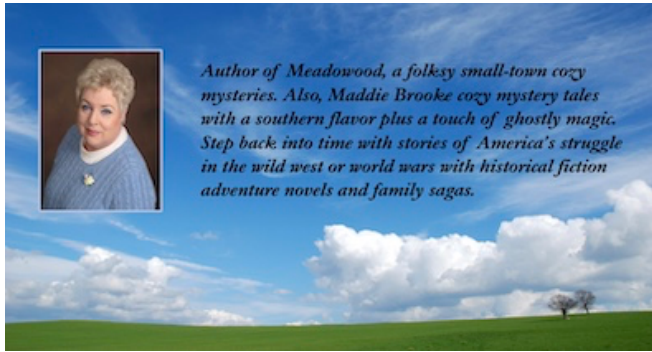


Vol. 8 - Cozy Scribe Newsletter

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Hello Cozy Readers,



WEB SITE WOES

The other day I browsed through a marketing campaign from Book Bub promoting their web site services with examples of author web pages. Wow! What an eye opener and interesting peek into how some authors highlight their work or present their personal biographies. It felt like when you walk through a furniture store and every room setting looks so beautiful it makes you want to come home and throw out all your stuff and buy new. That's how I felt when I looked at these pages and compared them to my own conservative Word Press web site.

Now granted, I was, and still am, on a shoestring budget when I created my own web page using the basic (and I mean cheapest) version of Word Press two years ago. With thoughts of those attractive web pages in mind, I opened Word Press and decided to do some redecorating. At first I browsed the collection of themed layouts offered by Word Press for my basic plan. Boring! The color themes and designs of the more costly layouts were so appealing, but then I thought of all the hassle installing a new theme and transferring all my data and links into a different layout. That horror was enough to make me reconsider. If you've struggled with modern computer technology and have launched any kind of web page, you know what I'm talking about. But I had to be able to do something to spruce up this page! A light bulb popped on over my head and I was inspired. One of the sample pages I had admired used a scrolling gallery of images across the bottom or middle of the home page. I rather liked that idea so I set to work by first questioning the "help" desk of Word Press to find out how I could do that. Turns out the procedure isn't that complicated.

First thing I had to replace was my own photo and image of all my book covers surrounding me. Let's face it, I've got too many books now to frame my picture. I'm running out of room. So I reconfigured my own picture, used a new background image of a blue sky with clouds over a deep green meadow. The green land coordinated with the green color theme of the original layout and text fonts. Hmm, looked pretty good so I plowed ahead.

Next was the gallery or slideshow to be placed on the bottom of the page. I decided to make a grid with three separate slideshows that would include each book series. One for each cozy mystery series and one for all the historical fiction. After I loaded the pictures into each scrolling slideshow, I had to resize various book covers so they were all the same consistent size. Whew! The little things you don't consider until you're in the middle of a project like this. A few hours later, I finally felt like I was finished.

I admit my web site won't win any awards for artistic endeavors, but I think it's attractive and offers readers some insight to my work and a clear path on my dropdown menus to reviewing each book cover and synopsis. There are even "buy buttons" that lead to several different bookstores and vendors, and holy cow they even work.

So when you get a minute, check out my updated look ... I kept the old furniture and painted the walls to give the old place a new appearance. Hope you will appreciate my decorating attempt while on that shoestring budget.



THANKSGIVING

It's that time of year again - the holidays are quickly approaching. I've been busy running from one fall festival and book sale event to another. But I've got to slow down soon and put plans together for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. My husband and I will be home alone so our meal menu can be conservative. Our children and other family members all live in other states.

Other than planning to kill diet routines and eat way too much food on that day, this year I really want to pause and simply give thanks for the blessings we do have. First of all, I'm grateful for my health. Yeah, yeah, I'm overweight, but still I'm healthy. I feel pretty good. My medicine keeps my blood pressure and diabetes sugar readings on a normal level. I work out three times a week with my husband at the wonderful senior center in Kingsport. It's fun to meet friends we've made at the fitness center and gives us a spurt of energy after each hourly workout. I'm limber with minimal aches and pains that come with my age, so I can't complain. Yes, I'm thankful for not having the serious health problems of friends and acquaintances I know.

We live in a comfortable home that we can afford or at least we think we can ... property tax rates have increased plus HOA dues have jumped up, but we'll get by. I listen to the news and the worries so many citizens have, especially senior citizens like me, with higher prices on groceries and health care insurance, to mention other living costs. It's a scary time when everything rises in price except your income. Pensions and social security payments don't increase at the rate our cost of living does. But still, I must be thankful that I at least have a source of income and realize many people don't have that.

Give thanks this Thanksgiving holiday for the small pleasures you have, the love of family, and your health. The other worries may take some effort to work out, but we'll get by.

RECIPE

If you are hosting the holiday meal this year, Thanksgiving or Christmas, try this twist of stuffing that pairs well with either turkey or ham. Easy to make, mix together a few ingredients and bake it in the oven for a different side dish to share with guests. Here's the recipe for PINEAPPLE STUFFING.



Pineapple Stuffing

PREP TIME 10 minutes

COOK TIME 50 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 1 hour

SERVINGS 8

This 5 ingredient pineapple stuffing recipe is a simple and perfectly sweet side dish for your ham. It can be made ahead of time to save your sanity during your holiday meal prep, and it easily can be made dairy free.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup butter or dairy free spread (room temperature)
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 20- ounce can crushed pineapple (with juice)
- 6-7 slices white bread (cut into 1-inch pieces)
- Cinnamon (optional, for garnish)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. In a large bowl with an electric mixer, cream margarine and sugar until fluffy, about 30 seconds - 1 minute.
3. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until incorporated before adding the next.
4. Add pineapple with juice and bread pieces and stir until evenly coated with the egg mixture.
5. Pour stuffing into a large baking dish (about 9x13 inches). * optional Sprinkle cinnamon on top.
6. Bake for 45-50 minutes.
7. Allow to cool for about 10 minutes before serving.