March 2009

Achievement Day

What a great day!!! Many thanks to those of you that attended. I know some of you are having health problems and were not able to be with us and you were really missed!

Congratulations to all of the winners … and all of you are winners in my book. Also, a big ‘thank you’ to all of the outgoing officers for your leadership, and for those that were newly installed – I look forward to working with you during the next two years.

I would like your feedback about having the meal catered. Please discuss this at your meetings and let me know if you would like to do it again or if you prefer to go back to potluck. Your opinion is very important.

County Council Meeting

Your new president, Ruth Clifton, would like to have a county council meeting on Wednesday, March 18th at 2:00 p.m. All county council officers and club presidents should attend. If the president cannot attend please have someone represent your club.

County Fair

I have finally found out the dates for the 2009 county fair; it will be October 5th through October 10th. Please mark our calendars and start thinking about your fair booths. They were so good last year and we need them to be good again this year.

Scholarship

Unfortunately, we only had one scholarship application turned in this year. The winner of our youth scholarship again went to Orin Felix. His scholarship has been forwarded to the Northeast District for judging. We should hear sometime in March how he ranks with the other scholarship applicants.

I don’t understand why we did not have more applications. We sent letters to every high school guidance counselor as well as the financial department at Coastal Carolina Community College (approx. 100 letters mailed!). You would think with today’s economy that students would be looking for any/all financial assistance opportunities. I guess they don’t understand loans have to be paid back! 😞

Cultural Arts Contest

The County Cultural Arts Contest will be Thursday, March 12th. Please have your items to me by 9:00 a.m. on the 12th. I have attached a list of the categories for this year. You can enter one item in each category. The item(s) must have been completed since last March.
**District Day**

District Day is scheduled for April 23rd in Lenoir County. I will send the information to your club president as soon as I have it. Registrations will be due a couple of weeks before the meeting … you can pay at our Area meeting and still meet the deadline.

Silent Auction items are needed for district day. We need two ten dollar value items and one fifteen dollar value item. If you have anything you can donate – please let me know. We usually have a great day and I look forward to having you go with me.

**Book Reports**

Thanks to those that completed book reports this year. We do have NEW FORMS for 2009 so please let me know if you need some and I will get them to you.

Remember, books reports need to be in your own words. This year we received a couple that were pretty close to being exactly what was on the book jacket … close enough that we were not able to use them in the Comment Book.

I will have the Comment Books available at our April Area meeting. If you want one and plan to be at the office before area meeting, please let me know and I will gladly give it to you.

**Leader Training**

There will not be any leader training in the month of March since we have our area meeting in April.

**Relay for Life**

Robin and I are participating in this year’s American Cancer Society Relay for Life fundraiser. Some of you put change in our can yesterday … thank you for that. Please let us know if you would like to contribute to the cause - we will gladly accept your donation. 😊

We can give you a receipt for tax purposes if you would like. The Relay is scheduled for April 24th.

**Staff News**

**Cathy Retiring:** Cathy informed me that she is ready to begin planning her days with what SHE wants to do and not what I want her to do, therefore, she is retiring beginning June 1st. We will be hosting a farewell tea for her on May 15th from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Your club will be receiving an invitation soon but we want you to mark your calendars now.

**Robin Expecting:** While decorating your tables on Monday before Achievement Day many of you heard that Robin is expecting!! The baby is due in September so she will be taking maternity leave sometime in September and plans to be out until the first of the year. I learned this the day after Cathy told me about her retiring so believe me – I did not talk to anyone on staff the next day ‘cause I didn’t want to hear about any more changes! 😝

I, on the other hand, am not pregnant, and unless the good Lord has other plans, am not planning on leaving! The only big thing for me this year is that I will be hitting the big “50” on my next birthday! I thank God for every day and for each year so I am not complaining about a ‘number’!

With the changes generated by both of them I will probably be crazier than normal. I am not planning any vacations for this year but I will survive … I think! I am not aware of any other staff changes at this point but believe me – I will keep you informed if there are any.

**Lake Waccamaw**

Ruth mentioned our annual Lake Waccamaw trek during the Achievement Day celebration. Please start gathering items for the girls’ cottages and/or the Country Store Thrift Shop. We usually go the month of June and it will be here very soon.
As I faced my Maker at the last judgment, I knelt before the Lord along with all the other souls.

Before each of us laid our lives like the squares of a quilt in many piles; an angel sat before each of us sewing our quilt squares together into a tapestry that is our life. But as my angel took each piece of cloth off the pile, I noticed how ragged and empty each of my squares was. They were filled with giant holes. Each square was labeled with a part of my life that had been difficult, the challenges and temptations I was faced with in everyday life. I saw hardships that I endured, which were the largest holes of all.

I glanced around me. Nobody else had such squares. Other than a tiny hole here and there, the other tapestries were filled with rich color and the bright hues of worldly fortune. I gazed upon my own life and was disheartened. My angel was sewing the ragged pieces of cloth together, threadbare and empty, like binding air.

Finally the time came when each life was to be displayed, held up to the light, the scrutiny of truth. The others rose; each in turn, holding up their tapestries. So filled their lives had been. My angel looked upon me, and nodded for me to rise. My gaze dropped to the ground in shame. I hadn't had all the earthly fortunes. I had love in my life, and laughter, but there had also been trials of illness, and wealth, and false accusations that took from me my world, as I knew it. I had to start over many times. I often struggled with the temptation to quit, only to somehow muster the strength to pick up and begin again. I spent many nights on my knees in prayer, asking for help and guidance in my life. I had often been held up to ridicule, which I endured painfully, each time offering it up to the Father in hopes that I would not melt within my skin beneath the judgmental gaze of those who unfairly judged me.

And now, I had to face the truth. My life was what it was, and I had to accept it for what it was. I rose and slowly lifted the combined squares of my life to the light.

An awe-filled gasp filled the air. I gazed around at the others who stared at me with wide eyes. Then, I looked upon the tapestry before me. Light flooded the many holes, creating an image, the face of Christ. Then our Lord stood before me, with warmth and love in His eyes. He said, 'Every time you gave over your life to Me, it became My life, My hardships, and My struggles. Each point of light in your life is when you stepped aside and let Me shine through, until there was more of Me than there was of you.'

Recipe Corner

**Ham-and-Greens Pot Pie**

*With Cornbread Crust*

*Southern Living Homestyle Cookbook*

- 4 cups chopped, cooked ham
- 2 Tb vegetable oil
- 3 Tb all-purpose flour
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1 16-oz pkg frozen seasoning blend
- 1 16-oz pkg frozen chopped collards
- 1 16-oz can black-eyed peas, rinsed/drained
- ½ tsp dried crushed red pepper

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Saute’ ham in hot oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, 3 minutes or until broth begins to thicken. Bring mixture to a boil and add seasoning blend & collard greens; return to a boil and cook, stirring often, 15 minutes. Stir in black-eyed peas and crushed red pepper; spoon hot mixture into a lightly
Black-Bottom Pecan Cheesecake Pie
_Southern Living Homestyle Cookbook_

1 deep pie crust, prepared
1 cp semisweet chocolate morsels
3 Tb whipping cream
1 8-oz pkg cream cheese, softened
4 large eggs
¼ cp sugar, divided
2 tsp vanilla extract, divided
¼ tsp salt
1 cp light corn syrup
3 Tb butter or margarine, melted
1 ½ cp pecan halves
Chocolate syrup (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Microwave chocolate morsels and whipping cream in a small glass bowl at 50% power for 1 to 1 ½ minutes or until morsels begin to melt. Whisk until smooth. Set aside. Beat cream cheese, 1 egg, ½ cp sugar, 1 tsp vanilla, and salt at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth. Pour chocolate mixture into piecrust, spreading evenly. Pour cream cheese mixture over chocolate layer. Whisk together corn syrup, melted butter, remaining 3 eggs, remaining ¼ cp sugar, and remaining 1 tsp vanilla. Stir in pecans; pour over cream cheese layer. Bake for 55 minutes or until set; shielding pie after approx. 45 minutes to prevent excessive browning. Cool completely on a wire rack. Drizzle each slice with chocolate syrup if syrup.

Turkey Roll-up
_from the kitchen of:\nIda McNamara, Sneads Ferry ECA_

Whole Wheat Roll-up (or whichever you like I used Sun-dried tomato roll-up’s)
½ Tb Ranch or Peppercorn ranch dressing
12 slices shaved turkey
2-4 slices Colby jack deli cheese
Fresh spinach or Romaine lettuce

Spread ranch over roll-up. Add turkey, cheese and lettuce. Roll and cut in pieces; serve.
Servings 2

Peggie L. Garner
County Extension Director

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