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Your Statewide Guide to Premier Shopping and Events

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March & April 2024



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March Events, Continued from page 2

- 1-April 30Visit White Daisy Quilt Shop during the All Florida Shop Hop in Punta Gorda (pg. 26)
1-April 30 Visit Kits by Carla during the All Florida Shop Hop in Labelle (pg. 26)
1-April 30Visit Cinnamon's Quilt Shoppe during the All Florida Shop Hop in Jacksonville (pg. 27)
1-April 30 Visit Calico Station during the All Florida Shop Hop in Orange Park (pg. 27)
1-April 30Visit Bee's Quilt Shop during the All Florida Shop Hop in St Augustine (pg. 29)
1-April 30Visit Sewing Garret during the All Florida Shop Hop in Daytona Beach (pg. 30)
1-April 30Visit Sew 'N Quilt Co during the All Florida Shop Hop in Holly Hill (pg. 30)
1-April 30 Visit Quilts and Lace during the All Florida Shop Hop in Melbourne (pg. 31)
1-April 30Visit Sweet Time Quilting during the All Florida Shop Hop in Sebastian (pg. 31)
1-April 30 Visit Quilt A Bit during the All Florida Shop Hop in Greenacres (pg. 32)
9.....Oaks Quilters Quilt Show at Red Oaks RV Resort in Bushnell (pg. 14)
12-16Nashville Market Week at Brick City Cross Stitch in Ocala (pg. 7)
14-16Original Sewing & Quilt Expo at RP Funding Center in Lakeland (pg. 16)
14-16Visit Tops Vacuum & Sewing at Original Sewing & Quilt Expo in Lakeland (pg. 23)
15-16Quilts from the Heart Quilt Show at Central Panhandle Fairgrounds in Panama City (pg. 5)
15-16 Deb Canham Event at Quilts and Lace in Melbourne (pg. 31)
15-30Visit Beyond the Stitches during the Central Florida Shop Hop in Crystal River (pg. 7)
15-30Visit the 7 participating shops during the Central Florida Shop Hop (pg. 8)
15-30Visit Nana's Quilt Shop during the Central Florida Shop Hop in Brooksville (pg. 19)

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March is National Quilting Month!

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Spinning Frames

Do you love cats? Cat Quilts? Cat Fabric? How about drinking wine?

Northcott has a new collection – Whiskers and Wine shipping to stores now! This includes a border print (used in the quilt) and 28 unique motifs that are cleverly framed in this quilt.

Using a half rectangle triangle shape creates a spinning design around each printed image.




Consider using the AnglePlay® template system for the easiest construction of these half rectangle triangles.

This pattern is designed to work for 5 1/2" cut squares in each frame. If you've got another size to use, the rectangle on each side can be adjusted to fit the shape!

The border stripe is fussy cut and gets you all the borders as shown in one piece for each side. The pattern includes mitering details.

You can find this pattern on my website or ask at a local quilt shop near you. Be sure to tag us if you make this up in these fabrics or something else. Happy Stitching!

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



- 16.....Coastal Quilt Show at Chillas Hall in Lanark Village (pg. 33)
18-19Designer Epic 3 Event at Scrap & Sew in Lutz (pg. 21)
21-22Spring Fling Sale at Nana's Quilt Shop in Brooksville (pg. 19)
23.....Suwannee Valley Quilt Festival by the Historical Train Depot in Trenton (pg. 6)
29-30Visit Margie's Sew Much Fun during the Panhandle Shop Hop in Crestview (pg. 4)

April

- 5-6Annual Quilts by the River with Miss D's Quilts in Palatka (pg. 28)
20.....Stitching Retreat at Brick City Cross Stitch in Ocala (pg. 7)
26.....Kimberbell Day at the Spa Event at Quilts and Lace in Melbourne (pg. 31)

May

- 2-43 Day Bare Bones Retreat at Brick City Cross Stitch in Ocala (pg. 7)
18.....Georgia JugFest and Old Knoxville Days at Old Knoxville Courthouse in Knoxville, GA (pg. 5)

August

- 2-5Quilt Weekend Get-Away Cruise with South Florida Quilt Expo (pg. 32)

March 2025

- 8-9Vendors Wanted for South Florida Quilt Expo at City Center in Pembroke Pines (pg. 32)

Panama City and Georgia

15 Quilters Commandments

by Deb Heatherly

- I hope this gives you a chuckle. As quilters I think we all can relate.
- 1: I promise to do my part. Money cannot buy happiness, but it does buy fabric and fabric makes me happy. Since I know that my friends and family want me to be happy, when I buy fabric, I am doing my part to keep everyone happy.
 - 2: I will put blame where it belongs. My need to buy fabric is the fault of the designers who create the fabric. I promise to stop buying when they stop creating.
 - 3: I will plan ahead. My stash is my retirement plan. One day I may have to actually use it. Until then, I'll buy more new fabric when I need to actually cut and sew, and always buy extra so I make sure to feed my stash.
 - 4: I will not envy my neighbors stash. Instead, I will diligently shop until I accumulate an even bigger one.
 - 5: I will practice equality. For every new "toy" my husband buys, I will spend an equal amount of money buying fabric.
 - 6: I will contemplate. I promise to think daily about all of the projects I will one day make from my stash. For now, just planning them is enough.
 - 7: I will utilize space wisely. It is important to come up with new ways to hide, (I mean store), my stash.
 - 8: I will be energy efficient. Stacked neatly, my stash acts as insulation.
 - 9: I will exercise my mind. I will do this by thinking of new ways to sneak (aka transport) the fabric into the house without being seen.
 - 10: I will be a good homemaker. This will be accomplished by coming up with creative ways to display and blend my stash into the home décor. Charm packs can be coasters. Yardage can be a tablecloth. What-nots can be placed on jelly rolls as lifters and to add a pop of color to a display.
 - 11: I will not whine. No, if a friend buys the last piece of a certain fabric that I wanted, I will not whine. I do reserve the right to quilt her until she shares.
 - 12: I will support the local container store. I will buy the largest containers possible because they will hold lots of fat quarters. As a bonus, when stacked in the kitchen cupboard behind cereal and cookies, they will be camouflaged from my husband.
 - 13: I will actually complete a quilt or two. By doing so I will need to replace the used fabric and my family cannot accuse me of hoarding. I will also keep in mind that quilts come in all shapes and sizes. A table topper counts as a completed project.
 - 14: I will always be there for my fellow quilter. Especially when she needs fabric therapy. I promise to accompany her on all buying trips and will clean out my car before the trip so there is plenty of room for the purchases. I will further support her by offering to store her purchases in my car until she can sneak (aka transport) them into her own house without her husband seeing.
 - 15: Finally, I will practice DUI. "Developing Ultimate Inventory." This supports my local quilt shop and keeps them in business so I can continue to develop my stash.

--Deb Heatherly is a designer for Creative Grids® rulers and the author of eight popular pattern books. Creative Grids® fans are invited to join her Facebook group, "Grids Girls," for tips and inspiration at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/770429649800457>. Shop Owners are invited to join her group just for them at "Grids Girls for Quilt Shop Owners Only" at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/273593657256524>. Visit Deb's website at www.Debcatsquilts.com.

St. Andrew Bay Quilter's Guild
"Quilts From the Heart" Quilt Show
March 15 & 16, 2024
Location: Central Panhandle Fairgrounds
2230 15th St, Panama City, FL 32405

9-4 each day Admission \$10

- RIBBONS - RIBBONS -
- RIBBONS -

This is a Judged Competition with ribbons presented to the winners of each category. These special ribbons are handmade by the guild members.

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- Judge's Choice
- Viewer's Choice
- Hand Quilting Award
- Machine Quilting Award

Annual Quilt Show Includes:

- Quilt Displays
- Silent Auction
- Quilters' Boutique
- Bits & Pieces Snack Shop
- Vendors

2024 Opportunity Quilt (pictured here)

Drawing will be held
Sat., March 16 @ 3PM
Tickets can be purchased
for \$2 each or 3/\$5

Visit our website for information on membership and meeting times
www.sabqg.org

Georgia JugFest

And
OLD KNOXVILLE DAYS

May 18, 2024
8:30-4:00 pm
Old Knoxville Courthouse
and more fun
4-9pm in the Roberta Town Square
with tug-a-wars; lawn-mower races
dancing and presentation of the Little
Miss and Mr. Jug Fest and more food
truck.... for the love of mud spend the
day in Crawford Co and Roberta.

Jug Fest 5k, Lunch and Learn, demonstrators, pottery and pottery
Display-Auction with attention to history.
Over 70 choice vendors and food trucks; Art Show, craft and business
booths, food trucks, and Puppy Pageant on stage on the field,
band performances and so much more until 4 pm
then it's up to Roberta's town center with food trucks and restaurants
and lawnmower races with a corn hole contest in process; food trucks
and more music to dance in the streets in the town center and so much
more to close the evening at 9 pm.
Friday night Little Miss Jug Fest Pageant.




Recipe THE COUNTRY REGISTER RECIPE EXCHANGE

Lemon Pudding Cake

3 tablespoons of butter,
room temperature
1 cup sugar
4 eggs, room temperature
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice

1/4 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 cup milk
fresh raspberries

Directions: Preheat oven to 325.° Lightly grease a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan or a 6-cup souffle dish.
Beat butter and sugar until fluffy. Separate eggs yolks and whites. Add yolks to butter mixture and beat well. Add lemon juice, salt and flour; beat well. Add milk; stir until well blended.
Beat egg whites until stiff. Gently fold into lemon mixture. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake 50 minutes, covering with foil during the last 10 minutes if the top gets too brown. Serve warm or chilled with raspberries. Serves 6.



Chiefland, Lake City, Trenton



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The Modern Priscilla Magazine

Today, there are many kinds of magazines, blogs and websites devoted to needlework enthusiasts with articles, photos and how-to instructions for many different types of needlework, including sewing, quilting, embroidery, knitting, crochet, and more. Social media groups are also available that allow members to interact with one another and share pictures of their work. And yet, 100 years ago, there were very few magazines on the market devoted to women's needlework.

The *Modern Priscilla* was a popular women's magazine that first appeared in 1887. Published by the Priscilla Company in Lynn, Massachusetts, the editors were Frank S. and Miss Beulah F. Kellog. By 1925, this monthly magazine claimed a readership of 600,000. The price per copy was 10 cents in 1911. In 1927, the price had risen to 20 cents.

Subtitled "A Fancy Working Magazine," this publication was aimed at women, with a particular emphasis on needlework fans. All types of needlework were illustrated—from hand embroidery and clothing construction to tatting, crochet, knitting and drawn work. One advertisement proclaimed,

"Women who like pretty clothes are almost invariably needle-workers because they know that a touch of embroidery gives even the most common-place garment an air of charm and distinction."


In addition to the emphasis on needlework, the magazine included tips and hints for caring for the household along with recipes, short fiction stories, dress patterns, China painting, information about new products, and letters to the editor. Advertisements included such companies as Eagle Brand Condensed Milk, Cream of Wheat, Campbell's Soup, Old Dutch Cleanser, Heinz, Spaghetti, Quaker Oats, and Jell-O.

Each issue was packed with illustrations of the latest dress patterns. Patterns in the early 1900s leaned heavily toward the Edwardian influence. Dresses were shown with dropped shoulders and long, narrow skirts that ended at the instep. Hobble skirts and tunics were also featured. Fashion changed radically by 1915 with the introduction of a style of design known as "war crinoline" showing hemlines creeping upward and skirts that were full and bell-shaped. By the 1920s, illustrations showed simple shift style dresses with clean long lines.

The magazine also featured serialized stories. Two different stories appeared in each issue and the editors were always looking for stories that included "dramatic interest having to do with the affairs of real people." They searched for stories that were concerned with the actual problems of the day.

By the 1920s, books based on the magazine's content were popular. The *Modern Priscilla Cookbook*, published in 1924, included 1,000 recipes. The *Modern Priscilla Home Furnishing Book* appeared in 1925, touting the idea of a "one-woman power kitchen." This type of kitchen was defined as "comfortable, convenient and efficient." The *Modern Priscilla* magazine was so popular that it began to absorb competing publications. In March 1912, *Everyday Housekeeping Magazine* had been acquired; then in May 1917, *The Modern Priscilla* absorbed *Home Needlework Magazine*. By 1930 *The Modern Priscilla* was out of print.

—Rachel Greco owns *Grandma's Attic*, a traditional quilt shop in Dallas, Oregon. A quilt historian and avid reader, she gives talks on needlework, the role of women in American history, and their connection to fabric. She has written several books and patterns and runs *Grandma's Quilt Club*, a monthly quilt class where participants collect quilt blocks, learn about quilt history and make new friends. Learn more at <https://grandmasatticquilting.com>.



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All Florida Shop Hop from March 1 to April 30 (magazine avail too)
and Jelly Roll Shop Hop from March 15 - 30

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The Country Register

RECIPE EXCHANGE



Taco Soup

From the Kitchen of Lynn Stephens, Longmont, Colorado

"Great for potlucks in a slow cooker!"

1 pound ground beef	1 onion chopped small
1 package Ranch dressing mix	1 package Taco seasoning mix
1 cup water	1 can black beans (15 oz. rinsed)
1 can Rotel diced tomatoes with green chilies (14.5 oz, mild or med)	
2 cans pinto beans with liquid (15 oz.)	
1 can creamed corn (15 oz.)	

Brown beef with onion in a pot. Drain grease. Add all of the remaining ingredients and simmer for about 20 minutes. Serve soup in a bowl with crushed tortilla chips on top and garnished with 1 tablespoon of sour cream.

Shop Hops: Supporting our Communities

Shop Hop is a familiar term to many quilters. These unique events benefit quilting and sewing businesses, shoppers, and local communities.

Shop Hops can vary in size from just a few stores to statewide or regional events. They expose customers to new stores and experiences.

Many of us have a "favorite" store. A place that's convenient, familiar, and that carries the stuff we like. But there is a whole world of new and different fabrics, notions, equipment, and personalities you're missing out on if you don't occasionally branch out. A Shop Hop provides quilters with a specific plan to do just that.

A Shop Hop works to promote and support quilting and sewing stores, so we can touch and feel the fabric in person. Most quilters "get this" and understand how important it is to support these places if we want them available in our communities.

Many quilters hop with friends, family, or their favorite "quiltzie." They're not just shopping – they're making memories as they travel around an area together. Shop Hoppers not only get to visit sewing stores, they also enjoy traveling through large and small towns, discovering places they may have never visited before.

The towns and cities that hoppers travel through also offer many treasures. Small town main streets evoke many fond memories. Shop Hoppers also support these towns as they take a break to enjoy lunch or dinner at a quaint restaurant. Someone along for the ride may visit a local antique store or boutique while hoppers are visiting a sewing store.

Hops are also about other kinds of fun. Most offer a reward, like prizes or discounts, for visiting participating shops. And of course, you get to express your creative side when you return home by making something beautiful with the items you picked up along the route.

The All Florida Shop Hop is coming to Florida for their second annual event during the months of March and April, 2024. It offers the opportunity to explore 70+ stores across the state. Start your adventure by picking up the All Florida Shop Hop Magazine at participating stores. This is a great resource to help you navigate the Shop Hop and something you can use all year long as you travel throughout the state.

Whether you hop to enjoy or support your community, we hope that you'll mark a few days on your calendar to explore the great state of Florida and all that its sewing industry has to offer. To learn more, visit AllFloridaShopHop.com and join the Facebook Group [Facebook.com/groups/All-FloridaShopHop](https://www.facebook.com/groups/All-FloridaShopHop). Please let the shops you visit know that you read about the shop hop in *The Florida Register*.

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Stitching Retreat April 20
email stitchocala@yahoo.com for further info

3 Day Bare Bones Retreat May 2-4
Registration begins Mar 28. email to register or call for details. \$90

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!



Picnic in the Park

After a long, cold winter the season we were eagerly anticipating has finally arrived... SPRING! Fling open your windows, and let the warm spring breezes flow throughout your house. With the dawning of a new season, the awakening of the earth, and the sun-filled days of Spring, one of the best ways to celebrate would be to have a picnic.

A picnic can be as basic as your typical backyard picnic. But if you want to tweak it up a bit why not have a picnic with a theme. Perhaps, by first deciding the location it will help you determine what theme you want to execute. For example, the beach for a beach picnic theme, or a ranch or farm with a barn for a western theme. The possibilities are endless, but you get the idea.

If you choose to go to a park, try to pick a spot that offers a nice scenic view. Some examples of themes at a park might be to choose colors of the rainbow and celebrate Earth Day. Or, do a Vintage Picnic which would be a perfect theme to have a tea party picnic theme. If you don't want to risk breaking your fine china, there are paper plates and cups that are fashioned to look like china plates. For a simpler menu why not try a cheese and charcuterie board.

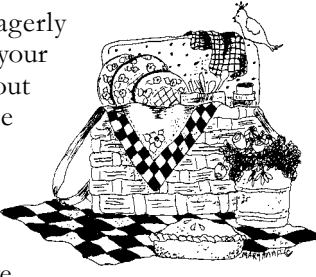
If you want a picnic on the grass, you might want to get a tarp from the hardware store, if you do not have one. The tarp should be put on the ground first, followed by a blanket or blankets and even pillows if you want to go all out for comfort. (The reason for using the tarp is to keep any dampness from getting on your blanket.)

Next plan the menu. In the planning process, bear in mind the distance from your car to the picnic spot. If you have access to a child's wagon that would greatly facilitate and eliminate the numerous trips back and forth to the car and picnic spot. You can keep the menu as simple or as elaborate as you wish. If having a theme, you could coordinate the menu to reflect your theme. For instance, the rainbow theme could consist of colorful foods to reflect the colors of the rainbow.



Whatever you choose from location, to theme, to the menu, keep in mind what you are wanting to create. Is it a celebratory occasion, a reflective moment, or a certain atmosphere you want to portray? Whatever the reason, sit back and enjoy the dawning of Spring when all the earth comes alive again and we rejoice in this invigorating time of the year!

Happy Spring!

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



Free Pattern



Meet Me in the Garden

For more fun and creative inspiration visit:
www.JacquelynnSteves.com

Free Embroidery Pattern – May not be sold or used for commercial purposes. Use this pattern for embroidery, wool applique, punch needle or rug hooking, painted projects or whatever your imagination can dream up! Reduce or enlarge pattern as desired.



Central Florida Jelly Roll Hop

MARCH 15-30

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www.sewing.net

Beyond The Stitches

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Airport Plaza, Crystal River
352-794-3289
www.beyondthestitches.com

Nana's Quilt Shop

18851 Cortez Blvd • Brooksville
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www.nanasquiltshop.com

The Sewing Studio at Lady Lake

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www.sewminithings.com

Piece by Piece

6917 Round Lake Rd • Mount Dora
321-398-2814
www.piecebypiecequilts.com

Passports cost \$7 prior to start of Shop Hop, \$10 during Shop Hop.
Only 1 passport per person. • Passports are non-refundable.

Participants must be 9 years old or older.

Must be present to have your passport stamped.

Must have stamp from all stores to be in Grand Prize Drawings.

Winners have 30 days from the end of Shop Hop to claim prizes.

Please do not ask stores to make exceptions to these rules.



Lady Lake, Orange City, Umatilla

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The Story of Glowing Glass

by Rica Ketcham

Glass that glows under Ultraviolet light has become one of the most popular trends in glass collecting today. While all glass contains a combination of elements, "Glow Glass" contains specific elements such as Uranium, Cadmium, Selenium and Manganese which fluoresce, or emit light at a specific wavelength, under a blacklight - glowing green, yellow, orange, pink, blue and bluish purple. Different elements glow best under different wavelengths of UV light, with the most popular being 365nm. A variety of fluorescent and LED blacklights are available at local hardware stores and online.

Uranium was initially added to the glass-making process in the 1830s to create a brilliant green-yellowish hue in daylight. As this glass grew in popularity, it was combined with other heat-sensitive chemicals to create a yellow glass that was first known as Canary Glass and then "Vaseline Glass: due to its resemblance to the Vaseline brand of petroleum jelly. It reached the height of popularity during the Victorian period (1880-1920).

Vaseline glass is in the family of Uranium glass, yet there are distinctions between the two. Vaseline glass is yellow or yellowish green in the daylight, while Uranium glass comes in various colors and shades of green and blue. Vaseline glass never comes in opaque colors like jadeite, custard, or Burmese glass, but Uranium glass does.

United States production of glass containing Uranium ceased during World War II because the government confiscated uranium supplies for the Manhattan Project from 1942 to 1958, but Uranium-based glass production resumed after that. Although Uranium glass does register on a Geiger counter, it is well below everyday "background radiation" or about the same as a cell phone. However, the U.S. EPA recommends not eating or drinking from Uranium glassware.

Manganese Glass dates back to Ancient Egypt and is considered one of the oldest elements added to glass. It was used as a clearing agent to remove the green tint that comes from iron impurities. The presence of Manganese is why clear or marigold glass will glow a dull green color under a blacklight.

Manganese in clear glass, especially antique glass, can also change clear glass to a shade of violet to deep purple with prolonged exposure to UV light, such as direct sunlight. In the glass world, this is known as "Sun-Changed" or Irradiated Glass, and it is considered a sham to deliberately alter the historical artifact by exposing glass to ultraviolet light to create this color. It is important to note that not all purple glass is sun-changed, and many color-fast shades of purple are created by adding specific elements.

Cadmium is added to glass to create a sunset look when exposed to UV light, with colors ranging from a bright yellow to a deep orange and even red. This was discovered in 1817, but there were production delays for the pigment until about 1820 because of the scarcity of the element - which also made it very expensive.

Selenium, similar to manganese, was used as a clearing agent for glass. It is often used in combination with Cadmium, creating a bright pink glow when exposed to UV light. Selenium is also associated with some red glass that will cause an orange glow when exposed to UV light.

The rising topic of these added elements to the glass world has brought about intrigue and new collectors, creating a surge in blacklights used while shopping to find the next piece of glass that unexpectedly glows. Now more than ever, glowing glass is selling fast. Don't forget your blacklight the next time you are out antiquing.

-Rica Ketcham is a seven-year veteran glass collector who was first attracted by the remarkable quality and craftsmanship of Italian Murano glass, and more recently Mid-Century glass. She is an active member of the Glass Gatherers Phoenix club (GGPhoenix8@gmail.com) and can be reached at her online store: <https://midcenturyketch.etsy.com>.

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Cowgirl Poet, Quilter, Entertainer



Yvonne Hollenbeck

Gone To Pieces

The bed isn't made,
the house plants are wilting;
the dishes aren't done,
and here I sit quilting.

I should be up dusting
or making some bread,
but it seems nowadays
I'm just quilting instead.

I've got many projects
all over the house
and it's not very pleasing
for my loving spouse.

I have no control,
since I caught the bug;
there's no time for laundry
or vacuuming rugs.

They are littered with clippings
or small bits of thread;
I barely take time
to make up the bed.

So, come in my friend,
that is, if you can.
I've just gone to pieces
and hope you'll understand.

Order Yvonne's new book, "A Stitch in Rhyme" at
www.yvonnehollenbeck.com — just \$15 + \$3.50 postage.

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Yvonne Hollenbeck, from Clearfield, SD, performs her original poetry throughout the United States, captivating audiences in her wake. She is one of the most published cowgirl poets in the West and is not only a popular banquet and civic entertainer, but also co-writes songs with many western entertainers. Yvonne also pens a weekly column in the "Farmer-Rancher Exchange" and writes articles about life in rural America in various publications throughout the West. For more information, visit <https://www.yvonnehollenbeck.com>

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Document Progress in Photos

by Sue Baldani

When making a homemade gift, how about keeping a photographic progress chart to include with it? Many people may not realize how much work and time goes into handmade items, and showing off the steps can be fun and educational.

For example, if you’re making someone a sweater, take a picture of the yarn with the knitting needles or crochet wand. Then, take pictures as the item takes shape. You may take one of the arms, the body, and then the finishing. Or, if making someone a bird house or other wooden object, take a picture of the pieces of wood and the tools needed to put it together. Then take a picture once it’s fastened together, followed by one of the painting in progress, and last but not least, the final product.

It will be interesting for the recipients to see what the items started out as and then to see them in all their finished glory. It will also show the craftsmanship involved, and may even inspire them to create a masterpiece with their own hands. Turning pieces of raw materials into something useful and/or pretty is a real gift that possibly the recipient doesn’t even realize he or she has.

Seeing an object take shape from beginning to end can bring the magic involved to light. Also, taking the time to make something by hand is a bit like giving a little piece of ourselves. And what says love more than that?



—Susan Baldani lives in New Jersey and writes articles about small town life, décor, books and food for various publications across the U.S., Canada, and the UK. You can contact her at suebaldani@yahoo.com, through her website at www.mywritingwall.com, or on Twitter @mywritingwall.



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Reader Shares!

Finished Project!

This is a remembrance quilt I made after my trip to Japan! I am inspired by quilt artist like Yoko Saito and Susan Briscoe and have made many of their designs. This is my compilation of beautiful sights in Japan.



Shared by A. Yuratich

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Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski

Improvisation



I finished a quilt yesterday which I actually began making three or four years ago. While this is not an unusual statement amongst quilters, this was a note-worthy (or, article-worthy?) quilt for me because it contains what I think of as a mistake-in-translation.

The birth of the project actually began one Saturday morning, when I was watching a quilting program on Public Television. The program's host was describing a quilt block she was featuring in the episode; I waited until the show finished before jumping up to grab paper and pencil to record what I recalled from her instructions. (Note to future self: have paper and pencil handy WHILE watching quilting programs which you cannot stop-and-start at will.)

Anyway, I scribbled down notes and drew out a diagram, to the best of my memory.

Working on the block a month or two later, I couldn't imagine why the program's host had referred to this design as a star, because mine looked more like a whirligig. But never mind, it was a cute block, so I made more. Eventually, a quilt top was created.

Six months later, the quilting episode aired again. I was rather horrified to discover I had missed a step in the notes I had jotted down regarding the block design. No wonder mine didn't look like a star!

This, of course, led my brain down a rabbit-hole of thoughts while I stitched the binding. How in the world did quilt block designs make it from the East, through covered wagon rides on the Oregon Trail as families headed West, yet my memory confused the information traveling ten feet between the television and my paper and pencil, not twenty minutes after watching the program?

Maybe that's part of what's behind the wide variety of interpretations on which color fabric belongs in the middle of a Log Cabin block (aside from the Underground Railroad's practice). Or, it might explain how one small adjustment became Courthouse Steps? Don't get me started on the subtle differences between the Hunter's Star, the Ohio Star, the Block Star, the Northern Star, and the Sawtooth Star.

I'm not a quilt historian. I appreciate the work quilt historians do, however, and I feel I now understand a bit more of why there is so much confusing history surrounding quilts they unravel for people like me. (Do you call it a Churn Dash block, or a Hole in the Barn Door?) Oy.

This also explains how there can be so many quilters currently designing more quilt blocks for us to play with. New fabrics, tools, techniques, and sewing machines allows for building upon the rich heritage of quilting which precedes us.

By the way, I looked up "whirligig quilt patterns" as I drafted this article; turns out there are at least two versions of quilt patterns going by that name—and my creation looks similar to, but nothing like either one of them. Isn't that too funny? Here I am, an Improv Quilter in the making.

© Jeanette Lukowski 2024. Jeanette is a mother, grandmother, teacher, and author who lives in Mankato, MN. She is inspired by the lives of strong women. Her email address is: writingfromlife@yahoo.com

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Open the Door! That’s What They are For.

by Barbara Kalkis

My doctor gets the credit for making me think about doors. No, it wasn't for therapy, although I sometimes wish someone would tell me what to do in certain situations. Mostly, however, I just wish I had a butler, the way some kids wish for a pony. But I digress.

It was a busy day at the doctor's office. The nurse escorted me to the examination room, apologizing that Doctor was running a bit late. No problem. Alone time helps me settle into my surroundings and shake off a list of “what-if’s”, which is challenging when the counters are stuffed with bandages, gloves and other “tools of the trade”, and the walls are plastered with cautions, warning signs of diseases and posters of body parts you forgot you had. And did not need a reminder of.

Grammed amongst the barrage of medical information, I was intrigued to see a huge, handsomely framed poster showing row upon row of doors. It was so completely out of place that I wondered if it contained some secret hidden message. In any case, it was a welcome change in the windowless room.

There were no words, no title, just close-up photos of formal doors in every style and color that could grace the front of a house. Windows or no windows. Embellished decorations or plain. Stern glossy black doors fitted with gleaming brass handles, locks and kick-panels. Gray doors, suggesting owners who could not commit to a color. Heavily varnished doors showcasing the wood's grain.

Interspersing traditional styles were the flashy doors. The owners seemed intent to match door color to decorations on their porches. Grecian urns held massive red geraniums that exactly mirrored the door color. Green doors stood between boxwoods shaped into miniature trees with globes of tiny leaves. Bright yellow, pink, sky-blue, and lilac doors indicated cheery souls within who were brave enough to shun tradition or homeowner association color codes.

As I studied each photograph, I wondered what made this artwork more compelling than a simple scene. Dedicated to over-thinking things and having nothing to do while half-dressed, I decided that there is some deeper meaning to a door than a realtor's suggestion for “curb appeal.” Scenes invite us into walk into an environment. Floral bouquets inspire appreciation of beauty.

Doors hold many more meanings. They are solid, sturdy, strong. You can count on a door for privacy. They provide security. They communicate the personality of their owners. They are the first indication of the kind of people that live behind them. Think of welcoming door wreaths at Christmas or circlelets of spring flowers or 4th of July miniature flags and stars. Doors can keep us out. They also are the gateway to walk through.

In life, we all encounter many doors, real and abstract. The real doors are easy to deal with. We knock and hope they are opened. The abstract doors are harder to define. Those doors might stay closed to a new job or other opportunity. Many more doors are gateways to a new chapter in our lives — perhaps a move, the vacation of a lifetime, a new friend, or special person to share our lives with, a child or grandchild.

Whatever the door represents is up to each of us to decide. I like to think of a door as the entry to some new adventure, a new beginning, a new start, a new chapter, even a new season in the circle of a year. We just need to knock, walk through and the future will be open to us.

—©Barbara Kalkis. Barbara spends her time writing, teaching, and working as a marketing consultant. She's author of Little Ditties for Every Day: A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

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Designed by Ann Jones, Nevada, MO

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PART II:
Piecing the Quilt Top (Option #1):

- Following the diagram below, piece together like a nine patch. Make four sections.



- We're now going to take these four sections and sew them together like a 4 patch, turning them so the dark patches form the center diamond. See Diagram below for guidance.



- This completes the baby quilt version of this Mystery Quilt. Quilt and bind as desired. Thanks for joining me! If you want to make a bigger quilt, leave the quilt top as above (don't quilt it!!) and look for Part III in your next Country Register.

Wit and Wisdom

by Cheryl Potts

Is Your New Year's Resolution Not Working?

If you have not been able to keep your New Year's Resolution, maybe this book is for you.

This year, I've decided to get serious about making a New Year's resolution. However, what can I commit to that is not too painful, wasteful or dangerous? Hmmmm...

Perhaps losing a few pounds, or forty, would be a worthy endeavor. On the bright side, it would give me more energy, grow more memory cells, looser clothing and have enough breath to get to the mailbox and back.

This may take some dedicated research to find the best possible meal plan for a big girl like me. After scrolling down through a few sites, I found a book titled: Eat to Lose Weight. That sounded like a book I could relate to, so I ordered it. That inspired me so much my stomach started growling. I finished up a half a bag of potato chips.

In the midst of my computer research, my neighbor came over for a visit and brought a bag of cream cheese cookies. So, we had a cup of tea and I shared the bag of cookies with her.

My book arrived the next day. So, I relaxed in my recliner, ready to read and get this resolution under way. Chapter one, started out very discouraging. It listed all the diseases and consequences of eating the wrong foods. The most disturbing of all, was that I would have to give up "dairy products." There goes my daily afternoon snacks of cheese and crackers.

Chapter two, advised me to eliminate eating any meat products unless it was a three-ounce piece of salmon, squid, scrod or octopus. I started having palpitations.

Chapter three, stated that enjoying sugar of any kind was totally against the "Dieter's Bill of Rights."

At the end of this chapter I just knew that starvation was my only option. This was becoming painful. I immediately had to have one square from a chocolate Hershey bar.

Chapter four, described the layout of your dinner plate. It should consist of 2/3 vegetables and 1/3 a chicken nugget. Green vegetables will produce enough protein to fulfill your minimum daily requirement. So seriously consider eating peas, beans and broccoli. At this point, I finished eating the rest of my Hershey bar.

Somehow, my dietary wants don't match up to reality. I don't believe reading the next ten chapters in my book will slim this body down.

On a serious note, perhaps my new resolution should be exercising at the gym at least twice a week. I would like to improve my muscle tone and flexibility. If I can bend over and touch my toes, I'll celebrate a victory! However, it's too late to look like a 20-year-old in a 70-year-old body!

Food for thought: "America has more to eat than any country in the world and more diets to keep us from eating it." and "You never realize what a poor loser you are until you try dieting."

-Cheryl Potts lives in the snow belt region of New York State.



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Retirement

by Barbara Polston

Two months ago, I gave my notice of retirement. The reaction of some of my coworkers has been surprising. Some expressed envy and many more gave congratulations. I've worked most of my adult life, only taking time when my daughters were born and for graduate school. I've dubbed this the "event 52 years in the making."

Certain aspects have been difficult. My replacement was named early and time was invested in training her in all the details of the job living in my head. There was a lovely retirement party, but after that and with two weeks to go, it was clear I was a lame duck. The feelings of uselessness have been challenging. But, that's over now.

People ask about my retirement plans. My adult children feel I should find a part-time job, but I have given myself one—that of children's book author. Resurrecting a project that has been in my mind for over five years, I have partnered with a long-time colleague and our first book draws closer to publication. Soon, we will be delving into the world of websites and social media to support book sales. It is all pretty exciting.

Some of my goals are small. Keep up the exercise program I began in an effort to positively impact my health. Give myself a manicure once a week (or so). Try new recipes and improve my scratch baking skills. Catch up on medical and dental appointments that have been neglected due to the pandemic and moving to another area of the state.

Of course, there are quilting and sewing goals as well! For two years, my home office and my sewing space has been one in the same. My goal for my first week of retirement is to break down the office space. In its place, I will build a design wall to, once again, have the visual impact of my current projects. I have more PITS (projects in tubs) than I care to admit, but I am determined to chip away at those and eliminate the stacks of tubs that fill my closet and live under tables.

There are a few competition quilts I've been mulling over for years. If they go according to the vision I have, perhaps I will put my work back out on the show circuit and see what happens. I'm quite excited about the time to attend quilt guild meetings, spend time in the company of like-minded quilters, and find a bit of volunteering to do there.

No one knows how much time is left in which to enjoy life and become the person I truly want to be. But, I'm working on it!

©Barbara Polston, Barbara, who is the author of *Quilting With Doilies: Inspiration, Techniques, and Projects* (Schiffer Press, 2015) lives in Tucson, Arizona, where she is now spending time in the pursuit of life-long dreams, many of those at her sewing machine. Contact Barbara at barbarapolstonquilter@gmail.com.

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Recipes From Barbara Floyd

Cinnamon Nut Scone

A Family Favorite Scone Recipe

3 C. flour

1/2 C. sugar

2 1/2 t. baking powder

1/2 t. baking soda

1 T. cinnamon

3/4 t. salt

Blend the above ingredients well.

3/4 Cup Cold Butter cut in so mixture is crumbly (like pea size)

Add 1/2 Cup chopped Walnuts or Pecans

1 Cup of Buttermilk, Stir gently until all is moist.

Knead mixture slightly and cut into rounds desired size on a floured board.

Use egg wash on top if desired.

Bake at 400 degrees for 12-15 minutes.

I could not begin to tell you how many triple batches of these scones I have made over the past 30 years! One thing I found out and tested many times is making them up ahead of time, cutting them out and freezing on a cookie sheet. When they are frozen solid, pop them into a good airtight container and, hours before wanting to bake them, thaw out completely (covered by a clean dishtowel) on either a stone or a cookie sheet—I like to put parchment paper down first—and then bake as directed.

One variation of this recipe is to leave the cinnamon out and add dried cranberries along with the nuts. We used this recipe exclusively at Goosberries Tea Room & Gift Shop in Phoenix and also at The Country Register Cafe & Tea Room in Kennewick, WA, in years past. Now I use it in single or double batches for home entertaining. If you don't have cookie cutters the right size, you can use a juice glass or cut them in wedges with a sharp knife.

from: Barbara Floyd, Founder of The Country Register

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Winter Haven

Life in Skunk Hollow

by Julie A. Druck

Library Love

National Library Week is Mar 25-31. Upon learning that, and in conjunction with the fact that I'm currently reading a book about libraries, I thought I'd wax eloquent for a bit about my library love.

Libraries and I have a long history. Actually, the library I'm referring to is the little bitty one I've patronized since I was old enough to read. The library itself is simply a doublewide mobile home that's literally 3 minutes from our farm. It's on the outskirts of my old hometown, and it's the same one that my grandfather would drive me to in the summertime to fill up on more Nancy Drew's. (I ate those things like candy.)

I've always loved to read and the nearness and familiar comfort of our little library encouraged that habit. I couldn't wait until I turned 13 – that was the age you had to be in order to volunteer at the library. The summer that my best friend and I “came of age,” we signed up at the same time. What bliss it was (yes, I'm a nerd) to hear the clunk of the book charger as it inked the due date onto a card, but it was even better to be the one who MADE the clunk.

During my high school years, the library was used mostly for homework help and term paper resources. That season of my library experience was more about business, less about the sheer love of reading.

But library love flourished again when my husband and I began our family. Our three sons were introduced early in life to story time and the joys of the summer reading program. Every week would find us lugging home book bags full of treasures. As our sons grew, our use of the library grew. Since we homeschooled before all of life was entangled in the worldwide web, the library was our main source of knowledge. We literally couldn't have homeschooled without it. When the boys were in the early grades, I'd plan unit studies on all kinds of topics to introduce them to the incredible world around us. Library books opened their eyes to places and things and concepts that they might never have known otherwise.

Those boys are grown and gone now, yet even in my empty nest years, the love remains. It's rare that a week passes when I'm not at that same little library picking up more books to read on our deck in the sunshine or audios for my husband and I to listen to on monthly trips to our cabin.

And I'm happy to report that my library love continues on into the next generation. Our two sweet grandbabies have been introduced to the joys of our little library. They've both already reached their goal of having 1,000 books read to them before kindergarten. I love seeing their faces pop up on the library's TV screen celebrating their achievement, along with the other children who are blessed to have parents who know the incredible importance of library love.

If it's been awhile since you frequented your local library (big or small), check it out and show your support for all that libraries contribute to our communities. You just might fall into library love yourself.

—Julie Druck is from York, Pennsylvania, and writes from her farm in Skunk Hollow. She'd welcome your comments at thedrucks@netzgera.com.

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GIRLFRIEND WISDOM

What is the Main Thing? Hummingbirds are spectacular to watch! Due to their extremely high metabolism, hummingbirds have to visit hundreds of flowers a day. A few Hummingbird facts: They are the smallest migrating bird. They don't migrate in flocks, they typically travel alone for up to 500 miles at a time. They are the only birds that can fly backwards! The average weight of a hummingbird is less than a nickel. Yet, they consume up to double their weight in a single day. Their tiny legs are only for perching and moving sideways. They can't walk or hop. They get their name from the humming noise that their wings make as they beat so fast from flower to flower.



GIRLFRIEND WISDOM:

The Hummingbird seems to hold a special talent and focuses on the main thing it needs to be successful: taking care of its body so it can beat those wings forwards or backwards to the next flower. Hummm - what is your special talent to focus on - are you attending to the Main Thing to nourish it in your day? When you see a Hummingbird in your yard, let it be a reminder to be aware that focusing on the Main Thing for your Heart's Desire needs to be nourished today!

Girlfriend Wisdom is written and illustrated by Jody Houghton®. For color files of this writing, contact Jody at: jodyhoughton@msn.com or www.JodyHoughtonDesigns.etsy.com

Brooksville, Plant City

A Cup of Tea with Lydia

Spring into TEA

by Lydia E. Harris



I grew up on a dairy farm in Blaine, Washington, where my mother served afternoon coffee and fresh homemade zwieback (yeast double buns) on Sunday afternoons. This German Russian tradition was called fasha. Often friends dropped in unannounced during that time. Mother would quickly set out a spread of sliced cheese, meats, rolls, home-canned fruit, and sweets to serve them.

My parents' hospitality made an impression. I enjoyed these spur-of-the-moment visits with church folks and wanted to follow my mother's example.

Hospitali-TEA

Years later, when a friend gave me If Teacups Could Talk by Emilie Barnes, I became inspired to invite family and friends for a cup of tea. Since I was also just beginning to write for publication, I decided to write a column I entitled, "A Cup of Tea with Lydia." When I told my writing mentor about my idea for a tea column, she said, "That would bore me to tears."

It hasn't bored me to tears. Now decades later, I still enjoy going out for tea, serving tea to others, and writing this tea column. I hope you enjoy the column too.

A friend asked me, "How do you keep coming up with ideas to write about?"

"I just keep serving tea," I replied. I don't usually plan a teatime to have a topic for a column. But often after serving guests, I realize, "This could make a good tea column." The tea party inspires the column, not the reverse.

If teacups could talk, mine would have many stories to tell. Like what happened a month ago when my granddaughters (13 and 20) planned to stop by. "Would you like to come for tea?" I asked. They did.

Impromptu Tea

Without much time to prepare, I planned a menu around the food I had on hand. I made crustless cucumber-and-cream cheese sandwiches, scone blossoms from my cookbook In the Kitchen with Grandma, and served sweets from my freezer.

Placemats, floral teacups and saucers, and a three-tier plate stand filled with foods welcomed them to the table. The bottom plate held fresh-baked scones, Norwegian krumkake, and cookies. On the side, homemade whipped cream, jam, and lemon curd accompanied the scones. The middle plate held the sandwiches and edible small trees for a garnish. A slice of summer sausage was the tree base, thin cucumber slices were folded back and forth for the tree, with a cheese star on top—all held together with a toothpick. The smaller top plate contained cupcake liners filled with fresh raspberries and small chunks of melon.

They each had their own small pot of favorite herbal tea—Country Peach Passion—and the three-tier stand rested on the table between them. What a delightful way to spend an impromptu visit! Now my teacups have another story to tell.

Spring Teas

Spring is a lovely season to share tea. How about an Easter brunch, a St. Patrick's Day par-tea, or a Mother's Day teatime? Or perhaps you have a birthday or shower to celebrate. I've included an easy three-ingredient recipe to serve. It will add a colorful sweet and salty crunch to whatever else is on the menu.

I can't wait until my next tea party! Won't you join me?

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From Lydia's Recipe File: Spring Pretzel Flowers

Colorful and easy to make.

Ingredients:
Pretzels (square-shaped, called snaps)
White vanilla candy melts
Pastel M&Ms



Directions:
1. Place one candy melt on each pretzel.
2. Heat a few at a time in the microwave to soften, not melt (time varies, but check every 15 seconds).
3. Remove from the microwave. Place an M&M in the center of each candy with the M side down.
4. Add 5 or 6 candies of another color around the center as petals of a flower.
5. Chill to harden the candy melt.
Make as many as you need, at least two per person.
Variation: Use round crackers or cookies (e.g. shortbread) as the base. Spread with ready-made vanilla icing. Add M&Ms.

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My First Quilt

by Sheila Tinkham

I sewed
And sewed
Stitch by stitch
Each stitch by hand
The first third all wrong
No rhyme nor reason
Then the second third carefully planned
After listening to Richard, my husband
And seeing the first quilts of Karen, my dear friend
So measured and perpendicular fine
The last third I just had fun
Weaving a kaleidoscope of color and form
Like my life messy, but strong in faith and love of family
I see the result
And like my life
I am well pleased
It is like this quilt, well sewn.



--Sheila Tinkham lives in Lincoln, NE. She started quilting when she sprained her ankle and fell in love with the process of sewing and the focused peacefulness of making and designing quilts. Writing is her passion and she has self-published three poetry books. You can follow her on Twitter at SheilaTinkham.



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Ann’s Lovin’ Ewe
What’s in a Name?

by Ann Stewart

*What’s in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.*

William Shakespeare makes that claim in Romeo & Juliet. Ironically, we once had a ewe named Rosie. Wouldn’t say she smelled sweet, but her name did endear her to us more than some of the other nameless sheep on the pasture. There have been a few other naming exceptions. The year UVA won the National Championship, we had Minnie (for Minnesota where they clinched the title), and Kyle (UVA star player), and Bennett (UVA Coach).

Following basketball’s March Madness, April brings a “shower” of lambs to Skyemoor Farm. Though there are plenty of opportunities to name each fluffy knobby kneed arrival, we try not to attach a name as it also proves Shakespeare’s quote that “parting is such sweet sorrow.”

Naming a baby is more fun but holds great responsibility. Two recent arrivals to our extended family were named Lydia ANN and Flora Elizabeth, both well thought out and meaningful names. Many websites list everything you could want to know about a name’s origin, meaning, and popularity by decade. There’s even research about how people perceive a person when only given their name. Catherine vs. Katherine evokes a different image in the reader’s mind. So then what effect does a name have on a person’s future?

Our pediatric ophthalmologist was Dr. Starer. While touring colleges, we listened to Dean Dean. A noted magistrate presides as Judge Judge. Perhaps at your next dinner party talk about “nominative determinism” which hypothesizes that people are drawn to the career that fits their name. Or bring up the funniest or worst names. That’s always worth a good story.

As someone who hopes to be a grandma one day, I also find the names given to grandparents very intriguing and apparently so do others. There’s a book on just that called Nanagrams and if you google names for grandparents, you’ll find all sorts of suggestions including:

Boppa, Papa, Gram, Gigi, Meemaw, Poppy, Bibi, Momo, Gaga, Pop Pop, Gramsie, Grammie and Grampie, Bubbe, Gpa, Gma, Yaya, Gran or Grannie as Downtown Abbey granddaughters dub the family matriarch.

In France they use Grand-Mère and Grand-père or Mémère and Pépère In Italy, Nonna and Nonno. Germans call out for Oma and Opa, (that’s better than grossmutter and grossvater) while in the Philippines they use Lola and Lolo.

Lydia ANN’s grandmother is going by “Nana.” When my friend Anna was dubbed Gramanna I was so enamored with the name I gave it to a character in my first novel. Another friend was dubbed Granny Lahoo by her grandkids—though she has no idea how it derived. But that will always be a tender favorite. When my daughter Christine was nine months old, she called my father, Bumpa. How I wish the name had lingered, but it was extinguished when she heard her cousins call him Grandpa.

Her full name—Christine Alane—means “Bright and shining follower of Christ.” That’s what I hoped for her and it’s how she lives her life. My other daughter Julia’s name comes from the Bible, and she shares my middle name Marie. I have to admit I gave her the names purely because they sound beautiful together and strike an image of someone who is beautiful inside and out. She is, too!

How were you named? Do you wish you had a different one? Do you know what your name means? Or why you were given it? It’s kind of fun to see if the meaning or the proverbial shoe fits. Hopefully, it’s been a good match as Shakespeare says, “Good name in man and woman is the immediate jewel of their souls.”

- © 2024 To find Gramanna – read Ann Marie Stewart’s STARS IN THE GRASS



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Crafter’s Perspective - An Oven Saga

by Barbara Kalkis

To me, the term “Joy of Cooking” only refers to Irma S. Rombauer’s 1931 classic book – not the actual practice of cooking itself. While I savor everyone else’s cuisine, the art of boiling, broiling, and baking always eluded me. One of my most jarring experiences was the evening my microwave oven died. The moment occurred just after I had removed the broccoli (8 minutes on high), scalloped potatoes (15 minutes/ medium-high), and my cup of tea (1 minute/high). I was ready to pop my signature turkey meatloaf in for 15 minutes (medium-high) when the microwave began buzzing as if locust hordes had returned after 17 years of hibernation. The panel blinked a few times and croaked. I stood, holding the meatloaf, not knowing how to cook it in the oven. (Yes, despite dozens of cookbooks and the web.) I browned turkey burgers to a crisp on the stovetop and dashed out the next morning to replace the microwave. If nothing else, I do prioritize tasks well.

This is not to say that I only use my oven as a storage cabinet for my cast iron skillets. It’s just that they fit nicely in there. My first oven lasted almost 30 years. Is that asking too much? It was “old-fashioned” with no special features, but it made everything look like something out of a magazine: pie crusts, turkeys, chickens, lasagnas, casseroles, cookies – all emerged with an award-winning golden glow. Naturally, they didn’t taste as good as they looked, but I got 5 stars for first impressions.

When that oven died, I graduated to a convection oven. It worked for 13 years. My niece claimed that, in terms of actual use, it was really only 3 years old. (How did we end up with a generation of smart-alecks?) Once again, I summoned my strength and raced to the biggest local appliance store. As I wandered down the aisles evaluating one wall oven after another, I spied a couple examining a 6-burner (yes, SIX) giant. Curious, I moved closer to the couple and salesman to hear the conversation. Not eavesdropping, mind you, simply wondering if the couple had 10 kids and needed the burners. It turned out that the couple simply entertains frequently. I realized I am out of touch with the world. What happened to company meals of meat and two sides? Three, if they were close friends?

But that was just the first surprise. The latest models feature elaborate command screens. Simply answer a few questions and go watch a movie; the oven will determine how to cook the food. New ovens come with Wi-Fi. Why? So, we can text messages to the oven while we are in another room or stuck in traffic.

With the arrival of technology bots (i.e., Ro-bots), new ovens will be able to “talk” to us and obey commands. Is this really necessary? My refrigerator isn’t “smart” but I have all the ice cubes I want and everything else remains cold and crisp.

Contrast hand-crafted arts to the art of designing “smart” appliances. As we gaze at a quilt or a painting, the design, color, shape, textures and even errors speak to us and inspire us – not just intellectually but emotionally. Hand-crafted art comforts and refreshes us. We continually see some nuance we missed a moment before.

As for ovens, no matter how much technology they include, or how well you can communicate with them, if you say the wrong thing, push the wrong button, enter the wrong code – or fail to follow directions - you’re going to end up with a meal that’s mummified. And there’s no going back on that.

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

Reader Shares!
Finished Project!

This is a classic medallion style quilt with LeMoynes star center, sawtooth borders, LeMoynes star blocks, and hand appliquéd leaves and vines. So fun to watch come together.

Shared by J. White of Foley, AL who shopped at A and E Fabrics



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Building Harmony

by Jeff Cappis

Moose Calls

This is a piece about passion, lust and heartbreak in a valentine story of unrequited love.

The air was still warm, but the leaves were softly fluttering from the trees. I was on my way out the back door with my grandson Kane. We were going to get some firewood for the evening. He’s four and to him, going to the woodshed is a great adventure. It just so happened that this time he was right.

Between us and the woodshed was a large moose. She was gently munching on our lawn. Even though we didn’t seem to bother her at all, I figured we should go back.

“Maybe we should just wait inside,” I said while shuffling a curious Kane back in through the door. Luckily, I have a fair size tinted window near the door, so we watched the moose from inside. She just kept on munching.

Not too much later, I noticed something up the hill was moving. It stepped out of the trees with its long antlers and proud stance. A male moose. After spying her, he swaggered down the hill to let her know he was there. But, in a way, kind of coy so as not to look too interested. Keeping his distance at first, he struck another rather noble pose.

She took on a “I’m just hanging around the forest with nothing to do but look pretty” kind of pose. I suppose in her mind she was going to have a romantic night under the full moon and stars, eating grass and leaves, with the man of her dreams (or something like that).

Diluted with self-reassurance, as guys often are, the male began to saunter closer. I suppose he was thinking he would meet this other moose and talk about the weather (or something like that). Anyway, he was starting to get all cocky and confident, unaware there was a problem: another male moose coming along not thirty feet behind him.

Now the female really struck a pose.

The males began by slowly circling each other, one of them snorted. They knocked horns a few times, but not very deliberate. They kicked up a little sod. They had staring and pooping contests. This kind of thing went on for 1/2 hour.

By the time they were in the “I can scrape more bark off this tree with my horns than you can” contest, it looked as if they might be actually having fun. The female though, was getting impatient. At one point she shook her moose stuff in a provocative way, but they ignored her. She paced a bit. I suppose she was thinking “There isn’t much tree left. They should be finished soon. Then I may choose my champion!” (or something like that). Turns out, we have lots of trees in the forest. Even Kane got bored and went to watch TV.

The female moved in a little bit closer but always pretend not to notice. So did the males. They got busy knocking dead branches off the newly naked trees with their antlers. After a while, the female was getting impatient. She got right close and made a few snorting noises. She even gave them that level-eyed kind of stare.


This finally got both the males’ attention and everyone stopped. So, there they were, all three of them staring at each other. Kind of a moose awkward moment really. One girl, two dates. For a few minutes they just stood there until finally the two males tapped horns, pooped, and wandered off through the forest in opposite directions.

The female (she must have been confused, humiliated and disappointed), just went back to eating and fertilizing our lawn. And our bushes. And our perennials.

There are a few theories about what happened there. a) Maybe in the moose world she was considered homely or b) The two males became good friends and neither wanted to hurt the other’s feelings by stealing his girl or c) Nobody could get romantic because they could see we were watching.

As it turns out, it didn’t matter. In the spring she produced a newborn calf from a previous romance. Now there are two eating our lawn.

—© Jeff Cappis 2024 jcappis@telus.net



From Tammy Page’s Recipe Box
Chocolate Chip Cream Cheese Bars
My husband Bud’s, favorite bar cookies.

Mix:
1 box dry cake mix (any flavor but dark chocolate is our favorite)
1 egg and 1/3 c. oil
Pat into an 9x13 greased pan, reserving 1 cup for third layer
Bake for 10-12 min on 350.

Then Mix:
1 pkg cream cheese, 1/3 cup sugar, 1 egg and 1 cup choc. chips
Pour over baked cake mixture. Then add reserved 1 cup dry cake mixture
Scatter over entire cookie and bake for 18 min. longer.
Let set to cool.
(Can be a lower fat version by using low fat cream cheese and canola oil.)

**Submitted by Tammy Page. See her article in this edition.*



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A South New Jersey Farmer's Stories
General Stores

by Ed Cuneo

The recent opening of a Dollar General spurred a question from a neighbor.

"Just went down to the new store. Reminds me of the old general stores in a way. You have the same opinion?"

I sorta smirked.
"Yes, the diversity of products is similar to a general store. but there was more to a general store than merchandise," I answered.

A quizzical look appeared on his face that prompted me to explain.
At one time in our area just about every hamlet had a general merchandise store. There were three stores within five miles of where we lived. The merchandise was limited to those things that a family really needed and couldn't get anywhere else. Since most of the families were farm families there was no need to get food or drink since that was produced on most farms. Meats and cheeses came from the butcher. Tools and implements were products of the blacksmith. So, things such as linens, paper goods or products used in baking were available for purchase. In my case it was the odd toy on the shelf or more importantly the display that held the pocket knives that drove my interest in accompanying my father to such stores.

It was a natural place for neighbors to meet and converse. Unlike the romanticized notions on TV or in the media, we did not have folks sitting on a cracker barrel in front of a stove every day chewing the fat in local gossip. If you were looking for that kind of action, it took place at the barber shop for the men and at the church for the women but only on select days of the week. However, a quick hello how are you or nice to see you was more common.

The experiences that I heard about or saw in those general stores was something that could not be duplicated by today's general stores.

At her store, Mrs. Matarese worked on credit as most did. But during the Depression it was not embarrassing for a neighbor to knock on her back door of the store and receive something to keep the family going. Free of charge. It was a neighbor helping a neighbor.

Mrs. Affrunti's store was well known by us kids because she carried the much coveted school book covers from legendary Philadelphia radio station WFIL but also the fact that after hours her son Bruce practiced his archery skills by shooting down the aisles of the store. Bruce later went on to represent the United States in archery competitions.

Then there was the Blatherwick store which had Topps baseball card packs for sale for this young fanatic to buy. The store was located just up the street from the diamond where we played Little League baseball. There wasn't a day after practice that we didn't walk down to the store for a soda and a pack of cards which cost 15 cents with a bad stick of gum inside which I usually threw away.

By now I think I had made my point with my neighbor.
"Just remember friend, it is more contact than content that makes a good general store."

—© 2024, Ed Cuneo is a "Jersey Farm Boy" born and raised and still residing in Southern New Jersey with his wife, Teresa, daughter Anna and her rescue dog Henry. A retired school teacher, he owns the last 14 acres of his grandparents' farm where he has a market garden which serves as much as a place of quiet reflection as it does for its bountiful food supply.



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Chicken Scratch Embroidery on Gingham Fabric

by Judy Sharer

Chicken scratch embroidery is done on gingham fabric, the checkerboard fabric in bright or pastel solid colors with opposite squares of white giving it a checkerboard look. Chicken scratch embroidery is popular on pillow cases, aprons, pot holders, and quilts dating back to the 1860s. It made a comeback in the 1930s and '40s and is becoming popular again. There are several patterns for all skill levels that combine the relaxing crafts of needle embroidery with sewing and quilting. If you're not familiar with chicken scratch designs, a simple Google search will reveal several patterns or find a book with patterns at your local quilt shop.

The chicken scratch quilt I'm fortunate to own was made by my grandmother on my father's side. It wasn't made specifically for me, but I was the lucky recipient of the quilt after Grandma passed. I know Grandma made the quilt, but I don't know when or for whom. I encourage everyone to place labels on your quilts with the date made, who made the quilt, who it was made for, and if it was for a special occasion like a wedding, anniversary, or birth of a child. It may seem like bragging when you create the label, but it is really preserving history for future generations. The label can be handmade from 100 percent cotton muslin or purchased. Remember to use a permanent marker and sew the label on the back of the quilt.

Growing up, I spent a lot of time at my grandparent's house. In fact, I remember my parents often putting me on the local bus, beginning at the age of six or seven. I sat behind the driver and always reminded him where to let me off. My grandparents lived two towns away, about 25 miles. Grandpa would meet me at the main road. It wasn't a regular bus stop, but I was a regular passenger, so the driver made an exception. Grandma taught me to embroider and was very patient. I still have the first set of pillowcases I made under her supervision. She was a good teacher and always encouraged me to try new things.

If you have a young person in your life, take the time to teach them to enjoy a craft. Help keep your favorite hobby alive for the next generation. Embroidery, sewing, knitting, crocheting, quilting, whatever your favorite, consider passing on your knowledge and skills. Remember your teachers along the way and thank them. I will always cherish my chicken scratch quilt and the memories of time spent with my grandmother learning to embroider.

© 2024 Judy Sharer is the author of A Plains Life series published by The Wild Rose Press. The four-book series is available online wherever books are sold. If you're a quilter, you'll enjoy Judy's sweet historical romance series which has a thread of quilting throughout the family saga series. Visit Judy's website for more details. judysarar.com.

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Back Porch Break

by Nancy Brummett

Vintage Volunteers

April is National Volunteer Month so I decided it was a good time to honor some volunteers I know.

Virginia scoots around in her wheelchair from table to table in the assisted living facility's dining room. She volunteered to keep the holders for the sugar packets on each table refilled each day, and she takes her volunteer responsibilities seriously.



Lois comes to my *The Hope of Glory* class with her knitting in a tote. Each week she shows us the progress she's making on the next cozy hat she's knitting for a baby in the hospital. How grateful new parents must be to receive this handmade gift, and even if Lois never gets to see their delighted faces or see the hat on a tiny head, she keeps knitting. She also regularly reads to fellow residents with vision problems, including Joanne.

Joanne always assumed that she would spend her golden years tutoring students and reading to others, but macular degeneration derailed her plans. "I asked the Lord what He would have me do instead," she explained to our group, "and He told me to pray for the younger generation because they need to be lifted up in prayer. So now that's my volunteer assignment."

And my friend Phyllis, 93, has volunteered at a thrift shop that supports community philanthropies for almost 30 years.

It's a privilege to know older adults who still have the heart to volunteer at a time in their lives when they could so easily sit back and say, "Been there, done that. It's someone else's turn to volunteer now." Rather than be complacent, they see a need and rise up to meet it. They say like Isaiah in Isaiah 6:8, "*Here am I. Send me!*" I call them vintage volunteers.

What motivates these seniors to volunteer when and how they are able? They are motivated by the same three things that motivate all volunteers: passion, commitment, and hope. Our passions are those things that make us extremely happy or extremely angry! They stir in us a desire to make a difference—add joy, right a wrong, ease some suffering. Commitment is what keeps us faithful to volunteer assignments even when we're weary, and we keep our commitments because of hope—hope that our small contribution will make the world a kinder, gentler place.

If you have elders in your life with time on their hands, help them recall a passion that motivated them in the past. If possible, identify some task, however small, that they can do to feed that passion. Encourage them to be committed to this volunteer effort and instill them with hope that what they do will make a difference. Vintage volunteers have so much to offer, and volunteering in any way adds purpose to their days.

Nancy Parker Brummett is an author and freelance writer in Colorado Springs, CO. Follow her on Facebook, Instagram and Linked In or subscribe to her blog posts at www.nancyparkerbrummett.com.

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Wear What You Love

by Janet M Bair



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Spring is near and with it comes new fashions and new colors that the fashion industry wants to promote. There are usually about three colors to choose from: celery, fuchsia, gunmetal, frost, indigo, plum, or emerald, all with enticing names to compel you to buy. However, if you don't happen to like any of those colors, you may be out of luck for a season.

One spring my seven-year-old wanted a yellow Easter dress. We looked in every store in our area but not a single yellow dress was in sight. (This was before online shopping). Plenty of pinks and turquoise but she had her heart set on yellow.

Even though I was busy working and didn't know how I would squeeze in the time to sew, in desperation, we went to the fabric store. She picked out a cute yellow cotton print and a pattern she liked. I had done a lot of sewing in high school and college but had let that part of my life slide after our two girls were born. I realized that I liked sewing at night after they were in bed.

After I made the yellow dress, I decided I ought to make my self an Easter dress too. My three-year-old said she wanted a dress "just like Mommy's." I was now committed to making two more dresses (with a deadline). I finished the peach print dresses in time and felt a great sense of accomplishment that I hadn't felt in a long time. That propelled me back into sewing for the rest of my life.

Life Lesson Learned: When you can't find what you want in the stores, you can always make it. You can choose the colors that look best on you and have fun experimenting with a new pattern or style or print. You can wear what you love!

Sometimes it is the little things in life that move us into the life paths we are meant to take. This spring season as you cut out new patterns or plan gardens, be aware of the One who declared that He was the ultimate path to follow. "Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me." John 14:6

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

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Life in Skunk Hollow

by Julie A. Druck

Learning to Speak Well

We have friends whose college-age son suffered a brain injury over a year ago now. Henry had to learn how to walk and talk and do the most basic of human processes all over again. And though he still has a difficult journey ahead, he's come a long and amazing way.

Recently I had the opportunity to observe Henry as he was conversing with someone. I listened to the painstaking slowness of his responses. Because of the injury to his brain, Henry must literally process each and every word before speaking them. When a question is asked him, he pauses (I could "see" him processing) and then speaks one word. Then he processes again and speaks another word - and again and again until a complete sentence is out. It's a very deliberate, very time-consuming process for him.

Watching this interaction made me realize how much I take the "simple" process of talking for granted - open mouth and out fly the words. I got to wondering how much better off I would be (and those with whom I'm talking to or about) if I had to slowly process each and every word that came out of my mouth. The idea of "idle words" would be non-existent. If every word cost me the time, energy and effort that they do Henry, I'm guessing that I wouldn't be as lazy or flippant as I am with my words. Would I waste effort on words of complaint, of gossip, of pettiness? If I had to stop and really think about every word I was going to form with my mouth, I think I would pretty quickly realize that much of what comes out of my mouth isn't worth saying.

It's interesting to me where life lessons show up. I'm grateful not only for eyes to see such things, but for a brain and mouth that work pretty flawlessly in unison to allow me to easily communicate. But watching Henry has been a good object lesson for me. And I want to apply the skill he has learned, because learning to process my thoughts, my words, and my reactions with greater intention would be a good thing for all involved. Thanks, Henry

--Julie Druck is from York, Pennsylvania, and writes from her farm in Skunk Hollow. She'd welcome your comments at thedrucks@netzera.com.

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Embroidery

by Sheila Tinkham

If I had my cup of tea and a scone softly buttered,
I could imagine myself an English lady
Embroidering
I draw the design on a plain lavender sweatshirt
Or pink t-shirt
Then carefully stitch again and and again
Following the lines
A road map to a different world
A slow and steady cadence to my fingers
In and out
Breathe
Slow but soothing
And my sweet husband Richard
Places jigsaw puzzles one piece at a time
The sweet soft sounds of embroidery
And the snap of puzzle pieces
Life could not be sweeter
Or more complete.

--Sheila Tinkham lives in Lincoln, NE. She started quilting when she sprained her ankle and fell in love with the process of sewing and the focused peacefulness of making and designing quilts. Writing is her passion and she has self-published three poetry books. You can follow her on Twitter at SheilaTinkham.

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This design has so many possibilities! Make a wool appliqued pillow top, a table mat or wall hanging. Create a punchneedle or hooked rug piece. If you're a painter, create Hippity on paper, wood or canvas. He'd make a cute note card too! Enlarge this pattern to your desired size. Whatever craft you choose, have fun! Not for commercial use. Please give the artist credit.

GRAHAM '24

Designed by Kathy Graham

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Humble Life Acres

Inspired by Nature, Gratitude & Living in the Moment

by Resha & Tim

As we are gifted a New Year, its great time to focus and reflect on all of the good things that have happened to us in the last year. Often times we don't realize just how much we have grown, experienced or have done in a matter of 12 months. Yet sometimes when we look back on it, the years go by fast and we wonder where time has gone. The key is to not live too much in the past or the future. As our “Now” time gets lost. It's a challenging thing to do as we were really never taught these ways or perspective. It has always been future driven thinking or sometimes we get caught up in memories of our past whether its wishing something did or didn't happen. The only time we can embrace and enjoy is ‘Now’. Being in nature allows us to be more in the present moment. Hearing the birds, feeling the sunshine in your face, noticing the bark designs on the tree or veins of the leaf, or insect crawling on it. Witnessing the sunrise and taking a moment to notice the sunset. That is how you become more in present time and learn to live in a more fulfilling “Now” time. When you do more of that, the mind gets calmer and you learn to slow down. Appreciate the moment and living in the moment.

We cannot change the things in our past but you can make peace with the things that may need back to heal. When we keep carrying that around then it becomes like a heavy backpack that we keep carrying through the years which has taken up a lot of time, and weighs us down. If we live too much in future and running to that, then we lose precious time of what is today and right now. There is definitely a balance and some days it isn't easy but when we are mindful of this and make the effort to be Present then like anything else it gets easier. Being in the moment and truly enjoying day with gratitude is where the magic is. It's like putting on a special pair of glasses and seeing things differently than what you are used to.

Waking up each day on earth is a gift! We get to experience so many things and interactions in just one day. Let alone one year. When you think of it in that perspective, each day is truly a blessing. To add to that, it is also seeing that everything is happening for you not to you. It is all a part of the experience on the journey of life.

My husband I started a new journey a few years ago and moved from city life of 20 years to country life. He grew up in the country most of his youth, but I have always been a city girl. We dreamed of having our own chickens for a long time and space to have a large garden but mostly to have the space to just be free. After years of us looking at different acreages and going through the motions of ‘it has this many check marks on our list but doesn't have this’. We soon realized that we need to make it our own. It was enough talking about it and start just doing it.

Fast forward to today, we have our own flock of laying hens, we are bee keepers and strive to live more self -sustainable by also living in harmony with nature and the land. The biggest deterrent is getting used to the fact that you are not going to know everything. It's comfortable to have that for sure but realistically its learn as you go, learn as you experience it and learn from others. The real recipe is harnessing our history by learning from our ancestors and others, the old-fashioned way and add a dash of modern thinking with existing knowledge. There are quite a few cups of learning as you go.

The biggest deal is not seeing the first step as success or failure. Especially when you're learning or doing something new it needs to be more like: try this version then try it again to get to the version of your success. The other thing is to stop caring about what other people think. You are living your life not others and while its nice to have support and insight from others sometimes it can be not helpful. You do you! Trust in the flow and know that with patience, time and determination, you will get to where you want to be. In fact, it will better than you initially thought! From today and each day this New year and chapter: Enjoy today and see each day as a Gift! Live in the present time and remember: “The best time to do all of the things you've always wanted to do, is while you are alive... Right Now!”

‘Never get tired of sunrises, sunsets, calming rain and watching the stars at night. If your lucky you'll get to witness the magical light. Fill your cup with Gratitude and sip it slowly. Slow down to enjoy the journey. Treat yourself with love, compassion, understanding and patience. This beautiful life is meant to be experienced and to learn. To be in harmony, love and surrender to the flow. Not saying it's all rose colored glasses, but if you put the glasses on you will see a world that is magical. If you listen close, you will seek to understand. The wealth is time. What we have is: Now. The gift is in the small, beautiful things. Enjoy the Journey!

Resha & Tim at Humble Life Acres www.humblelifeacres.ca Email: humblelifeacres@gmail.com Connect with us on Instagram & Facebook @humblelifeacres

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Pg. 33

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City Index & Map

Bradenton Page 23

Brandon Page 23

Brooksville Page 19

Broward County Page 32

Bunnell Page 29

Bushnell Page 14

Chiefland Page 6

Clearwater Page 22

Clermont Page 13

Crestview Page 4

Crystal River Page 7

Dade City Pgs. 14, 15

Daytona Beach Page 30

DeFuniak Springs Page 4

DeLand Page 10

Edgewater Page 30

Englewood Page 25

Fort Myers Page 23

Greenacres Page 32

Holiday Page 20

Holly Hills Page 30

Jacksonville Page 27

Jupiter Page 32

Keystone Heights Page 27

Labelle Page 26

Lady Lake Pgs. 9, 11

Lake City Page 6

Lakeland Page 16

Lanark Village Page 33

Largo Page 23

Leesburg Page 12

Lutz Pgs. 20, 21

Maitland Page 11

Mary Esther Page 3

Melbourne Page 31

Merritt Island Page 34

Milton Page 3

Mount Dora Page 12

Naples Page 23

Ocala Page 7

Orange City Page 9

Orange Park Page 27

Palatka Page 28

Palm Harbor Page 23

Palmetto Page 22

Panama City Page 5

Pembroke Pines Page 23

Pensacola Page 3

Plant City Page 19

Port Charlotte Pgs. 23, 26

Port St. Lucie Page 32

Punta Gorda Page 26

Rotonda West Page 25

Sarasota Pgs. 23, 24

Sebastian Page 31

Sebring Page 18

St. Augustine Page 29

St. Petersburg Page 22

Stuart Page 32

Tampa Pgs. 20, 23

Trenton Page 6

Umatilla Page 9

West Bradenton Page 23

West Melbourne Page 34

West Palm Beach Page 32

Winter Haven Page 17

Alabama Page 4

Georgia Page 5

Shop Hop Pgs. 3, 8



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