MaryJanesFarm®

Sister Issue

December 2013

With some added pluck,

we came up with this easy way to click (er, cluck) your way back to the farm in between magazine issues. As with any nesting hen, we prefer to accomplish our work with regularity. That's why, if you're an official member of **MaryJane's Farmgirl Sisterhood**, our Sister Issue (formerly **MaryJane's CLUCK)** will be showing up in your e-mail box on the first day of every month (well, except for January, because we head henchos take a much-needed break every December). With a cluck-cluck here and a click-click there, we're here for you just when you need a sisterly cyber hug the most. Let the braggin' (er, clucking) begin!

Life made us FRIENDS, MaryJanesFarm made us SISTERS

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{ just a click away! }

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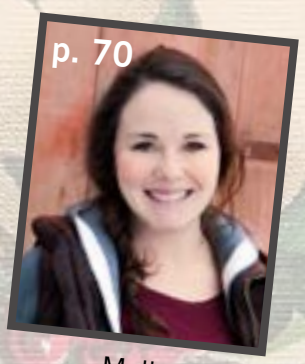
Sister Loves

{ staff picks ... only a click away! }

What girl doesn't love to shop, even if all you can afford is some window shopping? Here's where we treat ourselves and our readers to the things we love most. Come shop with us! Our favorites are only a click away.

Megan



Molly

Carol

Saralou

Karina

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Hello *from* Sister #1

Why We (Still) Need Our Girlfriends

Not a week goes by that we don't hear the results of another study on human behavior. These reports often try to explain present-day relationships in the context of evolutionary adaptations and the great race to survive. And it's truly interesting stuff. Up until very recently, well before the age of advanced social technology, people NEEDED each other, and not just for a pat on the back or company over a cocktail. They needed one another for basic survival. If men didn't have friends and neighbors to help them build their houses or tell them where to hunt, the family unit didn't make it. And if women didn't cozy up to other females for information and acceptance, well, they were just as doomed.

Now we can go days at a time too busy to speak with a single gal pal. But we shouldn't. And yes, online relationships count also. The relationships that women form with other women are still relevant today, nomadic tribe or no. We still need the support of our girlfriends as much as ever. And to hear scientists tell it, that's because we're strikingly similar to the hunter-gatherer women who came before us.

First off, women tend to seek connection, approval, and a sense of belonging more than men do, so we generally look for reasons to agree and sympathize. This trait may have helped our female ancestors to do everything from form new bonds with other women, solidify the family's status in the tribe, and ensure sources of childcare. Bottom line: women would rather love ya' than leave ya', and that's just fine with me. There's an old Swedish proverb that says, "Love me when I least deserve it, because that's when I really need it." In our darkest moments when we just don't have the strength to see ourselves objectively, our girlfriends are practically programmed to provide the unconditional coddling that we're hungry for.

Secondly, we often expect the men in our tribes (er, lives) to understand and fill our unspoken needs. Scientists believe that women have always valued this trait because it indicated a responsible mate who knew how to support the family. And it often was, and still is, a fair expectation. But it can be also be a short path to disappointment. There are days when we should fight for our right to be understood, and times when we should pick our battles. Primitive women understood that for some things, they'd just have to rely on their circle of gal pals. The same holds true today. When the chips are down and men seem like another species entirely, our girlfriends have historically always been there to "get" us—no explanations necessary.

Another thing we share with our female ancestors is the craving for constant communication. Yeah, yeah—we've all heard one too many jokes about women being able to talk the hind leg off a horse. But they don't call gab a gift for nothing.

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A woman's ability to chat is thought to be a development aimed at gathering vital information, confronting simmering tensions, smoothing ruffled feathers, suppressing violence, and calming fears. You know what? It still does all of that. Put several women together, online or off, and let the conversation flow—the things that result are pure magic.

And then there's the salty kind of communication—tears. The jury's still out on why exactly we cry and what purpose it serves. But some scientists believe that emotional tears are a uniquely human adaptation that wordlessly alerts others to danger, distress, and hidden threats. When speaking aloud was risky or impossible, our nervous system found a way to get the message across. We don't use tears to escape predators anymore, so tears have gained an unfair reputation as a sign of weakness or loss of control. But when you're in the company of good girlfriends, there's no need to suppress a good cry for fear of making anybody uncomfortable. Cry all you want—no self-respecting gal pal would think you any weaker for it.

MaryJane

P.S. Wishing you a Merry Christmas with family and friends! The Sister Issue will be back in February after our annual hiatus over the holidays.

Special Feature

Farmgirl Inspirations

Melody Joy Flick

Melody Joy Elick is "capturing the farmgirl spirit—no matter where you live" on her blog, JoyElick.com. And she's helping other women to capture their farmgirl spirit as well—here's her article on

How to organize a fabulous Farmgirl Sisterhood Chapter in your community.

If you're a farmgirl at heart, you've probably discovered **MaryJane's Farmgirl Connection**, a wonderful on-line community where you can chat and connect with other farmgirls, no matter where you live. I happily stumbled on to this site a while back and fell in love!

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It wasn't long after I found this amazing beehive of farmgirls, that I made my next happy discovery: The Farmgirl Sisterhood. A bit like Girl Scouts for women, the Sisterhood offers a whole program of projects you can do, for which you can earn Merit Badges—fun hexagon-shaped fabric patches you embroider and collect on a tote, apron, jean jacket, or something. How fun! Right away, I signed up. Farmgirl Sister #5290, that's me!

Then, not long after joining the Sisterhood, I wished to connect face-to-face with like-minded girls in my own community. That's where the local Farmgirl Sisterhood Chapter comes in. There's two ways you can join a Chapter: Find and join an existing one, or start one of your own. I chose to start one. We call ourselves the Fearless Farm Girls.

Signing up to start a Chapter is easy. Knowing what to do in your Chapter is where it gets interesting. They leave it up to you to do what you want. You can get as creative as you like, design things in a way that work for you and the members of your group. But where do you begin? How do you get a group of girls to want to meet? What should you do in your meetings? In other words: What's the best way to get organized?

I'm sure there are many successful Chapters out there, with plenty of good ideas for starting up a local gathering of Sisters, but here's what the Fearless Farm Girls did.

When I signed up to start a Chapter, I felt unsure. It was just little ol' me not knowing what to do next. But soon, through the Sisterhood website, a fellow farmgirl contacted me and expressed interest in joining the Chapter I'd registered. (Gulp—I was not feeling fearless!). We exchanged e-mails a few times until I asked my farmgirl sister if she wanted to help me get this Chapter up and running. (There's nothing like a friend cheering you on, right?) She said yes (yay!) and now we've become good friends—one of the many blessings that come of this thing called a Sisterhood.

We decided to create meeting binders. The first six binders were prepared ahead and presented at the first meeting (free of charge, of course) to the girls who came (six girls exactly, whew!). Having the binders ready made it easy to explain "the program." Plus, who wouldn't get excited about the pages of scrapbook stuff included in the Project Journal section?

I know what you're thinking: You must be crazy! You're going to make a binder for every girl that joins your Chapter? The answer is yes, but it's not so hard when you think team-work, girls.

Team-work is a totally farm-girlish principle. Here's what we did. Shortly after our first meeting, the first six members of our Chapter gathered for an event we called "Binding Together." We hung out, ate homemade pizza, and gabbed while we each made one binder for a future member. Now we can double in size, no problem. See? Team-work is the way to git 'er done!

continued ...

continued ...

So, what do you think? Would you like to make binders for your Chapter too? Well, you're in luck! I'm going to help you do just that.

Go to Melody Joy's website **here** to get step-by-step instructions on how to make your own binders, including dividers for Sister Contact Information, Farmgirl Reads, Project Journal, Tips & Tricks, Recipes, Badge How-to, Merit Badge Checklist, and Merit Badges.

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Woman's Section.

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Oct. 9th 1910

Winter Hat Fancies

THE popular Cloche shape is as becoming a style for children and young girls as for the matron and older women, and is being developed in all sorts of materials for winter wear.

FLOWERS, velvet and plumes trim the new winter hat models, while the shapes themselves are developed in satin, fur, cloth or other fabrics.

The small, close fitting hat is excellent for general wear, and a variety of styles all suited for the very young girl are shown on this page.

In the center is pictured a becoming shape well suited for "best" or dressy occasions. It is of satin of a deep mulberry shade, laced with black, and trimmed with richly hued roses.

Big welcome to our new and renewing Sisterhood members!

Aimee Dhondt
Angela Strobel
Angie Morine
Anita Simpson
Ann Woody
April Robinson
Ava Thurman
Barbara Delaney
Beckie Darrington
Becky McGuire
Betty Hoffman
Carol Dearden
Carol Merrithew
Carole Prevost-Meier
Carrie Faden
Catherine A. Dewitz
Chris Pruitt
Christina Dzeskewicz
Corey Romanski
Dana Ochsner
Darlene Riboldi
Debbie Cox
Diane Kasperzak
Elisabeth Ruppel
Ellen Cecil
Emily Rose Yost
Gaynelle Rose
Heidi Brown
Helen Nickerson
Janet Chalfant
Jennifer Johnson
Jeri Ausbon
Joanne Clyde
Joy Taylor
Joy Rebello
Joyce Meza
Joyce Schernitzki
Judy Poppell
Judy Bradley
Karen Knight Price
Karen Eifert
Kathleen Wysocki
Kathleen Knoppe
Kathleen Taranto
Katie Wright
Kimberly Cook
Kristine Wildung
Lacinda Augsburger
Larranie Gonsalves
Linda Heavel
Lisa LeVasseur
Lisa Gholson
Lisa Steele
Lynne Lightowler-Buck
Malinda Hudar
Marilyn Dalrymple
Marilyn Raber
Martha Wright
Mary Ann Davis
Mary Smith
Mary Golden
Mary Krystinak
Mary E. Rainer
Mary Ann Baker
Mary Gariepy
Mary Jo Boyd
MaryBeth Schwartz
Melody Tigo
Milli Andresen
Nena McLin Dunn
Noreen Pelchat
Patricia Gill
Patricia O'Donnell
Patricia Jeans
Patsy Baker
Penny Dyke
Phyllis Skalko
Portia Troupe
Rainy Horvath
Sally Karr
Sharla Orren
Sonja Blythe
Sonya Masterson
Sue Patillo
Susan Stickley
Suzanne Holland
Terri Jacobson
Valerie Thompson
Vickie Henriquez
Vicky Withey
Victoria Ott
Vivian Herrington
Wanda Owen
Wanda George
Wendy Cogdal
Wendy Spangler

"A true friend reaches for your hand and touches your heart."

– Author Unknown

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“For every minute you are angry, you lose 60 seconds of happiness.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Sister Loves

{our favorites ... just a click away!}

Megan's PICKS
(JUST A CLICK AWAY)

STAFF WRITER / EDITOR
(SISTER #2)

One can never have too much holiday décor. Especially when it's something handmade and unique that starts a good conversation. If you don't have time to make your own, visit Esty.com for some great ideas like these.

You can visit Megan's picks by clicking on the photos.

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Each Other

In the Shelter of Each Other

{EACH OTHER} with Megan Rae | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our {EACH OTHER} category, CLICK HERE

Megan Rae (Sister #2) grew up "on the farm"—MaryJanesFarm. She attended Gonzaga University and received a bachelor's degree in Journalism. After marrying her college sweetheart, they moved to Kansas and bought their first home on a cobblestone street. Her love for writing, editing, and well, her Mom, finally brought her back to the farm. Raising her 6-year-old and 4-year-old farmgirls and working alongside her husband, mother, and family is the perfect lifestyle mix for Megan. She rounds it out with travel across the country to visit her five dearest college girlfriends who she loves with all her heart (they've all been in each other's weddings), and one of her favorite farmgirls that she met when she lived in Kansas (scheduled around working the cows, of course).

The holidays are upon us

My Stella recently announced that she loves Christmas the most because it is a time for loving. Well, that sure does make a mom smile! This simple, sweet, and spot-on observation made me ponder the inspiration for such happiness and sharing of love during the holidays. There is, always, the religious foundation. But, what else?

Maybe it's a whole collaboration of celebratory customs that add up to what we now call "the Christmas spirit." There are the festivities with family and friends, the decorations (sparkles and bright colors always do make me happy), and all of the wonderful words we use during the holidays … merry, jolly, rejoice, joy, peace, warmth, and lovely noel. It is the fabulously French word for Christmas, and I just adore it—don't you? In fact, if I were to have a third little girl, I'm pretty sure she'd get to enjoy it as her middle name. It means a time for love, after all.

Full of the Christmas spirit, I set about crafting this project with some cute wooden spools and a selection of those sparkly, colorful holiday words …

Happy Holidays!

Meg

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J
O
Y

Sister Loves

{ our favorites ... just a click away! }

Carol's PICKS (JUST A CLICK AWAY)

GRAPHIC DESIGNER, UKULELE ENTHUSIAST (SISTER #3)

Who knew you could buy so many accessories for those handy, all-purpose canning jars? We've recently shown you a couple of lids to make your Mason jar into a to-go cup, and with these great lids from **JillyBeanKids.com,** you can turn the humble canning jar into a myriad of handy helpers around the house.

Mason Jar Aluminum Grain Dispenser Lid

Pint Mason Jar Soap Dispenser

Rusty Tin LED Solar Light Lid

Mason Jar Flower Frog

Rusty Tin Frog Mason Jar Lid

Pint Mason Jar Tea Light Warmer

You can visit Carol's picks by clicking on the photos.

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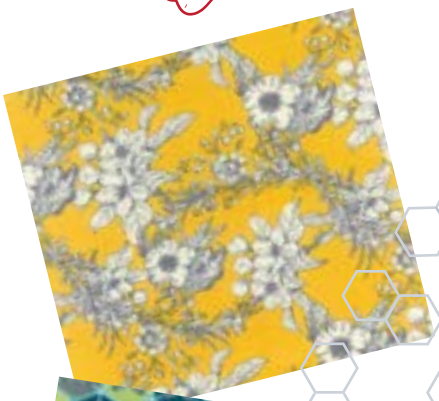
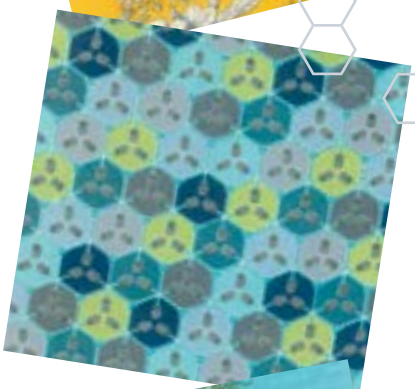
moda

BEE MY HONEY

by Mary Jane





The beleaguered honeybee needs our love now more than ever. "Won't you *Bee My Honey*, oh tiny wee one? Come look," I whisper. "This year, I've planted extra honeysuckle, dozens of butterfly bushes, patches of phlox, and a field of clover for your nectar needs. Your journey is long and hard; let us help!"

For every yard of my new *Bee My Honey* fabric that is sold, I'm able to continue supporting the important work of TheHoneybeeConservancy.org. Thanks for bee-ing the change with me!

Ask for my 100% cotton *Bee My Honey* fabric at your favorite quilt store, February 2014 or online at FatQuarterShop.com.

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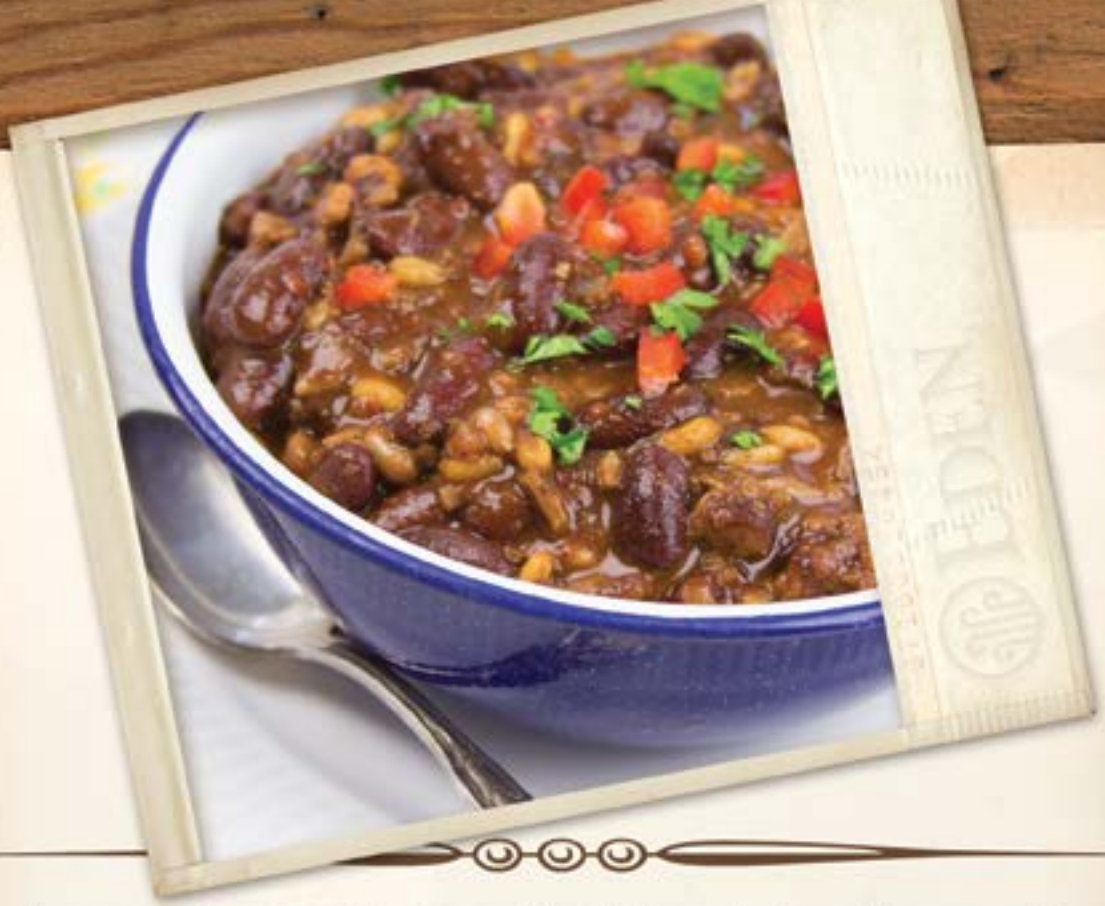

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Each Other

Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Mamas

{EACH OTHER} with Melyssa Williams | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our {EACH OTHER} category, CLICK HERE

Melyssa Williams (Sister #161) was a homeschooler back in the day. She spent a perfectly ridiculous amount of time reading and writing, usually in a tree, sometimes with pet chickens. Now she stays out of trees, but still reads and writes. There are three small fry in her house that refer to her as Mom, and keeping in tradition, she puts them in trees with good books. She is the author of the *Shadows* trilogy for Young Adults, and can be reached at **www.shadowsgray.com.**

I Love Throwing Stuff Away

My garage is calling me. It's saying,

"Come get these free craigslist chairs you acquired last year and put them out on the curb."

If I obey the call, I can get to the important stuff in there—like my box of sewing supplies, the kids' off-season clothing, and the contraband supply of Häagen-Dazs in my freezer.

Truer words were never spoken.

Anyway, one of the best feelings in the world (Okay, yes, that's an exaggeration. There are probably better feelings: feeding orphans, saving lives, winning the lottery, a really good sneeze, eating secret ice cream, etc.) is the feeling I get when I throw things away.

Not only do I love shopping at the Goodwill, but I love having a pile of stuff to give to the Goodwill. This is recycling at its finest!

Today, I threw out an empty shampoo bottle and a very nearly empty bottle of conditioner. I probably could have added some water in there, shook it around, and had enough to rinse my curly locks with, but I was feeling giddy with the thrill of throwing things out. This gave me opportunity—nay, NEED—to replace them with two shiny, new bottles. (This, if you're a girl, is super exciting.)

As much as I like products, I limit myself.

Once upon a marriage, Hubby had this in our shower:

one shampoo
a dull razor

And I had in the same shower:

apricot scrub
4 half-empty bottles of shampoo

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regular conditioner
deep conditioner
leave-in conditioner
conditioner that didn't work well, but smelled great
conditioner that didn't smell great, but worked well
two razors
make-up remover
face mask
shave cream
body scrub
soap
apple-cider vinegar for rinsing
a book for baths
bubble bath
candles

A few years later, and I think I've gotten better. We can now move a fraction of an inch without causing a domino effect.

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Sister Loves

{ our favorites ... just a click away! }

Saralou's PICKS
(JUST A CLICK AWAY)

MOZAIQ

PaperAndPresent

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
(SISTER #6)

HandmadeandHeritage

Christmas is by far my favorite holiday. I love cooking, decorating, and most importantly, wrapping gifts. I love non-traditional wrapping-paper prints. Bright colors, solid colors, and handmade prints. Some of these wrapping papers are even made from recycled paper!!!

pixelmarket

StrandRedesign

You can visit Saralou's picks by clicking on the photos.

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GINSENG

Panax quinquefolius

NATURAL

ORGANIC

American Ginseng is a member of the Araliaceae family and can be found growing with bright red berries under moist, shady canopies. Native to the eastern forested mountains of the North American continent, the Chinese consider it a superior choice to Asian ginseng for improving immunity, increased mental performance, and balance. However, popularity of this root as an adrenal tonic and vitality boosting herb has severely impacted the wild populations in this region, making organically grown American Ginseng the most ecological choice.

Traditional Preparations

American Ginseng can be taken as an extract, tea, or capsule. Some people also enjoy the mildly stimulating effects felt from chewing on its roots.

Herbal Curiosities

The word Panax is derived from the Greek word "pan" which means "all" and "akos" which means "cure". At its peak, wild Ginseng root was harvested and sold for $1000 per pound.

Each Other

Homeschooling with Cathi

{EACH OTHER} with Cathi Belcher | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our {EACH OTHER} category, CLICK HERE

Cathi Belcher (Sister #1295), who pens our **Mountain Farmgirl Blog**, lives in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. As a "lifelong learner," she fiercely values self-reliance, independence, freedom, and fresh mountain air. She's also a multi-media artist, with an obsession for off-grid living and alternative housing. Cathi is married to her childhood sweetheart, and owns and operates a 32-room mountain lodge.

"Mountains speak to my soul, and farming is an important part of my heritage," says Cathi. "I want to pass on my love of these things to others through my writing."

Decompression

"Down" time … we all need it once in a while. Whether we are living in the fast lane or just going along, taking time away from business as usual … it is extremely beneficial to our states of mind—and ultimately, to our productivity—to have some time off. But the kind I'm specifically talking about here has to do with kids who were damaged by their prior educational experiences … who are fed up with school and are turned off to learning for one reason or another. If your child is having problems in a traditional setting and it just isn't working out, you might find yourself suddenly considering homeschool as an alternative, mid-stream. In most states, it is perfectly legal to pull your child out of school at any time during the year. Meet with your child's teachers or advisor to discuss the situation, make your own decision based on your child's needs and your own personal circumstances, then file the necessary paperwork required by your state. Voila! Whether you'd been planning it or not, you are now an official homeschooler. But NOW what?

This exact scenario just happened to a friend of mine. Her youngest daughter, age 13½, has been miserable in middle school. She's smart as a whip, but her dyslexia and slight learning disabilities have made learning and reading not only a chore, but a source of extreme anxiety and frustration to her. She has not been able to keep up with her peers (or the immense amount of homework required); her self-esteem has suffered at a time when she needs it most, and her pent-up anger over it all has led her to hate school and turn an innately sweet girl into a sudden swirl of rebellion that her parents were at a loss to deal with. Her mom called me last week in a panic. The public school had become so intolerable for her daughter that she had no recourse but to take her out. There are no private or alternative schools in the area, and boarding schools were out of the question both due to cost and because they didn't want the physical separation from their daughter. They had just joined the ranks of homeschool parents by default, and didn't know where to go from there.

Sometimes the transition is smooth, but not always, and both scenarios are perfectly normal. In my friend's case, her daughter was glad to be out of school, but the anger and frustration that had been building up inside of her was now turned toward her parents—and naturally, they were at their wit's end. They were beginning to question the wisdom of their decision. Now that she was home, "Heather" didn't want to do anything! She wouldn't read; she wouldn't do writing assignments; field trips didn't appeal; in short, nothing they could suggest sparked Heather's interest. What to do? In cases like this, "decompression" is always the first line of attack and one of the best tools at our disposal. "But we don't want her to just sit around and do NOTHING!" my friend lamented.

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Decompression has nothing to do with being lazy, spoiled, or willful. It is a necessary time (the length of which will vary, depending on the child and situation) to act as an escape valve to blow off the pent-up steam and release the pressure that has been building up in this child's emotional and academic life. In the three decades I have been homeschooling—many of which I was a homeschool support group leader and also the liaison between the NY State Board of Regents and homeschool parents—I have seen this same scenario literally countless times. Not only is it normal, but it is actually necessary to clear the slate, so to speak, and get them ready and open to "learn" again.

"How long is this going to take?" is a natural question and one that I am frequently asked. The answer is never one they want to hear because it is so vague! "That depends …" is the only honest answer. If only homeschooling (and life) came with one-size-fits-all rules, we could follow so that we didn't make mistakes. Ha! In reality, it can take weeks or months. In some extreme situations, it can take a whole term or even the rest of the school year to "undo" the damage that was done educationally in certain students' lives. That sounds scary, I know, but I've seen it happen time and time again and turn out awesome in the end.

But just because your child is decompressing, this is no excuse for family life to be temporarily suspended, or for him or her to get special privileges. Life goes on as usual, and everyone, your homeschooler included, should be held accountable to family responsibilities and social activities. Decompression is never an excuse to get out of things one does not want to do. During this period (which in retrospect, you will look back upon as a gift), take time to establish a good one-on-one relationship with your child (if this has become a problem for you). Do things together, even if it is "just" doing a jigsaw puzzle while listening to some music or watching a great film and eating some homemade popcorn. Give your child plenty of space. Ultimately, you will want him to find his own passions and interests. This takes time. Boredom can actually be a good thing, because it is uncomfortable and often spurs some action. Remember, EVERYTHING is learning, and it all spawns countless opportunities for discussions and sharing thoughts. Don't try to force it though; just be yourselves, relax, and let the process take its natural course.

Farm Kitchen

Where the Cookin' Begins!

{FARM KITCHEN} with Ashley Ogle | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our {FARM KITCHEN} category, CLICK HERE

Ashley Ogle (Sister #2222) was born and raised in northern Idaho, and has always had an intense interest in anything kitchen. Shortly after marrying MaryJane's son, Brian, at the historic one-room schoolhouse his grandfather attended, Brian and Ashley moved back to the farm and began renovating the 1890 farmhouse that both Brian and his grandmother grew up in. And in keeping with tradition, they've begun to raise a family in the same house—their daughter is now 3 and a new baby just arrived.

Ashley works at MaryJanesFarm as a recipe developer/food stylist, and now spends each day inventing and preparing the delicious food you see in our magazines, books, and websites.

Hearty Sausage & Kale Soup

Everyone has their favorite go-to winter soup. Mine is a simple, savory combination of ground sausage, garlic, potatoes, and kale. These are the core ingredients, and I add other vegetables depending on what sounds good or what I have on hand. I love the quick and simple preparation of the soup, and also that it is hearty enough to feel like a satisfying meal on those cold winter evenings. I especially love the flavor the fennel and red pepper give to the soup. Perfect along with crusty bread!

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 1 HOUR, 10 MINUTES
MAKES: 6 SERVINGS

3/4	lb ground sausage
4	garlic cloves, peeled and minced
1	lb Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2" cubes
5	cups water
2	carrots, peeled and sliced
1/2	fennel bulb, minced
1	red bell pepper, seeded and diced
1	t salt
1/2	t pepper
6	cups kale, coarsely diced

1. In a 4-qt saucepan over medium heat, brown sausage; drain.
2. Add garlic, potatoes, and water. Simmer for 30 minutes. Add carrots, fennel, red pepper, salt, and pepper. Cook for an additional 20 minutes, or until vegetables are tender.
3. Add kale, and cook 3–5 minutes, just until kale is tender and deep green.

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Super Simple Rosemary Bread

The rosemary plant in my greenhouse is abundantly large these days having survived several winters. So this time of year, with all else from my garden either gone or in limited existence, its existence is forefront in my mind. Every time I go to my greenhouse I grab some leaves and smash them between my fingers so I can enjoy its smell throughout the morning. I've tried putting chopped rosemary in salads but it's too strong—forget smoothies and pancakes. But who among us doesn't love a chunk of warm rosemary bread, right out of the oven, to accompany our meals on these chilly December evenings? Hark the angels, who doesn't love the SMELL of fresh-baked rosemary bread? Usually, bread takes time—the mixing, the kneading, the rising. It's not something you can scrape together spur-of-the-moment. Or is it? Before you resort to buttering a slice of that store-bought loaf in your cupboard, preheat your oven to 425°F, and let me share with you one of the simplest breads in baking history.

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In the 1800's, the humble homemakers of rural Ireland relied on four readily available ingredients to make hearty loaves that became a staple of their diet. World-renowned Irish Soda Bread was born of whole-meal flour from homestead wheat fields, buttermilk left over from churning the family cow's cream, sea salt, and baking soda. Unlike yeast, baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) worked quickly as a leavening agent, and it produced a more consistent loaf. When mixed with buttermilk, which contains lactic acid, baking soda reacts to form tiny bubbles of carbon dioxide that guarantee a reliable rise every time.

Better yet, for bakers who are short on time, soda bread requires no kneading. Yep, you heard right. In fact, the best bread results from mixing the ingredients with a minimum amount of handling. The more you mix or mash it, the tougher it gets. Soda bread is naturally more dense than most yeast breads, but that doesn't detract from its deliciousness. Crusty and steaming, it is a superb complement to cold-weather dishes such as stews and roasts. Smaller loaves are perfect for individual "bread bowls" filled with savory soup. Plus, the dough can be dolled up with spices, nuts, and fruit bits to become a sumptuous sweet bread.

Traditionally, the dome of the rounded loaf was cut before baking, creating the shape of a cross. The gesture was regarded as a blessing to "let the devil out of the bread." Practically speaking, a crosscut allows heat to penetrate into the thickest part of the bread and encourages the bread to expand.

The Irish baked their soda bread in a heavy cast iron pot called a "bastible" that was placed directly onto the coals or turf fire. Using a Dutch oven, this is still a great way to bake bread while camping. But soda bread also bakes beautifully in a modern kitchen oven in less than an hour.

You can use straight white flour, whole wheat, or any combination you prefer. My favorite mixture incorporates a little of each with a bit of oat flour for added moisture. My basic bread works wonderfully with any meal, but it is also amazingly adaptable. Try rosemary like I did, or caraway seeds for traditional Irish flavor; currants, or raisins; or a sprinkle of cinnamon. A pinch of sugar will enhance browning of the crust.

Explore new territories of taste, and enjoy home-baked bread as often as the craving calls.

Here's what you need:

2	cups white flour
1 1/2	cups whole-wheat flour
1/2	cup oat flour
1	t salt
1	t baking soda
2	cups buttermilk
1	egg, lightly beaten

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continued ...

Here's how you do it:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Sift flour, salt, and baking soda in a large mixing bowl.
2. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture. Add buttermilk and mix with a wooden spoon until dough is too stiff to stir. (Do not overmix.)
3. Dust dough with flour and form into a round loaf—resist the temptation to knead!
4. Place dough on a greased cast-iron skillet or baking sheet.
5. Using a serrated knife, cut a cross into the top of the dough, about 1" deep. Brush with beaten egg.
6. Bake until bread is golden brown and bottom sounds hollow when tapped, about 40 minutes.
7. Remove from oven and cool for 5–10 minutes. Serve warm with butter. (If you have leftovers, try toasting slices for breakfast the next day.)

Mary Jane

Irish Soda Bread is for perfect for people who are short on time but hungry for a chunk of warm bread right out of the oven.

Sister Loves

{our favorites ... just a click away!}

Karina's PICKS
(JUST A CLICK AWAY)

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
(SISTER #4)

CrowBiz

CaPow

Idaho Necklace

Right Grain

With Christmas just around the corner, I've been thinking about unique gifts I could make or buy. I love the idea of giving a gift that reflects where someone is from or maybe where they dream to go someday. Here are some fun map gift ideas I found that inspired me to get started.

Anthropologie

ArtPrintsVintage

You can visit Karina's picks by clicking on the photos.

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Stitching & Crafting Room

Stitches of Fun & Laughter!

{STITCHING & CRAFTING} with Rebekka Boysen-Taylor | to earn a Sisterhood badge in this category, CLICK HERE

Rebekka Boysen-Taylor, (Sister #40) was born in Spokane, Washington, right around the time Mount St. Helens blew her top. She studied Geography at Portland State University and taught grade school in the Bronx and inner-city Los Angeles. She lives with her family on the Palouse. As a stay-at-home mama to two organically growing little ones, Rebekka rounds out her organic lifestyle by volunteering at the Moscow Food Co-op, working as an instructor for MaryJane's Pay Dirt Farm School, embracing a DIY ethic, winning blue ribbons at the county fair, and living simply.

Wool Felt Garland

This holiday, add a festive touch with beaded garlands that are a cinch to make. Create a wool bead by wet-felting a bit of roving into a firm ball, allow it to dry, and then finish with a felting needle. You can also purchase premade felted beads like mine in a rainbow of colors at **Wier Dolls and Crafts.**

Supplies

Fire Line beading thread
beading needles
gold seed beads
wool felt beads
bamboo crochet thread (size 10) or baker's twine
chenille needle

Begin by embellishing each wool bead with gold seed beads. Using Fire Line thread and a beading needle, stitch on as many or as few as you like. My seed beads are stitched into place evenly around the wool bead. A swirl or a few lines would be lovely as well.

Once you have added the seed beads and snipped the thread, grab a chenille needle and crochet thread. The chenille needles are strong enough to pass through the top portion of each wool bead. I added a new bead to the thread every 4" or so, taking a little backstitch into each one to keep it in place. Make each section of garland 3–4' long with an extra foot on each end so that you can attach it to tree branches or pin it above a doorway. The crochet thread tangles easily, so keep your garland wrapped snugly around a scrap of cardboard when it's not hanging up.

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Make it Easy

Happy Hearts Make Light Work

{MAKE IT EASY} with Shery Jespersen | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our {MAKE IT EASY} category, CLICK HERE

Shery Jespersen (Sister #753) is a Wyoming cattle rancher who's been horse-crazy all of her life. Shery is a leather and lace cowgirl. Her other interests include "junktiques," creating eclectic "make do" arts and crafts, collecting antique china, and cultivating mirth.

Vintage Potty-Box

I went antique shopping the other day while waiting for a feed mill to make some cow feed. Lo and behold, I found the cutest vintage potty-box. It was made quite awhile back, but the antique-shop owner had applied a fresh coat of pink paint and added tacked-on oilcloth to the lid. I bought it mostly for the design. I foresaw a new and improved version in the offing. This is my last Make It Easy assignment, and I didn't have time to have the new version built by a carpenter friend. But, anyone having basic carpentry skills can eyeball the photos, and with the dimensions I've provided, they/you can build one much like this. It is lightweight, and the pot that sits inside is a vintage enamelware thunder mug (easy to find and inexpensive). This vintage model has wicker sides. Wood or plywood would be hardier and not much heavier. I would definitely add cut-out handle holes on either side, which would make it easier to carry. Gloss enamel paint or a heavy polyurethane finish inside and out would be best for cleanliness reasons. Before tacking on the vintage oilcloth, staple a layer of batting onto the lid. This cute little potty-box doubles as a footstool, which I think is nice—there's no need to hide it.

As seen in the photos, there are two sets of hinges: one for the top lid to attach to the frame and another set for the hole lid inside. Since I've not had time to have another potty-box built, you're on your own to figure out the other details. Here are the dimensions: It's 15 1/2" square and 16 1/2" tall. The top lid is 14 1/2" x 15 1/2". The pot-hole lid is 12 1/2" x 15 1/2" and the hole is about 9" diameter (make yours to fit the pot you've got). There is a 2 3/4" x 15 1/2" strip of wood that attaches to the base. You'll attach this strip to the base and a set of hinges to the pot lid (see photo). There are notches cut into the support strip to accommodate the pot handle. Your pot may not have a handle.

I think you have enough information and images to get you from point A to point B. I'll bet an enterprising carpenter could sell these by the gross at glamp meets!

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Erin McIntosh is the Marketing Manager at Mountain Rose Herbs. Born and raised in the sunny Florida swamps, Erin now makes her home in the evergreen Pacific Northwest, where she studied herbalism, botany, and ethical wildcrafting at the Columbines School of Botanical Studies. She spends her days crafting culinary recipes, making botanical illustrations, gardening, hiking, foraging for wild edibles, photographing pretty flowers, and formulating herbal medicine in the magnificent Oregon Cascades.

Easy Winter Health Formulas

It's that time of year again when noses are red and running, throats are scratchy, and ginger-onion-garlic soup is on the stove. Whether answering the phone at work, borrowing a pen at school, or grabbing a few groceries at the store, our immune systems are bombarded with these microscopic viruses each day.

Sickies around us can be contagious even before a fever hits, and germs continue to spread for up to seven days. Since these sneaky little organisms far outnumber us, it's just a matter of time before the tell-tale symptoms appear. Herbal formulas make wonderful alternatives to over-the-counter cold and flu medications because herbs can help support the immune system before or during the sickness, rather than just masking the unpleasantness.

Here are three of my favorites for your natural medicine cabinet:

Soothing Herbal Throat Spray

I love the herbs in this spray for their wonderful disinfecting properties! They are anti-microbial to help fight the infection and soothing to ease the painful inflammation.

1 oz organic Sage tincture
1 oz organic Thyme tincture
1 oz organic Goldenseal tincture
2 T raw local honey
1/2 oz organic Peppermint Hydrosol (optional)

Combine all ingredients into a glass spray bottle and shake vigorously. Say "ah" and spray 3 pumps into sore throat every hour or as needed. Store spray in the refrigerator for an added cooling affect on the inflamed issue.

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First Signs Formula

This extract formula combines three classic alterative herbs that support your body's own natural defenses against seasonal illness. Make a batch of this at the first sign of a sniffle to help your immune system ward off a developing sickness or to process it more quickly.

1 oz organic Echinacea tincture
1 oz organic Elderberry tincture
1 oz organic Goldenseal tincture

Combine all ingredients together in a 4-oz glass dropper bottle and shake well. I like to take three droppers of this formula three times a day when I'm feeling under the weather.

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Winter Wellness Tea

Whether prepping for parties or visiting far-flung family, be sure to support your immune system each day with these helpful herbs. This immune-boosting formula combines adaptogenic and vitamin C-rich herbs to keep your defenses strong under stress. Tastes great too!

1 part organic Eleuthero Root
1/2 part organic Ginger Root
1/2 part organic Elderberries
1/4 part organic Cinnamon Chips
1/4 part organic Rosehips

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl. Gently simmer 1/3 cup of the blend in 1 quart of water for 30 minutes. Strain well, making sure to mash as much liquid as possible from the herbs using the back of a spoon. Wonderful with a little squeeze of lemon and honey!

Be well, and happy holidays!

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To find out more, scan here with your smartphone.

Shery Jespersen (Sister #753) is a Wyoming cattle rancher who's been horse-crazy all of her life. Shery is a leather and lace cowgirl. Her other interests include "junktiques," creating eclectic "make do" arts and crafts, collecting antique china, and cultivating mirth.

A Farmgirl Farewell

This is proving to be harder than I first thought. As most of you that have a few decades behind you know, we spend our lives periodically reinventing ourselves. Life kind of requires it and, in my opinion, you're better off if you go with the flow of stretching yourself to fit into the new you, whatever that might be. Here I am again, cogitating on some new ideas. At age 57, this isn't my first dance with deciding what to do next.

Before I go, I want to thank MaryJane for adding a dimension to my life that was so timely. Discovering MaryJanesFarm brought sparkle and light to middle-aged me. I needed to know that a bubbly sense of delight was not something I was losing. A farmgirl can make a new batch whenever she needs it. Thank you for refreshing my longtime love of the great outdoors in an entirely different venue: GLAMPING! Oh my stars, what a joyful foursquare adventure it has been. Thank you for driving out thisaway so that my friends and I would have the pleasure of meeting and glamping with you. Thank you for your friendly and personal e-mails … and for the thoughtful gifts. You really are anointed for such a time as this, and I pray that the Lord will bless your farmgirl mission in the years to come.

And to all my farmgirl friends out there, thank you for deepening my experience as a farmgirl. If it weren't for you, I would not have paid near as close attention to details in my "ranch farmgirl" goings on. My assignments required that I keenly watch and listen for details that might interest others. You made me learn and think and do more. Without knowing it, you made me grow exponentially as a farmgirl—much more than I would otherwise have grown, left to my own devices. You stretched me and challenged me to reach a little higher and dig a little deeper. So many of the things I might have otherwise missed, you made me see. I could very well have overlooked so many wonderful little things. So I want to thank you for the memories that you are very much responsible for.

May each and every one of you know how grateful I am that you promoted the opportunity for me to work with and for MaryJanesFarm. Of the many writing positions and jobs I've had over the last 25 years, this is far and away the one that jumps off the page as my favorite. I've smiled all the way through each assignment, and I'm smiling now. Thank you, sweet farmgirls. May God bless & keep you.

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Shery Jespersen

Gearing Up for Winter Driving

I've never been nervous about winter traveling, even though I've been stranded several times, once for 24 hours on an Amtrak train in a snowdrift in North Dakota. I always leave home prepared, although I do prefer being stranded at my snow-blanketed farm. But hibernation tendencies aside, there are, inevitably, times when one must travel, and Christmas often finds us on the road so we can be with family and friends. Whether we're going for groceries or destined for cross-country vacationing during the holidays, it all starts with getting into a vehicle. And when winter weather is afoot, it's crucial to keep our automobiles equipped for any circumstance that could arise while traveling icy or blizzard-bound byways. Before we begin stowing gear for survival, though, it's just as important to get mentally prepared for potentially hazardous driving conditions.

Slow Down and Stay Safe

No matter what your schedule, winter driving requires a significant slowdown. Since there's no safe way to power through the weather, budget a bit more time for your trip instead of pushing the limits of safety. And if the clock is ticking along faster than the miles, remind yourself to breathe, stay calm, and drive slowly. Sing or recite your favorite poems or have an imaginary conversation with someone—whatever it takes to cope with the stress of sluggish travel.

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Getting Stuck

In the event that your car stalls or slips into a snow bank, switch into survival mode. Regardless of your age, strength, or experience with the elements, you can do this! No need to spin the tires trying to get free—it will only dig your vehicle deeper into the snow. Don't bother getting out and trekking off through the frozen countryside either. Unless there is a home or business nearby, you will conserve energy, heat, and sanity much more effectively by staying in your car. This is where preparedness pays off. Think of your vehicle as a little igloo where you can huddle up safely—and even comfortably—until help arrives.

Staying Warm

It's tempting to rely on the toasty warmth of your car's heater when you're stranded, but there are a couple of reasons to resist running it continuously. If the exhaust pipe is blocked with snow or the wind is blowing into it, carbon monoxide from exhaust fumes can build up inside the car. (Remember the father on the national news one year who put his son inside his running car while he shoveled it out, only to find that the fumes, blocked by snow, had killed his child in mere minutes?) While not as dangerous as carbon monoxide poisoning, running out of gas is another concern. An average eight-cylinder automobile will burn about one gallon of gasoline per hour when idling. You'll likely be rescued before you run out of fuel, but it's best to conserve in case you desperately need emergency heat during a frigid night. If you do resort to a quick blast of heat, make sure the exhaust pipe is clear, open a downwind window a crack for ventilation, and only idle your car for 10–15 minutes every hour.

The best bet for staying warm in a stranded car is piling on extra clothing and bedding. Before you begin getting cold, remove any damp clothing, replace with dry items from your emergency stash, and bundle up in blankets or a sleeping bag. Loose layering insulates better than thick layers that cramp circulation. If you must venture out of the car for any reason, don a weatherproof poncho or a large plastic trash bag to prevent your outerwear from getting wet.

As silly as it may sound, a little exercise can go a long way to warm you up and loosen tight muscles. Stretch, improvise stomach crunches and leg lifts, and even bounce up and down in your seat when you start feeling chilly.

Winter Car Kit Checklist

Full change of clothes
Extra outerwear
Sleeping bag and down parka
Space blanket
Pocketknife
Whistle
Small shovel
Windshield scraper

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Cell phone with portable charger and extra batteries
Radio
Hand-crank flashlight
Beeswax candle (petroleum candles can be toxic in a small space)
Matches (in water-proof container) or Magnesium Fire Starter
Brita water bottle (w/built-in filter so you can drink water from creeks or snow banks)
Small, lightweight pot or mug
Non-perishable snack food like beef jerky
Tow rope
Bungee cord
Tire chains (not just for winter—mine got me out of a mud hole once)
Flares
Jumper cables
First-aid kit
Whistle
Basic tool kit (including duct tape)
Paper towels (doubles as toilet paper or fire starter)
Rain Poncho (a bright-colored poncho doubles as a flag or help sign)
Busy work (a book, deck of cards, paper and pens, or a knitting project will help keep you occupied and calm)

Flashlight

Batteries in conventional flashlights can freeze, not to mention the fact that worn-out batteries can leach toxic metals into groundwater when sent to the landfill. Hand-cranked flashlights don't require batteries. Check out the Garrity 3 LED Self-Powered Crank Light, available at **Amazon.com**.

3-in-1 Gadget

The Freeplay Energy Companion Self-Sufficient Radio, Flashlight, and Cell-phone Charger offers both wind-up and charging options, so you can use it far from any outlets. Plus, it's water resistant and compact enough to tuck in a glove box, available at **Amazon.com.**

Make sure you have a car power adapter for the devices you want to charge. Give all your hand-crank (self-powered) devices a test run first!!!!

MaryJane

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WATERPROOF
BAND-AID
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A SPEED BANDAGE FOR
MINOR INJURIES

The Scoop

MaryJanesFarm News

Index Available!

We have all the back issues of *MaryJanesFarm Sister Issue* available for download on our website.

CLICK HERE to read back issues.

[**TIP**] Use the search/find tool in your browser to look up keywords in back issues.

Farmgirls Unite!

If you are hosting a farmgirl event, open to all farmgirls, send the event description, date, location, and contact info to **megan@maryjanesfarm.org**. Megan will keep Sisters up-to-date on upcoming gatherings.

Upcoming Events:

Glamping Party & Sleepover, Glendale, Arizona, March 21–22, 2014, (see p. 57)

If you're a Sisterhood member, **click here** to download a FREE Farmgirls on the Loose logo!

Enter your Sisterhood number;
password is: FGLoose (case-sensitive)

(Fun logo ideas: frame it, use it for transfers on shopping bags, totes, and pillows, or make it into a sticker for your trailer!)

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Farmgirl Sisterhood

Share in the Fun!

Farmgirl Chatter

What are farmgirls chatting about?
Check it out at The Farmgirl Connection link **here!**

Farmgirl Calendar

Glamping Party & Sleepover, Glendale, Arizona, March 21–22, 2014, Submitted by ceejay48
Hey there, glamping farmgirls, The Farmgirls Southwest Henhouse will be hosting their 2nd "BACKYARD GLAMPER PARTY & SLEEPOVER" in 2014.

It will be in Phoenix, Arizona (more specifically, at the home of my daughter, Robin, aka Farmgirl "Birdie71," in Glendale, Arizona). DATES: MARCH 21–22, 2014. We plan to pitch tents in the backyard, have a tea party, a potluck supper, a craft project, lots and lots of laughter, and farmgirl fun! Details to come. You can e-mail me for more info or if you have any questions. Stay tuned!

CJ, "mother hen" for the Farmgirls Southwest Henhouse

Across the Fence: A Common Thread Game. Submitted by Calicogir
I saw this game on another board and it looked like fun.

Here's what we do:
I will post 3 things, the next person will chose 1 of those things and add 2 more. The following person does the same thing, and so on and so on … (is anyone having flashbacks to the Faberge commercial? :))

So, let's play!
1) I love pigs :)
2) I enjoy fires in the woodstove.
3) Autumn is my favorite time of year.

Join in here.

Across the Fence: FOUND IT!!! New farm. Submitted by rksmith
On our second trip to north GA this weekend, we found *our* place. Rent is affordable, it is right on the side of a mountain in Clayton, owners are super nice, and the house is lovely! Per the owners, we can have as much of the land to use as we like! We'll be moving in 2 weeks. We are so excited! We'll be meeting with real estate agents this week to put our property on the market … I do hope our great fortune continues! **Congrats here.**

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Across the Fence: You know you really are a farmgirl ... Submitted by texdane
When you have a "girls shopping trip" planned with a friend and you are excited about it ... but it isn't to the mall, it is to Tractor Supply!

My friend Susan had a big 20% off coupon for Tractor Supply (which the store told us is a rare, saved-for-the-best-customers coupon. She and I got up early and drove to New Milford and stocked up on 50-lb bags of chicken feed, rabbit feed, dog food ... my crossover was filled to the top! Even the back of the car looked like it was heavy! We had more fun shopping there and picking out stuff for our new baby chicks. She got four and I got four.

I am well-stocked for winter, for sure. **Share your farmgirl shopping story here.**

Barnyard Buddies: "Stormy" ... Our new Longhorn baby. Submitted by ceejay48
This little bull calf was born on October 30 on a cold, blustery day ... that is why we decided his name would be "STORMY." His momma is a highly marked red Longhorn and his daddy is half Longhorn/half Angus. Daddy has the markings of a highly marked red Longhorn and the build of the Angus.

I was able to get inside the fence, mingle around and get my hands all over this baby. Rubbing his back, scratching his head, and rubbing his ears. Notice the darker colored hair on the top of his head and the funny little red spot right between his eyes. What a cutie!! **Send your congrats here.**

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Barnyard Buddies: Finally! I got my chickens!!!! Big news! Submitted by texdane
Well, it's official. I am a real bona-fide farmgirl for sure! I am raising four little baby chicks. They will stay indoors in my basement until April thaw and they can go in the coop. So excited! My neighbor's chicken hatched babies! First-time chicken mom. I know they are chickens, I know I'm not supposed to name them or get close to them … but they are soooooooooooo cute! Fresh eggs this spring! Woo-hoo! (I'm even getting up at night to check on them and make sure they are warm)! For any of you that know me … this is BIG NEWS! Woo-HoO! All I want from Santa is a chicken coop! **Comment here.**

Barnyard Buddies: All Things Dairy (Goats, Cows and Sheep). Submitted by kristin sherrill
I thought we might need to have a dairy thread going here since there are so many of us that have goats and cows. And we are always needing advice and help on one thing or another. So why not start a dairy area. Anyone interested? We can talk all we want about our favorite girls. I'll start.

I have 3 Lamanchas and 1 Nubian. They range in age from 3–7. They are all due to kid around the end of march. I am hoping for more girls this year. We had 13 kids last year and only 2 were does. So I keep rubbing their bellies and talking to the "girls."

I have been milking goats going on 5 years now. I love it. I milk by hand. I have 3 stanchions so that makes it easy. Last year I had 7 I was milking. 4 is still a lot and I may end up selling 1 more. One of the does is half Toggenburg and her milk last year was not that good.

So ya'll join in and **let's talk dairy here**.

Farm Kitchen: Best gluten-free flour to use and where to buy it? Submitted by wooliespinner
I am wanting to swap out wheat for gluten-free flour. I have been looking at coconut, almond flour. I noticed they are super-duper pricey. I do not want to use soy flour. I know there are other ones, but I am just starting to research and figure out how to use these flours.

I have never used a gluten-free flour for baking before.What do you all find to be the best ones to use? Do any of you ladies know of the best place to purchase these flours ? I was looking on Honeyville Grain and I was shocked at the prices—is this the going price for these flours? I have been buying my own wheat for years and grinding it and it's not nearly as high as these and I guess I cannot grind my own when it comes to coconut or almond flour.

I purchsed the book *Nourishing Traditions* along with *Wild Fermentation*. The *Nourishing Traditions* book is blowing my mind. I am learning so much and really am interested in changing the way we eat. We already have free-range eggs and natural beef and milk and other stuff. But this book is really making me want to change way more.

Anyway if anyone has a decent resource for these flours or a really good bread recipe to replace my wholewheat bread, I am all ears.

continued …

continued ...

My poor brain is spinning from all the info from these books and I have never used any of these flours before.I hope they taste good and really want to get some right away to try a muffin recipe first. I figure this would be the easiest one first. Thanks for any help, info or suggestions. **Give advice here.**

Farm Kitchen: What to do with a ham bone (and ham leftovers)? Submitted by musicmommy
We had a wonderful ham for dinner last night, but the carnivores in our family only ate 1/4 of it. And they are piggies! I'm trying to figure out a good soup to make with the bone and they don't like split pea. Any other suggestions for soup or good ways to use up the leftovers? **Chime in here.**

Garden Gate: My big wonderful pile of wood chips!!! Submitted by wooliespinner
I had called the electric company hoping for fresh chipped mulch from when they cut limbs and trees down and grind them up. I guess you could call it raw mulch. In the video **Back to Eden,** he uses raw wood chips to help suppress weeds and help in gardening.He never tills anymore he just parts the composted chips and plants. Never tilling again ... I would love to never have to till again that would be totally awesome.

I had called the electric co. yesterday and figured it would be a long time for them to bring wood chips. This morning, I heard this truck at the bottom of my driveway and they had a load of chips!!! I couldn't believe my luck. I am so excited about my pile of chips. I know this sounds kinda crazy, but I keep going out and looking at this wonderful pile and it smells like fresh leaves. This evening, I am going to start putting it in the garden one wheelbarrow at a time. I hope I can have a Back to Eden garden just like Paul in the video. Its a kinda permaculture practice that many people are using. Anyway wanted to share about my wonderful load of chips.

The electric guys probably thought I was crazy because I was so excited over a load of fresh mulch. I felt like I won the lottery. Here is a picture of my pile and the little garden its going into.

Oh, I forgot to say that the chips were a combo of popular and maple. I hope that's a good tree to make fresh mulch with. **Comment here.**

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Nifty Thrifty: Repurposing tin/aluminum cans, submitted by neeter302
I thought these were cute. Going to make some and hang on my fence and let my grandson paint a couple, then plant with flowers to put on the picnic table. **Share your ideas here.**

Off the Grid/Homesteading Skills: Sisters Badges. Submitted by Jeri
I received my Sisters "badge" and was wondering how I was going to display it. I decided to use an apron I have. I love vintage and collect aprons, so I am going to sew my badges on one so I can keep up with them.

churunga (#5142) replied: I want to make a pieced hexagon garden path fabric out of it. It will be designed to keep growing.

Killarney (#3392) replied: Congrats Jeri! I decided to put mine on an apron (right). I have earned about 6 more since this picture, but have not sewed them on yet!

Daizy (#1953) replied: I love to embroider, so it is taking me a lot longer to sew the designs. I will be putting mine on a denim tote that is very large … I have it filled with a binder for all my MJF data—a copy of each badge and then blank paper behind that to fill with my info of how I am achieving that badge. It also holds my small Farmgirl bag, which has the badge and thread that I am certainly sewing on. My Henrietta is almost finished—I lost her for a while—and she will be on the front in the center. All others will be added around her like a hexagon quilt. Send your photos. I love to see what everyone is doing with their badges.

Join in here.

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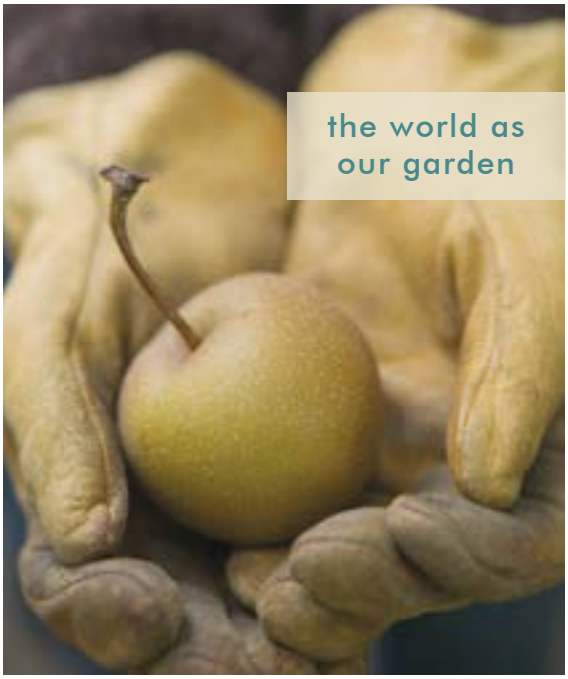

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Farmgirl Sisterhood

Social Media

I'm doubling back to make sure you're aware of all the social media happenings at MaryJanesFarm, because you won't want to miss a thing—especially the moment when YOU'RE the sister featured on one of our Facebook pages simply because you're just so farmgirl awesome or you've earned a badge or your blog post from our Sisterhood blogging community over at **www.GirlGab.com** was featured. (This is my favorite daily pleasure. I LOVE GirlGab!)

As ladies of the Sisterhood, now numbering 5,558 (and counting), we've earned an amazing number of Merit Badges so far—7,822 total! We've recently started alerting earned Badges daily on our MaryJanesFarm **Facebook** page. We started out alerting just the expert-level earners, but decided recently to alert all levels AND add photos if you include them. We're just so durn proud! Can you hear the clucking?

My blog, **www.raisingjane.org**, is a little bit more of the fun and frilly that you've come to expect from MaryJanesFarm, and is my outlet for conversation in between magazines.

If you're a Facebook or Twitter kind of gal, you'll find my posts teased on my **Twitter** account and my **Facebook** account. Updates for all things glamorously glampifying for International Glamping Weekend can be found **here**, at its Facebook fan page.

Facebook and Twitter not your thing? Then, our **Pinterest** page can keep you up-to-date with recipes, projects, products, and beautiful images captured here at my farm.

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Exclusive for Sisters!

Sisterhood Necklace

We've partnered with Elaine Tolson of Washington to offer this lovely bit of vintage-style jewelry—for Sisterhood members only. Your necklace will be emblazoned with your own unique Sisterhood number, setting your braggin' rights in stone. Whether you wear it as a secret code for those in-the-know, or as a conversation starter about the Sisterhood, is up to you. **Click here to order yours.**

Hello Elaine!

Thank you so much for my beautiful charm. I received it last week and have enjoyed wearing it and showing it to my friends and family. Can't wait to get our Chapter off the ground here in Cherry Valley.

Thank you again,
Mary Bronson

Elaine!!!

Thank you so very much for the beautiful Farm Gal necklace!!! I beyond love it! I really feel part of something grander when I wear it. You made my day when I opened my little burlap bag, truly.

kindness counts,
Kim

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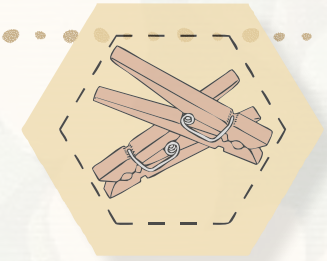
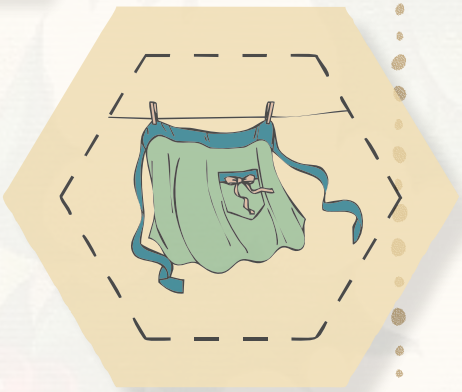
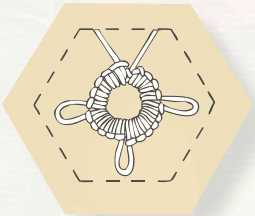
Merit Badge Awardees

Merit Badge Awardees







Audrey Morris: Dree #5517
Beginner badge: Each Other / Community Service
Beginner badge: Garden Gate / Backyard Farmer

Barb Keefe: ranerider #5355
Beginner badge: Each Other / Farmgirl Gratitude
Beginner badge: Make it Easy / Let's Get Physical
Beginner badge: Make it Easy / Relaxation
Intermediate badge: Make it Easy / Let's Get Physical
Intermediate badge: Make it Easy / Relaxation

Bobbi Miller: Farmchick #5127
Beginner badge: Each Other / Lend a Hand to Farm Families
Intermediate badge: Each Other / Lend a Hand to Farm Families
Expert badge: Each Other / Lend a Hand to Farm Families

Casey Comstock: #5366
Beginner badge: Make it Easy / Carp-hen-try
Beginner badge: Make it Easy / Let's Get Physical
Beginner badge: Make it Easy / Relaxation

Daizy Bailes: Daizy #1093
Beginner Badge: Cleaning Up / Recycling
Beginner Badge: Cleaning Up / Water Conservation
Beginner badge: Each Other / Community Service

Debbie Platt: GardenGirl50 #5353
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Nellie Will-do
Intermediate badge: Stitching & Crafting / Nellie Will-do
Expert badge: Garden Gate / Gaining Ground

Donna Lees-Kennedy: Montana.woman #5398
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Aprons

Emily Race: Simply Satisfied #3591
Beginner badge: Garden Gate / Bee Good to Your Mother Earth

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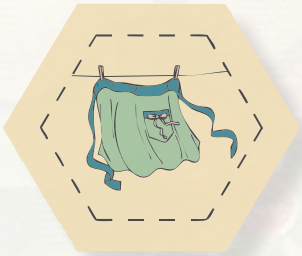
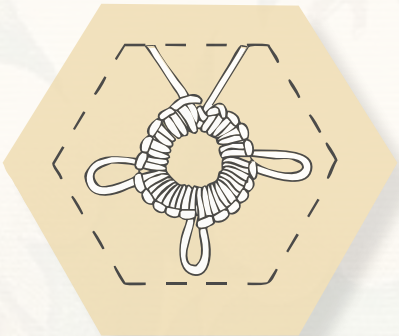
Beginner badge: Garden Gate / Herbs
Beginner badge: Make it Easy / Build it Green
Intermediate badge: Cleaning Up / Going Green
Intermediate badge: Garden Gate / Herbs
Intermediate badge: Make it Easy / Build it Green
Expert badge: Garden Gate / Herbs

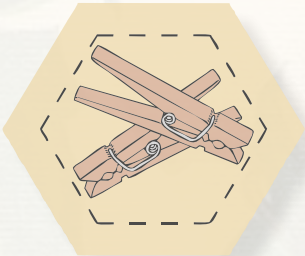


Johnelle Lamar: johnelle28 #4892
Beginner badge: Each Other / Greatest Generation

Megan McIntyre: #5220
Beginner badge: Each Other / Blogging
Beginner badge: Garden Gate / Backyard Farmer
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Buttoned Up
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Quilting
Intermediate badge: Each Other / Blogging
Intermediate badge: Stitching & Crafting / Buttoned Up
Intermediate badge: Stitching & Crafting / Quilting
Expert badge: Each Other / Blogging



Michele Preston: batznthebelfry #2622
Beginner badge: Farm Kitchen / Cheesemaking
Beginner badge: Farm Kitchen / Get it Together
Intermediate badge: Farm Kitchen / Cheesemaking



Nancy Boyd: NancyOH1 #2508
Beginner badge: Farm Kitchen / Icing on the Cake

Rebecca Miller: Horsecrazygirl #5126
Beginner badge: Each Other / Lend a Hand to Farm Families
Intermediate badge: Each Other / Lend a Hand to Farm Families
Expert badge: Each Other / Lend a Hand to Farm Families

Shelly Schrader: ShellyS #5481
Beginner badge: Farm Kitchen / Get it Together
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Knitting

Sherrilyn Askew: Sherri #1350
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Basketry

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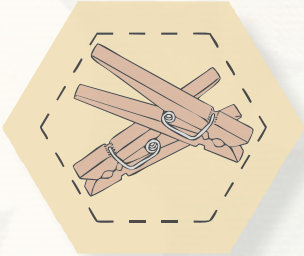
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Origami
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Weaving

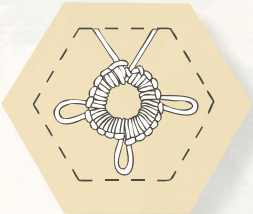
Sharon Demers: Calicogirl #5392
Beginner badge: Cleaning Up / Shopping Green
Beginner badge: Make it Easy / Build it Green
Beginner badge: Outpost / Wild Game
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Ink Slinger
Intermediate badge: Cleaning Up / Shopping Green
Intermediate badge: Each Other / Blogging
Intermediate badge: Garden Gate / Birds

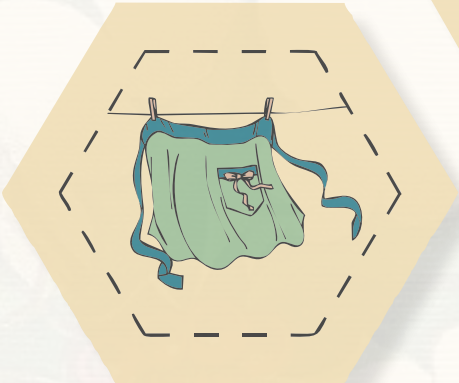
Susan Roby: #5505
Beginner badge: Each Other / Community Service
Beginner badge: Each Other / Languages/Culture

Sylvia Jacobus: CissiK #5389
Beginner badge: Each Other / Blogging
Intermediate badge: Each Other / Blogging

Terry Steinmetz: teryouth #3600
Beginner badge: Farm Kitchen / Cheesemaking
Beginner badge: Garden Gate / Horse Dreams
Beginner badge: Outpost / Glamping
Intermediate badge: Farm Kitchen / Self-Sufficiency
Intermediate badge: Garden Gate / Herbs
Intermediate badge: Garden Gate / Horse Dreams
Intermediate badge: Outpost / Glamping







Sister Loves

{our favorites ... just a click away!}

Molly's PICKS

(JUST A CLICK AWAY)

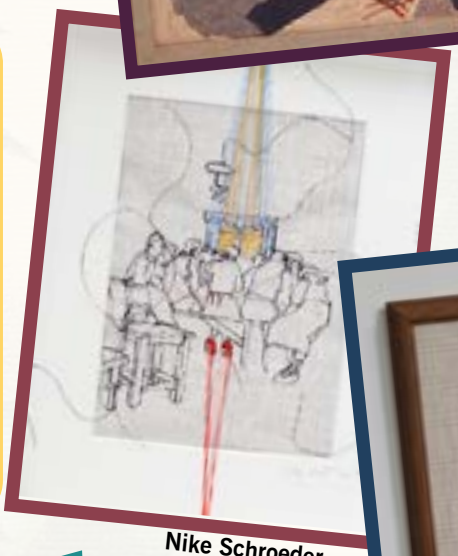
GRAPHIC DESIGNER
(SISTER #1867)

The snow is falling, the fire is roaring, and I'm pulling out my unfinished crafting projects from last year. Sometimes I need a little creative boost to help me finish those projects that just won't seem to end. This month, my picks are not only a fanciful collection of inspiration for myself, but hopefully, you will find them inspiring as well. In these examples, the craft of embroidery and concept of fine art join to make something delicate, beautiful, and unique.

Fulvia Luciano

Linda Behar

Mariska Karasz



Nike Schroeder

Stacy Isenbarger

Stephanie Liner

You can visit Molly's picks by clicking on the photos.

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Farmerettes & Young Cultivators

Merit Badge Awardees

Addison Branen: Young cultivator of Rebekka Boysen Taylor #40
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Little Scrappers
Intermediate badge: Stitching & Crafting / Little Scrappers

Isabella Taylor: Young cultivator of Rebekka Boysen Taylor #40
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Little Scrappers
Intermediate badge: Stitching & Crafting / Little Scrappers

Julia Branen: Young cultivator of Rebekka Boysen Taylor #40
Beginner badge: Stitching & Crafting / Little Scrappers
Intermediate badge: Stitching & Crafting / Little Scrappers

What's a Farmerette?
Farmerettes are young farmgirls-in-training between the ages 14–18. They can earn the same Merit Badges as adult Sisters, so long as there is a Farmgirl Sisterhood member nearby to work with them. **Click here to find out more.**

What's a Young Cultivator?
Young Cultivators are girls and boys between the ages 6 and 13. They can work with Farmgirl Sisterhood members to earn badges, but have their own unique program. **Click here to find out more.**

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Young Cultivators Group

Rebekka Boysen-Taylor, our Stitching & Crafting columnist, also coordinates a Young Cultivators group. She'll report on their activities here and in future issues.

Celebrating with Children

This year, our holiday traditions finally seem predictable. We are looking forward to cutting a wild Christmas tree, making peppermint hot chocolate, visiting family, and sledding with friends.

To enjoy your holiday celebrations with children, try to include them in the preparations and avoid too much shopping. Cultivate generosity by giving them chances to earn money for gifts by helping out with the seasonal chores. Once the work is done, head out for hot cocoa and the thrift store together to shop for small gifts. Teach kids the difference between quality finds and junk.

A friend of mine transforms her garage into Santa's Workshop one early December afternoon with treasures donated by families around town. A few parents offer to be elves and children can buy gifts for 25¢ to $1. The elves help to wrap gifts and the proceeds are donated to a local non-profit that assists aging neighbors who live at home but need help with shopping, rides, and household chores. It is an inspiring way to extend the joy of giving without having to buy anything new.

DIY Jump Rope

Keep your own shopping simple and choose one gift for the children in your extended family. This year, I am giving nieces and nephews 8' jump ropes made from used climbing rope. Our local sports store sells the rope for 25¢ a foot plus a small labor fee. They cut and heat-finished the ends into little loops perfect for small hands.

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Coming Soon
to a Magazine Near You

Want to make a classic holiday dinner in under 2 hours? Or enjoy family favorite holiday cookies like Peanut Butter & Jelly Thumbprints and Hazelnut & Fig Bars? How about ideas for out-of-the-box holiday trees and ornaments from vintage wooden spools? In the current issue of *MaryJanesFarm*, you'll find all that and more! Our December/January issue (For Whom the Bell Jingles) is on newsstands now. Don't risk missing *MaryJanesFarm* magazine on newsstands. Subscribe **here**! And just a reminder, the Sister Issue will be back in February after a short holiday hiatus.

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home

The MaryJane's Home towel collection is a spirited tribute to all that she loves. Her signature drawnwork comes alive with whimsical sophistication. Intricate subtleties like twill tape and appliqués offer dimension, while delicate double ruffles divinely complicate the simplicity of her collection. The entire collection is a wonderful mix of patterns and textures that, when pieced together, create a harmonious balance of rustic femininity, fresh from her farm.

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Meet our Bloggers

Being a farmgirl isn't where you live, but how you live!

Farmgirls are tapping away at their keyboards to bring you news from the homefront, no matter where you live or what your interests. Rebekah Teal, a former judge, writes about being a farmgirl in the city; Alexandra Wilson blogs from the rural perspective; Nicole Christensen gives you the suburban viewpoint; Cathi Belcher shouts-out from her mountain top, Shery Jespersen shares the ranch view from Wyoming, and Debbie Bosworth writes from the beach. You can click to our farmgirl blogs right on our home page (**www.maryjanesfarm.org**). While you're there, sign up for our e-mail blog alerts and recipe of the week.

city FARMGIRL

Rebekah Teal is a farmgirl from a large metropolitan area who recently made her dreams come true by moving to a farm. Given her dyed-in-the-wool city-girl background, she still writes our **City Farmgirl Blog**. She's a lawyer who has worked in both criminal defense and prosecution, and she has been a judge, a business woman, and a stay-at-home mom. She's not only down-home citified, she's a true-blue farmgirl ... in (the occasional) pair of stilettos!

Mustering up the courage to do the things you dream about, she says, is the essence of being a farmgirl. Learning to live more organically and closer to nature is Rebekah's current pursuit.

rural FARMGIRL

Alexandra Wilson is a budding rural farmgirl living in Palmer, Alaska—the agricultural seat of the last frontier—and she shares her adventures on our **Rural Farmgirl Blog**. Alex is a graduate student at Alaska Pacific University, pursuing an M.S. in Outdoor and Environmental Education. She is focused on developing a program to inspire young women to become beginning farmers. She lives and works on the university's 700-acre educational farm. When Alex has time outside of graduate school, she loves to rock climb, repurpose found objects, cross-country ski on the hay fields, travel, practice yoga, and cook with new-fangled ingredients.

suburban FARMGIRL

Nicole Christensen, our current **Suburban Farmgirl Blogger**, calls herself a "knitter, jam-maker, and mom extraordinaire." Born and raised in the great state of Texas, she now resides in suburban New England in picturesque Connecticut, just a stone's throw from New York state.

Married for 18 years to her Danish-born sweetheart, Nicole has worked in various fields and has been a world-traveler, entrepreneur, knitting teacher, and homemaker, but considers being a mom her greatest job of all. Loving all things creative and domestic, Nicole considers her life's motto to be "Bloom where you are planted."

mountain FARMGIRL

Cathi Belcher, who pens our **Mountain Farmgirl Blog**, lives in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. As a "lifelong learner," she fiercely values self-reliance, independence, freedom, and fresh mountain air. She's also a multi-media artist, with an obsession for off-grid living and alternative housing. Cathi is married to her childhood sweetheart, and owns and operates a 32-room mountain lodge.

"Mountains speak to my soul, and farming is an important part of my heritage," says Cathi. "I want to pass on my love of these things to others through my writing."

NEWS FROM THE HOMEFRONT ...

whether that home is

city, rural, suburban, mountain, ranch, or beach

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ranch FARMGIRL

Shery Jespersen, Wyoming cattle rancher and outpost writer, shares the view from her saddle in our **Ranch Farmgirl Blog**. Shery is a "leather and lace cowgirl" who's been horse-crazy all of her life. Her longtime love is Apple Pi "Dolly" Rose, a 20-year-old Morgan otherwise known as "The Best Darn Horse in the Universe."

Her other interests include "junktiques," creating eclectic "make do" arts and crafts, collecting antique china, and cultivating mirth.

beach FARMGIRL

Debbie Bosworth left her lifelong home in the high desert of northern Nevada 10 years ago and washed up on the shore of America's hometown, Plymouth, Massachusetts, where she, her "beach-bum Yankee" husband of 20 years, and her two homeschooled kids are now firmly planted. Debbie writes our **Beach Farmgirl Blog**.

"I found a piece of my farmgirl heart when I discovered MaryJanesFarm. Suddenly, everything I loved just made more sense! I enjoy unwinding at the beach, writing, gardening, and turning yard-sale furniture into 'Painted Ladies'! I'm passionate about living a creative life and encouraging others to 'Make Each Day their Masterpiece.'"

Nicole's FAVORITES

suburban FARMGIRL

EOS Lip Balm

Happiest of Holidays, dear Farmgirl Sisters! It's the end of another year and the holidays are here ... it's such a busy, buzzing, fun time of year!

This year, I'll be stuffing stockings and goodie bags with yummy organic chocolate, hand-knit treasures, and my newest favorite product ... EOS lip balms. A girlfriend mentioned these little cuties to me, and I'm hooked! Made of 100% natural, 95% organic ingredients like jojoba, shea butter, and organic stevia, these little balms are portable powerhouses, guarding against chapped lips! The colorful, round packaging is so different from other balms, with a twist-off lid (no more sticky messes in the bottom of your bag from loose lip balm lids)! Non-sticky and clear, I love to use this balm under lipcolor during the day, and alone at night to wake up to soft, comfortable lips. There's no waxy feel or bitter taste, and the product lasts on the lips. EOS lip balm is gluten- and cruelty-free and comes in a handful of juicy flavors like strawberry sorbet, blueberry-acai, and limited edition vanilla bean. Even my hubby's stocking will have one of these! Find them for around $3 at drug and variety stores everywhere, or on the Web at EvolutionOfSmooth.com. Ho Ho Ho!

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Magazines, Books & More

Our Dec/Jan issue (For Whom the Bell Jingles) hit newsstands on Nov. 12. In it, you'll find recipes for 5 family favorite holiday cookies, Grandma's eggnog, and more; get ideas for out-of-the-box holiday trees and unique ornaments; learn why it's important to get a good night's sleep; dig up the real dirt on spuds; and more.

Click here to subscribe to *MaryJanesFarm* magazine.

If you're a subscriber, you should have received your magazine by about Nov. 10. (Those of you near postal hubs get faster delivery; rural delivery takes a little longer.) If you didn't receive your magazine, you can call our publisher's subscription department at 800-476-4611 to check on your delivery.

MaryJanesFarm *Calendar*

Our **2014 calendar** is now available! Each month's top page features a full-color image from our farm and each calendar page includes dates, holidays, inspirational sayings, lunar phases, and fabulous farmgirl culture. This is a Project F.A.R.M. (First-class American Rural Made) product. All 26 pages are printed here at the farm on 8 1/2" x 11" card stock and are bound with black spiral wire, unfolding to 11" x 17".

Current Holidays:
December 1 ~ National Pie Day
December 4 ~ National Cookie Day
December 10 ~ Human Rights Day
December 13 ~ National Ice Cream Day
December 15 ~ Cat Herders' Day
December 16 ~ National Chocolate Covered Anything Day
December 21 ~ First Day of Winter
December 16 ~ International Day of Tolerance
December 24 ~ Christmas Eve
December 25 ~ Christmas
December 31 ~ New Year's Eve

December Sisterhood Special! (see p. 55)

Magazine "Goodies" on the MJF Website
"For those who are looking for the magazine portion of the website, here is the place to find additional patterns, instructions, recipes and such! Yum!" – Alee, Farmgirl Sister #8
To find the goodies, **click here!**

5,602 Sisterhood members and **7,898 Merit Badges earned** — growing stronger every day!