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## The Country Register Of Wisconsin

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### The Country Register® of Wisconsin

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# Something new and something...not so new

By Scott Hughes, Publisher

EAU CLAIRE, WI - This issue includes our annual Quilting In Wisconsin special section, so it is an amazing resource for avid quilters as well as those of you who have always wanted to take it up but just didn't know how to start.

The advertisers in this issue have all of the expertise, experience and modern equipment for sale to help you expand or explore this passion. Be sure to mention to any of them you call or visit that you found them in the Country Register. They will LOVE to hear that.

Make NEW friends, buy some NEW equipment, learn about a NEW technique to make your next quilt the quilt of your dreams.

This is the perfect time, so just do it!

Thank you for picking up this issue of the Country Register and spending a little time reading these pages. You know, print publications like ours are sometimes considered OLD school - but we think you'll agree that OLD school is still pretty cool.

Print is not dead. It is alive, and thriving, and it's in your hands!



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The Country Register® is available at each shop that advertises and often at other unique locations.

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# Schedule of Events

Great Sales & Promotions In Our Favorite Places!

## March

- 1-2 ..... Vintage Shop Hop - The Paisley Star - Boscobel
- 1-2 ..... Vintage Shop Hop - Sissy's Treats & Treasures - Seymour
- 1-2 ..... Vintage Shop Hop - The Old Junction Mill - Milton
- 1-31 ..... National Craft & Crochet Month - Herrschners Retail Store - Stevens Point
- 4 ..... Facebook Live - Sew Smart - Rhinelander & Wausau
- 5 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 5 ..... Facebook Live - River's Edge Antique & Quilt Loft - Hayward
- 6 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids
- 12 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 12 ..... Facebook Live - River's Edge Antique & Quilt Loft - Hayward
- 13 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids
- 16 ..... National Quilting Day - Herrschners Retail Store - Stevens Point
- 16 ..... Worldwide Quilting Day - The Paisley Star - Boscobel
- 16-23 ..... Biggest Quilting Sale Of The Year - The Paisley Star - Boscobel
- 18 ..... Facebook Live - Sew Smart - Rhinelander & Wausau
- 19 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 19 ..... Facebook Live - River's Edge Antique & Quilt Loft - Hayward
- 20 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids
- 21-24 ..... Fat Quarter Frenzy - Bolt & Skein Quilt Shop - Shawano
- 23-24 ..... 35th Annual Crazy Quilters Guild Show - Mukwonago
- 26 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 26 ..... Facebook Live - River's Edge Antique & Quilt Loft - Hayward
- 27 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids

## April

- 1 ..... Facebook Live - Sew Smart - Rhinelander & Wausau
- 1-30 ..... Spring Is Sprung Sale - Bolt & Skein Quilt Show - Shawano
- 2 ..... Facebook Live - River's Edge Antique & Quilt Loft - Hayward
- 2 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 3 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids
- 6-7 ..... Northwoods Quilters Quilt Show - Marinette Rec Center
- 6-7 ..... Barn Door Quilts Vending At Northwoods Quilt Show - Marinette
- 9 ..... Facebook Live - River's Edge Antique & Quilt Loft - Hayward
- 9 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 10 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids

- 12-13 ..... Swing Into Spring Open House - The Market Place - Tomah
- 13-14 ..... Twisted Threads Quilt Show - Simek Center - Medford
- 13-14 ..... Quilt Kits & Beyond Vending At Twisted Threads Quilt Show - Medford
- 13-14 ..... Needle & Quilting Workshop Vending At Twisted Threads Quilt Show - Medford
- 15 ..... Facebook Live - Sew Smart - Rhinelander & Wausau
- 15-20 ..... April Showers Event - Going To Pieces Quilt Co. - Appleton
- 16 ..... Facebook Live - River's Edge Antique & Quilt Loft - Hayward
- 16 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 17 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids
- 17-20 ..... NE Iowa Shop Hop - Forest Mills Quilt Shop - Postville, IA
- 19-20 ..... Magical Mystical Quilting Show By Evergreen Quilters Guild  
@ Green Bay Community Church
- 19-20 ..... Barn Door Quilts Vending At Evergreen Quilt Show - Green Bay
- 19-20 ..... Junkin' Market Days - Eau Claire County Expo Center
- 19-20 ..... Swing Into Spring Open House - The Market Place - Tomah
- 23 ..... Facebook Live - River's Edge Antique & Quilt Loft - Hayward
- 23 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 24 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids
- 26-27 ..... Bunny Hop Shop Hop - Heart Blossom Quilt Shop - Sand Creek
- 26-27 ..... Bunny Hop Shop Hop - Blueberry Line Quilting - Ridgeland
- 26-27 ..... Bunny Hop Shop Hop - Quilter's Corner - Clear Lake
- 30 ..... Facebook Live - River's Edge Antique & Quilt Loft - Hayward

## May

- 1 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids
- 1-31 ..... 10th Anniversary - Quilt Kits & Beyond - Marshfield
- 6 ..... Facebook Live - Sew Smart - Rhinelander & Wausau
- 7 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 8 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids
- 14 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 15 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids
- 20 ..... Facebook Live - Sew Smart - Rhinelander & Wausau
- 21 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 22 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids
- 28 ..... "After Hours" Facebook Live - The Pickett Fence - Prairie du Chien
- 29 ..... Open Rug Hooking - Country Freckles - Wisconsin Rapids



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## Visit: Eau Claire, Hayward, Stanley

# The Science Behind "Glow 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. They glow green, yellow, orange, pink, blue and blueish 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).

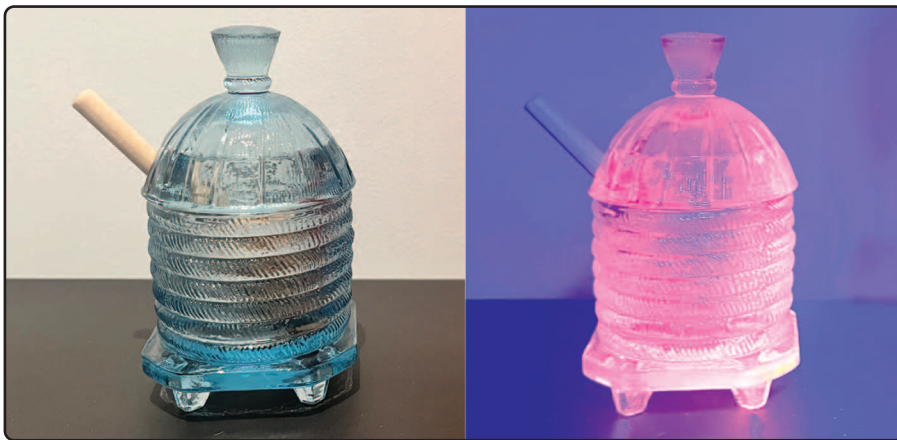
Vaseline glass is in the family of uranium glass, yet there are distinctions between the two. Vaseline glass is yellow or yellowish green in the daylight, while uranium glass

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



A glow-glass honey pot of the collector. "Glow glass" is popular with collectors once more.

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 has an online store: <https://midcenturyketch.etsy.com>.*

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## Visit: Seymour

# 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 faspas. 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 a 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 for teatime to have a topic for the column. But often after serving guests, I realize, "This could make a good tea column." The tea party inspires the column, not the reverse.

### Impromptu Teas

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. And they did.

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



Lydia with granddaughters Anna and Clara.

with Grandma," and served sweets from my freezer.

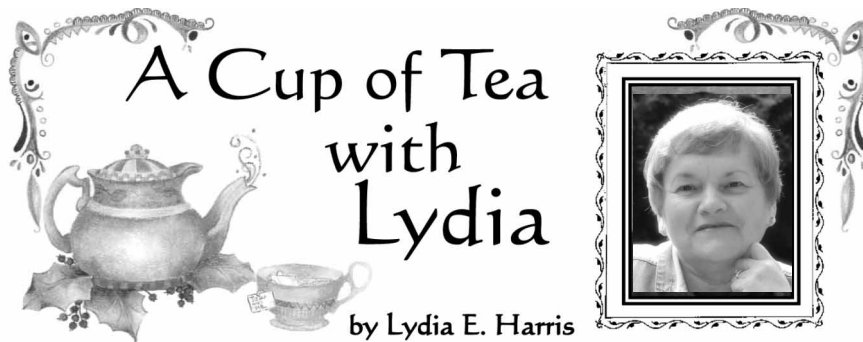
Placemats, floral teacups and saucers and a three-tier plate stand filled with food welcomed them to the table. The bottom plate held fresh-baked scones, Norwegian krumkake, and cookies. On the side, homemade whipped cream, jam and lemon curd accompanied the scones. The middle plate held the sandwiches 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 a 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?



Lydia's Spring Pretzel Flowers are really easy and fun to make for springtime!

### From Lydia's Recipe File: Spring Pretzel Flowers

These are colorful and easy to make.

Gather:

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

Make:

1. Place a 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.

*Lydia E. Harris is a tea enthusiast, grandmother of five, and the author of three grandparenting books: "GRAND Moments: Devotions Inspired by Grandkids" (2023); "In the Kitchen with Grandma: Stirring Up Tasty Memories Together and Preparing My Heart for Grandparenting." All are available online and wherever books are sold.*



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### Visit: Neenah

## Two-Minute Lift: Don't Build Your Life On Shoulds

By Kathy Sotak

I had two meetings the other day. The purpose of both was me seeking counsel from two distinct teams regarding unrelated topics. It was a typical work day.

However, both meetings had one common denominator. I was asked the same question by different people in each meeting: "Kathy, what do YOU want?"

Even though they were referring to

business outcomes, my mind must have taken it to my heart. I woke up that night at 3:02 a.m., with their voice ringing in my head. "Kathy, what do YOU want?" I then realized this was a pivotal question for my own personal life.

"What do YOU want?"

I shouldn't want more. I already have a lot of beautiful things. I am blessed with a kind husband, boisterous kids, family, friendship, home, career, dogs, chickens and great health.

But any good life is filled with retrospection, introspection and a bit of dreaming for the future. Right?

It rings again. "What do YOU want?"

I really don't think I've ever answered that question. My life was built on auto-pilot with too many shoulds:

- I should go to college then build a dependable career.

- I should be responsible and do the practical thing.

- I should put my dreams in a box

- I should wait until –

To clarify—no one "should" on me. I did it myself. I simply followed the societal program of shoulding.

"What do YOU want?"

I looked at the clock again at 4:00 a.m. on the dot, still lacking the courage to answer that question. I spent a lifetime asking others that question, but forgot to ask myself that same one.

This question is a gift. I've now identified where I'm on auto-pilot and flipped the manual switch to intentional choice. It has shifted me to micro-choose every morsel of the day.

Our micro-morsels are small but they transform to be big and life-altering. The theme of my micro-morsels are moments of joy. Like digging up my favorite childhood music. Buying a



hula-hoop. Dancing more around the house. Making the impractical decision of getting a second, high-shedding large-breed dog. Learning how to brew kombucha. Baking sourdough bread with my very own starter. Then eating it with zero guilt and all joy. Starting a new skills-trade group in my community to build connection and enrichment. More fires in the fireplace.

Will you join me in this walk? Let's do less shoulding and more choosing. Together, we will walk the longest, most treacherous 18-inch journey from our head to our heart, to answer that question.

"What do YOU want?"

©Kathy J. Sotak. Kathy is the founder and writer of 2 Minute Lift.

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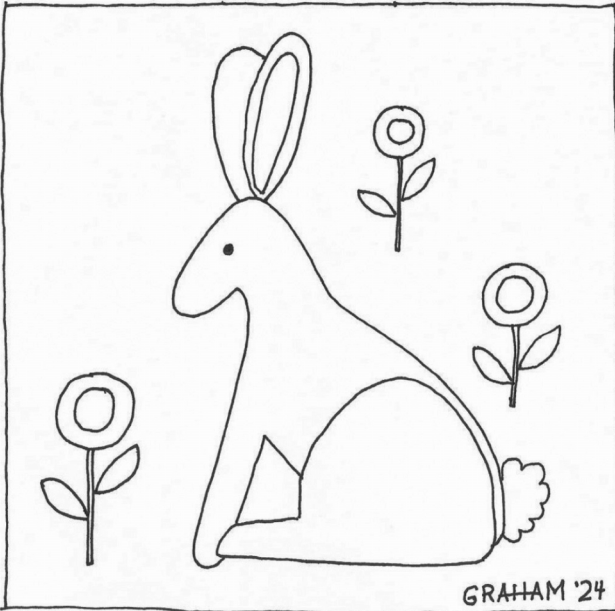
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by Jennifer Lopez



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Visit: Wisconsin Rapids

# Plan A Picnic In The Park & Celebrate Spring In The Sunshine

By Janet Young

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 is 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? First decide 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, certified tea and etiquette consultant, is a founding member of Mid-Atlantic Tea Business Association and freelance writer/national tea presenter. Visit her website at [www.overteteacup.com](http://www.overteteacup.com).*

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# RECIPE for SURVIVING HEART BREAK

MINE ENEMY IS GRIEF... ONE OF US MUST DIE. ♥ PROCTER, 1858

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**W**rite letters you never send & say everything you want.

**T**ake a tip from Scarlett O'Hara: don't think about it now... think about it tomorrow.

**V**oodoo dolls are always fun & allow for creative expression. Buy all new underwear.

**E**at turkey everything ~ it's loaded with L-Tryptophan which reduces anxiety & promotes sleep.

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## Visit: Milton

# The Luck Of The Irish And A Good Soda Bread And Stew

By Colleen Gust, Publisher  
The Country Register of  
Manitoba and Saskatchewan

St. Patrick's Day celebrates Saint Patrick, the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and the heritage and culture of the Irish. Wearing of green clothing or shamrocks, plus parades and festivals, are common ways to commemorate the day.

Saint Patrick's Day is a public holiday in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and in Newfoundland and Labrador (for provincial government employees).

How did the story of St. Patrick start? At 16, Patrick was kidnapped by Irish raiders and sent as a slave to Ireland. Patrick spent six years there working as a shepherd, and during this time, he found God. Patrick eventually fled to the coast, where he caught a ship to take him back to Britain; and Patrick then went on to become a priest.

According to tradition, Patrick returned to Ireland to convert the pagan Irish to Orthodox Christianity. He evangelized in the northern half of Ireland and converted thousands. His efforts became the story in which he drove "snakes" (heathen practices) out of Ireland, even though actual snakes were not known to inhabit the region. On Saint Patrick's Day, it is now customary to wear shamrocks and green clothing, as he used the shamrock, a three-leaved plant, to explain the Trinity.

Today, we celebrate St. Patrick with parades and festivals, Irish traditional music, and the wearing of green attire or shamrocks. Which reminds me, what do you call a fake Irish stone? A



sham-rock.

Christians may also attend church. The Lenten restrictions on eating and drinking alcohol are lifted for the day. Perhaps because of this, drinking alcohol, particularly Irish whiskey and beer, has become associated with the celebrations.

One of the longest-running and largest Saint Patrick's Day (le jour de la Saint-Patrick) in North America occurs each year in Montreal. Did you know that Montreal's city flag includes a shamrock? The parade has been held yearly without interruption since 1824, so it's time to paddy like the Irish do!

The Toronto Maple Leaf's hockey team was known as the Toronto St. Patrick's from 1919 to 1927 and wore green jerseys. In 1999, when the Maple Leafs played on Saint Patrick's Day, they wore green St. Patrick's uniforms.

St. Patrick's Day gives us a reason to celebrate Irish cuisine too. Most of us immediately think of Irish stew when asked about Irish food. Slow-cooked to perfection, the meat becomes tender, and the vegetables absorb the rich broth, creating a comforting and filling dish. It's said that every Irish household has a unique twist on the classic stew, a closely guarded secret passed down through generations.

Potatoes, known as the "Irish apple," have been pivotal in Irish cuisine since their introduction in the 18th century. A favorite is colcannon, a dish

made by combining mashed potatoes and cabbage with butter, a simple comfort food.

We must also pay homage to the "full Irish" breakfast, which includes fried eggs, bacon, sausage, black pudding, grilled tomatoes, and toast.

Another food staple that comes up when mentioning Irish cuisine is Irish soda bread. Soda bread, which is quick bread leavened with baking soda, has a crusty exterior and tender interior, which makes it the perfect vehicle for a generous spread of butter or a dollop of jam.

And, why do Irish bakers use baking soda? It's faster than Dublin the dough with yeast.

St. Patrick's Day, a global celebration of Irish culture, serves as a testament to his enduring legacy, fostering a sense of unity and pride among the Irish and enthusiasts worldwide. Ireland, with its vibrant traditions and enduring spirit, stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of St. Patrick, embodying resilience, community, and a deep-rooted appreciation for life's simple joys.

## Irish Soda Bread

This is quite good served with the Irish stew. I usually mix up the bread first thing in the morning, and then start chopping up ingredients for the stew while the bread bakes.

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- ½ cup white sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 2 cups buttermilk
- ¼ cup butter, melted

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Grease a 9x5-inch loaf pan.

Combine flour, baking powder, sugar, salt, and baking soda in a large bowl. Blend egg and buttermilk together; add all at once to the flour mixture and mix just until moistened. Stir in the melted butter. Pour into prepared pan.

Bake in the preheated oven until the

top is golden brown, about 65 to 70 minutes. A cake tester inserted into the bread should come out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Wrap in foil for several hours, or overnight, for best flavor.

## Slow Cooker Irish Stew

I usually double this recipe and it fills up my extra-large, oval slow cooker to the brim. It's hard to go wrong with a hearty stew, but if your family is balking at the leftovers, try reheating it with a can or two of coconut milk added, canned chickpeas and curry spices.

- 1 tbsp oil
- 1.5 lbs. beef stew meat in 1-2 inch cubes
- 2 onions peeled and very thickly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 1 lb. potatoes peeled and cut into chunks
- 4 carrots peeled and cut into chunks
- 3 sticks celery sliced
- 2 cups beef broth
- 2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 4 Tbsp flour
- ½ tsp salt
- Ground black pepper to taste
- 1 sprig rosemary, or ¼ tsp dried rosemary
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 Tbsp cornstarch stirred into 3 Tbsp cool water to make a slurry

Heat the oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add beef and brown; remove and add to 4-6 quart slow cooker.

Add the onions and garlic to hot skillet and sauté over medium heat until softened. Pour in about ½ cup of the beef broth, scraping any browned bits off the bottom of the pan. Pour into the slow cooker over the meat.

Place the potatoes, carrots and celery in slow cooker. Whisk together broth, Worcestershire sauce and flour in a measuring jug. Pour over meat and vegetables in slow cooker, stir. Add in the herbs, close lid and cook on LOW for 7-8 hours or on HIGH for 4 hours.

To thicken: open the slow cooker and pour in cornstarch slurry, stirring to combine well. Simmer WITHOUT the lid for 15-30 minutes on HIGH, until thickened.

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## Visit: Hayward, New Richmond, Port Wing, Siren

# The 15 Quilting Commandments To Follow — Or Not!

By Deb Heatherly

I hope this gives you a chuckle. As quilters I think we all can relate. I present the 15 Quilt Commandments ...

**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. 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](http://www.Debcatsnquilts.com).*



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## Visit: Clear Lake, Rice Lake, Ridgeland, Sand Creek

### Visit Wisconsin's Quilt Museum

*Compiled with information from Cedarburg.org, as well as the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts*

Cedarburg has a long and vivid history, lovingly preserved in its limestone buildings, the creek and more than 200 buildings of historical significance. It was founded in the early 1840s by Irish and German immigrants who were lured to the potential of power from Cedar Creek.

One of the first well-known buildings—the Cedarburg Grist Mill—remains a prominent reminder of the city's dedication and care that it devotes to preservation. Another iconic building located in the center of town is the Wittenburg Mill. When it was built in 1864, it was the only woolen mill west of Philadelphia to produce worsted yarns. Today, the mill continues to thrive as the Cedar Creek Settlement, a collection of shops, artist studios, antique stores and restaurants.

Post-World War II suburbanization changed Cedarburg significantly. While the mills had all closed by the 1960s, the city experienced rapid population growth and the development of new commercial properties and housing subdivisions.

In spite of the changes, more than 200 of Cedarburg's historic buildings have been preserved, and the city is home to eight listings on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Cedar Creek Settlement and the Columbia Road Historic District.

The community profits from a vi-

brant tourist industry and hosts festivals and events throughout the year that attract visitors from other areas.

#### One-Of-A-Kind Occasion:

*The Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts*

The Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts, located just east of historic downtown Cedarburg, Wisconsin, is dedicated to educating the public about the artistic, cultural, historic and social importance of quilts and fiber arts. They seek to increase the awareness of historic structure preservation.

The museum's roots extend back to 1988 when a group of quilters in southeastern Wisconsin founded the Wisconsin Quilt History Project, Inc. The mission was to preserve the history and creativity expressed in quilts through documentation and research. Since 1988, over 8,000 quilts and their stories have been captured. These records provided the material for an award-winning book, "Wisconsin Quilts: History in the Stitches," (second edition, 2009).

In 2001, the Wisconsin Quilt History Project, Inc. purchased the Hoffmann-Boeker farmstead as the future home of a museum dedicated to creating, preserving and teaching fiber arts. The 2.2 acre farm includes seven original stone and timber structures, the dairy barn with silo, farmhouse, ice house and summer kitchen/smokehouse/blacksmithery. The Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts has since refur-



The Wisconsin Quilt and Fiber Arts Museum, located in Cedarburg, Wis.

bished the barn for use as a gallery and education center, opening in August 2011. The site received Landmarks Designation from the City of Cedarburg in 2004.

The repurposed 1850s farmstead is used to:

- Foster and inspire creativity by hosting exhibits of artists from traditional to contemporary techniques.

- Educate children and adults, from beginners to experienced fiber artists, in the time-honored crafts.

- Preserve quilts and other fiber arts items, maintaining our own collection and encouraging others to document their treasures.

- Maintain a library for researchers interested in exploring how quilts and other fiber arts have changed over time.

Make the museum part of your spring or summer travels! To schedule a visit, more information can be found at [wiqiltsmuseum.com](http://wiqiltsmuseum.com).

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## Visit: Eau Claire, Menomonie, Osseo

# Breezy Manor Farm - A Bog-Inspired Hooking

By Donna Jo Copeland  
Farmeress

Echoes of the past appear when least expected, sometimes walking with us. I have always felt close to those who came before me, and their ways come easy. The whispers of my ancestors tickle my ears. I feel them guide my hands.

Last fall during a sleepless night I heard my cell phone ding, announcing a new message. A fiber friend in Wales sent two photos of a scrap of textile dug out of a bog. It was dated at about 2,000 years. Raw sheep locks were somehow hooked into a bast fiber background. One of the photos was a closeup. She asked since I was a rug hooker if I recognized the method.

It appeared to be hooked and looped with both ends of the lock on top. I puzzled over this the rest of the night.

As I carry some Welsh DNA, it called to me to figure out how it was made.

I had a large piece of Hessian cloth—tight weave burlap—which would become the backing. I hemmed all four edges and had a piece 24x36.

Luckily, I had a few pounds of raw Romney locks. I washed up 2 pounds in cold water with Dawn dish soap, leaving some lanolin in the wool.

Then I began experimenting with techniques. It took a few tries before I had something like the photo. To prove to myself it needed Romney, I hooked a few Border Leicester locks in. They didn't have the poof and substance of Romney.

I worked on it all winter, pulling the last loop last week. It is a lovely piece, full of life. Deciding it was better as a wall-hanging I sewed a sleeve on one end, inserted a dowel rod and hung it up. She is for sale in the Guild Fiber Arts Store in the Bloomington mall.

Since I raise Romneys, a nice sturdy English breed, I am off on another adventure. I bought the grand champion fleece from my friend and enabler Penny. It is from her 2-year-old stud ram, Lu'ke (named after the little boy in a John Wayne movie). He is creamy white.

Keeping 2 pounds of locks to wash myself, I sent the rest to Jamie at Wooly Knob Fiber Mill to be carded into roving.

On February 1 the adventure begins with a Welsh hooked pillow.

Then I will spin the roving and dye some. I want to see what I can make with this fleece. I hope to finish by the Greencastle wool show in April.

I keep telling myself, it's nice to have projects and chores to keep me busy, my mind active, and my world crazy.

The weather this winter has been incredibly unique and basically gray. I am suffering from light depravity and an overabundance of mud. Even had to buy new wellies as my old ones gave up. A friend asked why I had four pairs of boots at the door; it's simple—it all depends upon how wet the boots are, how high the water is, and how deep the mud.

I fear spring might be a wild ride. But the farmer in me hopes for kind, mild weather, lots of flowers, and time for tea and chocolate.

Keep smiling.

### Sunshine Salad

Growing up Jello salads were a constant. This is one of my favorites.

Dissolve 1 small box orange Jello into 1 cup boiling water. Stir until well dissolved.

Stir in 1/2 cup tap water, 1 small can of crushed pineapple, drained, and 1 cup shredded carrots.

Chill in the refrigerator at least 4 hours.

This can pass as dessert with a dollop of Cool Whip on top.

*Donna Jo Copeland is a 15th generation farmeress and fiber artist who lives in Indiana. She raises sheep and rabbits to make yarn used to create her art. Breezy Manor, her farm, is located in Indiana.*



Part 1 of the textile bog experiment.



Finished product from Donna Jo.



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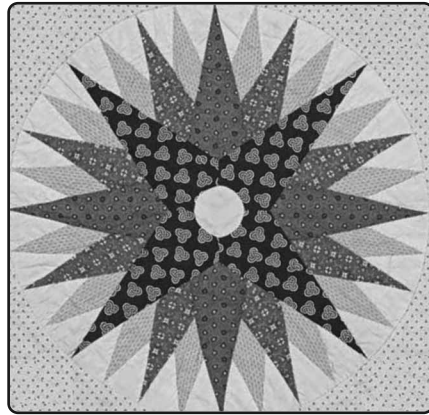
# The Mariner's Compass Quilt Pattern

By Rachel Greco

During the early to mid-1800s, Mariner's Compass quilt patterns were very popular. According to quilt historian Barbara Brackman, they were among the earliest named quilting designs in America. These quilt blocks are quite intricate and require skill in setting them together so that they lay flat. Other names for this type of quilt block include Rising Sun, Sunburst, Chips and Whetstones, and Sunrise.

Instead of originating from a square design, Mariner's Compass quilts are created from a circle with radiating points. The number of radiating points and designs vary, but they usually contain from 16 to 32 radiating points or rays. This quilt pattern may have originated in 18th century England, with the earliest documented Mariner's Compass style of quilt found in Britain. It is not known whether this quilt was actually called a Mariner's Compass, as documentation accompanying it showed a date of 1726, but did not include a name.

Although the exact design source is not currently known, it is highly possible that these types of quilts have their origins in the wind rose, a meteorological and nautical design element



An antique Mariner's Compass quilt block that is often found on compasses, maps, and monuments.

Maps and nautical charts often included a compass rose for displaying the orientation of cardinal directions, as well as their intermediate points. Sometimes called wind rose or Rose of the Winds, the compass rose is found in almost all navigational systems, including nautical charts, non-directional beacons, omnidirectional range systems, and global positioning systems.

The wind rose, along with the similarly designed compass star, was very ornate. At a time when sailors heavily depended on the wind for navigation, the wind rose was used to show cardinal directions—east, west, south and north—as well as intermediate direc-

tions. They contained from 4 to 32 points and were featured on charts and maps from as early as the 1300s.

Early American quilts with the mariner's compass style of design were most often found near the Atlantic Coast where the shipping and fishing industries were centered, thus giving credence to the idea that the nautical wind rose was used as inspiration for the quilt block.

The skill level required to create a quilt block resembling a wind rose increases depending on how many points the block contains. The more points a block has, the harder it be-

comes to piece each sharp point.

Today, the Mariner's Compass style of quilt block can be created using paper piecing methods, making it much easier to construct than those made by hand in the 19th century.

Rachel Greco owns Grandma's Attic, a traditional quilt shop and a large online store in Dallas, Oregon. 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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Grand Rapids (which you know now as Wisconsin Rapids) was incorporated as a city on April 6, 1868. The city included the area lying on the eastern side of the Wisconsin River, which is now the city of Wisconsin Rapids. On April 13, 1869, Grand Rapids held its first council meeting. At this time, lumbering had been the only product of the Grand Rapids area. In the springtime, while the waters were high, pine boards were floated in large rafts down river to markets. A gradual end to lumber rafting came in 1872, at which time the railroads began to service the area.

Another settlement located on the western bank, Centralia, was incorporated as a city on April 18, 1874. This city developed around sawmills and woodworking plants. The first wood pulp mill on the Wisconsin River, The Pioneer Pulp Company, was

started in Centralia around 1884. The first paper mill on the river, The Centralia Waterpower and Paper Company, was started three years later, and hence, so happened the birth of the Wisconsin River Valley's paper industry.

In 1902, The Consolidated Waterpower Company was organized to consolidate several of the water power facilities of the Grand Rapids-Centralia area. The company later turned its efforts toward paper-making, resulting in the birth of Consolidated Papers, Inc.

Wisconsin Rapids earned its name in 1920, and the area has now had a long history not only in lumber, but cranberries, industry and innovation.

The central location and airport/highway/rail transportation links make it a crossroads of commercial and leisure activity, providing broad-based opportunities for individuals and businesses.

The city, along with Marshfield, were ranked as one of the nation's fifth-best Top Small City to Raise a Family (with nearby Stevens Point ranking sixth).

The city now boasts a dozen arts, culture and historical organizations, along with an array of historical architecture. The Wisconsin Rapids Community Theatre

stages an impressive slate of Main Stage productions, while providing youth and senior performers creative forums through workshop productions.

The Central Wisconsin Cultural Center showcases diverse exhibits ranging from portraiture to sculpture to photography, while also providing a space for workshops and live performances.

Wisconsin Rapids also offers more than 25 miles of recreational trails, through wooded and urban areas, along the riverfront, or crossing paths with the many city parks.

The newest park, Witter Park, features a skate park, playground equipment, a splash pad, an outdoor shelter, a tennis court and six pickleball courts. Witter Park Aquatics Center offers three pools, two lazy rivers, slides, splash features, a climbing wall, a zip line and concessions.

Sports fans can play four golf courses in the city, and many more close by, all nestled in unique landscapes. Or take in a game at historic Witter Field, where the Northwoods League baseball team, the Wisconsin Rapids Rafters, are sure to keep you entertained. Be sure to take in a Riverkings hockey game.

From festivals to fishing, kayaking to

cranberry harvest, a free municipal zoo and more, there's a lot to see when you're in town.

Visit the city's website at [wisrapids.org/community](http://wisrapids.org/community) or the Wisconsin Rapids Area Convention Bureau's website at [visitwisrapids.com](http://visitwisrapids.com) for a full list of seasonal festivals and activities.

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The best part is that you can tour the family's cranberry farm! They also host Farm to Fork dinners, which visitors recommend for the delicious food and impeccable attention to detail.

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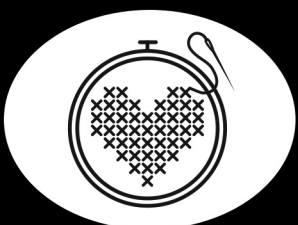
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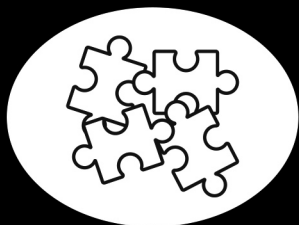
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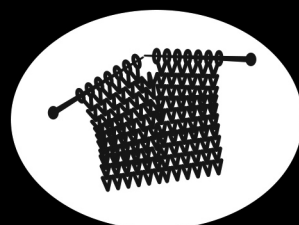
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# KISSed Quilts - Label Your Quilts And Build A Legacy

By Marlene Oddie

When you get to the very last step of your quilt, it might be easy to forget or not bother labeling your quilt, but what happens to a cherished quilt when one day you are gone and the recipient's child is wondering where the quilt came from? Have you seen beautiful quilts at the local thrift shop, cast away by a family member who may not understand the sentiment behind the quilt?

Early on in my quilting journey, it was explained to me that a label on a quilt is a fundamental part of documenting this craft. These quilts can generally last longer than our lifetime, so having the information about the quilt attached to it with a label is the simplest way we can keep track of its origin. You might find other unique details at <https://marketplace.unl.edu/iqm/fabrics/quilt-label.html>.

So, what should be in a label? When I'm doing sample quilts, I often include more technical specifics that help those who will be working with the samples—i.e., the fabric collection used, sizing and batting content. But in general, labels should include:

**Name of the quilt:** Yes, name it, make it fun, tie it into the sentiment of the reason the quilt was made.

**What is the reasoning for making the quilt or gifting the quilt?** Refer to the occasion in which it is being given or created.

**Is it based on someone's published pattern?** If so, what is the name of the pattern and who designed/published it?

**Who pieced it?** Probably you, so print your name or sign it.

**Who quilted it?** If it is you, then you might want to combine with the item before and this one just by saying Made by [Insert Your Name] if you're doing it all. But if you quilt for hire or had someone else do the quilting, it is appropriate to recognize their contribution to the quilt.

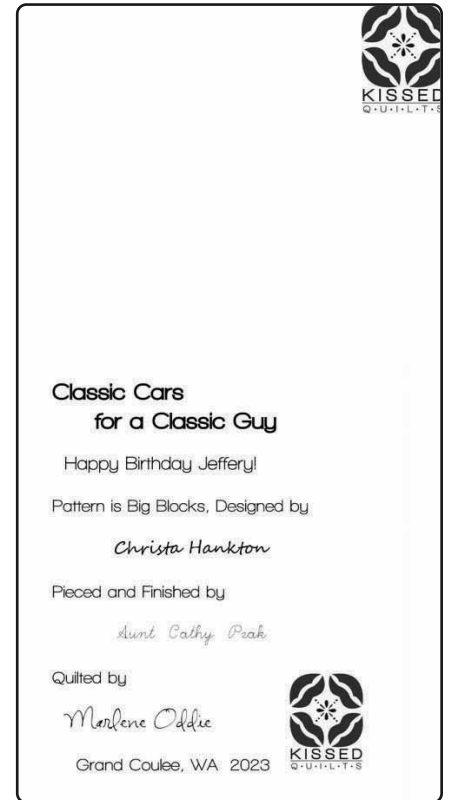
**Location and Date:** You can be as specific or not with this but given it a general location (I do the quilting in Grand Coulee) and at least the year should be sufficient. If it is on a special occasion, you might include a specific date closer to the top and disregard the year shown here at the bottom.

As a long-arm machine quilter for hire I am willing to create labels such as the example shown here using my inkjet printer and I sign them where my name is shown.

These can be printed on pre-treated fabric that is iron-on or sew-in or use Bubble Jet Set 2000 to pre-treat your own fabric and then fix the printing with Bubble Jet Rinse before drying and sewing the label onto the quilt back. There are pre-printed styled labels on which you can easily write the information you deem appropriate with a fabric pen. You might also machine-embroider a label or have pre-printed/woven signature labels/ribbons that you can sew into the binding, giving it at least some connection to the maker. Labels should be adhered in the lower left corner if facing the back or peel back the lower right corner when facing the front.

May your quilt's label be the connection to the legacy you have left behind.

*Marlene Oddie (marlene@kissedquilts.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.kissedquilts.com>. Follow Mar-*



An example of a label Oddie has used.

lene's adventures via <http://www.facebook.com/kissedquilts> and <https://www.instagram.com/marlene.kissedquilts>.

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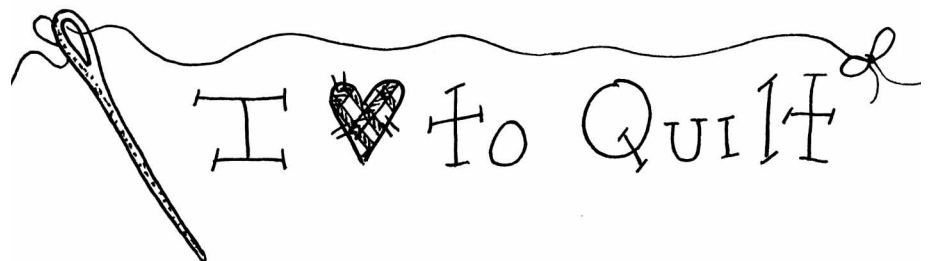
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# A Swedish Take On Spring Cleaning Can Be Helpful For Quilters, Crafters

By Barbara Polston

Have you heard about Swedish Death Cleaning? As I understand it, the idea is seniors should purge their possessions so that, when they pass away, friends and family will not be faced with the task. Several of my friends have embraced the concept and are shedding years of stored goods. No doubt, the process of disposing of the physical remnants of someone's life, especially while grieving, can be daunting.

For those of us with hobbies, we certainly have collections of all the accoutrement of our craft. I am no different with things squirreled away in various places in my house. While my "curated collection" is not as impressive as some, there is quite a bit. Neither of my daughters are interested in taking up the mantle. I worry about their ability to find good homes for these things; I would hate for it to end up in a land fill.

One of our neighbors, older and in failing health, has begun purging her craft

items. Learning that I sew, quilt, and embroider, she gifted me with several boxes, little related to the hobby work I do. These items were given with all good intention, but without first asking. I did feel it was a "dump" of sorts making her problem my problem.

These ponderings have led to several thoughts for those who might be considering Swedish Death Cleaning.

1. If you are a hobbyist, try to find a group of practitioners who will come and take care of everything when you are no longer around or if you are sure you are finished. My quilt guild has such a program. If that is not an option, seek out a group welcoming of these donations, for example, scout troops, art teachers, or senior centers. Some communities have organizations that accept the donations and then allow art teachers to shop everything for use in their classrooms.

2. Take your time, addressing one drawer or box at a time. If you think some

of your items may have value as vintage or antique finds, seek out someone knowledgeable to give you good information. A relative might be interested in having that heirloom. If not, it may be to your advantage to sell great-grandpa's pocket watch.

3. If you are gifting things to others, make sure they want them. No sense passing on items that will not be used, adding to the recipient's items to dispose of when the time comes. It is hard to let go of things given to us by those we love. Don't force friends and family into that position.

4. Donate freely to thrift shops, especially those run to support causes you believe in. Upcycling is quite popular if I can believe my social media feed. Reusing and repurposing is good for the environment

and you can contribute to that movement.

This feels a bit like pondering our mortality, but everything comes to an end. Perhaps we should be judicious about what we leave behind.

©Barbara Polston, Tucson, Arizona, January 2024. Barbara Polston, the author of "Quilting With Doilies: Inspiration, Techniques, and Projects" (Schiffer Press, 2015) and "Meet Puppy Brian" and "Puppy Brian and the Grey Cat" (www.puppybrian.com), lives in Tucson, Arizona where she has failed at retirement, but getting more time to stitch in a variety of forms. Contact Barbara at barbarapolstonquilter@gmail.com.



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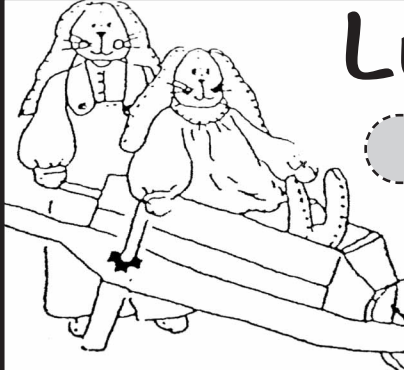
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# How Quilting Can Promote Relaxation & Mindfulness

By Steve Baker

We all know what quilting is, but let's explore how quilting can promote relaxation and mindfulness and share tips for incorporating these practices into your quilting routine.

### The Benefits of Mindfulness in Quilting

In today's circles where mental and physical health are so important, we hear a great deal about mindfulness. It is the conscious practice of being thoroughly present and engaged in the current moment. It involves non-judgmental awareness of your thoughts, feelings and physical sensations. When you practice mindfulness, you're able to let go of distractions and focus on the task at hand. This can lead to a range of benefits, including reduced stress and anxiety, improved emotional regulation and increased coping skills.

### The Comfort of Repetition

One of the key ways that quilting promotes mindfulness is through the repetition of simple, familiar motions. When you quilt, you may find yourself repeating the same stitch pattern or motion over and over again. At first, this may seem tedious or monotonous, but over time, it becomes a soothing, comforting process. Repetition is comforting because it creates a predictable rhythm that you can rely on. It can be particularly helpful when you're feeling stressed or anxious, as it provides a sense of stability and routine.

### Practical Tips for Practicing Mindfulness While Quilting

If you're looking to incorporate more mindfulness into your quilting practice, here are a few practical tips to keep in mind.

**Create a Comfortable Space:** The environment you quilt in can have a

big impact on how relaxed and present you feel. Create a comfortable, inviting space that feels safe and soothing to you. You may want to add soft lighting, calming music, or other elements that help you to feel relaxed and focused.

**Choose Simple Projects:** When you're first starting out with mindful quilting, it can be helpful to choose simple, repetitive projects that allow you to settle into a meditative rhythm. A straight-forward patchwork quilt or simple block pattern can be a great starting point.

**Breathe:** Breathing exercises can be a helpful way to relax and center yourself before and during your quilting practice. Start with a few deep, slow breaths before you begin to center your thoughts and continue to focus on your breath throughout the process. This takes practice so be forgiving and understanding with yourself when you lose focus.

**Take Breaks:** While quilting can be a soothing and meditative practice,

it's also important to take breaks when you need them. If you're feeling tired or overwhelmed, step away from your project for a few minutes and do something else. Take a walk, read a book, or simply sit quietly and breathe. Returning to your quilting project with a fresh mind can help you to feel more engaged and energized.

Quilting is a wonderful way to promote mindfulness and relaxation but like all new skills, it takes practice. Give yourself grace during the process. It doesn't matter if you're a longtime quilter or a beginner, adding mindfulness to your quilting practice can help you to achieve greater emotional balance and wellbeing.

*Steve Baker is the director of marketing at SewEndipitous located at 1093A Albright Road in Rock Hill, South Carolina. For more information visit the website [www.SewEndipitous.com](http://www.SewEndipitous.com).*



## Watch the Magic

Mystery Quilt - 2024  
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.



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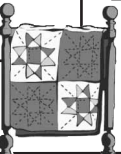


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By Marlene Oddie

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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@kissedquilts.com](mailto:marlene@kissedquilts.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.kissedquilts.com>. Follow Marlene's adventures via <http://www.facebook.com/kissedquilts> and <https://www.instagram.com/marlene.kissedquilts>.

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# Learning To Improvise As A Quilter

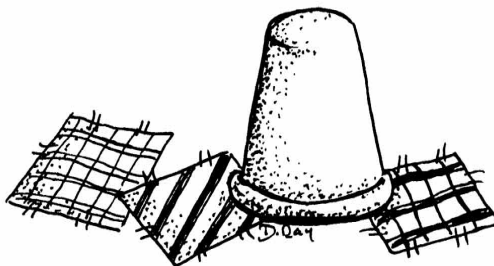
By Barbara Polston

I consider myself a traditional quilt-maker. Even when creating art quilts, I use traditional techniques. When piecing, I work to make intersections match. If points are part of the design, I try my best to make sure they fall exactly where they should without cutting off the tips with an errant seam. All my projects have a plan for what they will look like when complete.

The Quilt Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to document, preserve, and share the American quilt heritage, marked its 30th anniversary in 2023 with a Block of the Month sew-along. (You can learn more by visiting their website, [www.quiltalliance.org](http://www.quiltalliance.org).) Once a month, for nine months, members received a free pattern for a quilt block. Each of the patterns was designed by a different, well-known quilt artist. Participants were encouraged to post photos of their finished blocks on social media, tagging the designers and the Quilt Alliance. I participated in this celebration and looked forward to receiving each new pat-

terning...well, for the most part. One of the blocks was a nod to "improvisational quilting." An improvisational quilt is defined as one made without specific intention. One of the most common forms used to create such quilts is the sewing of random pieces of fabric together with no regard to straight seams. There is no worry if block joins meet precisely. One undertakes the process without knowing exactly what it will look like in the end.

Given my predilection for precision piecing and a solid vision of my end point, tackling this block of only 12 inches square literally struck fear in my heart. The designer shared their method, which was to just sew fabric together in haphazard rows and then trim the resulting pieced fabric down to



the desired size. The pattern did acknowledge those of us who would find this challenging. Directions were given to cut some 30 pieces of fabric to specific sizes and a layout was provided to stitch to an improvisational-looking result. This confused me even further. If one followed a precise pattern, how would that be improvisational? I procrastinated until the next pattern arrived in my inbox. With a need to move on to the next month's block, it was time that I took on this improvisational challenge.

I decided to just "do my own thing." I cut strips of fabric and pieced them together, varying the width of the exposed fabric. These strips were cut to a generous length and then sewn together. As planned, the created fabric

was larger than needed and trimmed to size. Whew! I did it! Put that block in the "done" column.

Sometimes we need to improvise. You may discover you are lacking an ingredient for a recipe under way and must improvise a substitution. A colleague is absent and you are called upon to make a presentation with little preparation. Based on your knowledge, you improvise and present. The need to improvise, I believe, is a rare occurrence. I learned that improvisational piecing and quilt-making is not something I would choose to do, but I also learned that, if necessary, I can improvise.

©Barbara Polston, Tucson, Arizona, Barbara Polston, the author of "Quilting With Doilies: Inspiration, Techniques, and Projects" (Schiffer Press, 2015) and "Meet Puppy Brian" and "Puppy Brian and the Grey Cat" ([www.puppybrian.com](http://www.puppybrian.com)), lives in Tucson where she has failed at retirement, but is getting more time to stitch in a variety of forms. Contact Barbara at [barapolstonquilter@gmail.com](mailto:barapolstonquilter@gmail.com).

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# All You Need Is Your Needle & Thread

By Sheila Tinkham

All I need is my needle and thread  
I forget awhile  
Any spats

Any troubles  
All I need is my needle and thread  
For a moment  
I am in bliss  
All I need is my needle and thread

I sew  
A quilt  
My new creation  
Yet all I need is my needle and thread..  
Life itself  
Stands still...  
Complete.  
All I need is my needle and thread.

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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# Writing From Life - Inspired By Marcia, Marcia, Marcia!

By Jeanette Lukowski

For those of a certain age, the ring of that name, Marcia, repeated three times can only mean one person: Marcia Brady. Although her co-star, Eve Plumb, spoke the words, it's Marcia's face which appears in my brain every time. Imagine my surprise when I discovered Maureen McCormick—the skilled thespian behind the character's name—had designed a line of quilting fabric!

No kidding. I learned about it during the pandemic lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, so I veered from my usual path of only purchasing from a brick-and-mortar quilt store: I purchased a small quantity of several designs from the line available through a reputable online retailer.

Working with a small budget allotted for quilting fabric (as I already have so much, please and thank you), I reviewed the choices carefully.

“This one looks like the fabric in a dress my mother made for me when I was about 6 years old, so a half a yard will be lovely. That one looks like the

flowery fabric of a dress one of the girls wore, so I'll take a half a yard of it. Oh, and that one? That reminds me of ...”

A modest collection, it fit nicely into a small shoe-box-sized plastic box in my sewing room. My plan was to make myself a “flower garden” quilt some day, using a simple 9-patch block and Kelly green sashing between. (Maureen McCormick had made her fabric line display quilt using hexagons, I believe; I am not there yet, skill-wise, but 9-patch is definitely in my skill-set.)

I moved before I had a chance to start that quilt, though, so the fabric remained packed, and the priorities for unpacking boxes reshuffled the order of projects to be worked on next.

Back in Minnesota for the Shop Hop in brick-and-mortar stores during 2022, I spotted the end-of-bolt sale for one of McCormick's fabrics! I didn't hesitate: I purchased the remaining yardage. Yes, I had the same fabric at home ... but it was on a clearance rack! I had to have it, especially when the purchase included an end-of-bolt discount.

That was the day I devised the plan: every woman in my family of a certain

age were going to get something made with some of that Maureen McCormick fabric. Some day.

Discovering a second set of fabrics designed and released by Maureen McCormick during the 2023 Minnesota Shop Hop, I got on the task (once again limiting my purchases to one yard of just two of the newest fabrics).

Welcome to my year of Marcia Brady table runners! It's the surprise birthday gift I'm quietly making and popping into the mail for three women in my family, and two of my best friends. I'm using the same clearance-rack yardage for all five, but the coordi-

nates and approach to my three block Disappearing 9-Patch table runner are creating some really fascinating differences! So far, one has included Gnomes, the second is three-color, and the third is scrappy.

They look so different! And I'm having fun.

©Jeanette Lukowski 2023. 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](mailto:writingfromlife@yahoo.com).



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### Yvonne Hollenbeck

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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.*

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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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## Visit: La Crosse, Onalaska

# An Oven Saga From A Crafter's Perspective

By Barbara Kalkis

To me, the term “Joy of Cooking” only refers to Irma S. Rombauer’s 1931 classic book and 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 skillet. 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 three 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

six-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 send 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 re-

mains 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.

©2023 Barbara Kalkis. Barbara spends her time teaching, writing and working as a marketing consultant. She’s the author of “Little Ditties for Every Day: A Collection of Thoughts in Rhyme and Rhythm.” Contact her at [BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com](mailto:BarbaraKalkis01@gmail.com).

## Writing From Life - The [ ...Blank... ] Of The Month Club

By Jeanette Lukowski

I remember hearing about a Block-of-the-Month program at a local quilt store, perhaps 10 years ago? While I was intrigued by the name, I was too distracted by other things to ask questions that day. Perhaps a year later, in the summer (when life feels a little more relaxed for me), I finally got around to asking.

For that store, Block-of-the-Month was connected to a class offered once a month. During the day. In the middle of the work week. Not an option for my work schedule. But the idea stayed with me.

A few years later, I ran across a store promoting a different kind of Block-of-the-Month program. Simply purchase the four necessary fat quarters to create the block (she supplied the pattern for free); if you re-

turned to the store the following month, with your finished block, you then received that month’s free pattern—and received a discount on any additional fat quarters purchased to make THAT block. I was hooked!

I received and made my January block, and February block—but then the store experienced a fire, and closed on February 28. No March block pattern. Or April, or May ... you get the idea.

It took me six years to figure out a different project with which to use those two blocks-of-the-month.

Not one to abandon an idea, though, the idea resurfaced on its own in about January of 2022. I was trying to figure out a wedding gift, when I remembered a cute little panel of seasonal gnomes I had purchased during the previous summer. What if I made mini wall hangings with the gnomes?

Viola, Gnome-of-the-Month began. I measured the center framing of each gnome, pulled out some graph paper, and started configuring. Using 2-1/2” squares of fabrics, I could outline each gnome’s frame with seasonal designs specific to that month! Batting, backing fabric which wraps around to become faux binding in the front, and a hanging pocket across the top; each finished wall hanging measures roughly 10” x 13”.

The pace of creating 12 mini wall hangings in a month-and-a-half almost killed me, though. Okay, not literally killed me, but I got bored by the redundancy of working on a singular project for a long time. Knowing I had purchased two of the gnome panels—and had decided to use the second to make myself a set of Gnome-of-the-Month mini wall hangings—I worked on a variety of other projects until about

November of 2022.

December 1, I hung the first of my new mini wall hangings, and returned to working on other projects. Then, sometime mid-December, I began working on January’s gnome. To my surprise, the joy of working on the gnome mini wall hangings had returned!

That’s when it hit me: the [whatever]-of-the-Month program is enjoyable ... if I only focus on completing one of whatever each month. An idea for any craft!

Big or small, quilting or hand-work, scrappy or color-themed. Variety!

©Jeanette Lukowski 2023. 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](mailto:writingfromlife@yahoo.com).

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# The Threads Of Life

By Janet M Bair

I was sewing on my machine very late one night when my daughter was home from college. Knowing that she was tired from her flight and wanted to go to bed, I asked "Will the noise bother you?"

"Oh no," she said. "When I was little, I used to fall asleep with the sound of your sewing machine in the background. It's a very comforting sound."

I never thought about sewing that way before — comforting. I realized that cutting out pieces of fabric and putting them together to create something beautiful is a soothing process in this hectic world.

I made my first quilt when I was in my 20s because I had so many fabric scraps from dresses I made in high school and college. I remember cutting out more than 100 squares with a paper pattern and how long it took to sew them together. I used an old blanket for filler and old curtains for the backing. When that enormous job was done, I said "That's it! I'm not making another one for a long time!"

Fast forward to retirement, and I recently joined a quilt guild with the naiveté that I could make some of the amazing creations I saw at their quilt show. Even though I have sewn many complicated things over my lifetime from animal costumes to bridesmaid's dresses, quilting is harder than it looks. Retraining myself to sew only one quarter inch seams was difficult. Planning a large quilt is an expensive endeavor, as material prices have soared.

However, I have found that I love my new rotary cutter and cutting board, which certainly saves time. Slowly reading my way through quilting books has shown me that there are quicker ways to piece together fabrics. I have enjoyed making smaller, lap-sized comfort quilts this year. Even though fabric is expensive, I think I will always enjoy looking at material thinking about what I can make



next.

I also realized that my family has woven many threads of creativity into my life. My grandma Scaduto (my maternal grandmother) emigrated from Sicily in the early 1900s. She could look at an outfit in a store window and go home and sew it without a pattern. After her eight children were grown, she worked in a coat shop.

Grandma Mac (my paternal grandmother) also sewed and crocheted. She quilted and did tatting. My mother sewed and worked in a factory where she did piecework.

My mother-in-law was a master seamstress. As a girl, she would wash the empty calico printed feed sacks animal grain came in and make dresses out of the material. This was on a northern Vermont dairy farm during the Depression. Besides sewing clothing, she made beautiful quilts.

Both of my girls learned to sew at young ages, making clothing for a 4-H fashion show at the Big E in Massachusetts. Recently, my younger daughter, Emily, sewed 140 cloth dolls to be sent to children in underdeveloped countries. My older daughter, Joanna, has designed and sewn many costumes for different theater productions.

Over the years, many colors of threads have been sewn by the women in our family. Sewing is a way of life with us. We have blended thriftiness, patience, love, and creativity to create a heritage that I hope will be a comfort to many.

# Cowgirl Poet, Quilter, Entertainer



Yvonne Hollenbeck

## The Quilting Flu

*It started innocent enough,  
some fifteen years ago;  
it was well into the winter,  
the ground was white with snow.  
He was laying in his easy chair  
while staring at TV  
as she was reminiscing  
about the way things used to be.*

*She looked at hubby laying there  
...across his lap he'd laid  
an old and faded patchwork quilt  
her Grandma Sarah made.  
The rolling channels bored her,  
the housework was all done,  
so thought she'd try to make a quilt,  
she thought that might be fun.*

*She got out grandma's patterns  
that were packed away upstairs  
within a box of pretty scraps,  
then soon was cutting squares.  
This urge that overtook her  
never really went away  
in fact, you'd call it "sickness"  
if you visited her today.*

*The house looks like a fabric shop,  
there's quilts on every wall  
the basements been converted  
to a fabric storage hall.  
There's projects on the table  
and more on all the beds  
and many that's unfinished  
packed in totes out in the shed.*

*There hasn't been much cleaning done  
since fifteen years ago,  
when she cut those pretty squares out  
and made a little throw.  
But, she is not alone  
as all her friends are quilting too,  
it is like they caught a sickness  
diagnosed, "The Quilting Flu!"*

*A guild is their support group,  
but there really is no cure  
and the only medication  
is a frequent shop-hop tour.  
Experts call it an addiction,  
there is not much they can do when  
you're overcome with this disease  
that's called "The Quilting Flu!"*

Order Yvonne's new book, "A Stitch in Rhyme" at [www.yvonnehollenbeck.com](http://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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