

FALL 2007

Our Country Home

A RIVER REPORTER MAGAZINE

A Country Home Away From Home
The Old North Branch Inn reborn

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OPEN HOUSE
see PAGE 20

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This 2½-story home is located just outside of Honesdale in the quaint village of Seelyville. It offers plenty of privacy nestled in the woods down a long private lane. The kitchen, living room and dining area are on the first floor along with 1 full bath. On the second floor are 3 bedrooms. The attic is partially finished and would make a great little office. Make arrangements to see this home soon! Ref# 5263 \$119,500



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SPACIOUS COUNTRY RANCHER

This spacious ranch is immaculate and a must-see!! The kitchen has oak cabinets, stainless appliances and an island. The kitchen, L/R, and D/R have chair rails and the foyer has a slate floor. Retreat to the master suite and relax in the garden tub. Ref# 5234 \$285,000



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This is one home you will not want to miss!!! This immaculate, 3-bedroom, 2-bath home lies on more than 17 acres of woods and fields. It is spacious, and well lit by natural light from the skylights in the kitchen and living room. The master bath is tiled and a jetted tub is waiting for you! The setting and surroundings are gorgeous. Make an appointment today to see this beauty before it's gone. Ref# 5226 \$375,000



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This unique property with home and horse pastures is definitely worth a look! A private lane leads to a 2-story farmhouse with a Pennsylvania bluestone exterior. This 1950s farmhouse has been totally and tastefully renovated on the interior. Knotty pine adds a rustic flair while cathedral ceilings in the living room and Pennsylvania bluestone fireplace are very impressive. There are 3 bedrooms and 2 baths, an enormous screened-in front porch that is great for entertaining guests and for admiring the view to the 5-stall horse stables. The pastureland has been professionally fenced in for horses and boasts a 2-3 acre pond with woods and stream. Call today!! Ref# 2760 \$587,000



COUNTRY ROAD TAKE ME HOME!

This is country living at it's best! This renovated home offers 3 BR, 2BA a MBR on the 1st floor, a basement with 2 outside entrances, a covered porch, several patios and decks. There is a 3-car garage and a small barn being used as a workshop. This magnificent private setting featuring seasonal stream, pond, fields, apple trees and charming stonewalls. This is perfect for horses, snowmobiles, ATV's, or just to relax & enjoy the views. Your Country Dream awaits! Ref# 5270 \$264,500



PICTURESQUE COLONIAL FARMHOUSE ON 13 ACRES

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HISTORIC BETHANY HOME

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SPACIOUS RANCH IN BEACH LAKE

This spacious ranch in Beach Lake offers 3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths with plenty of extra room to grow! The formal living room has a brick fireplace insert and just off that room is a family room. If that is not enough room the basement has even more finished space used as a third bedroom and an office, also includes room for a hobby room, etc. All this on more than 1 lovely acre. Ref# 5257 \$238,000

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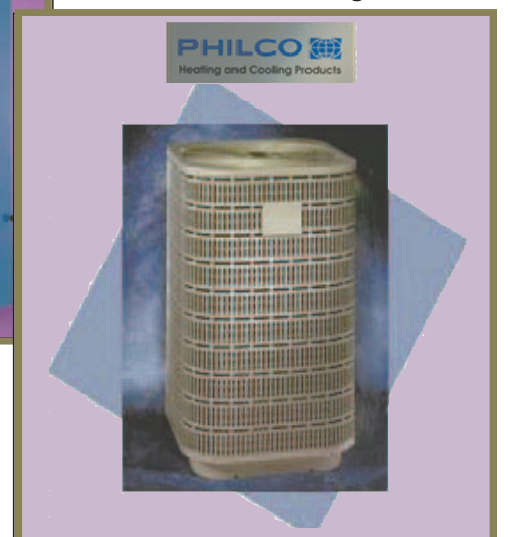
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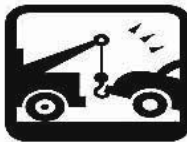
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 7** **A Country Home Away from Home**
The Old North Branch Inn reborn
By DOROTHY HARTZ
- 11** **Flying Fingers**
Knitting for relaxation and pleasure
By MARCIA NEHEMIAH
- 15** **How Long Can You Stay?**
Creating a cozy guest room
By LESLIE RUTKIN
- 19** **The Best Seat in the House**
Creating a home theatre
By MARCIA NEHEMIAH
- 23** **Room for One More**
Tips for adopting a pet through your local animal shelter
By EMILY GRILLO
- 25** **The Inventive Pumpkin**
Experiment with fall's flavorful fruit
By NANCY DYMOND
- 29** **Hills Afire and Ripening Tomatoes**
Fall gardening hints
By WILL CONWAY
- 31** **The View from the Train**
Honesdale's Stourbridge Lion makes tracks for fall
By SHEILA DUGAN
- 33** **Walking the Walk**
Creating a workout room inside the home
By CYNTHIA O. TOLIVER
- 35** **Modular Housing**
Is it for you?
By CHARLES PETERSHEIM
- 37** **It's All in the Details**
No Loose Ends provides worry-free home organization
By CASS COLLINS

Cover: The Old North Branch Inn in North Branch, NY.

Cover photo by Danielle Gaebel.

We Want Your Home

If you have a unique country home and would like to see it featured in this special section, e-mail marygreene@riverreporter.com or call 845/252-7414.



TRR photo by Tom Lasher

Section editor Mary Greene

Dear Reader,

"I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape... Something waits beneath it—the whole story doesn't show."

So wrote the painter Andrew Wyeth, that master of browns and whites in the terrain. At this time of year, we get to tumble in the wild beauty of fall, when the world seems crisp and alive with bright October blues and a blanket of leaves. Later, as the season progresses, we have the opportunity to notice simpler, quieter beauties—a sheen of ice on the pond, shades of new snow against a winter-pink sky. Perhaps we become more reflective, slowing down with the season, taking time to consider what is happening beneath the surface of our lives.

This is a great time of year to focus on hearth and home, and this edition of **Our Country Home** can help you do just that. Here, you will get ideas for creating a guest bedroom so that best friend Susie or Uncle Howard can come to stay (not to mention the grandkids or Annie's college friends). We guide you in the creation of a home gym to make working off all the winter calories easy and accessible. And for the adventurous, we give ideas for establishing a comfortable home theatre to entertain friends and family through the long winter nights. All of these projects can be done on a limited budget, relying on advice and materials from your local suppliers. For inspiration (and those overflow guests), take a ride up to North Branch, NY to see what Victoria Lessor has done with the Old North Branch Inn, our cover feature.

We can also get you started on the knitting you have always wanted to learn, or on some great pumpkin crafts and recipes to try for the Halloween and Thanksgiving festivities. The Stourbridge Lion train rides in Honesdale, PA ("Home of the American Rail Road") provide fun for the whole family through the year—be sure to check out their fall foliage tours or their special masked-man run. And if you decide that this is the time to open up your home to a shelter dog or cat, we provide some beginning tips as well as community resources to get you started.

If you are looking for a home and are considering a modular unit, we provide a comparison between that and a traditional stick-built house. And for those who are busy—too busy—playing city mouse and country mouse, sweat it no more. Ron Lee's Wurtsboro, NY company, No Loose Ends, will take care of all the niggling bothersome details of owning two homes. And, for the gardeners among you who know that gardening season never really ends, we provide some tips on how to get the most from your autumn yard.

So, what are you waiting for? There's lots to do—lots of adventures waiting.

Mary Greene

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A Country Home Away from Home

The Old North Branch Inn reborn

By DOROTHY HARTZ

All that and more has recently resuscitated a historic structure in bucolic western Sullivan County, **The Old North Branch Inn**. The emphasis is on “old,” for the current owner’s proud insistence on preservation wherever possible, and even, it seems, impossible. “We should all look this good after 150 years,” she says of the original wood floor, smooth as satin after reclamation from decades of tarpaper and carpet.



Contributed photos

Lesser’s living area in The Old North Branch Inn prior to renovation (above) and after renovation (below).



Victoria Lesser is making local history, not only by adding her name to a list of innkeepers—Spafford, Schlichting, Hoffman, among others, leading back to the building’s construction in 1868—but by assuring the continuity of history through her gift of new life for the landmark Main Street building, last open to the public in the early 1980s.

The new Old North Branch Inn is now in business, housing a visitors’ B & B, but also providing a neighborhood destination in Baxter’s Juice Bar and Café, where folks can linger over morning newspapers and coffee (organic, brewed in a French press), or where kids can gather after school to do homework over a snack. A large wooden table encourages community, as does a plump circular sofa and, in good weather, the front porch, but quiet nooks for reading are also available. Lesser is considering hosting movie and game nights, and she is open to other suggestions from the public. More formal, catered events such as weddings and private parties can be arranged, given the professional kitchen, and, for the future, an old pool is being

revised as a covered, rain-or-shine farm market. For the present, local vendors already dominate the café’s offerings—pastries by Flour Power and Little Miss Muffin, and light hot fare from Pika’s Quiches. Ziggy’s Dog Treats are also available, endorsed by the pets with whom Lesser shares her apartment on the premises—pub Baxter, for whom the juice bar is named, and Roxie, an inquisitive Great Dane.

An open house in August allowed visitors to preview the accommodations, browse for antiques in the still functional two-lane, hand-set bowling alley and sample the pastries in the café, which boasts both a gorgeous deco bar from the 1939 World’s Fair and high speed internet. Original accoutrements and memorabilia speed connection to the past as well, to an era when the inn, complete with barbershop, was a centerpiece of North Branch’s quiet but flourishing hospitality trade. Upstairs, the four guest rooms, all with spacious private baths, are beautifully and sometimes whimsically appointed with vintage finds from local antique dealers and artisans, as well as with art and

continued on page 8



The Old North Branch Inn, North Branch, NY.

Contributed photos



The view down the bowling lanes, now appointed with antiques.



The Inn has four fully furnished guest bedrooms, each with a private bath.

“Some people just assumed the building would be taken down, but how could I do that? Handmade nails. Hand-hewn timber. I’m preserving it for North Branch. People who came here to the barbershop or the bar or bowling alley can bring their grandchildren, and now they can have memories, too. It’s my investment in learning how to live a good life.”

—Victoria Lesser

memoros from the proprietor’s colorful other life.

Lesser relocated to Sullivan County in 2004 from Key West, FL, where, over a period of 30 years, she turned a small leather business into a fast track career as a clothing and interior stylist. Although she has no formal training in design, she does have a pedigree. One ancestor worked for Christian Dior and one was a tailor for Nicholas II, the last czar of Russia. When it’s time to work, Lesser imagines her grandfather’s hands cutting fabric. This act of homage has helped her to create celebrity garb—Bill Cosby’s silk pajamas, the very same ones we’ve seen on *The Cosby Show*, and Bee Gee Maurice Gibb’s boots, fashioned from originals worn by John Lennon. She has also designed for country music’s Barbara Mandrell and Aerosmith’s Steven Tyler and, locally, for the ongoing renovation of Roscoe’s Antrim Lodge. Prior to renovating the Old North Branch Inn, she purchased and refurbished two smaller houses in the county. Lesser’s attachment to the area grew out of childhood summers spent in Loch Sheldrake, NY with her family, student life in 1967 at a brand new Sullivan County Community College and, later, her young son’s enthusiasm for Camp Swago in nearby Damascus, PA. When life in the fast lane as a celebrity stylist took its toll and a changing Key West no longer provided the sense of community she’d once enjoyed, it was time to turn to the simple life, and Sullivan County called her home.

Restoration of buildings has also meant restoration of Victoria Lesser’s spirit. Her daily wish for “patience, understanding and tolerance,” as well as her appetite for hard physical labor, have been served with countless opportunities, as anyone who has ever picked up a hammer could attest. “I laughed when a neighborhood kid asked if I was retired,” she recalls. She welcomes visitors of all ages to drop in to see her results and especially old-timers to share their stories. “I’ve been given this talent to use in the service of restoration. I love being here, and I hope to be an inspiration to others, who maybe think they can’t do it.” When Lesser bought the building, the only draw to Main Street was the post office. Today, she is

continued on page 9

hopeful that, given commitment and investment in local networking, the hamlet of North Branch could enjoy a revival of its glory days, many of which, at least in autumn, centered around the cider mill, a fragrant feature of rural heritage popular with locals and tourists alike, no longer in operation. Lesser's faith in the possible comes from her own experience. "In order for the inn to retain its value, I have to be the business. I have to live here. So here I am, selling coffee and inviting strangers into my house. And by restoring instead of tearing down, I'm honoring all the people who worked on it in the past. I'm keeping their memory alive."

Indeed she is. Throughout this project and others, Lesser has employed exclusively local craftsmen, most of whom have personal associations with the sites where they work. Callicoon carpenter Teb Fink, for instance, found his grandfather's and uncle's names written on a wall during renovation of one of Lesser's other houses. A thread of connection runs to this reporter as well. My mother, a Jersey girl, vacationed in North Branch in the late 1930s and early '40s, first meeting my father at the Hortonville

Firemen's Field Day while staying at "Mrs. Carroll's" in North Branch. I've forgotten the exact location of that particular boarding house, but, growing up, I would picture my parents dropping in to the big old inn in the middle of Main Street, easing into their courtship over his beer and her ginger ale. Now, more than 60 years later, I see them more vividly than ever, thanks to Victoria Lesser. "I'm rewarded when locals call or visit to thank me for what I'm doing," she says. "Some people just assumed the building would be taken down, but how could I do that? Handmade nails. Hand-hewn timber. I'm preserving it for North Branch. People who came here to the barbershop or the bar or bowling alley can bring their grandchildren, and now they can have memories, too. It's my investment in learning how to live a good life."

The Old North Branch Inn is located at 869 North Branch Road, North Branch, NY 12766, approximately 15 minutes from Bethel Woods Center for the Arts and minutes from the recreational Upper Delaware River. Visit www.theoldnorthbranchinn.com or call 845/482-5925.



The guest rooms are furnished with antiques and whimsical touches.

Contributed photos



Victoria Lesser, with Baxter and Roxie, relax in the lounge area of Baxter's Juice Bar and Café.

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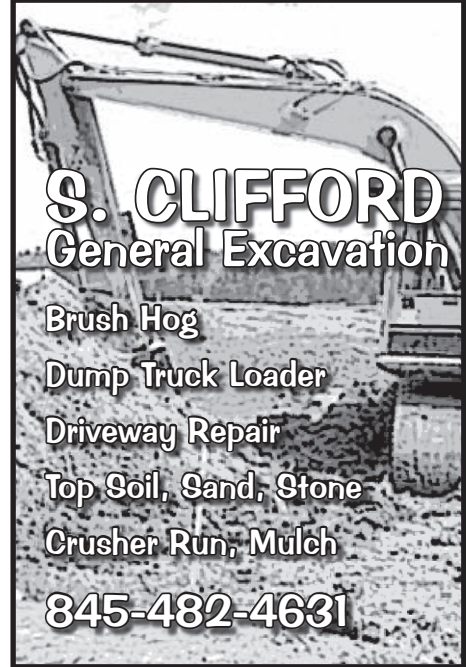
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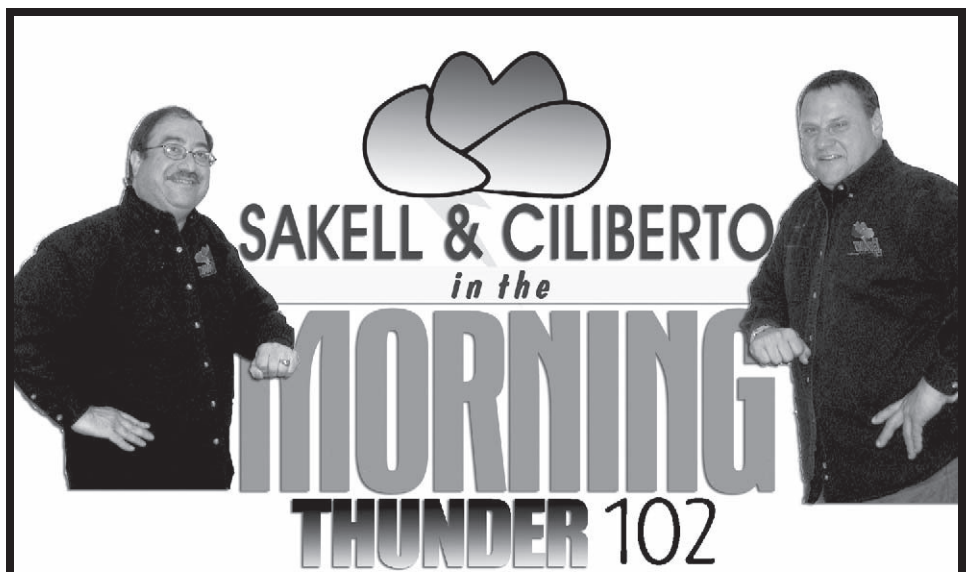
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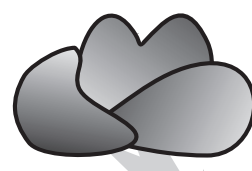
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Flying Fingers

Knitting for relaxation and pleasure

By **MARCIA NEHEMIAH**

It's my compulsion—a passion that satisfies my need for the pleasures of color, pattern and texture, my fingers sighing with the exquisite sensuality of touch. This isn't an unspeakable or illicit desire. It's knitting.

Since the summer of my seventh year when my mother taught me to knit, and then to purl, and then to cast on, and then to cast off, and I somewhat successfully produced my first handmade object, a lopsided but treasured navy blue scarf, knitting has been an integral part of my days, a way to meditate, unwind, center myself. I am never without a project, and sometimes work on multiple projects simultaneously, whether it's a sweater, afghan, purse, socks or other whimsies such as wrist warmers and necklaces.

I have lived through the dry times, when knitting stores in my neighborhood closed shop and buying yarn, needles and books was difficult, if not impossible. But the ranks of knitters are growing again. Some four million people (both women and men) in the United States have taken up knitting since 2003, according to a July article in **The New York Times**. Young knitters in their 20s and 30s, perhaps inspired by the availability of unusual new yarns made from exotic fibers like bamboo or fur, are not only knitting from patterns in **Vogue Knitting** or **Interweave Knits**, but are executing elaborate original patterns and designs and swapping ideas online in blogs and on Podcasts.

Knitting for the home

Knitting for the home is a growing trend and an excellent way for beginning knitters to learn various rudimentary techniques, since things like pillows, rugs, curtains, afghans and washcloths do not require the more advanced skills of shaping for armholes and shoulders in garments.

One of the pleasures of knitting, whether you make garments for yourself or your home, is the originality you bring to your creation. Although when you knit, you follow a pattern very closely (no ad libbing here!), it is in the choice of yarn that the piece takes on its unique character. As your skills advance, you can combine colors and textures; frequently, your creation will look nothing like the pattern you follow because of your unique choices of material, nor will the finished product be a mass-produced item you've had to settle for.

A popular trend in the knitting world is felting, technically known as "fulling," a process of loosely knitting an object using yarn spun from one hundred percent wool or other animal fibers and then throwing the finished piece into the washing machine. The hot water, soap and agitation of the machine cause the fibers of the wool to bind together and the piece shrinks (on purpose!), resulting in matted fabric perfect for rugs, placemats and matching napkin rings, a tea cozy, coasters, potholders, pillows and bowls (yes, bowls). More advanced projects for the home include lacy curtains, curtain tie-backs, slipcovers, bedspreads, bed canopies and lampshade covers.

Finding a teacher

You may have an image of an ambidextrous woman with fingers flying at lightening speed in a tangle of yarn that looks like spaghetti. But once someone shows you how to knit, you will see that, with a little practice and guidance, you'll be able to make anything, even the most complicated multicolored design, with two simple stitches—knit and purl.

Three shops strategically located in the Upper Delaware region are venues where you can connect with women who are eager to teach beginners and to help more experienced knitters refine their craft. The shops are a sensuous feast of luxurious novelty yarns you just have to touch,

ranging from cashmeres to microfibers that knit up like a dream, as well as yarn staples like wool and wool blends, mohairs and acrylics. Browsing both the yarns and the pattern books will give you lots of ideas and inspiration.

At the heart of each shop are the proprietors.

Susan Gross, a self-declared "yarnoholic," presides over her **Monticello, NY** shop, **Knit One Needlepoint Too (845/791-5648)**, where she offers free knitting, crochet and needlepoint instructions with any purchase. She hosts a Stitch and Chat with free help and refreshments on Thursday evenings from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The shop also accepts donations of yarn for Project Linus and gives a five dollar store credit for every five pounds of yarn donated.

Jill Deal is the soul of **jilldeal, inc on Broad Street in Milford, PA (570/409-9276)**. Aside from the breathtaking array of yarns in the shop, you can also participate in workshops or attend the Sit and Knit not only for technical support but emotional support of a number of women getting together and participating in an ancient handicraft. Call the shop for details on upcoming classes.

You will find **Carla Guiffrida**, an accomplished knitter, weaver, spinner and dyer, in the Crafts Corner of **Four Corners for Artful Living on Main Street in Narrowsburg, NY (845-252-3688)**.

Guiffrida loves "to share her knowledge and help others find the joy and meditative benefits of creating beautiful things with fiber." Beautiful yarns, a multitude of patterns and all the supplies for knitting and crocheting are available in the shop.

Guiffrida teaches classes for adults and children at Four Corners. Drop in with your knitting questions or your projects. Beginners are welcome. Visit Guiffrida in Narrowsburg for information on the knitting circle she hosts in her home.

Knitting not only provides the requisite dose of daily relaxation, it also provides a mental challenge. And there's nothing like the excitement of seeing your very own creations unfurl from your fingers and needles.

It does a heart good.



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Private Home on 5+ Acres! \$224,600
Sweet 3BR home, on 5+ magnificent acres. Partially finished basement, newer kitchen, baths, floors & more! Near lovely artsy river village w/lots to do all year long. #17241



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Privacy, 2 Ponds, Stream... \$399,900
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3BR 1BA Spacious lake community 'A' Frame w/large great room, loft, 2 screened porches & woodstove. Smallwood offers lake access with beach, docks, sport courts & more! #20786



Charming Colonial \$273,500
Spacious 3BR, 3.5BA, features formal DR w/french doors, large LR w/double sided fireplace, finished basement, 2 decks, set on a lovely lot w/landscaping. #21637



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3BR, open floor plan w/spacious dining area & kitchen. Deck w/gate offers security for children or pets. Seconds from lake, dining and entertainment in lake community! #20770



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Fabulous location, close to Racino & "Bethel Woods". Adorable 2BR features loft, large deck & det. garage. Yard overlooks magical wooded setting at end of dead end street. #18677



Moments from "Bethel Woods" \$375,000
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Immaculate 3BR 2BA 2-Story Log, w/large deck, set on 4 private and beautifully manicured acres, w/300ft frontage on the Beaverkill; well known for its amazing trout fishing. #20296



Country Charming \$179,900
Sweet & adorable 2BR, 1.5BA home in desirable lake community features fpl, cath. ceilings & private deck, on very pretty lot, w/lake, beach dock & sports courts access available. #19964



Fantastic Ranch on 21+ Acres \$375,000
Private & secluded on 21+ acres offers 3BR, 2BA, attached garage, full finished basement w/woodstove. 3-stall barn, XL corral & paddock, shed & turn-out-area. #21465



Unbelievable Value! \$109,900
Large 2500+ sqft 2-family w/detached garage located in a convenient location. Features 2 spacious apartments PLUS full finished basement, lovely yard & rocking chair porch. #21453



Just what you're looking for... \$188,000
Two story Farmhouse style home in beautiful lake community offers 3 BR, enclosed porch, spacious living room with fireplace & much more, set on a large beautiful yard. #21117



Immaculate & Spacious \$314,900
5 BR, 3 BA home w/pond on 2+ acres beautifully appointed & impeccably maintained. Formal LR, Den, w/additional space for FDR, country kit, large BR, hw flrs, decks, pool & more! #20365



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How Long Can You Stay?

Creating a cozy guest room

By **LESLIE RUTKIN**

My friend stepped off the train in Port Jervis, NY and exclaimed, “I’m so happy to be here!” She knew what awaited her: a “never want to leave” couch on the porch, the river streaming by and a very cozy guest room, designed for comfort. The vintage iron bed had a terrific mattress and lots of pillows. There was ample space to store her belongings in the bird’s eye maple chest of drawers and a wonderful rocker, and good light, to while away an afternoon immersed in a mystery novel.

Before its transformation, this room had been my daughter’s bedroom, then my son’s playroom and, finally, a repository for all the stuff we didn’t know what to do with. It was a mess. But it had great “bones”—three windows (two overlooking the Delaware) and a wide plank floor.

After a coat of pale mint paint and the addition of vintage and antique furniture, I hung my collection of funky wall pockets on the wall opposite the bed and piled my vintage quilts in baskets. There are colorful throw rugs over the polished floor and lots of books.

If you have an extra room, you’re lucky, but even if you don’t, there are many things you can do to make sure your guests go off to dream land in comfort. In my travels from Youngsville and Narrowsburg, NY to Milford, PA, I was delighted at what I found for your perfect guest room.

The bed

The first priority is a bed. Depending on the size of your room and who might be using it, you need to decide whether to get a twin, double or queen bed. A good-quality mattress will ensure that your guests do not wake up with back aches or other complaints. And if your space is really small, or your room is doing double duty as den or office, think sofa bed.

Furniture Find on Water Street in Milford,

PA (570/296-6099) is an all-purpose furniture store stuffed with lamps, chairs, sofas and much more. A traditional sofa, covered in soft-as-can-be microfiber, is available in a range of luscious colors and hides a queen size mattress. For an even smaller space, there are chairs with hidden twin mattresses.

Peg Harrison, at Rasmussen Furniture in Narrowsburg, NY (845/252-3901) told me that for a small space, a day bed is ideal. The “seat” is also a mattress. With the addition of a blanket and pillows, you have a bed. If you are looking for luxury on a small budget, Harrison suggests an upholstered head board to give your space color, texture and interest. Two yards of fabric attached to plywood is padded and mounted onto a wall. Dress the bed in complementary colors and you have a lot of design for an affordable price.

Accessories

Accessories are key. “You can take liberties in a guest room that you wouldn’t in the rest of the house,” **Kevin Holley of UpRiver Home in Milford (570/296-2026)** told me. He pointed out the handmade quilts from India with matching pillows in color combinations ranging from reds and pinks to earth tones. The colorful Mongolian cabinets in rich shades of red and yellow provide ample storage and are the ideal height to use as night stands. The wire wall baskets are perfect for holding towels or the extraordinary toiletries that you’ll find at UpRiver.

Every room needs wall decorations, and I found many to choose from at **Domesticities and The Cutting Garden, in Youngsville, NY (845/482-3333)**. Owner **Anne Hart’s** philosophy is to sell reused, recycled, old and locally made items, and her charming shop has a combination of both new and vintage merchandise. Here you’ll find small

quilts by local quilter Katherina Litchman that are a perfect size for a wall behind a bed. I also liked a grouping of vintage framed cross stitches, as well as framed vintage wall papers. In the barn at Domesticities you may find an end table, lamp or desk that, with a little paint and TLC, will convert nicely to the guest bedroom. And, in season, pick a nice bouquet of flowers for your guest from the large cutting garden.

Anna Bern-Penford has created an oasis **on Main Street in Narrowsburg** with her not-quite-year-old store, **Nest (845/252-3424)**. If you are looking for touches of luxury at affordable prices, this is the place to go. Bern-Penford, Brazilian born, regularly makes buying trips to her native country to pick up cuddly handmade cotton and lamb’s wool duvets and yo yo quilts in rich silks and homey cottons, plus stunning lace curtains. In addition, you’ll find special soaps, candles, Irish linen bedding and luxurious Turkish bath towels.

For those needing more guidance, ride over to **Monticello, NY** to talk to **Bob Goldberg at Broadway Home (845/794-1440)**. Bob is an interior designer and his shop is a showroom of possibilities. Talk to him if you want to order custom beds, couches and other furnishings. He does on-site consultations and offers comprehensive design services including construction, cabinetry, lighting and more.

Each shop owner talked about those little extras that make a room special: a place for a suitcase, preferably on a low bench; an ottoman in front of a chair, if you have the space; fresh flowers; window shades that keep the room dark; nice hangers in the closet; bath robes; and a carafe or bottle of water.

With all these extraordinary resources so close to home to feed your own ideas and imagination, you’ll have your guest room ready for friends and family in no time.

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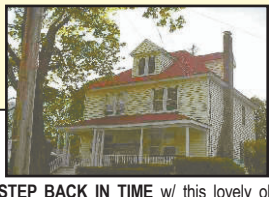
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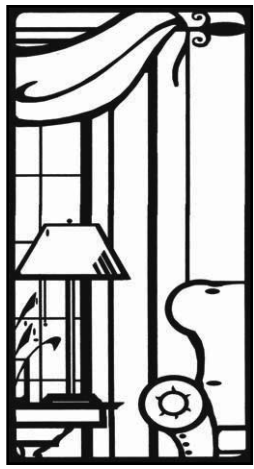
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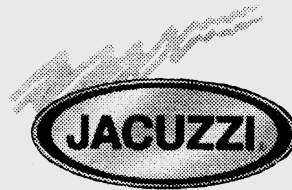
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TJR file photo

The Best Seat in the House

Creating a home theatre

By **MARCIA NEHEMIAH**

You've settled in with a bucket of warm popcorn. The lights and the coming attractions appear on the screen. But wait—how can you be wearing your sweats and wrapped in that cozy afghan grandma knit for you? And why didn't the popcorn cost five dollars?

You're watching the latest blockbuster in the comfort of your own home on your big-screen, home entertainment center.

These days, you don't need thousands of dollars and an advanced degree in computer technology to set up a home theater. What you do need is an appropriately sized room, carefully selected electronic components and comfortable seating.

Atmosphere is everything

The proper location for your home theater should be a rectangular room with as few doors and windows as possible. A basement is ideal for obvious reasons. A spare bedroom or an attic could also work well. Rooms with open floor plans or vaulted ceilings have poor acoustics and would make a less than perfect site for your theater.

Bare concrete, wood and tile reflect sound waves. Cover the floors with carpeting or an area rug to absorb unwanted noise. Thick curtains over windows reduce both sound and light. **Nanette Zube of Zube Interiors in Barryville, NY (845/557-0618)** can stitch up custom-made black-out shades for windows, and she recommends hanging full draperies with black-out lining on the walls. Not only will draperies absorb sound, they will also lend the feel of a real movie theater to your room.

Mitch Cooper of Cooper Paints in Monticello, NY (845/794-1818) suggests painting the ceiling black, or any dark color, to close in the room and give it a cozy feeling.

Kick up your feet

Obviously, the room's furniture must be carefully selected for comfort and functionality, as well as durability. **Van Gorders' Furniture in Hawley**

and Honesdale, PA (570/253-1860, 226-9726) carries a wide selection of La-Z-Boy sectionals available in a multitude of fabrics to complement any décor and create comfortable and appealing groupings in your den. When it isn't show time, reclining couches and chairs provide a relaxing retreat for the family. Armoires and media cabinets in many styles are made to accommodate equipment and provide proper ventilation and rear access for wire management and concealment.

At The Well Dressed Room at **Hockenberry Furniture in Port Jervis, NY (845/856-6153)**, you will find motion furniture that reclines and rocks. Components can be arranged in a traditional theater-style seating to accommodate up to six people. These modular units, upholstered in washable microfiber or leather, feature built-in holders for gear, like remotes and cups. Lift-top coffee tables allow you to eat without balancing plates and utensils in your lap.

Down to the nitty-gritty

Now that the room is ready, you need to get the gear. I won't lie; there are complexities in choosing components. My eyes glaze over at the mention of sub-woofers and aspect ratios, so even though I can find abundant information online about electronic components, I'd rather take a trip to a local electronics store and talk with someone who can help me choose exactly the right equipment to suit my needs.

Here is a basic shopping list. You will need either a conventional wide-screen television, a plasma-screen television or front-projection system. A rear-projection or big-screen TV offers the most screen—up to 80 inches—for the money. Plasma-screen TVs are only three to five inches deep so they can hang on a wall, but they're expensive (\$4,000 and up). Front-projection sets send the picture from a projector across the room to a screen. Prices range from \$1,000 to over \$50,000. High definition television (HDTV) offers clearer resolution than traditional

TV, and the FCC has mandated that by 2009 all television shows must be broadcast in HDTV. Most TVs are now HDTV-ready.

For optimal viewing, place the TV at eye level, front and center, rather than off to the side so people don't have to strain their necks. The distance between the viewer and the screen should equal about three times the screen size. For instance, a 40-inch TV is best viewed from a distance of 10 feet (120 inches).

Five speakers and one subwoofer will replicate authentic cinema Dolby Digital 5.1 technology. Three speakers should form a line with the TV, facing the seating area. Place two speakers opposite each other on either side of the listeners, slightly above ear level. Place the speakers on stands or mount them on the wall. For the best rumbling effect, put the subwoofer on the floor behind the seating area.

The final components to complete your setup are a DVD player and a receiver. And a Netflix or other DVD rental account so you'll never have to watch another cable TV rerun.

If acquiring all of the components individually seems too daunting a task, you can purchase a home-theater-in-a-box (\$300–\$3,000) that includes everything you need for a basic setup except the TV. These systems are easy to install and eliminate the need to figure out whether components from different manufacturers will be compatible, but they are not easily upgraded.

All systems go

As you build your home theater, remember that the most important consideration is how comfortable and enjoyable it is. You really don't have to win the lottery or inherit a million dollars to recreate the Cineplex experience in the privacy of your home.

Sit back and enjoy the show!

Wraparound Comfort and Style in Glen Spey

It is a house with a view—and a vision. Pleasing angles, a wrap-around porch, a sunken kitchen with a spiral staircase, reclaimed white pine flooring, bedrooms that beckon into yesteryear and even a cupola on the roof—tucked into a southern corner of Sullivan County, NY is an exquisitely crafted house that offers all of these qualities and more. The house dates back to 1886 and was an old caretaker cottage, one of three that existed on the original large farm. Its three-point-three acres are bounded by stone walls and graced with spreading maples and apple trees.

The cedar-siding house took its current shape during a renovation in the 1980s, and in 2007, many of its features have been updated or are new. Original elements of the cottage have been preserved and expanded upon to create a space that is light, airy, functional and full of old-world charm. For example, a highlight of the outside entrance to the home is the original working well, encircled with large, decorative field stones.

The decorative cupola on the roof is an eye-catching feature of the house. There is access to the cupola from inside, and it could become a unique sitting area, a place to dream and watch the stars. The property also features a beautifully restored two-story barn that has potential to become a guest house or a studio.

This special house and its sister barn feel intrinsic to the landscape, as indeed they have been for a century and a half. There is easy access to Route 97 and the nearby towns, but it has a remote feel—like stepping into an earlier time.

QUICK STATS

- Unique roof line with cupola
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- Kitchen w/Kraftsmaid cabinets, LG HI-MACS counter tops, GE stainless appliances & walk-in pantry
- Laundry room on main level
- Reclaimed white pine flooring throughout
- All systems new or updated

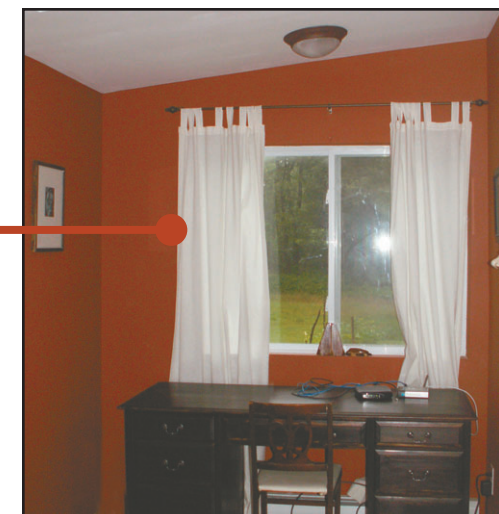
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The new part of the house has been constructed around the old, finished off with a spacious wraparound porch with skylights. You enter into a large mud/laundry room that leads invitingly into a family room with exposed beams and a roomy, modern kitchen with Kraftsmaid cabinets, LG HI-MAC countertops, GE stainless steel appliances and a walk-in pantry. The downstairs also features a dining area and the original formal parlor with a fireplace, which could be used as a sitting room, game room or music room. The house has a wonderfully open feel that incorporates little sitting areas and private spaces.



Two staircases lead to the second floor, which features three bedrooms, a second bathroom and ample closet and storage space. The master bedroom is actually a suite, with a sitting area that could become a dressing room, a study or craft space. White pine flooring continues through the house, giving a sense of clean space and continuity. Low doorways and ceilings harken back to the house's history. Large, lovely new windows and alcoves look out over peaceful vistas of field, forest and sky.



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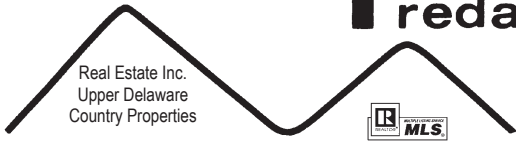
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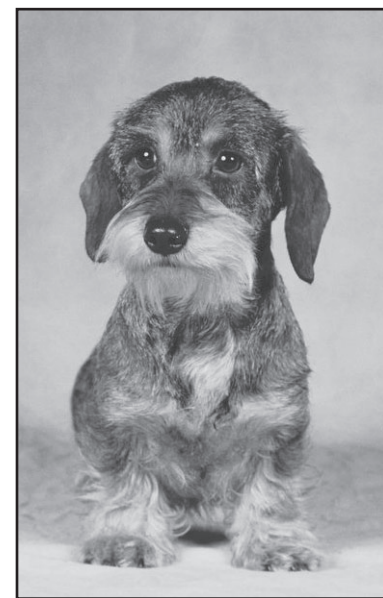
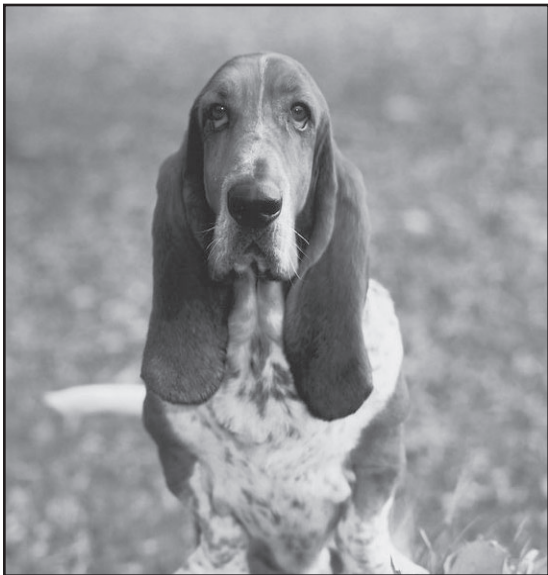
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Room for One More

Tips for adopting a pet through your local animal shelter

By EMILY GRILLO

The old adage is true: animals are our best friends. They are loyal, affectionate, forgiving, smart and silly. We love our pets like part of the family, as indeed they are.

That's why they deserve the best from us. With proper nutrition, veterinary exams and the right amount of pampering, our pets will live longer and bring us joy for many years.

If you are currently in the market for a cat, dog, hamster or bunny, take a look at your local shelter. Shelters provide abandoned animals with homes, medical attention and food until they are adopted. Many of the local papers, including **The River Reporter**, run pet sections that publish pictures and descriptions of animals ready for adoption. Another idea is to go to petfinder.com and type in your zip code and the kind of pet that you are looking for. The website carries pictures and descriptions of tens of thousands of animals from over 2,000 shelters across the country.

It is important to be realistic about your ability to care for an adopted animal. As every pet lover knows, emotions come into play when visiting a shelter. You have to consider how adaptable your lifestyle is, what your budget is and whether your living space can accommodate a pet. If your schedule keeps you close to home during the day, you may decide you have the time and energy for a dog. If you're not home as much, perhaps a cat would be the best companion for you.

You also need to think about family responsibilities. Someone has to walk the dog or clean up cat

litter, feed the animals and play with or walk them every day. Make sure you and your family are not allergic. Take your time deciding, because once you do, you are making a permanent commitment to the life and care of your animal.

Workers and volunteers at our local shelters are educated and informative as to what sort of animal best suits your lifestyle. They can then partner you with the best animal available. The animals in the shelter are ready to take home. They are vaccinated against all sorts of diseases and are spayed and neutered. Keep in mind they may live up to 15 years (dogs) or 18 years (cats).

Bringing your pet home

Did you remember to pick up the special food for the new puppy that the shelter recommended? Do you have a cage or small room to enclose a young dog during your absence? Does your kitten have a scratch toy so that she doesn't destroy your new couch?

In the beginning, pets will be anxious and fearful in a new place. They may cry at night or piddle on the carpet. Patience with these behaviors will pay off in gold in the long run. Harsh punishment and yelling does not help, but consistent reinforcement—both good and bad—does. Check with the experts at your local shelter on how to handle new-pet behaviors.

Your pets, just like people, need special attention as they grow. Make sure that you take the time to attend to proper health and nutrition for your pet.

Pet Central in Honesdale, PA (570/251-3470) carries pet food, bowls, treats, toys and bedding for your animals. They stock Eukanuba pet foods as well as a wide selection of leashes, collars, carriers and bathing supplies. Also **in Honesdale, Agway Farm and Garden (570/253-3890)** carries great chew toys for dogs and puppies, all made without preservatives and chemicals and very fairly priced. The **Monticello Farm Home and Garden, Monticello, NY (845/794-6457)** has a good pet supply section and the **Liberty Agway Home and Garden in Liberty, NY (845/292-7220)** has a really outstanding pet section featuring great selection, unusual items and low prices.

If you are looking for something a little special and posh for your pup or kitten, you may want to visit **River Dog in Narrowsburg, NY (845/252-6766)**. The store carries organic pet foods, treats, leashes and food bowls. The organic pet foods contain ingredients that are healthy and safe for your pets. **Good Cheer (570/253-0710), Honesdale**, is a grooming and gift store for you and your pet that offers (in addition to pet grooming) animal greeting cards, wonderful treats for pets (including cookies and cupcakes—good for birthday celebrations) and great leashes and collars.

Bringing home the right pet promises a relationship of unconditional and reciprocal love and joy. Be informed, choose wisely, and everyone will benefit for years to come.

continued on page 24

According to the Humane Society, you may be the perfect dog owner if you:

- Can care for a dog for 15 years.
- Look forward to big, wet kisses when you come home each day.
- Like sharing your house with someone who sheds, tracks dirt occasionally and might drool.
- Want to take care of someone every day, including walking, feeding, petting and playing.
- Love a playmate that likes to chase balls and drag off shoes.
- Can spend your extra money on pet food, toys, veterinary care, chew bones and more chew bones.
- Want someone to adore you even on a bad hair day.
- Can't imagine leaving your devoted pet behind when you move.
- Want to keep an ID tag on your pets, so they can always get back to you no matter what.
- Enjoy unconditional love and constant companionship.

According to the Humane Society, you may be the perfect cat owner if you:

- Can care for a cat for 15 to 18 years.
- Look forward to having your ankles rubbed by an affectionate, hairy animal.
- Don't mind sharing your house with someone who sheds, tracks kitty litter and throws up hairballs.
- Love an independent sort of housemate who will randomly entertain you with outrageous and silly antics (at his or her whim, not yours).
- Want to take care of someone everyday.
- Like your lap warmed whenever you sit down.
- Can spend your extra money on pet food, toys, veterinary care, kitty litter and more kitty litter.
- Want to be welcomed with a soft purr of appreciation.
- Can't imagine leaving your devoted pet behind when you move.
- Want to keep an ID tag on your pets, so they can always get back to you no matter what.
- Enjoy unconditional love and companionship.

Local Animal Shelters

Pike County Humane Society

PO Box 255, 189 Lee Rd
Shohola, PA
570/296-7654

The Dessin Animal Shelter


138 Miller Drive
Honesdale, PA
570/253-4037

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The Inventive Pumpkin

Experiment with fall's flavorful fruit

By **NANCY DYMOND**

This luscious fall fruit (although most of us think of it as a vegetable) is native to the Americas. It was roasted in long strips over an open fire by Native Americans. Early colonists took the first steps toward the invention of pumpkin pie by slicing off pumpkin tops, filling the insides with milk, spices and honey and baking them in hot ashes. In those early days, the value of pumpkins extended beyond the culinary into the realms of folkloric medicine, where it was said to be an effective freckle remover and snake bite cure.

The pumpkin has not lost its allure for health nuts and healers. Noted area herbalist Nathaniel Whitmore is enthusiastic about the nutritional properties of pumpkins. Herbal remedies utilize pumpkin in treatment of digestive problems and mucus in lungs and sinuses. Whitmore suggests roasting, rather than discarding, pumpkin seeds for a nutritious snack. The seeds contain essential amino acids, protein, fiber and important minerals.

Pumpkin nutrition consists of much more than the beta carotene component that's signaled by its conspicuous orange color. Besides the beta-carotene that converts to vitamin A in our

bodies, pumpkin also offers significant amounts of niacin, vitamin E, calcium and iron. It's low in fat and calories and high in potassium. The addition of eggs, milk, sugar and the like boosts the calories. The calorie-conscious can avoid extra calories by roasting or grilling strips or rounds of pumpkin sprinkled with cinnamon. Another way to get the nutritional benefits without the calories is to blend pumpkin puree with apple cider for a delicious and healthy drink.

Today, we revere the ocher-hued melons as signs of abundant harvest. The pumpkin's spherical shape flattens to a delicious circle of pastry and pudding on the tables of families who reunite during the season's celebrations. True to tradition, we also have fun carving and painting grotesque faces on pumpkins that glow and grimace weirdly during the Halloween season. In general, the smaller "pie" pumpkins are used for baking, and the more deep the orange color, the riper and sweeter the fruit. We have collected an assortment of new twists on old themes that will engage your imagination and perhaps add a new recipe or two to your holiday season repertoire.



TRR file photo

Recipes

Nathaniel Whitmore's Pumpkin Soup Recipes

For both recipes, the cooking method is the same. Place the one-inch squares of pumpkin in a cooking pot with just enough water to prevent scorching. As the heat causes the pumpkin squares to break down into a mushy texture, add the other ingredients, adjusting the taste as you mash and stir the mixture. When the flavor is perfect and the texture soupy, serve in heated bowls with sour cream or yogurt and chopped chives if desired.

Spicy Pumpkin Soup

One medium pumpkin cut into one-inch cubes (peel it or don't)
Water to cover the bottom of the cooking pot to prevent scorching
Toasted sesame oil to taste
Salt
Cayenne
Thyme
Spicebush berries (or allspice)
One six-inch piece of Kombu (kelp)

Sweet Pumpkin Soup

One small pumpkin cut into one-inch cubes
One small winter squash cut into one-inch cubes (acorn squash works well)
Water to cover the bottom of the cooking pot to prevent scorching
¼ cup olive oil
½ cup maple syrup
One tablespoon cinnamon
One teaspoon ginger
A pinch of nutmeg
A pinch of ground cloves
Salt to taste

continued on page 26



Soft-sculpture pumpkin

TRR photo by Nancy Dymond

Pumpkin Crafts

Glitter pumpkin

Glitter pumpkins are eye-catchers and simple to create. Take this project outside or spread newspaper over your working surface. Evenly spread a layer of white glue over the surface of a pumpkin and sprinkle glitter over the entire pumpkin, making sure your glitter completely covers the glue on the pumpkin. Let the pumpkin dry for about an hour. Shake off excess glitter. What color glitter you use is a personal choice, perhaps dictated by the child at your side. Some of the prettiest ones we've seen have glitter stems done in contrasting colors.

Painted pumpkin

There truly is nothing more eerily beautiful than a carved pumpkin head glowing from a candle within. This tradition came over with European immigrants who believed that such heads could keep evil spirits at bay during All Hallow's Eve. Originally a turnip was used, but folks in the new world naturally turned to the native pumpkin to continue this tradition.

These days, many agree that painting pumpkins is safer and less messy than carving. They will also last much longer, especially if you apply a paint sealer before and after you paint. Decoupage works well on pumpkin surfaces too, choosing photos, art images or images from magazines. The literary among you can try inking a poem on your pumpkin along with some colorful decorations

If you come up short on ideas, point your cursor to www.gonewengland.about.com/od/pumpkin-carving/1/blpmpkinpattern.htm and get free pumpkin painting or carving patterns, including "Pumpkin with Beret" and "Pumpkin with Dreadlocks." For extra painting fun, try painting a rock or even a basketball to look like a pumpkin!

Pumpkin centerpiece

An elegant tabletop centerpiece can be made by hollowing out a medium-sized pumpkin, inserting florist's foam and filling with silk or dried flowers. Expand the theme by setting it in a bed of straw or raffia and surrounding it with mini-pumpkins, also hollowed and filled with florist's foam and silk or dried flowers and/or dried corn and gourds. For pumpkin placetags, simply cut a small card, print the guest's name on the card, glue to a toothpick or fondue stick and insert into the florist's foam in each mini-pumpkin.

Crafts for children

Children love making pumpkin-seed flowers. Glue dried pumpkin seeds in a circle on round cardboard or a paper plate with the points of the seeds facing out. Then glue a second row of seeds inside the first row. Let dry. Put glitter in the center. You can paint the seeds any color you want using acrylic paints.

Here's a soft-sculpture mini-pumpkin that is easy to make. First, gather your materials: two pair of knee-high pantyhose, orange and green acrylic paint, paintbrush, fiberfill, scissors and three rubber bands. Next, stack all four knee highs on top of each other and put a rubber band around the center of the stack. Cut off the toe ends and stuff all eight "tubes" with fiberfill, leaving an inch or two of space at the open ends. Pull the eight sections up and around, fastening them together at the top with another rubber band. Braid the excess ends to create a stem for the pumpkin, holding it together with a third rubber band. Paint the pumpkin the traditional colors of orange and green or use your imagination to create a vibrant variation.

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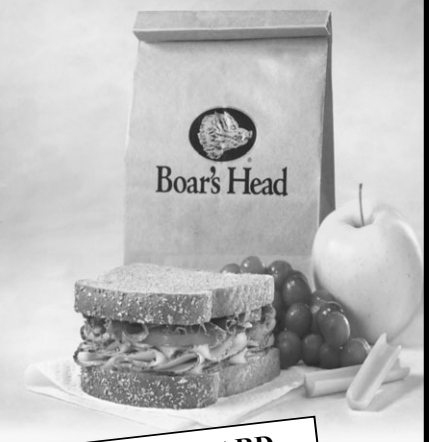
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Our Country Home, a special publication of **The River Reporter**, is published by Stuart Communications, Inc. Entire contents ©2007 by Stuart Communications, Inc.

The River Reporter maintains an office at 93 Erie Ave., Narrowsburg, NY. Its mailing address is P.O. Box 150, Narrowsburg, NY 12764. Phone 845-252-7414. E-mail ads@riverreporter.com. **The River Reporter** is online at riverreporter.com.

Subscription to **The River Reporter** is \$57.00 for two years, \$33.00 for 1 year or \$22.00 for six months. USPS 354-810. Periodical postage paid at Narrowsburg, NY 12764, and additional mailing offices.

Publication date: October 18, 2007

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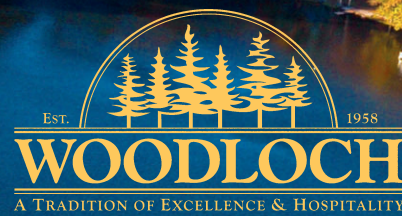
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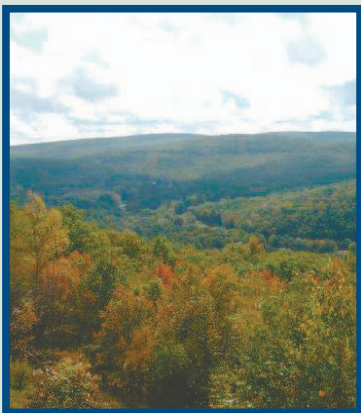
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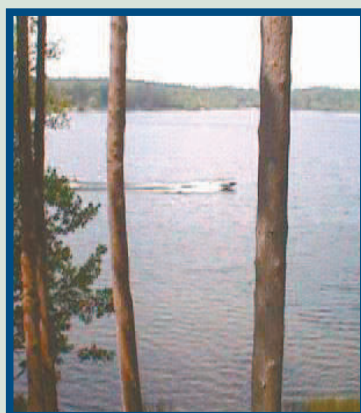
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TRR file photo

Hills Afire and Ripening Tomatoes

Fall gardening hints

By WILL CONWAY

Although plants are slowing their growth and readying for their well-deserved winter rest, fall is an active time. This is the time of year to undertake final harvest of garden produce such as tomatoes, winter squash and cold-hardy lettuces. Vegetables such as winter squash and onions are best left in the field or in a protected spot near the house to dry and ripen further. (When the cold weather hits, both will continue to dry and sweeten in the house.) Fall tomatoes can be saved by frost by placing them in a paper bag to ripen slowly. Garden cleanup begins at this time of year, and an initial concern is cleaning up dead and diseased foliage that might harbor fungus and pests. The garden will look neater, and make approaching planting chores easier. I put these garden residues into the compost heap, where they will slowly rot and turn into compost for conditioning the soil.



Compost and soil enrichment

I keep three compost piles: one fresh, one half rotted and one well rotted. I wait at least a year to use the third, so kitchen wastes and other collected material is thoroughly ready for use.

I add animal manures and compost into my gardens in the fall. There is no better time. Winter will allow fresh manure to cool enough for spring transplants. Depleted compost piles and flower or vegetable beds can be replenished with raked and mower-shredded leaves. Some gardeners simply turn spent plants into the soil, which is a fine way of adding nutrients directly, if care is taken to remove any diseased debris.

Planning for the future

Fall is the season for assessing your garden's structure, and to consider adding new beds as needed. I've been collecting dried seed from flowers & veggies, and gathering herbs, seed heads and flowers for drying. I lift overcrowded perennials and divide as needed, and introduce new selections. Fall is a good time to plant trees and shrubs, too. A three- to four-inch mulch can help protect tender roots from winter blasts of cold. I keep mulch material a few inches away from tree and shrub trunks to discourage mice gnawing at bark. Each week, I continue to water deeply until frost sets firmly into the ground. This is also a great time to repair or build a cold frame that will be ready for next year's seedlings.

Tools

Tool maintenance is a priority in the fall. Clean tools will last longer. I use sand to clean clumps of dirt from shovels. I scrape away any caked-on dirt and rinse the metal clean with water. Then, I apply linseed oil to both wooden handles and blades. Used motor oil is a great alternative. Oil will make the wood last and prevent rust. Sharpen any tools that need it before winter storage. When a freeze is expected, be sure to drain all the water from your hoses to prevent damage.

Autumn splendor

Fall presents us with colorful foliage displays as plants prepare for dormancy. When nights grow increasingly longer, we are dazzled by the landscape, set

on fire with shades of red, orange and yellow. The fall garden attracts attention with late bloomers. Fountain and woodland grass varieties can become foundation plants for a bed of flowering sedums, hardy chrysanthemums, asters and goldenrods. Butterflies will be attracted to many of the deer-resistant blooms of native varieties. For a more complete bedding, these can be set in front of a few dwarf conifers, which offer interesting shapes and year-round color. Conifers come in various shades of green, some gold, some in bluish or blue-green tones with interesting textures, and you'll see them as a perfect backdrop for blooming shrubs or flowers.

Late in August, my local garden center gave away unsold annuals for free. I took a few geraniums home and brightened up a quiet bed with their exuberant reds, purples, pinks, oranges and whites for a late-season show. Between these colors, I placed two silvery licorice plants and a burgundy sweet potato vine. Behind these, I put five pale green and white variegated basil. I was thrilled to give the throwaways a good home and get an unexpected show of color contrasts.

Houseplants and bulbs

At this time of year, I gather my houseplants from their summer spots on the porch and outside, and place them in a shady area. I repot any that need it. I'll leave them in the shade a few days to get them used to low light conditions that will be similar to the conditions once they are back indoors. Browning leaves and leaf drop happens in some species because of the change in light conditions and the lower humidity that is found in most homes. I lift tender bulbs of gladiola, dahlia and tuberous begonia. I dry begonia stems until they are brittle and can be broken off from the bulbs. To prepare rose bushes for winter, I prune dead or damaged branches and cut off any old flowers. Using topsoil or mulch, I mound the bush and cut canes back to six to 12 inches. To completely protect the bush, you can then cover it using a bushel basket.

Finally, I plant flowering bulbs of daffodils, tulips and crocus now for beautiful color in spring. I see this as an act of faith in the future. It can help bolster the spirit of spring's lively return in any gardener's daydreams.

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The Stourbridge Lion in Honesdale, PA.

The View from the Train

Honesdale's Stourbridge Lion makes tracks for fall

By SHEILA DUGAN

On the train tracks, the mighty train tracks, the Lion sleeps tonight—except when it is traversing the Northeast Pennsylvania countryside along the Lackawaxen River, from Honesdale to Hawley and back again. It is fall foliage time, time to wander, time to imagine, time to take a fantasy trip wherever you want to go.

Back in the days when the Delaware and Hudson (D&H) Canal Company operated a gravity railroad to carry anthracite coal from Carbondale to the head of their D&H Canal in Honesdale, the locomotive was just a glimmer in the mind of D&H's chief engineer, John B. Jervis. In 1829, Jervis's dream materialized as the original Stourbridge Lion—the first locomotive in the country—was shipped by its manufacturers in Stourbridge, England to Honesdale, where it ran the three-mile distance from Honesdale to Seelyville and back. While the tough seven-and-a-half-ton locomotive performed valiantly, the narrow-gauge track, constructed of hemlock rails covered with metal, could not support the weight of the Lion, and the stalwart engine was soon retired to its inevitable fate. In 1845, the Stourbridge Lion, now reduced to nothing more than its boiler, was put out to pasture, finding a home, in 1890, in the Smithsonian Institution. Currently it is on display at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore, MD.

So where did this latest replica of the Stourbridge Lion come from?

It all began in 1979 when the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce leased a locomotive and other necessary equipment from the New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway (NYS&W), in order to recreate the Lion's first excursion in honor

of the 150th anniversary of the birthplace of the American Railroad. It turned out to be such a hit that future excursions were planned. Five years later, the chamber decided that it should buy its own equipment, beginning with five coaches. Finally, in 1987, the chamber purchased the present Stourbridge Lion.

In 1988, under the supervision of executive director Annetta DeYoung, the Stourbridge Lion excursions expanded to 13, all on special holidays. Today the schedule boasts approximately 26 excursions a year, each with its own special theme. The biggest draw of this past summer, according to DeYoung, was the three-day exclusive state engagement of "The Little Engine That Could," a full-sized replica of Watty Piper's "I-think-I-can" engine that puffed its way up hills and down valleys and brought good things to good little boys and girls. As exhausting as it was exhilarating, this event brought volunteers from all over Wayne County to put together an extravaganza of entertainment, activities and the train ride itself. The celebrity train spectacular more than paid for itself in good will, according to DeYoung and Chamber of Commerce Board member Donna LaBar, as visitors from all over came to see what Honesdale is all about.

Other than the glitzy, rare appearance of "The Little Engine That Could" this past summer, The Great Train Robbery is undoubtedly the biggest hit of the summer excursions, attracting a western-outfitted crowd of kids of all ages for the last dozen years. And for as many years, a spunky group of actors who bill themselves "Just The Cowboys" have performed their dastardly deed somewhere between Honesdale and Hawley throughout the

summer months. Often parents and weekend hosts hope to surprise their children and guests by not letting them know what's in store for them on their "dangerous" journey to Hawley. So, ticket sellers have learned not to give away the mystery tour, and have adopted the tactic of pointing to the brochure, informing the purchaser of the day's adventure. "This is what we are featuring today," they say, usually to a smiling, nodding patron, often one who has taken the trip before.

During this time of year, featured rides include the fall foliage trips (Saturday, October 20) the wine-tasting Grape Express (Sunday, October 21, adults only), some Halloween fun (Saturday, October 27), the Santa Express with gifts for the kids (December 1, 2, 9 and 15) and a five-hour round trip to and from Hawley's Winterfest (Saturday, December 8). A new season begins at Eastertime, with the 2008 Bunny Run.

Before the floods of 2005 devastated the 25-mile Stourbridge Line, upon which the Stourbridge Lion runs, the tracks were shared with Gumble Brothers Lumber and other local businesses. Last July, the Stourbridge Line was bought by investors connected with Ideal Steel Supply Corp., who intend to repair the damage and expand the line's shipping potential. Stourbridge Lion runs are expected to continue and DeYoung is unfazed by the sale. "The future is bright for an active railroad," she says.

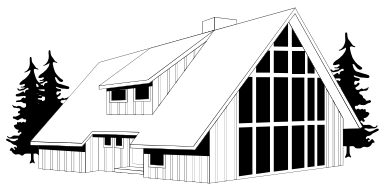
For more information and reservations, download the train schedule at www.waynecountycc.com/train_schedule.php or call the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce Stourbridge Line Trips at 800/433-9008 or 570/253-1960.

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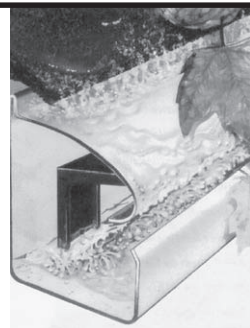
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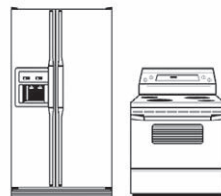
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Walking the Walk

Creating a workout room inside the home

By CYNTHIA O. TOLIVER

If your life is anything like mine, you often find it hard to balance work, family and social demands, let alone to carve out time for going to the gym in order to stay at the top of your physical game. Why not install a home gymnasium? Running down to the spare room or basement in your worn skivvies or torn sweats is a lot easier than taking a shower, putting on your expensive track suit and jumping in the car to head out to the gym. Sure, you may still want to visit your local gym some of the time, but a home gym will remove any obstacles that prevent or hinder you from getting or staying in shape. And once the initial investment is made, think of the money you will save!

It's not a race, it's a journey

We've all seen photos or videos of the fancy gymnasiums of the rich and famous, complete with personal workout coach. However, for anyone thinking of putting together a home gym, have no fear. You don't have to go bankrupt in order to be physically fit. It is not as expensive as you may think.

To ensure that creating a home gym is a fun, stress-free project, there are a few things you can do. First, take a realistic look at your personal goals. Are you a serious fitness enthusiast, or a beginner? It might be a good idea to write out some simple short- and long-term fitness goals that will help you know which equipment to buy. Secondly, create your budget. How much do you want to invest? Remember to include the touches you will need to make the space inviting and comfortable. Consider how much space you have in your home. Can you devote a whole room to your aerobics haven or will the space have to perform double duty as, say, a laundry room, guest bedroom or TV room?

If you are a beginner, or just not sure of what you want, it is recommended that you start small. Buy basic equipment that is reasonably priced, but that can still make your physical goals attainable. You can start off with a jump rope, a pair of hand weights, a step or slide and a mat. This is a great

investment that can be had for less than \$150. Other inexpensive but effective items include resistance bands, an exercise ball and a jump rope. An instructional DVD or two is also an affordable investment for the beginner.

Do your homework

Before you buy, talk to friends, visit your local gym and do your research to get the most out of your investment. Remember when comparing prices that safety and durability are important factors. The least expensive equipment might not pay off for you in the long run. Look at design and safety features. Durability is key, and parts should be easy to replace, if necessary.

How comfortable is the equipment you are buying? Will you be able to add on to it? You will need equipment that allows you to increase the level of challenge as your fitness progresses. If at all possible, check the machine out before you bring it home. If you are buying online, see if your local gym has something comparable, remembering that the equipment at your gym tends to be of a higher quality. It may be possible to buy used equipment, especially if you are looking at high-end pieces. A warranty and service plan are great pluses. If others in your family plan on using the gym, be sure to consult with them as well.

Location, location, location

Wherever you plan to create your new prize gym, don't try to cram too much equipment into a small space. It is ideal to leave an equal amount of open space and space for the equipment. Items such as mats, balls, jump ropes and weights can store easily in a bin or in a closet. A boom box will provide some light jazz, classical music or heavy metal—whatever your taste—while you work out. Some like to catch up with television news or listen to books on tape while working the treadmill or cycle. Create your space in a part of the house that is accessible at odd hours, such as late at night or early in the

morning, so that you can work out when you want without disturbing others. Often gyms end up in a basement, which is ideal for privacy and noise. If you are above ground, consider placing the equipment where you can see out a window.

Resources

Karen Weiss is an experienced personal trainer in **Monticello, NY (845/791-5932)** who will consult with you on your fitness goals and how best to accomplish them. She is also a nutritionist and will help you plan the best possible menu to maximize your physical well being and personal workout.

Cindy Fricasse of the **Liberty Fitness Center in Liberty, NY (845/292-0756)** has been a fitness instructor for over 20 years. She advises the beginner to "start small with a pair of handweights, an appropriate mat, a bottle of water, a towel and a smile!" She also reminds you to "remember to breathe, remember to stretch before, during and after class, and don't be too hard on yourself." Start small, she says, and work your way up to your physical goals.

Fricasse is offering one free trial class to first timers. Call for details.

John Chevalier, a fitness instructor for seven years at the **Fitness Factory in Monticello, NY (845/794-7344)**, adds his opinion that "a treadmill, a utility bench, an ab machine, ab rocker or ab roller are good pieces of equipment to begin for the serious home gym enthusiast."

There are also a wealth of places to order equipment online, including www.fittv.discovery.com, www.bowflex.com, www.proform.com and www.bestbuyfitness.com. Talk to the fitness instructor at your local gym for more suggestions and ideas.

Remember, you don't have to give up your trips to the gym. However, a gym in your home is not only a wonderful convenience, but an affordable and wise investment that will enable you to accomplish your healthy lifestyle goals any time of the day or night.



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A modular farm house by Quality Crafted Homes, Narrowsburg, NY.

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A stick-built farm house by Catskills Farms, Kenoza Lake, NY

Photo by Charles Petersheim

Modular Housing

Is it for you?

By CHARLES PETERSHEIM

Modular—kit house—pre-fab—dwell house—whatever you want to call it, the factory-built house has been getting serious attention from professional designers and a second look from homeowners who once considered them a step beneath the traditional hand-built, stick-framed house we all know and love.

Let's face it—building a house hasn't changed much in the last 70 years. Sure, the codes have gotten stronger and stricter, and we use better, safer materials, but the whole idea of 16-inch-on-center, stud-by-stud, rafter-by-rafter construction is not a new idea, or a very progressive one. One could argue a kitchen steak knife has seen more structural advances over the past half century than most of the houses being built today.

But, as they say, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Is the stick-built house broke? In need of replacement? Is modular better, faster and easier?

Design

To take full advantage of modular construction, most home buyers will choose a modular model within the current selection being offered by the chosen modular retailer. The options will include a collection of different designs, and a host of different finishes and fixtures. A bit of research will reveal what design best suits your taste and budget.

To venture into truly custom design within the modular world is to eliminate the main advantages of modular—speed and price. For the most part, modular retailers are not custom home builders. In modular design, the houses are broken down into “boxes,” and the boxes are limited in size to what can fit on a truck. The boxes can fit together endlessly to create infinite room sizes and variations,

but each connection limits and constricts the design freedoms.

A traditional home can adopt a lot of variations from any number of existing designs—incorporating what is liked, changing other items and eliminating or expanding walls and rooms without much issue.

Construction

It's fairly obvious that a home built in a climate-controlled environment, with the wood and materials protected from the elements, is a superior method of construction. As David Goodstein of Brookside Homes likes to say, “Show me a traditional house that goes down the highway at 70 miles a hour.” For the most part, the days of modular homes being of inferior quality is past (regardless of what the tax assessor says). Of all the arguments for modular housing, certainly this protection from the elements, and lack of delay that the elements can cause on site, are foremost.

Site preparation

The trees aren't cleared in a factory, a well isn't drilled indoors—you still need your electric, foundation, septic and driveway installed—so, regardless of where the house is built, a large amount of work is still required on site. The professional management of the site development is probably the biggest hurdle to consistently making modular a quicker method of construction. While a traditional home can be built anywhere—cliffside, nestled in the trees, high on a mountain—a modular home-site is more limited: the site needs to be open and flat enough for a crane and a tractor trailer to access and unload.

Cost

Though prices range wildly, a standard model modular home with some bells and whistles is probably less expensive than the traditionally built home. It's reasonable to assume that the site development costs are the same either way. Customization of the factory modular model can lessen the cost advantages.

Final analysis

When the rubber meets the road, new modular construction offers a great option for homebuyers, especially in a region where construction labor is scarce. If the homebuyer favors a showroom floor model or catalog model, and the retailer offers assistance with the site work, choosing modular can pay off in many ways, including speed of construction, overall price and, most importantly, lessening the stress of coordinating a builder and his 35 subcontractors.

Design-wise, modular construction comes with one major drawback: the inability to make changes and improvise once plans are finalized and in motion. With a modular, all your decisions are made in the factory, and since the house is delivered nearly finished, any changes—such as bumping out the bedroom wall an extra foot, adding a window or cabinets or extra electrical outlets, could be prohibitively expensive. The methodical nature of traditional construction reduces missed opportunities, and allows time for the house to “speak to you” architecturally about what it wants to become.

Which way you go depends on what you want, need and can afford out of the home construction experience. Either way, you end up with a house—to care for, maintain and love.

Charles Petersheim is owner of Catskill Farms in Kenoza Lake, NY.

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It's All in the Details

No Loose Ends provides worry-free home organization

By CASS COLLINS

Ron Lee wants you to relax, and he'll go to great lengths to see that you do. Ron and his wife Jeanene are no strangers to busy lives. But they manage to keep things "just so," according to Ron, by attending to details—their own and those of their lucky clients.

The couple's concierge service, **No Loose Ends**, serving customers in New York's Sullivan and Orange counties, is dedicated to taking the worry out of trying to accomplish mundane and/or time consuming tasks so that their clients can concentrate on enjoying time with family and friends. "You come to the country to relax," says Ron. "You do not need to worry about loose ends."

Ron is a 1974 Washingtonville High School graduate who spent much of his adult life in the suburbs of Westchester County. In 2000, he and his bride returned to the rural calm of the Catskills and found life here to be "the best of both worlds," he says, combining the beauty of the natural world with the "ability to be in the city in an hour and change."

A self-confessed "type-A" personality, Ron is the kind of guy who makes elaborate sand castles at the shore while most of us are conked out over the latest beach read. Up at 4:30 every morning with the songbirds that dot his property, Ron has plenty of time to pursue his passion for gardening and landscaping, before attending to the day's work. And every day is different, which is just the way he likes it.

"I've never liked being pigeon-holed," says this eclectic soul. His career paths have crossed many times, from modeling to bartend-

ing (he took a course in bartending before opening a bar called Masquerade with partners in Westchester). He spent years running a fine arts and antiques business in Pelham before the bar venture, and studied at the New York School for Interior Design. He has done event planning and catering, once making a bird's nest out of cheese for a client's affair.

Through it all, his attention to detail has made the difference. "Some people think \$150 a day is steep for house cleaning," says Ron, "but I find the best people, screen them thoroughly, interviewing and checking references" (he'll go as far as to run professional background checks if requested), "and I guarantee satisfaction."

No Loose Ends can provide event planning, catering, spa services, waiters and bartenders and personal shopping as well as house cleaning. They will even pick up dry cleaning and pharmacy orders and wait for deliveries or repair services at your home, for a five-hour minimum fee.

For a recent customer, a contractor in Swinging Bridge, Ron made a welcome basket for a new homeowner, filled with gourmet utensils and other goodies, that was a big hit.

In the '70s, Ron rented a bungalow in Wurtsboro and remembers thinking, "I could never live here." Now, from his home on Yankee Lake, he watches eagles nest "next door," and says, "It never bores me."

With a business like No Loose Ends, boredom is not likely to be a factor.

Contact Ron Lee on line at NoLoose-Ends.com or at 845/888-0000.



TRR file photos



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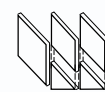
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ADDITIONAL BONUS! All homes produced in the month of February 2008 (under the Dream Kitchen promotion) will receive the following upgrade in addition to the Classic Series Cabinets. Hurry . . . offer valid for limited time only. See your authorized independent builder for details.

- Classic Series Deluxe Option which includes 3/4" thick Dovetail Drawer Construction, 3/4" thick Wall Cabinet Shelves & Undermount Drawer Glides.

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