Chrysteen
Braun
author

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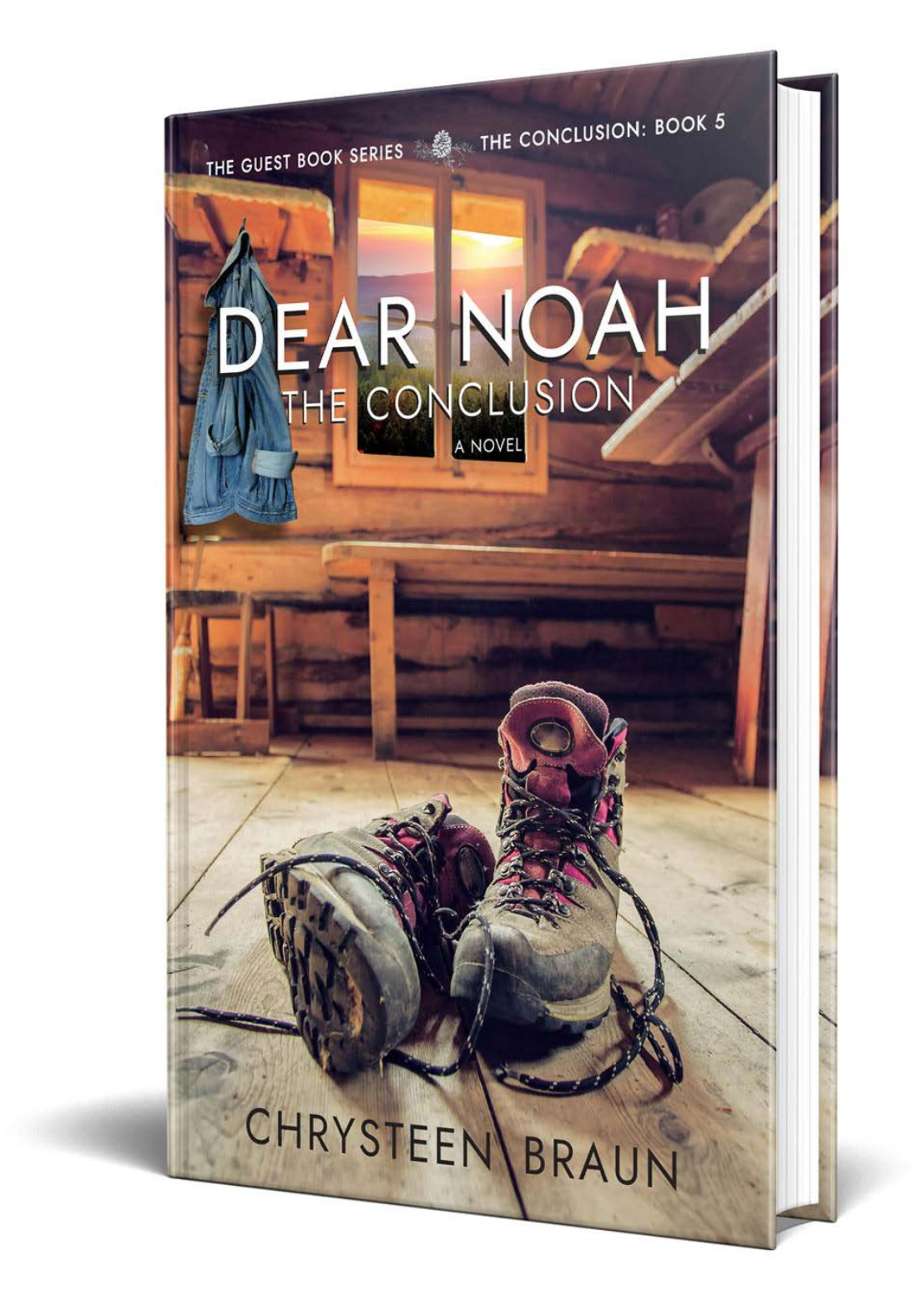


Coming Thanksgiving Weekend, Book Five, Dear Noah, The Conclusion

Look for it on Amazon…and don't forget to leave me a great review once you've read it!

For those of you who haven't read the series yet, Annie Parker is 80 years old when she begins writing about a time in her life when she was starting over. She moves up to the rustic Lake Arrowhead mountainside and restores a series of 1920s cabins that have their own stories to tell.

Dear Noah is the story of Annie's life with Noah and ends when she's in her mid 80s, taking us full circle until she starts writing her story.

Buy Now

Noah
A Sneak Peak at Chapter One

You might wonder how, after so many years, I can still recall the first time I laid eyes on Annie Parker. It was a Monday, and I was on my way back from the lumberyard when I stopped to check in on Sam. He'd been like a second father to me after my parents died, and now it was my turn to look after him. The door to one of the cabins was open and I could tell by the extra car in the drive that he had a guest.

The air was so still, my boots crunching on the gravel echoed as I made my way down there.

"Hey, Sam," I said, leaning on the doorjamb.

A suitcase was sitting on the bed, and Sam and a young woman turned to look in my direction. My heart turned over and I couldn't take my eyes off her. In that split second, I took in her large dark eyes and her pouty mouth. There was something about her that drew me in. Tight jeans and a red knit sweater completed the picture—and I lost my train of thought.

"Oh, Annie," Sam said. "This is Noah Chambers. He's a local, and since my wife died, he seems to think he has to check in on me."

"I heard that," I said.

Sam shook his head but chuckled. He then opened a cupboard, took out some towels and set them on the bed. "But I do appreciate it," he whispered with a crinkled smile.

They both stood there as if waiting for me to say something else, but it was hard for me to focus on what to say next. What I wanted to say was, 'I can't believe you're so incredibly beautiful.' But the woman turned her head back to her task at hand—unlocking her suitcase—and I lost my opportunity to say something profound.

She grabbed the towels and turned toward the bathroom, and Sam just stared at me. He raised his eyebrows, and I knew he could read my mind. When I saw it was obvious she wasn't going to talk to me, I dumbly said to Sam, "Well, it looks like you're in good hands for now, so I'll get back to work. Nice to meet you, Annie," I called out.

She either didn't hear me, or just wasn't in a friendly mood. I turned and headed back to my truck, listening again to my boots on the gravel, the sound roaring in my head.

All the way back to the job site, I couldn't help but think about her; the way her long dark hair fell onto her face when she bent over, and then how she brushed it back with her hand. And those eyes. I couldn't put my finger on it, but they were so out of the ordinary—almost seductive.

I knew I was going to have to figure out who she was, and then my mind went into overload as I wondered how I'd see her again, much less find out if she was interested in me. Even though I knew it probably wouldn't go anywhere, I had a hard time trying to focus on my work.

"Having lived in Lake Arrowhead for many years, Chrysteen Braun's books continually remind me of just how wonderful it is to live up here. It's been fun figuring out places both real and fictional. Her storytelling skillfully blends relationships, rich characters and unexpected endings, all set in our delightful mountain towns."
-Angela Yap, Editor, Mountain News, Lake Arrowhead Ca.

Booksigning in Lake Arrowhead

If you happen to be up in Lake Arrowhead over Thanksgiving weekend, I'll be there signing Book Five, Dear Noah, The Conclusion! Saturday 1-5 at Timberline in the Glen, Cedar Glen. As usual, the store is all decked out for the holidays, and even though I swear I don't have room for one thing more in my house, I always seem to find something I can't live without.

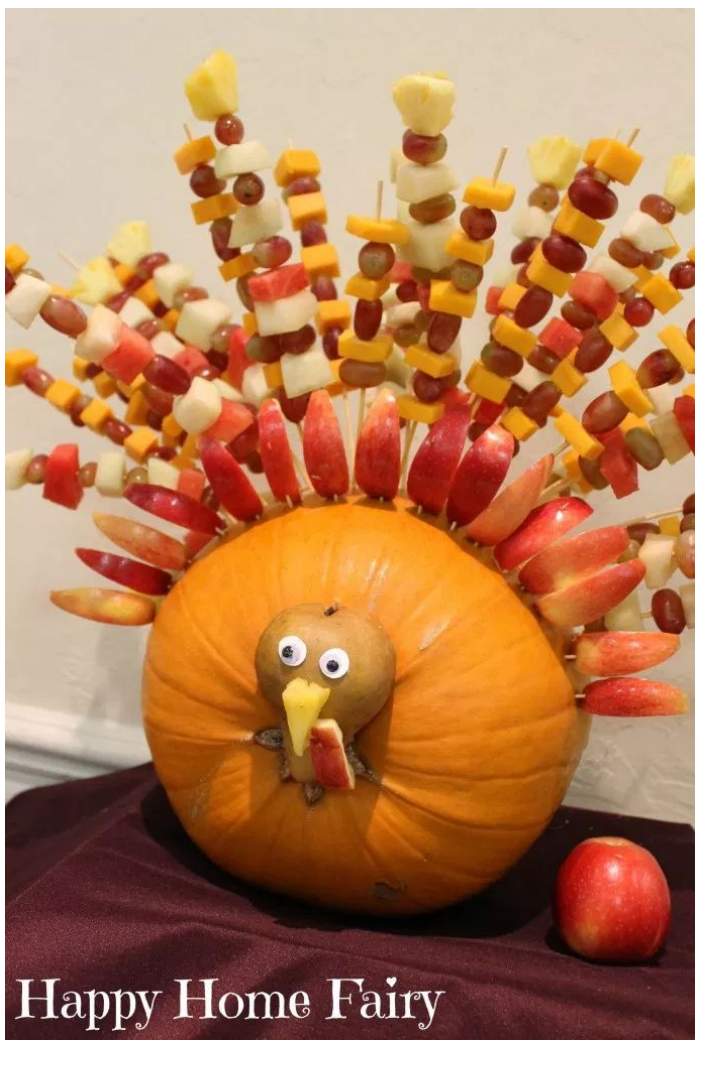
If you have books you'd like me to sign, bring them in! If you've already bought books and they're not signed, bring them in.

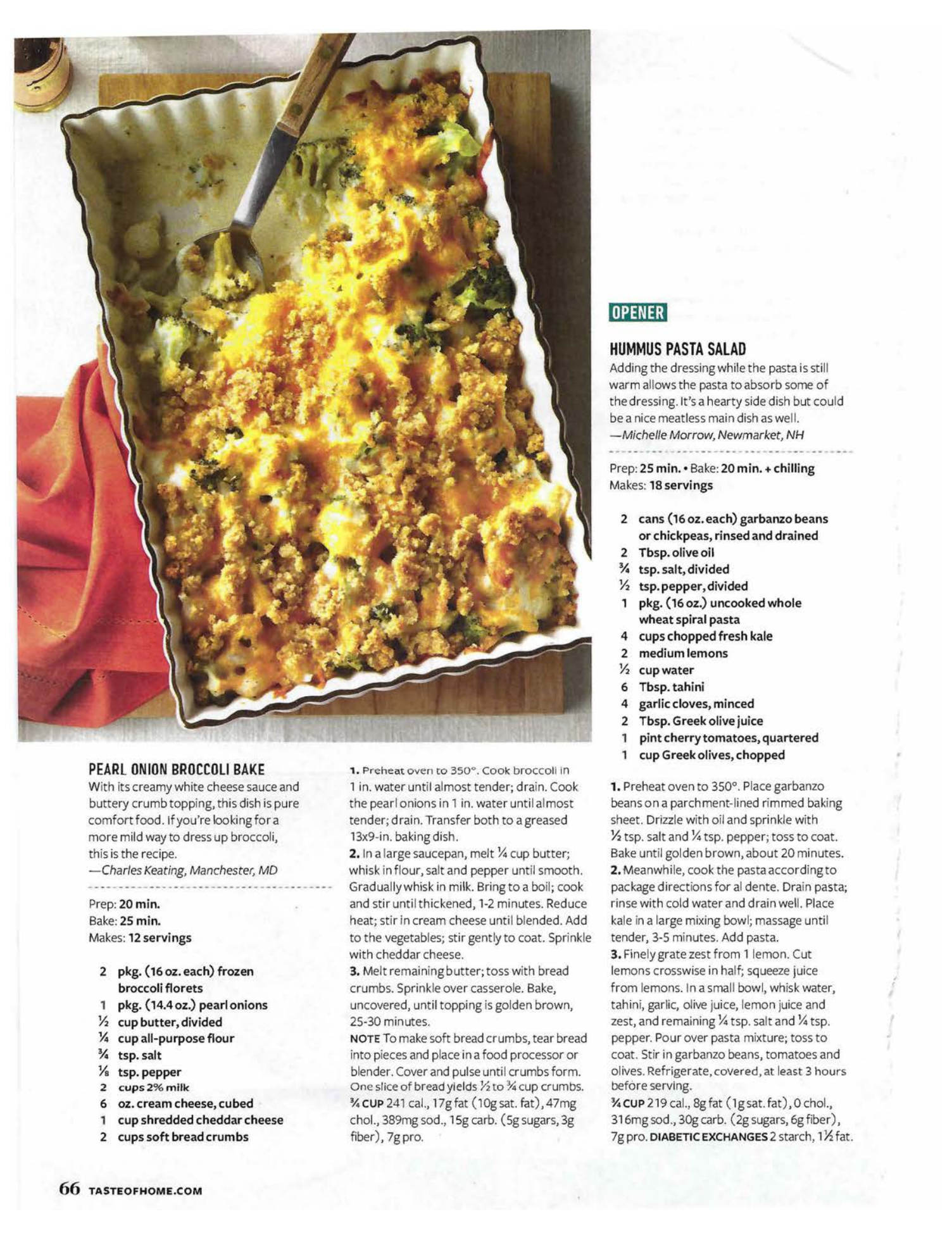
Hope to see you there!

Fall is my favorite time of year.

I don't like turning my clocks back an hour, even though it gives me another hour, but Fall is definitely my favorite time of year. We don't get a lot of color changes here in Southern California, just a lot of extra leaves on the ground, but I love the crisp air, wearing a sweater and watching television snuggled up in my fleece blanket. I also love the scents of fall; cinnamon, pumpkin, apple, nutmeg and maple, and woodsmoke, from those houses who still burn wood. And even if you don't celebrate Thanksgiving with family and friends like they do on television commercials, fall is the perfect time to remember to slow down and pause; to breathe deeply and to feel grateful for what you have.

thistlewoodfarm





PEARL ONION BROCCOLI BAKE

With its creamy white cheese sauce and buttery crumb topping, this dish is pure comfort food. If you're looking for a more mild way to dress up broccoli, this is the recipe.
—*Charles Keating, Manchester, MD*

Prep: **20 min.**
Bake: **25 min.**
Makes: **12 servings**

- 2 pkg. (16 oz. each) frozen broccoli florets
- 1 pkg. (14.4 oz.) pearl onions
- ½ cup butter, divided
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¾ tsp. salt
- ⅛ tsp. pepper
- 2 cups 2% milk
- 6 oz. cream cheese, cubed
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 cups soft bread crumbs

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Cook broccoli in 1 in. water until almost tender; drain. Cook the pearl onions in 1 in. water until almost tender; drain. Transfer both to a greased 13x9-in. baking dish.
2. In a large saucepan, melt ¼ cup butter; whisk in flour, salt and pepper until smooth. Gradually whisk in milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until thickened, 1-2 minutes. Reduce heat; stir in cream cheese until blended. Add to the vegetables; stir gently to coat. Sprinkle with cheddar cheese.
3. Melt remaining butter; toss with bread crumbs. Sprinkle over casserole. Bake, uncovered, until topping is golden brown, 25-30 minutes.
NOTE To make soft bread crumbs, tear bread into pieces and place in a food processor or blender. Cover and pulse until crumbs form. One slice of bread yields ½ to ¾ cup crumbs.
¾ CUP 241 cal., 17g fat (10g sat. fat), 47mg chol., 389mg sod., 15g carb. (5g sugars, 3g fiber), 7g pro.

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OPENER

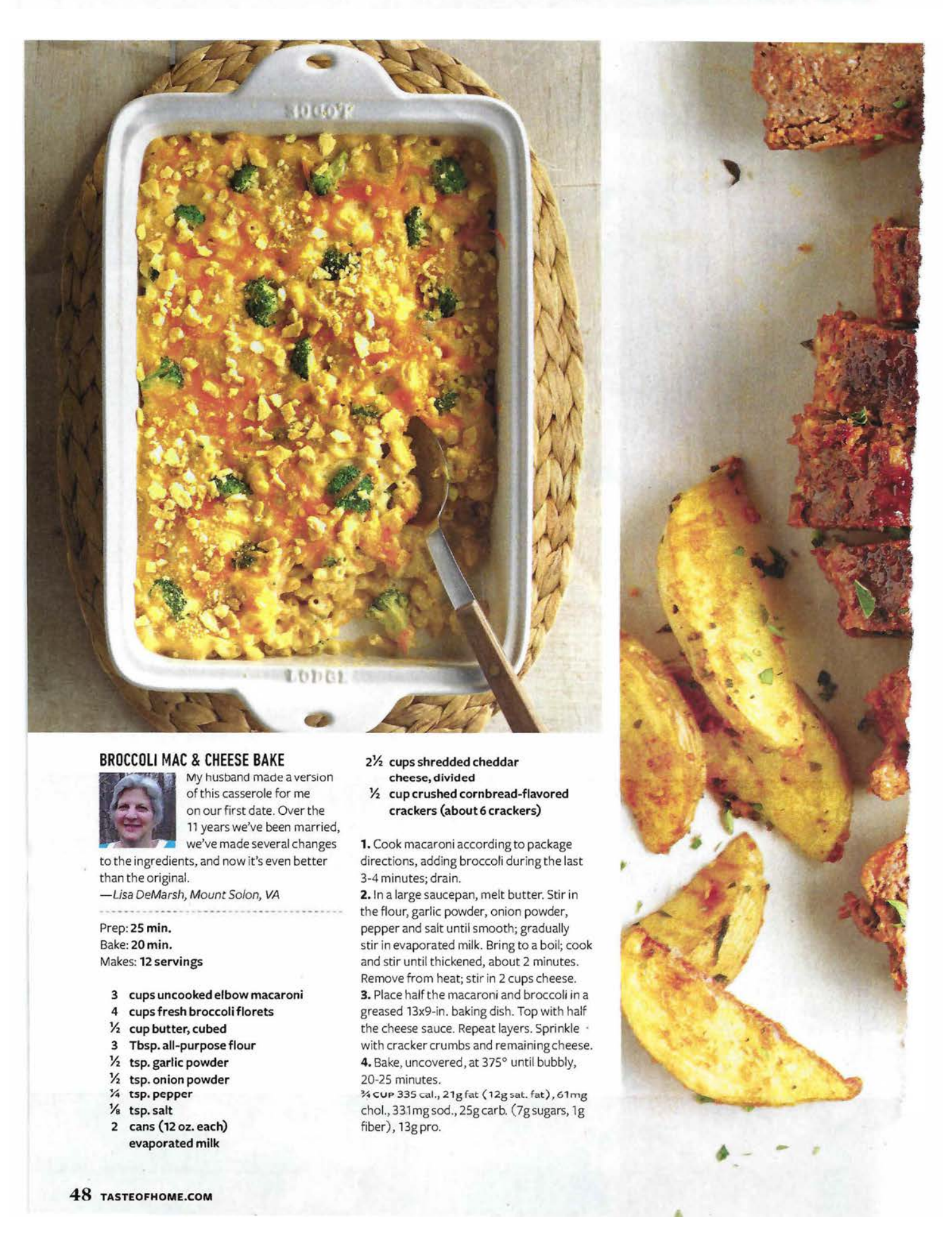
HUMMUS PASTA SALAD

Adding the dressing while the pasta is still warm allows the pasta to absorb some of the dressing. It's a hearty side dish but could be a nice meatless main dish as well.
—*Michelle Morrow, Newmarket, NH*

Prep: **25 min.** • Bake: **20 min. + chilling**
Makes: **18 servings**

- 2 cans (16 oz. each) garbanzo beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- ¾ tsp. salt, divided
- ½ tsp. pepper, divided
- 1 pkg. (16 oz.) uncooked whole wheat spiral pasta
- 4 cups chopped fresh kale
- 2 medium lemons
- ½ cup water
- 6 Tbsp. tahini
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tbsp. Greek olive juice
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1 cup Greek olives, chopped

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Place garbanzo beans on a parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with oil and sprinkle with ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper; toss to coat. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, cook the pasta according to package directions for al dente. Drain pasta; rinse with cold water and drain well. Place kale in a large mixing bowl; massage until tender, 3-5 minutes. Add pasta.
3. Finely grate zest from 1 lemon. Cut lemons crosswise in half; squeeze juice from lemons. In a small bowl, whisk water, tahini, garlic, olive juice, lemon juice and zest, and remaining ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. Pour over pasta mixture; toss to coat. Stir in garbanzo beans, tomatoes and olives. Refrigerate, covered, at least 3 hours before serving.
¾ CUP 219 cal., 8g fat (1g sat. fat), 0 chol., 316mg sod., 30g carb. (2g sugars, 6g fiber), 7g pro. **DIABETIC EXCHANGES** 2 starch, 1½ fat.



BROCCOLI MAC & CHEESE BAKE

My husband made a version of this casserole for me on our first date. Over the 11 years we've been married, we've made several changes to the ingredients, and now it's even better than the original.
—*Lisa DeMarsh, Mount Solon, VA*

Prep: **25 min.**
Bake: **20 min.**
Makes: **12 servings**

- 3 cups uncooked elbow macaroni
- 4 cups fresh broccoli florets
- ½ cup butter, cubed
- 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. onion powder
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- ⅛ tsp. salt
- 2 cans (12 oz. each) evaporated milk
- 2½ cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- ½ cup crushed cornbread-flavored crackers (about 6 crackers)

1. Cook macaroni according to package directions, adding broccoli during the last 3-4 minutes; drain.
2. In a large saucepan, melt butter. Stir in the flour, garlic powder, onion powder, pepper and salt until smooth; gradually stir in evaporated milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until thickened, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in 2 cups cheese.
3. Place half the macaroni and broccoli in a greased 13x9-in. baking dish. Top with half the cheese sauce. Repeat layers. Sprinkle with cracker crumbs and remaining cheese.
4. Bake, uncovered, at 375° until bubbly, 20-25 minutes.
¾ CUP 335 cal., 21g fat (12g sat. fat), 61mg chol., 331mg sod., 25g carb. (7g sugars, 1g fiber), 13g pro.

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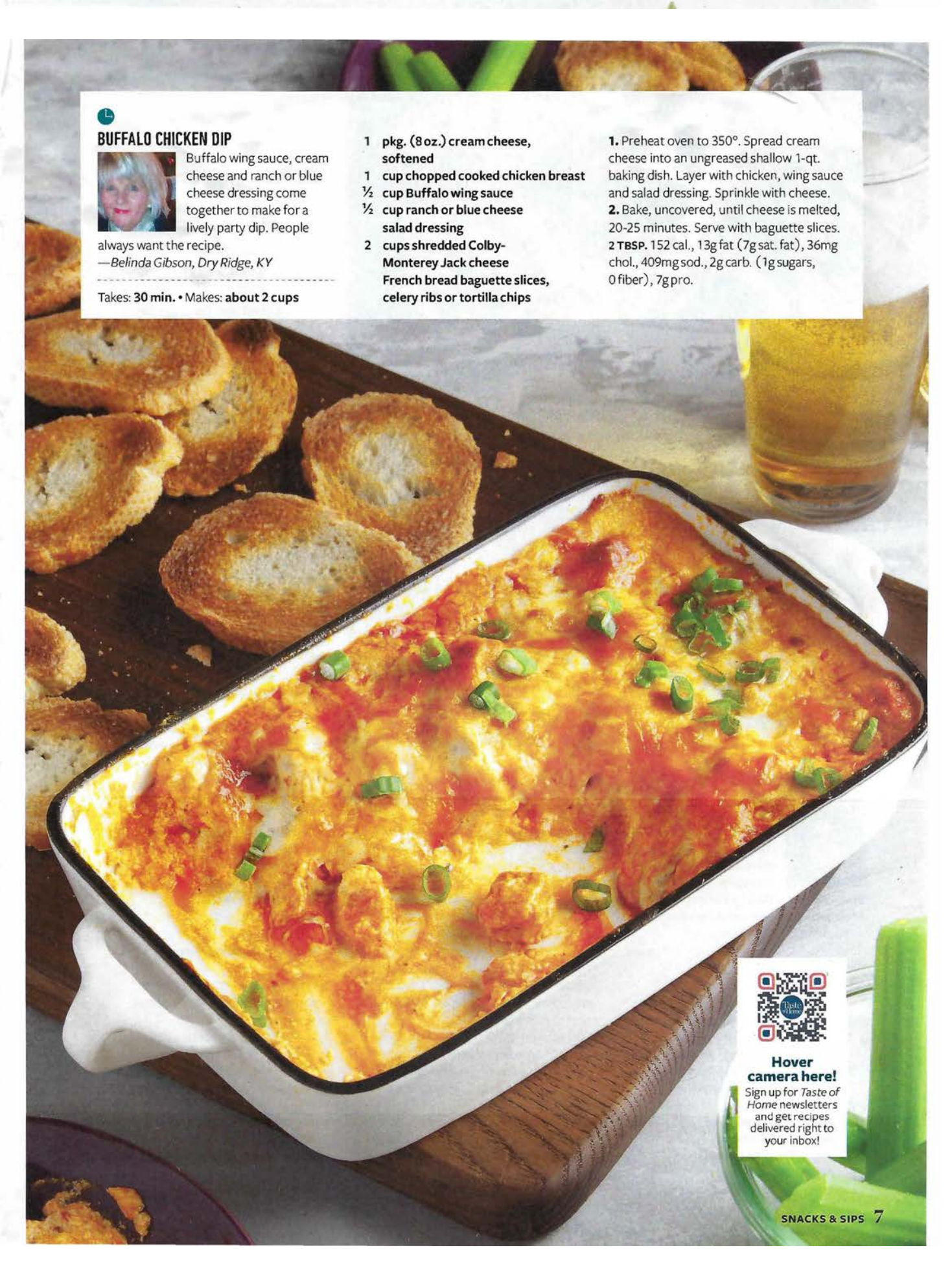

BUFFALO CHICKEN DIP

Buffalo wing sauce, cream cheese and ranch or blue cheese dressing come together to make for a lively party dip. People always want the recipe.
—*Belinda Gibson, Dry Ridge, KY*

Takes: **30 min.** • Makes: **about 2 cups**

- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup chopped cooked chicken breast
- ½ cup Buffalo wing sauce
- ½ cup ranch or blue cheese salad dressing
- 2 cups shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese
- French bread baguette slices, celery ribs or tortilla chips

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Spread cream cheese into an ungreased shallow 1-qt. baking dish. Layer with chicken, wing sauce and salad dressing. Sprinkle with cheese.
2. Bake, uncovered, until cheese is melted, 20-25 minutes. Serve with baguette slices.
2 TBSP. 152 cal., 13g fat (7g sat. fat), 36mg chol., 409mg sod., 2g carb. (1g sugars, 0 fiber), 7g pro.

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SNACKS & SIPS 7

I've said it before, that the only reason I have a kitchen is because it came with the house. But for some reason, I'm attracted to recipes with pictures. So, if you're meeting friends for Friendsgiving or bringing a side dish for Thanksgiving dinner, I'm adding some interesting side dishes you can make.

On a health note…

Prior to becoming a full time author, I spent 40 years in a sales/office environment, which meant even though I was up and down a lot I sat many hours a day. And now, my favorite place to be is sitting at my desk, and writing. On October 21 I had my right knee replaced, and all I've been doing since then is sitting in my recliner with my leg elevated and iced.

It was a perfect time to re-read an article on **Sitting Disease** in the August/September AARP magazine, and I was sure the author had been following me around for the last 40 years when she wrote it. In a nutshell, sitting and living a sedentary lifestyle (as much as 11 to 12 hours a day) is as bad for us as smoking! It affects everything from depression, anxiety, brain health, longevity, and chronic disease.

I'm not a natural health nut, and I'll never forget a conversation I had with a doctor/friend who was played tennis and hiked, and she was trim. She came up to our cabin in Lake Arrowhead one weekend and as she was having fruit, wheat toast and a poached egg, (to my French toast, bacon and eggs) she said, "It's so clean and fresh up here. Doesn't it make you want to just find a trail and get out and hike?" For those of you who know me personally, I've always been at least fifty pounds overweight, and I'm definitely not an exercise enthusiast. I looked at her as if I was shocked at her question and I pointed to myself. I said, "Now, do I *look* like I want to get out there and hike?"

I wish I'd been born with a natural inclination get up and move, and if you're like me, and you're not a natural health nut, there *are* some things you can do to get off your rear end. And I'm not talking about doing 8-10,000 steps a day. If I tried to do even 5,000 steps a day I'd have to call 911. But I *could* just start moving, and *keep* moving. According to the article, even five minutes every hour could make a big difference in your overall health—even two minutes every hour can make a difference. And when you're sitting at the computer, move your legs. Get an under the desk cycle to remind you to spend a few minutes peddling every hour. I've bought a one hour sand timer, (and if I remember to turn it over at the end of the hour), I get up and do stretches to loosen my shoulders since I slouch when I'm at my computer for hours on end. I'm pretty good about parking away from restaurants and grocery stores, but I need to do more.

I've given up on New Year's resolutions, because they don't work for me; saying on January 1, I am going to "____________". Instead, I'm thinking now, about things I can start doing today to improve my lifestyle. Last December, I started eating better; minimizing sugar and bread and replacing corn and soy oils with avocado oil. I no longer eat processed salad dressings, again using avocado oil, and I'm eating more protein and vegetables. I've lost 16 pounds, and I even have my favorite desert, chocolate sundaes once a week.

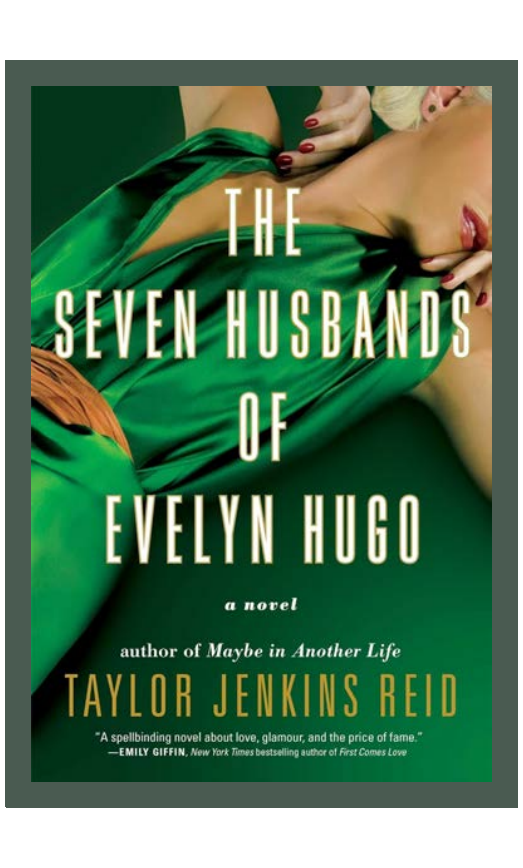
So now that my butt's getting tired of just sitting here, I'm trying to think of things I can do to improve my lifestyle more. After reading that article again, my plan is to get up and move a little more. I thought about waiting until I fully recovered from my surgery, but then I realized part of the recovery is to get up and move to make sure I restore my range of motion.

My timer isn't doing me any good sitting on my desk, I'm bringing it in and putting it on the end table next to my recliner where I can see it. I'll turn it and when the sand empties to the bottom, I'll get up and walk, even if it's 50 steps. I think that's a good beginning, don't you?

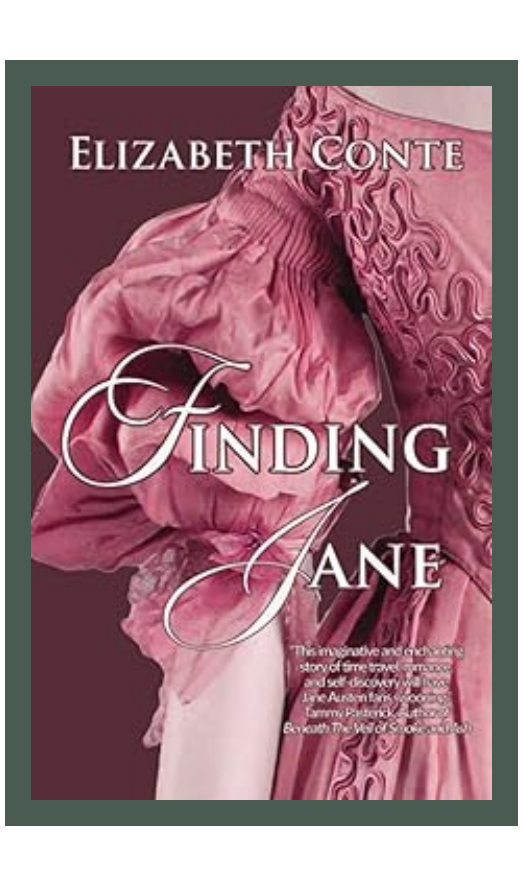
Just thought I'd share.

What's on my Nightstand

The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo


THE SEVEN HUSBANDS OF EVELYN HUGO
a novel
author of Maybe in Another Life
TAYLOR JENKINS REID

I loved this book. Evelyn Hugo is a famous actress who wants to tell her story, and she contacts a young woman who works at a magazine to write her biography. She tells her that in due time, she'll tell her why it had to be her that wrote the story. I never could figure it out, and kept me interested until the end. There is a spoiler alert though; if you're sensitive to LGBTQIA+ there are a few parts of the book you could skip. There's nothing graphic and loving another woman played a big part in Evelyn's quest for love. Just FYI.



Finding Jane

I first met Elizabeth Conte at a writer's group a little over a year go. A lot of writers I've met are satisfied living on the sidelines, but not this lady. Her effervescent personality and outspokenness were refreshing, and we immediately hit it off. Of course it helped when she said "I love being around you. You don't act like a 75 year old. You get it!"

Out of my hundreds of to be read books, I finally picked up her first book, Finding Jane. Her writing reflects her love of the English Countryside, where the book is set. On a business trip from bustling Los Angeles to England, Jane meets a psychic who tells her she is unique and has a magnetic energy that will send her on a faraway journey. The next day, she's found naked in a 19th century field and she's ultimately drawn to the landowner.

Finding Jane is a combination of Historical Fiction and a little time travel (a genre I've never read) and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. Like me, her writing crosses several genres, including Historical British & Irish Literature, Historical Fantasy and Women's Friendship Fiction.

Be adventuresome and check it out.

Chrysteen
Braun
author
THE MAN IN CABIN NUMBER FIVE
WINNER
CHRYSTEEN BRAUN
THE GIRLS IN CABIN NUMBER THREE
THE STARLET IN CABIN NUMBER SEVEN
THE MAIDSERVANT IN CABIN NUMBER ONE
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Chrysteen

The Man in Cabin Number Five, Book One
The Girls in Cabin Number Three, Book Two
The Starlet in Cabin Number Seven, Book Three
The Maidservant in Cabin Number One, The Beginning, Book Four
Dear Noah, The Conclusion, Book Five

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