

Decorating
with nature

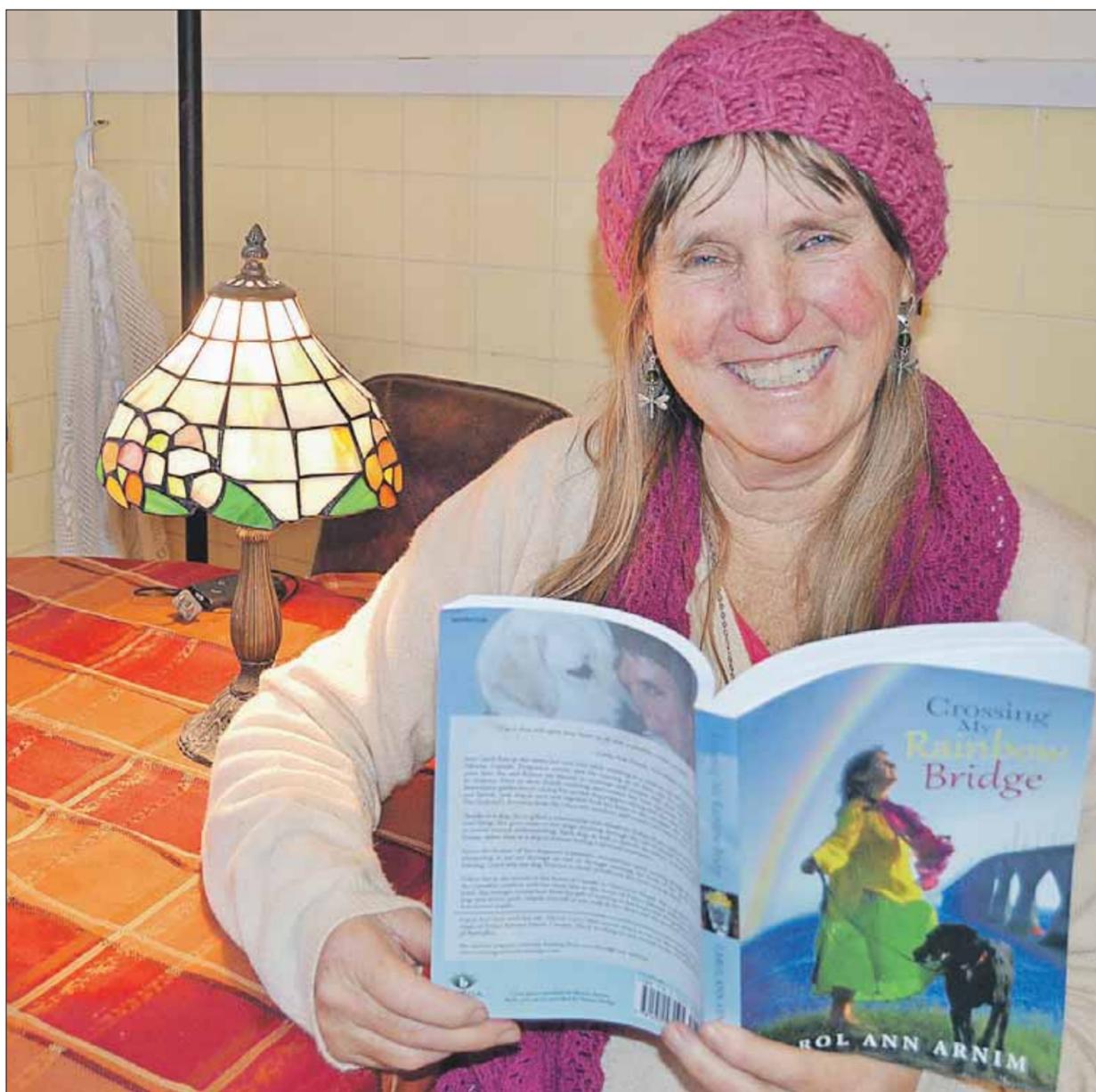
'Tis the season to enjoy
the forest's gifts.

>B6

ANIMALS

Heart to heal

Carol Ann Arnim, who finds comfort and peace in raising dogs, shares her story in her book, "Crossing My Rainbow Bridge"



SALLY COLE/THE GUARDIAN

Author Carol Ann Arnim will read selections from her book, "Crossing My Rainbow Bridge", during a presentation at the Montague Public Library on Saturday, Dec. 12, at 1 p.m.

BY SALLY COLE
THE GUARDIAN

Carol Ann Arnim is on a healing path.

It's a quest that has had her searching for ways to lessen the pain and suffering of people ever since her husband died of cancer 19 years ago.

One way the Kensington resident is finding her way is through working with animals.

Since her husband's death, Arnim has trained five service dogs, including two dogs for the blind. She's also raised puppies.

Getting in touch

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"To me, dogs are spiritual beings, like we are. At times they are even more connected to the earth, nature and God than we are. Loving and compassionate, they have all the attributes that we are struggling to acquire. And they do it naturally. So they are very healing," says Arnim, who

shares her story in her book, "Crossing My Rainbow Bridge".

"From the moment that Laverne, that (first) eight-month-old puppy was put in my arms, I instantly felt healing."

Then as time passed, other canines called Spookie, Spirit, Mystic and Treasure gave her the comfort she needed as she navigated the maze of grief.

"It took a few years. Somehow, while raising my third puppy I woke up one morning realizing that I needed to live. That's because, from the time that Robert died until that morning, I woke

up wanting to die. I had such a monumental grief for my husband," says Arnim who will be reading excerpts from her book during a reading at the Montague Public Library on Saturday, Dec. 12 at 1 p.m.

The premise of the book is to teach people how they can live authentic lives by paying attention to "synchronistic messages that the divine blesses them with every day."

"Many people don't pay attention to the rainbow in the sky or the beautiful cloud that's above them. Or maybe, it's something



SALLY COLE/THE GUARDIAN

Carol Ann Arnim shares a special moment with Mystic, her lab mix. Dogs provided her with healing after the death of her husband 19 years ago.

"Many people don't pay attention to the rainbow in the sky or the beautiful cloud that's above them. Or maybe, it's something that someone has said to them. But, in reality, it's meant to be a profound message. Yet they miss it."

Carol Ann Arnim

that someone has said to them. But, in reality, it's meant to be a profound message. Yet they miss it," says Arnim, whose healing journey has taken her in a new direction recently.

After studying a new therapy, she has become a certified practitioner of FasterEFT (emotionally focused transformation therapy) and has set up a service to help others.

"It's a form of emotional acupuncture. And, as Robert Smith, the man who created says, 'we're all taught to brush our teeth but we're not taught emotional hygiene.'"

As Arnim looks toward her future, she is positive.

"I am passionate about my new path and look forward to guiding many people to create what they desire."

INSPIRATION

Mom becomes sous-chef for her daughter

A Hanukkah family tradition is passed on to a new and capable generation

After her mother — the family's master latke maker — passed away, Deborah Shouse felt unequipped to uphold the tradition of making perfect potato pancakes during Hanukkah. Several years of trial and error later, Deborah finally got the reassurance that this tradition would indeed live on for her family. Here's her story, "The Latke Legacy," from our latest book of joyous holiday stories:

"This is not like Mom used to make," I had to confess.

It was my first Hanukkah being the latke lady. My mother's potato pancakes were crisp, flat and nicely rounded. The texture was smooth but not mushy, and they shone with just a glint of leftover oil.

I had been a latke apprentice for years, pressed into service by Mom. I was a key cog in the labour pool, peeling the potatoes, then wearing out my arm rubbing them against the stain-

chicken soup FOR THE SOUL A CUP OF SOUP DEBORAH SHOUSE

less steel grater, using the side with the teardrop-shaped holes. My mother must have known that enlisting my help would keep me from pestering her to make potato pancakes for other occasions. Only once a year did these delicious patties grace our table, when we lit the first candle of Hanukkah and began the eight-day Festival of Lights.

My debut latkes were pale and greasy, like something carelessly served in a late night diner. I myself was pale and greasy from the stress of trying to coax the patties into cohesion. First they had drifted apart — too little flour. Then they had turned cliquish, glomming into rebellious lumps. When I had finally worked

through the potato/flour/egg ratio, I bumped into the complex dynamic between potatoes, onions, oil and heat. For three hours I had struggled to create what turned out to be a barely edible token of tradition.

Years passed. Every Hanukkah, I faced a different challenge. The oil was too cold, too hot, not enough, too much. The texture was too coarse or too fine. The grated onions were too strong or too weak. The latke mixture was too thin, then too thick. Every year, I hoped for pancakes that tasted like Mom's, and got instead gray leaden latkes.

My daughters, who peeled and grated potatoes with me, examined my finished product warily, smothering it in the traditional applesauce and often taking only a few bites. I worried that when they grew up, they would forgo the holiday tradition and turn to something simpler and more delicious, like

frozen hash browns. I felt a sense of failure as a mother and as the guardian of the tradition. My mother had shown me how to make the latkes: Why couldn't I measure up and instill the potato pancake protocol in my progeny?

Then my daughter Sarah, fresh from college and a first job, moved back to town and offered to help me prepare the holiday meal. She was a food show devotee and had already orchestrated several dinner parties, creating the menus and cooking all the courses. She understood the relationship between vegetables, oil and heat.

"Mom, I think you need to squeeze more water out of the potato mixture," she advised. "Maybe you could use a food processor to grate the potatoes. What if you used two pans instead of trying to cram so many into one?"

I stepped back and she stepped forward, and under her

guidance we prepared the latkes. As I watched my daughter mastermind the cooking, I realized that tradition could be kept alive in many ways. My daughter was starting the tradition of "doing what you're good at," giving me a chance to forget my own culinary challenges and applaud her self-taught abilities.

That Hanukkah night everyone at the table exclaimed at the sight of the latkes. Each one was golden brown and crisp, free of extra oil. I didn't even have to secretly search and pluck out a "good one," like I had been forced to do in previous years.

I looked around the table of friends and family and took a bite of my daughter's latke. My mouth filled with the crunch, flavour and intriguing texture of a well-fried potato pancake. This was the latke I had been waiting for; just like Mom used to make ... only better.

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