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December / January 2018 Issue

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Calendar of Events

..... ONGOING

NOV 30 - DEC 3	38th London Christmas Craft Festival - London
..... DECEMBER	
DEC 1 - DEC 31	Jingles & Joy - Blue Mountains
DEC 1	Santa Claus Parade - Mount Forest
DEC 1	Christmas in Pelhan - Outdoor Christmas Market
DEC 1	Celebrate Christmas - Brantford
DEC 1	Santa Claus Parade - Elliot Lake
DEC 1	Santa Claus Parade and Light Up Night - Cayuga
DEC 1	Shop Midnight Magic - Hearst
DEC 1	Santa Claus Parade - Warkworth
DEC 1	Light Up Night & Christmas Parade - Dunnville
DEC 1 - JAN 3	Light Up The Hills - Georgetown
DEC 1 - JAN 6	Alight at Night Festival 2017 - Upper Canada Villate - Morrisburg
DEC 1 - JAN 12	Lakeside Festival of Lights - Burlington
DEC 2	Light Up The Holidays - Toronto
DEC 2 - DEC 3	Lang Pioneer Village Museum's Christmas by Candlelight - Peterborough
DEC 2 - DEC 3	Christmas at the Falls Craft & Gift Show - Niagara Falls
DEC 7 - DEC 10	Christkindl Holiday Village on King & Christkindl Market- Kitchener
DEC 9	Santa Claus Parade - Straffordville
DEC 9 - MAR 17	Creemore Farmers' Winter Market - Stayner
DEC 9 - DEC 23	Christmas by Lamplight - Black Creek Pioneer Villabe
DEC 10	Old Fashioned Christmas - Sharon
DEC 12	Tales of a Charlie Brown Christmas - Ottawa
DEC 16 - FEB 17	DJ Skate Nights - Toronto
DEC 16 - DEC 31	Sparkles in the Park
DEC 23	A Portage Flyer Christmas - Huntsville
DEC 28 - DEC 30	Frozen In Time Sculpture Festival - Collingwood
DEC 31 - JAN 1	New Year's Eve: Mississauga Celebration Square - Mississauga
DEC 31	First Night - Richmond Hill
DEC 31	Barrie's Downtown Countdown - Barrie
DEC 31	Family First Night - Bradford
DEC 31	First Night Celebrations - Cobourg

..... JANUARY

JAN 1	Mayor's New Year's Day Levee - Pickering
JAN 1	Annual Perth Polar Bear Plunge - Perth
JAN 3 - JAN 14	Next Stage Theatre Festival - Toronto
JAN 7	Mayor's Levee - Bradford
JAN 12 - JAN 28	Niagara Icewine Festival - St. Catherines
JAN 12 - JAN 14	Twenty Valley Winter Winefest - Jordan Village
JAN 13 - JAN 27	Sacoury Celebrations - Cobourg
JAN 15 - JAN 21	Toronto Design Offsite Festival - Toronto
JAN 18 - JAN 21	London Wine and Food Show - London
JAN 20 - JAN 21	Fire & Ice Winter Festival - Caledon
JAN 23 - FEB 3	Colores de Latinoamerica '18 - London
JAN 24 - FEB 7	A Taste o Oakville - Oakville
JAN 27	Fire and Ice Festival - Bracebridge
JAN 27	Polar Bear Plunge / Winter Festival - Campelford

Dearest Readers,

Once again the year has just flown by, and yes, once again...it's almost Christmas! It never ceases to amaze me that year after year I still get that same feeling of wonder and awe that I remember so fondly from my childhood. These memories and feelings are triggered by the simplest of things...the crisp winter air, the smell of wood burning in fireplaces around the neighborhood, the pretty snow covering just about everything, the wonderful twinkling Christmas lights! The simple joys of simple activities... hot cocoa by the fire, working on Christmas presents, snuggling up with your favourite book, or your favourite honey ;)

I guess this year I am focusing on the simple because I, for one, have fallen prey to the "other side" of the Christmas season. The hustle and bustle, the non-stop stress machine of getting everything done for everyone, all at once, and all to perfection! It is so easy to fall into this trap! Don't do it dearest readers, don't do it!

Ok, so maybe a little too melodramatic, but my point is, in my opinion, the key to wonderful holidays is to strike a healthy balance. This balance of activities is different for every one of us, so what may be super hectic for some is a walk in the park for others! So my humble advice to you, dear readers, is to just have fun. If you look for the fun in your everyday life (especially during this season) everything tends to balance out just fine!

As we are also entering a new year, I want to sincerely thank some key players from our team that helped us throughout this past year. First of all, to our wonderful, excellent advertisers and you, our dear readers (yes, you are part of our team too!) without you we wouldn't have a Country Register of Ontario. To Cathy, our wonderfully talented, sharp as a tack, fantastically creative (...I could go on...) graphic designer. To Bill Whitaker, our printer extraordinaire, who actually puts the magic on paper! To our cover artists, who through their art stir up the emotions that summarize each issue. And finally to our columnists and contributors that bring us the best in entertaining informative crafting content!

Thank you all and have a wonderful and blessed holiday season.

Happy Holidays! Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

Thanks and best regards,

Harriet

p.s. Go to www.OntarioCountryRegister.com to find our latest issues online. And, we are also on Facebook, so please "like" us there too!

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.rdewolfe.com, or by email at info@richarddewolfe.com.

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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

Countryberries Designs
My Little Red Truck



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 to be painted, but it can also be needlepunched or hooked. It would be cute done as a wool applique with embroidered details. It would make a great tree skirt design. Have fun!

Designed by Kathy Graham

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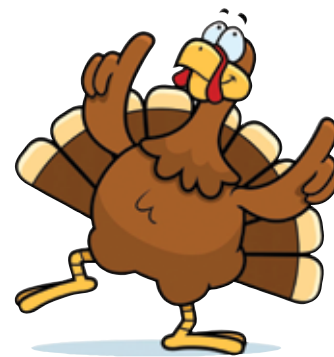
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Building Harmony A Christmas Turkey

by Jeff Cappis

My neighbor Renee came over last Christmas with an unusual offer. He wanted to know if I was interested in a free turkey. Now, a free turkey at Christmas isn't that unusual, in fact, it can make for a nice gift. No, this turkey was different. Renee took me over to his car and we peered through the windows.

It was a live turkey. A big live turkey. Live and animated. He was going berserk and tearing up Renee's upholstery. He pecked at the buttons on the dash. Feathers were flying everywhere inside. The car was rocking and then the bird discovered the horn.

"His name is Clyde," said Renee with a wince.

The horn went off again and Renee banged hard on the car. "Give it a rest you bird from hell!"

Then he regained his composure. "Clyde likes going for rides. It gets him excited"

Yup, Clyde was a full-grown living turkey.

"What are you doing with a live turkey?" I asked. Renee had never struck me as the livestock type.

"Well, it's a long story," he replied. Then Clyde locked the doors. "Guess I have time." As the headlights began flashing on and off, Renee began it tell me the story of Clyde...

Mr. Andolini down the road decided that the family was going to have the best turkey of their lives for Christmas later that year. The traditional Christmas dinner with everybody around the table was his favorite time of year and being Italian, he fancied himself a great cook.

He started by going to a local turkey farm and bought a chick. Not very old, the chick fit into a small cage and Andolini placed him in the front seat for the ride back to the acreage. The bird chirped and jumped around as he looked out the window. Andolini thought it was cute. The bird loves to ride in cars.

He didn't have any kind of a coop and he was concerned about wild animals, so he decided to raise the turkey in his garage. It was a two-car garage. Kind of free range. Lots of room for a turkey. He was sure that Mrs. Andolini wouldn't mind and the turkey didn't look like it would take up much room. It would only be until Christmas.

Clyde took to the garage right away. He had his own comfortable bed and lots of feed. He started to grow. Over the following months he ate everything Andolini brought out to him and more. He produced a lot of, uh, fertilizer, too.

This would get harder to clean up as he got bigger because Clyde also became grossly territorial. At first he would nip at anyone who entered the garage. He got Mrs. Andolini cornered once as he flapped up a storm and made hideous gobbling noises at her. She was really afraid of him.

One time she had to go grocery shopping. She quietly entered the garage and gently got into her car. No Clyde, no problem. She figured Clyde must have been sleeping and she was right. Ten minutes later he woke up. In the back seat.

Locals reported seeing a car swerving down the road with the lights

(story continues on p. 8)

Hawkesbury • Perth

Our Canada 150 Quilts

Visiting my mother on Vancouver Island this past Spring, we got to reminiscing about Expo '67 and Canada's centennial year. We remembered that exciting time and the 10-triangle Centennial logo seen on so many souvenirs, from buttons and pins to commemorative community gardens and flower arrangements. Who could forget the happy song we sang: "Can-a-da! One little, two little, three Canadians! We-e-e love thee!", and that poster. The poster was an overview shot of the Expo '67 site in Montreal. It adorned many rumpus room walls, including our own. Expo, and Canada's Centennial fifty years before had been so memorable for our family, and for many other Canadians.

When my visit was over and it was time to return to Kingston, Mom and I decided to keep in touch creatively, and to celebrate our country's 150th birthday by making a pair of "Canada 150" quilts. Our idea was to consider the old Centennial logo with its triangles, and to design quilt blocks around those shapes, perhaps using fabrics in vibrant golds, reds and greens – the colours of a Canadian Autumn – as seen in so many "Group of 7" paintings.

But a trip to a quilting store here in Kingston changed that. One day I spotted some beautifully-printed Robert Kaufman fabric, showing different Canadian city names along with images related to those cities – "Butchart Gardens" for Victoria, a rodeo horse and rider for Calgary, a moose and a covered bridge for Fredericton – the Northern lights, the CN Tower, Totem Poles and an oil rig – familiar Canadian images in vivid colours brought our country's beauty and diversity to life in cloth. Suddenly an idea for our quilt design took shape: we would use these printed "city blocks", with each of us choosing cities that were personally significant. We would then make what my Mom called "traditional blocks," using classic, mostly pioneer era patterns, as seen in Ruth McKendry's book: "Quilts and Other Bedcoverings in the Canadian Tradition" – which is a social history of quilts and of pioneer life. (Both Mom and I own copies of this wonderful book).

I bought two sets of the city blocks fabric and sent half to Mom on Vancouver Island. She then divided up some fabric from her "stash" so that even if we made totally different "traditional blocks", visual unity in our quilts would be maintained with the same fabric being used for both.

Each Canadian city meant something to one or other of us, and it was surprisingly easy to come up with an association that in turn led to a specific "traditional" patterned block. For example, the printed Fredericton city block reminded us of my brother Patrick having earned a forestry degree at the University there. (The worrisome memory of him having had to drive a taxi to fund his studies we chose not to commemorate!). Instead, we both made blocks out of tiny red, orange and gold triangles in the shape of a tree, with overhead, the classic pioneer pattern: a row of "flying geese". (Strangely enough both Mom and I chose this tree image to be the centre-block of our finished "Canada 150" quilts – Mom working on hers in B.C., and me making mine here in Ontario!).

Edmonton is where my daughter lives now, so an old pattern called "Star of the West" was made to go alongside; Regina is where my parents married, so the 1875 "Love Apple" pattern, with 5 "love-apples" seemed perfect – one for each member of our original family. Each city meant something different, and we made traditional-style blocks that represented our associations with that city.

Keeping in touch by Internet, phone and by letter, Mom and I ended up producing two quilts that are remarkably similar and which look, I think, very special together. Mom is an expert quilter while I am a novice, so it was she who designed and planned the widths of sashings and bindings, planned the placement of the



blocks, and in fact basically designed our Canada 150 quilts! When my quilt top was done, I mailed it to her, and she got them professionally long-arm quilted by Ginette, (a former member of the R.C.M.P., which in itself seemed an especially wonderful thing for our special "Centennial plus Fifty" titled creations). Ginette chose muslin for the backings, in a vintage "tea-coloured" hue, which gave our quilts a touch of history. She computer-quilted each with a beautiful design of maple leaves and vines, and even put our names on the bottom corners.

Orange, green and burgundy seam bindings made by Mom tied the wide variety of colours and patterns together, and when she mailed both quilts back to me I proudly put them side by side in my guest room.

Fighting the cat off them, I then took some photographs, which you can see here.

Our Canada 150 quilts commemorate not just the precious mother-daughter bond we share and our lifelong interest in crafts and sewing, but will also serve as a wonderful memory of our country's 150th year!

Submitted by: J.B. O'Reilly, 619 Shiloh Avenue/Kingston/Ontario/K7M 8V9 Tel: (613) 389-8961

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(story continued from p. 6)

flashing and feathers flying out the windows. It would take Mrs. Andolini four months before she would drive again.

Sometimes he would grab Andolini's broom as he tried to clean up the scat, other times he would follow Andolini around and nip at his butt. The place began to stink and nobody would go in the garage. They parked the cars outside and still checked the back seat before they got in. Clyde made a racket all night long and kept the Andolinis up.

One morning, at the breakfast table, a very frazzled Mrs. Andolini gently explained to Mr. Andolini that if he didn't go in the garage and kill that bird, no one would get Christmas dinner because Clyde would be full of buckshot! Then she took a breath, sipped her tea and gave her husband the eye.

Now Andolini was faced with something he hadn't given much thought to. He would have to kill Clyde, and he'd never killed anything in his life. If he was going to keep his dream of a fantastic family Christmas dinner, he would have to do something brutal. So he did.

He called Renee and offered him a free Christmas turkey.

As ornery and mean (and plump) as Clyde had become, Andolini had raised him. To kill a kind of family member like that at Christmas didn't feel right. Better to let Renee do it.

The Andolinis did have a great family Christmas dinner in the end and the store bought turkey was delicious. All is well that ends well and a very Christmas.

"So why did you take the turkey?" I asked Renee.

"Being French, I fancied myself a great cook."

Then he smiled a little bit. "Problem is, over the last few weeks I've gotten to know him. Besides, it's Christmas."

We had a sentimental pause, then the radio in the car began blaring different radio stations and the trunk popped open.

"I'll eat him in January."

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Houses of Memory

by Kerri Habben

A year seems to evolve slowly. One second becomes more until a minute has passed. Then another minute until an hour has elapsed. Suddenly time compounds upon itself. One moment it is January and then it is April which quickly becomes August. Then somehow years slip by and unless I deliberately pause and take stock, I wonder where they went.

However, at least we were given that precious time. It could have stopped, but it didn't. Rather than lament its passing I celebrate that it was ours for its duration. Though perhaps it was never actually ours at all. Maybe time was just being itself, and we simply used it while it was here.

So it is as we live our way into a new year. It is all too easy to fall under the illusion that this year time won't flee so fast. Winter's dormancy is a lullaby, as if being soothed by Mother Nature herself.

"All will be well, my child," she assures. And somehow, some way it will be. Especially if there is beauty and grace before our eyes that we have failed to see. There may be blessings ahead we cannot even imagine on a winter's day.

Pondering time leads me to consider the memories we carry. A single second or sound can cause them to vividly emerge. My mother, now approaching 80, sometimes describes to me the home of my great-grandmother, great-aunt, and great-uncle as she was growing up. Mom is just old enough to remember the blackouts and rationing during World War II and also confetti swirling through the air when peace was declared.

I can see Nanna baking yeast cakes and efficiently peeling potatoes with little waste. I can see Uncle Henry's typewriter on the dining room table. I can hear Mom playing hymns on the piano on Sabbath afternoon.

I watch her eyes when she shares these stories with me. As I absorb her words and their accompanying energy, I sense she is traveling to

(story continues on p.27)

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Left Behind

by Madeline Lister

Silently the 4-year old stood by the farm truck, head bowed, a tear inching down her cheek. "It's only little," Kido thought. "Surely there's room."

No one paid her any attention. Grown-ups have a way of being unduly occupied with their own affairs when it comes to small fry. Her daddy's graduation had been a flurry of activity. Now he had been offered a pastoral district, and along with her Mamma, seemed excited at the prospect of relocating. They would bid farewell to their married students' apartment before the day was through.

Earlier this particular morning, a dirty mud-encrusted truck had arrived from Prince Edward Island, Canada. She'd barely heard of Canada, never mind an Island. Oh, she was used to moving, all right. But only in their little college town of South Lancaster, Massachusetts. Over her brief life, to manage their meager finances, they'd found lodging in several homes. When the new baby arrived, they had moved to this real home, a few second-floor rooms above the book bindery. Just the four of them, and she'd been happy.

Many a day she and Mamma had taken a stroll across the campus, pushing their buggies. Students and older folk always fussed over the new baby. Then, stooping low, they'd offer a few words of advice to the little girl pushing the aged wicker carriage filled with a ragtag assortment of dollies. How she did love her buggy. Its bonnet could be flipped forward, if the sun shone in her babies' eyes. Its smooth steel handle was just her height. And Mamma had crocheted a little matching blanket, so they'd be "twins". Idyllic days . . . until this moment.

The long fingers of evening's shadows were settling down. The farmer threw a strong blanket over the loaded truck. Using stout ropes, he crossed and crisscrossed the lumpy contents, tying everything securely in place. Then, with a wave of his hand he headed for the Border, and PEI. Daddy crammed the last bits and pieces into their Chevy. There'd barely be room for him to slide behind the wheel, Mamma beside him. Kido and baby Carol in her car bed would share a fraction of the back seat.

"Jump in, Shennie. We'd best get on



the road." Her father had called her this pet name for as long as she could remember. Now he patted her back light-heartedly. "We've got a long drive ahead of us."

"But we can't go yet. I'm not done packing." With all the might she could muster, she clung hopefully to that steel handle.

"We tried, Sweetheart. Really, we did. But . . ." How could he help her understand? "There just wasn't room."

The dam broke, and she burst into sobs.

"We'll buy you another one," Daddy promised. "A brand-new one, with shiny wheels. A bigger one. You won't even miss this worn-out old thing."

"No. No. No! I can't leave my buggy. I don't want a new one. I want this one. Me and Mamma, we go walking together. It will be lonely without me. Please, Daddy. Please?"

"Sharon, get into the car. Now."

She knew she must obey. Giving it one final glance, broken-hearted, she climbed into the back seat, leaving her beloved carriage among the rubbish a neighbor would take to the dump.

True to his word, Daddy bought her a new carriage for her dolls. And such a fine carriage too. Sturdy, with soft blue sides and a hood. Just like a real baby pram, one that could be converted into a stroller. Downright proud she was. Dolls and teddy bears shared the make-believe world of the little Mamma as she strolled about the neighborhood. Even the occasional cat was conned into sporting a baby bonnet and going for a ride.

Days turned into weeks; weeks into months, then years. The memory of the wicker carriage faded. But not completely. Mamma had kept a picture book for her child. A way of assuring the past would not be forgotten, of honoring its memory. And most especially, the second-hand left-behind buggy.

Until next time, happy honoring to you . . .

Madeline Lister is a quilter and writer by heart and by trade. Having retired in 2015 from the quilt shop she founded with her daughter, Madeline still fills her days creating with fabric and the pen, and traveling alongside her husband who suffers from an incurable case of wanderlust. Madeline writes from DeltaStone Farms in the peaceful wine region of southern Ontario, Canada. She would love to exchange comments and ideas with you. Contact her by email: madelinesmusings@gmail.com

Caricature by Ryan Lundy, August 2017

Storms with Three Holes

by Madeline Lister

It was a sure sign that things were getting colder. All over town, storm windows, stashed away in garages and under porches, were being hauled out. The autumn get-ready-for-winter ritual had begun.

"Get them on before the temperature drops," Daddy would say.

No double- or triple-paned thermal windows back then. Oh, no. When it got hot in the summer, you went outside and sat under a tree, and prayed for a little breeze. When it got cold in the winter, you thanked God Dad had put on the storms.

And quite a process it was, putting up those windows. Especially if you had an upper story or two, like most of our neighbours. A ladder, that's what you needed. And somebody at the bottom to hold it steady. Off with the screens, and on with the storms. Up and down, up, and down. Protect and insulate. Keep in the heat.

(story continues on next page)

(story continued from previous page)

In summer, the evenings usually cooled off. By raising the lower half and dropping the upper half of the window, we were able to coax a wondrous breeze through the house. Each room was refreshed. Window screens kept out the mosquitos.

But there was no such option with glass storm windows. That wood-framed window was fixed. Not that you wanted the howling wind reaching its fingers into your already chilly room, mind you. Nevertheless, a little fresh air to counter the staleness of a closed-up house is rejuvenating to both body and mind, not to mention helps reduce the chance of mildew. So, what to do?

Enter, Ventilators. When ordering your windows, you could order with or without ventilators. One-inch diameter holes, three to a set, drilled in the window frame's bottom sash to allow for air flow. One set or two, price 10 cents per set, as per The Mulliner Catalog of 1893. "Weep holes," some called them, as they also allowed for the draining of the water from melted snow accumulation between the normal window and the exterior storm window. Long pointy icicles grew down the side of the house below each hole as the drips "wept" from inside. A little arm, or flap, covered the holes. It could be pivoted up or down, depending on how much "refreshing" Mother wanted in her house.

In the deep of winter, Jack Frost locked us into a frozen world. It was magical. Intricate patterns papered our windows. Across the street could have been a thousand miles away. By scratching at the frost, you would get a blurry idea of whether it was merely foggy, or "blow'n up a gale" outside.

But why have only a fuzzy idea of the world beyond? Simply flip up the arm and check out the day! My sister and I called them peep holes. Taking turns, we scooped in close to the holes and drew a long breath of crisp cold air to clear the night's cobwebs. Then, holding one eye shut, we snooped.

There was Mr. MacKenzie, frantically clearing the night's drift from his driveway. If he didn't get a move on, he'd be late for work. From time to time he'd jab his shovel into the snowbank and slap his mittened hands together. While he shoveled, great puffs of vapor rose from his truck. A running engine would mean a warm cab when he pulled away. Cold work, that.

Through those peep holes we watched as the long rays of the sun and the morning's wintry breeze swirled in the ice-crusted trees about our house. A million diamonds were set to dancing. Cally and I imagined we were locked high up in an ancient stone fortress, there to languish until Spring would break through and rescue us.

At times, "peeping" paid us back something fierce. Those wintry breezes quickly became fierce gales, and found their way into every crevasse only the wind could find. Getting a blast of snow in the eye would bring the arm down with a slam and we'd scurry back under the bedcovers. Before Mom could call up the stairs, "No school today, girls," we already knew.

All day the storm would rage. The winds howled, ice pellets pinged the windows, snow drifts mounded up along the fences. The mercury sat at the bottom of the thermometer.

"Weather fit for neither man nor beast", Grandpa loved to say.

It can be most trying for young and old to be cooped up indoors all day, school, or no school. But who cared? We had our very own "snowbank". Through the long night, snow had been piling up between the inside window and the storm. Though an arm covered the weep holes, nothing completely sealed the openings, so, wisp by tiny wisp, the drift grew, sandwiched betwixt the windowpanes.

With great care, Sis and I raised the inner window. Packed white walls of snow, sometimes a foot high, held their place. And we carved away-miniature houses, curving streets, skating ponds. Elfin snowballs whizzed



across our room. No boredom back then. Fun was never farther away than a "Hey, why don't we . . .?" Eventually, the warmth of the house spelled the demise of our snow play. Only then did we close the window, and mop up the drips running down the wallpaper.

Today, storm windows with three holes have long ago gone the way of the proverbial Dodo bird. Such a pity. Should you ever find yourself on Star Trek's Holodeck, ask for a stormy Victorian winter's day, and do some peeping yourself.

Until next time, happy peeping to you . . .

Madeline Lister is a quilter and writer by heart and by trade. Having retired in 2015 from the quilt shop she founded with her daughter, Madeline still fills her days creating with fabric and the pen, and traveling alongside her hubby who suffers from an incurable case of wanderlust. Madeline writes from their farm in the peaceful wine region of southern Ontario, Canada. She would love to exchange comments and ideas with you. Contact her by email: madelinesmusings@gmail.com

Photo by Steven Campbell. Used with permission from Lost Newfoundland: Reflecting: A window of an abandoned home in Clarke's Beach, Newfoundland. www.facebook.com/lostnewfoundland

Over The Teacup

Benefits of Snow

By Janet Young



Outside the window the snow is falling on a starlit night to the sound of silence. In the meantime indoors you hear the crackling of the fireplace as you sit by the fire sipping your mug of tea.

This quietude brings a smile to your face as you lean back to enjoy the moment. For that one fleeting moment you can bask in the warmth of the room, while swallowing that last drop of cinnamon tea.

This is life at its best. This is the time of year when Mother Nature makes us slow down, when she causes the wind to blow, and the snow to fall silently to the ground. In the midst of this whirlwind, we have choices to make. Are we going to fret and worry? Or, is this the time you are going to honor the promises you have made to yourself over the last few weeks or even months? Promises such as spending more time with the children, or reading that novel you have been putting off, yet yearning to read.

This is a time to remind ourselves that we were made to take time to slow down and relax. It is a time to experience our everyday routine in a different way, in a slower way. This is an opportunity to do something for you.

Whatever you choose to do with that time, I would encourage you to use it wisely because in the morning you may find yourself outside shoveling the driveway as you prepare for another ordinary day.

-Janet Young, Certified Tea and Etiquette Consultant, is a founding member of Mid-Atlantic Tea Business Association and freelance writer/national tea presenter. Visit her website at www.overtheteacup.com.

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

By Annice Bradley Rockwell

A Time of Anticipation

The anticipation of the holiday season is an exciting time for country enthusiasts. With the first cold snaps of the year we can happily begin to plan for the festive season to come. Creating a welcoming space to celebrate the season can include many of our favorite things—early antiques, changes in lighting and elements of nature to provide balance and beauty.

At this time of year our decorated homes surround us with a special glow for our festive gatherings with friends and family. When planning to set the stage for splendor, consider a rearrangement of furniture to more easily accommodate larger groups with ease. Then to add texture and color to your vignette you might select woven runners or oriental mats that feature vibrant reds or deep cranberry tones. Using a prominent antique in an unusual way is a fun way to dress your home for the season. For example, an antique sled in early paint can serve as a beautiful riser at the center of a harvest table. Adorned with live greens, berries and candles, it would make a beautiful statement for the season. Early carriers of all sizes can be used not only to decorate, but to hold utensils for a holiday party.

Nature's bounty can round out your Christmas displays and complement early antiques beautifully. Using a tall pineapple surrounded by boxwood and berries on a pewter charger looks wonderful in either a formal setting or a more primitive space. The use of other fruit, like apples or pears tucked in and among boughs of green add a touch of nature and fill out the beauty of the scene.

The Spirit of the Season

To get into the spirit of the holiday season, nothing inspires more than the sights, smells and sounds that the country shopper can experience at Christmas shopping events. On selected crisp, cold weekends in November and December, many shop owners will have an evening open house event when their decorating talent and enthusiasm for the season is in its full splendor. Redecorated spaces capture the essence of Christmas and the relaxing sound of the harpsichord and scent of balsam make shoppers feel eager and welcomed. Finding that perfect gift for a friend or the ideal accent for your own Christmas display is a true joy in a setting that has been tended with such care, with you, the country shopper in mind.

So this holiday season plan to venture out to country shop events. Take in the beauty of the efforts of those who love country as much as you do. Enjoy the feeling of anticipation that this special season naturally brings and share that sense of excitement with those you hold dear.

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

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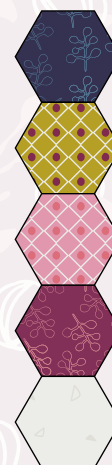
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Blissful

60" x 70"

Please read through all the instructions before beginning this project.
1/4" seams are used throughout unless otherwise stated.

Cutting:

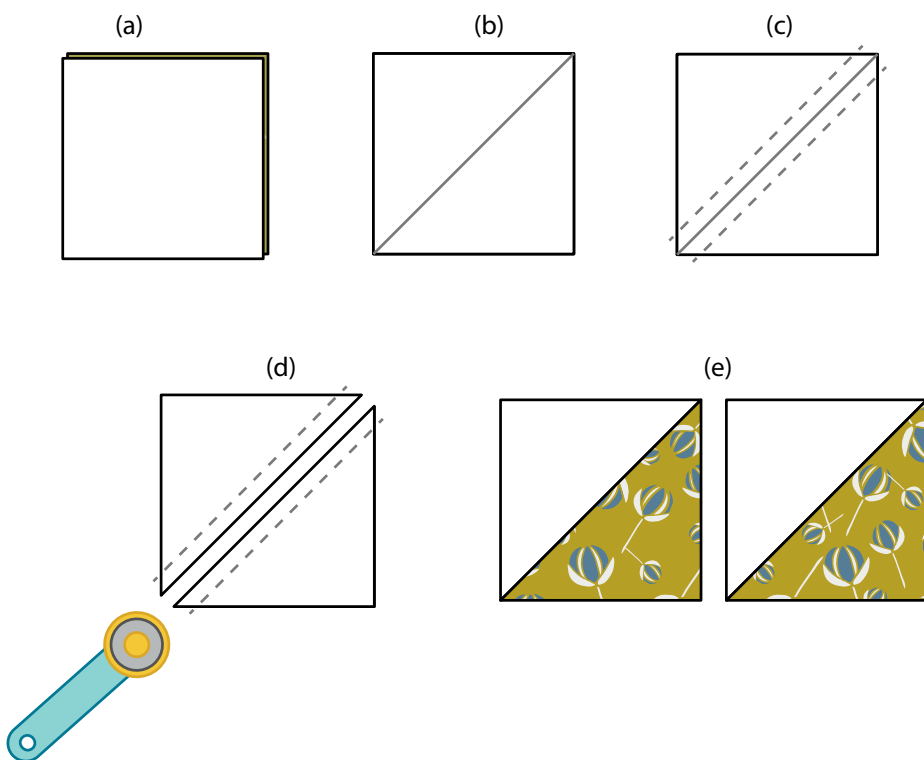
From EACH of the 14 printed fabrics cut: (1) 6" x wof strip subcut into
(6) 6" x 6" squares
(84 squares total)

From the white background fabric cut: (12) 6" x wof strips subcut into
(84) 6" x 6" squares

From the binding fabric cut: (7) 2 1/2" x 45" strips

Half Square Triangles:

Place a white 6" square on a 6" printed fabric square (rst) (a).
Draw a diagonal line from corner to corner with a marking pencil (b).
Sew 1/4" away from the drawn line on each side (c). Cut on your line (d).
Press open (e). Yields two half square triangles. Repeat for all 84 squares for a total of 168 half square triangles.



Assembly

Lay out your half square triangles out 12 squares across by 14 squares down. Make sure that the row beneath is the match to the row above to complete the rhombus shape.

Sewing

Sew the blocks together to form a row. Press each row in alternating directions.

Sew rows together. Press in one direction.

Quilt as desired and bind using your favorite binding method.

Enjoy!

HINT: make this quilt a little larger by adding a few borders!



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Town and Country Cooking

Nuts for the holidays

By Janette Hess

Just when you've been craving homemade cookies, the holidays come around to give you an excuse to pull out the mixing bowls and heat up the oven. This season, focus on nuts – almonds, pecans and walnuts -- to give your cookies plenty of holiday gravitas.

With their winning combination of almonds and cherries, melt-in-your-mouth Almond Balls will always deserve a spot on your ultimate cookie tray. Pecan Sticks, because they are not overly sweet, are the perfect showcase for pecans, a favorite nut for fall and winter baking. Old-fashioned Thumbprint Cookies allow you to creatively customize the flavor and appearance of each cookie.

When making cookies of any type, remember that the color of the baking sheet may affect the look of the finished product. These cookies were tested on light-colored sheets, as dark-colored sheets sometimes result in overly browned cookie bottoms. If using dark-colored sheets, just keep a closer eye on your cookies.

This year, go nuts with your seasonal baking.



Almond Balls

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 2 cups flour
- ½ teaspoon salt (if using unsalted butter)
- 1¼ cups powdered sugar, divided
- 1 cup blanched, ground or finely processed almonds (approximately 4 ounces)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 18 maraschino cherries, halved and blotted dry

Combine butter, flour, salt and ¾ cup powdered sugar. Add almonds and extracts. Mix well. Divide dough into 36 portions. Press cherry half into center of each portion. Finish forming ball. Bake at 325 degrees for approximately 35 minutes, or just until edges begin to brown. While still warm, roll in remaining ½ cup powdered sugar. When completely cool, store in single layer in airtight container. Makes 36 cookies.

Pecan Sticks



- 1 cup ground or finely processed pecans (approximately 4 ounces)
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup powdered sugar, divided
- 2 cups flour
- ½ teaspoon salt (if using unsalted butter)
- 4 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa powder, if desired

Mix ground pecans with butter. Stir in egg yolk, vanilla extract, ½ cup powdered sugar, flour and salt. Divide dough into 48 pieces and roll into short sticks. Bake at 325 degrees for 20 to 22 minutes, or until just beginning to brown. Leave hot cookies on sheets. While still slightly warm, roll in remaining ½ cup powdered sugar. For chocolate-coated sticks, roll sticks in ½ cup powdered sugar mixed with 4 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa. When completely cool, store in single layer in airtight container. Makes 48 cookies.

Thumbprint Cookies

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 egg yolks, lightly beaten
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- ½ teaspoon salt (if using unsalted butter)
- 2 egg whites, lightly beaten
- 1 to 1¼ cups chopped pecans, walnuts or almonds
- Fillings of choice (see suggested combinations below)

Mix together first 4 ingredients. Stir in dry ingredients. Roll dough into balls the size of small walnuts. Dip in lightly beaten egg whites and roll in chopped nuts of choice. Place about 1 inch apart on ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 5 minutes. Remove from oven and quickly press thumb on top of each cookie. Return to oven. Bake 8 to 9 minutes longer, or just until edges of cookies begin to brown. Cool. Fill each thumbprint with jam or jelly before serving. Makes 24 to 28 cookies.

Combinations:

Chopped walnuts or pecans with apricot jam

Chopped almonds or pecans with cherry jelly or seedless raspberry jam

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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Floradale • Stratford

The Day I Learned the Truth about Santa Claus

by Kerri Habben

When the little things of the world catch up with us, we cease to sense our truest dreams. Therein lies the tragedy of relinquishing our best selves without any real resistance.

Which is when Santa Claus, Father Christmas or St. Nicholas becomes a healer of sorts. Absurdly, it is easier to write a letter to an imaginary man in a red suit with elves and flying reindeer than it is to confess that we have

lost part of ourselves in the details of our lives.

I understand that Santa Claus is a secular part of Christmas. Yet Santa's story has a universal quality to it. He gives to every child, everywhere. All he asks is if you've been a good girl or boy this year. Which means that a sincere heart and kind actions matter most to him. His philosophy brings the Golden Rule to life before our very eyes.

Pure joy is an affirming emotion to witness in someone of any age. In a child there is precious and refreshing innocence to it. When someone more immersed in the light and dark of our world retains that particular essence and it shines from within them, it is achingly, enduringly beautiful. It doesn't necessarily mean that life was always kind to them; instead the exact opposite could be true. It simply means that they found a way to hold onto what many others gradually lose. Perhaps joy becomes an even greater treasure when we've experienced or imagined how empty life would be without it.

If we can extend our imagination as we did when we were children, in taking that leap of faith we remember how to dream with a youthful spirit. We may also yet find our better selves through giving and sharing with each other. In that essence I offer the following poem, originally published in an anthology entitled Looking For Santa.

I hope that whatever holiday your heart embraces, this poem adds joy to this season and a smile to your face.

To Dance with Santa



'Twas some time before Christmas,
late in Oktoberfest to be exact,
when as the strains of a waltz swirled,
I waited wistful and weary
beside a river journeying on its way.
Suddenly inside, the song shifted-
the simmering sound of Patsy Cline's Crazy
shimmered through the doorway,
showering me with its unabridged lament.
Who should appear, as I pondered imponderables,
but Santa Claus, dressed all in red
from head to toe like a true Father Christmas.
"Perhaps you would dance with me,"
offered he, gently and quietly.
From around myself, I unwrapped my arms,
stepped away from the night and the chill
toward the light and Santa himself.
I let the water carry my doubt away
as accepted Santa's white-gloved hand.
As we danced, I remembered how to dream.
The next evening I saw Santa once more.
He, kindly helping to clean tables,
was dressed from head to toe
in cap and overalls.
And the truth-
after all I'd heard speculation over the years-
washed over me.
Now I knew.
Even Santa has to take his suit to the cleaners
every once in awhile.

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. She donates many of her yarn creations to those in need. Kerri has gathered a decade of essays she is working to publish. She can be reached at 913jeeves@gmail.com.

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For those of you who collect 5" pre-cut square packs and don't know what to do with them, this is the pattern for you. Ann loves batiks and couldn't resist some batiks I had in the shop so this Mystery Quilt was designed specifically for them! It's fast, fun and easy! The 5" squares in this quilt are to the dark to medium range. Coordinating fabrics are a light and a medium light. The coordinating fabrics should not over power your 5" squares.

Blocks size will finish at 12X12" and your quilt will finish at 56X56" which is perfect for a child. If you want it bigger, you will just need to make more blocks!

Fabric Requirements:
Forty Eight (48) 5" pre-cut squares - "Fabric A"
1 yard light fabric to coordinate with your squares - "Fabric C"
1 yard medium/light fabric to coordinate with your squares - "Fabric B"

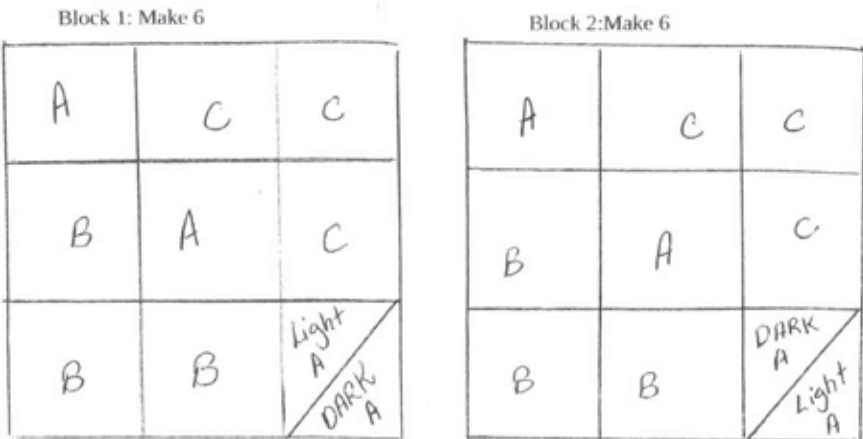
Border: 1 3/4 yard light fabric
Binding: 1/2 yard medium fabric
Batting 60X60"
Backing 60X60" (or 3 yards if using 45" fabric)

Construction:
We are making 9-Patch blocks. We will be making half square triangles so you might want to separate your fabrics into 2 piles: a "dark" pile and a "light" pile so you have contrast.

Blocks 1 & 2: Make 6 of each
For each block, Cut:
Three (3) - 4 1/2 X 4 1/2" light Fabric C
Three (3) - 4 1/2 X 4 1/2" medium Fabric B
Two (2) - 4 1/2 X 4 1/2" Fabric A
Two(2) - 5" squares Fabric A - choose a lighter and a darker for contract

Using your 5" squares, draw a diagonal line on the wrong side of the light one and with right sides together (dark/light), sew scant 1/4" seam on either side of the drawn line. Cut the diagonal line and press the seams toward the darker fabric. This will give you two half square triangle blocks. You will need to square these up to 4 1/2"

Block 1 and Block 2 are identical EXCEPT for placement of the half square triangle! In Block 1 the DARK side of Fabric A will be on the OUTSIDE BOTTOM Corner (light side towards the center of the block). In Block 2 the LIGHT side of Fabric A will be in the OUTSIDE BOTTOM Corner (dark side towards the center of the block)



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Star Anise (*Illicium verum*)

By Wanda Headricks

Over the last few months, there has been an increased interest from my customers for Star Anise essential oil (*Illicium verum*). So, I thought it would be good to share information on this interesting essential oil with you.

Star Anise (*Illicium verum*) is also called Chinese Anise or Chinese Star Anise essential oil. Star Anise essential oil is extracted by steam distillation from the fresh or partially dried ripe fruit of the Star Anise evergreen tree. China is the major producer of Star Anise essential oil, but it also cultivated in Vietnam, India and Japan. The fruit of the Star Anise evergreen usually consists of 5 to 13 seed-bearing woody follicles attached to a central axis in the shape of a star, from where it gets its name: Star Anise. The essential oil produced is a pale, yellow liquid with a warm spicy, sweet, licorice-like scent. There is a Japanese Star Anise (*I. lanceolatum*), which comes from a smaller tree and should not be confused with the true Star Anise (*Illicium verum*).

Star Anise has a licorice-like aroma, similar to aniseed essential oil, which comes from an annual herb, not an evergreen tree. Star Anise essential oil blends well with other spice oils like cinnamon, clove, nutmeg and ginger as well as lavender, orange (sweet), rose, pine and rosewood. Star Anise essential oil has been used in the pharmaceutical and food industries for many years to mask the taste of other, less pleasant tasting ingredients. It was used as far back as the 16th century in Europe as a flavoring for liqueurs. It also has excellent masking properties in aromatherapy to change or cover an essential oil odor an individual may not find pleasant, but one that is beneficial in a blend.

Star Anise essential oil is considered to have the following therapeutic effects: antiseptic, anti-spasmodic, carminative (settles the digestive system and encourages expulsion of intestinal gas), expectorant, galactagogue (increases secretion of milk), stimulant, stomachic (digestive aid).

The ancient Chinese physicians used star anise as a digestive aid, treatment for flatulence, and a breath freshener. They also used it for respiratory disorders, such as bronchitis and unproductive coughs. In the Eastern cultures, star anise is used as a remedy for colic and rheumatism. The Egyptians used it as a medicine and a culinary spice, thinking it "refreshed the heart." The Greeks and Romans considered it a "pick-me-up." Edward IV used it along with orris root to scent his linen and cloths.

As with all essential oils, it is encouraged to dilute star anise essential oil in a carrier oil if one is using it in an essential oil massage blend for a whole body massage or over a large area of the body. It is also recommended that it not be used continuously as a massage for an extended period of time. One good way to think of it would be to use it in a massage for a week, then use a blend without star anise for a week. That way you can be safe from over exposure.

Marie, Friendship & Sugar Cookies

by Rene' Groom

There are many moments during this time of year that I think of my elderly friend, Marie. Marie has been gone for a couple of years now. Our friendship was somewhat not the norm—she was some 30 years older than I and never a mom.

When we moved into our home, Marie and her husband Chuck lived next door with their two cats. We must have seemed like a storm that blew in with my husband and I, our four very busy boys and our dogs. In the early days, while we unpacked and got settled, we saw them watching from the distance. And, we always said hi. It wasn't long before we were all fast friends.

Marie and Chuck adopted our boys and our boys treated them as grandparents, doing little chores like mowing their lawn, taking the garbage to the curb and so on. Marie always commented that she didn't know how I did it, running here and there trying my hardest to keep up with my little herd. She seemed to be more reflective after the bustle of the holiday season. The invites to come for tea and cookies came more often as the grey days of winter came in endless streams. Her favorites were German Chamomile tea and Sugar Cookies.

Marie was of German descent and loved to share that her beloved Sugar Cookies originated from Nazareth, Pennsylvania, and can be traced back to the 1700s. Originally they were an unleavened cookie the German Protestant settlers called "jumbles," which was more of a biscuit that could be stored for many months, similar to the English crumpet. When researching her account, I discovered that the sugar cookie was actually adopted as the Pennsylvania Nazareth Sugar Cookie by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

I can think of no better way to pass away those grey days than with a pot of tea, fresh baked Sugar Cookies and memories of a sweet friend.

Rene' Groom lives in Washington State with her husband, Tom, and describes herself as a wife, mom, mother-in-law, granny, friend, speaker, writer, accidental photographer, woman of faith and cowgirl interrupted. Follow her on Facebook at Stories From The Back Road and on her blog - A Cowgirl Called at <https://renegroom.com/>.

Pick Me Up Winter Blues Massage Oil Blend

- 1 - 4-ounce Glass Amber Bottle with a glass dropper lid
- | | |
|---|------------|
| Pumpkin Seed Oil..... | 3.5 ounces |
| Orange, Sweet Essential Oil..... | 40 drops |
| Star Anise Essential Oil | 10 drops |
| Ginger Essential Oil | 15 drops |
| Rosewood Essential Oil..... | 20 drops |
| Black Pepper Essential Oil..... | 10 drops |
| Cinnamon Essential | 7 drops |
| Clove Essential Oil | 7 drops |
| Cedarwood (Virginia) Essential Oil..... | 10 drops |

Pour the pumpkin seed oil into the 4-ounce Amber bottle. The pumpkin seed oil is a carrier oil used to dilute the essential oils in for safe use on the skin area of the whole body. Blend all the essential oils into the amber bottle with the pumpkin seed oil. Apply the glass dropper lid to the amber bottle and gently roll or mix the essential oils into the pumpkins seed carrier oil. You can now use this blend if you want. Remember that its scent will change over a 4-day period until the blend matures. If you do not like the essence, you can add a few more drops of an oil you do like to change the scent.

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The Knitting Savant Accepting The Challenge

By Andrea Springer



Someone recently asked me how many years I'd been knitting. I learned as a child, so the question required some mental math. I was shocked to realize I've been making things out of sticks and string for 50 years – half a century! If I didn't feel old before I was asked the question, I do now!

There's a comfort in working at a craft you know well. Our hands and bodies can relax into familiar motions until we reach a point in the project that demands our attention. However, I've learned that to keep any craft fresh, we need to challenge ourselves now and then with something that requires a new skill, technique, or just plain scares us. As an instructor, I've watched students do just that -- successfully take on big projects that were well beyond their level. It wasn't always easy, or pretty, but by asking questions, experimenting and persevering, they achieved their goals and they grew as knitters. It's inspiring to watch!

Last year, I decided to challenge myself and develop new fiber skills by learning to spin. I'd been watching friends at their spinning wheels and admiring the finished objects they were able to knit with yarn they'd spun

themselves. I started watching spinning videos online, and the process looked so completely foreign to me I paused, completely intimidated. Could I really do this? Maybe. Maybe not.

I looked at wheels for months before finding a used one in good condition. I started by practicing making my feet work the treadle and making the flier go in one direction, then the other, for 15 minutes a day. I started adding fiber to the process and continued practicing. It's now a year later and thanks to friends who've mentored and encouraged me, I'm spinning yarn! It hasn't been easy -- or pretty -- but I'm producing singles and plying them together into skeins. I know more about the fiber I've been knitting all these decades, and I'm enjoying the process more than I ever imagined. So much so, I'm already wondering what to explore next!

What will you challenge yourself to learn in the coming months? Are you ready to knit socks or steek a sweater? Maybe there's a part of you that's ready to try your hand at a fair isle pattern or lace. Better yet, perhaps a project has captured your imagination and, after reading the pattern, scared you a little -- or a lot -- so you've passed it over for something you know you're comfortable with. Maybe the scary projects are the ones that teach us the most.

So, here's your pep talk: Decide what inspires you and go for it. Find someone who can help you break it down into manageable tasks. Practice. Ask questions, experiment, persevere! You never know what new doors will open and what beautiful objects you'll create!

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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The Festival of Quilts is Europe's leading patchwork and quilting event attracting 24,000 quilters from all over the world. Similar to the North American large quilt show in Houston, Texas, the Birmingham show is a celebration of quilting in all its forms. With over 300 exhibitors offering essential supplies, professional curated galleries of quilts from leading international makers, 250 workshops, talks and demos plus a magnificent display of over 700 competition quilts, this quilt show is a must to experience!

We will spend two full days at the Festival of Quilts during our 2018 Tour through Wales and London. Although the Festival of Quilts is a highlight of our tour, we have many, many other sites and stops planned – The Jen Jones Welsh Quilt Center, The Minerva Arts Center, Blackwell Arts & Crafts Center to name a few textile related stops. We will visit St. Fagans national History Museum in Cardiff, including its open-air museum on the grounds of the magnificent St. Fagans Castle and gardens (a late 16th century manor house donated to the people of Wales by the Earl of Plymouth in 1948).

Also included on our tour is a welsh Banquet at Cardiff Castle, a boat ride and tour through the lake District, Windsor Castle tour, plus so much more. An optional post-tour excursion to London includes visit to Stratford-upon-Avon (birthplace of William Shakespeare), Hampton Court Place (home of the Royal School of Needlework) and the incredible Highclere Castle made famous by Downton Abbey! Dust off your tiara and join us!


Our tours are catered to the textile enthusiast – quilts, fabrics, needle arts, etc. You don't need to be an expert, just an admirer of such beauty. Of course our tours are not just for textile artists, as our itinerary is full of interesting sites and must-see places for any traveler. We are like-minded people traveling together, and we'd love to have you along with us.

For more information: Celtic Quilt Tours - Kim Caskey 780-288-9008, kim@kimcaskey.ca, www.celticquilttours.com

The Festival of Quilts (Birmingham, England) - <http://www.thefestivalofquilts.co.uk/>



GIRLFRIEND WISDOM



George Harrison wrote the song, "Any Road". The lines from the song are often used as a reminder for the need to set goals and a plan for a desired destination.

"I've been traveling on a wing and a prayer - by the skin of my teeth by the breadth of a hair - traveling where the four winds blow - with the sun on my face, in the ice and the snow...Ah yea it's somewhere - and if you don't know where your're going - any road will take you there..."

Everyday we add mileage to our own Road of Life. Is there a map, a clear route to arrive at your Desired Destination? Are you on schedule, or have you taken a detour? All good questions to ponder.

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM: Pull over at the next Rest Stop and review your Life's Map. Can you find a more direct route to your Dream Destination? Program your GPS, get back on track. Jump in the Driver's Seat and put the Pedal to the Metal!

Joy & Blessings, *Jody*

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

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From our family to yours – Happy Holidays and a Prosperous New Year!

Tis the season for entertaining! Here's a great treat to have on hand for when company drops in or to make and give as a gift:

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- 2 pounds white chocolate (or 1 lb white and 1 lb dark)*
- 30 small peppermint candy canes

Line a large jellyroll pan with heavy duty foil. Place chocolate in a microwave safe bowl on medium setting for 5-6 minutes. Stir occasionally until chocolate is smooth and melted. (Or melt in a double boiler on the stove top.) Crush candy canes in to tiny pieces and stir in to chocolate. Spread evenly in pan and chill for about 1 hour. Break in to pieces!

*You can also add a layer of chocolate first. Use one pound of each and let the chocolate layer chill and add the white chocolate layer with peppermint pieces on top. Chill once combined and then break into chunks!

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(story continued from p. 8)

a landscape long gone, all of these beloved people she remembers now passed on. But in those moments I watch the world of my mother’s childhood reawaken. I feel this home that I have never seen. Through her I treasure this house of memory.

Never mind that Nanna passed away in 1958, fifteen years before I was born. For it is within our houses of memory that people live forever.

It is with this wistful, blessed gift that time loses its sting. Within these walls and windows of our recollections, we breathe a bit of the past as we live in the present. Yet we still journey one second at a time towards the future. Within us is the resilience to draw strength from our memories and foster gratitude for a new minute. A new minute of a young, new year with hours to learn, to give, and to love.

I wrote the following in my journal a summer ago. Often I sit quietly each season recording a moment for my own house of memory:

“But this I want to remember. The curve of the land around the azaleas, edged by the rocks my daddy set there decades ago now. That and the slope of green flowing gently around the cedar tree that just volunteered itself. And towards the crepe myrtle with my grandparent’s bench beside it. It is today and all is well.”

The precious time didn’t fully leave us. It simply lives on now in our hearts where many houses-and spirits-of memory reside.

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. She has gathered a decade of essays she is working to publish and can be reached at 913jeeves@gmail.com.

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