

The Country Register™

Manitoba and Saskatchewan's Complimentary Guide to Specialty Shopping & Attractions

Dec. 2024/Jan. 2025

Vol. 25, No. 2

Merry Christmas

&

HAPPY NEW YEAR

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Keeping In Touch

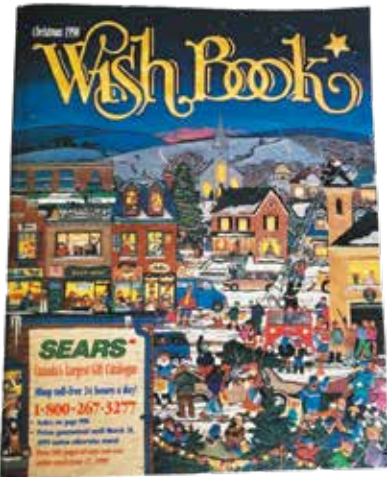
Cindy and Joe Ashfield <old.stuff@sasktel.net>

What a great time to let your creative spirit free, and a fun day for kids or all of us who are still kids at heart. I find myself writing this the morning of “All Hallow’s Eve”. I certainly never gave it a thought as a kid that it was followed by All Saints Day.

This year, Hallowe’en offers me a little respite from election overload. I will go to the polls three times this fall and going to almost any news source, there is the incessant drone of the American presidential election. Thinking about our elections, perhaps my first thought should be one of thanks. In my mind, voting is a civic duty afforded me by those who served through two world wars and by some heroic women of our past. “Lest We Forget”. Why, then, is voter turnout so low...I think around 53% provincially. I feel apathy is a lazy excuse. Do we need to place more emphasis on responsible citizenship at home and in our schools?

Allowing your name to be put forward as a candidate is a serious choice and a great commitment should you be successful. As voters, we should be thankful that someone is willing to open their thoughts up to public scrutiny. Sitting on any council or board of directors is a time-consuming responsibility as well. I didn’t find any candidates door knocking in our town. Did you? We are a small community, and perhaps this is something that happens more in the larger centers. Well, enough for now about elections.

With such a comfortable fall, weather-wise, thoughts of Christmas seem a little distant. So far, I haven’t heard anybody talking about plans. But..... the Lee Valley Christmas catalogue was in the mail the other day with all its treasures, along with the Brecks Christmas catalogue with pages of amaryllis plants and Christmas treats to order. I check these over with some interest, but nothing like the arrival that the Eaton’s and Sears Catalogues



brought to our house when we were kids. There were pages and pages of things to consider before writing that all-important letter to Santa. Did I always fulfill my promise to be “good”....whatever that may have meant then? Likely not, but putting more effort into it when reminded by some adult of the consequences of some misdemeanour. I was raised in a working-class family and the eldest, and I knew my choice must be a careful one. Hanging up that long brown cotton stocking on Christmas Eve was certainly the only time I thought of them favourably. Those catalogues served many purposes besides shopping long after Christmas was over. When the new replacement catalogue arrived, the old one was available for all sorts of purposes....paper airplanes and cutout doll clothes are a couple that come to mind.

Darkness engulfs our days earlier, and so the lights and festivities brighten our lives at this time. It is a time of music and stories and some great memories. Joe and I had a tacit agreement about the music. I would keep the music early in the season, quietly playing in my office or wherever I happen to be sewing, and he would turn the sound down or off during the curling game he was watching on television.

On another note, Whitewood has installed a huge curling broom near the flag garden as you come into town from the west entrance, a reminder about what a great curling community we are. Keep in mind our Farmers and Friends.

Joe and I wish all a happy Christmas and much success and joy in the new year ahead.

Did You Know?

Rudolph was created by an advertising copywriter.

The red-nosed reindeer was created in 1939 by Robert L. May, an advertising copywriter for Chicago's Montgomery Ward department store. Every year, the store would give away free colouring books as holiday gifts to the children who visited the store's Father Christmas. Rudolph's story sold 2.4 million copies in its first year of publication. The famous song was released in 1949, becoming one of the best-selling songs of all time.

Oak Bluff/Winnipeg, MB

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146th Edition

The Country Register, Manitoba & Saskatchewan

Kirby & Colleen Gust

Editors, Publishers, Advertising Representatives

ISSN 1700-9340

The Country Register Story

The Country Register began in Arizona, in the fall of 1988, to provide effective, affordable advertising for shops, shows, and other experiences enjoyed by a kindred readership. Since then The Country Register has spread to many other areas, each of which is published and independently owned by the people listed below.

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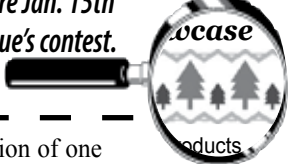
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Last issue's winner of
Can You Find This Ad
Contest are:
our mystery ad was ...Corben Tours
Get your entries in before Jan. 15th
to be eligible for this issue's contest.
Can You Find This Ad?

Verna Liebrecht & Donna Costella


Pictured in the magnifying glass above is a small portion of one of our ads. Can you find the ad that it came from?

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*******SAVE ON POSTAGE! Put your friends' entries in with yours!*******
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YES! There will be two \$50 prizes drawn for correct entries.
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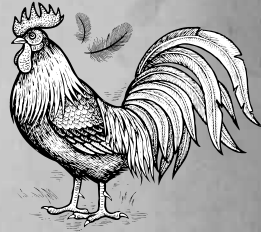


Humble Life Acres

Inspired by Nature, Gratitude & Living in the Moment

By: RESHA & TIM from HUMBLE LIFE ACRES

Embrace the Seasonal Shift



As the season is changing, it is a great opportunity to observe and adapt it into our own lives. I am sure you feel like we do when we have gone from thriving summertime to Fall settling in. The cooler weather, leaves falling, and there are fewer pollinators around. The birds are starting to migrate, and we go from having a bird sanctuary of songs to much quieter.

Often nature gives us the cue to the next phase, when we get into Fall and Wintertime. You can feel the energy shift to calmer and quieter when it becomes dormant. By observing, we can also adapt to some of the things it teaches us. Sometimes, it also makes me feel sad as we want summer to last longer. Especially when visually, it has become more apparent. That is also why it serves as a reminder to be grateful and acknowledge the present time.

Our focus in the last few weeks has been busy with winter prep on the farm. It seems to be sometimes a never-ending task. That rush before the first snow falls, and at the same time pushing the envelope with as much time as we can get before the actual transition. One of the projects this year was to build a greenhouse. Tim finished that project with a scratch-made plan. It is like a dream come true. I am looking forward to using it in the Spring. With it getting colder, we seek refuge in it as it becomes warm with the day's sun.

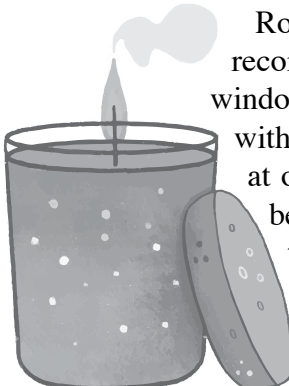
Often, we can feel really isolated inside our homes when the weather changes to winter. We used to look at it in a negative way. Over the years we have learned to go with the flow. Appreciating more, the change and transition. Winter is a time of more rest and where you can change gears to do different things. Now we see it as an opportunity to focus on more of the inside work. Trying a new hobby or continue something that has been put on hold during the Spring and Summer. It is a great opportunity to adapt your routine with the weather change. How we see it is; Spring and Summer are where most of our focus is outdoors. Fall and Winter is where most of our focus is indoors.

It is important to implement mindful practices especially, when Winter can feel dark. Waking up in the dark and coming home from work in the dark can be very hard on mental wellbeing. We thought this would be a great opportunity to share what has helped.

With the focus more indoors and with the colder weather, one of the biggest things you can do to help is to declutter your space so that it flows better. Let go of the items that no longer serve you. It will give your space a refreshed feeling. It can be overwhelming to do this but keep in mind that you do not have to do it all in one day. In fact, it is better to be spaced out over time. Focus on the quick and easy tasks then leave the others for another day. See it as a project over time. It helps to schedule an hour a week or biweekly to work on it. Personally, I find this a very exhausting task to do. Then it ends up where I don't want to even think about doing it. That is why doing it in layers helps prevent that feeling overwhelmed. You can even incorporate changing the wall colours and doing some furniture rearrangement.

Indoor plants are a way to bring green space and life indoors. We started with one plant, and now we have quite a few. I enjoy learning about plant species and love seeing and observing how they have grown. If you're not an indoor green thumb. I recommend that adding greenery of

some sort, even if it is a fake plant, is a great alternative. If your lighting is not great for plants, then there are options like little grow lights that help your plant with that.



Room ambiance is very important. For this, I recommend getting a crystal suncatcher for your window. When the sun shines on it, it lights up the room with these magical rays of light. When this happens at our house, we all stop and admire it as it is quite beautiful. Finding a candle that you love is one of the easiest and quickest ways to change the vibe in the room. There is just something about a light scent that is a huge part of uplifting your mood. The same goes with essential oil diffusers.

Wintertime is the perfect time to try a new hobby. It can be something you have never done before. Often, we self-doubt ourselves and talk to ourselves out of trying something new. Or saying that we can't do it or won't be good at it. Or don't know how. My question is, how do you know unless you try it or give it another chance? Being able to learn a new hobby is fun and challenging. When you let go of the limiting thoughts and fear of 'what other people might think'. It is fun and enjoyable. Something to keep in mind is a hobby is a personal thing for us to harness our passion. It taps into the creative and comes from the heart. It will require patience, learning and practice. It is something that we keep growing and keep learning from. Creative outlets like a new hobby improve mental wellbeing. It is a great way to unwind and disconnect from the busyness and noise of the world. Get re-balanced by connecting to your creative.

Self-care is always important. Even more so with the seasons changing. Rest, rejuvenate, relax and take time for yourself. That may include mindfulness practices, reading a book, journaling, exercising, or having an at-home spa day. Have a little fun by dancing to your favourite tunes in the living room or while you're working on tasks.

There are many ways to embrace the seasonal shift, including outdoor activities and nature walks. It is a great opportunity to reflect on, adapt to your routine and implement new things. Whatever you may do, always be sure to take time to reflect more on Gratitude, the present moment and all the amazing things in your life.

Much Love,
Resha & Tim
Humble Life Acres
www.humblelifeacres.ca



Gingerbread Houses

In the 16th century, in Germany, gingerbread houses were created. These houses had gingerbread walls and were decorated with foil and gold leaf. When the Grimm's fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel" was written in 1812, the popularity of gingerbread houses rose.

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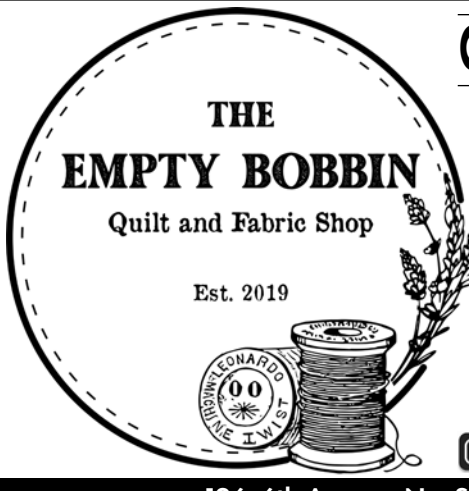
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~the joy of friends in your life
~ the peace of God in your soul.

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Reader Submitted Recipes

Marshmallow Delights

June Palmer

BOIL for 3 minutes:

- 1 cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup canned milk
- ¼ cup butter

- 1 can Eagle Brand milk
- ½ cup oatmeal
- 1 ½ tsps. vanilla
- ½ tsp maple flavouring
- 1 lb. marshmallows cut in fours
- 1 cup red & green cherries
- ½ cup desiccated coconut
- 30 graham wafer squares, rolled

Boil first 3 ingredients together for 3 minutes and add in remaining ingredients. Spread into a greased 8x8 pan.

White Chip Cookies

Unknown, but thank you! My husband had a bit of an OOPS! moment – we received this recipe with a “Find The Ad” contest entry. He was on autopilot when placing entries into the draw box and realized too late that there was a recipe included. We really do apologize, and we’ll be more careful in the future.

- ½ cup margarine, softened
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ cup cocoa, sifted
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup white chocolate chips
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ¾ cup walnuts or pecans chopped

Cream margarine, brown sugar and cocoa in a large bowl until smooth. Beat in egg and vanilla until fluffy. Add remaining 5 ingredients. Mix well. Drop by rounded tablespoonful onto a greased cookie sheet. Flatten slightly with a fork. Bake at 350°F for 10 minutes or so.

Brandon, MB



George Strange

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Potato Chip Crispy Treats

Linda F., Morden

** Use ripple potato chips to replace rice krispies for a salty-sweet, marshmallow chew! snack.

- 4 tbsp butter
- 4 cups mini marshmallows
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 5 cups rice krispies or ripple potato chips (crushed)
- Optional: choc chips, raisins, slivered almonds, peanut butter, etc
- Use your imagination...

- Grease a 9 inch square baking pan.
- Melt butter in saucepan over med-low heat. Add marshmallows & stir until smooth. Once combined with no lumps remaining, stir in vanilla extract, then remove saucepan from heat.
- Add crushed potato chips and stir to combine. Once fully coated, pour the mixture into the buttered baking pan.
- If desired ... Melt ½ cup choc chips and drizzle over top of treats.
- Let stand for 1-2 hrs - then cut into squares & serve.

Enjoy!

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A Cup of Tea with Lydia

Three Kings Tea

By Lydia E. Harris

When our grandchildren were younger, they loved to play dress-up year-round. It didn't need to be December for them to put on Christmas costumes and become Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds or kings. Often the glitzy robes and crowns were their favorites. They draped themselves with glittery fabrics, donned shiny crowns and became wise men from the East. Perhaps being "wise guys" and bearing gifts from afar was what appealed to them.



In the spirit of children and the Magi, who followed the star, let's celebrate the season with a Three Kings Tea.

Royal Guests

This tea would be fun for children, adults or families. Send invitations to three or three times three—any number that suits you. Pick a date, make your guest list and get ready for a festive teatime. If December seems too busy, host your Three Kings Tea on Epiphany, January 6.

Royal Decorations

In December, your home is probably already decorated for the holidays. Nativity sets with wise men may sit in prominent places and gold garlands, twinkling lights and colorful balls may adorn your Christmas tree. All that's left are table decorations.

For a regal touch, consider gold lamé fabric, golden candleholders and gold napkin rings. A glass bowl filled with purple and gold Christmas balls could add a royal touch, along with crowns or stars to represent the Magi and the star of the East they followed.

Festive Foods

Select one or more recipes you love to serve during the holidays. If sugar-cookie cutouts are your favorite, cut them into stars, crowns and wise men. If children are invited, they could frost and decorate their cookies. To make golden star or crown cookies buy edible glitter at candy or cake-decorating stores to sprinkle on top of the frosting.



If you serve cake add a royal look with a crown cut from a gold or silver doily. Place it on top of the cake along with candies that look like jewels. For a warm glow add three candles, one for

each wise man.

Our neighbours often made an angel food cake, frosted it with whipped cream and decorated it with crushed candy canes. I have a recipe to make this Peppermint Angel Cake along with a candy cane poem in my cookbook, *In the Kitchen with Grandma* (pages 135–136). A mint or chocolate tea goes well with this cake.

Three Kings Bread also seems perfect for this teatime. It's a sweet Mexican Christmas bread that reminds me of my mother's tea ring served at our family gatherings. Made with yeast dough and candied fruit it's formed into a circle so I call it a crown.

Every tea party needs a pot of tea. Choose your favorites and include a decaffeinated blend for those who can't have caffeine. For a merry sound tie jingle bells onto your teapot's handle.

Festive Favors and Extras

For a welcoming ambiance play Christmas carols including "We Three Kings." Perhaps someone could read the story of the Magi from Matthew chapter 2, or a few people could act out the story.

Since the wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh you could suggest guests bring an inexpensive wrapped gift to exchange. Or buy small favours for guests to take home—something spicy to remind them of frankincense or something shiny and bright to remind them of gold.

No matter what you give your guests the real gift of the party will be the warm memories of the time shared.

From Lydia's Recipe File:

Three Kings Bread

Ingredients:

- Your favorite yeast roll dough or
- 2 loaves of ready-made frozen bread, thawed
- 1 package candied fruitcake mix or
- Red and green candied cherries and pineapple
- 2 beaten eggs
- Powdered sugar glaze or
- 3 tablespoons melted butter
- ¼ cup sugar

Directions:

- On a greased cookie sheet form the two loaves of bread into a ring. Moisten the ends to make them stick together.
- Press candied fruit into the top of the ring.
- Let it rise according to the package directions.
- Before baking brush, the top with beaten eggs.
- After baking brush, the top with butter and sprinkle with sugar.
- Return the bread to the oven for 5 minutes.
- Cool on a cooling rack.

Optional: Omit steps 5 and 6 and frost the warm bread with a powdered sugar glaze.

Lydia E. Harris is a tea enthusiast and the author of three books for grandparents: *GRAND Moments: Devotions Inspired by Grandkids*, *In the Kitchen with Grandma: Stirring Up Tasty Memories Together*, and *Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting* all available at amazon.com.

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Christmas Memories

By Nancy Nash

“Daddy, is Santa Claus real?” I was a small child when I asked my father that all-important question. I believe his reply included something about using our imaginations to make a story for children and their parents to enjoy together. The news was somewhat disappointing, but I rallied and asked, “Will I still get my presents?” Dad assured me that he and Mom would continue that part of the tradition. I was satisfied.

Over the years, I could count on at least three gifts: a needed piece of clothing, a book (I was a bookworm), and a doll. I outgrew the clothing long ago, but even now I take pleasure from my childhood books and in displaying my doll collection.

I soon learned the joy of giving to others. I was still quite small when my older brother and I decided to buy presents for my parents. With a few dollars donated by our grandparents, we walked to the corner store. It wasn’t like a corner store on a city block, with everything from watches to embroidered handkerchiefs to imported chocolates. It was in the country, and the corner was simply a place where a side street joined a bend in the main road. This establishment sold bread, milk, and popsicles, the latter being of great interest in the summertime.

We scurried down the aisles searching for holiday gifts. There was nothing seasonal on display. The proprietor, taking note of our disappointment, asked about our mission and informed us that the store sold razor blades. We decided they would be perfect for Dad, who shaved away his face whiskers each morning, lest he come to resemble Santa Claus! And lo and behold - a travel kit for Mom, complete with a nail file? What exciting discoveries these were!

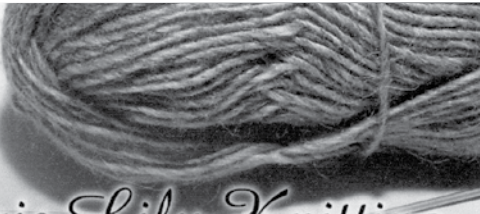
We purchased the articles, wrapped them loosely and placed them at the bottom of a cardboard box big enough to have held much more. In a sense, it did hold much more – our love for Mom and Dad and our joy in having a surprise to give to them.

Christmas evolved over the years. As my mother grew older and found shopping and wrapping more laborious, my brother and I enjoyed finding presents for Dad and Mom to exchange with each other. Such memories of our rituals of gift-giving open window after window into the past.

Material goods are not an end in themselves. At best, they simply reflect a glint of light from afar - from that night when the stars spread their glow over a town called Bethlehem and over the birth of a very special Child. May your holidays be filled with gifts of many kinds, especially those of the spirit that still spring forth from that perfect Love.

©2024 Nancy J. Nash - Nancy J. Nash is the author of Mama’s Books: An Oregon Trail Story. and Little Rooster’s Christmas Eve, each available on amazon.com. She has a B.A. in English composition from Mount Holyoke College and an M.F.A. in Writing for Children from Simmons College. She can be reached at nancynash341@gmail.com

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Christmas Stockings

By Tammy Page

I remember as a child digging through my sock drawer on Christmas Eve to find the biggest sock I could find. I searched for the largest one that would be filled with a banana, oranges, nuts and candy. No other goodies, like what children receive now days. This is what my parents had found in their stockings and the tradition was passed down through them.

Christmas was not as "showy" back then. We marked the JCPenney Christmas Wish Book with our wants and wishes in hopes of Santa bringing at least one of the items and possibly our parents would chip in for another. My parents were not rich and with three girls in the family it was often just a couple gifts each that were under the tree come Christmas morning. Most years we got a new baby doll with an extra outfit for her and always one of the those disappearing milk bottles. As we got older, our dolls were ones that accomplished something such a talking or wetting their diaper. We always received a new board game or two. Our family were big on playing games. Such games were, Feely Meely, Hi Ho Cherry On, Twister and Sorry. We also played a lot of card games and often got a new deck of playing cards or Crazy Eights. Instead of sitting in front of a television all night, we played games before going to bed. As we got older the games advanced to Monopoly and card games such as Uno and Skip Bo. My mom was a pro at Skip Bo and we rarely beat her. But, when we did, we bragged on it for days.

I'm not sure if Santa wrapped your gifts but, in our house, he did not. Our gifts were sitting under or around the tree with our stocking nearby. We had one or two gifts from mom and dad that were wrapped and they consisted of clothing and other needed items. Not too exciting for a child but nonetheless, needed. And, of course we were not allowed to sneak into the living room and see what Santa had left but had to wait for mom and dad to get up out of bed. Most of the time we headed into their bedroom and pleaded with them to "get up". After some minutes of pleading they finally drug out of bed.

After growing up and getting married and having children of my own, Christmas morning had changed a little bit. Yes, we still heard pleas of "get up, get up, Santa has been here" but the biggest change has been that the stockings are no longer socks from our drawers but homemade for each child. They are not filled with fruit and nuts but with their favorite candy, trinkets, sports cards and jewelry. I've carried this tradition on with my grandchildren and now fill 14 stockings. They say this is their very favorite part of the morning and look forward to seeing all the goodies in their stockings. I shop all year looking for just the right prize for each child and grandchild. I can usually find some bargains if I shop after holiday sales and put them back for Christmas. I've

already got a nice stash of gifts stored away for this coming Christmas and am looking forward to seeing their faces on Christmas morning. It's so much fun to look for things that matches each child's and grandchild's personality. Although it is also one of my favorite parts of the holiday, my greatest pleasure is that we are celebrating the birth of Jesus together. Isn't that what it's really all about?

© Tammy Page writes from her family farm in Indiana.



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A Slice of Life: Dessert Squares and Dainties

By Colleen Gust

Dainties, also known as squares, are a beloved category of baked goods ranging from rich and decadent chocolate treats to nutty and gooey confections; dainties and squares come in various flavours and textures.

These sweet treats, often made from simple ingredients like butter, sugar, flour, and eggs, were initially made for special occasions and celebrations, such as weddings, holidays, and religious festivals.

Dainties/squares gained popularity during the 20th century, becoming a staple at social gatherings, potlucks, and bake sales. As home baking became more accessible with modern kitchen appliances and convenience ingredients, their popularity increased. Dainties are the easier recipes to master once you start up baking, and when it comes to baking, don't be afraid to take whisks.

One nice thing about squares is that they usually freeze well, which enables us to get ahead on the Christmas baking. Like everything, different flavours come and go out of popularity; my husband mentioned that he didn't know when the last time it was he saw a date square on a tray.

I don't know about you, but when we mention squares and dainties, I immediately think of the "Company's Coming" cookbook icon, Jean Paré. I was thrilled when a friend mentioned that he drew a caricature of her when she visited the *Regina Leader-Post* years ago while on a book tour.

One of Jean Paré's most beloved cookbooks is *150 Delicious Squares*, a collection of mouthwatering squares recipes. Published in 1981, this cookbook marked her debut in publishing and quickly became a bestseller. I think most households in Canada have at least one of her spiral-bound cookbooks.

Jean Paré's approachable writing style and emphasis on using readily available ingredients have made her cookbooks accessible to home cooks of all ages and skill levels.

For me, she fostered a love for baking and creating cherished memories in the kitchen. I consider her a pioneer in the home cooking chef field, as she inspired countless home bakers with her clearly written delicious recipes, making her a cherished figure in Canadian culinary culture. I was quite sad to hear that she passed away in 2022; it had been a dream of mine to meet her someday.

As we see the loaded dessert tables this festive season, it reminds us that squares are a beloved component at social events, and potluck, with classic recipes like Nanaimo bars and lemon squares holding iconic status. When thinking about mixing up a square, remember, life is what you bake it!



Rhubarb Custard Bars

We're both fans of rhubarb and can eat it raw, so we usually gravitate towards rhubarb and not rhubarb/strawberry recipes. It's a good way to use up some of the rhubarb in the freezer too!

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup butter, melted
- ½ cup icing sugar
- 4 eggs beaten
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ cup flour
- ¾ tsp salt
- 4 cups rhubarb, diced

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Mix the flour, melted butter and icing sugar. Pat evenly into a 9x13 pan Bake for 20-25 minutes until the edges are just starting to turn a light golden colour.

Combine the eggs, flour, sugar and salt. Fold in the rhubarb. Pour over the crust and bake for 55 minutes or until the centre is set and not jiggly.

*For those that this is too big of a recipe, a half batch fits in an 8x8 pan.

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Banana Bars

It's hard to go wrong with this recipe!
Bananas and cream cheese are always a hit.

CAKE

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 ripe bananas, mashed (about 1 cup)

FROSTING:

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 3 ¾ to 4 cups icing sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Add eggs, sour cream and vanilla. Combine flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture. Stir in bananas.

Spread into a greased 10x15 baking pan. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 20-25 minutes. Cool.

FROSTING: in a large bowl, beat cream cheese, butter and vanilla until fluffy. Gradually beat in enough icing sugar to achieve desired consistency. Frost bars. Store in the refrigerator.

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Random Acts

By Maranda K Jones
Sweet Memories



Would you like some hot chocolate? Or would you prefer some hot cocoa? My preference is hot cocoa, but we tend to use those names interchangeably. Hot chocolate is usually made by melting solid chocolate in warm milk or cream. Hot cocoa includes a powdered base of cocoa with added sugar that is dissolved in hot water or hot milk. Hot cocoa tends to be sweeter, lighter, and much thinner. All goals I aim for in my everyday life, so it fits that hot cocoa is my warm drink of choice.

Some people enjoy a well-mixed cocktail or a sophisticated coffee, but as for me and my house, we will drink hot cocoa any time. We once left our home- town high school football field and walked home up the hill when the chill of fall was too much to bear on the bleachers. Around our picnic table, we wrapped our mittens around warm mugs and listened to the announcers several blocks away. The stadium lights mixed with the stars above as we sipped our warm sweet drinks and made sweet memories with our little kids.

They still love marshmallows, whipped cream, and chocolate chips, but the number of extra toppings in their cups has dwindled. They have grown older, and their focus on nutrition and athletics has taken precedence over their desire for sprinkles and sugar. We looked into the health benefits of hot cocoa and have chosen to believe everything we read on the internet about the beverage we like best.

It makes us happy! That alone is a great health benefit. Cocoa has been shown to increase levels of serotonin, helping to regulate mood and reduce anxiety, reduce fatigue and improve alertness. It satisfies the soul, reduces cravings and regulates how much energy is used. Some say it has positive effects on the immune system and heart health.

My heart beats joyfully thinking of our grandmothers and their hot cocoa recipes. My husband's grandma had the best recipe for homemade hot cocoa mix. Chris' grandma gave us a blue glass jar decorated with snowflakes full of her hot cocoa mix, and each time we emptied the jar, we would return it for a refill. That jar traveled back and forth between our houses often! When she finally shared the family recipe with me, Chris claimed she left out a secret ingredient because my mix just did not taste the same as when his grandma made it. Doesn't everyone have a family recipe that cannot be replaced? For my husband, his grandma was that one family member who cannot be replaced.

Although we miss her greatly, we remember her with every mug of hot cocoa.

GRANDMA'S COCOA MIX

- 1 8-quart package (about 10 cups) nonfat dry milk powder
- 16 oz. (about 4 ¾ cups) powdered sugar
- 1 ¾ cups unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 ½ cups instant malted milk powder
- 1 6 oz. jar (1 ¾ cups) powdered nondairy creamer

Makes about 16 cups.

Place 1/3 cup cocoa mixture in a mug; add ¾ cup boiling water.

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Maranda Jones' new book *Random Acts* is now available at amazon. com
The book includes her acclaimed articles from the last decade!

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Christmas Trees

Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Some built Christmas pyramids of wood and decorated them with evergreens and candles if wood was scarce.

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Traditions

By Deb Heatherley

Traditions are typically described as long-established customs or beliefs passed from one generation to another. These may take many forms.

As a child I knew it was getting close to Christmas when my grandmother came over to help my mother make fruit cake. Large plastic tubs of ingredients were mixed by hand and I could not wait to get my little hands in there and help. I remember having my hands and arms scrubbed clean, until I passed inspection, and standing on a chair in order to reach the tubs. My grandmother called this mixing process “gooshing” the fruit cake. I am not sure this is even a real word but I will never forget hearing her say it.

The best part to me was being able to lick my fingers when we were finished. Since I did not like the cooked fruitcake, to me this was the wonderful culmination of the entire process. I never did acquire a taste for the cake, but always I loved the raw batter, so my mom would set aside a small cup of batter just for me. I remember sitting down with that cup, grabbing a spoon and enjoying every drop of that heavenly mixture.

Today the ‘cake police’ would shudder, since we’ve been warned not to eat uncooked cookies or cakes, so I am very thankful that the ‘cake police’ did not exist at that time. And, between you and me, I still love to use my finger and get the last drops of batter from the bowl when I make a cake. My sweet husband knows this and when he makes a cake, he brings me the bowl and spoon when he’s finished. It’s the little things in life that make me happy. This is just one example.

The fruit cake tradition stopped with my mom because I never did develop a love for fruit cake. I did however love the fruit tarts she would make and I continue to make those, pecan tarts, and sugared pecans to this day. My daughter Tarrah once told me that it did not feel like Christmas until she came home from school and could smell the tarts or sugared pecans cooking. She now makes the tarts each year herself and has passed that love to her son, Luke. It is my hope that when he marries, his wife will want to make them too.

Other traditions in our family were in the form of gifts. When she was younger my daughter was always allowed to open two gifts on Christmas Eve. One would be a book or small toy, the other would be Christmas pajamas. She would wear the new pajamas to bed that night and when pictures were taken on Christmas morning, they would take on a festive feel. This tradition was shared by a friend when my daughter was very young and I adopted for our family.

As she got older, I added a new fun tradition for Christmas Day. Once all of the presents were opened, she was allowed to search the trees, (we lived in a very large older home and I put up numerous trees throughout), to look for an ornament she had never seen. It was always something that opened. Inside she would find a small piece of jewelry or a note with clues for a treasure hunt leading to a final surprise. When she was old enough to get her driver’s license, the clue led to a key, and eventually outside to her new car complete with a large bow on top. I smile at this memory because my daughter used this same approach this past Christmas when my grandson Luke received his car- red bow and all.

There was also the advent calendar. Ours was a mouse that moved to a new pocket each day of the count down. Just to see if she noticed, her dad would sometime move the mouse backwards when she was not looking. With a groan she would just move it back to its rightful location. This advent calendar went with my daughter when she married and she has used it all these years with my grandson. I’ve always wondered if it will go with him when he marries and has a family of his own or stay with her as a link to her childhood.

I’ve since heard of several traditions that I wished I had known when she was younger. I love the idea of an “anticipation quilt.” This is a Christmas quilt that appears on the child’s bed on Dec. 1 and then goes away on Dec. 26. Each year when it appears, the child knows that Christmas is right around the corner and is wrapped up in a ‘Christmas hug’ each night as they wait.

Another is the progressive nativity. This is a nativity set with 24 pieces. Each day in December a new piece is added with baby Jesus as the last piece to be put in place on Dec. 24.



Finally, one family I know has the “hand made rule”. All gifts exchanged must be made by the giver. I can image the wonderful memories created as the older children and adults help the younger children make something to give to those they love. From popsicle snowflakes to book marks and more, I can just feel the joy that would fill your heart as you received one of these treasures.

Each family has its own unique way to celebrate, but I still believe that the best tradition of all, is to gather together and enjoy each other’s company. May you, your children, you’re your grandchildren enjoy the traditions passed down from those who came before you while leaving room for new ones to make the season bright.

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

Shop Owners are invited to join her group just for you, “Grids Girls for Quilt Shop Owners Only” <https://www.facebook.com/groups/273593657256524>.

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

Did you know that Santa has his own Canadian postal code?

Every year, children from across the world send letters to Santa Claus, and some kind-hearted Canadian post office workers started writing back to them. As the program gained popularity, they decided to create a special postal code for Santa Claus, which is now part of the Santa Letter-Writing Program initiative. The postal code is HOH OHO.

Answer to Crossword on Page 8

F	R	I	N	G	E		A	R	C	A	N	E
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Oh NO!!!

Carl has a screw loose!!!

Did you find Carl’s loose screw in our last issue?

Regular readers of The Country Register will know that Carl runs a small town store that sits smack dab on the Manitoba and Saskatchewan border, and that Carl fancies himself as a bit of a handyman, but his eyesight is not what it used to be. Can you help him find it? It looks like this.

This is not a contest, just some fun for you, our readers.

their convenience and versatility in recipes and

d in from heese

It was on page 13.

Carl must have dropped when he was making that Velveeta Fudge recipe!

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Writing From Life

by Jeanette Lukowski

Quilting Lessons



I have been doing a lot of mental comparisons lately: Quilting Lessons vs. Life Lessons, for lack of a better way of phrasing it. If you don't mind, I would like to share these musings with you.

1) **No two are ever alike.** I remember seeing a twin to one of my quilted wall hangings in someone else's house. Turns out we had both purchased a kit in the 1990s—but not from the same supplier—so our background fabrics were different.

This past spring, I went to a quilt show where several members of the guild used the same pattern with different fabrics. The dramatic difference created by simply selecting their personal favorites left me in awe.

2) **Things take time.** Have you ever watched programs where someone talks about making an entire quilt in a day? Good for them! I can't do it. I can't even make a table runner in a day.

Then again, quilting is my hobby, working around many other activities which fill my days (and nights).

The one quilter whose videos I enjoy watching wears several outfits during the fifteen-minute video. It took me a while, but I finally realized the video is recorded over the course of several days, then edited down for content.

3) **Not everyone does it the same way.** Historically a "rule follower," I was surprised to discover there are nearly as many ways of creating a quilt as there are quilters who make them! For instance, which method do you follow when you create a flying geese unit? Or, half square triangles? Depending on who taught you, and the decade within which you learned, I can bet there are a variety of answers to these questions among the readership. Now there are even trim-tools to help quilters achieve that perfect, uniform size, if that is of great personal concern.

4) **Doing what brings me joy can be so mentally healthy!** I don't aim for perfection in my quilting. Perhaps that's why I never sell my work? What began as a way to bring art into my family's bedrooms has evolved over the years. These days, I make quilted items for gifts, to brighten a plain wall, keep someone cozy, or donate to a variety of organizations.

I'm excited when corners match up perfectly, or my points remain intact—but I don't fret when they don't. I quilt to relieve stress, not create more.

5) **There's always another new pattern, idea, tool—or job—coming.** For those readers who might be wondering about how I ended my previous article, no, I didn't get / take that job. Ironically, though, the space got filled by two other part-time job! Jobs I hadn't known about, but appeared in my email box as queries from employers wondering if I were available—and interested.

Reminds me of emails I get from quilt shops, sharing their new arrivals.

Happy inspiration for tomorrow's sewing time break! The ideas are flowing; the excitement to sew builds.

© 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

SPICED ORANGE FOOT SCRUB

Take time for yourself this holiday season with a foot scrub.
It also makes a lovely gift, especially if you include a loofah, pumice stone, and a pretty nail polish.

½ cup coarse sea salt or sugar
¼ cup coconut oil
Zest of 1 orange
1 teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon ground allspice



In a bowl, mix the sea salt or sugar with coconut oil until well combined. Stir in the orange zest, ground cloves, and allspice.

Apply Scrub: Massage the mixture onto your feet in circular motions, focusing on areas that need extra attention.

Rinse: Rinse off with warm water and dry your feet thoroughly.

Benefits: The coarse sea salt or sugar provides effective exfoliation, while coconut oil deeply moisturizes. Orange zest adds a refreshing scent, and cloves and allspice enhance the festive aroma while offering additional skin benefits.



Textured Fishscale Knitted Baby Blanket

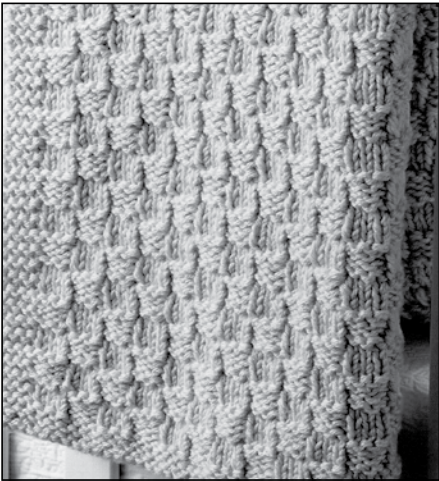
EASY

Finished Size: 36" x 45" (91.5 cm x 114.5 cm)

MATERIALS:

- Medium Weight Yarn
- 36 ounces, 2,100 yards (1,020 grams, 1,920 meters)
- 29" (73.5 cm) Circular knitting needle, size 10 1/2 (6.5 mm) or size needed for gauge

Afghan is worked holding two strands of yarn together.



GAUGE: In pattern, 15 sts and 21 rows = 4 1/2" (11.5 cm)

AFGHAN

Cast on 113 sts.

Rows 1-5: Knit across.

Row 6: (Right side): K7, P3, (K3, P3) across to last 7 sts, K7.

Row 7: K4, P3, (K3, P3) across to last 4 sts, K4.

Row 8: K7, P3, (K3, P3) across to last 7 sts, K7.

Rows 9 and 10: K4, P3, (K3, P3) across to last 4 sts, K4.

Row 11: K7, P3, (K3, P3) across to last 7 sts, K7.

Row 12: K4, P3, (K3, P3) across to last 4 sts, K4.

Rows 13 and 14: K7, P3, (K3, P3) across to last 7 sts, K7.

Repeat Rows 7-14 for pattern until Afghan measures approximately 44" (112 cm) from cast on edge, ending by working Row 9 or Row 13.

Last 5 Rows: Knit across. Bind off all sts in knit.

Cranberry Crumble Squares

The verdict on these squares was that "it tastes like Christmas" between the cranberries, shortbread, and cinnamon. You can also use oranges instead of lemons for the zest and juice.

BASE:

- 3 cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 cup butter, cold and cubed
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 tsp vanilla

FILLING:

- 3 cups fresh or frozen cranberries (do not thaw), or 1-340 g bag
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 2 lemons zested
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice

GLAZE:

- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 cup icing sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Grease a 9×13-inch baking pan.

Crumble mixture for the crust and topping: Whisk the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon together in a large bowl. Add the cubed butter, and cut in the butter using a pastry cutter until all the flour is coated and resembles pea-sized crumbles.

Whisk the egg, milk, and vanilla together in a small bowl. Pour over the flour/butter mixture and gently mix together until the mixture resembles moist, crumbly sand.

Set 2 cups aside of the crumble mixture for the topping. Pour the remaining into the prepared pan and tamp down to form an even crust. Set aside.

Cranberry Filling: Mix all of the cranberry filling ingredients together. Spread over the crust. Sprinkle the remaining crumble mixture all over the cranberries.

Bake for about 40-50 minutes or until the top is lightly browned and a toothpick comes out mostly clean. Remove from the oven and allow the bars to cool completely.

Whisk the glaze ingredients together. If desired, add more lemon juice to thin out. Drizzle over cooled bars, then cut into squares.



Stories of Yesteryear Reader Submitted Stories

I'll Have to Get out the Snowplow

By Bernadette Greuel

The isolation would get me,
They said it would wear me down.
The silence, the quiet, it would be too much
For a gal who was used to the town.
And it's true, I sometimes would panic
At night when I was alone.
When a strange car came into the drive-way
And all I could use was the phone.

When it rained the whole month of September
And I was as big as could be,
I had made up my mind that this baby
Would share the tractor with me.
An appendix attack hit our Susan
During a blizzard so dark and so cold,
And lots of times for some special events
My planning to go would just fold.

But sometimes in winter, the roads would be closed
No visitors came up our drive
So I'd hardly cook, I didn't sweep up,
And the toys we'd both kick aside.
With a three-day storm, if anyone came
They'd have to be out out of their head.
So with the kids tucked away we would spend many hours
Just rolling around in our bed.

And it's true, these Saskatchewan winters can just about kill you.

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Baking Christmas Cookies with Friends

By Judy Sharer

Talking at a luncheon one day with girlfriends, the topic came up of baking for Christmas which was just around the corner. Discussing the amount of time each of us spends baking holiday cookies had us tired just thinking about it. One of the gals said, “Why don’t we make them together. My kitchen is available.” Three of us accepted her invitation. We chipped in money for basic ingredients like flour, sugar, butter and eggs and brought additional ingredients like nuts and chocolate chips for different varieties. We each chose one of our family’s favorite cookie recipes to made enough for everyone to take a batch home.

For efficiency, we divided the tasks: I measured and mixed the various doughs. One gal placed them onto cookie sheets. Another was in charge of baking and timing, and the fourth removed them from the oven and put them on racks to cool. We had a constant assembly line cranking out cookies all day. The kitchen smelled heavenly and of course we had to make sure they were edible! Hard to beat a warm cookie with a cup of coffee or tea!

I learned a trick I’ll share with you when we rolled out the sugar cookies. My friend made quarter inch thick, eighteen inch long by two-and-a-half inch wide oak slats. Flour the rolling surface and your rolling pin. Place the dough between the slats, roll, flip, and dust with flour until the rolling pin is even with the top of the slats. The result: perfect, quarter inch thick dough ready to cut into shapes. If you have a sticky sugar cookie recipe place parchment paper on top of the dough before rolling. It was simple!



We spent the entire day making and sampling cookies together. It was best time I’ve had baking cookies in a long time. This year the girls are coming to my house! I can’t wait.

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 and Ebooks 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 and watch for her next historical romance release. judysharer.com



Lemon Cheesecake Bars

I really enjoy having a tart option on the dessert tray. Christmas desserts can be a bit heavy and sweet, and this recipe adds a bit of variety to the mix. Plus, who can resist anything featuring cheesecake? I would recommend baking this early in the day, as it takes several hours to set up. And go slow and gentle when pouring the cream cheese layer!

SHORTBREAD CRUST:

- 1 cup flour
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ cup butter
- 2 Tbsp grated lemon zest

CHEESECAKE LAYER:

- 1 pkg (8 oz/226 g) cream cheese cubed
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 egg

LEMON LAYER:

- 4 extra-large eggs room temperature
- 1⅓ cups sugar
- ⅔ cup flour
- ⅔ cup lemon juice (2 to 3 large lemons)

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9x9 square pan. Line the pan with parchment paper for easy removal of square later.

CRUST: Use a pastry blender to combine the flour, cornstarch, sugar, butter, and lemon zest until the mixture is coarse crumbs, with the butter worked in. Press the dough into the greased baking pan on top of the parchment paper. Bake for 15 minutes, until lightly browned. Remove and place the pan on a wire rack to cool slightly.

CHEESECAKE LAYER: In a mixer, beat the cream cheese and sugar together until light and creamy (3 to 4 minutes). Beat in the egg completely, then pour the mixture onto the warm crust. Return to the oven and bake for 10 to 15 minutes, until slightly set on top. You need to have the top cooked in a slight crust so the lemon layer doesn’t seep through when poured on top.

LEMON LAYER: Whisk together all the ingredients. Gently pour over the cream cheese layer, trying not to disturb it. Spread out the lemon in an even layer.

Return to the hot oven and bake for another 25 to 30 minutes until the filling is just set in the center.

Cool at room temperature, then refrigerate uncovered to let the filling set completely.

Sprinkle with icing sugar if desired. Slice into squares to serve.

These can be stored in an airtight container for 2 to 3 days in the refrigerator, or frozen in a freezer-safe container for up to 3 months.

Largest Nativity Scene

Switzerland is also home to the biggest Nativity Scene in the world a Diorama Bethlehem located close to the Monastery in Einsiedeln.

Sudoku Please see answer on Page 8.

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

Countryberries Designs

Christmas Angel

Make a wool or cotton applique wall hanging. Create a punchneedle or hooked rug piece. Paint the angel on paper, wood or canvas. Enlarge this pattern to your desired size. Whatever craft you choose, have fun! Not for commercial use. Please give the artist credit.



Designed By
Kathy Graham



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Fa-La-La-ing All the Way to Christmas!

by Barbara Kalkis

My car audio system can store at least 28 pre-set AM and FM radio stations. I know it can “remember” more than that, but I do not care to master any more technology than necessary. Although I’ve worked in high tech for decades, I avoid incorporating it into my personal life. With a slot for CDs, plus fee-based channels and a connection for streaming music from my phone, who needs more than that? I have plenty of driving distractions already, singing at the top of my lungs while monitoring other cars, the traffic, other drivers’ capabilities, and ensuring that I exit the highway at the right time and in the correct direction while cruising at 70-ish miles per hour.

While I have all traditional and contemporary ways to listen to music, news or the rants of someone with enough money to buy a piece of the airwaves, I love listening to traditional radio stations. The voice of a show host is like traveling with a friend. The “DJ” keeps things light and conversational. The news is read in snippets, allowing me to adjust to every calamity in a rational manner. I even like commercials. It’s interesting to hear the sales pitch for a product, while public service announcements offer the first alert of breaking news.

And so, the year turns and the drill is the same: listening to current music, 70s and 80s rock, country-western, calming classical or the all-news station.

Christmas changes the pattern. One local station begins playing only Christmas and holiday music beginning on Thanksgiving Day and continues until midnight on December 25th. For that golden 5-week

period, it’s nothing but Christmas/winter/holiday music. This year, I considered why Christmas music is so appealing.

Think about it. It encompasses every music genre there is. There’s something for everyone. What other music genre can logically skip from “*God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*” to “*Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer*” and still boost the holiday spirit? Religious, operatic, classical, symphonic, comedic, country, “pop,” jazz, rock, folk, rap, punk...every music genre hails the Christmas season. Singers, soloists, choirs, orchestras, bands in every genre record a Christmas song – thus ensuring that they will be heard at least once a year and collect royalties.

Many renditions recall former artists whose names or works are forgotten or relegated to niche music channels. From Tchaikovsky’s “*Nutcracker*” ballet to Charles Schultz’s cartoon “*A Charlie Brown Christmas*” to Gene Autry immortalizing Rudolph as the “*Red-Nosed Reindeer*,” holiday music delivers variety unlike any other music form and genre.

No mysterious-meaning lyrics here, either. We all know the tunes and can hum along or screech out the words while we are sitting at a light, zipping down the highway or finding our way home on a dark snowy evening.

Other music talks about love, loss, jealousy, hate, anger, revenge, sadness and loneliness. Christmas music is about love, laughter, joy, charity, family, hope, peace, presents and “presence” of the holiday spirit. It makes us stop, think, cherish what we have, consider change in ourselves, strive to do better and be a better person.

It is not meant to be a list of ‘resolutions’ that get tapped into our phone “notes,” posted online, scribbled into our new year’s calendar or even written on paper – and then forgotten as quickly as our holiday diet resolutions. The songs we hear from Thanksgiving through Christmas Day are reminders that we just need to keep the music in our hearts all year round.

©Barbara Kalkis, 2024. Barbara spends her time writing, teaching, and working in high tech. She’s author of Little Ditties for Every Day...A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm. Contact her at BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com.

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Tomato Braised Pork Chops

Next time, I make this recipe, I plan on doubling it, so that we can have an easy, “just have to warm it up” supper during the week.

- 4 thick cut pork chops approx. 8 oz. each
- 2 – 795 mL cans of crushed tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic, finely diced
- ½ cup onion, finely diced
- 2 tsp black pepper
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 ½ Tbsp basil
- 1 Tbsp oregano

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

Season the pork chops on each side with the salt and pepper.

Add 2 Tbsps. of olive oil to a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the pork chops and sear on each side for 2 minutes.

Transfer the pork chops to a plate and use the Dutch oven to make the tomato sauce. Add the onions and garlic to the pan over medium heat and sauté for 1 minute or until fragrant. You may have to add additional olive oil.

Add the tomatoes, basil and oregano to the pan and bring the sauce to a light boil. Add the pork chops back to the pan. The tomato should come close to covering the pork chops. It’s okay if it does cover them.

Place the lid on the pan and bake for 2 ½ hours.

*If the sauce is too thick add a little water. If the sauce is not thick enough you can let it simmer for another 20-30 minutes on the stovetop or back in the oven without the lid on.

Serve with pasta, rice or potatoes.

Moose Jaw, SK



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Kirby's Korner

Green is the Colour...

Green is the colour..., and safety is the game. I bet you all thought I was about to mention football in this issue's article. The truth is, I will be discussing colour, specifically the colour green, and how this topic sparked my interest.

I am a This Old House Insider® member and, therefore, have access to all 46 seasons of the show through the Insiders streaming service. I started watching the original 1979 season about four years ago. As the saying goes, if you want to learn something new, read a very old book. Well, in this case, it was watching an old TV show.

For the first three or so seasons, Host Bob Villa and master carpenter Norm Abram worked close to and around the home renovation project they were working on. But then, in later seasons, Bob started visiting factories to show the viewing audience how certain things were manufactured. As the seasons went on, I kept noticing a reoccurring theme: Most of the factory machinery was painted green.

This got me thinking about my old days of working in pressrooms. I ran a Goss Community press for many years, and it, too, was similar in colour to the machinery used to mill lumber for flooring, windows, and doors.

Once I noticed this, it led me to my childhood memories. I remember many cars built in and still driven in the early 80s were green. In my mind, this could only mean one thing, green paint, or at least the pigment used to make paint green, must have been cheap back then. After digging into the subject, I discovered I was wrong on both accounts and that using green paint on factory machinery and cars had completely different histories.

Let's start with the cars. When Henry Ford was setting up his Model T assembly lines, the paints of the day were too expensive and time-consuming to use, which prompted Ford to develop asphalt-based baked enamels for his cars. The dark colours lasted longer; they fit in with the assembly line process and didn't take as long to dry. Henry Ford wrote in his autobiography: "Any customer can have a car painted any colour that

he wants so long as it is black."

This mindset lasted until after WWI when new painting techniques were developed. Fast-forward to the 1970s and the energy crisis. Manufacturers started making fuel-efficient automobiles. This led to the popularity of earth tones in paint colours, thus explaining the use of green paint along with tans and browns.

One fascinating fact I discovered while researching this story is that the first metallic paints were developed in the 1930s. These paints were made using actual fish scales and were reserved only for the very rich. Herring scales were specifically used, and it is estimated that it would have taken 40,000 fish to make one kilo of metallic paint.

The colour of factory machinery has a more interesting story than that of car colours. It dates back to 1917 when Germany developed its Deutsches Institut Für Normung, DIN. DIN is a nonprofit that acts as a national organization for standardization. This organization is responsible for hundreds of standards, from the size of paper to the colour of paint and much more. The organization sets standards covering nearly every field of technology.

If you have ever seen old factory equipment or even an old bandsaw or lathe, for that matter, you will know the green I am talking about, Reseda Green or RAL 6011, to be exact. Reseda Green gets its name from the Reseda odorata, or garden mignonette plant. The colour of its leaves gave Reseda Green its name. Reseda Green is listed in the RAL colour collection under the number RAL 6011. The RAL system is a globally recognized colour reference system introduced in Germany in 1927 as part of the DIN, as mentioned earlier, a program to standardize and catalogue colours. Each colour group has its own number, and RAL 6011 belongs to the green tones, all green tones starting with a 6. The RAL system includes 2,540 colours, with 216 shades in the RAL CLASSIC collection, including Reseda Green. In the post-war period, machines were increasingly painted in green and grey tones. The primary reason was the positive effect of the colour on workers. RAL 6011 was officially defined as a machine paint in the German DIN 1844 standard to prevent workplace accidents. Until 1974, machines in Germany had to be painted in these colours. With its large machinery industry, Germany influenced not only the domestic market but also manufacturers from other countries who adopted colour coding to make their machines compatible and marketable. The use of these colours, especially Reseda Green, was widespread from the 1950s to the 1970s and had a lasting impact.

So there you have it. You now know more about the colour green than you likely ever wanted to know. But at least now I know why all my old favourite TV shows about woodworking have more green paint on the tools than not.

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Netherland Traditions

December 5 is a major celebration especially among children because it is the time when St. Nicholas or Sinterklaas visits them and puts candies and treats on the clogs they placed by the fireplace or windows.



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Our Mothers’ Sewing Machines

By Kerri Habben Bosman

In 1960, my mom purchased a Singer Slant-o-Matic sewing machine. She was 22 years old, and she had learned to sew from our Aunt Wilma. My mom used that machine for the rest of her life, and it served her well. Until recently, that Singer was the only machine I had sewn on, except for when I took sewing in school.

Whenever I use it, I see so much more than metal and dials. My mom is sitting at the dining room table sewing Santa hats for my entire first grade class because we were singing Christmas carols at McDonalds. There was the lined red cape when I was Little Red Riding Hood for Halloween, and the cat costume with the tail that took forever to stuff. There were sundresses with fabric I got to choose myself, ruffled pillows made for my bed, and pleated skirt for dress wear as young teenager.

Watching my mother sew inspired me to do the same thing. Teaching me, she was patient and supportive enough to make me love to sew. She was always honest, telling me what I had done correctly and what needed fixing. She’d guide me through a repair, but I had to do it myself. This didn’t always make sense to me when I was young. Sometimes I grumbled, “It would be so much easier if you did this.” And she would answer, “But if I did, you’d never learn.” Thus, I learned.

During our summer visit with my mother-in-law in Wisconsin, we talked about sewing. Her original sewing machine, a motorized treadle, is still up in her attic. Mom’s 103 year old eyes lit up as she remembered how her mother had patterns and fabric spread out across the table. And my husband, Wayne, recalled how Mom used to do the exact same thing.

It has been some time now since Mom has sewn. She quite happily gave us her 1972 Kenmore sewing machine because she knew that it would hum and create once again. We call that machine Mom’s and now the Singer is mine.

Over the years, I have made dresses, aprons, pillowcases, and tablecloths. Since Wayne’s family became my family, every Christmas they all receive a handmade gift. That means about 18 presents, and I start them in mid-August. Usually I hand-sew simply because I like putting the extra love into them. But with Mom’s machine newly ours, I was inspired. I wanted to get to know her sewing machine.

It now lives at one end of our kitchen table. I also pulled out the Singer, which we set up in the living room. Between the two of them, all of my sewn holiday gifts were completed by the end of September. It helped that a local fabric store was having a major clearance sale with a wonderful selection. I took it as a sign that it was time to sew a lot. I figured out which machine I preferred for specific parts of a project. The best part was telling Mom that presents for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren were all made on her sewing machine.

Our mothers made themselves lined suits and dresses, decorated their homes, and sewed special things for their children. Where my mom made me a Little Red Riding Hood cape, Mom made Wayne and his brothers cowboy shirts. There were doll clothes for my sister-in-law that Mom sewed at night so Linda would be surprised.

Our mothers may have sewn partially because it was relaxing and resourceful. It was a skill most women learned in their generations. But it was also far more than that. They sewed for the same reason I do. Because it says “I love you,” without ever saying a word.

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



Chocolate Pecan Kisses

Yield: 1-1/2 dozen

These cookies are sometime called “forgotten” cookies because the little meringues are left in the oven for 1 ½ hours to dry.

- 1 egg white
- 1/3 cup sugar
- ½ cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup chopped pecans

Place egg white in a small mixing bowl, let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Beat on medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in sugar, 1 Tbsp at a time, on high until stiff peaks form. Fold in chocolate chips and pecans.

Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart onto parchment paper lined baking sheets. Bake at 250°F for 40-45 minutes or until firm to the touch. Turn oven off and let cookies dry in the oven for 1 ½ hours.

Carefully remove cookies from parchment paper. Store in an airtight container.

Pork Chops with Rhubarb

- 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 bone-in pork loin chops (½ to ¾ inch thick)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ½ lb fresh or frozen rhubarb, chopped
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 ½ tsp minced fresh parsley

In a shallow dish, combine the flour, salt and pepper. Add pork chops and turn to coat. In a skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add pork chops; cook until a thermometer reads 145°F, 4-5 minutes on each side. Remove and keep warm. Add the rhubarb, honey and cinnamon to the skillet; cook until rhubarb is tender, about 5 minutes. Serve sauce over pork chops. Sprinkle with parsley.

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Borderline Observations

"Who was that, Carl?" Mary asked from across the room, not lifting her head to look at him, her knitting needles and fingers gracefully switching back and forth from knit to purl.

"Who was who?" replied Carl, also not looking up.

"That car that dove by," Mary said matter-of-factly.

"I don't know. I never looked." Said Carl.

Mary dropped her hands and knitting needles to her lap as she raised her head to look at Carl. "What do you mean you didn't look?" she said with annoyance.

"I didn't notice; I'm reading my book!" Carl replied, reaching for his tea without looking at it, resting on the wooden table beside his chair.

He effortlessly found the finger grip of his cup without looking at it; bringing it up to his mouth, he was about to take a sip, never taking his eyes off the page. "What does reading your book have to do with anything?" said Mary, sensing that Carl wasn't about to answer. "If you have time to read your book, you have time to look up and see who is driving by!"

Carl was sitting cross-legged by the window; he saddled his book across his right knee to not lose his page. He put both hands around his teacup like he was trying to warm them. Shifting a little in his chair for a better look out of the window beside him. Outside the window, it was a cold winter day; the fresh snow that had fallen the night before was now reflecting bright white light into the room for Carl to read by. "Sorry!" he said, "I didn't look up in time, maybe if you run to the kitchen window you can catch them before they drive out of sight!"

"No need to be sarcastic." Said Mary. "I was just asking."

"If you were "just" asking." Said Carl, using his hands to make air quotation marks as he said the word "just." "Why the attitude?"

"It's a cold day," said Mary. "I was just curious as to who would be out on such a day when they don't have to be."

"I'll never understand the reason for knowing why every small-town person needs to know who drove down the street or why every farmer or rancher needs to know who passed by on the grid road." Said Carl.

"It is what we do to look out for one another." Said Mary. "Is like a public service."

"Like PBS," Said Carl. "Public Busybody Spies!" "Or simple BS for short"

"Very funny!" said Mary. "if you would just learn to look, we wouldn't

have to fight about it every time someone drives by and you have the chair by the window."

"Learn to look!" Carl said, exasperated. "It will never occur to me to look. Could you imagine if we lived at my father's house in Saskatoon? On a busy street, no less. One of us would need to quit our jobs to keep track of every car that sped by."

"That's different," Said Mary

"Different, how?" asked Carl

"We wouldn't know any of those people driving by." Said, Mary

"That actually makes sense somehow," Said Carl.

"Of course it does," Said Mary. "Now, let's switch chairs if your book is too good to look up from."

It was Christmas morning, and Carl and Mary had finished exchanging gifts with each other. The turkey was in the oven and was just starting to make the house smell like a house on Christmas Day should. With a few hours to relax before Christmas dinner, Carl had settled in for a good read of the new book Santa had brought him. The book wasn't new, but it was new to Carl. Carl's favourite books have always been ones that had already been gently read by someone else. The only thing that made Carl happier than reading a used book was finding a notation in the margins or a highlighted sentence.

Carl grew up in a house full of books. All of them purchased new. His father was an insatiable reader. He would read anything he could get his hands on as long as his hands were the first to caress the pages. Carl's father never seemed to read anything Carl was remotely interested in, but the local library was full of books that Carl would borrow again and again, each time learning something new that he had missed the first time he had read it. Carl liked books you could learn from. Not textbooks, mind you. He never picked up any of the schoolbooks that Mary would bring home for her lesson planning. They were too... Too what? Carl never quite figured it out. Too straightforward and obvious, I guess. Whatever the reason, Carl liked to learn things organically and with a bit of a story attached. Not from a textbook. If Carl had an interesting bit of trivia to share with you, he would also know the name of the book from which he read the trivia. However, he would be hard-pressed to tell you anything he learned from a textbook.

This love of books led him out into the weather later that Christmas Day. Carl had moved to Mary's small town after he and Mary had wed. Mary was still in university, obtaining her teaching degree. Carl moved to take over the reins of Mary's family store. Mary's father wanted nothing more from life than to go fishing, and as soon as he learned that Carl was interested in taking over Borderline Goods, the family business, he retired and handed Carl the keys. As regular readers of the *Country Register* know, Borderline Goods sits smack dab on the Saskatchewan and Manitoba border and has been in Mary's family since the 1880s.

The town library, which today is just another abandoned small town building, was on the Saskatchewan side of town, just down the street from Borderline Goods. But when Carl first moved to town, it was an anchor for the community.

Carl soon learned that there is quite a bit of alone time in a small-town store, so on Wednesdays and Fridays, when the library was open, he would put a "back in 10 Minutes" sign in the window and wander down the street to the library on his lunch break. He would always find something that interested him. He would take it to the old oak desk where Mrs. Phillips awaited him. Even though she knew Carl never left without borrowing a book, she always waited until Carl came up to the desk before she started her ritual of flipping through the wooden box on her desk to find his Library Card. She would note his card number and the book number in

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her ledger before opening the book, pulling out the borrowing card from its paper sleeve inside the cover and stamping it with the return due date. This routine never got old to Carl; it was like watching a scene from your favourite classic movie over and over again.

Mrs. Phillips and Carl were kindred spirits when it came to books. And over the years, they had become good friends. Mrs. Phillips had lived with her husband, Ed, in a small house just out of town. When they retired from farming, they sold all their land sans the lot where their house sat. Their house was about an eighth of a mile out of town, not far enough from town to be considered a farmyard, and yet not close enough to town to have a street address. Ed would often joke that once they sold the farm, they moved to an acreage, even though they had not moved at all. When her husband passed away, Mrs. Phillips stayed in the house; she would walk into town to work her shifts at the library. It was closed when the village council could no longer afford to heat the library building. So, in a strange turn of events, it was she who strolled down the street twice a week to see Carl and pick up her mail at the store. Carl often wished his mail-fetching ritual was half as poetic as the ritual she performed lending him books.

Carl's and Mrs. Phillips's friendship led to her attending most of his and Mary's holiday meals. She would still walk to Carl and Mary's when the weather was nice at Easter or Christmas. This Christmas was not one for walking. The clear, bright skies that Carl had been reading by earlier in the day had given way to clouds and more snow. Carl was to pick Mrs. Phillips up for supper at 5:30. The sun had set shortly before five, and as Carl walked out into the darkness to warm up the car, the wind picked up. Carl shivered in the car until the engine warmed enough to start blowing warm air.

Carl could still see where he was going when he turned his car onto Railroad Avenue and headed east toward Mrs. Phillips'. When he drove past the last streetlight in town, the darkness fell over him like a heavy tarp. The only light he could see were those on the dashboard and the beams from his headlights. Beams that looked like two white pipes poking out into the night and only shone far enough to reach the road in front of Carl. Carl felt with his foot for the high beam button on the floorboards. As soon as the lights switched from low to high beam, Carl knew they had made a mistake. Not only was it more challenging to see with his headlights on a high beam, but the flash of bright light against the snow momentarily blinded him. By the time Carl's eyes recovered from the

flash of light, he knew he had driven past Mrs. Phillips's driveway. It was too late for him to try and turn around. The road in front of him had almost completely disappeared in the blowing snow. Carl crept his car along the road, hoping to come to the next intersecting grid where he could turn around. Having no idea how far he had driven and the snow falling even harder now, there was only one thing for him to do: stop and hope the storm would let up enough for him to keep going.

The Christmas I am recalling was long before the days of cell phones, so all Carl could do was wait and hope he didn't run out of gas. Every few minutes, he would drive a few feet ahead to ensure a drift couldn't build up over his tailpipe. What seemed like hours had only been about 45 minutes when Carl saw the headlights of what had to be a 4-wheel drive pull up behind him. Soon, there was a knock on his window. Carl cranked the handle down; as the cold air rushed into the car, he heard a friendly voice say, "Do you need some help?"

I was Fred McGilvery, the farmer who had purchased the Phillips' land when they retired and lived just a mile or so farther down the road from Mrs. Phillip. With Fred's help, he was able to turn around. Carl then followed his taillights back into town. Fred stopped and picked up Mrs. Phillips on their way, and they slowly made their way back into town and to Carl's place, with Carl tagging close behind.

"I can't thank you enough," Carl said to Fred as they got out and helped Mrs. Phillips into the house. "Do you have time to come in for a Christmas drink?" Carl asked Fred. "Next time said Fred, I have to get home for my Christmas dinner. As Fred turned to walk back to his truck, Carl said, "I'm just curious; how did you know I was stranded?" "Oh, that's easy," Said Fred. "When you didn't return home, Mary called to see if we had seen you drive by. We didn't know it was you, but a flash of headlights on the grid caught our attention, so we went to the window to see who it was. When Mary called, we knew it was you and where you were."

The storm let up shortly after supper. Carl and Mary had convinced Mrs. Phillips to stay the night, and they had all settled into the living room to watch A Christmas Carol at 8:00. Just before the movie started on TV, Carl said, "The Johnstones." "What about the Johnstone's?" asked Mary. "They just drove by," said Carl. "I thought you would like to know. "

Borderline Good is a series of fictional stories written by Kirby Gust. The stories are set in a fictional town on the Saskatchewan/Manitoba border. All the characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Zen Garden

I	I	A	P	B	M	R	A	C	I	I	O	P	S	E
M	L	E	R	P	F	R	C	P	O	R	R	E	L	E
M	S	P	E	P	E	E	R	O	O	N	L	V	B	R
T	F	S	T	E	M	P	L	E	B	B	I	M	S	A
E	A	O	O	L	L	I	L	O	B	R	R	F	F	Y
T	M	O	G	M	B	R	N	E	K	I	R	L	E	B
S	R	E	T	R	R	S	P	E	V	E	R	C	S	R
C	L	E	L	P	A	M	B	E	O	S	A	R	O	A
H	Y	R	C	I	A	V	R	E	N	E	R	B	P	B
E	N	A	R	A	K	E	E	O	P	O	E	L	O	O
O	O	M	V	O	R	P	E	L	E	P	L	W	E	O
I	M	L	R	A	W	A	T	E	R	F	A	L	L	E
R	R	R	A	O	S	A	N	D	R	S	I	O	R	L
E	A	L	L	B	C	H	O	I	O	O	B	M	A	B
S	H	N	O	V	E	K	N	E	E	E	K	O	E	P

- | | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| BAMBOO | MAPLE | RIVER |
| BONSAI | MOSS | ROCK |
| CONIFER | PEACE | SAND |
| GRAVEL | PEBBLES | TEMPLE |
| HARMONY | RAKE | WATERFALL |

Wacky Definitions:

ADVICE

- 1. What the old give the young when they can no longer set them a bad example.
- 2. The one thing it is more blessed to give than to receive.
- 3. You never know whether it's good or not until you no longer need it!

BANQUET

An affair at which a man may insist that he isn't much of a speaker, then gets up and spends an hour and a half trying to prove it.

BASEBALL DUGOUT

A whine cellar.



This picture was sent to us by

Sew Happy
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from their store in Arborg, MB.

Although there's no official confirmation on who invented eggnog, most historians agree that eggnog originated in medieval Britain. Eggnog was an upper-class luxury since they were the only ones who had access to the milk, sherry and eggs required to create the original version. Monks in the Middle Ages added figs and eggs and called the drink "posset" while the wealthy kept with the simple recipe and used it for toasts or big events. Research shows that eggnog most likely became associated with the holidays due to a lack of refrigeration. It became a drink for the more common man in America because of the larger farming opportunities and more access to cows and chickens.



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