

Author's BAZAAR

ONLINE

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EDITOR'S NOTE • DEAN REA*So,**what's your hobby?*

Harry Spence builds model ships. Brian Nelson works with puppets. Elizabeth Lindsey cuts figures on ice.

They are among the **American Amateur Press Association** members who share their hobbies with readers in this issue of *Author's Bazaar*, an online hobby journal.

I have several hobbies. One is printing and publishing a hobby journal for the AAPA. I also build model airplanes, which normally have 3- to 4-foot wingspans and are powered by miniature gasoline engines. It's

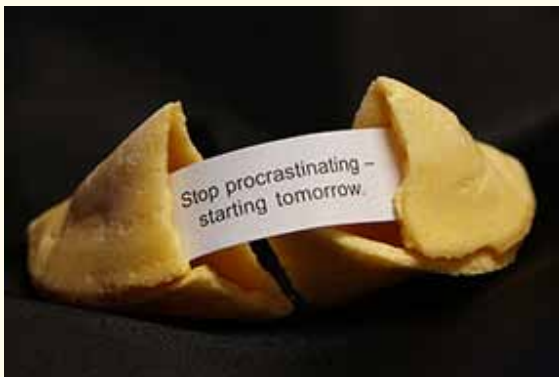


one of several avocations that have helped me escape from the sometimes humdrum work-a-day world.

A hobby is defined as a spare-time recreational pursuit. In the Middle Ages, falconry was a popular pastime. Today, the list of hobby activities seems limitless and includes such pastimes as arts and crafts, collecting, cooking, outdoor nature activities, puzzles, skydiving and bungee jumping.

For a number of us, writing, printing and publishing rank high on our list of hobby pursuits. We often share the fruits of our labor with AAPA members.

If you have procrastinated in selecting a leisure-time activity, consider picking a hobby, especially in retirement. Building model ships, chatting with puppets and taking a spin on ice certainly would add an enjoyable, challenging and rewarding dimension to your life.





A therapeutic pastime: Building miniature ships by Harry Spence

I started building ship models when I was about 10. At first I built all types: modern battleships and then historic sailing ships.

My first models were from kits. The hulls were made of balsa, composites, soft wood, hard wood. As I grew older,

I built scratch models. The methods varied until I built a plank-on-frame model that took about three years to complete.

The pleasure I get from building models is hard to explain. I have always enjoyed using my hands to build things. I found my niche after building more than 66 miniatures. For a while, I sold my products at miniature shows: fireplaces, cuckoo clocks, flintlock weapons, etc.

Since moving to our condominium, I have built 10 ship models, mostly from kits. However, at the present time I am building a scratch model of H.M.S. Bounty. It is coming along nicely, and I expect to complete it early next year.

I believe that using one's hands is a healthy pastime. I also believe that working in miniature scale is therapeutic. When a person concentrates on a small creation of a larger item, the mind moves away from the cares of just living.

While I work on a model ship, my thoughts can roam the high seas as I seek adventure under an unfurled sail, wind and waves splashing across my face before I fall asleep in a comfortable bed in my condominium.





Friend of puppets

by **BRIAN NELSON**

I have several hobbies. So, picking one hobby to focus on can be difficult. For the past two years, I have attempted to stay focused on puppetry. Puppetry gives me the ability to create unique characters while integrating many of my interests in photography, video, Web Sites, writing, sewing, set design and construction under one umbrella.

I am working toward launching a new web based on a series of shows called “Presidential Briefs.” This is the largest effort that I have undertaken to date. This series will use 5 to 10 hand-made puppets, though it is unlikely that more than three puppets will be on the screen at any one time.

I use my grandmother’s old Necchi sewing machine to

create each puppet. To clothe the puppets, I usually shop second-hand stores. I recently needed a “wolf” skin jacket for a character. So, I sewed it from a McCall’s pattern. My puppets so far have been of the hand and rod variety. This type of puppet is similar in function to such well known puppets as Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy and Elmo.

At times, it can be challenging while acting the puppets and photographing or video recording them. So, I have recruited my children to help. This has been rewarding, as I can introduce them to my hobbies while showing them how to take an idea and make it real.

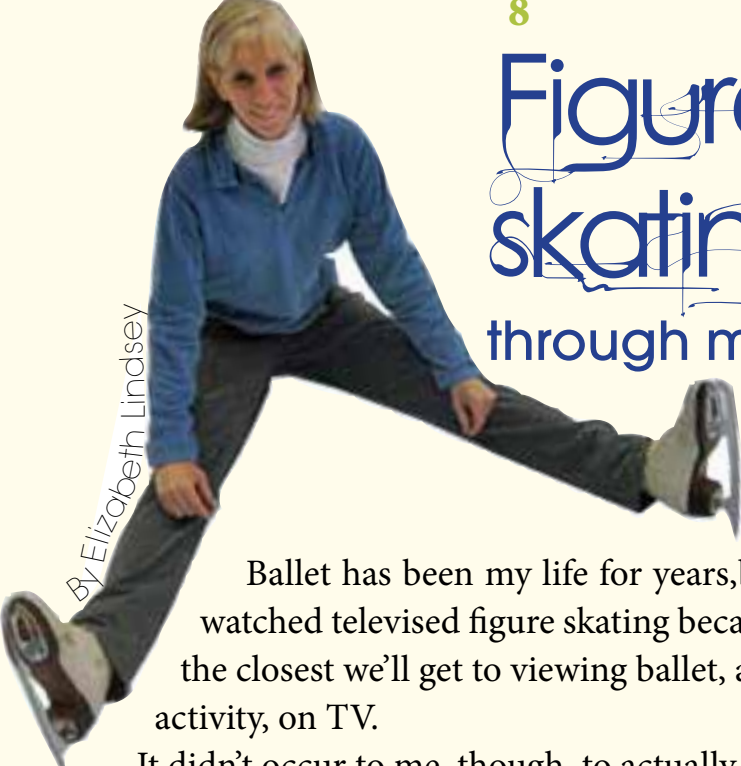
If you are interested in learning more about my efforts, check my blog at <http://treegecko.com>.



Figure skating

through my forties

By Elizabeth Lindsey



Ballet has been my life for years, but I've always watched televised figure skating because I think it's the closest we'll get to viewing ballet, a truly athletic activity, on TV.

It didn't occur to me, though, to actually do figure skating myself until three years ago when I visited a friend, and she took me to her class. It was fun. So, I signed up for lessons and twice-weekly practice sessions at the downtown rink.

Skating has taught me that you're never too old to learn a new skill. I'm 47 and have skating friends in their fifties, sixties and seventies. We work on edges, turns and strokes, but not jumps (a concession to our older joints). Even without jumps, skating challenges me, a naturally cautious

person, to leave my comfort zone. That ice is awfully slippery, after all.

I've also learned that practice really does make perfect; the more time I put into doing three turns, bunny hops and back crossovers, the better I've become at them. I'm even better at falling down, now that I've had some practice at that, too. At first, falling made me feel shaky, but now I can get up and right back to skating again, just like Michelle Kwan (only not quite as good).

I'll never be in an Olympics, but I'm having fun learning new ways of moving and slowly mastering enough skills to give me a better understanding of the skating I see on TV.



ART, expressed by painting, printmaking and sewing, has been a part of my life in one form or another since childhood. Scraps from my mother's sewing projects were hand sewn by my 6-year-old hands into doll clothes. My parents, recognizing my artistic talent, gave me paint-by-number sets. Before I had finished the numbered side, I had turned the board over and painted my own design. The creative process has always fascinated me.

Lately, I have ventured into fabric art or art quilting. Art

Printing presses among artist's tools

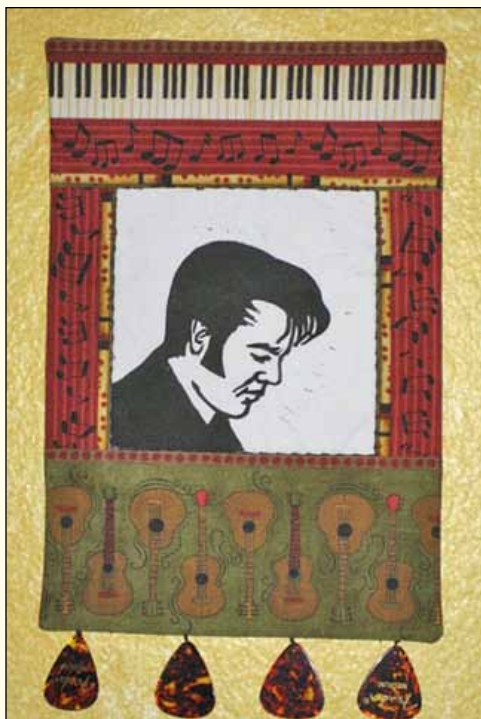


quilting is creating original, one-of-a-kind, fabric art pieces, sometimes combining traditional art disciplines with quilting techniques. I have been experimenting with painting, letterpress printing and various printmaking techniques on fabric.

My studio is in a comfortable part of the house beside the kitchen with access to an enclosed outdoor room. Two skylights help brighten the area with natural light. Equipment, gathered during the past 30 years, includes an etching press, two small

Kelsey platen presses and a sewing machine.

Wall hangings, place mats and clothing are some of the forms my fabric art takes. I did a commissioned work for a fellow artist who requested that his wood and lino-cuts be printed and sewn into a vest. Two of my quilts were exhibited this past summer at the Coburg Quilt Show and my work can be seen, sporadically, on Etsy <nancykarp.etsy.com>.



Elvis Presley wall hanging



By Russell Miller

Hobbies you say? More like work, not as manual as the cows that went down the road in 1993 but still managed to stay busy. I am 79 years young.

Time to get a riding lawn mower. Before the wife and children had a push-type cutting machine. Further and further afield I went until it was three acres. Every few days I fire up the Toro 50-inch-wide machine and clip grass.

Six months of summer. Alfalfa and weeds grow on our remaining 20 acres. Two or three cuttings, 1,500 bales. Kicker wagons and flat racks hold the hay. Because the tornado took our barn, we sell “off the wagon” to horse and llama people. Keeps us in spending money. A good hobby.

The April 2011 tornado took our “pig coop” among other buildings. 30x50 feet. After we buried the concrete pad, I

found it had a black dirt and sandy loam base, perfect for a garden. Next to the highway.

Butternut squash, (a failure), sweet corn, peas, dill, beets, green beans, jack-o-lantern pumpkins, (a failure), red,



A tornado destroyed the barn in the background on April 10.

white, yellow and purple potatoes, onions, crippled carrots, yellow, cherry and big tomatoes, zucchini, cantaloupe, watermelon, peppers, cucumbers, lettuce, marigolds, salvia, gazania, ageratum, (a failure), zinnias, dahlias, cannas, gladiolus.

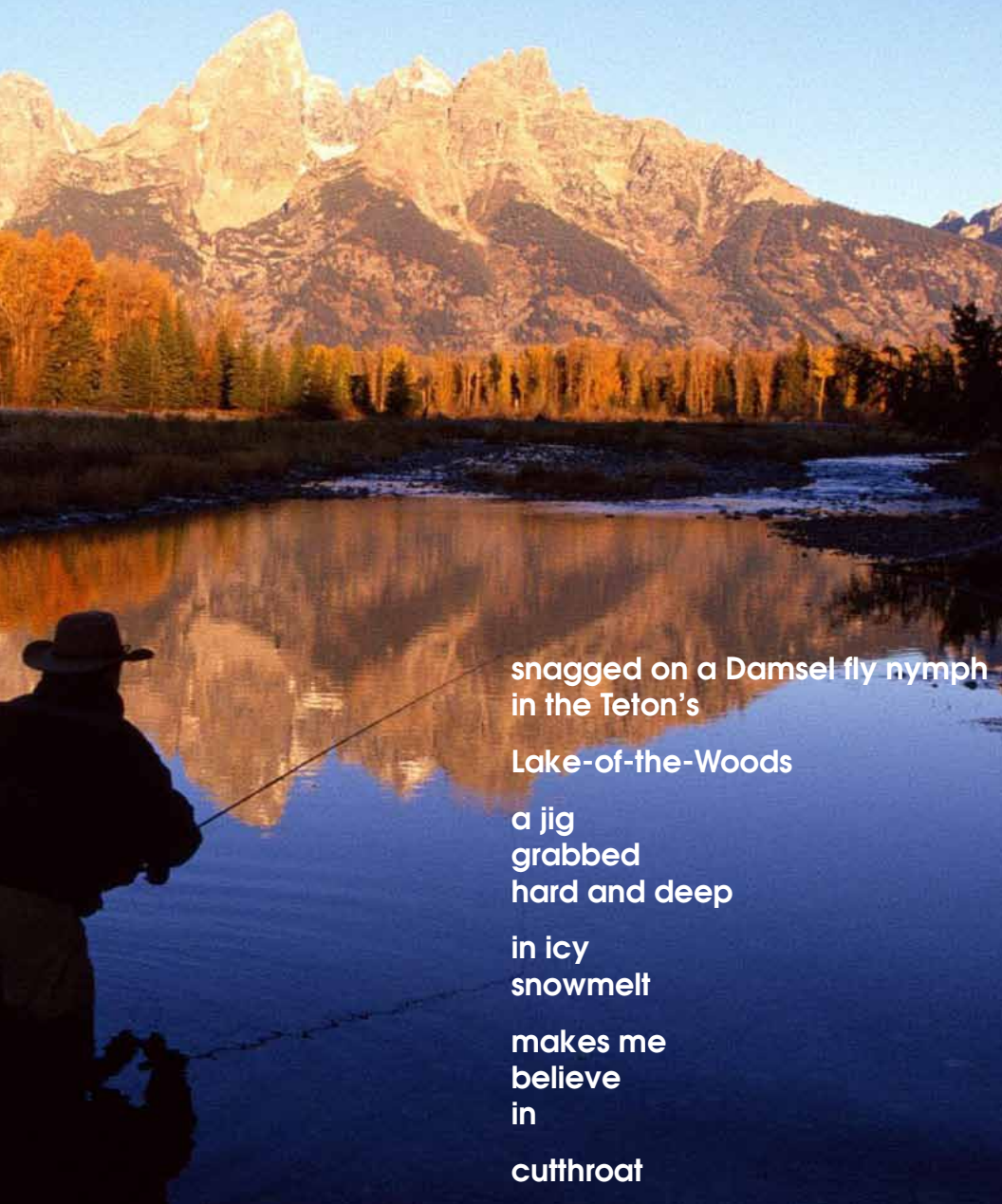
The Lord blessed us with sufficient rain and the garden grew and grew and produced enough for us, our children, our friends, our neighbors and relatives. Near the end of the season people hid when they saw us coming with yet another bag of produce. We just hung the bag on their door knob. Just wait until next year.

So, we come to the six months of Wisconsin



winter and below zero temperatures. Fire up the new International Harvester Case loader tractor to plow snow. Time to hunker down in the house, read books, watch the Green Bay Packer football team, the New England Patriots. And dream about our six months of summer. And our hobby farming.

fly fishing in wyoming 🐟 sheryl l. nelms



snagged on a Damsel fly nymph
in the Teton's

Lake-of-the-Woods

a jig
grabbed
hard and deep

in icy
snowmelt

makes me
believe
in

cutthroat



Raven
Erebus...

Containing my hobbies inside books

I've always been interested in art. I've done almost every type of art; painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, photography, printmaking, jewelry and others. In college I took classes in most of these. And I also took book binding and letterpress printing classes at Mills College. I loved book binding and printing. In combination with letterpress printing I could make "real books." At the time I thought that was important.

I've since realized that artist's books are more interesting. But nonetheless I was in love. I yearned to have my own press. But I was too practical (afraid) to do any of these things as a career. I graduated with a degree in poetry, which was not very practical. But I had been working

with computers for years. So, that gave me a lucky break in finding a way to pay my bills. For most of the next 15 years I worked 100-hour work weeks and had ongoing health problems. I was just too tired to have a hobby.

Eventually I became too sick to work. I also finally got a diagnosis of late stage Lyme disease. I like to think it was a blessing and a curse. I found the love of my life around the same time as I became unable to work. And this wonderful man supports me, not just financially but also in my artistic endeavors.

Because I'm not one to sit idly, I picked up some of my old hobbies. I soon hooked up with the San Jose Printer's



Guild, Bay Area Book Artist's and the Foothill College printmakers. I started to focus only on printmaking and book art. It gave me the freedom to do all of my artistic interests and a way to contain them.

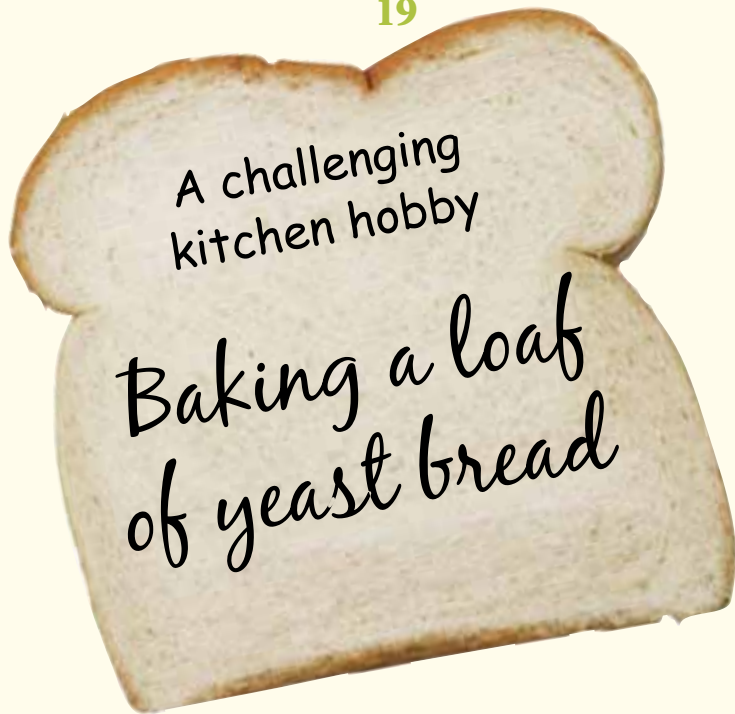
Any of the arts can be integrated into a book. By this point I had accumulated a lot of artistic tools. Then I started saving interesting bits and bobbles for my books. And soon my home looked like an art bomb had hit. It still looks that way unfortunately.

My new hobby is to scale back my art supplies until it's contained to just printmaking and bookbinding. A nice combo I think. At this time my focus is on book arts and photogravure prints. And on occasion I do some linoleum block prints and letterpress printing. I have three presses, two letterpress and one etching press, and a bunch of metal type. It's literally more than a ton of art supplies. As of this year, I now have gallery representation at ModernBook Gallery for my photogravure work. And then I learned that even a hobby can be a lot of work.

My Gallery:

<http://www.modernbook.com/ravenvictoriaerebus.htm>

Bay Area Book Artists: <http://www.bayareabookartists.org>



By Tina Howard

My newest hobby started in earnest a month ago. I am now an official Baker of Yeast Bread.

In past, I've sometimes tried to make risen bread with various results, none of which were tasty enough to ask for seconds. In October, I narrowed my eyes, girded my apron and determined to conquer yeast once and for all.

I started with a method my grandmother learned in a "Bread Make" baking class 30 years ago. I chose it be-



Tina and her grandson, Caedmon, making bread.

cause it is FAST (from start to baked in about two hours), and because it makes only one loaf (so less waste from failed experiments).

My first loaf was a pitiful failure. I used whole wheat flour, which made it heavy and dull. And when the instructions said “makes two small or one large loaf,” I thought

standard loaf pans were “small.” Wrong. Maybe the birds will eat it on snow days if they get hungry enough.

So, I immediately made another loaf. This time, I tried one of the alternatives in the recipe and used plain white flour. But their idea of “enough flour” is not enough for my oven, I guess, because this loaf — although better than the first — was still too weak to reach the top of the loaf pan. More bird bread (although we did eat a few slices of this and praised the flavor).

My husband Paul made a couple of observations, one of which was to add flour until the dough would have the

strength to stand up to the yeast. So, I started again.

Success! My husband went from amused skeptic to excited fan.

Since then, I've tweaked the recipe until we have a nice, plain, white loaf that slices for sandwiches and keeps well at a cost of 94 cents a loaf. I've since turned the recipe into nice rolls. Next, I want to learn to make sourdough. Doesn't that sound good?



Authors

Harry Spence

Harry is a longtime AAPA member who has published nearly 300 issues of *Independence Way*, a hobby journal. He builds model ships in a condominium complex where he and his wife Margie live in Norwood, Mass. In retirement Harry continues active in local government as a member of the zoning board and several committees. Email him at hartom54@norwoodlight.com

Brian Nelson

I earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in mechanical engineering from the University of New Mexico. During the last 15 years I have worked as a software engineer for several companies. I am an entrepreneur and have started two companies. I am transitioning from being software development focused to being digital content development focused. Email Brian at brian@treegecko.com



Elizabeth Lindsey

When not practicing my figure skating, I'm in ballet class, in the garden or in my home office writing. I also enjoy reading, sewing and being bossed around by my two basset hounds, Elsinore and Charlie. I work as a freelance copy editor and, long ago, was a public reference and young adult librarian. I live in Nashville, Tenn., with my husband, Ken Locke. Email her at erlindsey@comcast.net

Nancy Karp



Nancy studied the fine arts in Boston, Mass., at the Vesper George School of Art and in Oregon at Lane Community College in Eugene. She is a member of the Watercolor Society of Oregon and her watercolors have won many awards. She also is a long-time member of the American Amateur Press Association. "When I'm not creating art," she says, "I can usually be found tending my garden in Springfield, Ore." Email

her at nancy.karp@comcast.net

Russell Miller



My wife Delores and I have been farming and country living all of our lives. I spent a short stint in the Marine Corps, then construction work and dairy farming from 1971-1993. We reared five children who attended colleges and universities. We traveled around the world, reading books, genealogy, history. Life has been good to us. Email the Millers at millerrussell@att.net

Sheryl L. Nelms



Sheryl, a regular contributor to *Author's Bazaar*, submitted five poems that described her hobbies, including one about motorcycle riding and the fly-fishing poem that appears in this issue. She rode a 750 Honda while dirt and street biking for about 20 years and competed in four races. "I don't have a bike right now, so not much riding," she says, "but I have been 4-wheeling with my two sons and my brother."

Sheryl is from Marysville, Kan., and is the fiction/nonfiction editor of *The Pen Woman Magazine*, the National League of American Pen Women publication. Email her at slnelms@aol.com

Raven Erebus



Raven Erebus graduated with a degree in Creative Writing from Mills College, where she also learned letterpress printing and book arts. She got a "real" job after graduation doing software testing working products such as Netscape Navigator and Flash. After too many years of 80-100 hour work weeks, she was forced to take a break for her health. After many years of illness she was diagnosed with Lyme disease. She continues

to battle with the disease. To keep herself out of trouble she has taken up artistic endeavors such as letterpress printing, book arts and photography. See some of her work at <http://www.trollop.com> or Email Raven at heytrollop@gmail.com

Tina Howard



Tina, AAPA's mailer, has more hobbies than Carter has pills. But her main hobby is life with her husband Paul in a tiny rural town in Central Texas, where the neighbors keep donkeys in the backyard. Originally from Oklahoma, Tina lived most of her adult life in West Texas followed by a few years on the Texas gulf coast (the "third coast"), before coming to Blanket in a temporary move that proved permanent — pleasantly so. Email her at tinahoward2@verison.net

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