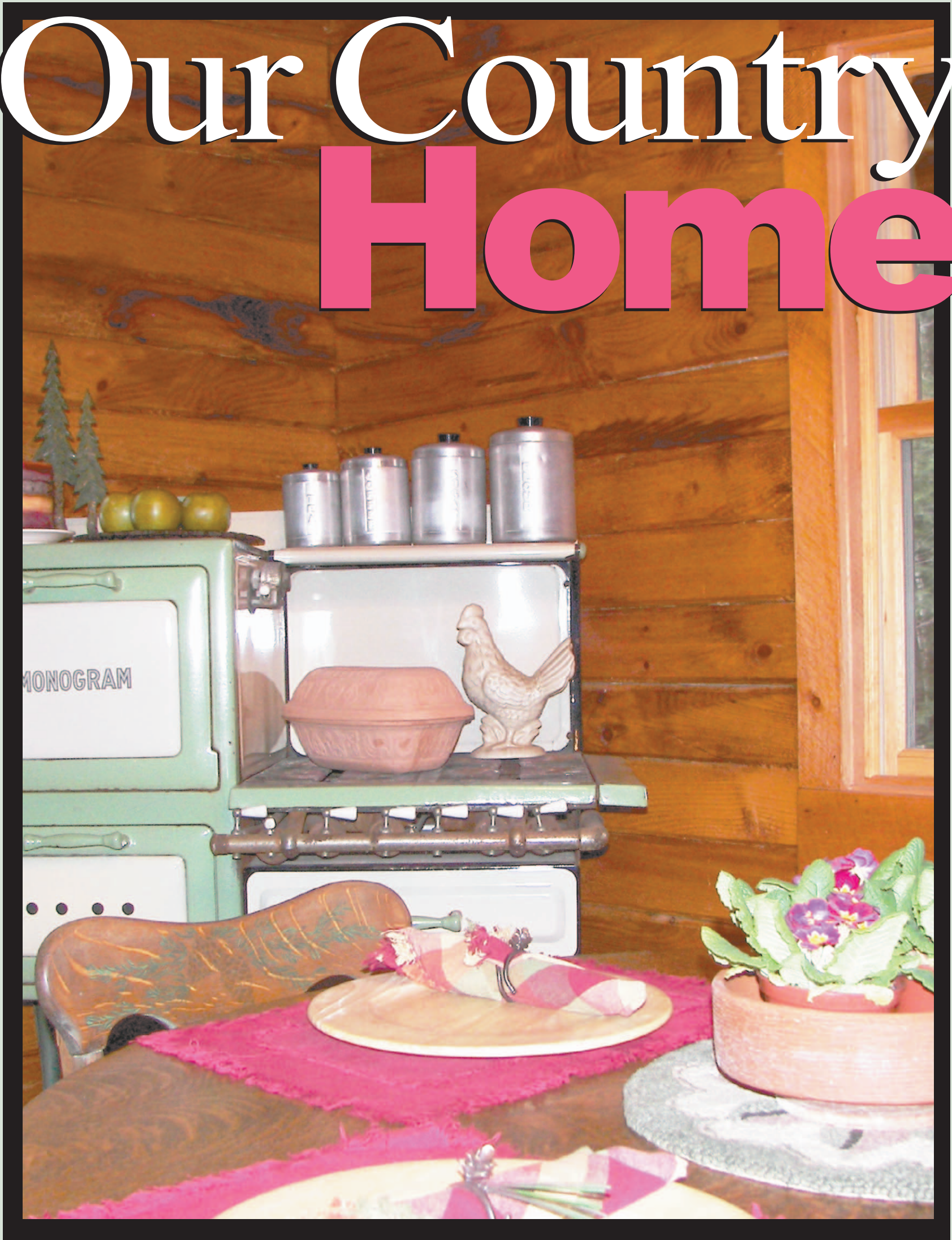


Our Country Home



THE RIVER REPORTER

Winter 2006

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Our Country Home

Beat the winter blues

This edition of **Our Country Home** launches a new format. The four issues to be published this year will include columns focusing on ways you can enjoy your home and the country life. Each issue will feature a unique country home and columns on gardening, decorating, entertaining, crafts, cooking, art and renovating.

Gale and Frank Rivera built the featured home in this issue, and as they did, they discovered the community spirit of country life when they set out to build their log cabin.

The column, *Life in the Country*, explains the process of making maple syrup, a quintessential country activity. After you read the article, you may want to visit one of the local farms where maple syrup



Marcia Nehemiah
Section Editor

is made or try some of the maple syrup recipes.

Cabin fever may already have struck, but it's not too late to spruce up your home. Small, inexpensive touches can brighten up your home as you wait for spring's arrival. You may even try a bright coat of paint to add some color to a room.

Learning a new craft and planning your garden can also beat the winter doldrums. And nothing is more rejuvenating than entertaining friends. Two local chefs give advice on how to be an anxiety-free host at your next, or first, dinner party.

Spring is just around the corner, and we're all thinking of warmer weather that brings burgeoning life to the river valley. As we dream of the coming warm days, here are some ideas on jump-starting the season.



TRR photo by Marcia Nehemiah
Gale and Frank Rivera relax on the porch of their hand-built log cabin.

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Featured Home

More than a little help from family and friends

Frank and Gale Rivera share the home they built not only with their own muscle, but with a lot of help from family and friends.

9

Life in the Country

Sweet water runs as the days grow warm

Making maple syrup is a pure country-life activity. Learn about the process and about a Long Eddy family who has been tapping trees for over 60 years.

13

Cooking with...

Maple syrup

We tend to think of maple syrup for use on pancakes and waffles. Here are some recipes that use it for both sweet and savory dishes.

15

Country Crafting

It's not just for grandmas anymore

Learning how to knit or crochet can lead to making beautiful decorative objects to warm up your country home.

19

The Country Garden

Gardening resolutions

Our gardening columnist, Rosemary Mandeville, has some suggestion about how to pass the time until the first thaw, and what to do when you finally have that trowel in hand.

21

Decorate your Country Home

Cures for common cabin fever

Everyone has felt it as the winter progresses—that desire for a little sprucing up around the house. Some area decorators offer ideas on how to add simple, inexpensive touches to completely change the feeling of a room.

23

Renovating, Country Style

Where there's a wall

A simple coat of paint can transform a room. Here are some tips on what to consider when you embark on a journey with a paintbrush.

25

The Art of Living

Buy what you love for the home you love

Area gallery owners and operators give advice on how to buy art for your home.

27

Simply Entertaining

Serve it stress free

Don't be afraid to throw a party. Following some basic rules can make entertaining fun rather than a nail-biting trial.

THE RIVER REPORTER

Our Country
Home

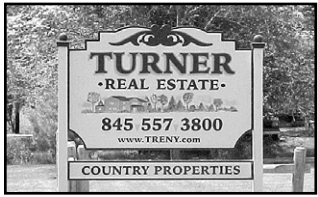
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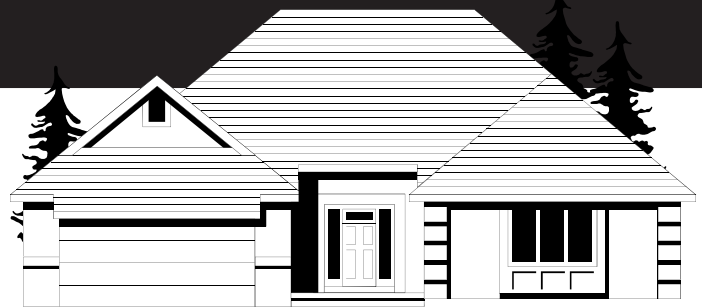
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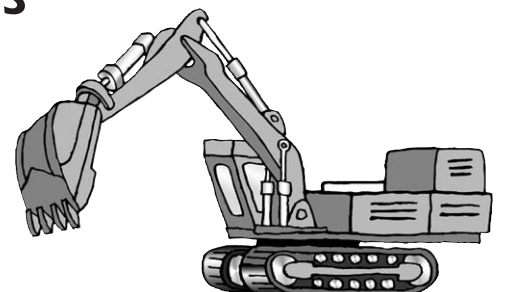
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OFFICE RT 52 YOUNGVILLE

More than a little help from family and friends

By MARCIA NEHEMIAH

Franks and Gale Rivera remember most fondly the collaborative effort that unfolded as they tackled the job of building their 1,000 square-foot log cabin in the woods just outside of Narrowsburg, NY.

"There's no way we could have done it without everyone's help," said Frank. "If it were just the two of us working on it, this house would never exist."

They started building in August of 2003. By late fall they feared the house would not be enclosed by the time the bad weather came. Town of Tusten code enforcer, Stephen Stuart, whom Gale described as "wildly supportive," showed up one day with six volunteers, all members of the Beach Lake Unitarian Fellowship and strangers to the Riveras, who spent the day helping them build.

For two years, "every weekend without fail," said Frank, the Riveras trekked to the building site from their home in Little Falls, NJ, "working relentlessly" no matter what the weather. Friends in Matamoras, Rick and Lin Jung, not only housed them but also worked with them on the building. Rick's brother Craig, a master carpenter, also proved indispensable. One friend, a plumber who lives in Colorado, happened to be visiting the area and was able to install all the plumbing.

Friends and family who helped the Riveras often endured days filled with rain, cold, snow and mayflies, said Gale, but at night Frank and Gale and the tired workers gathered for picnics and bonfires, turning the toil into a time for bonding and creating enduring friendships.

"If it were just the two of us working on it, this house would never exist."



TRR photos by Marcia Nehemiah

The kitchen cabinets were bought unfinished on the Internet and painted to suit the Riveras' style.

Setting priorities

For their weekend home, the couple choose a parcel of land based on their wish list: they wanted their home to be on a dirt road, not too far from the river, reasonably close to a town center with a supermarket, drug store and other conveniences, and they wanted something with interesting topography and a water element.

"Something kept bringing us back here," said Frank, even though they looked at other parcels of land.

Their cabin sits within walking distance of two ponds and has an active spring on the property.

They had clear ideas of the kind of home they wanted, something simple with a rustic, lodge feeling. "We wanted to build a log home because it would look like it belonged here. We didn't want a McMansion with vinyl siding," said Gale.

Continued on page 7



All the home's furnishings came from garage sales, estate sales and flea markets. Many of the pieces were refinished. Gale united the kitchen hutch with the dining chairs and chest by stenciling pine branches on all the pieces. The table was originally painted green. "We thought we'd take a chance with it," said Frank, and as they stripped the paint they found flawless, beautifully grained oak.




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More than a little help from family and friends

Continued from page 5

"It took us a while to find a company because it was hard to build small," she said. They worked with West Adirondack Log Homes. Bruce Dennison, the owner of the small company, cuts the logs and mills them himself. He helped the couple adapt an existing floor plan and guided them on the more difficult aspects of the actual building, providing one full day of onsite instruction.

Gale said that the process of building a log home is relatively simple. "You need to be able to measure, lift and cut with a chain saw," she said.

They cleared a small plot for the 20 x 30 foot house, rather than following the suggestion of one excavator who wanted to clear a 200 x 200 foot building site. "We wanted to keep the trees," said Frank.

Since logs are a natural insulator and the couple use the house only

on weekends, fuel costs are minimal. In winter, they keep thermostat set at 40 degrees during the week so they don't have to drain pipes, and they heat with their wood stove on weekends.

They also installed radiant insulation in the ceiling and foundation. Fuel consumption in the cold months is about 10 gallons of propane a week.

Total relaxation

"This is a real weekend getaway," said Frank. Former campers, the couple have traded their tent for this cabin where they see wildlife such as porcupines, grey fox, wild turkey, hawks and flying squirrels, and they revel in watching the night sky.

"This is wooden Prozac," said Frank. "When we come here, the week just vanishes." The couple do not have television reception, which Gale said they don't miss. "We relax and watch the trees wave in the breeze and that's enough entertainment."



The cabin does not have closets, so Gale devised inventive and decorative storage solutions. Three old leather suitcases purchased for 25 cents apiece provide storage for clothes

"This is wooden Prozac."



The open floor plan of the cabin unites the eating, kitchen and living room areas.



To preserve the intimate atmosphere reminiscent of a lodge, the couple didn't put up a wall between the sleeping sections of the upstairs loft.



TRR photos by Marcia Nehemiah
Compared to the other rooms of the house, the bathroom is relatively large because, said Gale, it serves as the cabin's private changing room.



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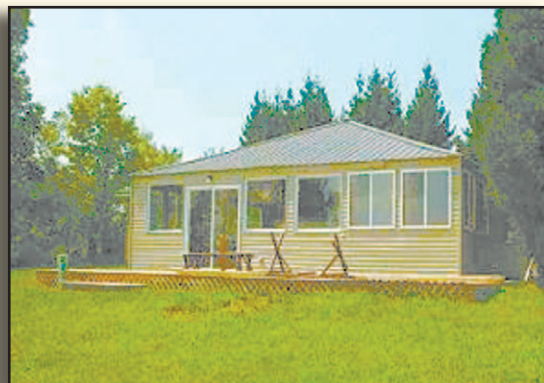
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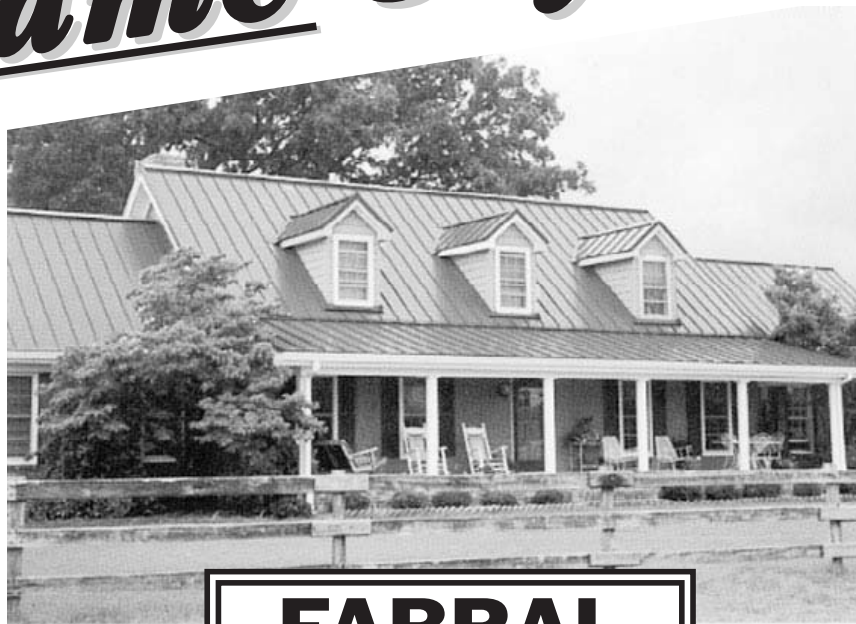
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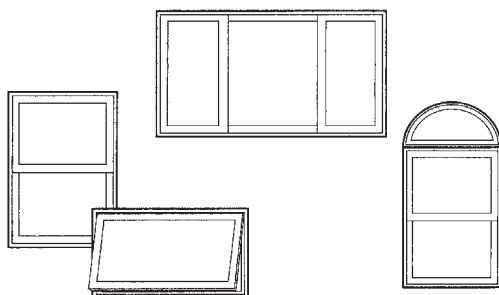
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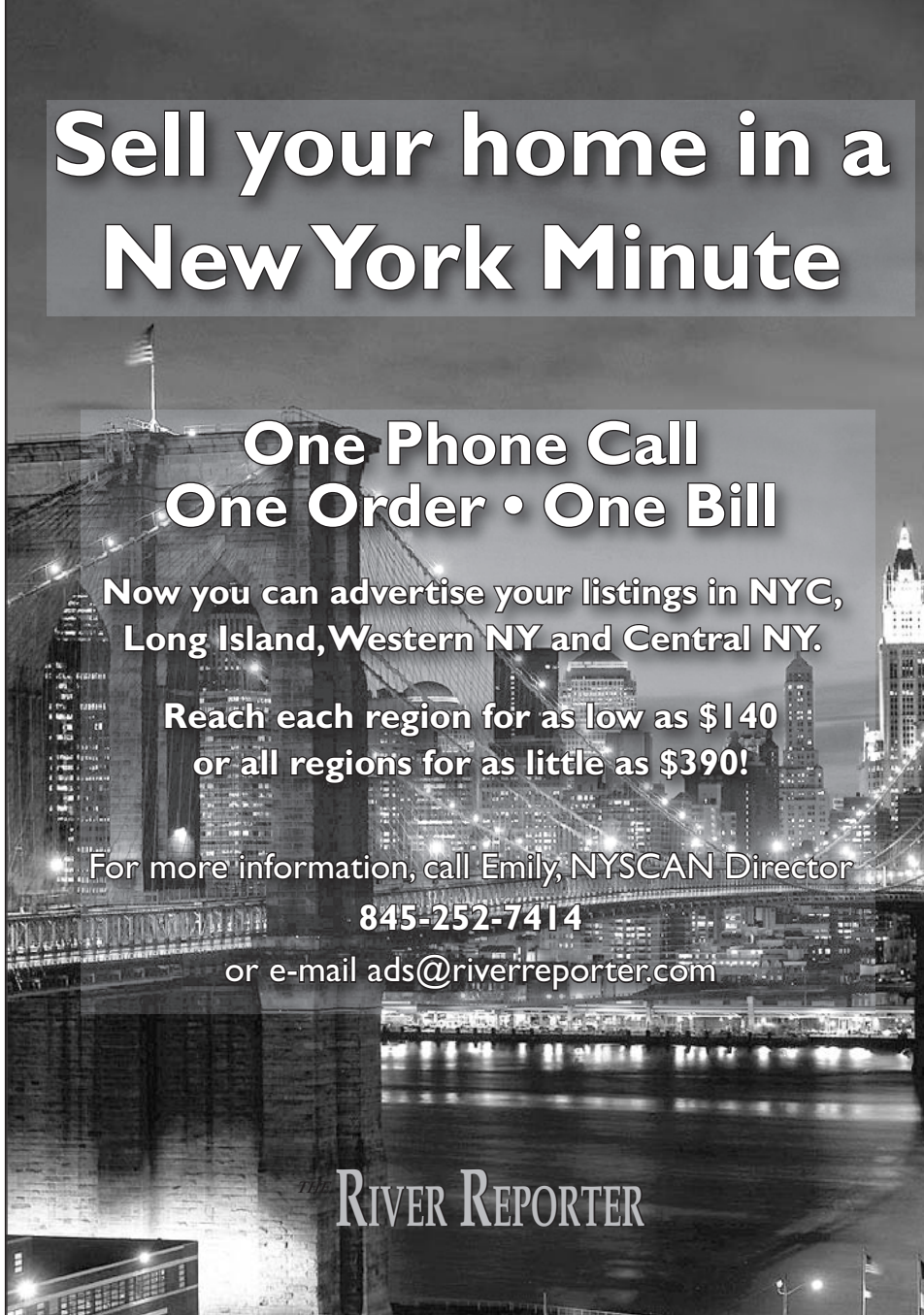
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RIVER REPORTER

Sweet water runs as the days grow warm

By DEBRA CONWAY

The Andersen family knows that when nature awakes from its winter slumber, it's the trees that wake up first.

As days grow warmer and the nights remain cold, the lifeblood of the maple trees begins to rise.

Native Americans celebrated this phenomenon of spring as the "maple moon" or "sugar moon" as they were the first to discover, hundreds of years ago, that the "sweet water" running in the trees at that time could be boiled down to a delectable syrup. They cut diagonal slashes with a tomahawk in each lower trunk and inserted a hollow reed through which the sap dripped into a small bark con-

tainer. These were subsequently taken to bigger bark or log containers where fire-heated stones were dropped into them until the sap had boiled down to a dark, sweet syrup.

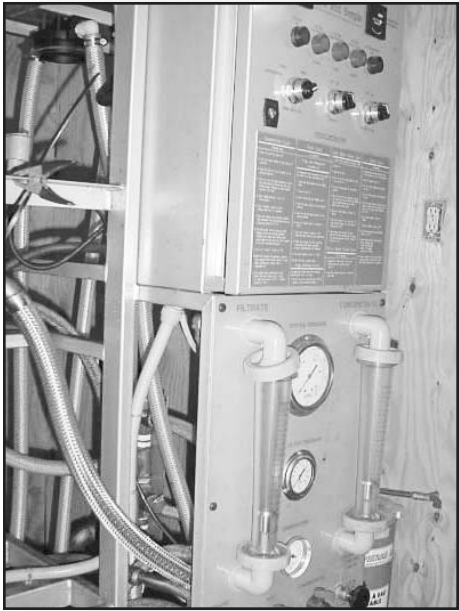
Early European settlers were delighted to learn this process, replacing bark vessels with wood or metal pails and large cast-iron kettles hung by chains over boiling fires. Indeed, the "maple moon" or "sugaring off" period remained a special occasion on the country calendar for generations.

But it was World War II that brought the Andersens to the art. Since the Depression, when the family first bought the property, their Long Eddy homestead had produced only some dairy products and plentiful cauliflower crops. "But during the war, you couldn't get sugar," said August Andersen, the family patriarch, who eventually purchased the farm from his parents in 1955. "So we made our own."

Back then, they used metal buckets and spiles (taps) to collect the sap. Typically, one tap supported a tree 10 inches in diameter, two taps for a 15-inch tree and three for a 20-inch tree. An average maple tree will produce approximately 15 gallons of sap from each tap hole per season.

Now a complex network of color-coded plastic tubing conducts the sap from smaller tubes to larger tubes, to still larger tubes. About a third of the 9,000 taps the Andersens drill flow directly into the sap house, where stainless-steel holding tanks can hold up to 6,000 gallons of waiting-to-be-processed sap. Some of the tubing empties into large metal vats in the woods that will be picked up by August and Irene's son Peter, who now runs the operation, and delivered by tractor to the holding tanks at the sap house.

Continued on page 15



A reverse osmosis machine is used to evaporate about 70 percent of the water content of sap. Working like a dialysis machine, it separates and eliminates about 70 percent of the water content, reducing the sap to a sugary concentrate. This concentrate is then cooked in a steamy evaporator at about 212 degrees, depending on high or low air pressure that day. Calibrating the exact temperature at which the sap boils is critical, Irene says, particularly in the making of confections.

"Native Americans celebrated this phenomenon of spring as the 'maple moon'."



TRR photos by Debra Conway
Irene Andersen bottles jugs of maple syrup at the Andersen Maple Farm in Long Eddy, New York.



Peter Andersen checks the density of a batch of maple syrup.

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Life in the Country

Continued from page 9

When the sap arrives from the tree, it has about a two-percent sugar content. The evaporation process will condense it to a 66-percent sugar content in the syrup. The object, said Peter, is to pass the sap through the evaporation process as quickly as possible. For one thing, it reduces the amount of fuel necessary to run the oil-fired evaporators. (Usually it takes about one gallon of fuel oil to make one gallon of syrup, he said.) And a quicker process insures a better grade of syrup.

To hasten the evaporation process, Peter runs the sap through a reverse osmosis machine.

When the concentrate reaches the desired density, 11¾ pounds per gallon according to a hydrometer, it is pulled off in 10-gallon batches to go through the stainless finishing pan, then a series of filters. This removes sugar sand, a natural impurity, and any other debris that may have gotten into the evaporator. From there it is canned in various-sized containers for market.

All told, Peter said, when they're

cooking, they can process 400 gallons of sap an hour.

Although the tubing lines have been sterilized and strung through the woods since January, and the taps drilled since about Valentines Day, the bulk of the collection doesn't really get going until around St. Patrick's Day, depending on the weather. The slower the thaw, the better the volume of sap.

"When everybody else is looking for tulips and daffodils, we're hoping for snow sap," Irene said.

Some springs, the weather turns warm so quickly the sap only runs for a week or so. Other years, the frost in the ground surrounding the trees breaks up more gradually, and the sap will run into April, when the leaf buds first form on the trees. During those "maple moons" the Andersens have to hustle to keep up.

"Basically, when the sap runs, I run," said Peter.

For a tour during maple season, call Andersen's Maple Farm, 534 Andersen Road in Long Eddy, NY, at 845/887-4238 or 845/887-4817.

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Maple syrup

Maple syrup is not just for pancakes and waffles, said Irene Andersen, matriarch of the Andersen Maple Farm in Long Eddy, NY and a retired home economics teacher. With the sap running and

the “maple moon” upon us, here are a few sweet and savory recipes Andersen has shared over the years as a maple syrup demonstrator at the New York State fair.

Baked Acorn Squash

Cut an acorn squash in half, remove seeds and fill the cavity with maple syrup and butter. Place in a shallow baking pan with small amount of water. Bake in a 375-degree oven for 1 hour.

Maple Roast Chicken with Winter Vegetables

2 tablespoons melted butter
1 roasting chicken (6-7 lbs.)
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon dried rosemary
¾ cup pure maple syrup

Your choice of 4 harvest vegetables (carrots, parsnips, winter squash, celery, onions, sweet potatoes) peeled and cut into chunks.

Spread vegetables evenly in a roasting pan. Place chicken on top. Brush melted butter over the top of the bird and sprinkle with salt, pepper and rosemary. Place in a 400 degree oven and baste every 10 minutes with maple syrup. When you run out of syrup, baste with pan juices. Roast until chicken is golden brown and juices run clear, about 1 1/2 hours. Let stand 10 minutes before carving. Serves 4-6.

Maple Apple Crisp

4 cups tart apples
2 tablespoons lemon juice
¾ cup flour
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup granulated maple sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
⅓ cup butter

Peel, slice and place apples in a 8 x 8-inch baking dish. Sprinkle lemon juice over apple slices. In a separate bowl, mix together flour, salt, granulated maple sugar, cinnamon and butter. Spread flour mixture over apple slices. Bake in a 375-degree oven for 40 minutes.

Serve warm with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

Maple Pecan Pie

¼ cup butter
½ cup sugar
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup dark maple syrup
3 eggs
1 cup pecan halves
1 unbaked 9-inch pastry shell

Melt the butter; add the sugar, salt, maple syrup and eggs. Beat the mixture with a rotary beater until it is well blended. Add the pecans, breaking large halves in two. Pour the filling into the unbaked pastry shell. Bake at 375 degrees for about 35 minutes or until filling is set when the pie is shaken gently.

Cool the pie before serving.



TRR photo by Debra Conway

Irene Andersen uses a grading kit to determine the color of a batch of syrup. New York State recognizes two grades, NYS Grade A, which is what the Andersens produce, and NYS Grade B, which is used for cooking. There are three kinds of Grade A syrup, determined by color using a grading kit: Light Amber, which is used for Irene's confections of maple butter and maple sugar candies, Medium Amber and Dark Amber, used as table syrup.

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It's not just for grandmas anymore

By MARCIA NEHEMIAH

It's hot. Everyone is doing it. Absent a teacher, people resort to the Internet to learn the skill. Podcasts are cropping up. Even men are taking up the hooks and needles.

We're talking, of course, about knitting and crocheting.

Jill Deal, proprietor of jilldeal, inc in Milford, PA said that people are returning to the ancient craft of knitting because of the many benefits of the activity. "Knitting is sharing one's talent and heart. It is carrying on a tradition and creating a legacy," she said.

She also cited recent evidence that suggests the healthful benefits of the craft. "It brings the heart rate down, fosters relaxation and focuses attention. The result is something beautiful."

It isn't hard to learn the basics, she said, noting that she taught a knitting intensive to people who had never knit a stitch in their lives, and after the six-hour class, the participants went home with a scarf.

Among the simplest items to make for your home are pillows and blankets. One of Deal's customers knit cotton washcloths and wrapped them around bars of French soap she bought in the gift shop next to jilldeal, inc, Up River.

Another great gift idea is an afghan for a college student in the college colors. Carla Giuffrida, knitting instructor in The Crafts Corner at 4 Corners of Artful Living in Narrowsburg, NY, said that more and more people are tackling projects for the home. "Afgans and pillows don't have to fit and do not involve the complications of shaping. It's soothing knitting," she said, since the knitter needs to know only how to cast on, knit, purl and cast off. She also said that felting, the process of shrinking hand knitting in the washing machine's hot water cycle, is a popular way to create pillow covers, rugs, tea cozies and place mats. "When something is felted, it's indestructible and lasts forever," she said.



TTR photos by Marcia Nehemiah

Susan Gross, pictured standing in blue shawl, conducts a class of knitters at her shop, Knit One, Needlepoint Too in Monticello, NY.

Join the circle

Knitting circles, where people gather to knit and talk and bond while making beautiful and utilitarian objects, are a good place to learn the craft. On the second and fourth Friday of every month, jilldeal, inc hosts Sit and Knit, any time after 5:00 p.m.

Deal's shop also offers a wide array of classes for all skill levels, from basic Knitting 101 and Crocheting 101 to more complex techniques and classes that focus on garments such as sweaters, ponchos, mittens and socks. She has started a 4-H group in which she involves not only the young women who attend, but also their mothers.

Giuffrida offers classes in knitting and crocheting as well as a Sunday Knit In from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. She will teach a class on knitting felted flowers in March.

Continued on page 21



A sampler afghan on display at jilldeal, inc is not only beautiful but also a way for a knitter to learn more complex stitches, which give a piece interest and variety.

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E. BROADWAY, MONTICELLO

It's not just for grandmas anymore

Continued from page 15

Charity

A self-declared "yarnoholic," Susan Gross opened her Monticello, NY shop, Knit One Needlepoint Too (k1n2), in 2004. Attesting to the growth in popularity of handcrafts, Gross' customer list has grown to over 1200 from 600 just two years ago.

At the shop, patrons find not only yarns for knitting and crocheting, but needlepoint canvases ranging in price from eight to 300 dollars. When complete, canvases can be framed or fit into beautiful seat covers or lacquered boxes. The store offers extensive knitting and crocheting workshops and classes.

Gross and her customers have become involved in many charity knitting activities. The shop is a drop-off point for Project Linus, a national volunteer organization that donates hand-made blankets to children suffering serious illness and trauma. She and her customers have also collected hand-knit and crocheted items for hurricane and tsunami victims, and she holds a class for underprivileged and challenged children who, after they learn to knit or crochet, sell the items they make to raise money for their families.

Gross said she can teach the knit stitch to someone in "12 to 15 minutes. Purling takes another two minutes." She said, "I love teaching. I've been teaching knitting for 35 years. My friends call me the knitting doctor," since she cures all her friends' knitting problems.

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Suggested reading:

"Classic Home" by Rowan
"Comforts of Home" by Erika Knight
"Hand Knits for the Home" by Caroline Birkett
"Knitting for your Home" by Nicky Epstein



This pillow was knit first and then felted, or shrunk in the washing machine.



Wendy Kaufman, proprietor, along with her husband Dale, of 4 Corners in Narrowsburg, NY, knit a square out of self-stripping sock yarn, bought clock works at a craft shop and assembled this clock, using mismatched buttons to indicate the hours.



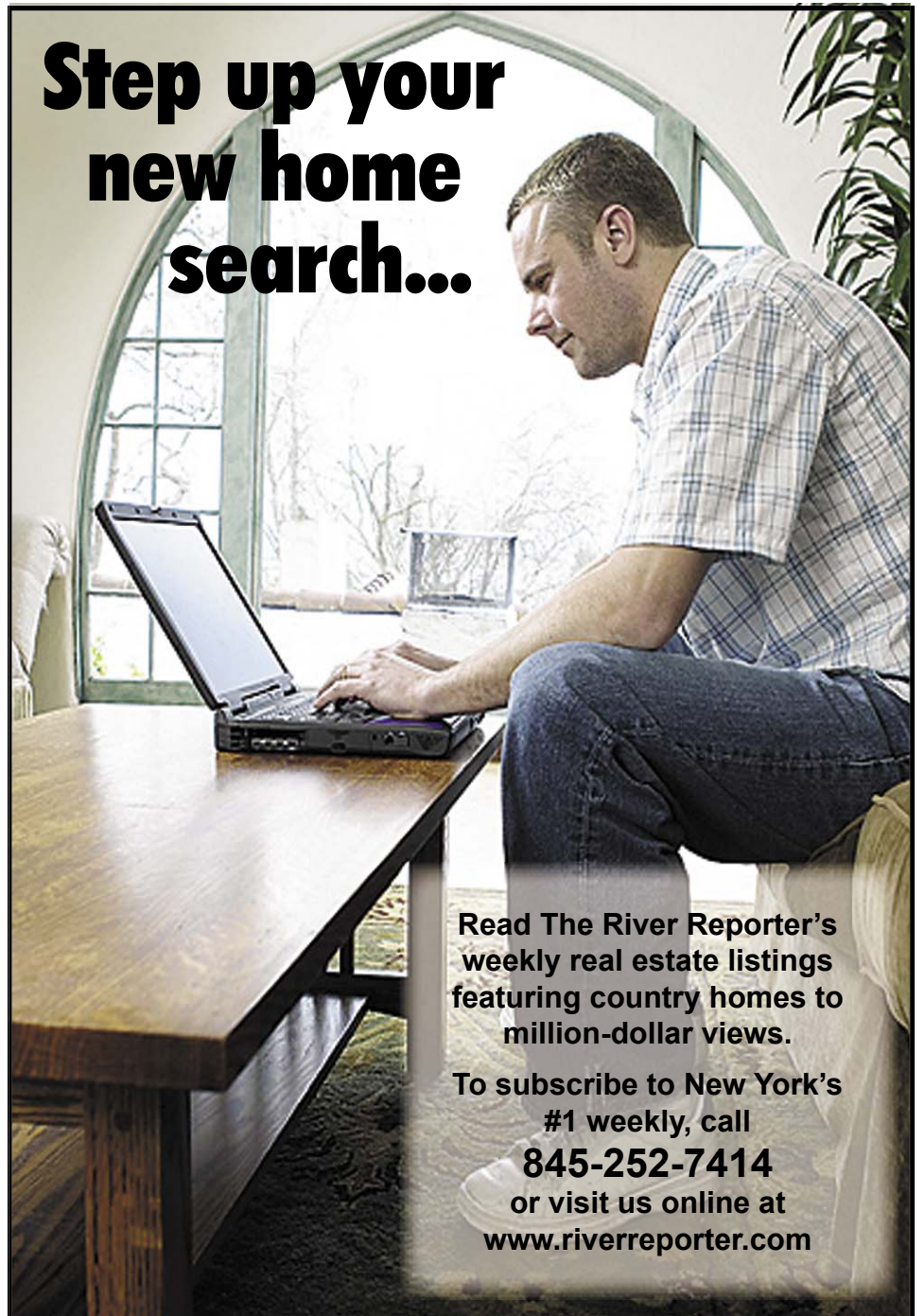
TRR photos by Marcia Nehemiah
In addition to staples like wool, cotton and other natural fiber yarns, new novelty yarns add pizzazz and funky style to projects.

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Cures for common cabin fever

By DEBRA CONWAY

Got cabin fever? Then it's time to spruce up the cabin!

It doesn't have to be complicated or cost a fortune. A little ingenuity and creativity in decorating can improve your mental health and appreciation of home and hearth until the robins return in a few weeks.

Nothing has as dramatic an effect as a simple can of paint. Do a wall. Do a room. Paint will brighten and freshen any space. You can go with the trendy beiges or taupes that you see in the Pottery Barn or Crate and Barrel catalogs, if you want a very modern look, says Michelle Weiss, owner and resident interior designer of La Shed du Fred in Callicoon, NY

(845/887-6888). But she thinks it's more important to choose your favorite color or combinations of colors to determine your theme.

"We don't change our [design] philosophy to coincide with trends," said the transplanted Manhattanite, who has decorated upscale hotels, restaurants and businesses across the country. "We think it's a matter of creating what feels comfortable and friendly for you and your family."

Weiss suggested starting with what she calls the "meditative spaces," the bedroom and the bath.

"I find that nothing feels as luxurious and uplifting as new linens," she said. "A new set of sheets and spread or comforter in the bedroom,

or a new set of towels, shower curtain or area rug in the bath will change the whole demeanor of a room."

Kevin Holley of Up River Home (570/296-2026) in Milford, PA, agrees. He favors his line of Mistral bath products—gels, lotions, soaps and candles—to brighten up a bathroom.

"Lovely candles, particularly those with certain scents can be very calming," said Weiss.

In the living area, both Holley and Weiss agree that new furniture slipcovers—particularly those washable and changeable with each season—and perhaps new throw pillows, will enliven the decor.

A vase of fresh flowers will also go a long way toward bringing spring to a room. Or use silk flowers until the real ones bloom.

"And don't forget the window garden," said Weiss. "Even a coffee can, some dirt or potting soil, some bulbs or a packet of seeds forced indoors during this time of year will soon make you think spring is on the way."

Similarly, a cozy armchair, surrounded by new houseplants—a Boston Fern on a pedestal, perhaps—will bring new life to any winter landscape.

And by that armchair, try a new lamp, Holley said. A colored or textured shade, beaded, or stained glass will add pizzazz and a little brightness and bling to a room.

In the kitchen or dining area, try a couple of new, inexpensive curtain

"And don't forget the window garden."



TRR photos by Marcia Nehemiah

Forced bulbs and houseplants add a touch of color to drab winter windows.

panels. (Also applicable in the bed, bath, kitchen or living room.) Or find an artsy ceramic bowl for the countertop or family table and fill it with fresh fruit or vegetables of the season.

In any space, floors are also dominate. In addition to colorful area rugs, Weiss suggests stripping and staining old floors to give them new life. Painting floors, particularly in older homes where wood is very worn, is an option. Stenciling is another option.

This is the time of year, Weiss said, to think about removing clutter. It's a

good time to reorganize, regroup and purge, she said. Wicker baskets are one way to accomplish that. So is a system of new shelving.

"A new piece of unfinished furniture designed for the task of storing or displaying is ideal," said Weiss. "Trying your hand at staining or finishing brings a new level of 'you,' into the mix. One thing leads to another, and pretty soon you have your own personality into the decor, and not just trends."



TRR photos by Debra Conway

A.A. El-Kamass, known professionally as Kamass, co-owner of La Shed du Fred in Callicoon, NY, shows one of the storage units he created. He builds bedding, dressers and storage units from recycled architectural units. Using beams from old barns, pillars from old buildings and woodwork made from old barn siding, he constructs new dressers, bedding, shelving and storage units/armoires with that vintage look.



A display of pottery can liven up the home. Fill the bowls with fresh fruit or vegetables. This kitchenware is displayed at La Shed du Fred.

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Gardening resolutions

By ROSEMARY MANDEVILLE

Happy New Year! Now, before you think I've had too much dandelion wine, let me assure you that I know that January 1st is well behind us. The beginning of a new year in the garden, though, is fast approaching, so it's time to make resolutions for the season ahead. Here are some of mine.

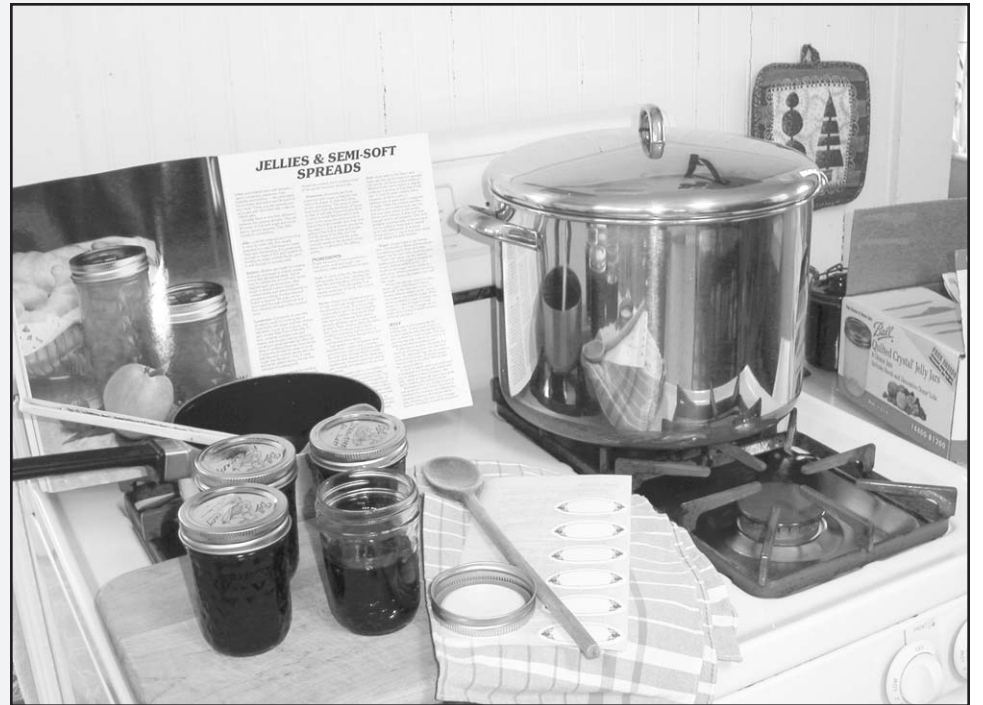
Keep a garden journal

"He who does not learn from history is bound to repeat it." Those words of wisdom are just as true in the garden as they are in world events. The best way to learn from your successes and failures is to keep a record of your gardening activities. It can be as simple or as complex as you wish, but you should at least record things like the vegetable varieties you've planted, ideas for a new flower bed or the date of the last frost. I keep a ring binder with to-do notes, plans and photos, and a file folder each year for receipts, pictures and descriptions of the things I ordered. On the receipts, I often write where the new shrub or perennial was planted. I also keep notes on when I planted different seeds, when they were transplanted, when they began to bloom, etc. That way, the next year I can adjust my planting dates accordingly. You'd be surprised how often the notebooks and files come in handy.

Learn a new skill

Instead of buying new plants this year, try starting a couple of things from seed, or divide that big clump of hosta to spread around the yard or among friends. Cut some forsythia and watch it take root. You can create a whole hedge if you want to. Save some seeds from a favorite flower or vegetable, plant them next year and see what happens. How about making some wine? Or jam? Whatever your current skills, take the next step to expand your garden knowledge.

"Each time you complete a mini-goal, pat yourself on the back."



TRR photos by Rosemary Mandeville

Support your local farmers markets. Use the produce you buy and grow to make jellies and jams.

Shop at a farmers market

Both Sullivan County, NY and Wayne County, PA have active farmers markets where everyone can have access to fresh, sometimes organic products, even if you don't have a garden of your own. Without our support, however, this valuable resource could disappear. Let's resolve to support our local farmers this year.

Read some good books or magazines

Whether for information or inspiration, books and magazines can get us into the garden even if it's only in our imagination. In my opinion, **Fine Gardening** and **Horticulture** magazines are about the best in the U.S. I'm also fond of the British magazines **Gardens Illustrated** and **Garden Design**. When your chores are done and you're ready to curl up with a good book, try "The Greater Perfection" by Francis H. Cabot. Filled with incredible photography, it brings you on a virtual tour of a beautiful garden along the Hudson river. If vegetables are one of your interests, try "This Organic Life: Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader" by Joan Dye Gussow. It's not a how-to book, but more a journey into the joys and politics of locally produced foods. Both books are available through both the Wayne and Sullivan County library systems.

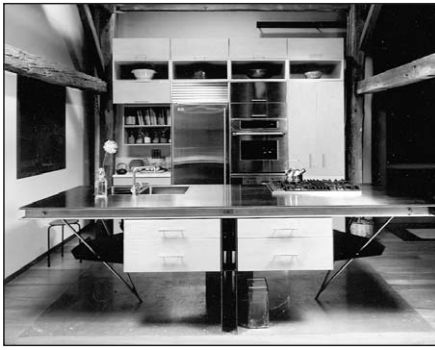
Set goals for the garden

A new season offers limitless opportunities to learn and grow, to make plans and dreams come true. Some goals may be long term, some may be completed in an hour or a day, but the important thing is to decide where you want to go and how you plan to get there. Write your goals down (in your garden journal, of course), then break down each goal into steps that can be completed in a reasonable time. Each time you complete a mini-goal, give yourself a pat on the back. If you keep completing mini-goals, it's impossible not to eventually reach the main goal.

I hope you'll join me in these garden resolutions, and perhaps add a few of your own. By setting goals, establishing new habits and charting a course for the next year, we can aim to have the best garden year ever.



Planning the coming season's garden journal and reading gardening magazines and books helps to pass the time until spring.



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Buy what you love

By MARY GREENE

Barry Becker and Tony Coscia look right at home in their elegantly furnished River Gallery in Narrowsburg, NY (845/252-3230). The couple spends time creating “vignettes” of various styles in the gallery that incorporate American and Asian antique furniture, lighting, ceramics and art work. “We want to show the working relationship of interiors with art work,” said Becker. The gallery shows the work of a number of local artists, including Frank Holmes, Jill Mackie, Dennis Corrigan and Jim McGinley. “We keep our pieces conducive to the area. We want it to be organic. Everything is about wood, stone, water, fire.”

In addition to the artwork, the store carries fine food items, candles and soaps. Becker and Coscia emphasize affordability and service for their customers. “People are getting into entertaining and being at home. They want to be comfortable and to have beautiful, natural settings,” says Becker.

When creating a special display, work with what you have. Color is important and the various pieces should pick up the same colors. A Tibetan chest may pick up the same tones as a Mackie painting, for example, and the colors are duplicated again in the table-top accessories. It is good to add something that will give the whole area a “pop,” says Becker, such as a figurine or special vase.

Becker advises customers not to buy a name but to buy “art that you relate to, that makes you feel com-

fortable. Art is personal,” he said.

Jerry Horn of Jerico Fine Arts Gallery in Callicoon, NY (845/887-5990) agrees.

“My gallery features local artists or artists from New York City who have studios here,” he says. “The Upper Delaware River valley inspires them and they paint what they see.” Jay Brooks, a “true local,” says Horn, is his most popular artist.

Many of his customers are second-home owners. “When they come in, very few are buying for investment. What they are looking for is a beautiful landscape, something that reflects the area.

“Certainly,” says Horn, “a good piece of art will always increase in value.” But he advises customers to buy what is beautiful, what inspires and affects them. “I would rather see someone buy something they love and build the room around it” than purchase art to fit into a décor, he said.

Hortense Jacobs is director and curator of The ARTery Fine Arts and Fine Crafts gallery in Milford, PA (570/409-1234). The gallery began six or seven years ago as “a cooperative with about 20 artist members,” says Jacobs. The gallery hosts group shows and two-person shows, and “currently, shows are changing every three weeks, to coordinate with Milford’s ‘Art after Dark’ program,” she said. The gallery shows fine art, including that of renowned watercolorist Joan Ross and the whimsical oil paintings of Al Rosser, as well as sculpture, photography and jewelry.

Jacobs also finds that true art lovers will buy a piece they really connect



TRR photos by Marcia Nehemiah

Arrangements of art objects and paintings at The River Gallery in Narrowsburg, NY show how displays of art can look in one’s home.

with. “A lot of it is: how does it make you feel? And what are you going to use it for?” she said.

Galleries are “great places for small gatherings,” said Jacobs, and recently the Black Bear Film Festival held their reception at the ARTery.

“People think galleries mean art work,” said Becker of the River Gallery. But, he said, “a gallery is a showroom of art media, of painting, furniture, rugs, table top accessories. Showing the art of living.”

Guidelines for choosing art and creating room displays

- Work with what you have.
- Consider the space you are working with and what you want out of the space, whether it be a foyer, a dining area, mantle display or bedroom.
- Have fun creating “vignettes” around the artwork, incorporating lighting, rugs, furniture and tabletop accessories.
- Consider what technique and style you appreciate, and what mood you wish to create. Tones can be warm or cool; settings can be contemporary, modern, primitive or an eclectic mix.
- Colors should complement each other and add vibrancy.
- Choose art that you really like and that makes you feel at home.
- A good piece of art will increase in value over time.



Glass pieces can complement hanging art in the home. These pieces are available at the ARTery in Milford, PA.



Jerico Gallery features work of local artists. Jerry Horn, the gallery owner, urges collectors to buy what they love and then arrange décor around it.



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Where there's a wall

By JENNIFER O'REILLY

The promise of a coming spring often gives birth to inclinations for sprucing up.

Changing a wall surface can make seldom-used space more inviting or simply change a room's ambiance. Although sometimes daunting, it is always do-able. Regardless of your medium—paint, wallpaper or coverings such as wood or fabric, when the agony of the decision-making and preparatory steps are over, the actual procedure is a joy.

There are three principles to maintain as you contemplate and progress through a project. First, you can do it yourself, even if you've never attempted something like this before. Second, there will be forks and bumps along the road, so be flexible while keeping the end-goal in mind, and third, whatever you do does not have to be permanent.

This last truth is why I primarily use paint with an occasional paper border at chair rail or cornice level. That way, if I don't like how it's going, or if I commit a big boo-boo in operandi, either is easily remedied by simply repainting. Wall coverings, while rewarding, require removal if you decide in an hour, a day, month, year, or decade to make a change. The act of "undoing" even something you do not like, though cathartic, can be challenging. Otherwise, wouldn't all the walls in your house change with your moods as the years progressed?

It's also important to understand that, unless you are leaving a wall empty, whatever you plan to hang or place in front of it must be complemented by the treatment you are adding and not fight the wall itself. This, unfortunately, is why many shy from color, opting instead for what is believed to be safe. White.

White is not safe. White reflects all light, creating eye-tiring glare. It also represents deflection of the decision-making process and as per Webster's definition: white is "the lack of any color." Many designers and therapists have decreed it one

of the most depressing "colors" commonly used.

The good news is that most of us want to use color but can be intimidated by the prospect of choosing the "wrong" one. Paint specialty stores and departments can now so expertly match a paint color to anything you might venture to bring them, this need no longer be a worry. The true concern for the use of color is not which to use, but how much (its depth/tone as well as overall wall space) and where.

A general rule of thumb is big, bold colors require big space and big objects to provide balance in a room. In a bathroom, for example, if the door, vanity, commode and bath/shower are all white, they together comprise a big object that balances out a big color. Half walls, walls that feature art, mirrors and portraits can be painted in deep tones, but should lean toward the earth tones rather than vivid colors so that art and photos are not "hidden" on the wall.

"White is not safe."

For example, a texture technique called "suede painting" is simple, yet appears complex, giving the appearance of a rich, brushed suede fabric on the wall. I chose this treatment in a deep-toned buckskin brown as backdrop for artwork featuring Native American themes. The wall was imperfect, which was fine for this technique (less work, too) and I chose sanded paint specified for "sueding/suede painting." The first coat went on thickly and evenly, in an up and down (as opposed to side-to-side stroke) application. After waiting two full days for a completely dry surface, the last step was applied.

In four-foot by two-foot sections (visualized, not marked on the wall!), a series of overlapping X's were brushed (FULL of paint, mind you, no mincing on paint in this technique) downward from top to middle, then upward from bottom to middle. Then (again with a full brush) the middle was X-ed over and over, blending the upper and lower X-ed sections. As long as the paint was wet, the X's could be repeatedly brushed in. Alternating sizes, deepness and breadth of stroke added the depth and dimension that true



This rich color, Bruning Paint's "Butterscotch," complements an arrangement of vintage cross stitch samplers.

brushed suede shows. The only danger was in not moving quickly enough. If the edges dry, they become tacky and cannot be blended into the next four-foot by two-foot section.

The only downfall was that each stage had to be done in a single day. And be prepared: making lots of X's can be a little tiring.

The main component for successfully completion of a home decorating project is preparedness. Having the right tools, an adequate allotment of time and a complete understanding of the proper technique to achieve the effect desired are non-negotiable. Practice board, spare scraps of drywall or plain "laying around the garage" board are very useful for experimenting with brush-stroke and creating muscle memory.

So, if you desire to change your world, go forth and do it. And have some fun.

[Jennifer O'Reilly has painted, stenciled, wall papered and applied suede paint to the walls of her country home in PA.]



TRR photos by Marcia Nehemiah
Rather than safe white walls, consider using a vibrant color to accentuate décor and make furnishings pop.

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Serve it stress free

By JENNIFER O'REILLY

Whether you're having guests to dinner for the first time or need a kick-start back into the entertaining groove, here's a professionally advised checklist for pros and novices alike. Thankfully, the important aspects of an enjoyable dinner party for four or 40 are simple concepts easily divided into two categories.

Menu and preparation

Plan. Completely. Sheelah Kaye Stepkin of Torte Knox Recreational Cooking School in Hawley, PA (570/226-8200) recommends that entertaining engagements follow the French proverb, "mise en place" or everything in its place. If guests are coming to dinner Friday, she said, "the menu should be complete with the shopping done by Wednesday," excepting items such as bread where freshness is paramount. Always allow time for multiple trips to the grocer, and perhaps multiple grocers, since nothing seems to inspire an out-of-stock condition like a dinner party. Stepkin advised: "Cut, chop and measure out all the ingredients and set the table Thursday night. Then on Friday, all you need to do is mix everything together and cook it."

Be sure to directly ask guests about food allergies and preferences. You really want to avoid a premature end to your party because an ambulance arrives to cart a guest with shellfish allergies to the hospital before his throat swells shut. Are any guests vegetarians? If so, how "veggie" are they? No meat only? No meat, no eggs, no cheese?

In addition to being conscientious of an uncomfortable or even dangerous faux pas, Stanley Harper, chef at Main Street Café in Narrowsburg, NY, (845/252-7222) recommended that the main course "not distract from the gathering and be easy to eat. Take the chicken off the bone,"

for example, to allow guests to enjoy the conversation and not "have to be looking down at their plate" to navigate through the meal.

Each course offered should reflect the season. There's nothing worse than boiling hot soup on the hottest day of the year, and likewise, summer salad in the depth of a cold January just feels inappropriate. One exception—themed parties. For example, in the heart of February, when everyone is so tired of winter, a "tropical" theme can be great fun. Parasol drinks, shish-ka-bobs, crudités as opposed to hot appetizers are wonderful for rebelling against the doldrums of winter. The big caution for a thematic approach is: avoid subtlety. This is the time for all-out hokiness. Let your guests know your theme in advance and let them in on the fun. Remember, the danger is that if you shy-step-it with an almost or slightly themed approach, your guests will be left wondering just exactly what you were trying to accomplish.

Social structure

Unfortunately, the social aspect of



TRR file photos

Prepare ahead, advises Sheelah-Kaye Stepkin of Torte Knox cooking school in Hawley, PA, to assure that your dinner party goes smoothly. Set the table the evening before your guests arrive so you can focus on cooking the day of the event.

"Contrary to popular belief, hunger is detrimental to a dinner party."

a dinner party is often regarded as a by-product of the event. It is not. It is the overriding reason for the gathering. People talk. They talk before they eat, while they eat and after they eat. Conversation is an important aspect of a successful evening. In this regard, Harper said, "Guests need structure. They need focus, a direction to talk in, and people of both similar and differing opinions to speak with who know as much as they." Beware of the overbearing, "only-my-opinion-counts-and-the-louder-I-get-the-more-it-counts" type. They are death to a "party" atmosphere. Harper also advised a couple of considerations for keeping a consistent flow of conversation: "Choose each guest carefully," and when invitations are issued, "tell them we will be discussing something in particular—a movie or event and not something particularly political;

in fact, the less so the better." Keep the end goal in mind; the objective is to host an entertaining event, not a fiery debate.

Contrary to popular belief, hunger is detrimental to a dinner party. When people experience hunger, they eat. For this reason Harper suggested serving "substantial hors d'oeuvres. Don't have guests coming to the table hungry." When guests see real food, they know they are going to eat well and they relax. Cheeses, nuts, little bites of salmon or proscuttio take the edge off and allows for polite dinner appetite.

And if you really are planning for 40, seriously consider calling in a caterer. Either of the professionals that chimed in for this article would be happy to help you carry off a wonderfully successful event.

What are You Breathing?



Do you have **pets** in your home? Does anyone in your home **smoke**?

Does anyone in your family suffer from **allergies, asthma** or breathing difficulties?

Do you ever suffer from a **dry throat, dry skin** or experience **static electricity** in your home? Do cooking or other odors tend to linger in your home?

Do you tend to use **anti-bacterial household products** like soap or cleaners?

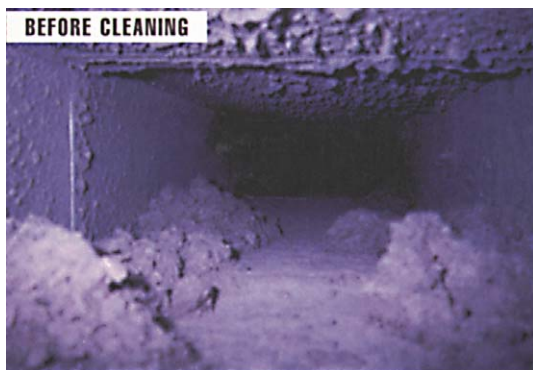
Have you ever purchased or used portable (plug-in) room air cleaners or **humidifiers** to relieve symptoms of **unclean** or **dry air**?

Are there some rooms or areas in your home that are **uncomfortable** or that vary dramatically in temperature?

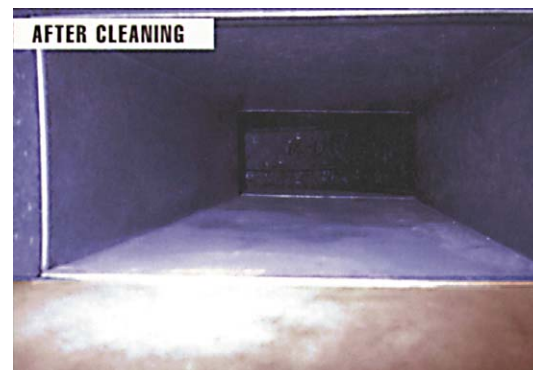
Do you regularly program your thermostat for **energy savings**?

Has it been more than a year since you had your heating and cooling system **cleaned and inspected**?

*If you answered yes to any of these questions call **Narrowsburg Mechanical** for a **FREE** indoor air quality needs assessment.*



In today's airtight homes, indoor air quality is a growing concern. Most household dust contains dust mites, mold, mildew, pollen and animal dander. Many of these contaminants are circulated through the central air systems in most homes and can aggravate the symptoms of asthma and allergies.



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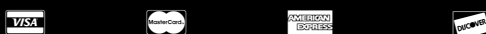
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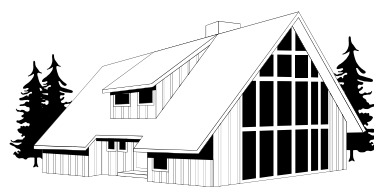
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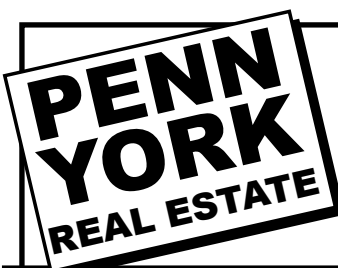
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Call for an appointment today to view this gorgeous wooded lot
located in Western Sullivan County, New York

*Model Open Monday, Tuesday and Friday 10 to 4,
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BUILDING? RENOVATING?

There's a lot that goes into building a new home, or renovating an old one. You'll want the home of your dreams to feel as comfortable as it looks. Your family will use your home's heating, cooling & water systems on a daily basis. New construction and renovations offer the perfect opportunity to make choices that can optimize your home for energy efficiency, improved water, and indoor air quality. **Narrowsburg Mechanical, Inc.** can help you make the choices you need to make today for tomorrow.



Thermostats

Narrowsburg Mechanical, Inc. can install a thermostat that will give you precise and comfortable heating and cooling control.

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With **Narrowsburg Mechanical, Inc.**, you'll be sure that the air delivered through your heating and cooling system is clean.

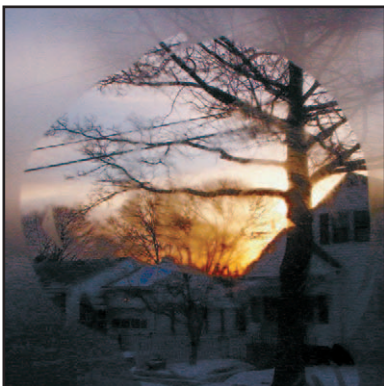


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Narrowsburg Mechanical, Inc. can install a humidifier that will properly maintain the humidity level in your home while giving your family comfort and protecting your woodwork and floors.

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Tight and energy efficient homes can trap stale air inside. Let **Narrowsburg Mechanical, Inc.** bring in fresh air efficiently and economically.

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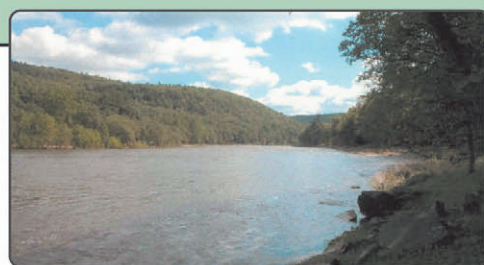
CHARMING VILLAGE HOME

Very attractive 3 BR modified cape nestled on village parcel with great yard perfect for children and/or pets. Home offers lovely original woodwork including wood floors & wood pocket doors, living room w/fireplace, formal dining room, kitchen w/appliances, 2 enclosed porches, walk up attic, & detached garage. (20989) \$139,900.



PERFECT NEIGHBORHOOD

Very attractive 3 BR, 2 BA town & country residence nestled on almost 1 acre with picturesque grounds in highly desirable quiet neighborhood. Home features spacious living area with cathedral ceiling & stone fireplace, eat in country kitchen with all appliances and sliding glass door leading to expansive deck, full basement, plus garage and carport. Priced for immediate sale! (20897) \$235,000.



11+ ACRE RIVERFRONT

Enjoy views of the wild & scenic Delaware River from this spacious 4 BR, 2 BA Pa. farmhouse with wrap around covered porch. Offers bright & airy living area, cntry kitchen, sep. dining, plus gazebo, 2 car garage, deck and more. (21078) \$ 350,000.



37 ACRE COUNTRY CHARMER - BARN

Currier & Ives setting! Pride of ownership is evident throughout this 3 BR, 2 BA Pa. farmhouse offering blend of fields, mature woodland plus picturesque valley views! Home features spacious living area, eat in country kitchen, family room, stone patios, carriage house, and much more. (20457) \$ 365,000.



188 ACRE FARMSTEAD

Spectacular acreage tract with perfect blend of rolling fields & woodland and countryside views, located in highly desirable area of Pleasant Mount. Comes with farmhouse, barns, and machine storage building. A must see! (20362) \$ 475,000.



5 ACRES - BARN - PADDOCKS

Perfect property for the horse lover! Country 2 BR rancher offering living room, eat in country kitchen, full basement, covered porch and spacious deck. Comes complete with movable paddocks, 3 sheds, 30X50 stall barn, and two beautiful pastures. (21082) \$ 349,900.



TOWN & COUNTRY HOME

Immaculate 4 BR, 2 BA rancher set on quiet 3 acre parcel on the outskirts of town. Highlights include bright & airy living area, country kitchen, skylights, spacious family room, 2 car garage, outbuilding and more. (21094) \$ 265,000.



BROOK - STATE LANDS - PRESERVE

Attractive 3 BR country home set on 4 acre natural landscaped parcel with brook, overlooking preserve, pond and state lands. Offers living room with fireplace, country kitchen, expansive deck & enclosed porch. (21118) \$ 129,000