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# from the editor



Sarah J. Gardner, at age 2, spoons out flour to bake a cake with her grandmother Jean. (Submitted)

There is a passage in “Little House on the Prairie” that comes back to me every holiday season. In it, young Laura Ingalls and her sister Mary discover their Christmas stockings contain small, heart-shaped cakes for each of them that “were too pretty to eat. Mary and Laura just looked at them. But at last Laura turned hers over, and she nibbled a tiny nibble from underneath, where it wouldn’t show. And the inside of the little cake was white! It had been made of pure white flour.”

It’s funny from this distance in time to think that something made with white flour would be an unheard-of luxury — but for these prairie homesteaders it was. So much so, Laura and Mary spent the rest of the evening simply looking at their cakes, and opted to eat instead the brown cakes they were accustomed to for dinner. Laura describes their other Christmas gifts in equally ecstatic terms: a penny, a stick of candy, and a tin cup each girl can have as her own.

One of the reasons this passage in the book sticks with me is that it echoes a similar story told to me by my grandmother. She was not raised as a homesteader, but rather in a large immigrant family of meager means living in a two-room apartment in Chicago. For the holidays, everyone in the family would receive one sweet bun. It was such a rare and wonderful indulgence, my grandmother told me, she would hide it on a small ledge underneath their kitchen table, and she would crawl back under the table over the course of the next several days to eat her bun little by little, savoring every bite.

Whenever I recall either of these stories, I think about how lucky I am to have been so well provided for that holiday treats were commonplace to the point of being taken for granted. And yet, at the same time, I can’t help but wonder if I’ve ever had a single sweet I’ve savored the way my grandmother savored her bun or the Ingalls their cakes. I don’t want to be glib about the privileges I had and they didn’t; to do so would be a disservice to the hard work both families did to improve their circumstances. But I do take away from their stories the idea that we’re surrounded by abundance — and maybe the real gift, in the end, is the ability to perceive it. Whether on a homestead or in a city, what holiday treat isn’t better seasoned with heartfelt thanks for all we’ve been given?

— Sarah J. Gardner  
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# Radish

HEALTHY LIVING FROM THE GROUND UP

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# the grapevine

## From our readers

"I always enjoy picking up the latest copy of Radish Magazine here in Galesburg, Ill. When I finish reading it from cover-to-cover, I pass it on to my son and daughter-in-law in Bloomington, Ill. I belong to Spurgeon's Veggies CSA, Sitka Salmon Shares, and also have my own garden. Keep up the excellent magazine ... looking forward to many more issues!"

— Lindsey Chase, Galesburg, Ill.

"Love this magazine! (I) like to sit and have hot tea and read."

— Kathleen Cox

Spooktacular! (Oct. 2013): "We had a Halloween party and we did the pumpkin puzzles, the kids loved it! I had not seen that before, not even on Pinterest!"

— Suzanne Kanschat, Culver, Ind.

On the Road  
with  
**Radish**

We love to meet our readers! Thanks to Friends of Radish, you can find representatives of the magazine this month at the following events:

• **CHM Holiday Movie and Gift Swap**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5, at the Humility of Mary Center, 820 W.

Central Park Ave., Davenport. Watch a short film, "The Story of Change," and bring in new or gently used items for re-gifting in the holiday gift swap! Admission is free and open to the public. For more information, visit [radishmagazine.com](http://radishmagazine.com) or call 563-336-8404.

• **Iowa City Holiday Farmers Market**, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14, at the Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center, 200 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City. Shop for your holiday menu and homemade gift items. Admission is free. For more information, call 319-356-5210.

To discover more upcoming events of interest, see the events calendar at [radishmagazine.com](http://radishmagazine.com).



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- Choose low-sodium canned goods for vegetables and broths.
- Try white whole-wheat flour or whole-wheat pastry flour in baked goods.
- Replace some of the fat in baked goods with natural applesauce or another fruit puree.
- Replace added salt with fresh herbs and spices and added sugar with cinnamon and vanilla to enhance flavor.
- Serve smaller portions of all dishes, especially dessert.
- Lighten up side dishes by serving fresh fruit or veggie salads instead of casseroles

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# healthy living from the ground up

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Canning and storage jars can make a wonderful holiday gift — or even a festive centerpiece. (Photo by Todd Welvaert / Radish)

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## radishmagazine.com

Sometimes, a great gift just needs a second chance at landing in the right hands: the sweater may be fabulous, but not quite the right size, the coffee mug may be delightful, but the cupboard is already full. That's when a gift swap such as the one to be hosted by the Congregation of the Humility of Mary on Dec. 5 can be just the ticket.

Participants bring in new or gently-used gift items and get the chance to exchange it for something someone else brought. They also get a chance to see "The Story of Change," a short film with a powerful message. Learn more about this upcoming event and get a sneak peek at the film by visiting [radishmagazine.com](http://radishmagazine.com).

healthy living

# Gifts of the heart

## Reclaim Your Holidays helps explore gift-giving options

By Annie L. Scholl

With another holiday season right around the corner, you might be wondering if it's possible to have more fun and more meaningful celebrations that also are kinder to the environment. If so, you might want to check out Reclaim Your Holidays ([reclaimyourholidays.org](http://reclaimyourholidays.org)), a year-round initiative of the University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy & Environmental Education (CEEE).

The initiative is supported with grants from the Resource Enhancement and Protection Conservation Education Program and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Solid Waste Alternatives Program. Its purpose is to provide resources and inspiration to help create more meaningful celebrations and to be gentler with the environment, and to connect with educators and volunteers across the state of Iowa to offer professional development opportunities to help them connect community members with these ideas.

"We've learned that many people want to focus on family and friends for celebrations, but our culture focuses our attention on stuff," says Carole Yates, program manager with the CEEE. "Reclaim Your Holidays offers resources to help people think about how they can refocus on what is important for them."

Susan Salterberg, also a CEEE program manager, says that once our basic needs are met, "the research, and my heart, confirms that what matters most to us are our relationships and such things as leisure time to pursue our interests. Yet the

holidays are a time when we often get stressed out. We also spend a lot of money on material goods that don't really make us happy."

She suggests that when we focus on what matters, we help create good memories and deepen our connections with family and friends. "A huge bonus is that consuming less and consuming differently is kinder to the environment," Salterberg adds.

**"People want to focus on family and friends for celebrations, but our culture focuses our attention on stuff."**

Most environmental impacts, she says, occur long before we buy products, such as through the extraction of materials, like cutting trees and mining, and through the manufacturing process. That's why it's important to rethink our purchasing habits, the two women say. They suggest that by giving experiential gifts, like theater tickets, or teaching skills, like building a birdhouse with a grandchild, we give — and get — what matters most in life. And when we give consumable gifts like wine from a local winery, we can help build healthy local economies.



iStockphoto

They point to statistics that show in the past 50 years humans have consumed more resources than in all of previous history. The materials being used are also changing, they note. One statistic shows that in 1900, 41 percent of the materials used in the United States were renewable. By 1995, only 6 percent were. Yet another statistic shows that 42 percent of greenhouse gas emissions are associated with materials, accounting for the largest sector of emissions. In other words, we contribute more to climate change as a result of purchasing stuff than we do by driving our cars or heating and powering our homes.

Yates and Salterberg suggest we take three small, but deliberate actions. First, take some time to think about what is important during the celebrations. Next, think about what we would like to change to focus on our priorities. Then make a plan for changing one thing during this holiday season.

Annie L. Scholl is a frequent Radish contributor.

## Gift ideas great and small

We love our grandchildren, nieces and nephews — but we can often go overboard in the gift-giving department, causing concern for parents. When giving a material gift, first consider the lifespan of the object. If it will break or become obsolete, or the child will quickly lose interest, skip it. Ask parents what the child needs for sports, music or hobbies. Consider giving play clothes, special equipment or art materials. Choose toys that stimulate critical thinking and imagination.

Of course, many people are interested in giving things other than material goods, but are unsure what "gifts" they can give in their place. If you'd like to show that you care in other ways, [reclaimyourholidays.org](http://reclaimyourholidays.org) offers the following creative gift suggestions.

- **Talent and skills.** Children learn from watching their elders. Consider teaching them a game from your childhood — and asking them to teach you a game they know. You also could make plans to plant and tend a garden together; prepare a favorite recipe; or teach food preservation skills, such as canning or dehydration. Teaching a hobby, like quilting, or a work skill, like how to make household repairs, is another great way to give of your talent and skills. You also can ask the child to teach you something they know how to do. Repurpose items and make something together.

- **Affirmation.**

Sharing supportive words is a great gift to children, who may often hear, "Do this. Don't do that," at home and at school. Acknowledge and encourage the child's special traits, abilities, interests and talents. You can also write and tell stories of your childhood memories; share stories from your youth, such as what holiday dinners were like; and tell work stories, such as what your first job was like. Ask them what their goals are in life and point out characteristics you admire in them.

- **Time.** Nothing says "I love you" like full, undivided attention. Play with the child, doing what they enjoy. Set aside your adult expectations and enjoy imaginative play, silliness and fun. Go outdoors and read under a tree, go for a hike, or go skiing or kayaking. Another idea is to do work together, like household chores, schoolwork, car repairs, or volunteering in the community. Give hugs, kisses, bedtime backrubs, tickles and laughter. Practice relaxation techniques — and then teach them to the child.

For more complete details, visit [reclaimyourholidays.org](http://reclaimyourholidays.org) and download, "Spoiling Grandkids: A Guide for Parents" and "Spoiling Grandkids: A Guide for Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles."



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By Julie Stamper

In 1959, when Beth Anne Smiley was a child, a runner on the stairwell of a family friend made of vintage wool caught her eye. The friend had cut all of the wool by hand out of her husband's good

# WHEATEN WOOLENS

Davenport  
teacher  
helps others  
get hooked  
on an early  
American craft



Beth Anne Smiley. (Photos by Gary Krambeck / Radish)

wool pants and used a technique called “hooking” to create the runner. While Smiley tried many fiber arts over the years, including cross-stitch samplers, weaving, knitting and basket making, she never forgot that handmade runner. She was, as they say in the rug business, hooked.

## A craft with Colonial roots

Hand-hooked rugs have been relatively common since the 1800s, when they started appearing in New England and the Canadian Maritime provinces. Colonial women, who couldn't afford the rugs shipped over from Europe, started repurposing rags and wool into rugs they crafted by hand to make their new homes more comfortable. Using burlap sacks from livestock feed and other staples, the early rug hookers would use any kind of fabric that wasn't suitable for other use, and cut it into strips. They would then use a bent nail to “hook” the fabric strips into the burlap, and thus, one of North America's native folk art forms was born.

By the 1940s, rug hooking had become a well-established craft and art in the United States and Canada, but had progressed from the earlier, more utilitarian form to the more artistic wools and patterns seen today. Hooks are no longer bent nails; ergonomic hooks with bent shafts and turned wooden handles dominate the market. Wool is hand-dyed, and strips ranging in size from 2/32 of an inch to an

inch in width are often used to create hooked rugs or wall hangings. There are rug hooking studios and teachers around the world for those who want to learn.

Smiley, a second grade teacher at Adams Elementary in Davenport, started hooking without the help of a teacher. She ordered a kit for her first rug, using yarn, but wasn't sure if she was doing it right, so she set it aside. Eventually she finished that rug, but knew that hooking with yarn was not the look she wanted.

Rugs are generally hooked in two styles: Fine cut and primitive. Smiley hooks only in the primitive style, and she prefers using textured wool because of the depth it gives to the rug's appearance.

"I first learned about primitive rug hooking at a lovely camp in the mountains, at a beautiful 100-year-old inn called The Summit," she recalls. "There were five teachers at this camp, who all had different areas of expertise. I saw people hooking fine cut rugs, traditional rugs, primitive rugs and artsy rugs. We worked with our teacher in a beautiful ballroom all day."

## Teaching the tradition to others

In 2012, Smiley attended another rug hooking camp in Pennsylvania, where she met two new teachers, both of whom encouraged her to become a rug hooking teacher herself. Over the course of the week, she asked questions about teaching, and considered the idea when she returned home to Davenport.

"In the Midwest there are very few teachers of rug hooking and places to buy the supplies," she explains. "I created Wheaten Woolens in our 1860 stone barn with the help of my carpenter husband, and now it makes a beautiful studio for rug hooking."

Wheaten Woolens, which was named for her beloved soft-coated wheaten terriers, Murphy and Abby, is where Smiley teaches people the craft of hooking rugs, and she guides others with color planning of their next project. While the studio has limited hours due to her teaching career, she also offers weekend workshops. "I have people of all ages hooking. In fact, I have three generations in one family hooking and all loving it," says Smiley.

**"By taking a class, you learn so much more about rug hooking, faster than you would on your own."**

In addition to her studio activities, Smiley is taking her love of rug hooking into the Quad-Cities community. Last year, she started offering an evening class for beginners at the Figge Art Museum. "Taking a class is the best way to learn, because you really need the experience of a good teacher to guide you," she says. "By taking a class, you learn so much more about rug hooking, faster than you would on your own."

Smiley clearly loves rug hooking. You can see her personality shine though in both her rugs and the atmosphere she's built into Wheaten Woolens. Says Smiley, "I've been fortunate to work with inspiring rug teachers, and have made wonderful friendships that are born in a creative environment."

*Julie Stamper is a regular contributor to Radish. Read more of her musings at [adayinthewife.com](http://adayinthewife.com).*

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gift guide

# Homestead holidays

On the farm and in the city, gifts for sustainable living



By Sarah J. Gardner

**H**omesteading. Once upon a time, it was a word that called to mind prairie schooners rolling across the grasslands in search of 160 acres to support a family. Today, it's a term just as likely to refer to an urban dweller with a vegetable plot and an interest in living sustainably. As the term has evolved, so has American culture — and our understanding about what sustainable lifestyles and communities look like.

At its heart, homesteading is about “utilizing local resources better,” says Stephany Hoffelt, who with friend Sarah McElligott, helped form the group Iowa City Homesteaders. They envisioned it as a way for like-minded individuals to share information online and pool resources at get-togethers, including an annual “Black Friday” party the day after Thanksgiving in which participants make crafts together rather than head to the shopping mall.

Hoffelt says homesteading has “just always been a part of my life.” Raised on an 80-acre market farm into her late teens, she was naturally drawn to incorporate some of the sustainable practices she grew up with into her life in Iowa City. The biggest difference in an urban setting for a homesteader, she says, is that even though her “teeny-tiny yard manages to produce some food ... nobody has enough land to support themselves.” Therefore, building a strong community network is even more crucial.

Cordelia “Cordy” Kaylegian, who raises and preserves her own food on a 13.5-acre farm north of Henderson, Ill., sees sharing as a vital part of the homestead lifestyle as well. “Homesteading should involve passing on that knowledge, how to grow things, how to make things from scratch, for future generations,” she says.

In her own home, this has included a tradition of gift giving with an emphasis on gifts that you can make yourself. “Most of the gifts we give, and our children have been raised to give, are handmade,” she says. This can range from homemade breads and jams to napkin rings repurposed from cardboard tubes that have been cut and decorated.



Stephany Hoffelt measures infused oil for a soap making kit, left, and a GrainMaker Model 99 grain mill for making flour, above. (Submitted)

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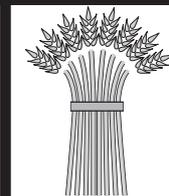
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### Continued from page 10

If you are going to buy a gift, though, it's worth it to take your time and look for "the good stuff, not the cheap stuff" for a homesteading lifestyle, says Kaylegian. Such items get a lot of use, and it's important that they hold up.

Ian Forslund, whose interest in a sustainable lifestyle led him to Mad Farmers Garden outside of Coal Valley, Ill., would likely agree. The first garden tool that comes to his mind as a good gift is a Japanese garden knife called a "hori hori," which Forslund praises as "pretty indestructible. I don't know how many trowels we broke before we found these."

For Forslund, homesteading is about "trying to be as self-sufficient and

### For your gift list and your wish list

Are you on the hunt this holiday season for a great gift for someone interested in living a more sustainable, frugal or self-sufficient lifestyle? Hoping, perhaps, to find such a gift under your own tree? We asked local homesteaders for their best ideas. Here are some of their suggestions.

#### For the kitchen:

- Grain mill, such as those available from GrainMaker (grainmaker.com), to grind grains into flour
- Canning supplies: Mason jars, lids, a wide-mouth funnel, a sturdy jar lifter. For beginning canners, the Ball-brand Canning Discovery Kit has the basic supplies for small-batch canning projects.
- Pressure cooker, for energy-efficient cooking
- Pressure canner, for safely preserving foods low in acid (most meats and vegetables)
- Solar oven, such those available from solarovens.org, for off-the-grid cooking
- Food dehydrator (preferably with a motor in back so you don't have to rotate foods) for drying herbs, fruit and making your own jerky



Clockwise from left: A go-to guide on home canning and a solar oven (submitted), and a coffee grinder (iStockphoto).

sustainable as possible.” It helps to have some good reference materials to help achieve that. Titles he suggests would be useful to give as gifts or scour for gift ideas include “The Encyclopedia of Country Living,” by Carla Emery, which he says covers most topics in a broad sense “enough to make things seem possible.”

Whether looking to live a little more sustainably or be wholly self-sufficient, homesteading can be an inspiration for building a more intentional, environmentally-friendly household. That’s a gift that gives the whole year through.

*Sarah J. Gardner is the editor of Radish.*

- Coffee grinder for grinding coffee, herbs and spices
- Stock pot for making soup and for water-bath canning
- Food mill for mashing and sieving foods
- Storage jars in a variety of sizes and lids for reusing glass jars, such as those found at Frontier Natural Products Co-op ([frontiercoop.com](http://frontiercoop.com))

#### For the garden:

- Hand tools: spade, tiller, cultivator, garden knife
- Larger tools: hoe, garden rake, trowel, dibble
- Seeds and seed catalogs, such as those from Seed Savers ([seedsavers.org](http://seedsavers.org)) and Fedco Coop Garden Supplies ([fedcoseeds.com](http://fedcoseeds.com))
- Soil block makers, such as those from Johnny’s Selected Seeds ([johnnyseeds.com](http://johnnyseeds.com))
- Propagation trays and other containers for starting seeds
- Raised-bed garden containers for gardeners with mobility challenges
- Gift certificates for gardening classes offered by the University of Illinois Extension ([web.extension.illinois.edu/hmrs](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/hmrs))

#### For the craft table:

Both Stephany Hoffelt and Cordy Kaylegian suggest assembling kits for crafty friends that include basic supplies and typed instructions for projects such as:

- Soap making kit: soap molds; lye; coconut, palm, olive and castor oils; essential oil for fragrance
- Herbal tincture kit: herbs from your garden, small glass jars
- Candle making kit: wicks, beeswax and molds
- Lip balm kit: beeswax, essential oil, flavor extracts and lip balm containers
- Container garden kit: seeds, potting soil and clay pots

#### For the bookshelf:

- “Putting Food By” (2010, fifth edition, Plume, 464 pages, \$17 paperback) by Ruth Hertzberg, Janet Greene and Beatrice Vaughan
- “Joy of Cooking” (2006, revised edition, Scribner, 1152 pages, \$35 hardback) by Irma S. Rombauer, Marion Rombauer Becker and Ethan Becker
- “The Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving” ([freshpreserving.com](http://freshpreserving.com), \$6.49 paperback) by Jardin Home Brands
- “Urban Homesteading: Heirloom Skills for Sustainable Living” (2011, Skyhorse Publishing, 304 pages, \$15.80 paperback) by Rachel Kaplan and K. Ruby Blume
- “Making It: Radical Home Ec for a Post-Consumer World” (2011, Rodale Books, 320 pages, \$14.54 paperback) by Kelly Coyne and Erik Knutzen



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# Adding it up

## Recent grad assesses Augie sustainability programs

By Laura Anderson Shaw

Amy Bandman has always been interested in sustainability. She works to reduce her environmental impact by doing easy things such as shutting off lights she isn't using and riding her bike whenever possible.

"It's fun for me," she says, adding that she enjoys seeing the savings on her gas and light bills. And because of its environmental benefits, it's a "no-brainer."

The Waukegan, Ill., native, who now lives in Rock Island, graduated from Augustana College in Rock Island in May with a bachelor's degree in geography and a minor in mathematics. Not knowing what she could do with her growing interest in sustainability, she heard of a summer internship with Augie's sustainability committee to assess the school's sustainability initiatives and jumped at the chance to apply for it.

She was hired and spent three months researching and entering data into the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System, or STARS, a self-reporting assessment tool that colleges use to report their sustainability efforts. It is managed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

She assessed everything from efforts to reduce water usage across the 115-acre campus of 2,500 students to raising the profile of sustainability as an academic subject.

She covered 135 criteria, or credits, in categories ranging from education and research to operations, administration and planning. She looked at where the college's food comes from, whether its buildings' lights have sensors, and more.

"My goal in this project was to just create a very real assessment of where we are as a college," she says — a way to say "this is how it is, for good or for bad."

Most of the data she collected had not previously been studied systematically. Locating some of the data was fairly difficult, she says, such as the

college's water consumption amounts, but she "just took it one credit at a time." Throughout the project she made connections with a variety of people on campus and in the community who helped her track down what she needed.

Bandman learned that the college is doing well with smaller sustainability initiatives, such as having an organic garden (Augie Acres, an acre of land on campus run by students that's used to grow organic produce); reusable to-go containers in dining halls; tray-less dining, which encourages students to take less food and hopefully triggers less food waste; and LED lighting in campus buildings.

Unfortunately, Bandman says much of the criteria Augie scored well on are worth fewer points than larger areas such as energy consumption. However, it shows that the college is "itching to move forward," she says. It's a "good base that we can very easily jump into the next level."

Through her research, she also found numerous learning opportunities for future students to continue researching. For instance, her research on Augustana's energy and water consumption and reduction on campus for the assessment was only "scratching the surface" of the issues.

There is more the college can do, too, when it comes to cutting back on greenhouse-gas emissions. "We haven't conducted a greenhouse gas inventory," she says, so "we don't know how much CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) we emit as a college." Once the college is aware of those numbers, she says, it could "set CO<sub>2</sub> reduction goals."

Bandman's report was submitted to the sustainability committee this fall. As soon as they are made public, Augustana's scores will be accessible online at [stars.aashe.org](http://stars.aashe.org).

As for Bandman, she currently works for River Action in Davenport and hopes someday to land a job as a college sustainability coordinator. "I know what can be done," she says, "and so I want to."

*Laura Anderson Shaw is a writer on staff with Radish.*



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# Time for treats!

Warm up to these flavorful, seasonal indulgences



By Sarah J. Gardner

I have a memory of making cookies with my mother when I was a young girl. As we spooned the batter onto the cookie sheet, I looked up at her and asked why her face had lines around her mouth and mine didn't. Without missing a beat, Mom said to me, "Those are my laugh lines. You have to smile many, many times to get them. They're beautiful, because they tell people you've been happy a lot in life."

Just like that, my mom gave me a great blessing. Before anyone else had the chance to tell me otherwise, she taught there was beauty in aging. I remember running into the bathroom after we slid

the sheets of cookies into the oven. I climbed up onto the sink and leaned into the mirror, smiling over and over, wondering how long I would have to wait to get laugh lines of my own. I wanted to be beautiful just like my mom.

I couldn't tell you the time of year when Mom and I had this conversation, or even how old I was, but it's a memory that comes back to me often during the holidays. Maybe it's because I'm busy baking cookies. Maybe it's the merriment of the season, all those laugh lines deepening. Or perhaps it's simply finding myself another year older, at an age now that is likely further on than my mother was when we had that conversation all those years ago. I

no longer have to run to the mirror to see if I have laugh lines. They are there — and knowing that, I can't help but smile. One more grin for the bank.

Mom's enduring lesson, imparted time and again, was that beauty is more a matter of how you live than how you look. Perhaps for this reason, when the holidays roll around I find I appreciate fancy sugar cookies with their carefully piped icing and silver dragees all in a row — but I love the treats that fill my home as they bake with the warm scents of ginger and cloves, cinnamon and honey and orange. It is to me the cookie equivalent of a life lived well.

*Sarah J. Gardner is the editor of Radish.*

## Gingerbread Brownies

1 cup butter	1¼ teaspoon baking soda
1¼ cup brown sugar	1¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup sugar	1¼ teaspoon cinnamon
3 eggs	1¼ teaspoon ginger
1¼ teaspoon vanilla	1¼ teaspoon cloves
⅓ cup molasses	12 ounces white chocolate chips
2¾ cup flour	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9x13-inch baking pan well. Cream butter and sugars together until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time, followed by vanilla and molasses. Combine dry ingredients and add gradually to the butter and sugar mixture, stirring to incorporate. Fold in white chocolate chips. Spoon mixture into the baking pan and, using a spatula, spread to an approximately even thickness. Bake until edges are set, about 35 minutes, turn off oven, and allow brownies to sit in the cooling oven. When cool, slice and serve, or store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

## Orange-Scented Pecans

3 tablespoons butter	½ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons honey	2½ cups pecan halves
3 teaspoons brown sugar	Black pepper (optional)
Zest from a medium orange	

In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, combine butter, honey, brown sugar, orange zest and salt. Stir constantly as butter and sugar melts until mixture reaches a uniform consistency. Remove from heat and stir in pecans. Spread in a single, even layer on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper or a silicon baking sheet. Bake at 300 degrees for 20 minutes. Upon removing from the oven, immediately dust pecans with pepper to taste, if using. Stir nuts once more and spread evenly on cookie sheet to cool completely. Once dry, break up any clusters and keep in a tin for up to 1 week.

## Cranberry Orange Macaroons

2½ cups unsweetened shredded coconut	½ teaspoon salt
1½ cups sugar	⅓ cup dried cranberries
⅓ cup flour	Zest from one-half medium orange
4 large egg whites	1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Combine coconut, sugar, flour, egg whites and salt in a medium saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat for 5 minutes, stirring constantly, as the mixture thickens and begins to pull away from the bottom of the pan. Remove from heat and stir in cranberries, orange zest and vanilla extract. Drop heaping spoonfuls onto a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper or a silicon baking sheet. Bake 25 minutes at 325 degrees; remove from oven and allow to cool 5 minutes on the sheet before removing to a wire rack. Once macaroons are completely cooled, store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.



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handmade

# Wooden wonders

## Carver shares the joys of working in wood at Nahant

By Chris Greene

Dennis Carlson began as many woodcarvers do, with a bit of idle curiosity, some talent thrown in for good measure, and, of course, a block of wood. His expertise developed in much the same way his carvings do: one cut at a time.

Now affiliated with DC Carvings and the Mississippi Valley Wood Carvers Association, Carlson will share some of the skills he learned along the way in a four-session woodcarving class to be offered at Nahant Marsh this December. The projects students will tackle include a spiral tree, an icicle ornament, and a Santa ornament (depending on the skill level of the students and the time available). The class is part of a winter series of classes being taught at Nahant.

Carlson's woodcarving journey began in 2005, when his children were both in college. With the kids away and a bit of free time available, Carlson decided to pursue the interest and see where it led him. He worked with other, more experienced carvers and traveled to events where he met others practicing the craft.

Little did he know that all his practice would lead to the holiday cover of *Woodcarving Illustrated* in 2011. Carlson had entered a contest for design, and although he didn't win, the magazine did want to feature Carlson and his carvings in an article for the magazine.

Carlson is humble when asked about his work, pointing out flaws in pieces

as any self-critical artist will do. To the untrained eye, however, his carvings are impressive, ranging from simple tree ornaments to intricate busts. He works at perfecting the smallest details, such as the expression in the eyes of his original Santa ornaments. Although many are similar, no two are exactly alike.

Carlson says he has whiled away many hours in his basement shop, often while a ballgame plays on a small TV in the background. He says he is sometimes amazed at how much time has passed while he is immersed in his work.

For him, the reward of the craft comes from the simple act of creation. "It's the satisfaction from going from this," Carlson says, holding up a simple block of wood, "to this," as he presents one of his detailed, completed Santas.

The tools of the trade — at least for beginners — are simple. "You need a quality carving knife, safety gloves and a thumb guard. Safety is very important," he says. These tools will be provided as part of the class at Nahant.

Carlson says how long it will take a carver to become proficient can vary greatly. "It depends on a lot of things ... natural ability, interest, the amount of time you put into it. Really, it's like anything else in that respect," he says.

There's no reason to be intimidated to try woodcarving, though, explains Carlson. "If you mess up, it's just wood."

*Chris Greene is a writer on staff with Radish.*



### Winter Classes at Nahant

What better way to pass the dark days of winter than by learning something new? Winter classes at the Nahant Marsh education center include:

**Basic Woodcarving**, 6-8 p.m., Dec. 9, 11, 16 and 18. Learn how to carve small ornaments. The cost is \$135; tools and materials will be provided.

**Wildlife Paper-Mache**, 6-8 p.m., Jan. 7, 14, 21 and 28. Have fun making interesting creatures out of nothing more than wire, paper and adhesive. The cost of the class is \$80 and includes all materials.

**Breakfast with the Birds**, 8-9 a.m., Dec. 6, Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 7 and April 4. Discover the world of dabbling ducks, raptors and songbirds. A \$5 donation covers the cost of breakfast; come dressed for the outdoors and bring a camera (there will be a short hike, weather and time permitting).

All proceeds from the winter classes will go to support environmental education and natural resource projects at Nahant Marsh Education Center.



Photos by Paul Colletti / Radish

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# Love those latkes!

## A Hanukkah staple gets a new, sweet potato twist

By Tamar Grimm

When I think of celebrating Hanukkah as a child, I think of lighting the candles, listening to Rabbi Joe Black's song about Judah Maccabee, playing dreidel with chocolate candy coins (known in Yiddish as gelt) and indulging in Hanukkah's most revered — but least healthy — food: the potato latke.

A potato latke is essentially a hash brown pancake. Some people pronounce the word lot-kah, while others make it sound more like something you buy in a hardware store, lot-key. You say potato, I say potahto. The important part is actually the oil, which symbolizes the miracle of Hanukkah.

After reclaiming the Holy Temple in Jerusalem from the Greeks in a war in which they were severely outnumbered, the Jews tried to light the menorah, the temple's six-branched lampstand. The menorah was supposed to remain lit at all times to signify the eternal presence of God. According to legend, there was only enough of the oil to last one day, but miraculously it lasted for eight days until they could procure more, hence the eight-day celebration of Hanukkah.

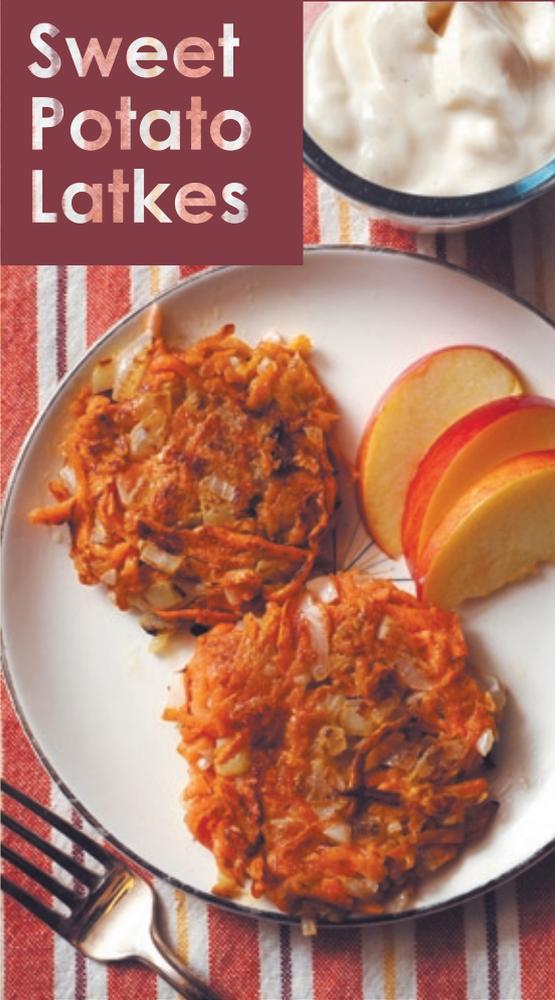
In my family, we used to eat lasagna with our latkes. We joked that lasagna had become our Hanukkah tradition even though it had no symbolic connection with the holiday. We made lasagna, because it went well with the latkes and we liked having a dairy meal so we could have sour cream with the latkes. The Jewish dietary laws forbid eating dairy and meat products together, and while we didn't keep kosher in a strict sense, we just felt a little strange about having sour cream and meat on the same plate — and having sour cream at this meal was non-negotiable. We always ate our latkes with sour cream and applesauce. This was highbrow cuisine.

For the first time ever in history, this year the start of Hanukkah coincided with Thanksgiving, and since my generation can't resist a mash-up word, we renamed the holiday Thanksgivukah. Food blogs began suggesting special combination menus months ago. One blog suggested making a cranberry applesauce topping, but personally, I like to stick with something more traditional. For the past few years Jews have been trying to make "healthier" versions of the latke by using zucchini or sweet potatoes. So, I thought this year sweet potatoes

would make a great latke and fulfill the double-role of a Thanksgiving staple food.

For me, Hanukkah has always been more about the people than about the food. The lyrics to that song I liked so much as a kid describe the special feeling the holiday creates: "In the window, shining so bright, I can see the Hanukkah light, and it gives me such a warm, friendly glow when I think of Judah Maccabee so long ago." Whether eating lasagna, "lotkajs" or "lotkeys," what matters most is the warm, friendly glow of celebrating together.

*Tamar Grimm makes her Radish debut this month.*



### Sweet Potato Latkes

- 2 pounds sweet potatoes (3 medium-sized)**
- 2-3 teaspoons kosher salt**
- 1 cup finely chopped onion**
- 3 large eggs, beaten**
- 1/3 cup flour (or 2/3 cup potato starch for gluten-free option)**
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- 1 tablespoon turbinado sugar**
- 1 teaspoon baking powder**
- Canola or vegetable oil, for frying**
- Sour cream and applesauce of your choice for topping**

Peel the sweet potatoes and then shred them using the medium/fine shredding disk of a food processor. Transfer to a colander and sprinkle liberally with the kosher salt. Use your hands to squeeze out as much moisture as possible, or transfer to a mesh bag and squeeze. Put the sweet potatoes in a large bowl, and add the onion and eggs. In a separate bowl combine the dry ingredients. Mix into the sweet potatoes until thoroughly combined.

In a heavy skillet (cast-iron is ideal), heat about 1/2 inch of oil over high heat until it is hot, but not smoking. Make small patties of the latke mixture in your hand so that you can squeeze out the excess liquid, then put them on a spatula and slip them into the hot oil. Flatten the latke with a spatula. Continue making latkes in the same way, cooking about 4 or 5 at a time. Fry until crisp and golden on the both sides.

Transfer the cooked latkes to paper towels or untreated brown paper bags to drain off excess oil. It is preferable to serve the latkes immediately; however, if necessary, you can keep the latkes warm in a 200-degree oven until they are all ready to be brought to the table.

Top with sour cream and applesauce and enjoy!

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health & fitness

# Power in presence

## Q-C yoga teacher offers classes for cancer survivors

By Ann Ring

Attending a yoga class may seem simple enough — you pay a small fee, perhaps bring a mat, and reap its many benefits with a little effort. However, for cancer patients, attending a public or semi-public yoga class may be too emotionally and physically overwhelming.

“There are special considerations that cancer survivors are concerned about, such as medical issues, fatigue and self-image,” says Missy Wright, a certified yoga instructor for Indigo Wellness in Moline, and a program director at Gilda’s Club Quad Cities in Davenport.

Wright says, for example, modifications in yoga poses may be needed for those receiving chemotherapy intravenously — a wrong move in a yoga class can be painful — the opposite of yoga’s intention.

The good news is that in spite of the anatomical, physiological and emotional toll cancer has on the mind and body, cancer survivors can benefit from those yoga teachers who, like Wright, understand their special needs.

LuAnne Snyder, 62, of Bettendorf, is a four-year cancer survivor. As a self-described type-A personality and “highly active” grandmother with five grandchildren, to say that Snyder’s life changed dramatically after hearing “It’s cancer” is a proverbial understatement. Not only this, but she is also a victim of Post-Chemotherapy Cognitive Impairment (PCCI), a debilitating cognitive impairment resulting from the cancer treatment. “Inside I was fragmented,” she says. “The acute (PCCI) phase had passed, but ... I didn’t know where to go from there. Inside I was broken and I didn’t know how to pick up the pieces. I needed to look for outlets.”

She found one in particular while attending a National Ovarian Cancer Coalition conference in Des Moines. While observing a restorative yoga demonstration, something within

enlivened Snyder. “I could feel the presence of that power. I felt as though yoga could really benefit me.”

They say when the student is ready, the teacher appears. In Snyder’s case, her yoga teacher was Missy Wright, who she met at Gilda’s Club Quad Cities. Snyder not only appreciates the benefits of yoga, like her increase in balance, flexibility and relief from stress, but she also loves the comfort of knowing she can just be herself without side glances from anyone. She says, “I now feel the ‘old me’ coming back, and that’s very gratifying. I have a sense of peace of mind; I’ve learned how to relax and just focus on the present.”

The intention of Wright’s yoga workshops for cancer survivors is to help build strength, stamina and flexibility at any phase of cancer survivorship to promote healing and a greater sense of well-being. In addition to learning poses, there is some class discussion on the relationship between cancer and yoga’s benefits.

“Participants will learn how breathing techniques will help them deal with stress, and how this relates to life after cancer. Facing death comes up — yoga gives you a greater sense about living life, being aware of what’s around you, and facing your fears,” says Wright, describing an upcoming class. “With this class, maybe we can create a sense of community, a place to share.”

Says Snyder, “The yoga class at Gilda’s has been a safe place for me — where I can just be. The concept is on honoring yourself, letting other things go, and being able to have that safety net when the world overwhelms you.”



Paul Colletti / Radish

*Ann Ring is a frequent Radish contributor. To learn more about services offered through Gilda’s Club Quad Cities, visit [gildasclubqc.org](http://gildasclubqc.org). Indigo Wellness will offer its next yoga class for those living with cancer on Jan. 18 at its Moline location, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact the studio at 309-764-9642 or visit [indigowellness.info](http://indigowellness.info).*

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# All in the cards

## Crafty and creative uses for holiday greetings

By Leslie Klipsch

If you're like me, somewhere deep in the recesses of your closet, you have a box bursting with holiday greeting cards from years gone by. There is something about the design, the paper, and the sweet messages tucked inside that make me loath to throw any away. Recently, I've discovered that I don't have to. There are many ways to savor the spirit of your past-holiday post that are creative, meaningful and earth-friendly.

### ■ Snip

Set aside sentimentality and grab your scissors. Seasonal cards can be given new life with just a bit of trimming. The easiest way to recycle last year's greetings is simply to repurpose the paper by making a handcrafted holiday gift tag. Cut the cards into tags and punch a hole for a ribbon to add some economical elegance to this year's gifts. To take this a step further, trace a silhouette of an image like a dove or a tree onto a greeting card cover, snip it out, and secure it to a package using tape, or cut a hole and string a colorful ribbon through it. Do the same thing to personalize a package by cutting the recipient's initial out of a colorful card and attach it to their gift.

### ■ Sew

Paper garlands made from last year's greeting cards add whimsical holiday style to your home in a memory-making fashion. While any holiday card can be used for this project, it's especially amusing to incorporate the ever-popular photo cards. Simply cut uniform shapes around the carefully posed photos of friends and family (circles of an approximately 3-inch diameter work well and you can use card stock or even card envelopes if you run out of photo cards). Cut carefully so that each shape is the same size. Then, grab some craft string or yarn and a bottle of glue or Mod Podge. Lay one greeting card cutout

face down on a long workspace and, using a paintbrush, cover the entire back of the shape with a coat of glue. Set your string (or yarn) on top of the shape so that it runs right through the center. Place another cutout on top of the glue and yarn, pressing down to seal. Leave about an inch of space and repeat until ... voila! A veritable album of smiling loved ones to adorn your tree or dress up your banister.

### ■ Stamp

Photo cards aside, this year's greetings sent TO you could be next year's merriment sent FROM you. Grab some colorful card stock and cut your desired size of postcard. Just keep it rectangular and between 3.5 inches high by 5 inches long (minimum) and 4.25 inches high by 6 inches long (maximum, according to U.S. post office regulations). Secure images, designs, or words snipped from last year's cards on one side of the card stock and write your message on the left half of the other side, reserving the right half for the mailing address and appropriate postcard postage, which is a bargain at 33 cents.

### ■ Supply

If you're not feeling crafty this season but hope to do something productive with your dated holiday cards, consider donating them to the recycled card program at St. Jude's Ranch for Children.

St. Jude's Ranch is a Las Vegas-based organization that serves abused and at-risk children, young adults, and families. The organization asks that well-wishers send the front of used cards (size 5x7 or smaller) to St. Jude's Ranch for Children, Attn: Recycled Card Program, 100 St. Jude's St., Boulder City, NV 89005, first checking to make sure there is no writing on the card front. Donated cards are cropped and recycled into new cards that are sold to customers to help support the work of St. Jude's Ranch. See the St. Jude's website for more specific information ([stjudesranch.org](http://stjudesranch.org)).

*Leslie Klipsch is a frequent Radish contributor. For a longer version of this article, including additional craft ideas, visit [radishmagazine.com](http://radishmagazine.com).*

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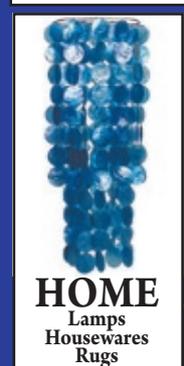
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# Cozy critters

## Tips on caring for your pet in cold weather

By Lindsay Hocker

The cold weather is a great reason to spend more time at home with your favorite furry friend, but how can you help make this winter a happy and safe one for you and your pets when freezing temperatures hit? Here are some tips from area experts.

**Q Do dogs really need sweaters and coats?** Yes. No. OK — it depends. “Cold, wet, windy weather affects dogs differently,” says Julie Phye, co-owner of Leash on Life in Iowa City. Some are fine, she says, but those without a lot of fur are impacted.

“Cold weather is also harder on young and old dogs,” she says, explaining that sweaters and coats can help some pets stay warm while “getting that ever important exercise in the winter months.”

Patti McRae, executive director of the Quad City Animal Welfare Center in Milan, Ill., says that smaller dogs often like wearing sweaters to keep them warm, but not all dogs like to wear clothing.

At The Dapper Dog in Moline, owner Lauren Isaacson makes custom collars, leashes, harnesses, coats, and accessories for her clientele. She says it’s a good idea to have at least a thin coat for your dog. Her own dogs wear coats whenever they go on winter walks.

**Q What about protecting their feet?** Make sure to protect them from chemicals and ice. McRae cautions that chemicals used to melt snow on sidewalks can irritate your pet’s paws, so it’s a good idea to wipe their paws down with a wet cloth after an outing. It’s also a good idea to check for and gently remove any ice between a dog’s paw pads.

Isaacson suggests pet owners only buy sidewalk salts that are pet safe, and advises renters to check with their landlords to see what type of product they use on sidewalks. Paw Butter is another product she recommends, which she describes as ChapStick-like.

She says salt can absorb into paws and lead to drying and cracking, and paw butter “helps heal cracks, brace them against salt.”

“Boots are a great piece of winter gear for many dogs,” says Phye. “Others simply can’t stand to have something on their feet. For these dogs we have paw wax that is applied before heading outdoors.” Like Paw Butter, the product helps keep the paw pads from cracking and helps keep salt and chemicals out.

**Q What do outdoor pets need?** Find a way to bring them indoors, or take

special care to make sure they have a dry place to sleep, drinkable water, and extra food.

“Cats and dogs need protection from wet and cold, whether they get it inside your house or inside their own,” McRae says.

For outdoor dogs, she suggests a dry, elevated dog house with clean, dry bedding and a flap over the opening to keep drafts out, or else adding a dog door to the garage with a dog bed in the warmest corner.

She also notes that outdoor dogs need more calories in the winter to produce body heat, so their food intake must be increased.

Special precautions need to be taken for outdoor pets’ water bowls. McRae says owners should check outdoor water bowls often when it is below freezing to refill them or break the ice as needed. “A bowl of frozen water cannot help a thirsty pet,” she says.

**Q How important is exercise during the winter months?** Very. Since both pets and people are cooped up inside during the winter months, it’s important to make an extra effort to keep active. This is one of the reasons Isaacson really recommends interactive toys as holiday presents.

Phye says it’s important to continue walking your pooch in the winter, and to spend time playing with your cat. Interactive wands and puzzle toys can keep cats moving, while chew toys and puzzles are great options for dogs.

McRae notes it can be difficult to exercise your pet outside during the winter, so make sure you do have plenty of inside play time in a safe place. Playing indoor fetch can be great for dogs, and most cats love chasing wand-style toys.

*Contributor Lindsay Hocker lives in Rock Island and shares her home with two cats, three rats, three birds, five fish, and an agreeable Pekingese. For a longer version of this article, including suggestions as to the best stocking stuffers for pets, visit [radishmagazine.com](http://radishmagazine.com).*



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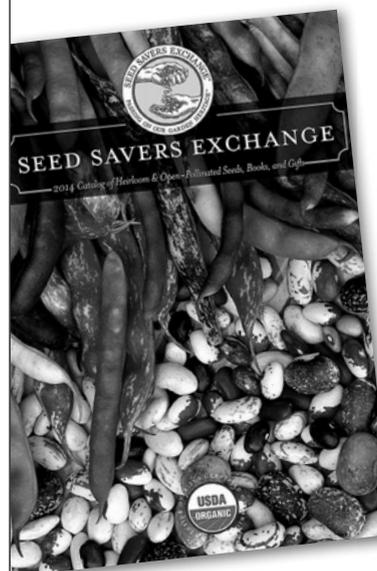


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outdoors

# That Tree

## Finding renewal in a picture-a-day project

By Becky Langdon

Who would have thought taking photos of a tree with a cell phone would be a powerful source of inspiration and healing? Certainly not Mark Hirsch, a former photographer for the Dubuque Telegraph Herald. When he took the first shot of “that tree” on his way to his home, he had no idea what kind of journey would follow. It was one that would culminate in a published book, thousands of Facebook followers, national coverage, and — perhaps above all — renewed creativity and healing.

The first photo of the now famous bur oak tree happened in January 2012. The second photo, which would begin his accidental, yearlong project, came in March. “I was driving home making that same path back that I made in January, and there was this beautiful sunset,” says Hirsch. “I hadn’t posted a photo that day. I’d been looking all the way between Platteville (Wis.) and home for something to put between me and that sunset.” He found what he was looking for in that tree — and it wouldn’t be the first time.

Another friend saw the photo on Facebook and commented, “Dude, what’s with you and that tree? Why don’t you do a photo a day with it?” So Hirsch did. Over a period of a few weeks he found himself waking up early to shoot the tree, stopping by at sunset and other times, playing around with different techniques, and of course raising questions from friends and family about his new photography quest.

Hirsch didn’t know how long he wanted to keep taking pictures of the tree until his agent noticed the photos on Facebook and said, “I’m kind of digging this. I think if you go a full year we could publish a book with it.” So Hirsch committed to that goal.

He didn’t find out until weeks later that his agent’s comment was intended facetiously. As it turns out, it

was still good advice. “That Tree” sold over 1,400 copies in preorders before the book was finished and began shipping in September of this year.

The reward of the project, however, became more than mere numbers for Hirsch. He became a better photographer, as he learned how not to depend on an “arsenal” of lenses.

He also became a better artist. “Spending my whole career as a photojournalist, I was used to running from A to B,” he says. “I thought I was a pretty good storyteller. Until you dive into a project that is static and quiet and contemplative, like taking a landscape photograph every day of the year, you don’t realize how much you have to learn as an artist or photographer.”

He also unexpectedly found a way to heal from the trauma of a nearly fatal car accident he survived in 2011. “In hindsight,” he says, “I credit the whole experience of slowing down and taking time to have this contemplative experience with the tree, this quiet time in the valley with the tree, as a healing experience.”

The tree itself became important in its own right for Hirsch. Throughout the course of the year, he began to recognize the tree’s role as a source of life, food, protection and habitat for so many other plants and animals in its ecosystem.

“Until I embarked on this project, I would have said it’s just a tree in the cornfield,” he says. “Now I have an intimate relationship with this tree. I’ve spent as many mornings waking up with that tree as my own family.”

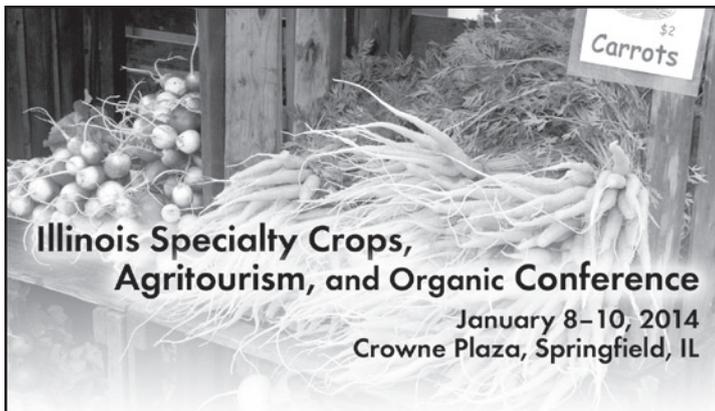
Through the Facebook page and book, the rest of the world can now see “that tree” through Hirsch’s eyes. That alone is one of the biggest rewards for him: to share the emotional resonance of his journey.

*Becky Langdon is a frequent Radish contributor. To see more of Hirsch’s photography, order prints or purchase copies of “That Tree,” visit [thattree.net](http://thattree.net).*



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**This program is overflowing with the resources you need to grow your business and your profits.**

### January 8 Pre-Conference Workshops

- 1) Pumpkin Production, Pest Management, and Marketing
- 2) Season Extension and Year-Round Markets
- 3) GAPs and Food Safety Guidelines for Growers Who Sell at Farmers Markets
- 4) Optimizing Plasticulture and Drip Irrigation Practices; and Growing Unique Fruits & Vegetables

### January 9 - 10 Conference Tracks

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Herbs
- Agritourism/Marketing
- Organic Production
- Business Management

### Highlights

- Business Management sessions to include:
  - Farm to School
  - Labor and Legal
  - Risk Management and Insurance
  - Health Care for Employees
  - Heat Stress Prevention
- Annual Cider Contest
- Thursday Evening Banquet
- 60-Booth Trade Show

For more information: 309-557-2107 or [dhandley@iflb.org](mailto:dhandley@iflb.org)

**Go to [www.specialtygrowers.org](http://www.specialtygrowers.org) for full agenda**





## Holiday Farmers Market

Saturday, December 14th  
8a.m. to 1p.m.  
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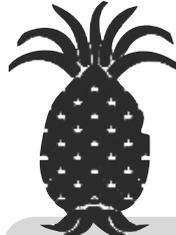
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food for thought

# Soil and Sacrament

## Growing food, author discovers an expression of faith

By Fred Bahnson

Winter is my favorite growing season. Anyone can toss down a few seeds in June and get a crop, but it takes a disciplined hope to garden in the dark of December. And what rewards. After several frosts, plant starches become sugars. Carrots attain the sweet crunch of apples, and kale loses all hint of bitterness. Turnips become so sugary you can eat them raw.

Mid-morning on the first Sunday in Advent, I stood beside the red-roofed barn and looked out at Anathoth Community Garden. Down the hill the greenhouse was shedding its frost in the first light. Along the creek sat the children's playhouse, and beyond that the site of our future orchard. But the sight that always drew my eye was the wide expanse of the field itself, a wave-and-trough succession of raised vegetable beds lying dark and still in the low winter light, pregnant with life waiting to be born. Soon I would need to drive a mile down the road to the little Methodist church where my wife and sons would be arriving for the morning service, but first I needed to come here, to this five-acre piece of land that had come to feel like an extension of my own body. Over the past three years of working hard here I had grown attached to this garden and its people. They had fed me in many ways.

I walked downhill to the greenhouse, a Gothic arch structure where we grew most of our winter crops and started all our seed. Heated entirely by the sun and ventilated by wax pistons, it was off the grid. This was my favorite of winter places, my sanctuary; I could lose myself here for hours. What a thrill I received each morning as I entered its congregation of plants, lit as if from within by the low winter sun. The world outside the greenhouse was 19 degrees cold; dry and lifeless. Once I stepped across the wood threshold, the temperature rose to a balmy 40, lush and humid and alive with the earthy aromas of plants seeking light.

The soil here was deeper than in the rest of the garden, the color and consistency of chocolate sponge cake. Even on the coldest of winter days, black organic

matter in the soil absorbed the sun's heat and slowly released it at night. The beds, each 4-foot wide and 30-foot long, were double-dug. While the topsoil of a rototilled garden descends a mere 8 inches, our greenhouse beds reached a depth of at least 2 feet, mimicking the fertile, loamy soils of the American prairie or the Russian steppe.

Soil is not dirt. It is a living organism, or rather a collection of organisms, and it must be fed. Soil both craves life and wants to produce more life, even a hundredfold.

The true profundity of our soil was difficult to gauge. One day I slid my hand into one of the greenhouse beds. I gently pushed down and kept pushing until my arm vanished and my shoulder touched the soil's surface. It had seemed then as if I could keep burrowing downward, until my entire body was swallowed by the warm, dark earth. Soil is a portal to another world.

To grow and share food with others in a garden is to enter a holy country. American spirituality is discovering itself anew as people of faith reconnect with the land. But while the buy local, eat organic movement is increasingly in the public eye, the faith-based food movement remains virtually unknown by the wider public. At times it intersects with its larger cousin, but mostly it charts a parallel course, comprised of many people who've neither heard of Michael Pollan nor set foot in a Whole Foods. Many of those I've come to meet in this loosely woven movement view soil as a sacrament: a physical manifestation of God's presence, a channel of Divine grace. They know soil is a portal that joins us to the

world to come even while rooting us more deeply in this one.

Through the practices of caring for the soil, those I encountered had discovered a way to become more fully alive. They have sought from God, and been given to find, the patterns of life that made them more holy. More whole. More human.

*Excerpted with permission from "Soil and Sacrament: A Spiritual Memoir of Food and Faith" (2013, Simon & Schuster, 288 pages, \$26 hardback) by Fred Bahnson. More information and copies of the book are available at [SimonandSchuster.com](http://SimonandSchuster.com).*



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#### December 2013

- Historic Trolley Tours (Sundays at Noon & 1:30 p.m.)
- Guided Winter Hikes (Every SAT/SUN at 11 am)
- Wine tasting in the Hotel Lobby (Every Saturday) 4 pm
- 9:** Legacy Girls Christmas Show-Matinee (X386)
- 13-23:** Trolley Holiday Lights Tours (X386)
- 14 & 21:** Santa's Workshops (X386)
- 16 & 17:** Christmas with "Frank Sinatra" (X386)
- 17:** Flutes by the Fire (6 pm)  
Drum Circle to follow!
- 21:** Breakfast with Santa (X386)
- 28:** Starved Rock Photography Club (X354)
- 31:** New Year's Eve Party (X386) Reservations Required



#### January 2014

- Guided Winter Hikes (Every SAT/SUN at 11 am)
- Bald Eagle Trolley Tours (MON/WED/SAT/SUN)
- Wine tasting in the Hotel Lobby (Every Saturday) 4 pm
- 5:** Bridal Expo at Starved Rock Lodge
- 12:** Sled Dog Demo (Host: Free Spirit Siberian Rescue)
- 18 & 19:** Winter Wilderness Weekend
- 21:** Legacy Girls' Andrews Sisters Tribute Matinee (X386)
- 25 & 26:** Eagle Watch Weekend



#### February 2014

- Guided Winter Hikes (Every SAT/SUN at 11 am)
- Bald Eagle Trolley Tours (MON/WED/SAT/SUN)
- Wine tasting in the Hotel Lobby (Every Saturday) 4 pm

- 2:** Sled Dog Demo (Host: Free Spirit Siberian Rescue)
- 8:** Teddy Bear Tea in the Great Hall (X386)
- 12 & 13:** Legacy Girls' "Legacy of Love" (X386)
- 20:** Rock Star (NEW! Talent Contest) 7 pm (X 363)
- 23:** Photo Contest Exhibit & Show  
11 am to 3 pm -Great Hall
- 27:** Rock Star (NEW! Talent Contest) 7 pm (X 363)



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