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Gobble! Gobble! Gobble! If you're like most Americans this month is one of planned over indulging, stuffing yourself with turkey, dressing, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie and other foods destined to cause our waistline to increase.

We hope that between planning for that insane family gathering and the plotting of your course for the annual test of human patience (also known as Black Friday) you'll enjoy a few spare moments with the Mavens.

This month's issue is chock full of news, recipes, and fun trivia.

ENJOY!

Garden Gate

****PLEASE NOTE** ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE GARDEN GATE SEGMENT IS STRICTLY FOR ENTERTAINMENT!!**



Acorns, they aren't just for squirrels. Did you know that at one time the acorn was a staple food source for not only the various tribes of Native Americans scattered across America but also for settlers and pioneers?

Acorns, unlike many other plant foods, do not need to be eaten or processed right away, but may be stored for long time periods, as done by squirrels. In years that oaks produced many acorns, Native Americans sometimes collected enough acorns to store for two years as insurance against poor acorn production years. After drying them in the sun to discourage mold and germination, Native American women took acorns back to their villages and cached them in hollow trees or structures on poles, to keep acorns safe from mice and squirrels. These acorns could be used as needed. Storage of acorns permitted Native American women to process acorns when convenient, particularly during winter months when other resources were scarce. Women's caloric contributions to the village increased when they stored acorns for later processing and focused on gathering or processing other resources available in the autumn.

What kind of foods did they make from the little acorn? Well after pulverizing the nut, they created a flour and from the flour they made stews, pemicans, the settlers made muffins from the flour.

There are several recipes that can be found but for a "traditional" recipe would be acorn venison stew. This can be made by:

2 lbs of venison, chopped up
 1C of finely ground acorn meal
 Combine venison and meal cover with water in a pot and simmer until meat practically falls apart. Serve hot.

Dally with Donica



Where on the 'net is Donica?

Website:
www.donicacovey.com

Gateway Guardians Blog:
<http://tinyurl.com/dn6rp5>

Magic Mavens:
<http://tinyurl.com/dh5bna>

My Face book
<http://tinyurl.com/cc8obx>

MySpace:
<http://tinyurl.com/cmjowm>

Twitter
<http://twitter.com/DonicaCovey>

Shades of Suspense Blog:
<http://tinyurl.com/c8y7zl>

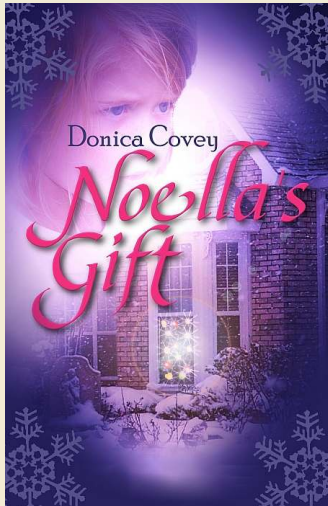
The Writers Vineyard blog:
<http://thewritersvineyard.com>

Infinite Worlds of Fantasy:
<http://www.iwofa.net>

Missouri Authors Blog
<http://moauthors.blogspot.com>

This is a big month for me! This month my holiday themed novella, **Noella's Gift** releases to the public. The publisher informed me that already she's been receiving requests to review the book so there's a definite plus!

The cover is a perfect fit for the story. Trish, the cover artist I've been given at Champagne continues to blow me away with her perfect interpretations of my books. Trish—YOU'RE THE BEST! I know I shared the cover last month, but I'm so pleased with it, I just had to pull it out again!



A disillusioned cop, and a bitter woman. Can a little girl take the bah humbug out of their holiday?

Holly Harper has hated Christmas for years. The season full of commercialism has left her feeling cold and bitter. When she finds a little girl freezing and alone a spark warms her heart. She's determined to keep the child until Christmas is over.

Jaxon Cole is a police detective whose Christmas spirit left a long time ago. He knows the season brings an increase in drunk driving accidents and suicides. But when a dark haired woman shows up in his office with a little waif in tow he sees that there is some good in the holiday.

Will they find joy in the season or will their hearts be as cold as the winter winds?

My other big news? **Betraying Chase** is now available in print! WOOHOO!! Can you feel the excitement?

She was hired to kill him, but fell for him instead--ain't love a bitch?

Chase Willet is a DEA agent working from the St. Louis office. He is in the process of destroying the business of a high dealing drug lord, Ramiro Gonzalo Sancho Rivera. They've already put a large chunk in the import train, but it's not enough. They have to take out Rivera to stop the line.

Brandy Montgomery swept Chase off his feet. She's sexy, smart but she has a secret. Brandy is a hired gun for Rivera. She's spending time softening Chase up so that he won't be prepared for the kill.

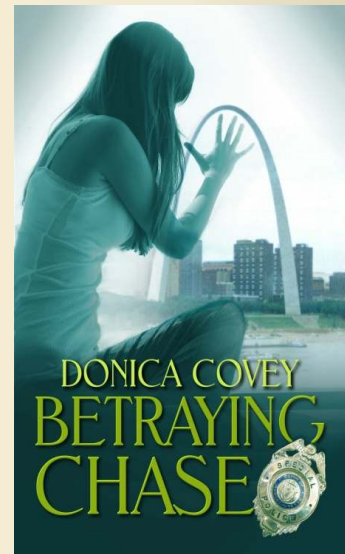
The problem with Brandy's plan is that the more time she spends with Chase, the more she falls for him. How can she do her job if she's in love with the man? When the truth is revealed, she offers to help Chase take down Rivera. Should he trust her? Would you?

Linda from FAR gave it 5 ANGELS WOOHOOHOO!! Please check out the review here:
<http://fallenangelreviews.com/2009/October/lindal-betrayingchase.htm>

You can order your print copy here: <http://tinyurl.com/yjbo2sj>

Well, I best get back to work! It won't write itself for some reason...LOL See y'all in December. HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Hugz
 Donica



Ciara's Golden Nuggets



Where on the 'net is Ciara?

Website:
www.ciaragold.com

MySpace:
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Blog:
<http://tinyurl.com/nzgcpcw>

I'm coming up for air after spending a week in the "zone" getting the magazine ready to go to the printers. I was up until 2:30AM last night trying to upload it all to the ftp after spending all day doing just that. There are really big files but it looks fabulous if I do say so myself. I write/edit/design for a local magazine as one of my side jobs. It's fun, rewarding and exhausting. But - it's done!!!

Last weekend, I attended my first writer's bar camp. It's a gathering where writers teach writers. It feels unorganized at first but really, it turned out to be an awesome day. When you show up, if you're presenting, you put your name on a big sign for the time slot you want. Folks can then look at the sign to determine what lecture/workshop they want to attend. Very laid back and without the heavy expenses garnered when booking a big-name presenter.

I submitted my third book in the series for the sci-fi books. I'm hoping to hear back within the month as to whether I'm offered a contract or not. Cross your fingers for me. ☺

That's all the big news for now. As we head into the holiday season, I wish all the best for you and yours.

Ciao,
 Ciara

Recipes from our Kitchen

Ciara's Sweet Potato Casserole

Peel and cut 3 sweet potatoes into medium chunks. Boil until tender.

Sauce:

- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 3 tablespoons margarine
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Heat over medium heat until brown sugar and butter dissolves.

Place sweet potatoes into casserole dish and add small can of mandarin oranges, small can of pineapple chunks, chopped pecans if desired, an apple cut into small pieces. Pour sauce over potatoes and fruit and bake for 45 minutes to an hour at 350 degrees.

Becka's Bits



Becka on the 'Net:

Website

www.rebeccagoings.com

Twitter:

<http://tinyurl.com/6d2ld9>

MySpace:

<http://tinyurl.com/2ltz6o>

FaceBook:

<http://tinyurl.com/lav8wn>

The Magic of Romance:

<http://tinyurl.com/noffwg>

Hello everyone. Wow, where did this year go, eh? I can't believe my little baby is almost a year old! Crazy.

Well, I just finished my final edits on **KINDRED**, my new fantasy about dragon-shifters coming out with Champagne Books. It's going to hit the virtual shelves in March, so we still have a few months on that. Speaking of Champagne, I sent them **BLACK ANGEL** as well as **IT'S NOT LUCK, The Instruction Manuel for Raising Kids**. I haven't heard back on either one of those submissions, so we'll see if/when they accept them. :)

Great news from Cobblestone Press, they accepted my Christmas historical, **HEAVEN SENT!** Many thanks to Donica who helped me with the title. :) It will be released sometime in December, but I don't know the exact date. I should be hearing news soon. Hopefully by next newsletter, I'll have a cover to show you! This little gem was written in ONE day. I love this story, about God sending an angel to heal a lonely man's heart. It takes place in 1880's Montana Territory. I'm so excited for it!

The agent I sent **RENEGADE** to rejected the story, so I decided to send it on to *Harlequin Historicals* all on my own. I sent them a short story for their Undone eBook line, entitled **THE FALL OF JERICHO** at the end of July. I still haven't heard anything about that book. I'm hoping the longer they have the story, the better the news I will get. Imagine if I can break into *Harlequin/Mills & Boon*! I'm so excited. Keep your fingers crossed for me, say a prayer, dance the lucky chicken - I WANNA BE A HARLEQUIN AUTHOR! :P

If they pass, however, I'm going to send both stories to Samhain for first crack. If THEY pass, then I'll send them to Champagne. At some point, you will read these books! Never fear. Even if I have to offer them as free reads!

I will definitely keep you all informed of what happens. It's an exciting time for me with many more projects, I just HATE the waiting process!

Oh, and I'm more than halfway done with book #4 in my **BEAST** series, **MARK OF THE B*E*A*S*T***. Won't be long on that one either. Woohoo! I'm a'rockin'! See you next month!

~~Becka

Sexy. Sensual. Seductive.

<http://www.RebeccaGoings.com>

Venison isn't your thing (and speaking for Donica it definitely IS) you can create the stew from beef.

The recipe for this is also very simple:

1 lb stewing beef
 1/2 cup finely ground acorn meal (tannin removed)
 salt and pepper to taste

Place beef in heavy pan and add water to cover.

Cover with lid and simmer until very tender. Remove from liquid and cut meat into very small pieces. Return meat to the liquid. Stir in the acorn meal.

Add salt and pepper as desired. Heat until thickened and serve.

How do you make acorn flour? This too is easy—if you have the patience to work at it. Here's how: Put decapped, cracked, and hulled acorns in a pot, cover them with boiling water, and boil from 2 to 4 hours, changing the water for fresh, already boiling water whenever it becomes dark. When you change the water, taste an acorn -- they are leached enough when all astringency has gone. They will darken as they cook. Drain the acorns and let surface moisture dry off, then spread them in a shallow pan and roast them for about an hour in a 300F oven. The acorns are then ready to be eaten like other nuts or to be ground into coarse flour or meal to be used in bread, muffins, or cookies. The roasted acorns or the flour may be stored in airtight cans, or else frozen for future use. Uncooked acorns freeze well too -- they will keep indefinitely.

Recipes from our Kitchen

Donica enjoys *Egg Nog* but she's also come up with a new recipe called **Apple Nog**: (This doesn't mean she invented it—she just came across it!☺)

1-12 oz can of frozen apple juice, partially thawed
 2 eggs
 1 tablespoon cinnamon
 1 tablespoon ground nutmeg
 ½ teaspoon of lemon juice

Place all ingredients into a blender. Blend thoroughly and pour into cups. Serves 4. Yummy yum yum!

How about that traditional Green Bean Casserole? Try it with a French twist:

French Beans:

3 slices of bacon, diced	1 onion, diced	1-15 oz can green beans, undrained
1/3 C brown sugar	1/3 C vinegar	¼ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon salt		

Fry bacon until crisp in skillet. Add onion and sauté until translucent. Stir in liquid from green beans, brown sugar vinegar, pepper and salt. Cook 5 minutes to reduce liquid then add beans. Simmer covered for 10 minutes. Serves 6

Becka's Totally Awesome Unlumpy Gravy (for three cups gravy)

4 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour or cornstarch
1 teaspoon pepper & salt to taste
Turkey drippings and enough milk to equal 3 cups liquid

(It's up to you to allow pieces of the turkey meat into the gravy, which will make it "lumpy" but not in a bad way. I, personally, love to keep the little bits of meat that stick to the bottom of the pan in the gravy when the turkey is lifted out.)

Melt butter in a medium pot. Once butter is melted, add flour or cornstarch, one tablespoon at a time, stirring constantly with a whisk. When one tablespoon has melted, add another. This makes a roux, and thus avoids lumps of flour/cornstarch in your gravy. (Note: Cornstarch seems to be thicker than flour, I've noticed. If you like thicker gravy, go with cornstarch.)

Slowly pour in drippings & milk, again stirring constantly to mix the roux with your gravy. Heat to boiling, then turn heat to low, letting simmer for one to two minutes or until thickened and bubbly, stirring with a whisk to avoid flour/cornstarch burning to the bottom of the pot.

If there is oily fat, you'll want to siphon it off with a spoon before serving. Otherwise, pour into a gravy boat and serve immediately.

This gravy heats up beautifully the next day. It will be a solid due to the fat content, but scoop some out onto your cold turkey, pop it in the microwave and voila! Gravy leftovers! Enjoy. :)

In Closing

The Mavens offer their sincerest hopes that at this time of family, warmth and Thanksgiving you and your family will be happy, healthy and enjoying each other.

In our list of Thanks, we include each of you, our readers.

All the best, ALWAYS
The Magic Mavens