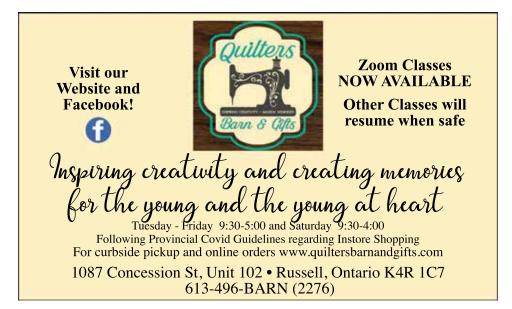
'Snow' Ornament

Requirements

- Dark blue:
 o Front: 9 cm x 15 cm
 o Loop: 4 cm x 10 cm
- Light brown: 12 cm x 20 cm
- Red: 15 cm x 23 cm
- Pink: scrap
- Backing: 15 cm x 23 cm
- Cotton batting:
- o Snowman: 5 cm x 10 cm
- o Batting: 15 cm x 23 cm
- Fusible interfacing (Vlieseline)
- Fusible web (Vliesofix)
- Matching embroidery threads

RON'S FABRICS





Assembly:

Trace the large oval with a (white) pencil onto the red fabric and the backing. Cut outside the lines.

Iron fusible interfacing to the back of the red fabric and the piece of cotton batting for the snowman.

Cut the dark blue oval outside the line and iron it into the centre of the red fabric using fusible web.

Iron the light brown frame, the snowman, the heart and the nose onto the blue/red fabric. Use a scrap of the red fabric for the nose. The light brown frame covers the blue oval a bit.

Sew the appliqué with a small running stitch, 1-2 mm inside of the pieces (raw edge appliqué). Use 1 strand of embroidery floss (Red: frame, nose, heart – Ecru: snowman).

Trace the stitchery with a (white) pencil onto the fabric and embroider with 3 strands of embroidery floss (Ecru: snow, snowflakes, letters – Light brown: arms – Black: eyes, mouth – Green: button – Red: button).

Fold the sides of the 4 cm x 10 cm blue fabric to the middle (lengthwise) and fold double, to form a 1 cm x 10 cm strip. Sew the centre of the strip with a running stitch, using 3 strands of light brown embroidery floss.

Place the back (right side down) on the table, place the batting and front (right side up) on the table. Fold the fabric for the loop and pin it in place between the backing and the batting.

Baste the 3 layers.

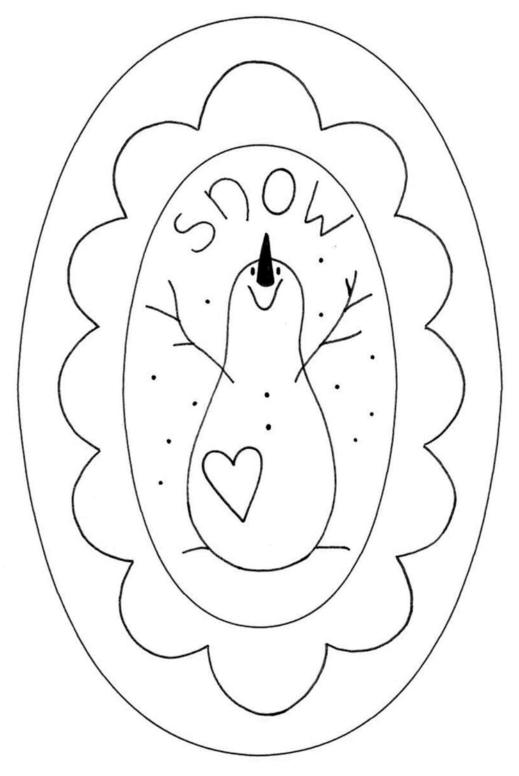
Sew with a running stitch, using 3 strands of light brown embroidery floss, on the pencil line of the large oval, all the way around. Anchor the loop with an extra stitch.

Cut the sides with pinking shears, approximately 0,5 cm outside the pencil line.

Happy quilting!

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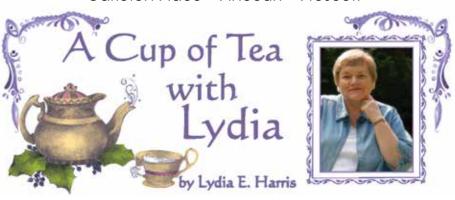
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idings of Comfort and Joy

'Tis the season for good "tidings of comfort and joy" found in Christmas carols, greeting cards and food!

The holidays evoke many comforting memories for me and some include food. During my childhood, one of the food traditions our family enjoyed was my mother's fruitcake. I know—fruitcake often gets a bad rap. But in our large family with eight children, we all loved it. That might have been the problem.

Mother baked several fruitcakes around Thanksgiving and let them age until Christmas. But one Christmas, when she went to the pantry to get the fruitcake, she found a knife and a partially eaten cake. Unknown to any of us, my brother had cut a slice for his lunch each morning on his way to work. We didn't hold it against him. Instead, we laughed that he

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got away with his caper. After all, he was a "merry gentleman" and it was the season of "good will toward men."

For the holidays, how about bringing comfort and joy by hosting a Christmas tea using familiar foods made with a festive twist. This trio of comfort foods is sure to bring glad tidings.

1. Scone Makeover: ("Visions of sugarplums danced in their heads.")

I'm sharing my favorite scone recipe with added ingredients to make it festive. Or use a box mix and adapt it if you prefer.

Holiday Scones

Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 T. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 TSP. Sait
- 1¼ cups whipping cream, unwhipped

½ tsp. vanilla

- 1 cup (8-oz. container) candied cherrypineapple mix, divided
- Glaze

1 cup powdered sugar

1 tsp. butter, softened

2 T. milk

¼ tsp. vanilla **Directions:**

- 1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Lightly grease a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray.
- 2. In a bowl, mix together flour, sugar, baking powder and salt.
- 3. Cut 5 red and 5 green candied cherries in half and save them to garnish the baked scones.
- 4. Cut remaining candied fruit pieces into fourths and stir them into the flour mixture to coat them.
- 5. Add whipping cream and vanilla and mix.
- 6. On a lightly floured surface, knead the dough gently until combined. If it is too dry, add another tablespoon of cream.
- 7. Roll the dough ½-inch thick. Cut the dough into bells, circles or wedges.
- 8. Bake the scones for 12 to 15 minutes or until lightly browned.
- 9. While the scones bake, mix the glaze ingredients together.
- 10. Remove the scones from the oven and place them on a cooling rack. Cool slightly.
- 11. Dip fork tines into glaze and drizzle it across the scones. Decorate each one with half a cherry on top.
- 12. Serve the scones warm with jam, honey, butter or whipped cream. Makes about 16 scones.

Variations: Replace candied fruit with red and green gumdrops snipped into small pieces. Or use dried cranberries and white chocolate chips.

2. Sandwich Makeover ("O Christmas Tree")

With a tree-shaped cookie cutter and a few extra ingredients, a plain sandwich becomes festive. How lovely (and tasty) are your branches!

CHRISTMAS TREE SANDWICHES

Ingredients:

O

Slices of wheat bread or your favorite kind

Slices of cheddar cheese

Cream cheese spread—plain or flavored, such as herb, onion or garden vegetable

English cucumber

Red pepper or pomegranate seeds 3-inch Christmas tree cookie cutter ½-inch star-shaped cutter Salt and pepper, optional





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(recipe continued from previous page)

Directions:

- 1. Cut bread slices into trees with cookie cutter (2 per slice). Prepare 2 or 3 trees per person.
- 2. Cut cheddar cheese slices into trees with cookie cutter. From the cheese scraps, cut small stars for the tops of the trees.
- 3. Spread the trees (bread) with cream cheese. Top each with a cheddar cheese tree.
- 4. Spread another thin layer of cream cheese on the cheddar cheese so the cucumber branches will stick.
- 5. Use a fork to score the peeling of the cucumber. Cut the cucumber into thin slices.
- 6. Cut the cucumber slices in half and place pieces on top of the cheese layer in a shingled fashion with scored peeling edges facing down. Start at the bottom of the tree and work your way up. Trim pieces to fit as needed.
- 7. Cut red pepper into tiny pieces and add a few on top of the cucumber branches for ornaments. Place a cheese star on top.
- 8. Serve immediately. Pass salt and pepper shakers with the sandwiches.

3. Sweets and JOY! ("Joy to the World!")

I met Joy on a flight 41 years ago and we've been keeping in touch as pen pals ever since. Recently, she sent me her cheesecake recipe that she made in her 6th grade home economics class. Sweets add a grand finale to any teatime or meal. I made a few changes to the recipe and now call it:

MERRY CHERRY CHEESECAKE

Ingredients:

Crust

20 graham crackers ½ cup butter, melted

Filling

1 (8-oz.) package cream cheese

- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 tsps. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. lemon zest 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- Topping
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 T. sugar
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- 1 (21-oz.) can cherry pie filling

Directions:

- 1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
- 2. Place the graham crackers into a large zippered plastic bag and crush them with a rolling pin.
- 3. Mix crushed crackers and melted butter; press into a 9-inch pie pan (bottom and sides) to make crust.
- 4. Combine all filling ingredients in a medium-sized bowl. Beat thoroughly.
- 5. Pour filling into pie shell. Bake for 30 minutes. Cool.
- 6. For topping, combine sour cream, sugar and vanilla. Spread on top of cheesecake. Chill overnight.
- Top with cherry pie filling. Or cut and serve individual pieces of cheesecake and top each piece with a spoonful of cherry pie filling.
 Serves 6 to 8.

Variations: Serve with strawberries or raspberries for a Merry Berry Cheesecake. Also, you could make individual cheesecakes by preparing them in muffin pans.

Brew a holiday blend of tea and enjoy past Christmas traditions or create new ones. With these recipes or your favorites, you can remember that "Silent Night" of long ago and turn your holidays into a season of "comfort and joy."

Lydia E. Harris, M.A. in Home Economics, is a tea enthusiast and grandmother of five. She authored In the Kitchen with Grandma: Stirring Up Tasty Memories Together and Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting. Her books are available on amazon.com.











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Fiber-Friend Fanatics

by Barbara S. Kalkis

There comes a point where a passing interest in a craft becomes something more intense. It happens slowly, like an expanding waistline. You sit dunking your third donut into your second morning coffee and suddenly realize the jeans you're wearing shrunk in the wash. This is perfectly natural. We all know clothing isn't made the way it used to be. Seriously.

This also happens to crafters. We take a casual interest in a craft. Out of curiosity. To see if we like it. It becomes a pastime. Then our hobby. Then our art. Then our avocation. Then our vocation. Then your family returns home and finds the house is a mess. There's no sign of dinner, not even any food to make it, but who cares, they can order pizza, because you have to get this pattern done to see if yours really looks like the one in the magazine laying crumpled and limp from over-handling and smeared with your fingerprints and donut sugar.

As a paper-crafter with some modicum of constraint, here are characteristics I have observed about fiber-artists who knit, crochet and quilt:

Your friend invites you over to see how she redid the kids' bedroom after they left for college. You arrive to see that their belongings and bed are gone (They can stay with Grandma.) The room now boasts a sewing center and long-arm machine.

Your friends got new pets¬—alpacas. So, she can grow her own wool for knitting projects. And maybe start making felt for an appliqué project or two!

Arthur, Alfred, Mitzi, Horace, Juan and Juanita are not kids' names. They are the alpacas' names. Juan and Juanita are twin so naming them something cute was important.

Likewise, Bubblegum, Basket, Pinwheel and Rose of Sharon are not alpaca names. They are quilt patterns.

The Drunkard's Path and God's Eye do not refer to Sunday's church homily. They are ... back to square one ... quilt patterns.

You are invited to dinner. Wine glasses are encased in a quilted beverage napkin. The handmade tablecloth celebrates the appropriate holiday and features placemats in complementary designs. The napkins are not quilted but the coffee mugs are nestled in fuzzy multi-colored cozies, courtesy of Juanita and Juan who, as it turned out, were not identical twins.

As for dinner, no need for individual plates for salad, bread and the main dish. The food is arranged on one platter in neat blocks highlighting color and pattern. Green beans create the look of sashing. Mashed potatoes provide texture.

Your husband hears the word `stash' and thinks Money or Drugs. Wrong, it's fabric.

Speaking of money, you do have a stash of cash for emergencies ... like a quilt show. No sense over-extending the credit card. This way, you can buy something special. Who knows when you'll need a bolt of glowin-the-dark fabric.

Your friends think July is the time to purchase school supplies. Silly! It's time to buy holiday fabric.

On Halloween, your kids are the only ones in the neighborhood who do glow in the dark.

At Thanksgiving, the tablecloth, napkins, potholders, your apron all match. Along with the kitchen curtains. Buying the entire bolt of fabric may have been an over-reach.

At Christmas, you do your part for the environment. Your front door features a quilted wreath with crocheted decorations. The alpacas' contribution.

You have enough quilts to supply a hotel chain.

You love the smell of a shop filled with new fabric.

You believe the words "Shop Hop" are code for "Shop 'til you drop."

And, finally: You know the peace, joy, contentment and thrill of making something that reflects you and your love for your craft. What better way is there to spend your time? Aside from your family, of course.

©Barbara S. Kalkis, 2021. Barbara is an educator, consultant and 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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Duct Tape to the Rescue!

Wikipedia defines duct tape as "cloth or scrim-backed pressure sensitive tape, often coated with polyethylene."

My husband has long sworn that duct tape has 101 uses. My response is that I have never seen it used on HGTV so it must not be something I need. Surely, Ben and Erin on Hometown or the Property Brothers, would have shown me what to do with it if it was a must have for me.

To strengthen my argument, I asked my husband had he ever seen a quilt made with duct tape. Of course not! There was nowhere in my quilt design world that I saw a need for this stuff. As a result, my interaction with this magical substance has been very limited. It could live in the garage with all the other manly tools as far as I was concerned.

This little story is my confession that I have now seen the light.

Let me digress. Two years ago, at my annual retreat, one of the attendees gifted me two small flannel boards. One was approx.10" x 15"

and the other was 20" x 30". She explained that they were helpful when moving blocks in progress from the sewing machine to the ironing board and that she thought I might like the larger one as a demo board.

The flannel boards were made from the same white foam board that children use for school projects. One side was covered with white flannel and the edges were covered with a pretty purple and pink tape. I wondered where she found something so pretty to use on the edges and finally just asked. How was I to know that duct tape came in colors? All I had ever seen was the black rolls that seemed to multiple in my husband's garage.

Once I was enlightened, I had to admit, just this once, that duct tape was useful for sewing purposes. I love the little boards and I do use them often.

Fast forward to a recent move into a new home and new studio. The house was just right for our needs and, with a bit of remodeling, the studio would be, too. Work on the studio began as soon as we moved in. Carpet was removed, new flooring added, lighting installed, custom built bins put in with lots of shelving for various needs. All was complete in about three months with the exception of a design wall. I had the perfect location right across from my desk and sewing area and Hubby had come up with a great idea for securing it to the wall. I was very excited that I would finally be able to stop using a portable design wall system and have a permanent spot for this task.

Step One was to purchase a large sheet of insulation board from the local home supply. Step Two was ordering a heavy-duty white flannel sheet to cover it with. Step Three was figuring out how to secure the sheet to the insulation board so that Hubby could then hang it with his custom hanging system.

I'll use staples, I thought to myself. I'll fold the edges to the back and secure it in place. With the flannel sheet right side down on the floor, the insulation board on top of that and me on hands and knees, I opened the stapler and tried using it just like you would if decorating a bulletin board. The staples went in just fine but came back out just as easily and I quickly realized that this would not work. The flannel was coming back off just as fast as I stapled. Strike one for this method—but I was not defeated.

Maybe hot glue is the answer, I thought. An hour later, after searching for the hot glue gun, then the glue sticks and finally an extension cord, it only took 5 minutes for me to admit that this was not the solution either. My perfect wall was looking hopeless and I was running out of ideas.

As I sat there defeated, a light bulb went off. Maybe it was time to try duct tape. Not willing to admit to my hubby that I was considering his secret weapon and might be on my way to finding use number 102, I searched quietly in every nook and cranny of his garage until I found a roll. Jackpot! And not just any roll, he had guerrilla duct tape.

Let me just warn you that guerrilla duct tape is even stickier than regular duct tape. I found out the hard way that it pretty much sticks and stays on anything-my hands, my hair, the table, the scissors, etc. I think you get the picture. But, later that day with the help of the tape, determination and a little prayer, the insulation board was covered and there was no way the flannel was coming off. Finally, Success!

That was last week and I am happy to report that the wall is now up and I am a happy quilter. Every time I look at this wall, I will remember that, in this instance, Hubby was right. Duct tape can be awesome and certainly came to my rescue. Now, as I look around, I find myself wondering-what else can I do with it?

Deb Heatherly is a designer for Creative Grids® rulers. You can contact her at Debscatsnquilts@aol.com or call the studio, Deb's Cats n Quilts Designs, 828-524-9578. When not in her studio, Deb is normally on the road doing Creative Grids® lectures and workshops for guilds and shops across the country. She is the designer of the Creative Grids® Cat's Cradle Tool, Strippy Stars Tool, Turbo 4 Patch, Ultimate Flying Geese Tool, Cat's Cradle XL, and Kitty Cornered Tool. She is also the author of the books 'Cat' itude, Strippy Stars, 4-Patch Panache, The Ultimate Flying Geese Book, Catitude XL, Creatively Yours, and her newest, The Build A Quilt Workbook. Visit her website at www.Debscatsnquilts.com. Creative Grids® fans are invited to join her Facebook group, Grids Girls, for tips and inspiration. Grids Girls members have the opportunity to participate in exclusive Grids Girls mystery quilts two times each year. https://www.facebook.com/ groups/770429649800457/. The next mystery will start in January.

Quilt Shop Owners- You are invited to join the group above and Deb has an additional Facebook group just for you. "Grids Girls for Quilt Shop Owners Only. https://www.facebook.com/groups/273593657256524/

Borderline Obese

Carl thought that when he moved to the country, and small-town life, he would be surrounded by friendly people, fresh air, and a laid-back lifestyle. What he hadn't planned on was homemade food. Not just food cooked at home, but good homemade food, and lots of it.

Carl and Mary met at university, and because of this Carl had no idea Mary knew how to cook and bake. If Mary had had the luxury of living offcampus in an apartment, she would have had a kitchen, and a way to prepare proper meals. Unfortunately for Mary, and in time Carl, she lived on campus in a dorm room.

University dorms as any current or former student well know, do not have the best kitchens, if they have kitchens at all. The dorms are designed to cram as many students as possible into a building with the smallest land footprint possible. Sleeping, studying, eating, and just plain living, it seems, completely slipped the minds of the architects when they were designing these buildings.

Mary's dorm room had a kitchen that consisted of a small refrigerator and a 24-inch stove. Both of which, sort of worked. This setup alone would have been enough to dishearten any cook with even the simplest of needs. The cupboards however were the real nail in any cook's coffin.

The cupboards in Mary's dorm spanned all of 3 feet. There was a twodoor cupboard that hung on the wall above a two-door, one-drawer base cabinet. The base cabinet had a countertop that spanned all of 38 inches, thanks to a small overhang on the side that wasn't butted up against the wall. Half of this expansive countertop was, of course, taken up by a sink, leaving just enough space on the remaining countertop for a toaster and a place to butter your toast. There was, unfortunately, not enough space for the butter dish and the toast at the same time. Mary and her roommates all made toast the same way. They would put their bread slices into the toaster, cross the small room to where the butter dish was kept on top of the fridge, retrieve a pat of butter on their knife and then try to balance the butter on said knife as they crossed back to the toaster. Trying to time it just right so the toast was popping up as they got there with the butter.

This cupboard setup did not leave much, if any, room for groceries, and in Mary's case, this limited space had to be shared with 3 roommates. Needless to say, the toaster was the most used kitchen appliance in Mary's dorm room. The limited space in the cupboards was used up storing plates, bowls, cups and few boxes of cereal, and most importantly, a loaf of bread or two.

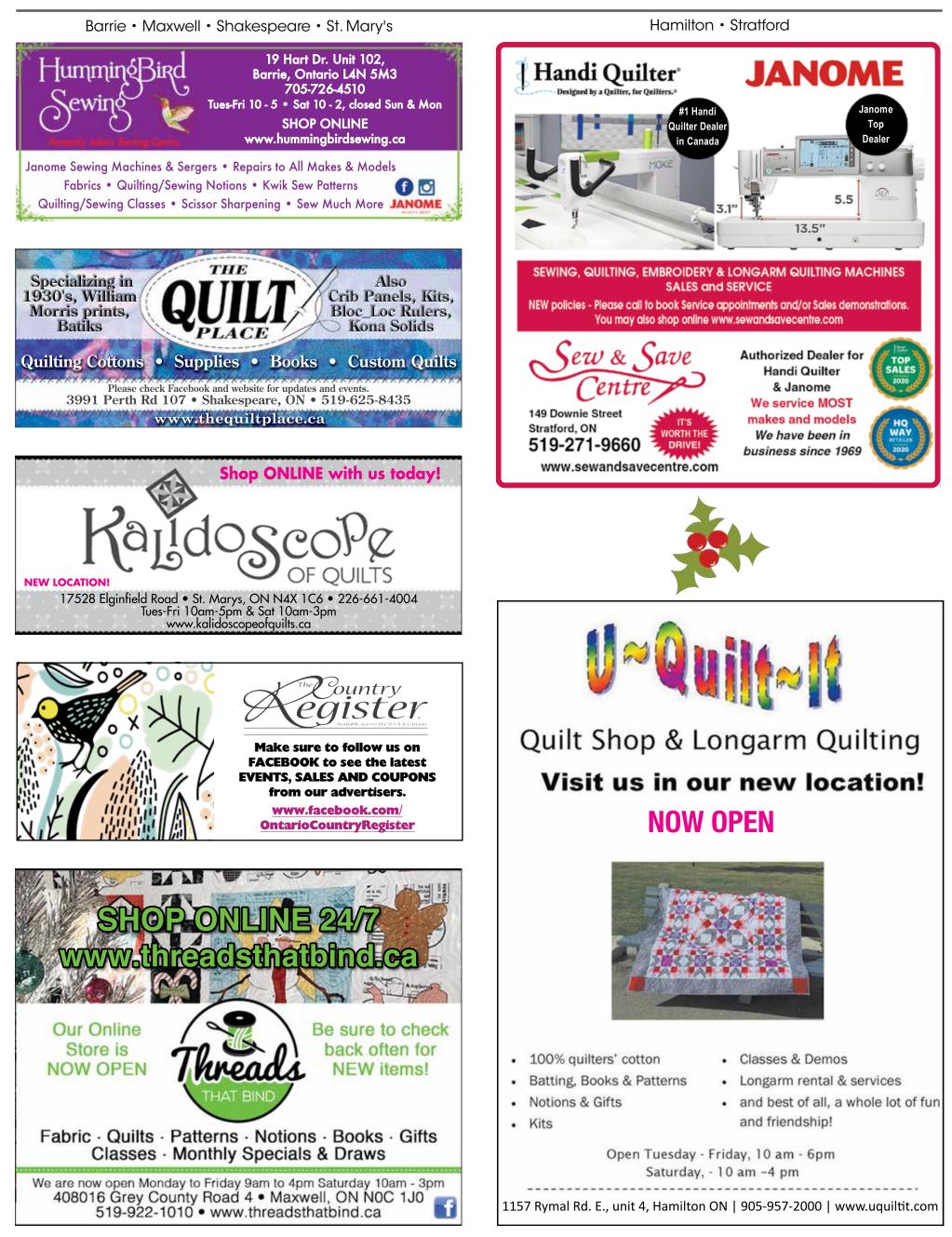
Once Carl and Mary had started dating, she jumped at the chance to meet and have supper with Carl's parents, even if just to spend some time in a real kitchen. Mary had an image in her mind of what a wonderful kitchen Carl's mother must have. What she found however when she arrived one evening for supper, was a dining room table spread out with takeout from a local Chinese restaurant, and a kitchen that even though was expansive and well laid out, had even less stuff in the cupboards than she and her three roommates had in theirs. Carl's mother was a Doctor and Professor at the university. Carl's mother was by no means a cook. What she could do, however, was warm things up, and that was about the extent of her cooking knowledge. Being a doctor, however, she knew the importance of good healthy food, and what most people should and shouldn't eat. What she didn't know was how to make those good healthy foods palatable. To be totally honest, even warming pre-made meals was a chore that she did not enjoy or, for that matter, do well.

Carl was not aware of Mary's kitchen talents until after they were married. In fact, it had never even crossed his mind that such things were possible. Their wedding supper was put together by the local church group and caught Carl off guard. He was used to city catering when attending events. Lots of warmed-up processed food with very little seasoning or flavour that tried to please the pallets of many. He was not aware some people could put together a meal for a hall full of people and use real food doing it. The type of people that served food that they themselves would eat. He was so happy eating at their wedding supper that he forgot not only where he was, but why he was there. Carl was startled away from his supper when his best man got up to make a speech. Carl was shocked to hear his speech was about him and Mary and not the food.

When it was Carl's turn to take the microphone and say, "Thank you", Mary had to promise to guard his plate so no one could take it away while he was away from the head table. She also promised him as she forced the knife and fork out of his hands, that this would not be the last good meal that he would ever have. Before the wedding, Carl had had a pretty good idea of what he was going to say when it came his turn to



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Magical Snacking

There's nothing really magical about home-made snack mixes, other than they always disappear quickly when placed before a hungry crowd of holiday revelers or sports fans.

"Family Favorite" Snack Mix offers a welcome change

from traditional mixes, which tend to rely on seasoned salt and Worcestershire sauce for their savory flavor. Instead, this snack mix offers a quirky variety of cereal, crackers and chips laced with dry ranch dressing mix, lemon pepper and dill. Thank goodness the recipe makes such a large batch!

For snackers with a sweet tooth, Brickle Snack Mix is a hocus-pocus combination of cereal squares, candy coating and chocolate or peanuts. Don't close your eyes and count to three, because this mix will be gone in a flash. For nut lovers, the recipe for Exotic Party Nuts relies on curry powder to take sweet and savory nuts from mundane to magical. Enjoy, but do so quickly.

"Family Favorite" Snack Mix

- 1 12-ounce box crisp corn cereal squares
- 17¹/₂-ounce bag bugle-shaped corn snacks
- 19¹/₄-ounce bag original corn chips
- 3 cups soup (oyster) crackers
- 3 cups square cheese crackers
- 2/3 cup butter-flavored popcorn oil
- 4 teaspoons dry ranch dressing mix
- 1¹/₂ teaspoons lemon pepper
- 1½ teaspoons dried dill weed
- Several dashes of cayenne pepper, if desired

Combine dry cereal, snacks, chips and crackers in jumbo (2¹/₂ gallon) zip-top bag, taking care not to crush cereal squares or other ingredients. Whisk together oil and seasonings. Drizzle mixture into bag while constantly rotating, once again taking care not to crush ingredients. Transfer mixture to 2 or 3 large rimmed baking sheets. Bake at 275 degrees for 20 minutes. Remove from oven and cool to room temperature on baking sheets. Transfer back to bag. Allow flavors to blend at least 12 hours, rotating bag several times. Store in mixing bag or airtight containers.

Brickle Snack Mix

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- ¼ cup light corn syrup
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 12-ounce box crisp corn OR corn-rice cereal squares
- 1 to 1¹/₂ cups candy-coated milk chocolate pieces
 - OR 1 to 1¹/₂ cups honey-roasted peanuts

Prepare two rimmed baking sheets with cooking spray. Empty cereal into very large mixing bowl or container. (A roaster makes a nice substitute for a large mixing bowl.) Set all aside. In saucepan, melt butter and stir in brown sugar and corn syrup. Bring to boil over medium to mediumhigh heat. Boil and stir for 2 minutes. Stir in baking soda and quickly pour over cereal. Using thin rubber spatula, fold and stir to thoroughly coat cereal with hot mixture, taking care not to crush cereal. Carefully spread on baking sheets, separating squares as much as possible. Bake at 250 degrees for 40 to 50 minutes, or until lightly golden but not browned. Stir at least two times during baking. Remove from oven and stir again to separate pieces. Cool on pans before adding chocolate candies or nuts.

Exotic Party Nuts

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 tablespoons packed light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt

1¹/₂ cups lightly salted mixed nuts with peanuts

Dash of cayenne pepper, if desired

Prepare rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. Set aside. In heavy skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add brown sugar, curry powder and salt. Cook and stir until brown sugar is completely dissolved. Add nuts and cayenne pepper. Cook and stir 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer nuts to baking sheet, separating nuts as much as possible. Cool completely. Store in airtight container.

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.



life lessons

Life is like knitting with increases, decreases, style selection, execution of time and materials, decisions, trials and errors with the anticipation of a good result. Do any of the following life lessons transfer into your daily living?

- 1. Gauge swatch is a must!
- 2. Matching pattern to yarn is harder than vice versa.
- 3. Plan-plan-plan ahead.
- 4. Not all cast-ons are equal.
- 5. Learn a variety of bind offs.
- 6. Read patterns for complexity before purchasing yarn, buttons, and struggling to begin.
 - 7. Calculation and problem solving are a must.
 - 8. Patience-patience-patience!
 - 9. Need help? Contact those who know.
 - 10. Organize: keep selected pattern with purchased yarn; don't rely upon memory.
 - 11. Consult resources for direction. 12. Frustrated? Take a 10-minute break or whatever amount of timeout works.
 - 13. Some patterns and fibers are not worthy the time or effort.
 - 14. Know when to quit when a situation consistently does not work out. Rip-rip-rip!
 - 15. Know when to say NO to unfinished objects and to those who want theirs finished.
 - 16. Don't punish ourselves to work with yarn color, fiber, or texture not liked

just because it is in the stash inventory or gifted.

17. As a knitting project progresses, lay the item on a flat surface every now

and then to check for dropped stitches, bad selvedges, errors, and appearance. 18. Don't be afraid to step outside the project. Modify-design-semi-design. Have

- fun with the fiber.
 - 19. Avoid last-minute crises. Start early to meet deadlines.
 - 20. Stash is nice for small projects, traveling, and last-minute gifts. No shopping!
 - 21. Too much stash can drown desire to knit at all. Too much is overwhelming.
 - 22. Charity handmade gifting is rewarding and needed. Warms two hearts!
 - 23. Don't forget to knit for OURSELVES!
 - 24. We'll never be bored!
 - 25. And above it all, we meet the nicest people.

Creative pursuits can be transformed into healing arts which can transform a person. Needlework isn't simply enjoyable but therapeutic. We're all happy when our crochet hooks scoop a stitch or our knitting needles click and clack along—all forming a lovely pattern of stitches. It soothes our souls by doing what we love. Thus, we are transformed.

Many thanks to The Country Register newspapers who have published "The Dropped Stitch" the past 15 years. The complimentary and kind e-mails from so many readers have been inspiring and very rewarding. However, it is now time to BIND OFF with this my closing column.

Keep the needles and hooks moving!

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL QUILT GUILD

Ajax	Twisted Stitchers Quilt Guild We meet at the Ajax Legion at 7pm on the 2nd Tuesday on any month from September to June.
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	Almonte Quilters Guild We meet at the Almonte Civitan Club, 500 Almonte Street Active at 7:00 pm from September through
Ancaster	June (no meeting in December). Ancaster Quilter's Guild
Arnprior	We meet at the Marshall Memorial United Church, 20 Gilbert Ave. at 7pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from September to June. Amprior District Quilt Guild
Ampion	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	Simcoe County Quilters' Guild We meet at the Simcoe County Museum, 1151 Hwy 26, Midhurst at 1:00 pm on the Fourth Thursday each month except the 2nd Thursday in Dec and 3rd Thursday in June, from September to June.
	Kempenfelt Quilt Guild We meet at the Lion's Gate Banquet Hall on Blake Street, the 3rd Thursday of the month from 7-9pm
	Barrie Modern Quilt Guild We meet at Grace United Church, 350 Grove St. East the last Thursday of the month, on alternate
Belleville	months from September to May - 7pm and on various Saturdays during the alternate months, for Activities and Workshops, from October to June. <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	Binbrook Country Guilters' Guild We meet at the Binbrook United Church, 2623 Binbrook Rd. 7:30 pm the last Monday of the month from Sept - Nov and Jan - June.
Bracebridge	The Pine Tree Quilters' Guild of Muskoka We meet at the Bracebridge Memorial Arena, 169 James St at 1:00 pm on the 2nd. Thursday of the month free Soctomer threu up huno.
Brampton	month from September through June. Brampton Quillers Guild We meet on the 4th Thursday of each month from September to June at 7:30 pm. Meetings are held at
Brantford	Jim Archdekin Recreation Centre, 292 Conestoga Dr. Brampton. Brant Heritage Quilters
Brockville	We meet at St George United Church at 7:30 pm. on the second Thursday of the month. The Thousand Islands Quilters' Guild We meet at the Royal Canadian Legion, 180 Park Street at 7 pm on the 4th Thursday evening of the
Buckhorn	month. No meetings December, January, July and August. Buckhorn Area Quilters' Guild
Burlington	We meet at Hartley Hall, St. Mathews / St. Adian Anglican Church at 9:00 a.m. on the last Wednesday of the month (excluding July, August and December). Halton Quilters Guild
-	We meet at the Mainway Recreation Centre, 4015 Mainway Dr. at 7:00 pm on the first Thursday of the month from September through June).
Caledonia	Caledonia Grand River Quilters' Guild We meet at 7pm on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from September through June.
Cambridge	Busy Hands Quilters Guild We meet at the Preston Scout House, 1580 Queenston Road at 9:30 am on the third Monday of each month.
Chatham	Chatham-Kent Quilters' Guild We meet at St. Paul's Congregational Church, 450 Park Ave W at 7pm on the third Wednesday each mark expect December
Cornwall	month, except December. Cornwall Quilters Guild We meet at St. Mathews Lutheran Church, 1509 Second St West at 7pm every third Monday evening
Courtice	from September through May. Clarington Quilt Guild
Dryden	We meet at Faith United Church, 1778 Nash Road on at 6:30 pm on the 3rd Thursday of every month. Sunset Country Quilters' Guild We meet at 84 St. Charles Street at 7 pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month.
Elliot Lake	Elliot Lake Quilt Guild We meet at Gentle Shepherd Church, 3 Ottawa Ave. at 7:00 pm on Tuesdays from September through
Elmira	June. <i>The Elmira Needle Sisters</i> We meet at the Elmira Mennonite Church at 7:00 pm on the fourth Monday of the month.
Etobicoke	Etobicoke Quilters Guild We meet at Neilson Park Creative Centre - 56 Neilson Dr. at 7:00 pm on the third Monday of the month.
Georgetown	Halton Hills Quilters Guild We Meet at 8958 Trafalgar Rd, Georgetown, ON L7G 4S5. 6:45pm till 9pm from September till June on
Gloucester	the fourth Monday of the month. Common Thread Quilt Guild We meet at Le Mouvement D'Implication Francophone D'Orléans (MIFO), 6600 rue Carriere in Orleans
Goderich	at 7:30 pm on the second Tuesday of the month from September through June. Goderich Quilters' Guild
Grimsby	We meet once a month on the 2nd Tuesday. Grimsby Quilters' Guild We meet at the bingetee Activity Costse at Zam on the third Thursday of the month
Guelph	We meet at the Livingston Activity Centre at 7pm on the third Thursday of the month. Royal City Quilters' Guild We meet at Three Willows United Church, 577 Willow Road at 7:00 pm on the second Tuesday each
Gwillinbury	month from September until June. Gwillimbury Quilt Guild
	We meet at the Sharon-Hope United Church, 18648 Leslie St. at 1:00 pm on 4th Monday of the month from September through May.
Hagersville	Haldimand Quilter's Guild We meet at the Hagersville United Church at 7:00 pm on the first Monday of the month from September through June.
Haliburton	Haliburton Highlands Quilter Guild We meet at the Stanhope Community Centre, 1095 North Shore Rd, Algonquin Highlands at 1:00 pm on the second Wednesday of each month.
Hamilton	Hamilton Quilters Guild We meet The Church of Resurrection, 435 Mohawk Rd. W.at 7:00 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each
Ingersoll	month from September through August. Oxford Quilters Guild
Kanata	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. <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	Kemptville Quilters Guild We meet pm at the Kemptville Pentecostal Church 1964 County Road # 43 at 7:00 pm on the second Monday of the month (except for holiday Mondays).
Kenora	Lake of the Woods Quilter's Guild We meet at St. Louis Catholic Church, 912 Superior St in Keewatin at 7 PM on the second Thursday of the month.
Kingston	Kingston Heirloom Quilters We meet at St. Johns Anglican Church Hall in Portsmouth Village at 9:30 am on the first Tuesday and
	7:00 pm on the first Thursday of each month. Limestone Quilt Guild
Kingsville	Meeting Area usually is – Kingston Senior Centre, 56 Francis Street, Kingston, Ontario, but we are on zoom right now. We meet every Wednesday at 7pm on zoom. <i>Erie Shores Quilters' Guild</i>
Kirkton	We meet at the Kingsville Arena, 2nd floor at 7p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month. Huron, Perth Quilters Guild
Kitchener - Waterloo	We meet at the Kirktown/Wooddham Community Centre at 9:00 am on the second Tuesday of the month from September through May. <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	North Lambton Quilt Guild We meet at the Port Franks Hall on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Lindeau Craativo Quildea Guild
Lindsay	Lindsay Creative Quilters' Guild We meet at Celebrations, 35 Lindsay St. N at 1:00 pm every 2nd Monday of the month except for October, December and June.
Manitoulin Island	Island Quilters Guild We meet at the Community Hall in Mindemoya at 7:00 pm on the third Thursday of the month from Sentember thou you hung
Markdale	September though June. <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
Meaford	September to June. Georgian Quilters Guild
Mississauga	We meet at the Meaford Opera House, Sykes St. at 1:30 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month. <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). Mississauga Quilters Guild
	We meet at the Tomken Twin Arenas at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month (except July and August).

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

(story continued from p.15)

address their guests. When he got to the microphone with an almost full belly and a smudge of gravy on his rented suit jacket, he spoke from his heart instead of reading the speech he had prepared. It was more than obvious to the guests that Carl's mouth was listening to his heart, and his heart was just repeating what his stomach was telling it to say, as he told of how lucky he was to find Mary.

Carl and Mary were married in early summer just after she was finished her university classes. They had spent a hard-working summer together at the store, trying to clean it up and get it ready for them to run into the future. Mary's father had never wanted to run the store and had let a lot of things slide as far as maintenance went. It wasn't until Mary was back in Saskatoon to resume her university classes in late summer that Carl started to gain weight.

You see Carl and Mary had moved into her parent's basement after the wedding, and once she was back at school, Mary's mother took it upon herself to make sure that Carl never went hungry. She had seen how he seemed to come to life every time he sat at the table. She took it as a challenge to see if she could fill him up.

Mary's first trip back home at the end of September for the weekend came only 4 weeks after she had returned to classes. She noticed in that short time that Carl had gained a bit of weight. No one else however had noticed Carl's weight gain, mainly because they saw Carl all the time, making his weight gain unnoticeable. Most of Carl's store customers, and most importantly, Mary's mother, thought that he was a skinny city kid that needed a bit of fattening up anyway.

Mary noticed Carl getting a little pudgier every time she came home on one of her monthly visits. By the end of October, she thought it might have been too many Halloween candies. When she came home at the end of November, her last visit home before the Christmas break, she noticed that even though Carl had put on a bit more weight, it didn't seem to be as much as he had the last time she was home. This made her a bit more comfortable with her plans for that weekend. Mary and her mother had planned the weekend to be a bake fest. A weekend in the kitchen to get most of the Christmas baking done. They made Scottish shortbread, whipped shortbread, and ginger snaps. They made sugar cookie dough that they could roll out and then use cookie cutters to shape them into Christmas trees, Santas, and rocking horse shapes that they then decorated with coloured icing after baking and cooling.

But most importantly they made Spesiur, an old traditional Icelandic cookie. Traditional Icelandic cookies are very simple cookies with few ingredients because during the winter in Iceland that is what they had. Mary isn't sure if her Great Grandmother, Helga, learned the recipe from her mother, or if she learned it from other Icelandic settlers in the area. Either way, they have, as far as Mary knows, been sold at the store almost every week leading up to Christmas since the store has been open. Some years acquiring all the ingredients on the Canadian prairies winters was harder than it would have been in Iceland. In many of the early years, Elga's Spesiur was made with lard instead of butter and molasses was used instead of sugar many times. It wasn't until Mary's grandmother started to make the cookies that vanilla was readily available to flavour the cookies. Before vanilla, spices were used to flavour the cookies. This is likely where the name spesiur came from, as the word for spices in Icelandic is spesiur. Helga would offtimes use dried mint leaves that she had gathered from the riverbank during the summer and then had dried in the sun. Other times she would use spices available at the time like cinnamon, ginger and or nutmeg.

The recipe Mary uses today is quite simple. She blends 1 ³/₄ cups of butter with 1 ¹/₂ Cups icing sugar, 2 cups of flour and a tsp of vanilla. She then rolls the dough into logs and refrigerates them overnight wrapped in waxed paper. The next day she cuts the logs into ¹/₄ inch coins and bakes them at 375° F for 10 minutes. Luckily for Carl, or at least for Carl's waistline anyway, he didn't know how easy these cookies were to make, or else he may have started to make his own. Mind you this is unlikely.

Carl had started eating Mary's Christmas cookies before she left to head back to Saskatoon from her weekend visit. He would have a few with his evening tea. He would take half a dozen to work with him to have during the day. Sometimes he would have a couple before supper. About every 5 days or so he would have to venture into the basement to retrieve another Tupperware container from the deep freeze. He even crunched through a few frozen ones because he wasn't willing to let them thaw before eating.

When Mary was still home that weekend, she found Carl's enjoyment of her cookies cute. She took great pleasure in watching him enjoy her baking. She was in a sort of euphoria knowing that she could make him so happy. This euphoria, that she felt before heading back to university would be short-lived once she returned home for Christmas, however.

On her first night home, some friends had come over for an evening of cards, board games and laughs. When it was getting time to put the coffee on late in the evening, Mary asked Carl if he had remembered to take some baking out of the freezer. Carl of course had not. He ventured down to the basement in high hopes of coming up with bragging rights of how lucky he was to have such a good wife, who could bake better than anyone he knew. He instead, came up empty-handed. Carl had a good look around the kitchen to find the cookies thinking that surly Elizabeth, Mary's mother, must have been down earlier in the day to get something out of the freezer for supper, and brought the cookies up, knowing that they were having company later that day. Finding nothing but an empty Tupperware container Carl himself had brought up from the freezer a week or so ago, he ventured back downstairs for another look.

The truth of the matter hit Carl like a frozen package of ground beef, much like the one he had just dropped on his toe. Carl had taken everything out of the freezer except for the heavy white frost that clung to its sidewalls. The Christmas turkey was perched on top of the hot water heater. The washing machine was covered in frozen bags of tomato sauce that Mary and her mother had made that fall. The top of the dryer was strategically stacked with packages wrapped in brown butcher's paper and was what was left of the half of beef Jon and Elizabeth had purchased in the spring from a local farmer. The floor was scattered with the same odds and ends of plastic containers that somehow seem to end up in everyone's freezer. You know the ones, the plastic tubs half-filled with leftovers that you told yourself you would make soup out of someday and just couldn't bring yourself to throw away. That is until these leftovers have been frozen solid for at least a year or two and you have moved them from one side of the freezer to the other at least three times, and are now so freezer burnt that you have to throw them away.

Carl slowly and carefully placed everything back into the freezer in a neat and orderly fashion. Not because he was trying to impress anyone with his organizational skills. He was simply stalling for time trying to think of something to tell his young beautiful and hopefully understanding wife.

As Carl was straitening up his sore back after leaning into the freezer for who knows how many times, he came up hoping the find the room empty of frozen food. What he found instead was Mary. "What have you been doing down here for so long?" she asked. Carl's face, which was already red from being in the cold freezer, somehow managed to darken another shade or two more. He sputtered out as best as he could, "I can't find any cookies." "That's impossible," Mary said, "Mom and I made 12 batches of cookies last month when I was home, the only way there couldn't be any left is if someone..." and that was when the truth landed on Mary like a frozen fruitcake.

After words were said, mostly by Mary, ok all by Mary, she and Carl ventured back upstairs to rejoin their friends. Mary had Carl explain why they wouldn't be having any cookies with their coffee. Laughs were had, but for Carl, these laughs were short-lived. As soon as their guests had left, Mary started making more cookie dough. Carl thought it best if he were to stay up and help her. It took most of the night to help her remake what was to be their, and the stores, Christmas cookies. Carl even had to go out into the -30-degree weather at one point to fetch a few pounds of butter from the store.

The next day, was Dec 21st, and the last Monday before Christmas. Traditionally the first day that Borderline Goods' famous spesifur cookies would have been available to customers. Carl did his best to get through the day after getting only an hour's sleep. The day was made even harder by having to explain over and over again why the spesifur cookie tradition would be a day late that year. If you remember correctly, the cookie dough has to rest in the fridge overnight before baking.

Carl was barely able to keep his eyes open during supper that evening. He then spent the rest of the evening helping Mary cut spesifur coins from the chilled logs of dough. The last batch of that night's cookies came out of the oven at 2 a.m. It wasn't until the next night that carl had a chance to truly rest his head and newly acquired chubby body beside his wife, and much like the cookie dough that had to rest overnight, Carl could definitely feel a chill in the air.

Borderline Good is a series of fictional stories written by Kirby Gust. The stories are set in a fictional town on the Saskatchewan Manitoba border. All the characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental. A special thanks to my former high school principal, John. O. Smith, who has graciously and painstakingly edited these stories.











by Maranda K. Jones

Never Doubling

My grandma's hands illustrated her stories with their long crooked fingers moving through the air above her legs so contrastingly still in her wheelchair. Those long fingers with never painted nails would point to the drawer in the dresser where I would find the envelopes and stamps she needed. Those long fingers would hold my children's



suckers and chocolate she saved for them and other visitors. Those strong hands steered her down the hall of the Good Samaritan Center where she spent her final days. And it was one of those last visits that I try to remember well.

My grandma's hands held my youngest child as I pushed her wheelchair down the hall with my older two children's help. We sat near the front window of the shared visiting room, and she gave me a cooking lesson. No kitchen was necessary. She taught me again the tradition of my childhood.

My grandma's hands came together as she showed me how to form the popcorn balls she had made most of her life and all of mine. Our fingers ran under imaginary water, getting our hands damp so the hot liquid would not burn as we shaped the sweet treats. She measured the water with a distance between her pointer finger and her thumb, reminding me to pour about that much in a glass to check the hardness of the candy. She rubbed her fingers against her thumb and reminded me how the consistency would feel and look when it was ready to pour on the popcorn.

My grandma's hands suddenly issued a warning! That shaking crooked pointer finger reminded me to remove any kernels that had not popped before getting started! She moved her arms around as if she was stirring the food coloring into the giant pot of sugar and syrup right then and there. She moved me back into her kitchen to a time when she stood tall over her stove. My dad lifted me up in his arms, above the hot pot to drop in a few squirts of red or green, and Grandma kept stirring.

My grandma's hands were all over the place as she told her story, which was symbolic in a way, as her story's instructions were not properly sequenced. She wanted to tell me again, and I was hungry to listen and learn. She wanted to share her tips and secrets, and I was indulging. She shared her delicious popcorn balls with neighbors, strangers, friends, and family. She was well-known for her holiday goodies.

My grandma's hands created hundreds of popcorn balls each year. She individually wrapped each one and placed it in a paper grocery sack. She only made one set at a time, never doubling the recipe. She felt each batch needed to be perfect, and finishing one batch only meant it was time to start another.

My grandma's hands hugged me tight around my neck and grabbed my kids' hands as we said goodbye. Her story reminds me to live one day at a time. Finishing one year only means it is time to start another. © 2021 Maranda K. Jones

Maranda Jones' new book **Random Acts** is now available at amazon.com.

The book includes her reader-acclaimed articles from the last decade.

Thunder Bay





OH YES, WE CRAN!

Why did the cranberry sauce cross the road?

To get to the others sides.

I know I would certainly cross the road for cranberries. As a child I enjoyed cranberry sauce, but when my Mom started to purchase fresh cranberries that just took it up a notch. I soon discovered too, that I really enjoy raw cranberries to snack on. They're quite tart and they pop in your mouth. My Mom tried snacking on them too but decided they were better off in cranberry sauce. She would buy me my own "snack bag" of them, as she said it was hard to be upset at me for snacking on something so healthy.

Cranberries are even semi-local with being an evergreen creeping shrub or vine. They are grown in Canada, the United States and Chile accounting for 98% of the world's production of cranberries. The Native Americans used cranberries in permican in food as well as a dye. The first cookbook in which cranberry sauce appears was in 1667, and another cookbook made reference to cranberry juice in 1683.

Cranberries certainly have a unique methodology for growing. They are grown in areas with shallow water tables and are actually not flooded during the growing season, but they are irrigated. The beds are flooded in the fall for harvest, and again in the winter to protect the plants. While most cranberries are harvested when they turn red, they can also be harvested while still white, which is how they make white cranberry juice.

Cranberries can also be dry picked (which leaves the berries less bruised), and then they can be sold as fresh fruit. If they are wet-picked (about 95% of the harvest) then they have to be immediately frozen or processed.

Did you know that cranberry juice is usually sweetened and that it contains about one teaspoon of sugar per ounce? That added sugar makes it even more sweetened than soft drinks. And that dried cranberries are usually processed with up to ten times their natural sugar content. The drying process also removes the vitamin C.

Raw cranberries are 87% water. A half-cup of chopped raw cranberries is 25 calories and has moderate amounts of vitamin C, fibre and manganese. They are also commonly used as an old wives tale to treat urinary tract infections. The bit of research I did on that basically shows conflicting evidence, so the jury is still out on that.

Cranberries are also featured heavily in decor and decorations at this time of year. Everything from the classic popcorn and cranberry strings on the tree to wreaths to floating candles with cranberries. If I'm making an ice ring for a punch, I'll jazz it up with sprigs of rosemary and cranberries. I'll do the same by adding cranberries to the star ice lanterns we make (the mould is from Lee Valley). Speaking of punch, here is my cranberry punch recipe.

Cranberry Punch

1 can cranberry juice (prepared according to directions)

2 cans of orange or pineapple juice

1/2 can of limeade concentrate

Ginger ale or Sprite to taste

We shouldn't forget that cranberry is additionally a colour too. We had our front door painted cranberry for several years.

I'll leave you with a final pun...do you know why the cranberries were wet? They were Ocean Sprayed!

Slow Cooker Cranberry Chicken

I think I first discovered the recipes in the '90s and have the recipe tucked away for when things get busy in our household, as the slow cooker does the work. Although, I have made this in the oven on a cold, wintery day, and I wanted to warm up the kitchen. It's also made with pantry staples (I usually buy a couple of cans of cranberry sauce in the Thanksgiving sales to stash away). This is just a base recipe; feel free to add different spices. This recipe also works well with pork.

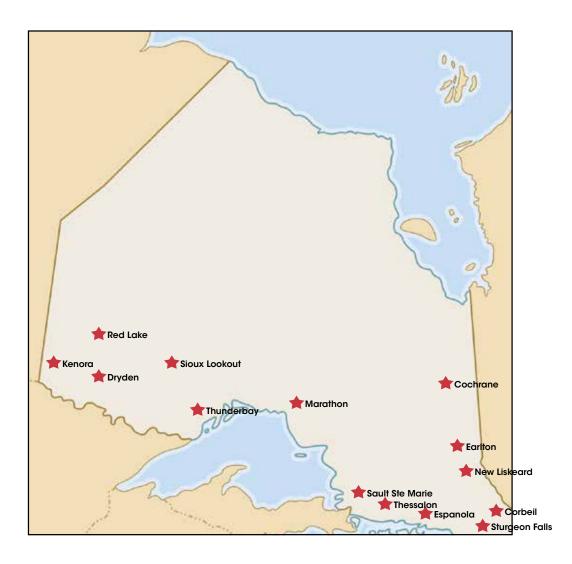
4-6 boneless skinless chicken breast halves or 1 chicken cut up

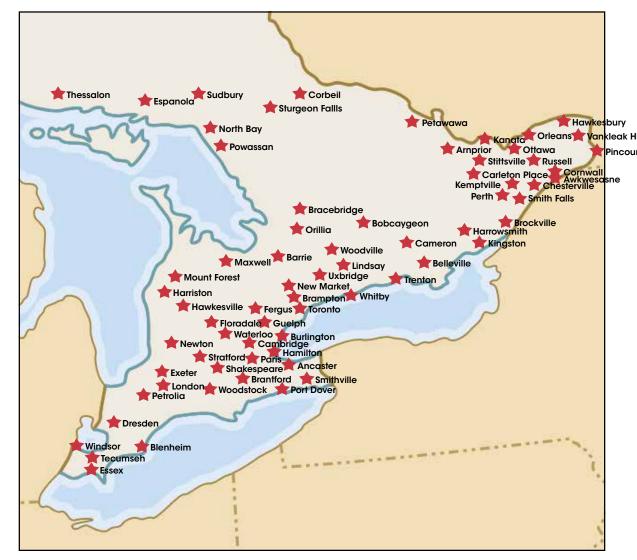
- 1 can whole-berry cranberry sauce
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 1-1/2 tsp lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp dry mustard
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger or finely grated fresh ginger
- 2-3 cloves of garlic minced

Place all of the ingredients in the slow cooker Cook on Low for approx. 6 hours.

Serve over rice

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Cranberry Bundt Cake

This is a new recipe that I tested for this edition. Kirby loves, loves, loves Bundt cakes, so I thought it would be a hit, and it was! By the way, did you know that "Bundt" is supposed to be capitalized as it is a trademarked name? Bundt pans were invented by H. David Dalquist in 1950. Dalquist was the owner of Minnesota's Nordic Ware company, and he designed the pan to recreate traditional kugelhopf—a dense, ring-shaped cake. Originally, he called his invention a bund pan, for the German word that translates to "bond" or "alliance." Why did he add the T? There's never been an answer to that, other than possibly for ease of getting a trademark.

Cooking spray

1-2 Tbsp of all-purpose flour or more as needed to flour the pan

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking powder

3/4 tsp kosher salt

1 - 12 oz bag fresh cranberries

1 Tbsp all-purpose flour

1 cup butter softened

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

4 large eggs

1/2 cup sour cream or Greek yogurt

1 1/4 cups icing sugar (or more) 1/4 cup orange juice

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350° F and very generously spray with cooking spray and then flour a 9" Bundt pan.

Combine 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour with 1 tsp baking powder and 3/4 tsp kosher salt.

Whisk to mix well and set aside.

Place 12 oz fresh cranberries (1 bag) in a small bowl. Add 1 Tbsp flour and toss gently to coat the cranberries.

Set aside until ready to use.

In a mixing bowl, combine 1 cup softened butter with 2 cups sugar.

Mix on low to combine and then turn up the speed to mid-high and beat for 2 minutes until light and fluffy.

Mix in 1 tsp vanilla extract.

Add eggs to the butter mixture one at a time, mix well after each addition.

Mix in 1/2 the flour mixture until combined and add 1/2 cup sour cream and mix well.

Add in the remaining flour mixture until just combined and scrape down the sides of the bowl to ensure all flour is mixed in.

Gently fold cranberries into the batter.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and even out the top.

Bake on center rack for 50-55 minutes until the top springs back when pressed gently or a cake tester comes out clean.

Remove from oven and allow to cool in pan for 15 minutes.

Run a plastic knife, around the edge of the pan, and centre hole to loosen. Then place a cooling rack over top of the cake pan and carefully flip the cake pan over so the cake slides out onto the cooling rack.

Allow cake to cool completely.

Prepare the sweet orange glaze by mixing 1 1/4 cups icing sugar with 1/4 cup orange juice. You may wish to add more sugar or orange juice to reach the consistency you like for glazes.

When the cake is cooled, drizzle the glaze over the cake.

Fluffy Cranberry Pie

I've been making this during the holiday season for the past few years. I enjoy it as it's easy to make and it's slightly different, yet still has traditional flavours.

Crust:

1 3/4 cups of graham wafer crumbs
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
1 Tbsp all purpose flour
6 Tbsps of butter, melted
Pie Filling:
3-3 1/2 cups of fresh or frozen cranberries
1/2 cup of maple syrup
Finely grated zest of 1 mandarin orange
1 cup of whipping cream, cold
1/2 cup of sour cream
Make the Crust:
Preheat the oven to 350 F

In a large bowl, whisk the graham wafer crumbs, sugar and flour. Add in the melted butter and stir until well combined.

Press the crumbs into the bottom and sides of a 9" tart pan with removable base, and then put on a cookie sheet. Bake until the crust is set (approx. 10 minutes). Cool completely.

Make the Pie Filling:

In a medium saucepan, combine the cranberries, maple syrup and zest. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until the cranberries pop and it thickens (approx. 10 minutes). Let cool slightly.

Scrape half of the cranberry mixture into a food processor or blender (I use an immersion blender), and purée until smooth. Combine the puréed and unpureed berries into a medium bowl, cover and chill until cold.

In a stand mixer, whip the heavy cream and sour cream on high speed until thick and shiny (approx. 2-3 minutes).

Dollop about one-third of the cream into the cranberry mixture and fold with a large silicone spatula. Continue adding the cream, one-third at a time, and gently folding until well mixed but with some cranberry streaks remaining.

Spoon the cranberry mixture into the crust. Refrigerate until set, about 2 hours.

Craisin & Chocolate Chip Cookies

This recipe calls for kosher salt, and it makes for a bit of a more savoury cookie. You'll get an occasional taste of the salt when you bite into the cookies. Now, I'm a fan of things like sea salt caramels, so it's a taste I enjoy, but if it's not something you like, feel free to reduce the amount of salt. If you do that, I would probably only use about ½ teaspoon of table salt.

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 ¼ cups butter
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 ½ cups chocolate chips 1 ½ cups dried cranberries

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone mats.

In a standing mixer fitted with the paddle, beat the butter and both sugars at medium speed until creamy.

Add the egg followed by the egg yolk and vanilla, beating well between additions and scraping down the side of the bowl as necessary.

Beat in the dry ingredients, then add the chocolate chips and cranberries and beat until incorporated.

Spoon heaping teaspoons of the dough onto the baking sheets, 2 inches apart. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until the cookies begin to brown at the edges.

Let the cookies cool on the baking sheets, then transfer them to a rack to cool completely.



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