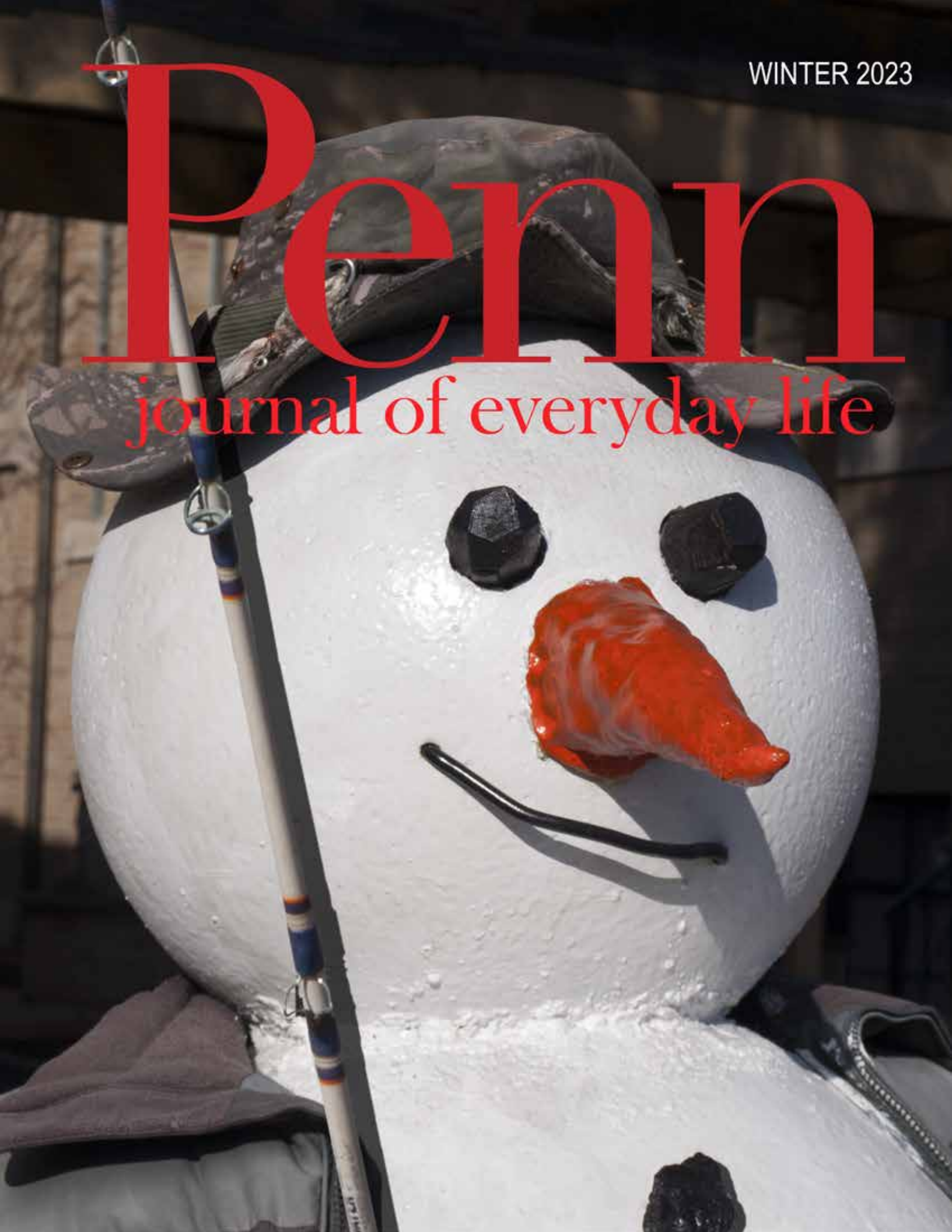


WINTER 2023

# Penn

journal of everyday life





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Winter 2023



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Pocono Joe,  
one of the  
Snowmen of  
Stroudsburg

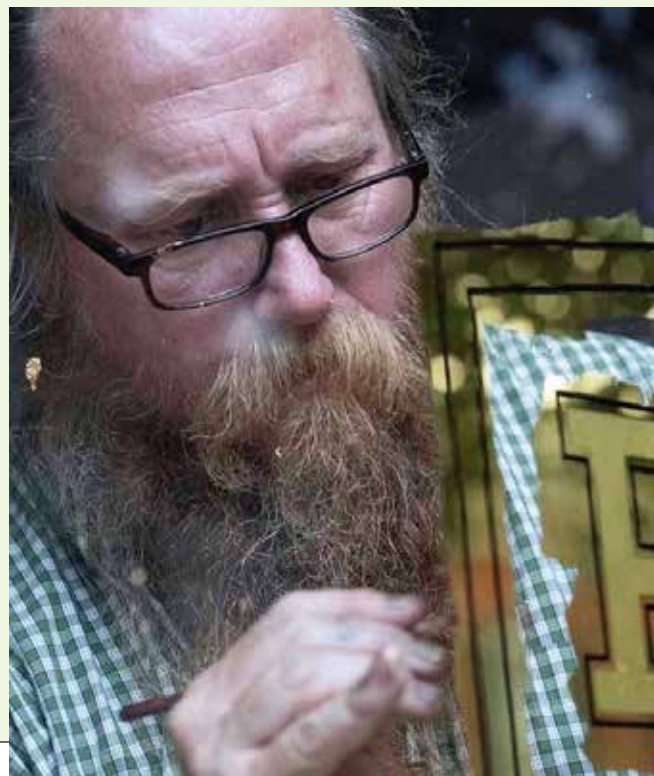
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## Seasonal: *Ice*



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**W**ith the warmer winters the last few years, we haven't seen as much snow as in the past but we still see ice when the temperatures drop

overnight. It's fascinating to see the ice form on the eaves of the roof and power cables. Sure, we know ice can cause all kinds of problem with the services and on the roads, so we stay put and enjoy it out the window.



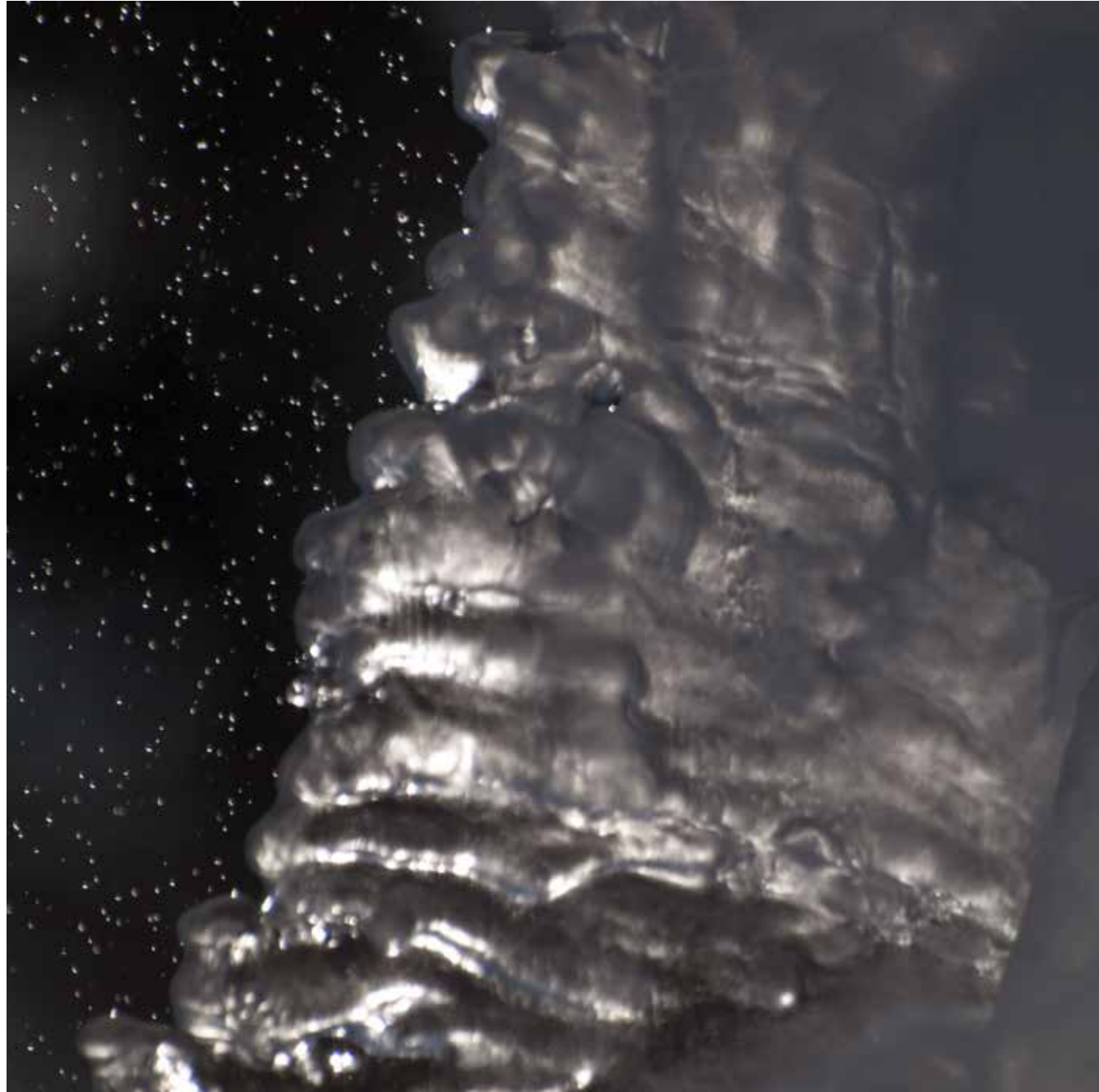




*Above and right*, the ice sugar coats the bushes and tree branches, forming crystals on some of them. It's kind of magical.







*Above*, we make an ice sculpture in the front yard that changes every day with the weather. Lights and mirrors add more dimension to the presentation. *Right*, ice crystals form around the twisted morning Morning Glory vines on the lamp post.









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## Day Trip: *Snowmen of Stroudsburg*



**F**or the past six years, the community has supported the Snowmen of Stroudsburg Project. Artists decorate snowmen that are placed around the borough in order to encourage foot traffic to the shops and businesses in town. (The snowmen face the sidewalks







rather than the streets.) To further encourage interaction, the organizers have created trading cards and games related to the snowmen and decorations.

*Previous pages, Cogswell by Kyle Maloney, Mr. Penny Bags by Gamut Art Gallery. Above, Georgette by Laura Lippay. Right, Pocono Joe by Go Collaborative.*



Pocono Joe  
by  
Go Collaborative





*Above, Winters Children by Thomas Dillon,  
Right, Fritz by Chris Centrella.*









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## Art: *Gibbs Connors*

**G**ibbs often points to his start as a sign painter in his hometown of Troy, New York and credits John Daly for his inspiration. Gibbs graduated from Pratt Institute, later

specializing in exhibition graphics for museums. His museum list is long, but he says that the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Barnes Foundation, and Winterthur Museum and Library were his main clients.

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Gibbs still does that kind of work and has become even better known for his exceptional sign painting. We would say that even if he were not our cousin.

Gibbs works out of Philadelphia, but

travels around the world, as he terms it, as an itinerant or journeyman sign painter. One of his beautiful styles is creating ghost signs to look like signs painted years ago and faded to just barely a shadow.







Gibbs lists his “techniques of the sign making craft: hand carving, surface gilding, reverse-glass gold leaf lettering, hand lettering, screen printing, and large-scale

wall lettering projects. In addition to the traditional techniques of sign making, I paint large-scale imagery on walls, sometimes at significant heights.”





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## Harvest: *Basil*

**B**asil is one of the staples we grow and use in our cooking. We tried a variety of Giant Basil in our hydroponics and liked it so much we harvested the seeds and planted it outdoors in dirt for

the summer. This winter we are back to putting the seeds in the hydroponics.

What we don't use immediately, we store by freezing the chopped basil in olive oil. It works beautifully and can be reconstituted easily for cooking.







*Left*, the Giant Basil growing in a planter outdoors last summer. *Below*, Linguini al Pesto is our favorite use of Giant Basil. *Left*, a small serving of pesto for dipping or spreading on toast.









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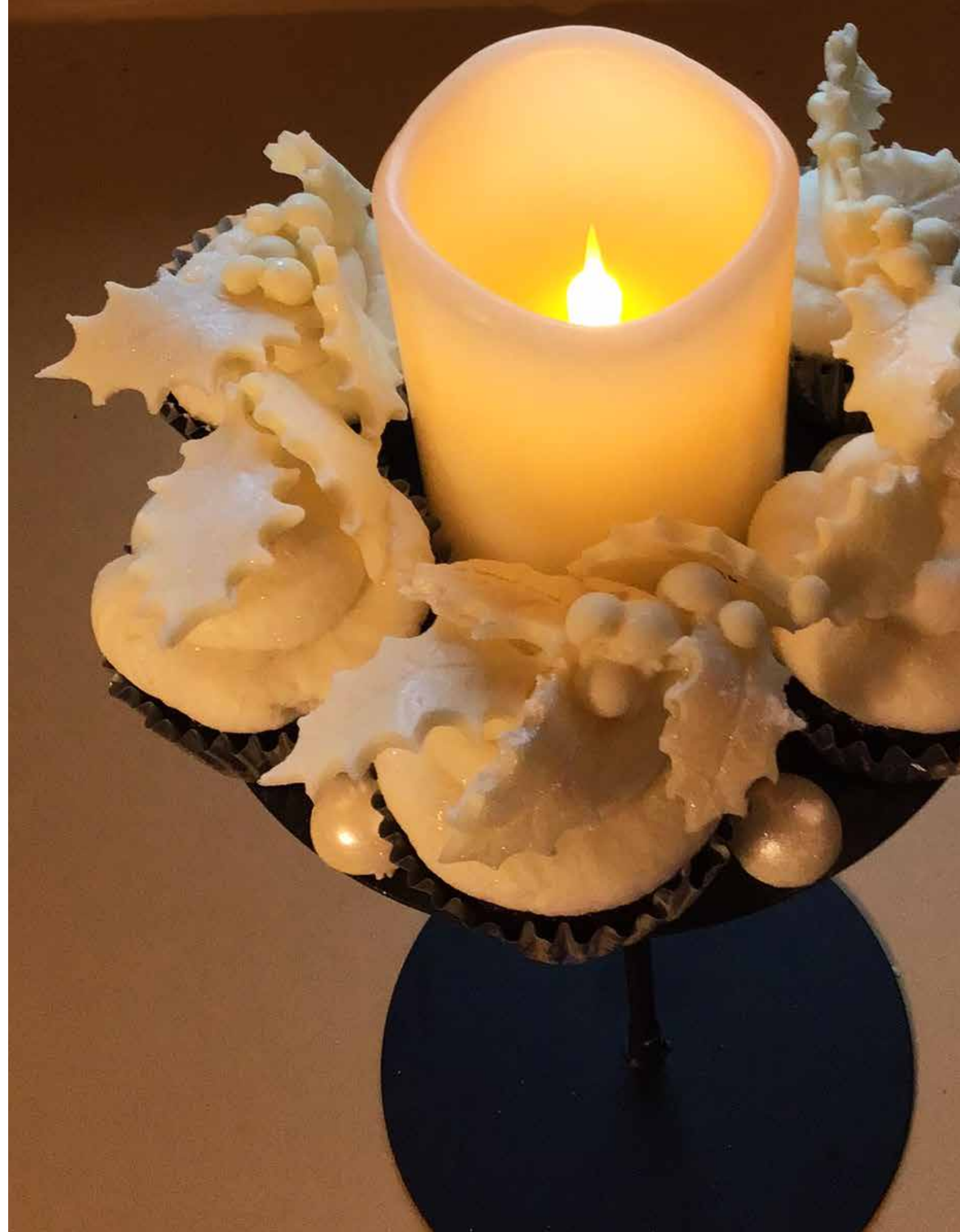
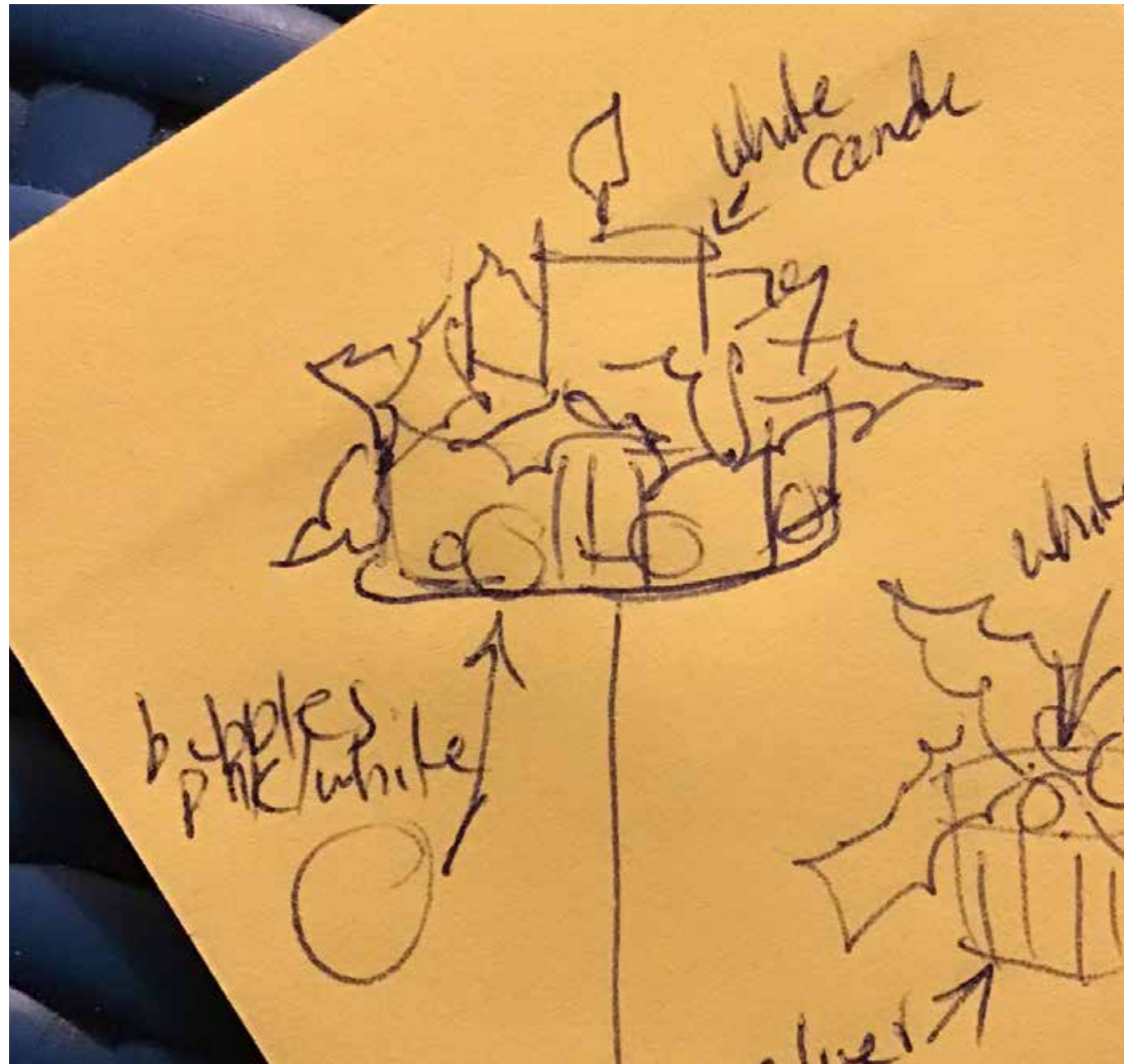
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## Celebration: *Holly Cupcakes*

**H**ere is an extravagant cupcake and decoration that is really not hard to make—just a little time consuming. We started with a sketch to plan. First the cupcakes

were made with a good dark cocoa and we added dark chocolate chips to the batter for a surprise bite.

The cupcakes were frosted with buttercream icing. The holly leaves were made with white chocolate candy clay.







The berries were white chocolate melted then placed in a mold to cool. We put the white chocolate chips in an icing bag, then microwaved them until they were just soft. We snipped the end of the icing bag and squeezed the chocolate into the mold cavity.

Finally, we squeezed out a line of chocolate to resemble a stem or branch and stuck the leaves and berries to it with buttercream icing or melted white chocolate. We dusted everything white with edible candy glitter.





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# Garden: *Switch*

Once the garden suffers a hard frost, we harvest the seeds and put them in the freezer. Then we order some new seeds. After Christmas, we start the indoor hydroponic garden

for the winter. Each year we do different plants. While basil and rosemary are staples, we also do other herbs and lettuce. It's fun to look up new recipes based on what we are growing and to head out to the porch to pick the ingredients to cook.

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While it was made from a kit, our hydroponic system is basically plumbing parts. We buy fresh soil plugs each season that go into a little basket in each hole in the pipe. Our porch has lots of sun and we augment it with grow lights over the system.









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## Crafts: *Knitted Christmas*

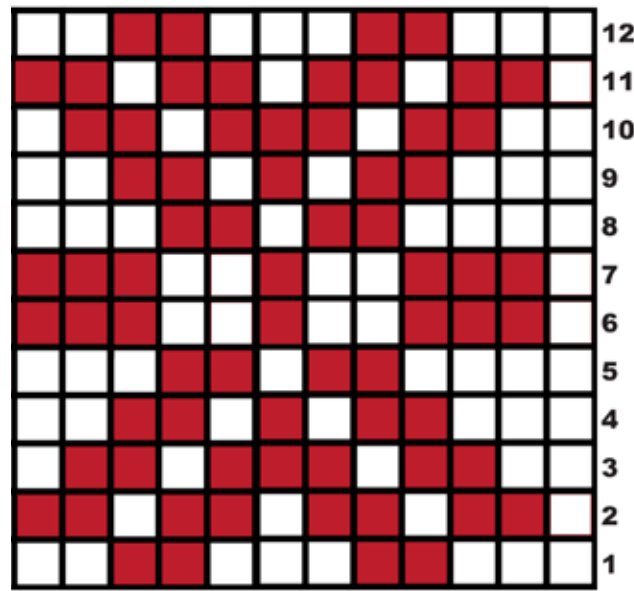


**O**ur red and white Nordic knit tree evolved over a couple of years. It started with 3-inch balls, then the next year added 4-inch balls. We had a matching afghan knit years ago

from a *Women's Day* magazine pattern that wraps the base. White lights and plastic candy canes add the finishing touch. There are lots of free knitting patterns on the web. We have included ours here.







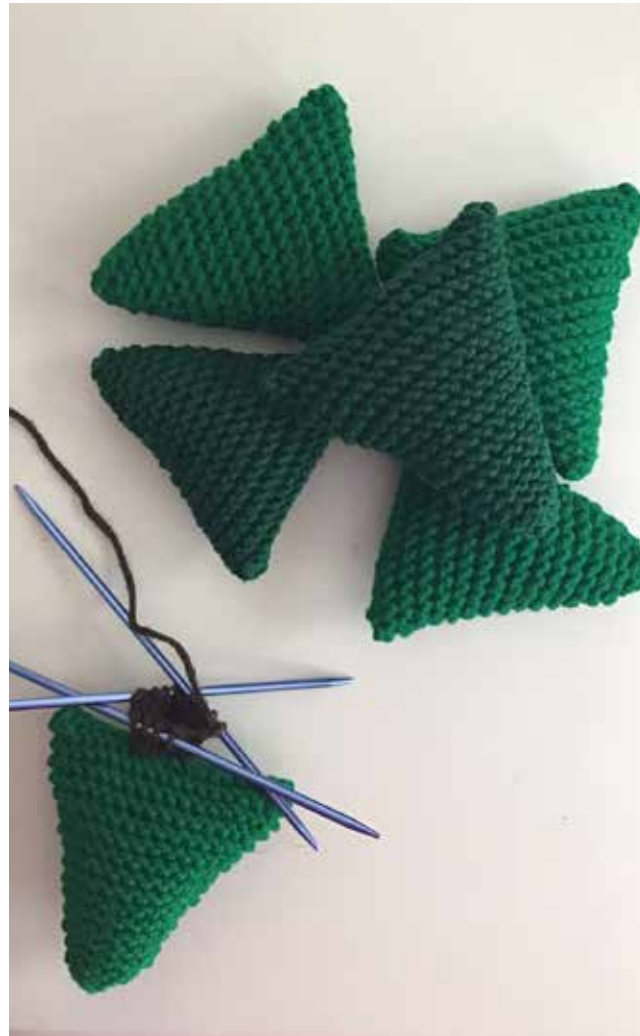
Our pattern uses a 12 stitch by 12 row area for the design. It is easy to set up a grid to design your own. For the 3-inch balls we use a sport weight yarn. For the 4-inch balls (instructions in parentheses) we use worsted.

Sport yarn (Knitting worsted)  
DP needles size 4  
Styrofoam balls 3" diameter (4" diameter)

1. Cast on 8 stitches and divide between 4 needles. Knit 1 round.
2. Inc 1 - 8 times by knitting 2 stitches into one stitch (16 stitches total); Knit 1 round.
3. In the first stitch Inc 1, then knit to last stitch, Inc 1, knit 1. Repeat this on the rest of the 3 needles; Knit 1 round.
4. Repeat STEP 3 until you have 12 stitches on each needle ending with increase round. Test the knitting on the styrofoam ball
5. Knit 12 rounds (18 rounds). On 6th round test the styrofoam ball – it should cover half of the ball (with stretching). If you have less or more then you need to adjust your knit rounds accordingly.
6. When step 5 is complete, leave the styrofoam ball inside of your knitting.  
Knit 1, k2tog, knit to last 3 stitches, k2tog, knit 1. Repeat this on the rest of the 3 needles; Knit 1 round.
7. Repeat STEP 6 until you have 4 stitches on one needle. Knit 1 round.
8. k2tog x 8 times
9. Cut yarn leaving enough for sewing. Take a sewing needle and bring yarn through all stitches. Tighten up, knot and weave in.
10. Make your Christmas ball damp (use spray bottle). With a hairdryer, block the ball with hot air to finish.







**Needles:**  
Two size 5 single-point knitting needles  
Four double-point size five needles  
**Materials:** Red Heart size 4 yarn, fiberfill, yarn needle  
**Size:** About 5 1/2" inches from the top of the tree to the base of the trunk

**Garter:**  
Cast on 20 sts.  
Row 1: Knit  
Row 2: Knit  
Row 3: k2tog, k to last 2 sts, k2tog  
Row 4: Knit  
Row 5: Knit  
Row 6: Knit  
Repeat rows 3-6 until 4 stitches are left  
Next row: k2tog twice resulting in 2 stitches

K2tog resulting in 1 stitch  
Pull the yarn through last stitch to knot  
Make two for each tree

**Finish:**  
Weave ends of yarn in.  
Position the two tree shapes with right sides together. Stitch or crochet the edges of the two sides of the tree together. Turn inside out and stuff. Stitch the bottom of the tree closed.

**For the trunk:**  
Pick up 12 stitches with one of the double point needles or a size G crochet hook in a circle at the center base of the tree.

Using size 5 dp needles pick up and knit on 3 needles. Knit 8 rows.

Bind off 8 stitches on two of the needles. Continue to knit the 4 remaining stitches for four rows. Bind off leaving a tail of yarn about six inches.

Stuff the trunk.  
Fold over and stitch the flap to the trunk to create the base of the tree trunk.







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## Local Eats: *PA Specialties*



**C**ookies! It's the season of baked goods. Our first stop was the Kiffle Kitchen in Bath. Since 1985, they have been making everything from scratch—no mixes. We loaded up our shopping cart

with buttery, flaky, jam-filled kiffles but we didn't stop there. We chose nut tassies (they call them Tossies), a shoe-fly pie, and other cookies were also in our order. All are favorites at our house and all are Pennsylvania specialties.





This year we tried Boilo. It is a coal-region Christmas drink made using citrus fruits, spices and honey with a generous helping of grain alcohol. We bottled it with and without the alcohol. The drink is gently warmed to serve. We found we also like it added to our hot hibiscus or chai tea or bubbled up with a little sparkling water.







Farm stand cookies are the best. This year we picked up a tower of fat pumpkin cookies at Kenny's in Gettysburg and Fastnachts at the Shoprite bakery in Brodheadsville. Our first choice for fastnachts are made at the Lutheran Church in Gettysburg —when we are there at just the right time to order and pickup. They are the real thing a Lutheran pastor informed us. Indeed they are.







The Purity Candy Company in Allenwood has been making candy for more than 114 years. One of their specialties is candy canes so we ordered hard candy curls in peppermint and clove flavors and a dark

chocolate peppermint bark loaded with bits of peppermint candy. Next Christmas we will order early to see if we can get some of their clear toy candy, something we have had an eye out for years.









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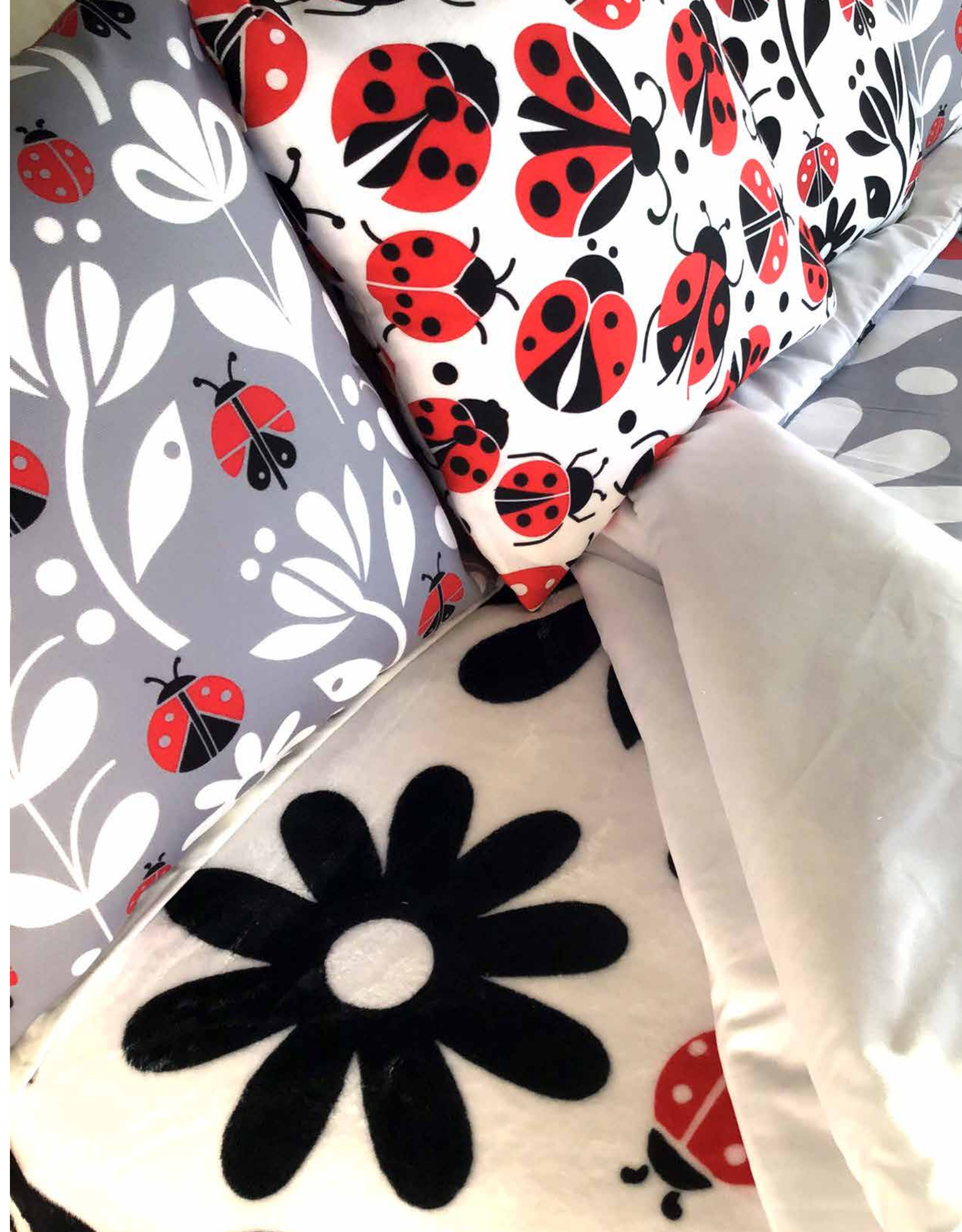
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## Home Sweet Home: *Ladybugs*



**B**ecause of our interest in gardening, ladybugs have been a favorite of our family for years. When it was time to refresh the guest bedroom we decided to

design our own linens and then Christmas giftwrap in a modern ladybug pattern. Print On Demand companies makes this easy to accomplish. We used Redbubble to pattern the linens and Zazzle to produce the paper goods.







Redbubble uses dye sublimation for printing fabric. We liked the quality of the result. Zazzle prints their papers traditionally. Starting with vector art, both resulted in crisp bright images.





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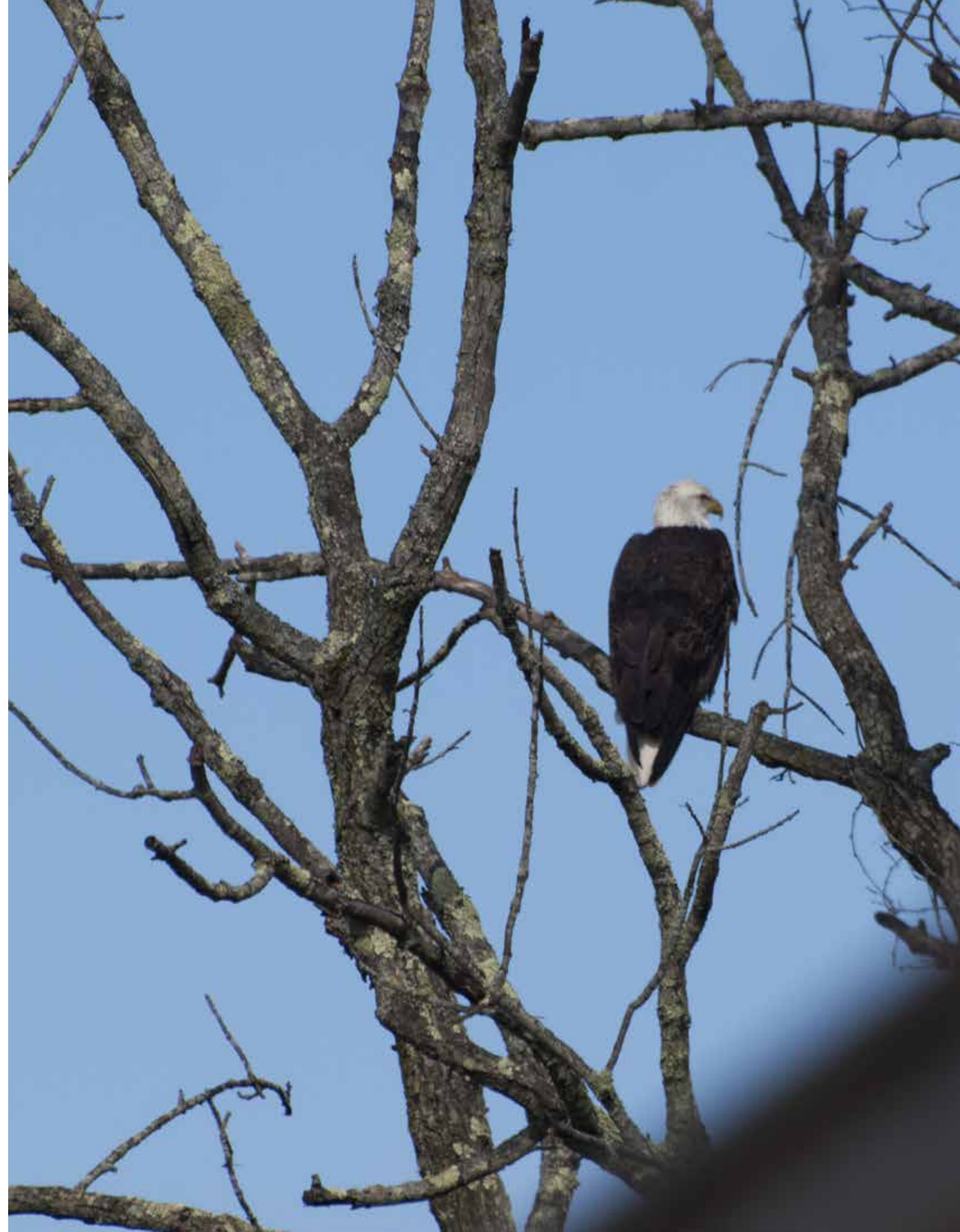
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## Favorite Things: *Eagles*



**E**agles are not an unusual sight in our area, but they do cause a stir. When a deer was killed by a car, the eagles appeared for the feast—bringing even

young ones. Eagles are so distinctive in their coloring and regal silhouette. They are easily recognized. People driving by stopped their cars on the road to watch them and photograph these special birds.









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## Best Views: *Fireplace*



*Above*, the best view in the house this time of year—the fire in the fireplace.

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### *Penn, journal of everyday life*

A quarterly publication. All content in this issue is produced by Susan and David Bonser.

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