



NEWSLETTER ♦ 54th Edition ♦ Feb. 2018 ♦ *Special Valentine's Edition*

FEBRUARY

... the month for love. For many of us, this means roses, boxes of heart-shaped candy, and a dinner by candlelight. For someone with limb loss, it can mean feelings of loneliness, self-doubt, and depression.

One of the toughest questions that I am asked when going on a peer visit to a new amputee is, "Will anyone ever love me now?" or "Will I always be alone?" This is particularly difficult for young adult amputees. The emphasis our society places on having the *perfect body* doesn't help. Others their age are out socializing, dating, and trying on skinny jeans; while they are in rehab beginning the process of adjusting to living without a limb or limbs.

I decided to ask two single young ladies from our group to share their thoughts on the subject of finding true love after becoming an amputee. I am sure their stories and advice will touch your heart and give inspiration to all those amputees out there both young and old who are hoping to one day find that special someone to love.

- by Belinda

NEVER GIVE UP ON LOVE

- by Katie Flanigan

It can seem like dating is over once we have an amputation. But this is not true! If anything, in my opinion, it helps! Who wants to waste time finding out if the person they are dating is superficial. If someone doesn't want to date you before getting to know you just because of your amputation, maybe it's just me, but I don't want to date them anyway. There is someone out there that wants to get to know the real you! I want to share with you the story of my boyfriend and me.

I met Chris early in 2009, before my amputations, which were in October 2009. It was love at first sight! We dated until I disappeared. He had no clue I was battling for my life in the hospital. I was afraid to tell my parents about Chris because of our age difference, so no one knew to let him know. (Side note: I love our age difference as he knows what he wants and doesn't play games. My family is completely fine with it, too.) I was in the hospital for 3 months, and then recovery at home would prove to be much longer than that. That first Christmas came by, and I found a present left on my porch. It was a very thoughtful gift from Chris. I hadn't seen him in months, and he had no idea what had happened to me. It was such a beautiful gift and beautiful gesture that I loved, but I wasn't confident enough with my new body to call him yet. I didn't feel good enough about myself. I thought he'd take one look at me and run. Another year of recovery passed and Christmas came again. Once again, I never saw any sign of Chris, but he had snuck another beautiful gift onto my front porch. Not long after, I was in a car

- Continued on Page 2 Column 1 -

FINDING LOVE AS AN AMPUTEE

- by Kelly J. Reitz

Oh, love, such an exciting time in a person's life when you meet a potential match. Most people want to know how you even get to that point when you are an amputee. First things first, you have to remove 'being an amputee' as a way of describing yourself. You're a human and a person despite having lost a limb. Everyone has some type of flaw that usually has to be revealed at some point in the relationship. What you really have to focus on is acceptance. Not of them accepting you, but of YOU accepting you. You can find love without accepting yourself, but that can and usually does lead down the wrong path.

Accepting yourself does not come within a month or even a year of losing a limb. For me, it took many, many years. I was a year old when I became an amputee, but it still took a lot of time when I came of age to learn to accept myself. It's all about self-discovery and that's different for each person and there are different levels. You can't focus on how long this will take, rather you have to focus on yourself, your relationship to a higher power, and finding an inner peace to understand what you're after.

This, as they say, is usually when love finds you! When you find someone that enjoys your company despite any 'flaws' and you accept theirs and enjoy them regardless, you're well on your way to finding that true person that you deserve.

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### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Let someone love you  
just as you are.  
As flawed as you might be,  
as unattractive as you might feel,  
as unaccomplished  
as you might think you are;  
let someone love you just as you are.  
And let that someone be you.

- by Sandra Kring

www.sandraking.com

## NEVER GIVE UP ON LOVE (cont'd)

crash, broke both arms, and was facing surgery again. I just knew it was time. I called Chris to come visit me in the hospital and told him everything. He didn't run. Quite the opposite! We've had our ups and downs, but never once did he leave because of my amputations. Today, we have a beautiful handicapped accessible home that we had built together. We are there for each other and love each other in every way. He doesn't mind having to push my wheelchair or how much water I flood the bathroom with while using my shower chair. He believes in me 100% while I'm learning to walk again and knows that I will. He's even going to amputee boot camp with me! I thank God all the time with tears in my eyes that Chris brought those Christmas gifts and didn't give up. And most importantly, that he didn't run when he saw that I couldn't anymore.



This is possible for you, too! It might not be the first person you meet. You might have to go through a few "duds", but I believe with everything in me that there is someone out there for you. Don't become bitter and shut yourself off and give up. I'm a firm believer that love happens quite often when you aren't looking. So stay open to love and never give up or think it's over! It's only just begun!!

If you are struggling with this or with self-confidence, please reach out to me! I'm here for you and together we'll show you that you deserve and are capable of love!

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FIND OUR NEW YOUNG ADULTS GROUP ON FACEBOOK

Moving Forward Limb Loss Support Group wants to welcome our newest sub-group for young adults! If you are an amputee or a supportive family/friend of an amputee in the age group 18-38, this is for you! Currently we have a Facebook group, which is "Moving Forward Limb Loss Support Group for Young Adults Ages 18-38" (just type that into the search bar and we'll pop up!), but as interest grows we'd love to start having our own events geared to the interests of people in this age group! Katie Flanigan has agreed to take on this project, including the Facebook page. If you have any ideas or questions, please reach out to Belinda or Katie at katiemovingforward@gmail.com.

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## FUN WITH WORD SCRAMBLES

Unscramble these words and then use the letters in parentheses to finish the sentence. You can find the answers on Page 6.

ULTEGAHR ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 MTMTMCOINE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 VTDDEEO ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 DNAEGGE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 DEMAIR ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 TEFCFAONI ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 NMORAE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ IS IN THE \_\_\_\_\_.



## JANUARY RECAP

Despite the cold and snowy weather, **Moving Forward** held its 1st meeting of 2018 at Southern IN Rehab Hospital on Jan. 15th. Guest speakers for the evening were George Bay and Roosevelt Smith III with Veteran Voices of Kentuckiana. This organization works to make certain that veterans of our military receive the recognition and services that they deserve and are entitled to. They talked about the high rate of suicide among veterans, and their work to ensure access to mental health services for both veterans and their families. We discussed ways in which our groups could help each other to reach out to more veterans in our community. They will be speaking at our March meeting in Louisville at NBH. Please plan on attending to learn more about this organization and to thank them for their dedication to all veterans.



Our Louisville meeting was held at Norton Brownsboro Medical Plaza 1 on Jan. 27th. Our guest speaker had to cancel due to an illness of a family member. Several members were unable to attend also because of illness. We hope they all are feeling much better. Time was spent catching up with each other following the holidays and planning for the upcoming year. Members expressed their support of our dear friend Bill



Titus by bringing in canned and boxed food items to stock his pantry. Bill has recently been diagnosed with cancer and is undergoing treatment. He is such an inspiration to not only our members, but to

everyone he meets. We want him to know that we will be there to provide support, love, prayers, and help to both him and his family during this trying time.

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SPOTLIGHT

- by Belinda

Each month in this column, we shine our light on a group member or special organization. What better organization to shine that light upon than our own, **Moving Forward**. I was asked at our last meeting just how our group came to be. I thought that some of our readers may be interested in hearing that story, so here it goes...

We were first brought together when some of us were invited to a meeting at Louisville Prosthetics to discuss forming a support group. There was quite a big turnout that evening and it seemed that there was a lot of interest in getting a group started. The next few meetings were moved to the Okolona Fire Station and then a move was made to Baptist Hospital East. Attendance was up and down for those first few months as we attempted to form the group. There were times when only 2 or 3 people would show up. What we had, though, that helped us to succeed was a core group of people who saw the vision of what our group



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– by Belinda

Our Q&A section is provided so that our readers can submit a "?" and then I, in turn, ask some of the members of the group for a response. From time to time, I also do some research from various informational sources so I can better respond to the submitted question. I am not trying to provide medical advice, but just trying to help amputees who are in search of some answers. As always, I encourage you to talk to your family doctor, specialist, or prosthetist about your concerns. **Do not be afraid to ask them questions!**

Since I have been discussing the purchase of exercise equipment in our **LET'S GET MOVING!** column, a question that I have been asked is, "Will my Medicare plan cover the purchase of exercise equipment?" With all the emphasis now on preventative medicine, you would think that would be a definite possibility, but according to Medicare exercise equipment is not covered because it is not medical in nature. Medicare will only pay for durable medical equipment. Some items are covered because they are medically necessary; some items are never approved, even if there is a need. Exercise equipment falls into the latter category.

Original Medicare also doesn't cover gym memberships or fitness programs, but many Medicare Advantage plans (also known as Medicare Part C) do offer these extra benefits. The most popular of these plans are Silver & Fit and Silver Sneakers, which both provide access to exercise facilities, online resources, and home exercise kits. You are encouraged to visit Medicare's website at <https://www.medicare.gov/> for more information on coverage, plans, and enrollment deadlines.

Although major insurance companies do not cover the purchase of exercise equipment under most circumstances, many do offer discounts of up to 30 percent on monthly fees on select gyms. Employers often offer discounts on gym memberships, as well – some offer \$250 per year reimbursements. So check with your benefits department.

Exercise equipment may be eligible for reimbursement with a Letter of Medical Necessity (LMN) from a doctor with a flexible spending account (FSA), health savings account (HSA), or a health reimbursement arrangement (HRA).

If the equipment is prescribed by a physician to treat specific medical conditions (e.g., diabetes), then the expense should be reimbursable. The cost of exercise equipment for general well-being is not reimbursable. Always check with your plan administrator before making the purchase. Information on FSA's, HSA's, and HRA's can be found in IRS publication 969. Information on deductible medical expenses can be found in IRS publication 502. To access these publications go to the IRS website at <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/>.

To sum it up, it appears that most of us are on our own when it comes to purchasing exercise equipment. That's why it is very important to make an informed decision. How do you make that informed decision? By researching the equipment on the internet, visiting stores that specialize in exercise equipment, talking to trained professionals, and trying out the equipment in a store or gym before purchasing it; you can feel comfortable that you have made the right choice.

References:

medicare.gov
irs.gov
blog.medicaresolutions.com
fsastore.com



SPOTLIGHT (cont'd)

could become and were dedicated (or stubborn, depending on how you see it) enough to see it through. That vision involved moving from just being a small group of people gathering to discuss our lives as amputees to becoming an organization offering all those affected by limb loss emotional support, information, and resources.

It was decided that we would take the steps to become a group member of the Amputee Coalition, which is a national organization, and we would begin the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization as recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. What a process that was! I spent countless hours doing research and filling out forms. As soon as I would get one filled out, I found that there were 10 more waiting for me. The day that the approval letter came in the mail from the IRS, I did a little victory dance!

During this time, we began reaching out to other prosthetic companies in our area. We realized that they could provide us with the ability to connect with more amputees in our community. The response was tremendous, and we are honored to have many of them as sponsors of our newsletter. Their continued support has been instrumental to the growth of our group. **And, oh, how we have grown!** We now have well over



100 members, our newsletter reaches over 300 individuals and businesses, our original Facebook group has over 250 members, a new Facebook group for young adult amputees was recently started, our website provides information to countless individuals, and we hold meetings in 3 area locations. Another service that our group has been involved in, which I am particularly proud of, is the many peer visits that we have provided to new amputees not only in our area, but also by phone and email to amputees throughout the U.S. These visits provide them with the opportunity to talk to someone who has lost a limb or limbs and has been able to recover and get back to living a full and productive life. It also helps them to realize that they do not have to face this challenge alone.

I am often asked, "Why would I want to join your support group?" There are many different answers to that question. It depends upon the person and what they are looking for. Some answers that I have heard from group members are:

"It makes me feel like I'm part of something again."

"I learn so much from talking to the other people."

"It's good to know that I have people to count on when I need them."

"We have so much fun!"

"It's great to laugh again!"

"It makes me feel good that I can still help others."

We have strived to offer many different ways to reach out and support those affected by limb loss in our community. We are here for not only the amputee; but also for their family members, friends, and caregivers. I encourage you to come to a meeting or event and see for yourself. Maybe we are just what you need to begin **moving forward!**

LET'S GET MOVING! — by Belinda

As promised, this month we will be discussing some of the different types of exercise equipment available for aerobic exercise. Aerobic exercise is essential to maintain cardiovascular health, for body weight control, and has been proven to be an effective way to relieve stress. For many of us, the thought of beginning an aerobic exercise program can also cause stress. We are unsure of what type of exercise is best for us or how to use the equipment to receive the most benefit. We may be afraid to exercise because of our amputation or other health issues. Some may become anxious at the thought of spending countless hours walking to nowhere on a treadmill or cycling staring at a blank wall. We can't let fear and anxiety keep us from doing something that will benefit both our physical and emotional well-being.

Last month we discussed the importance of trying out various exercise machines before making a purchase. You want to make sure that not only is it something you will enjoy doing but also are physically able to do. Another important aspect of your purchase decision is where will this equipment be used in your home? If you have an unused room or a basement that can be designated as your exercise area, you won't have much trouble finding a machine to fit. If you live in a small apartment with limited space, you may need to opt for equipment that is easy to move or foldable. As amputees, we know the importance of avoiding falls. We definitely don't want to crowd a piece of equipment into a room that would cause a fall hazard. You can purchase the most expensive and highest rated machine, but if you don't have room to properly use it or it takes up too much space, more than likely it will end up on eBay or in a yard sale.

When we talk about aerobic exercise equipment, the usual types that come to mind are stationary bikes, elliptical trainers, and treadmills. They each provide for good exercise, are reliable, and come in various price ranges. Let's begin by taking a look at some of the advantages and disadvantages of each.



Stationary bikes: Advantages include ease of use; provide for low-impact exercise which lessens risk of injury or muscle strain; both upright and recumbent models are available, allowing you to choose which is most comfortable; most come with adjustments to allow you to increase the intensity of your workout; many come with displays and monitors showing things such as calories burned and heart rate. A disadvantage is that bikes exercise only the legs, so users will need to also do upper body and core exercises for a balanced workout.

Treadmills: Advantages include ease of use; provides for a safer walking environment than walking outdoors; can easily adjust speed and incline, allowing for a more intense workout; most allow you to design a custom program to fit your exercise needs; running on a treadmill generally burns calories faster than stationary biking. Disadvantages include taking up a lot of space; may cause too much jarring on your back or stress on knees, hips, and ankles; some models are noisy, making it difficult to listen to a TV while using; provide for only lower body exercise; they require occasional maintenance by a trained professional (NOTE: it may be worthwhile to purchase the extended warranty.)



Elliptical or Cross Trainers: One main advantage of this type of machine is that it causes a very low level of stress on the spine, bones, and joints. The pedals are suspended above the ground and are moved back and forward or up and down on a track. The user's foot never hits the ground, so there is no jarring impact. Some models offer

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SPECIAL THANKS!!

We wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Wayne Luckett of Louisville Prosthetics and Kathy DeNise, a former employee there, for their commitment to not only helping us begin, but helping us to continue **moving forward**. We hope that we have made you proud along the way. Our thanks extend to all of our newsletter sponsors. Your support has helped us to reach out and connect with so many more people affected by limb loss in our community. We also want to say thank you to Southern IN Rehab Hospital, Norton Brownsboro, and the Harrison Co. Hospital in Corydon, IN, for allowing us to use your facilities for our meetings. A special thanks goes out to the Okolona Fire Station for providing use of your cafeteria for many of our events.



I'm Moving Forward . . .

Each month we are including a picture of one of our members **moving forward** after limb loss.



Chuck Messer & Marcia Evans **moving forward** and having a wonderful night at the Amputee Coalition Grand Gala Dinner/Dance.

** If you have a picture that you would like to submit, please send it to Julie or Belinda. **



Thank You to the Amputee Coalition!

** We want to thank the Amputee Coalition for allowing us to use their articles in our newsletters. We also want to thank them for the many brochures and publications that they provide to our group. It is not the intention of the Amputee Coalition to provide specific medical or legal advice but rather to provide consumers with information to better understand their health and healthcare issues. The Amputee Coalition does not endorse any specific treatment, technology, company, service or device. Consumers are urged to consult with their healthcare providers for specific medical advice or before making any purchasing decisions involving their care. **

For road conditions in KY, www.goky.ky.gov has replaced the 511 system for traffic information. People calling 511 will be directed to this new system. A free community-based traffic app called Waze is also available there.

In Indiana, traffic and road condition info are available by calling 1-800-261-7623 (ROAD) or by going to www.in.gov/indot and using the TrafficWise application. Indiana provides the Hoosier Helper service, which patrols main interstates looking for disabled vehicles. The local weather channels also provide apps for your cell phone to keep you connected to weather conditions.

LET'S GET MOVING! (cont'd)

moving handles or poles which provide an upper body workout. Disadvantages include difficulty of use for some people. It requires significant forward push to start and maintain the motion. Also, some machines have a pre-set stride length, making them more difficult to use for people with a shorter or longer stride. As with treadmills, maintenance requirements may become an issue.

My personal preference: I have always enjoyed exercising and the stress relief that it provides me. I will admit that since my current battle with cancer and the relentless side effects of my chemotherapy, I don't exercise as regularly as I would like. Being an exercise enthusiast, I have collected quite a bit of equipment through the years. My husband and I do have a basement in our home and have a stationary bike, treadmill, and an elliptical trainer. My preference in equipment has changed since my amputation. I used to prefer the treadmill and used it quite frequently when weather didn't permit for a walk outdoors. Once I lost my leg, I found that the treadmill became more difficult for me to use. I had to adjust the speed to a much lower rate due to my gait change. I also struggled more when trying to raise the incline. I found myself holding on to the handrails for balance instead of swinging my arms as I once did. My husband's preference is the elliptical trainer, but I find it difficult to use because of the pre-set stride length. I have found what works best for me is my recumbent stationary bike. It eliminates the need for an even gait and maintaining my balance isn't an issue. I can easily adjust the intensity of my workout, and can use small hand weights while pedaling to get some upper body exercise while pedaling. The bike doesn't make any noise, so I can even enjoy watching my favorite programs on HGTV while riding. In other words, I have found something that I can physically accomplish and enjoy doing. Another advantage for me is that I can exercise in my home which makes it more convenient.



For some the thought of hopping on a bike or treadmill may be too boring. The cost of purchasing this equipment may make it out of reach for some. Next month, I will discuss other ways to get that much needed aerobic exercise. So if I haven't mentioned anything that appeals to you yet, don't give up. There's more to come, so **let's get moving!!**

FEBRUARY UPCOMING EVENTS

MEETINGS:

Feb. 19th, Mon., 6:30 - 8:00 pm at Southern IN Rehab Hospital, 3104 Blackiston Blvd., New Albany, IN, in the Education Conference Room.

Feb. 24th, Sat., 2:00 - 4:00 pm at Norton Brownsboro Medical Plaza 1, 4950 Norton Healthcare Blvd., Louisville, KY, Room 301B. A presentation will be given by staff from Commonwealth Pain & Spine and St. Jude/Abbott Medical on pain management. This will be a great opportunity to learn about new options for relief of both phantom and residual limb pain.

EVENTS:

Sat., Feb. 24th, a Health & Wellness Fair is being held at the Harrison Co. Hospital in Corydon, IN, from 9:00 - 11:00 am. Free health screenings and information will be available. **Moving Forward** will have a booth there.



Sat., March 10th, from 5:00 - 8:00 pm we will be hosting our March Madness Soup & Chili Supper at the Okolona Fire Station, 8501 Preston Hwy., Louisville, KY. There will be a soup and chili cook-off with prizes being awarded to both Judge's Choice and People's Choice in each category. A best-dressed fan contest will also be held, so be sure and wear your favorite team apparel. There will be an admission fee of \$5.00/person for all the soup, chili, hotdogs, and dessert you can eat. Children 12 & under can eat for free. All proceeds will be donated to the Amputee Coalition Paddy Rossbach Summer Youth Camp. You are asked to bring a pot of soup or chili for the competition or a dessert. Hotdogs, drinks, crackers, and utensils will be provided. Parking and the entrance is in the back of the building. We will be on the 2nd floor and an elevator is available. Please plan on attending this fun event!!

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Attending a summer camp is a wonderful way for children or teens with limb loss to develop new skills, gain confidence, and make new friends. It is a place for them to experience all the fun of your typical summer camp, but in a safe environment with specially trained staff and among their peers. We encourage you to check out the following links to camps to see if it is something your child or grandchild with limb loss may enjoy. There are also opportunities for camp counselors and volunteers.

### Amputee Coalition Paddy Rossbach Youth Camp:

<https://www.amputee-coalition.org/events-programs/youth-camp/> The deadline to apply is **Mar. 2, 2018**, and the camp runs June 11 - 16, 2018. The camp is for children 10-17 years of age. A leadership camp is held for young adults ages 18 - 19. There is no cost for attending and transportation is included. An application is also available for camp counselors at this website. The camp is located at the Joy Outdoor Education Center in Clarksville, OH.

### Camp No-Limits:

<http://nolimitsfoundation.org/camp-no-limits-overview/>

Camps are held at various locations and dates and are for children and their families. There is a \$500.00 fee/camper and transportation is not provided. Scholarships are available as well as resources for raising funds. Volunteers are needed.

### Adventure Amputee Camp:

<https://adventureamputeecamp.org> The camp is held July 11 - 15, 2018. Registration is opening soon. The camp is held at the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Bryson City, NC, and is for children ages 7 - 16. The only cost to campers is a \$25.00 registration fee which can be waived due to financial hardship.



## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

**Moving Forward** will be holding an Amputee Coalition Peer Visitor Certification class on Sat., May 12, 2018. The class will be held in the board room at the Okolona Fire Station, 8501 Preston Hwy. in Louisville. The course will be instructed by Valerie Gibbs, an AC Certified Peer Trainer and Coordinator of Amputee Rehab at Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital in Lexington, KY. A fee of \$10.00 will be charged by the Amputee Coalition to cover the cost of course materials. *All participants are also required to get a criminal background check. The fee for this is \$37.00. Once you have been accepted into the class, you will receive a link by email telling how to obtain the background check.* This course is open to both amputees and caregivers. Pre-registration is required, and you are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Qualifications and an application are available at our website: [ampmovingforward.com](http://ampmovingforward.com) or by contacting Belinda at 812-620-3694. It is a full day class, and the time will be announced later. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

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KATE'S KITCHEN

Heart-Shaped Cake without a Heart-Shaped Pan!!

Use any cake mix, even boxed mix. Use a square & a round pan. Cut your circle in half and arrange on the square to make a heart. Spread on your favorite icing. There you have it!! An easy heart-shaped cake without a heart-shaped pan!!

Perfect for your valentine! Try Red Velvet!! Or even brownies!!



Krafty Kids by Katie

Love Birds: Valentine's Day Bird Feeders

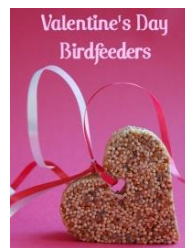
Here's the recipe:

3/4 cup flour
1/2 cup water
1 envelope unflavored gelatin (2-1/2 teaspoons)
4 cups birdseed

Spray a spoon with cooking spray; then mix all ingredients together in a large bowl. Next, spray the inside of your cookie cutter with cooking spray, and place it on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Fill it with the birdseed mixture. Be sure to really pack it down. In retrospect, I wish I would have sprayed another spoon with cooking spray and used the back of it to help pack it down. It would have made for two smooth sides, instead



of one. Once you have your cookie cutter full, use something (we used a chop stick) to make a hole. Then, holding down the birdseed, pull off the cookie cutter. Be careful; will be flimsy. I had to respray the cookie cutter after every four, and with a 2-1/2 inch cookie cutter I made 12 feeders. Let them firm up overnight, and then they are ready to hang or give away!



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FUN WITH WORD SCRAMBLES ANSWERS (from Page 2)

LAUGHTER, COMMITMENT,
DEVOTED, ENGAGED, ADMIRE,
AFFECTION, ROMANCE

LOVE IS IN THE AIR.



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