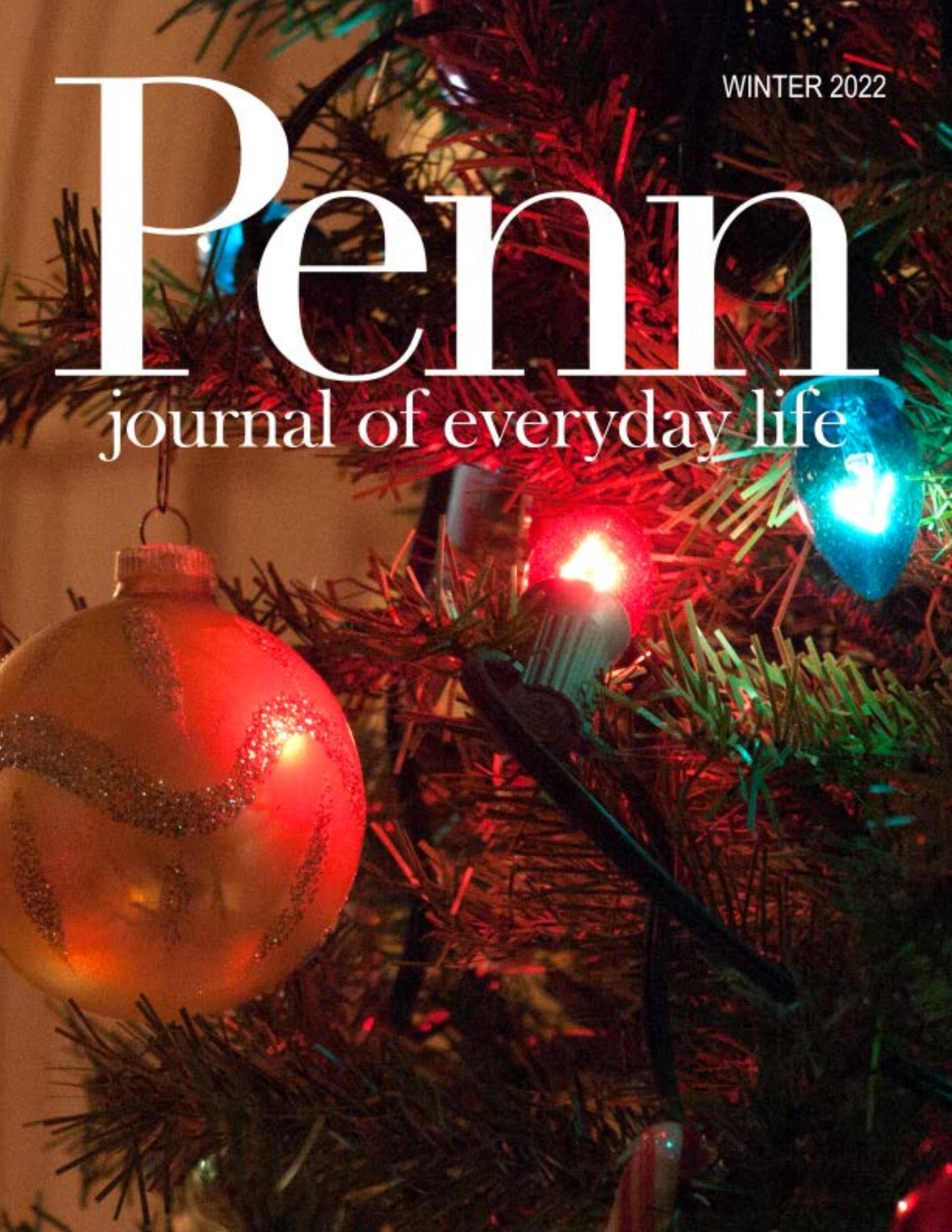


WINTER 2022

Penn

journal of everyday life



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Seasonal: *Wreaths Across America*



In December each year, at Arlington Cemetery and 3,400 locations across the United States, at sea and abroad, volunteers place wreaths to “Remember, Honor and Teach” about the veterans who have served in all branches of the military. Volunteers are asked to stop at each headstone on which they lay a wreath, to read and say the name.

We often attend the ceremony at the Soldiers National Cemetery in Gettysburg,

sponsored by the Sgt. Mac Foundation which was started by John and Susan McColley of Gettysburg, PA after their son, Sergeant Eric McColley, United States Marine Corps, was killed along with 7 other Marines and two Airmen in a fatal helicopter crash off the coast of Djibouti, Africa on 17 February 2006. We saw veterans, scouts and school buses of children line up to place a wreath, read a marker, and say a name. It is a moving and thoughtful event.







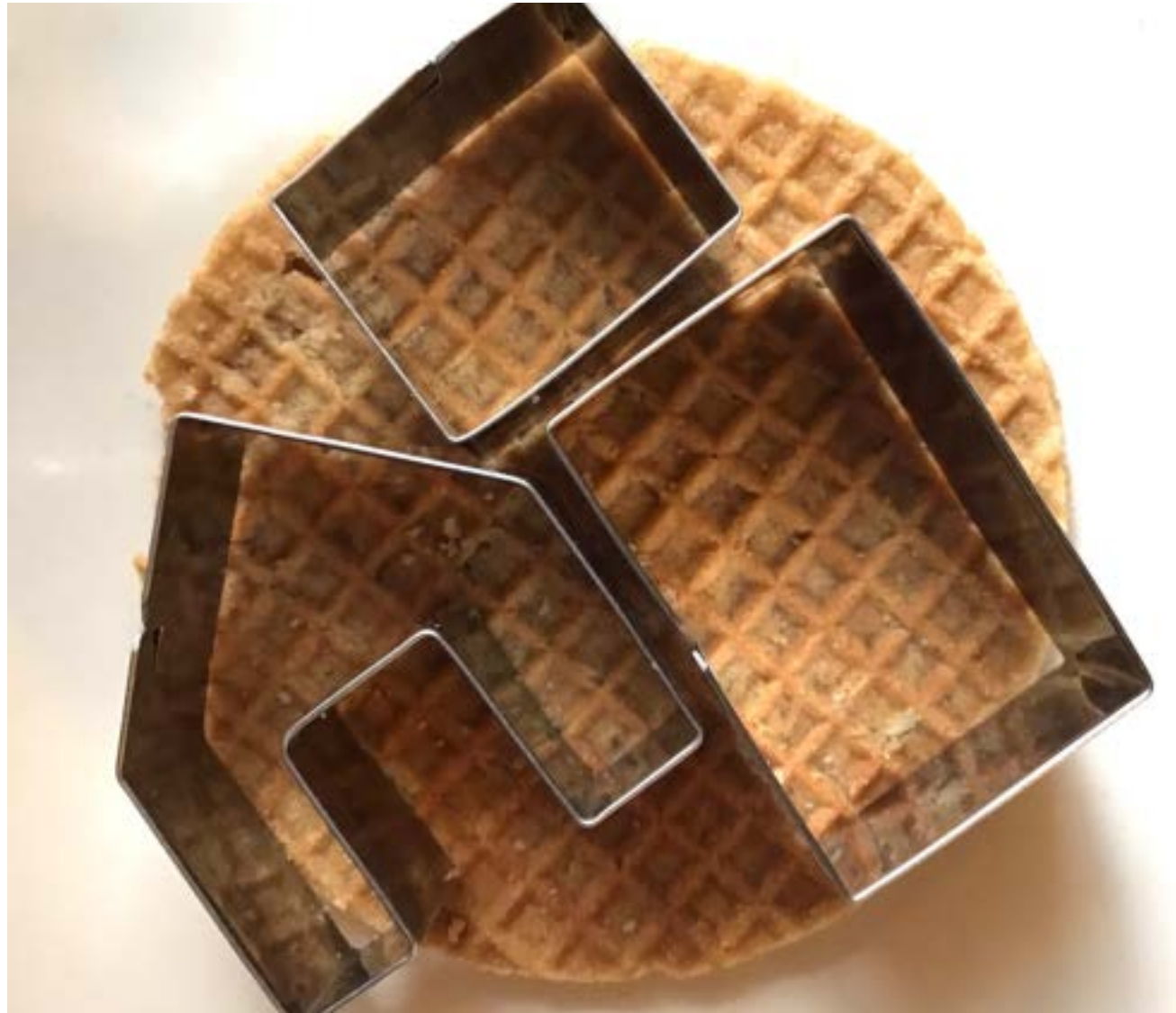


Day Trip: *Stroopies*

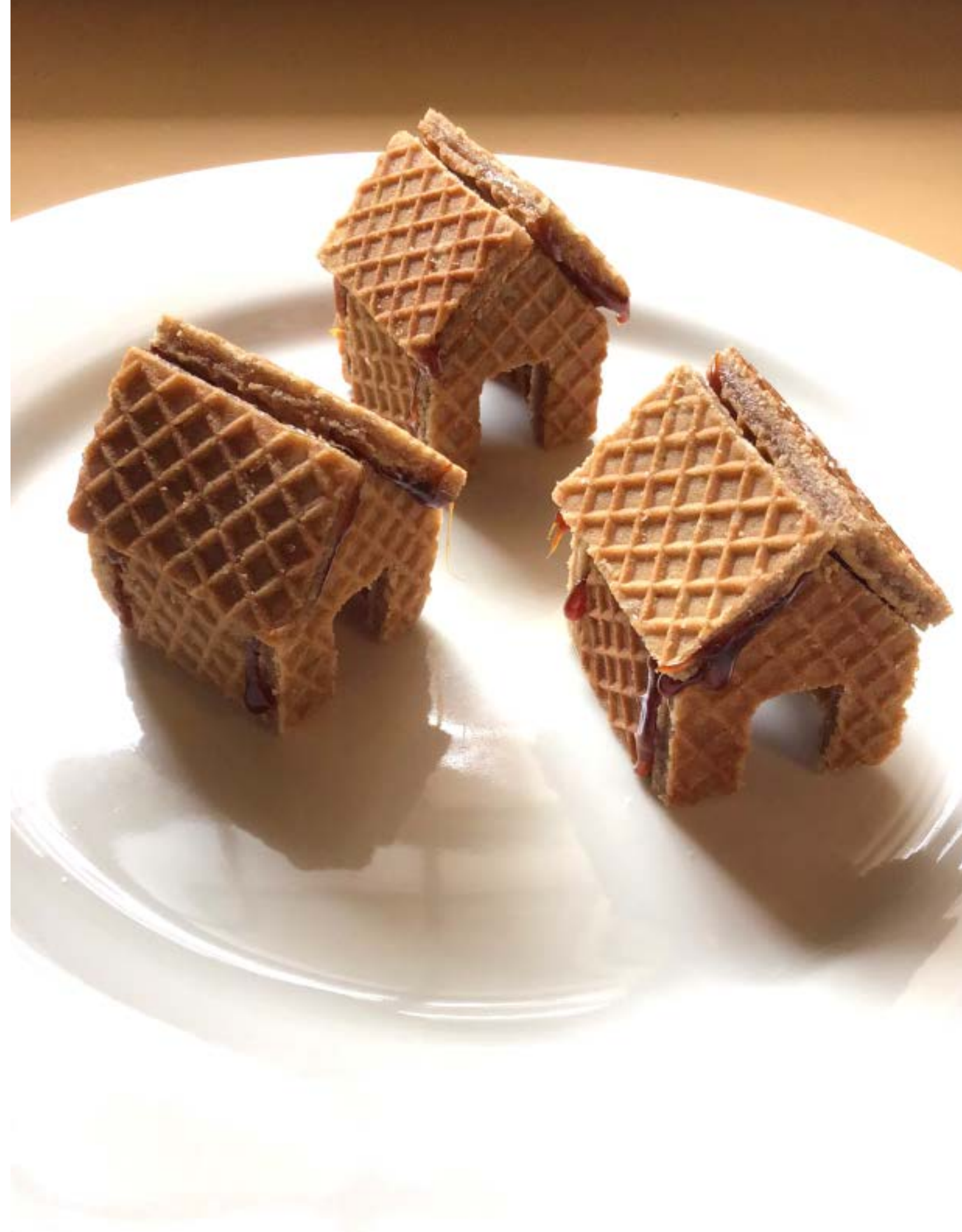


We first enjoyed stroopwafels from Stoopies in Lancaster by mail ordering a variety box of them. The basic stroopwafels are a round crisp waffle cookie sandwiched with caramel. They can also be found in shapes, dipped in dark chocolate and nuts. Lately, stroopwafel ice cream sandwiches have become popular with the largest distributor being from Canada, Heavenful. We make our own using Stoopies.

Traditionally served sitting on top of a hot mug of tea or coffee, Stoopies also sells broken bits that can be used for baking or



candy making. We mix broken bits with melted dark chocolate then spoon it out onto parchment paper to cool. We make a caramel then drizzle it over the top of the candy. We also place caramel in a silicone mold, then a stroopwafel and top it with melted butterscotch. Adding a stick makes it a portable treat, like a Stroopie pop. But our favorite is to use mini house cutters to create a Stroopie house that sits on a mug. We warm the stroopwafels slightly in the





microwave, and then cut out the shapes. When they have cooled, we glue them together with caramel and top the roof with a dollop of white chocolate snow.

But Stroopies is about more than a delicious business. It was created “to provide meaningful employment to resettled refugee women in Lancaster.” They teach life skills, English classes and provide a safe and welcoming place to work. It’s a lovely place to visit and shop.





Art: *Franklin's Glass Armonica*

We've all run our dampened finger around the rim of a glass of water and made that sound. Benjamin Franklin heard it and set about to design the science into a musical instrument he completed in 1761. The *Washington Post* termed it "the first musical instrument ever invented by an American." It became so

popular that composers such as Beethoven, Mozart and Donizetti wrote for the instrument. But it's popularity suddenly declined when audience illness was attributed to it. Franklin, however, ignored the unsubstantiated claims and played his glass armonica for the rest of his life without developing any symptoms.

Below, Brauer's recording of Christmas music on the glass armonica.





The Franklin Institute maintains a glass armonica that was made in London in 1761 from Franklin's instructions. According to the Franklin Institute, it has "a mahogany case and stand, and the musical glass bowls are supported on corks along an iron rod."

We found a recording of Franklin's glass armonica, played by Cecilia Brauer. Franklin's wife had called the sound the "music of angels" so appropriately Brauer recorded a CD of Christmas music in 1996. She was only one of a few musicians in the world playing the instrument. While she was a longtime member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, she also performed concerts on the armonica at venues such as

The National Portrait Gallery, The Franklin Institute, Carnegie Museum and Corning Glass Museum. The *New York Times* quoted Brauer explaining that it was difficult for her to learn how to play Franklin's glass armonica. "I used to play Tchaikovsky on the piano, but when I could finally play Yankee Doodle on the glass armonica, I was so happy." Brauer, a piano prodigy, was awarded a scholarship at age 13 to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. She died at 97 years old in 2021.

Photo by Peter Harholdt, Armonica (FI Cat.#80-1) from the Collections of The Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, PA.





Harvest: *Torta Rustica, Coeur de Creme*

Every culture has its' own specialty enveloped in a flaky crust. Torta Rustica is one that can be made using a broad variety of ingredients—vegetables and meats. We like that once it's made, we can reheat it for subsequent

meals when it is just us. We have also made it for family picnics (where there were no leftovers).

This recipe, from Pepperidge Farm, has layers of spinach, smoked turkey, roasted peppers and an omelet. We make it simple with a frozen puff pastry crust.



While this might look extravagant, this really is a simple dessert. It's a wonderful way to use berries— fresh or frozen. Coeur de Crème is made using cream

cheese and crème fraîche or sour cream. The trick is to leave it in cheesecloth to chill and drain. We used a recipe from *Bon Appetit*, but there are many on the web. It is a lovely way to use frozen berries in the winter and perfect for Valentine's Day dessert.

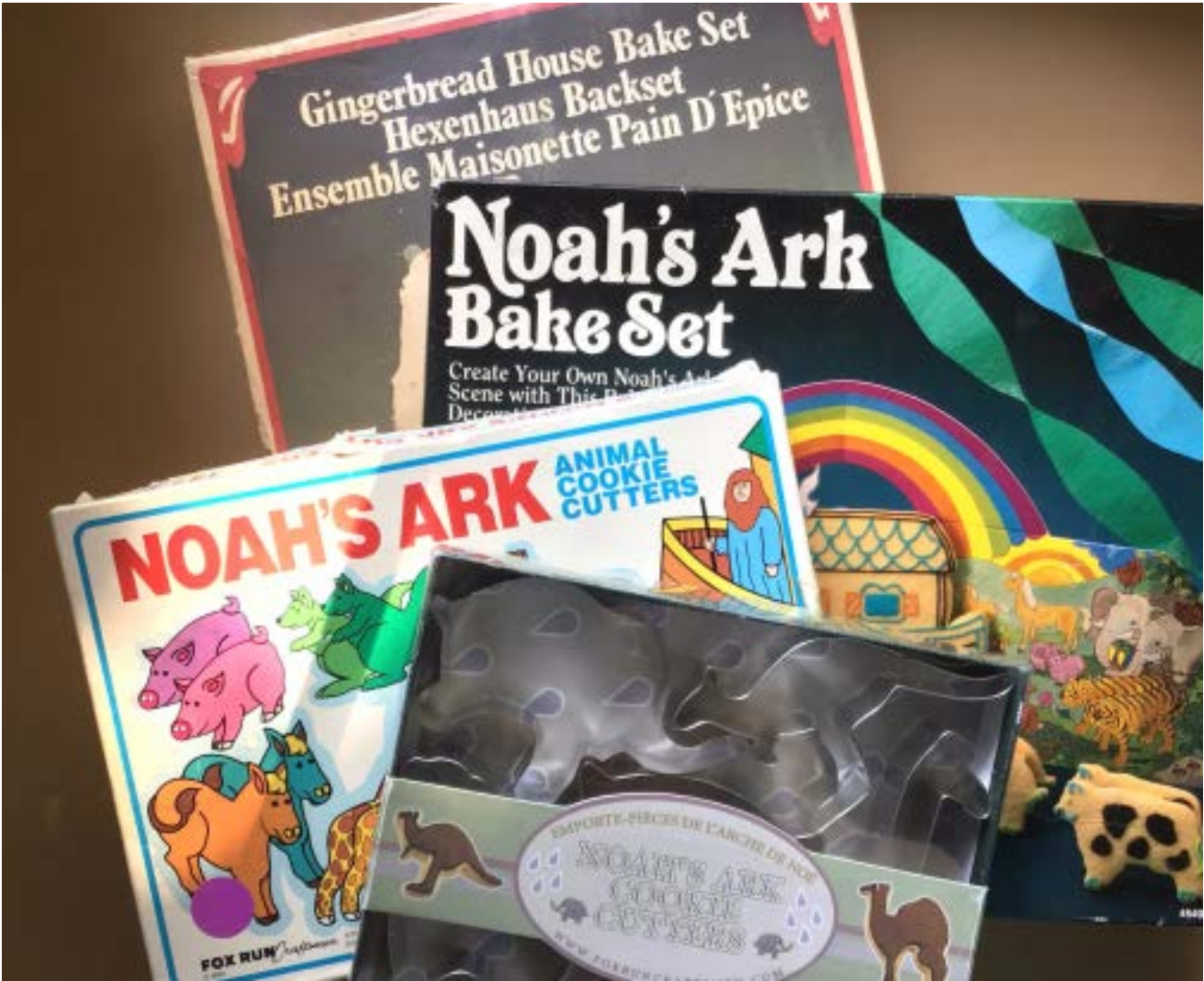




Celebration: *Fox Run Craftsmen*

Fox Run Brands is a Pennsylvania company that focuses on kitchen products. They have been around for forty years and were well known early on for their cookie cutters. This time of year we bring out our Fox Run cookie cutters collected over many years to make traditional festive treats and decorations for the holidays.

One thing that we have made over the years is a gingerbread Noah’s Ark. Fox Run has had several different sets of cookie cutters, some that include that ark and several sets of just animals. This year we used parts of our gingerbread house cookie cutters to make a large three-dimensional ark to go with our animals. Years ago we custom made up a set of ark cookie cutters





with Fox Run, but they no longer carry it.

We use bamboo skewers and Styrofoam sheets to hold the cooled gingerbread shapes while we “glue” them together with royal icing. We let ours dry over night to set.

Another one of our old gingerbread arks is shown under a feather tree hung with Swiss Tirlgel, delicious crisp honey cookies. Mexican animal candle holders substitute for cookie cutout animals. This ark is decorated with chocolate icing.

Older Fox Run sets can be found on Internet auction sites and other selling spots on social media. You just have to look carefully at the pieces to make sure they are clean if you want to create cookies that will be eaten and not just displayed.





While we like the idea of charcuterie houses, the ones we have seen look hard to dismantle to eat. So this year, we used Fox Run's Christmas Village cookie cutters to make small charcuterie houses. This way, one or two people can share a charcuterie house. They fit on an appetizer plate and are much easier to take apart and enjoy.

The dough is a two-cheese recipe from Food Network. The "glue" holding them together is whipped cream cheese. We added pickle trees and cherry tomato Santas to the board., which is bamboo with holes to hold skewers vertically in place.



Modeling chocolate, also called candy clay, is an easy way to make fancy little treats for the holiday dessert table. The recipe is very simple. We used about 16 ounces of dark chocolate melted and mixed with ½ cup light corn syrup. The candy dough was then

kneaded, covered tightly and refrigerated until time to make the pinecones.

We began by making a pinkie-sized triangle cone of modeling chocolate, then added pinches of dough to form the pinecone. After dinner, each dessert plate got a chocolate pinecone, sprinkled with confectioners sugar snow.





Making the wrappings for gifts is fun if you have time. Any paper can be ground up in a blender with water then poured on a screen or into a cookie mold to shape and dry. It's a nice way to make gift tags. Add grasses, herbs or confetti before the pulp is poured out to add texture and color. For us crafters, tape measure ribbon can be used with homemade strawberry pincushions made of felt. Gift baskets can be spray painted using stencils to jazz them up.



Here is one of our favorite ways to get the scent of cinnamon throughout the house. Cinnamon hearts can be used as decorations, or in a dish as potpourri. If you have never made them, all you need is ground cinnamon and

applesauce. The proportions can be 1 cup of applesauce to 1 ¼ cup of cinnamon. Add more cinnamon if the dough is too hard to handle. Mix and then shape like any wet clay. We dry them in the oven at 200 degrees on cookie sheets lined with parchment paper for about two hours.



Garden: *Forcing Bulbs*

Forcing bulbs in the winter is a lovely way to get some color and even a wonderful fragrance into the house in the winter. While the amaryllis is a spectacular and colorful bloom, we also like the narcissus for its small white flowers and scent.

It's easy enough to pick up a kit in the late

fall with a pot and peat ready to plant. Once the bloom fades, we leave the pot to grow its leafy plant the rest of the year. We used to trim the plant and let the bulb sleep under the sink, but once forgotten they bloomed an eerie white without the sun to make chlorophyll. Now we just leave them out and enjoy them year round.





Narcissus bulbs and their subsequent flowers, we enjoy their delicate scent. Not everyone does. We are careful to not gift someone these bulbs that may not enjoy them. Sometimes an artificial plant serves the purpose.





Crafts: *Knitting Gifts*



This year's projects were cotton dishcloth and towel sets, mittens, and hearts for Valentine's Day. Once we made enough for the family, we donated a bunch of them to the

local food bank for distribution.

We made our dishcloths in cotton yarn using free patterns found on the web. After testing them in our kitchen, we liked the dishcloth made up in a seed stitch and





the towels made up in a waffle stitch most serviceable.

For the mittens, we used acrylic worsted yarn and a free pattern from Yarnspirations website resource. For years we made mittens using my mother’s pattern and still have it, but switched to the new pattern knitted up

on four needles. For donation we made all of our mittens in medium and large sizes.

We watch Facebook Marketplace for people looking to destash their yarn and found someone getting rid of both yarn and cotton thread. They were perfect for the charity knitting project.





My mother's 1950's mittens knitting book is still in good shape. Me made red mittens this year. Put at the place setting with a spring of rosemary, filled with chocolate coins and candy canes. One year, we hung the gift mittens at the fireplace. They were filled with candies and a new red bandanna.



Crafts: *Knitting Gifts*

Stuffed knitted hearts were made on two needles with acrylic yarn in two pieces then sewn together. They were made in a simple-to-execute garter stitch—every row is knit. There are lots of free patterns on the web for knitting hearts. It's also a great charity project. Who doesn't want a heart to hug?







Local Eats: *Sticky Buns & Paczkis*



Sticky buns are a long time Pennsylvania thing. Grilled Stickies are a Penn State thing. We remember them from college days and, luckily, they are still available by mail. *Valley* magazine called Grilled Stickies, “the halfway point between a cinnamon roll and a sticky bun, coated in butter and sugar.”

So we gave them a test run. They arrived beautifully packaged, fresh and ready to grill. (Of course you don’t have to grill them, but we were reliving an experience

so we did.) Our conclusion was that Grilled Stickies were really good.

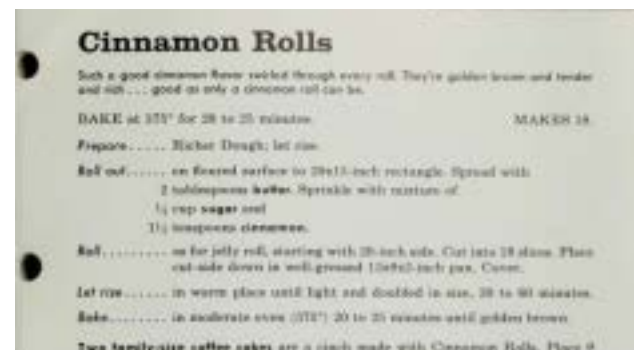
Grilled Stickies were a staple of the 24-hour Ye Olde College Diner at Penn State. Even though the diner closed in 2018, the recipe continues and is now made in a Boalsburg bakery in Centre County.

At the other end of the spectrum are our cinnamon rolls. Super easy to make, they start with a box of one of our pantry staples, Hot Roll Mix. We use a recipe from a 1950s Pillsbury cookbook.

Once the dough is made and rolled



out, we add the filling. The ingredients we use depends on what is on the shelf. Raisins, dried fruits, cinnamon, and nuts are combined with sugar and butter. The sweet filling is spread on the dough. The rectangle is rolled, sliced and the circles place in a pan to bake. Icing is almost always the last step.





The hardest to find of the winter baked treats in our area is Paczkis. We have found one bakery so far, though the grocery store chain bakeries sell something they call Paczkis. They also sell something they call fastnachts. Both are pretty much donuts and jelly donuts. The real Paczki is different than your everyday jelly donut. (Just as

real fastnachts are different than donuts.) A real Paczki is deep fried very rich dough. It is most commonly associated with Poland so found in Polish neighborhood bakeries and restaurants. Each one we had weighed about a half pound, so we shared—which also gave us a chance to taste the different jam and apple fillings.





Home Sweet Home: *Stuffed Pretzels*



We like to make homemade soup and with our soup we like a good piece of homemade bread. This year, we started making pretzels and breadsticks stuffed with cheese, finished with an egg wash and salt, and baked crispy. While we often make our own bread dough, or use a bread dough mix, our fastest way to make these was to use Pillsbury's refrigerated

dough. We just pop it open, roll it out, stuff it, shape it and bake.

For our stuffing, we use whatever cheese is at hand and whatever herbs are in the hydroponics. Basil, rosemary, thyme, oregano and garlic are favorites. Cheddar, mozzarella, feta, Jarlsberg, Parmesan or Romano are often in our filling.

Just before they go in the oven, we wash them with milk or a beaten egg yolk, sprinkle with more herbs, salt and Parmesan cheese.





Bread sticks can be made the same way as pretzels. We just roll out the dough, fill it, and pinch together the sides. A little water on our fingers helps the dough to stay closed while it is baking. We also give our breadsticks a twist after they are closed up. We like to make a few really long breadsticks, but we could make smaller ones. In the end, we break them into pieces about six inches long to serve.





This is a hand-me-down recipe that was a family favorite since the 1960s. These little cheesecake tarts are made with a cream cheese dough and cheesecake filling. After they are baked, a dollop of crème w or sour cream goes on the top, then a teaspoon of farm stand jam with whole cherries. The only trick is to have mini cupcake pans to shape and bake the little tarts. We refrigerate them and freeze them. But they don't last long, so we don't know the outside length of time they can be saved.



Favorite Things: *The Clock*

Have you ever looked around the house and found something old, then wondered who made it or what life was like back when it was made? We have a clock. We found an ad for it in an old magazine dating the clock to about 1902. That's one hundred and twenty years ago. The world was a very different place in 1902.

The maker of the clock was H. T. Cushman, a company Henry Cushman had started when he returned from the Civil War where he was a Union soldier and quartermaster of his Vermont regiment. At the time we acquired the clock, we were living in Gettysburg. Henry and his unit had been at the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863.

The clock design, though inspired by Stickley Mission style, was particular to Cushman. He called it Bolt Mission for the series of bolts that held the piece together. Cushman produced a complete line of Bolt Mission furniture. The advantage was if a joint loosened as the wood dried you could tighten it up again with a wrench.

The clock works Cushman used for his tall clock were made by the New Haven (Connecticut) Clock Company. When this clock was made, Walter Camp was the company treasurer. In the early 1900s, Camp ran the clock company while also coaching football at Yale College.



Walter Chauncey Camp, 1859 to 1925, became known as the “Father of American Football”. He invented football’s line of scrimmage and the system of downs among many other contributions to the sport. He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1951.

All that from a clock in the hallway. It still strikes accurately and chimes every hour.





Best Views: *Thinking of Spring*



Above, a view from our window in the winter. Previous pages, Biglerville farms.

Penn, journal of everyday life

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