

Ladies of the Lake – December 2019  
by Barbara Galvin

On a beautiful sunny December 4, 2019, the Ladies of the Lake met at Lake Bracken Country Club for a delightful Christmas celebration. Our hostesses, Cindy Hanning, Elizabeth Hiel and Kay McKiley were sorting cookies as the ladies arrived.

The dining room was Christmas personified with several elaborately decorated Christmas trees to help the holiday spirit be right. In addition, Elizabeth began the luncheon with a heartfelt grace thanking God for all our blessings, especially being close to nature on Little Swan Lake. Elizabeth specifically thanked the Lord for the bald eagles that swoop so gracefully over the lake. What majestic birds!

Elizabeth also took the opportunity to introduce the guests Denise Thomas brought to the Christmas party. Both daughter Dana Harding and her mother Janet Pickrel were warmly received and given directions to their neighbors' homes on title Swan Lake. Welcome to our beautiful neighborhood, ladies!

Once everyone greeted other festively dressed ladies, the menus were the main item. The ladies were enthusiastic to select whatever they craved. Some ladies opted for "tried and true," the chicken club sandwich, which is delicious. Others wanted salads, and there were several to tempt any salad lover, especially the chicken salad plate that is sure to please. Several wanted the traditional lunch of soup and salad. Lake Bracken obliged. Then there was a unique item, a veggie flatbread covered with mozzarella cheese.

All the hostesses, Cindy, Elizabeth, and Kay, encouraged the ladies to visit the "Cookie Exchange Table," which had tantalizing treats. For those who liked the cookie unique look, there were Reindeer Cookies, made by Nancy Hoppes— yes, the cookies had pretzel antlers! Then, Pam Gaskill baked scrumptious Cranberry Bars, which everyone enjoyed. Sharon Butler went with Pistachio Cookies, while Barb Dunlap brought a nostalgic recipe back with Rum Balls, which her mother used to make. Remember? Cindy Hanning thinks BIG! She baked Monster Cookies that could fill you with one cookie. Kay McKinley made two traditional treats, Sugar Cookies and Peanut Butter Rice Krispie Treats. Last but not least, Elizabeth Hiel made Pinwheel Cookies and Peanut Blossoms. They were melt-in-your-mouth good and the ladies did their darnedest to sample them ALL!

The Ladies of the Lake enjoying Lake Bracken's lunch and cookies and the other Christmas festivities were Pam Gaskill, Darlyne Ackers, Cindy Hanning, Elizabeth Hiel, Kay McKinley, Sharon Butler, Gail Maher, Barbara Galvin, Nancy Hoppes, Sandy Morrow, Barbara Jonckheere, Laura Jennings, Denise Thomas, Dana Harding, Janet Pickrel, Carlene Adams, Judi Jones, Barb Dunlap, Jane Stevens, Nancy Powell, and Judy Brown.

As if selecting cookies to nibble was not exciting enough, Kay created a Candy Cane Spinner for a dandy game— spin the dial and whatever number came up, you won! The prizes were immediately delivered by Cindy.

At one table, Gail Maher won a coffee bag, while Darlyne Ackers was happy with the cooking whipper filled with candy (she said "for my husband"). Barb Jonckheere opened her prize bag to find a Christmas tree candy dish. Then Nancy Hoppes, a most artistic lady, won a plaque with a picture of an old boat docked. She was thrilled! Sandy Morrow continued the decorative gifts with a sign painted with three snowmen on it. Finally Sharon Butler received a red votive holder, filled with chocolates.

All the Ladies of the Lake received one of these prizes from a spin of the dial. Thank you, Cindy, Elizabeth, and Kay who aim to please everyone! (and they do).

Jane Stevens called the ladies to order to give the news about hostess sign up for 2020, and the decision to cancel the Ladies of the Lake luncheons for both January and February in 2020. The weather has been so miserable in previous years that the luncheons were cancelled, so we are being careful.

The good news that Jane Stevens shared is that March will be an outing at a restaurant in Galesburg. There's something to anticipate.

Lunch was served as the ladies sipped coffee. Then the fun began with the grab bag gifts. Barb Jonckheere was the first lady to select a gift. She received bath lotion and shampoo in a handy metal dispenser. Sharon Butler is ready for holiday entertaining, as she opened Christmas paper plates and napkins.

Nancy Powell opened white Christmas hand towels, while Gail Maher made everyone laugh when she opened her jazzy socks, with the message "Friends are therapists."

Judi Jones was pleased with an address book, which she said was needed badly. Jane Stevens had chocolates, while Sandy Morrow was hiding her carving by Judi Jones to thwart any bandits from stealing it.

The thievery began when Carlene Adams lost her grab bag but was pleasantly surprised when she picked another BIGGER grab bag gift which was a Christmas plaque. The culprit was Cindy Hanning, who made off with the Christmas towels. Barb Dunlap did not have her first grab bag choice long. But she too was pleased with a second choice of a large baker, after Kay McKinley snatched her first pick.

Ironically, Pam Gaskill, who had complimented Sharon Butler's white infinity scarf, received her very own scarf in her grab bag selection. Fittingly, Nancy Hoppes again selected an item creative for her artistic flair—a glass globe lite. While Dana Harding will be snug and warm in her black stocking hat, Darlyne Ackers will be enjoying some aromatherapy.

Lots of fun and fellowship everywhere as the ladies of the lake wished everyone a "Merry Christmas" and thanked the creative hardworking hostesses Cindy, Elizabeth, and Kay for a wonderful Christmas luncheon.

Remember that the reason for the season is Jesus. Celebrate His birth with family and friends. Stay healthy and enjoy the New Year, 2020.