Palisade woman carves fruit in memory of days gone by

By ERIN McINTYRE
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Debra Browne, 66, of Palisade carves faces into apples that dry to become dolls. She uses techniques she learned from her grandmother and stepmother and can carve an apple in 30 minutes if she’s listening to good music.

Browne said, “They wrinkle so good.” Different apple varieties dry quicker or slower than others, but they all ultimately are only about one-third of the size they were before they were carved.

“I like the green Granny Smiths,” Browne said. “They wrinkle so good.” The apple dolls bring to mind a world where those who lived in the country had to make their own fun, and made do with what they had on hand.

Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote about makeshift dolls in “Little House in the Big Woods,” which was set in the 1800s.

Wilders have had sisters. Mary had a superior doll fashioned from rags to play with in the attic alongside their pumpkins stowed for winter. Laura had only a corncob wrapped in a handkerchief, but it was a good doll. It was named Su-san. It went Susan’s fault that she was only a corncob,” Wilder wrote.

Each apple Debra Browne carves develops its own personality as it dries. Browne uses salt to dehydrate and preserve the apples.

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FROM THE ARCHIVE

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From the Archive shares photos and vignettes from The Daily Sentinel’s past, the first Sunday of each month.

About 20 years ago around Halloween, local dog trainer Sandy McFarland dressed up her very well-behaved golden retrievers as ghosts complete with jack-o’-lanterns.

While her dogs weren’t really happy about becoming ghosts, they obeyed McFarland, and I got this photo.

After the photo published in The Daily Sentinel, I sent it on to The Associated Press. It was picked up by a lot of newspapers around the country and beyond.

I even had a friend who was teaching English in Japan who saw the photo in one of the local papers and sent me a copy.

The photo later appeared on a line of birthday and Halloween greeting cards.

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CHRISTOPHER TOMLINSON/ The Daily Sentinel

Photos by CHANCEY BUSH/ The Daily Sentinel

The Daily Sentinel’s past, the first Sunday of each month.

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