

SUMMER 2022

Penn

journal of everyday life



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Seasonal: *American Flag*



Both Dave's father and stepfather served in the United States military and Dave served in Vietnam in the 1960s with a military contractor, General Dynamics, doing radio communications work to support the war. There is a deep and generational respect for the flag in his family. Dave raises the banner most days on

a pole he put up with his father as a boy.

We replace the flags as they get tattered and recently set a goal of buying American made flags from Pennsylvania companies or of historic interest. The first set we bought was a U.S. flag and Ukrainian flag from the Annin Flag Company. Annin bought Dettra Flag Company in Oaks, PA in 2010 and FlagZone in Gilbertsville, PA



though manufacturing takes place largely in Ohio. What interested Dave most was that Annin was a very old company and their flags were raised by U. S. Marines atop Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima in 1945, were on the Apollo 11 Mission to the moon, and draped Lincoln’s coffin as it was taken by train from Washington D. C. to Illinois—just to name a few events of historical interest.

Another flag we found recently was the “76” flag made by the Valley Forge Flag Company in Wyomissing, PA. It is a family-run business originally founded in 1882. This particular design is sometimes called the Bennington flag or the Fillmore flag. The original flag is housed at the Bennington Museum. They write, “One of the oldest and most famous American flags in existence, the Bennington Flag is unique in its use of white stripes for outer bars, and the arrangement of seven-pointed stars with the number “76” in the canton.” Though designed to commemorate the Revolutionary era with 13 stripes and stars, it was probably made during the War of 1812. The original flag stayed with the Millard Fillmore family until it was donated to the museum. Dave flies his Valley Forge

replica on special days during the summer—Flag Day, Memorial Day.

We were surprised to find that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, through its Correctional Industries program (PCI) produces American flags. We were sorry to discover that they are for sale only to non-profits or government agencies. Too bad, it would be a nice program to support but they don’t sell to the public.

There are many sources of flags manufactured in Pennsylvania and there are historic flags unique to the state. The Betsy Ross house in Philadelphia sells a replica of the famous Betsy Ross flag. The flag’s legend and factual history may be in conflict, but undisputed is that she was a Philadelphia Patriot and supplied uniforms, tents and flags to the Continental Army. The replica sold at the Betsy Ross House is not made in Pennsylvania, unfortunately, but by a well-known company, Allied, in Kansas City, MO.

The next flag on our wish list came from the Flight 93 National Memorial. American flags that have flown over the memorial are for sale on site and by mail. Dave will cherish this special piece of Pennsylvania history and fly it only on 9/11 each year.

Photo, right, b Coolcaesar at the English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6410841>









Day Trip: *Pocono Organics*

Pocono Organics, whose motto is “Inspiring People. Healing the Earth.” is one of America’s largest regenerative organic certified farms. It is located right next to Pocono Raceway in Long Pond. That means if you are looking for peace and quiet, it’s better to avoid race and preliminary race days. Also choose a day with good weather so you can sit outside to enjoy a snack or a meal created by

Chef Lindsay and her Kitchen Infusions. Pocono Organics describes themselves as a global center for research, education and discovery. Their partners include Rodale Institute in Kutztown and other like-minded organizations. Founded by Ashley Walsh in 2015, inspired by her own medical condition

Left, the market area. Below, lots of things growing on the guided tour.





and the lack of available organic foods.

You can buy a ticket to tour the facility in advance online. Leaders are happy to answer all kinds of questions about their facility, plants, and process. The tour groups are relatively small and friendly so we got a lot from our tour. The tour starts in the market area where they also sell plants, vegetables, fruits and kits for growing things like mushrooms.

We planned to enjoy our lunch onsite and were glad we did. We chose a menu salad and a daily special then shared them at the picnic tables on the lawn. We ordered and paid inside where they gave us a number. Exceptionally pleasant staff delivered and later cleaned up our meal. Water bottles were served at the table with pint canning jars for glasses. It is water that they bottle from their own wells, using reverse osmosis to filter. It is a system that they set up to solve a problem with minerals in their well water resulting in pristine clean water that tastes like spring water.





Art: *Museum Shopping*

The question of where you buy art depends on your art collecting goals and what kinds of artists you might want to support. Our idea is not exactly limited to investing in something of value that might appreciate over the years. We collect art we love, art we want to live with and art that supports artists, galleries, museums that interest us.

There is always the debate about the difference between art and craft, designer versus artist. We are not so rigid in our thoughts on art. We find art in design. Not all design, so that is where our definitions come into play. We are discerning. And at times that seems like much ado about nothing. When a person takes a material in hand and produces something, they make decisions at every step of the way toward the completion of that object. Some museums refer to them as “makers”.

Considering and appreciating process and thinking are therefore part of our decision to purchase a piece.

So now, that delineated, one of the places you can find interesting artists from the world of artists is through museums and in museum shops. It used to be, and still is in many museum shops, that the handmade pieces they sell support a cause other than art. They support the fair trade of indigenous peoples and businesses for instance. While these are admirable motivations, our interest for the purpose of this article is to find American artists related to Pennsylvania.

Museums often have exhibits in their galleries focusing on regional artists such as *Locally Sourced* at the Carnegie Museum of Art that ran from 2020 to 2022. They called their artists and designers the “faces of the next revolution in making.” These exhibits are a great place to start when looking for





art to buy to love. Brian Ferrell was one of the “makers” exhibited and now has pieces for sale in the Carnegie Museum of Art store. We fell for his coffee scoops, though that certainly is not the limit of their functionality. Ferrell is a professor at Seton Hill University in Greensburg and works in wood, metal and clay. His contemporary pieces are beautifully original.

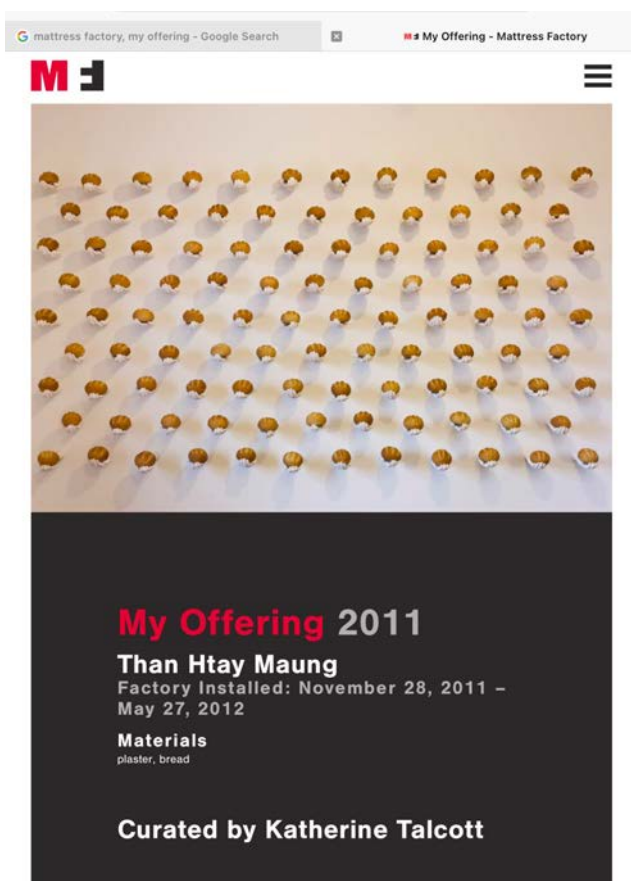
Through the Philadelphia Museum of Art Shop we noticed items from the local company Peg & Awl had a number of eye-catching pieces. The most interesting to us was The Scout Plein Air Box. It is a very portable hand crafted kit to take out to sketch or paint, with a place for supplies and an easel for small works. When we explored the company website, we were fascinated that the focus of the company was “Treasures Built from Abandoned Materials.” What began as a family business

grew to reflect the model of the Bauhaus makers, combining art and craft all with an eye to repurposing interesting and beautiful used materials. Then we saw that founder, Walter Kent sells his paintings of regional landscape scenes and bought one right away. We love the painting and love the whole concept of their business.

Museums depicting regional history are often a source of extraordinary handmade pieces. The Mennonite Life Museum shop near Lancaster offers books, toys and crafts related to the Mennonite people. We fell in love with the Amish made pine reed baskets. The Historic Ephrata Cloisters Museum Store had a lot of beautiful pieces. We chose a beautiful Fraktur by Emily Smucker-Beidler, a well-known teacher and artist in the area. According to the museum, “her designs are inspired both by designs from the illuminated pieces produced at the Cloister as well as Pennsylvania German themes.” We bought a piece beautifully framed in a grain-painted finish.

Perhaps the most interesting museum of all we found was the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh. They define themselves not





as a museum, but as a “laboratory where you can immerse yourself in the creative vision of artists from around the world.” And after exploring their exhibits, when you go to their shop you find Remnants. When some of the art exhibits are dismantled at the conclusion of their showing, they are divided into pieces and sold. So, you can buy a piece of art that was once exhibited at the Mattress Factory.

We fell in love with the exhibit “My Offering” of Than Htay Maung. Inspired by his memories of the victims of a Burma Cyclone in 2008, he created hundreds of plaster cast hands reaching out for a loaf of bread. He said, “When my wife and I were doing relief work I saw the many hands of people who were hungry for food, for safety, for kindness and for others.” When the installation was removed, the hands were offered for sale in the museum shop. Instead of a payment, the museum asks for a donation to a local food pantry for one of the hands and a loaf of bread.





Harvest: *Blueberries, Rhubarb, Lettuce*

Planting fruit requires some patience. Last year we planted rhubarb and blueberries. We got a little rhubarb by fall, but not blueberries. Then we lost a couple of the plants over winter and planted more this spring. But finally this

summer we have blueberries. We make and can jam and pie filling. A good bit goes into a bowl with milk. It is so much fun to grow what you eat.

This year we have a very healthy rhubarb plant and have already made a pie with our rhubarb and farm strawberries.





We used a deep-dish pie plate so the juices wouldn't overflow—and it worked. Last year we made some rhubarb jam that was wonderful on crackers.



We grew lettuce two ways this past year. First, we always have lettuce in the hydroponics on the porch. We also grew some in the dirt in the garden. Both ways work just fine. It is such a luxury to have fresh lettuce to pick for a nice green salad. Our favorites are endive and kale. There is so much you can do with kale. It is wonderful in salads, soups, sandwiches.



Celebration: *Fourth of July*

The Fourth is always a picnic day. This year we cooked up our favorites: deviled eggs and German potato salad. We laid out our favorite Caprese salad as a flag, with olives as the canton and white mozzarella stars. Our new addition was the hot dog quilt. Strips of dough were woven

over and under hot dogs and then baked in the oven. The hot dog quilt was then cut into squares and served from a bowl with lots of cheese sauce for dipping. Dessert was a

Below, A hot dog quilt ready to go into the oven. Right, our vintage Hartstone Stars and Stripes dinnerware, perfect for the Fourth.





parfait of fresh fruits layered with cubes of pound cake and whipped cream served in pint canning jars.

With the leftover salad, we made a homemade pizza the next day, adding some mushrooms. We use a ready made refrigerated dough as our pizza base. After experimenting, we decided we like it best when we bake the dough for a few minutes bare then take it out and add the fixings and return it to the oven for the remaining time.



Garden: *Summer Flowers*

One of the great joys of summer is the flowers. Wild flowers, cultivated flowers—we enjoy them all. The first flower plants we bought this year were pansies. Who could resist after the winter drabs. Then the daisies started popping up

everywhere in the yard and in the field. Dave is careful to cut the flowers and bring them into before he mows.

We love morning glories on the light post and start them from seed. We give them a string to climb on each side of the post. Sometimes we have to go out and guide





Above, right, morning glories on the lamp post. A wonderful mix of colors.



them upward instead of across the yard. Then at the end of the season we collect the seed pods and put them in the freezer to bring out to the flower bed the next year.

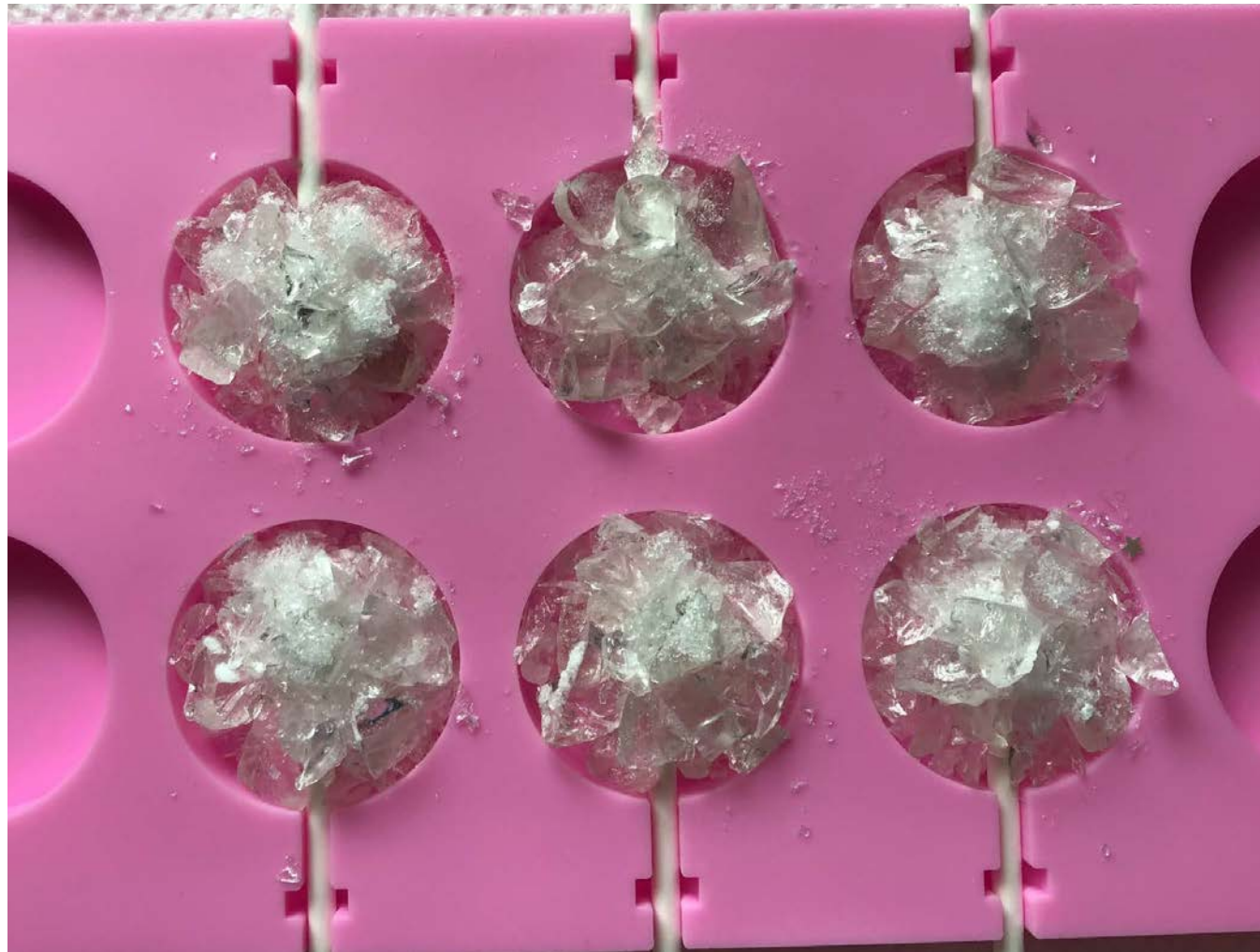
We still buy bunches of flowers for a special occasion or when there is something

special at the store. Last spring we chose some packages of commercial seeds that attracted humming birds and butterflies. This variety popped up a huge bush of flowers. A vibrant orange, we enjoyed them inside and outside in the yard.





Crafts: *Lollipops & Lavender*

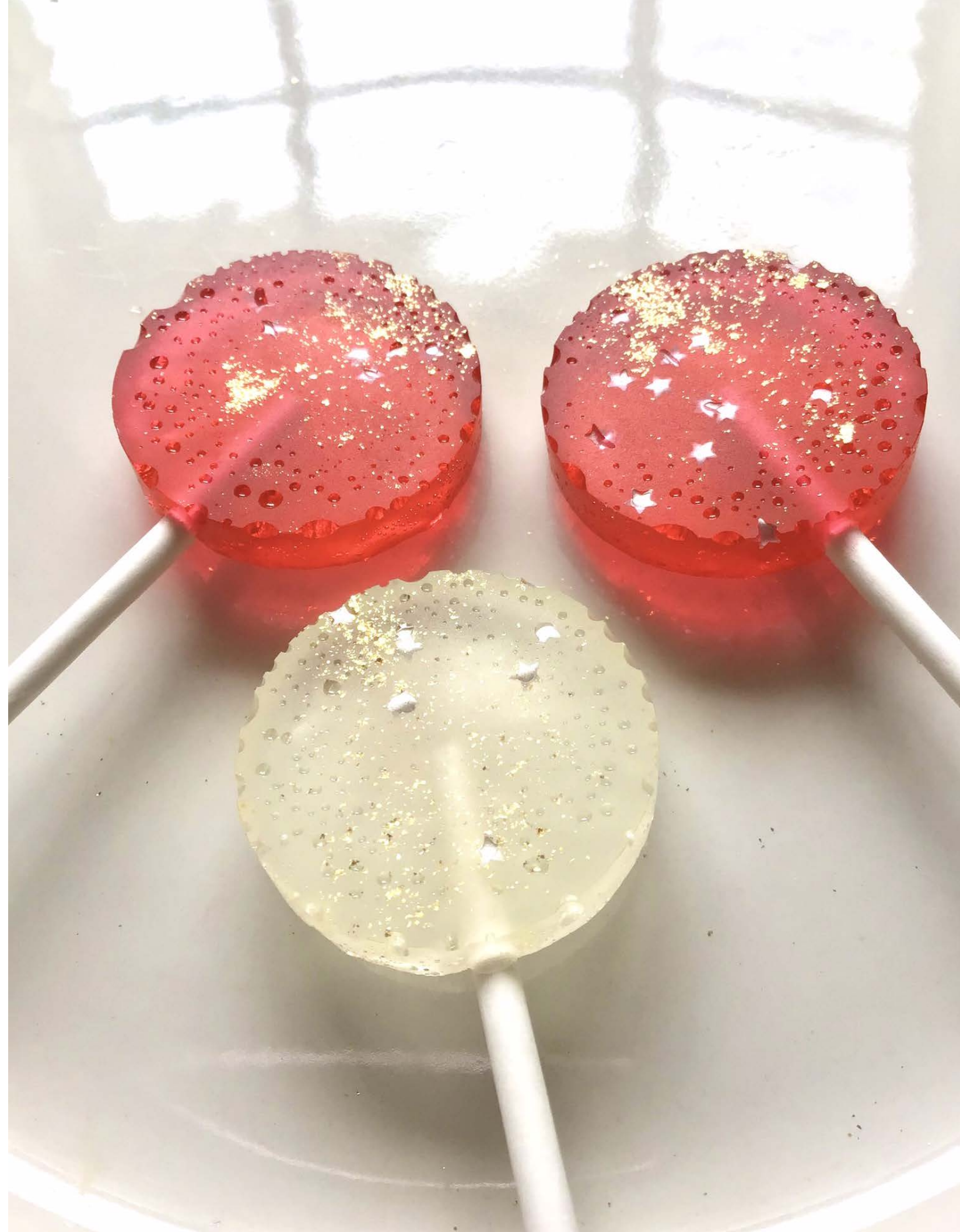


I remember as a child my mother making lollipops. She boiled the sugar then poured circles of the candy onto waxed paper over lollipop sticks. These days it is so much simpler but still just as much fun to make and share.

We used Jolly Rancher and other hard candies for the basic lollipop. Then we added edible glitter, stars and even edible

paper flowers to decorate our sweets. Our process was to use a silicone lollipop mold. We crushed the hard candies. First we placed the edible glitter, stars or other decorations in the molds, then the lollipop sticks and finally piled the crushed candies. Into a 350 degree oven for about 5-6 minutes, or until the candy is melted. Cool and remove from the molds.







We started exploring lavender farms in our area and found there were many of them throughout the state.

While we have lavender in our garden, it was

interesting to see the range of products and uses for lavender. You can even visit and cut your own on many farms.

Above, Paradise Lavender Farm in Cresco.

Right, One of our lavender blooms.



We loved lavender as a scent but weren't sure about cooking with it so we tried a few recipes and were pleasantly surprised. First we made Martha Stewart's Three-Cheese Cake. Lavender was used primarily as a garnish, perfect with the cheese and fruit flavors. Then we made sugar cookies with lavender in the dough and as a garnish on the icing glaze. They were a lovely cookie with coffee or tea





We were careful to pick organic culinary lavender for cooking. We also bought a variety of lavender products from regional farms such as soaps, teas, dried lavender and sprays. When our outdoor rosemary plants developed bugs early in the season, we found our lavender spray did the nontoxic trick to rid them. We use the spray as a cologne and on our bed linens. We put packets of lavender in our clothes drawers. Vases of lavender give the whole room a fresh garden scent.



Crafts: *Lollipops & Lavender*

We made Martha Stewart's Spring Cupcakes with Sugared Flowers. They were certainly the prettiest use of flowers in our cooking. While the cupcakes were a traditional rich chocolate brownie-like cake, the icing was made by boiling and steeping lavender flowers in milk, then straining the liquid before sugar was added giving it the mildest hint of fragrance. We used silver foil cupcake papers, greasing them before filling. Sugared pansies were the decoration. Be sure to use organically grown flowers to sugar for edible flower confections.







Local Eats: *Potato Chips*



We had never heard of Gibbles. In 2009, PennLive, the website of the *Patriot-News*, published an article in their Life & Culture section titled, “What’s the best Pa. potato chip?” and we were pleasantly surprised. Number one was Nibble with Gibble’s made in Chambersburg, Franklin County.

Now, there are a lot of potato chips produced in Pennsylvania. Before that article, we tended toward the classic Herr’s

or Utz. We liked the harder Martin’s kettle-cooked chips. (At times we even bought out-of-state Cape Cod chips.) We both remember cans of Charles Chip growing up being delivered to our homes. Our families reused the cans for years.

But then we found Gibbles. Now we look for them, and often find them. I am sure our doctor would not approve, but we love the lard cooked flavor, crunch and salt. We only have chips once in a while. Wouldn’t you want the one voted best?

Home Sweet Home: *Ribs, Scones, Vinegar*

Sometimes you just get a taste for ribs. We have two favorites. First we found a recipe for slow-cooker ribs for the Crock Pot (*below*). The recipe touted, “No oven required and perfect every time.” We have never been disappointed. The recipe includes catsup,

vinegar, molasses and seasonings. The ribs are slow-cooked for eight hours.

Our second favorite ribs are from Hog Wild in East Berlin (*right*). Smoked on Pennsylvania hardwoods, you can smell the barbecue when you come down the main street of the town. We have eaten in, but usually take out.





Scones are a decidedly British tradition but we were inspired by a PBS television show, *Father Brown*. His housekeeper, Mrs. McCarthy, makes “Award-Winning Strawberry Scones.” We looked it up and there are many recipes online for

strawberry scones, and even those claiming to be the ones Mrs. McCarthy of TV fame makes and wins awards for. Instead of clotted cream, we used whipped cream. They were a wonderful way to enjoy the summer bounty of farm strawberries. A nice change from strawberry shortcake.





We use vinegar for all kinds of things around the house but the one that surprises some people most is that we use it as a weed killer. We are very uncomfortable with commercial weed killers like RoundUp because of the potential evidence of carcinogenic risk for the users. So we use vinegar very successfully.

We have two recipes, depending on the application. For weeds growing in the driveway, we use 1 gallon of vinegar (5%), 1 gallon water, 1/2 cup Dawn dish detergent and 2 cups of salt. We used it recently to kill some brambles in the yard but since the salt sterilizes the ground, if we want to plant in the ground once the weeds are gone, we eliminate the salt. We spray it on a sunny day with no wind. We wear protective gear.





Best Views: *Sunflowers*



Above, a farmer's field of sunflowers, our wedding flower. *Previous* pages, a neighbor's field of wheat.

Penn, journal of everyday life

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