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Ref# 2753 \$459,900



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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.

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Ref# 5231 \$265,000



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Located in the Bavarian Village only minutes to Beach Lake, Honesdale and Narrowsburg, NY. This house is well maintained with many new improvements such as vinyl siding, thermal windows and doors. The roof is only 7 years old. Nestled on a 1.2-acre property with trees.

Ref# 5206 \$167,000



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Don't miss out on your opportunity to own this spacious, 5 bedroom, 2.5 bath Colonial-style home. Lots of room on these 6.28 acres with 2 ponds! Large steel building can be used as workshop or extra garage.

Ref# 5223 \$299,000



POCONO SPRINGS CHALET

This beautiful 3 bedroom, 2 bath chalet, in pristine condition, leaves nothing to be desired. It features a dramatic wood-burning fireplace with propane starter; both heat and central air can be set via telephone! The hard wood floors are impeccable. A huge loft is plumbed for additional bath, convenient 1st floor laundry, and an oversized 2-car garage for ALL the toys! The full basement is waiting to be finished. Your dream home is here!

Ref# 5212 \$245,000



PRECIOUS 1850'S FARMHOUSE

A great investment, this 1850's farmhouse with 1.3+ acres is situated on a quiet country road in Tyler Hill, PA. This adorable home features 3 bedrooms, 1 bath, a covered porch & covered side porch with glider; great for relaxing in the country. There are several outbuildings on the property for storage. This precious home just needs some TLC.

Ref# 2752 \$150,000

LAND

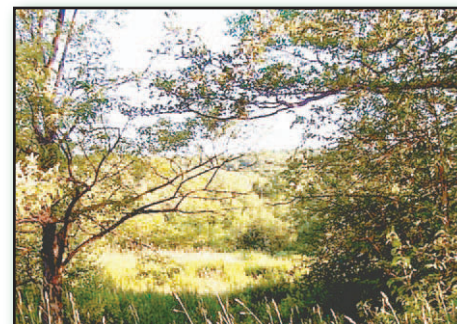
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COVER
 Greenville, NY's historic Tapstone Inn
 Contributed photo

Greetings!

The season of bounty is here once again. Those of us lucky enough to live in and visit the Upper Delaware River Valley value it more than ever as a pocket of peace in a world that is ever more fragile and tentative. The land in our five-county region is verdant and lush; the lakes and rivers inviting and clean. Of course, we are not untouched by the issues affecting our country and the world. Floods keep ravaging, along with storms that grow increasingly violent. Our farms are struggling to survive. We are trying to find our way into green building and alternative energies at the same time that our community is threatened by large companies seeking greater electric power for regions south. Our town leaders are grappling with issues of sustainable development and growth. Our watersheds need protection, and local organizations have stepped up to the plate. Sullivan Renaissance continues to assist citizens in beautifying our towns and roadways.

We all need to do our part, big or small, and we all need respite. **Our Country Home** is a way that we celebrate the richness of our region, and we hope also to provide some entertainment, good ideas and pleasure within its pages. This issue will teach you how to create a simple fountain in your yard, or plan a brunch for friends. We present a way to create no-till garden beds without breaking your back, and some options in choosing a "green flooring" alternative for your new house or renovation. We invite you on the pottery trail with us, an ancient art form that has not changed that much through time but has grown in popularity in recent years. You can organize the garage and figure out how to update your children's bedroom or the master bath. We offer tips on how to survive a building project. And our featured home is an inspiration all on its own: a historic Greenville, NY home, lovingly restored and tended.

Let us know what you think of this edition of **Our Country Home**, and enjoy!

Mary Greene

Mary Greene, Editor
 Our Country Home



Section Editor Mary Greene

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“In another interesting bow to historic authenticity, the couple installed one style of upper kitchen cabinet and subtly different lower cabinets.”



James Thomas spends many pleasurable hours maintaining and renewing his gardens.

TRR photo by Marcia Nehemiah

Life at the End of the Road

Greenville's historic Tapstone Inn

By **MARCIA NEHEMIAH**

James Alton Thomas requested that the Town of Greenville change the sign at the beginning of the dirt road leading to the Tapstone Inn from “Dead End” to “No Outlet.”

“There’s plenty of life down here at the end of this road,” he said, and he is responsible for most of it. Refulgent gardens fill his 16-acre property, protected wetlands across the road teem with life, and in the center of it all is the Tapstone Inn and Apiary, the country home Thomas co-owns with Eric Liboy Lopez.

Thomas and Lopez, partners for 12 years, spent almost two years in the real estate market before finding their dream house. Holding fast to a few specific requirements—they wanted a stone house at least 100 years old, they wanted a fireplace and they wanted at least six acres—and after seeing ranch after ranch and countless newly built homes, they were close to giving up the search. One Saturday, a real estate agent took them to five houses,

none of which met any of their parameters. Then they came to a dirt road, and James, after recognizing the location, commented, “We’ve been down this road before.” He meant it both literally and figuratively.

Then they saw the last house on the agent’s list.

When he walked out of the car on to the property, Thomas said, “This is it,” without hesitation. He had found everything he had been searching for in the old Tapstone Inn.

Over 200 years of history

The stone house and its recently remodeled addition, combined with the burgeoning gardens, create a landscape that perfectly melds past, present and future.

Jonathan Woods built the stone house in 1792 and lived there with his wife and “one black slave,” according to a ledger he kept. The couple raised children there and died there, and the Town of Green-

ville had its first meeting in the front room in 1853, when it incorporated.

The tavern and inn was probably a stopping point for travelers on the Delaware and Hudson Canal making their way east to Goshen or New Hampton. A stagecoach ran on a road behind the inn. Travelers watered their horses and took libations, such as cider and ale.

The partners purchased the house in January of 1999. “We had no intention of fixing up a house. We liked the cabin-esque, country home feeling of the place.”

But a few years later, a prospective bathroom remodeling led to a major renovation of half of the house. The bathroom wall crumbled, and as most homeowners can predict from their own remodeling experiences, one thing led to another and the entire back portion of the house was rebuilt. The resulting extension, 10 feet deeper and 5 feet wider than the original structure, with the roofline

continued on page 11



A large dining room adjoins the kitchen in the renovated section of the house, creating an open and airy space for entertaining.

TTR photos by Marcia Nehemiah



Natural light floods the master bedroom in the renovated section of the house.



The original spiral staircase was salvaged and reinstalled during the remodeling.



The kitchen was renovated with attention to historic details.

Life at the End of the Road

continued from page 9

raised to match that of the original house, now includes a dining and kitchen area downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs.

Although he has no design or architectural training, Lopez designed the space, which was finished in April of 2006.

In an effort to honor historic authenticity, there are no closets in the addition. "The more closets you had, the more you were taxed," said Thomas. "So we opted for windows instead of closets."

The couple also lives in Manhattan and, "in Manhattan, most living spaces are dark because you are boxed in by high rise apartments. The windows here let in abundant light."

Original wood beams were salvaged and used as accents. The original spiral staircase was salvaged.

In another interesting bow to historic authenticity, the couple installed one style of upper kitchen cabinet and subtly different lower cabinets. Thomas explained that in the 18th century, most people couldn't afford to install all the kitchen cabinets at the same time, so they frequently did not match.

Thomas is committed to displaying original art in the house, and works by E. O. Miner and M. E. Whitehall, both Hudson River Valley painters, grace the walls.

Lopez is senior vice president for an international banking and financial services organization. Thomas, who is a self-employed hair salon owner, spends three days each week in his country home. "I've made different life choices to be here. I don't wear Prada or Dior. But people can't judge me by what I wear. Underneath our clothes, we're all the same."

Garden paradise

To say that Thomas is an avid gardener is an understatement. When this reporter visited, he was expecting a delivery of 500 plants and was planning to put in a vegetable garden the next weekend. The property has numerous garden plots, some planted five years ago and some blossoming for only their second spring and summer. They bloom near the ponds he created, around the stone patio and encircling the pool, a favorite spot for Lopez and Thomas' nieces and nephews, who frequently visit.

Perennials, berry bushes, rosebushes, peonies, buddelia and snapdragons are among Thomas' favorite plants. A 125-year-old apple tree provides shade, and a lilac tree over 100 years old fills the air with unbridled aromatherapy. The 150-year-old barn is original to the property.

An organic gardener, Thomas encourages his neighbors to plant organically and to eschew pesticides. He keeps bees. He plants herbs in containers so they don't invade the rest of the garden. Aside from their many uses, the herbs help control insects and are good for the bees.

Garden tours will commence in July. For more information, visit www.Tapstoneinn.com.

The protected wetlands across the road is home to wild turkeys, river otters, bears, "an unbelievable variety of birds" and a great blue heron, who frequently visits the edge of one of the ponds on the property.

Thomas anticipates future projects to enhance the property. He is presently reconstructing the stone well, original to the property. He plans to build a stone-and-copper-topped cupola and to use water from the well for his garden.

He said, "The work is ongoing, but this is our little piece of paradise."



James Alton Thomas, left, and Eric Liboy Lopez display one of their many gardens, which blends effortlessly into the field beyond.

Contributed photo



The 150-year-old barn is original to the property.

TRR photo by Marcia Nehemiah



The stone patio and wall in back of the house provide a perfect backdrop for lush plants and flowers.

Contributed photo

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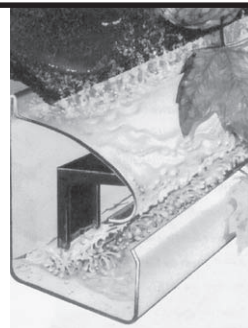
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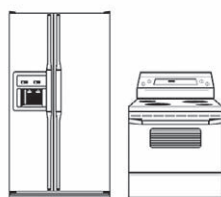
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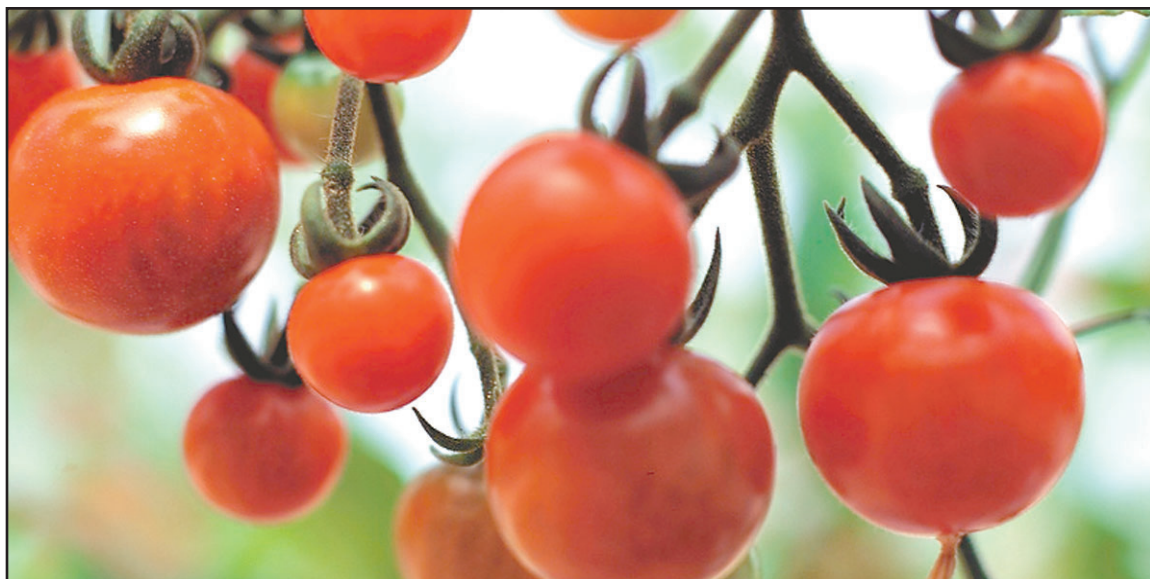
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“This pocket garden among the trees is, as all gardens are, an experiment.”



TRR file photos

No-till Gardening

Create healthy beds without the shovel

By WILL CONWAY

An easy no-till garden can be made with minimal effort. Weeds can be tough competition for crops, and digging new garden beds is hard work. With layered raised beds placed on top of slowly degrading materials, both garden tasks can be reduced. Avoiding digging and weeding allows more time to enjoy your garden and makes quick work of building permanent gardens.

Perhaps six yards north of the window, where I am looking out, I have put in a new vegetable garden, having cleared an area of small trees on our wooded lot. Spring has provided the spot with a fine, fresh crop of grass and weed. This pocket garden among the trees is, as all gardens are, an experiment. Set with five three-foot-wide beds pitched along a northwest to southeasterly track, the garden makes the most of the hours of stronger midday sun. The beds vary in length, graduating from seven feet up to 24 feet.

After last year's clearing of an area of small cherry, maple and ironwood trees, I had a stack of seasoned posts waiting. I began making two-foot-deep holes with a posthole digger and a crowbar, for loosening stones. In each, I put an eight-foot length of timber, with the bottoms triple plastic bagged and duct-taped. (This to slow the inevitable rotting of untreated wood by minimizing soil dampness reaching the posts.) I had an assortment of four-foot-high lengths of fence to string together to create a perimeter. To these, I added sections of black plastic netting fence, bringing the above-ground height up to deer repelling standards. I used bits of copper wire to

attach the various pieces of fencing together and to the posts. Last, I constructed a door for the garden, made very simply from sticks. These were laid out as a rectangle with five horizontals and two diagonal braces. Long loops of wire secured the door to a strong post, fitting it nicely in with an overall rustic and practical look.

Between modest grassy pathways, I made layered beds in cake-like fashion. Here's how it's done. Start with recycled cardboard to suppress weed growth. On top, add a layer of leaves that have been aging since last fall. Next, apply a thin layer of peat moss. After that, add layers of compost, aged manure (cow, horse and alpaca are all great), topsoil and rotted hay. Continue in this fashion, creating two-inch layers, until the beds are 12 to 18 inches high. It's an added touch to supplement the bedding layers with an aged mulch of rotted, shredded bark and woodchips. This will help retain moisture and allow for root expansion. In addition, sprinkling wood ash over the layered mix helps neutralize the natural acidity of woodland soil below.

This style of "lasagna gardening" can be done at any time of the year, and you can take your time about the process. Basically, anything you can find, save, collect or buy that is a soil-enriching substance will reward you in the end with rich black garden dirt. Generally, this type of garden does best after some time has passed, six months to a year, when the materials have had a chance to break down and blend, but if you wish, you can begin planting it right away.

Of course, putting in transplants is the most rewarding part of the process of starting a new garden. I was able to put in four varieties of squash, including delicata, spaghetti, butternut and a zucchini. I put in a few red cabbages, cauliflowers, broccoli and collards, to which I applied light dustings of wood ash to slow the cabbage moths. I planted heirloom tomatoes, two cherry, a New Hampshire slicer and a yellow pear. I have some yellow and green peppers and an eggplant. In the longest row I have seeded yellow wax, romano, green and lima beans. I have placed basil starts between the tomatoes and parsley at the north end of the same bed. And for color, I planted nasturtiums to edge a couple of the rows, and put in a patch of brightly stalked swiss chard. With a little room left in one row, I planted some snapdragons, cosmos and zinnias. I tucked in a few hollyhock seedlings that will flower next year, with luck. To grow up the garden's northern fence I've planted morning glories and a single scarlet runner bean.

These are all fairly hardy plants that, with the right care and sunlight, will thrive in my garden and yours. Once you've done your planting, whether it's flowers, vegetables or a combination of the two, stand back and admire your handiwork. That pleasure will extend through to harvest with good weather, punctuated with the cheerful tasks of watering, thinning and weeding. (With these newly formed, raised beds, weeding should be minimal.) Lately, rain has been cooperative and regular. That leaves thinning, which will offer tasty garnishes for your salad bowl.

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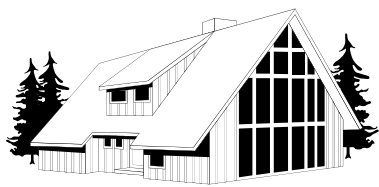


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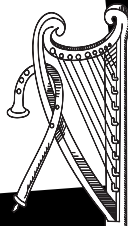
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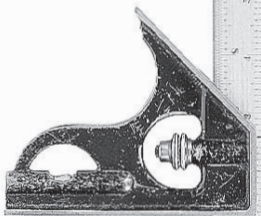
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TRR file photos



Bathroom Facelift

Easy and inventive ways to create a whole new look

By CASS COLLINS

It was late one winter night, and I was all alone in my dream house when it hit me—I hated that blue floral wallpaper in the second floor bathroom.

Armed with a “Paper Tiger,” a device that looks like it belongs in a Gitmo prison but is used to strip wallcoverings, and a glass of Chenin Blanc, I scored all four walls of the former homeowner’s decorating dream, leaving a once adequate bathroom looking like a nightmare.

It was months (and many family jokes later) before I returned to the job, but you can learn from my experience. Don’t tackle the big jobs on a whim and a glass of wine. Small decorating changes can make a huge impact.

Whether it’s the first-floor bathroom everybody uses or your master bath ensuite or the kid’s shower room, chances are it could use a facelift. When new towels and a shower curtain fail to do the trick, you need something more, and your local home improvement stores are there to help, with fair prices and personalized service.

How to begin

Having tackled four full-fledged bathroom renovations of my own, I have a few tips to share. First, assemble ideas by perusing the many magazines and newspaper supplements devoted to the subject, like this one. Keep a file of favorite ideas. Ask friends and family to share resources, and quiz them about their experiences with local plumbers and electricians.

Identify one thing that would make your bathroom a more pleasant environment, and tackle it. A heated towel rack or better lighting are tops on the list of improvements for some. For others, it will be a new color scheme, from walls to softgoods, and new bronze faucets. Maybe it’s the flooring. That old pink nylon carpet a goner? Rip it up, and lay a new vinyl floor in a few hours, by yourself.

Local resources

Lenny Dunhom, sales manager at **Pro-Jan Tile** in Tyler Hill, PA (570/224-6343), says many people are

choosing the new cushion-backed floating vinyl flooring for their remodeling projects. For one thing, these floors can be laid without the use of strong adhesives, reducing the chemical volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that so many people are sensitive to.

Overall, Dunhom says the trend in home flooring is hard surface. Tile and vinyl and the new laminate floor choices are easy to clean, don’t trap allergens and can last a lifetime, in the case of tile. Cork flooring has a natural sound-deadening quality, and its molecules heat naturally when walked on, a nice touch for a master bath.

Laminates come in a wide variety of finishes—pay attention to the slip ratio when choosing a bathroom surface—and they are easy to install. But it’s best to choose a professional installer, cautions Dunhom, when tiling a new shower. Pro-Jan creates its own mud-bed shower pans, carefully angling the pitch for proper drainage. “We’ll get you whatever you need to do the job,” says Dunhom, “whether your style

continued on page 18

Bathroom Facelift

continued from page 17

is to do it yourself or get it done by the experts."

Green Demolitions (www.greendemolitions.com) in Honesdale, PA (570/253-8933) and Bethel, NY (845/583-8000) is a great resource for homeowners looking to improve their plumbing fixtures while saving the planet. The Connecticut-based, locally managed company recycles high quality fixtures and appliances from homeowners who receive a tax credit for their donations. Recent items at Green Demolitions included a Kohler jetted five-foot whirlpool tub for \$400.

Schmidt's Wholesale Plumbing and Heating Supply Co. in Monticello, NY (845/794-5900) is a local family-owned-and-operated business. Their showroom has several full bath displays, with everything from sleek Swanstone wall surfacing and Grohe shower systems to the more standard, and affordable, fiberglass tubs and shower stalls. Frank Gibson, plumbing manager at Schmidt's, says most people who are looking to upgrade their bathrooms opt for new hardware and vanity tops first. For a few hundred dollars, you can get the newest trend in finishes—from Venetian bronze to brushed nickel—or a Swanstone vanity top with a single-bowl integrated sink.

Another new look is a vessel sink placed on top of an existing vanity or cabinet. There are dozens of choices of sinks, and with a customized paint finish for your vanity, your bathroom will look like no one else's. But, be warned, a trip to Schmidt's may have you longing for the Toto Washlet, a quasi bidet system that attaches to any toilet and eliminates the need for tissue paper, using a fan and heated water spray. A remote control can pre-heat your toilet seat—a nice touch on those mid-winter mornings.

Monticello Ceramics and Tile in Monticello, NY (845/794-1186), another family-owned business, has

a great selection of porcelain tile in a variety of colors and finishes, a nice complement to old porcelain sinks and tubs. They also can refer you to a local tile artisan, who can take any image and recreate it in tile. For a quick, easy facelift, opt for some new towel holders, or go for the easy no-install hooks that hang on the back of the door for the kid's bathroom.

Dirlam Brothers Lumber Co. (570/253-3540) in Honesdale has a selection of bathroom hardware, everything from toilet tissue holders (I like the free-standing version that holds extra rolls, especially for the guest bath) to towel racks. And if you don't want to tangle with the Paper Tiger, a great way to update your old wallpapered walls is with a paint wash. A watered-down latex paint can be rolled over most wallpaper, changing the whole ambiance of the room.

Wainscoting is an old technique that looks new again, and it's easier than ever to install. There is even a composite wainscoting that can be installed without nails, using construction adhesive.

In a powder room, you can really go to town decorating. A small space can have big impact. Try red walls and a black and white tile with shiny chrome fixtures to really make a statement.

Our first-floor powder room is papered with topical maps of the Upper Delaware, using Mod-Podge, a decoupage glue. The old brown vanity is painted green to match the maps. Elaborate brass drawer pulls were switched out with pewter finish bin pulls, changing the look from colonial manse to a more appropriate country store style instantly. A floating vinyl floor covering mimics the look of black and white ceramic tile. Completing the makeover, the vanity lights got new, old-fashioned-looking seeded glass shades for a fraction of the cost of a new light fixture.

So go at it, tiger, and don't be shy.

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My, Have You Grown!

Updating the children's bedrooms

By MARY GREENE

There is nothing like the feeling of bringing your baby home from the hospital to a warm, cozy room that you have prepared just for her. When babies are small, they don't need much by way of clothing, toys or bedding. As they grow, however, their needs change and become more complex. The changing table gives way to an art easel, and the stroller is replaced by a bike. So, too, a crib is replaced by a first bed, which then must be replaced by a larger, sturdier bed for an active adolescent. And, any parent remembers the moment a teenager looks around her childhood room and demands a makeover.

A makeover can be as simple as buying a new coverlet and curtains. A fresh coat of paint on the walls—and maybe on the furniture—goes far in freshening up the look of a room. Book shelves and wall shelving will help with clutter. It's a good idea to let a child be in control of what goes up on the walls of her bedroom. (Provide thumbtacks for hanging posters and pictures, as the holes left by tacks or small nails are easier to spackle and repair later on than those pesky strips of scotch tape.)

Gene Palley, owner of **Raiten's Mattresses** in Monticello, NY (845/794-4510), sells a crib mattress made of foam and quilted vinyl for easy cleanup. He has a good selection of mattresses for twin or bunk beds that also have a waterproof coating for easy cleanup. His advice to parents is not to spend a great deal on mattresses for young kids, who are likely to jump on beds. He also does not recommend going the ultra-cheap route, as some mattresses are constructed so poorly they won't last even with normal use. Raiten's stocks a good foam mattress that, said Palley, will withstand jumping and will provide good support without having to spend a fortune.

Susan Krause is a sales consultant at **Royal Fur-**

niture in Port Jervis, NY (845/856-4474, royalfurnitureofpj.com). The store, she said, carries a large selection of children's furniture with a wide range in price, everything from the pine Barn Door selection that has a rough and tumble, heavy duty, rustic look to upscale lines like Hooker and Stanley Young America. There are 75 different manufacturers represented, so there is something for every taste and budget. She generally recommends a middle-of-the-road company, such as Lea. Small children do not need much support for their spines, she said, but growing children do need a bit more substance in a mattress.

There are baby cribs that convert to day beds for toddlers, a nice way to get more for your buck. Twin beds are ever-popular, said Krause, as are bunk beds. Much of the furniture made today is versatile and intended to grow with the child, said Krause. She recommends that customers ask sales people for assistance when exploring their options.

Charlie Barbutti of **Charlie Barbutti Furniture Mall** in Liberty, NY (845/292-4826) agrees that there are a lot of choices out there for kids today. "The big thing in youth furniture," he said, "is the bed options—trundle beds, bunk beds, lofts." He recommends waiting until the child is nearly grown—into the teenage years—before investing in good furniture. "Then you want something of a better value, something a little more permanent, that kids might want to take with them—or that can be used if the bedroom converts to or doubles as a guest room."

Nanette Schips, owner of **Zube Interiors** in Barryville, NY (845/557-0618) has lots of practical ideas for parents to make their youngsters comfortable. Her number-one recommendation is blackout

shades for the windows, which, she said, works with both young and older children when they need to get to sleep at night or nap. They can be dropped all the way or half way for varying shades of darkness. "Mind over matter makes them tired," she said. Schips also recommends—and will reupholster—a nice small-sized chair for kids to curl up in and read and relax. Schips says accessories can be a good place to spend a bit of money for a new look. Schips also makes custom bed spreads and bed skirts, but she thinks pillows and accessories are the way to go in a child's bedroom.

The Little Duck House in Jeffersonville, NY (845/482-5900) is the place to visit when you've got all the basics in place. This delightful shop has everything from children's clothing to dolls to games and books. Certain toys can be part of the decorating scheme, said owner Tim Corcoran. The store sells art easels (one side is a blackboard), small-sized tables and chairs, play mats, train sets, doll houses and kitchens. They even stock a tree house play set to be set up inside. "Just about any type of creative toy can be used as decoration," said Corcoran. They have huge stuffed animals that will be nearly bigger than your child—lions, penguins, a white teddy bear and dinosaurs, said Corcoran. They also have indoor tents on themes such as the fireman tent and the princess tent. They have an animal puppet theatre and even a toy baby grand piano to inspire your little one toward greatness.

So have no fear: with a few changes, such as paint and pillows and upgrading the beds now and then, your child's room can grow with your child, providing a comfortable, comforting sanctuary from the cares of the world.

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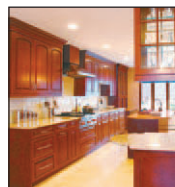


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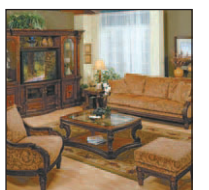


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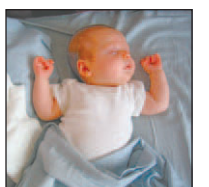


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“Water fountains are popping up in more and more backyards and gardens. The ease of set up and the aesthetic quality that it adds to property can be exponential.”



TRR photo by Emily Grillo

Water, Water Everywhere

Creating a water fountain in your back yard

By EMILY GRILLO

Once thought to be something only the rich and powerful could afford, backyard water fountains have come a long way in popularity and affordability.

At one time, these fountains featured elaborate, carved stone structures spouting water out of pitchers or statues pouring water from mouths or some more explicit body part. They were a sign of prestige and wealth.

Water fountains are popping up in more and more backyards and gardens. The ease of setup and the aesthetic quality that it adds to property can be exponential.

Sound can be a soothing sense. The sound of flowing water increases relaxation and can reduce stress. Flowing water creates a sense of serenity and peace.

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Today's water fountains encompass a few different elements. The first step is to create the bottom, or foundation, where the water pump is located and to which the water returns. This can be made out of

almost anything that is non-porous, including pots, troughs or even a tub. The top portion, from which the water will flow can be fashioned out of a smaller pot, any sort of antique pump or spouting creature. Lastly, you will need a middle part to your fountain, to receive the water and flow it back up through the pump. For this, you can use more pots, pebbles, shells or empty space to create a free fall of water.

The simple pump needed will force water up through the tubing, where it is released to return to the bottom and then pumped through the tubing on a continuous basis. There are different choices of pump sizes so that you can determine if you'd like the water to drip or to spray. These elements are easy to install, and some places also sell kits where all the pieces and instructions come in one box.

Monticello Farm Home and Garden in Monticello, NY (845/794-6457) carries most elements for a backyard fountain. They carry the pumps, the tubing and all sorts of fountainheads. They also carry the electrical components, including power cords and switches. You may want to add

a switch to the water pump so that you can turn it on or off manually instead of unplugging it. The combination of items allows endless possibilities.

Pay attention to how you design your fountainhead, because that's what will be visible when your friends and family admire your fountain. Make sure that you choose a fountainhead that reflects the style and setting that you want.

You may also opt for no fountainhead, setting up your fountain like a babbling brook. The tubing and the pump should be set up the same way, but instead of the water spouting from an object, the water will cascade down rocks, falling into the pool and then starting all over again.

Go natural

When choosing stone to place on (or) around your fountain, go natural. Stone that is native to an area always looks best when trying to capture a natural look. You don't want the stones to be too big, either. For starters, they will be hard to lift, and secondly, smaller-sized stones are easier to fit together. Stones

continued on page 22

Water, Water Everywhere

continued from page 21

for most fountains can be collected in the backyard or nearby woods. (If you've ever planted anything outdoors in this area, you know what I mean about the ample availability of stone in the soil.)

Monticello Farm Home and Garden also carries hard or soft pond liners. The pond liner, an ideal bottom for your fountain, allow you to be very creative with what you want to add about the bottom of your fountain. It allows your base to be as big or as small as you would like it to be.

Plants and flowers

A well-built, operational fountain will attract all sorts of interesting wildlife to your yard. Butterflies, humming birds, frogs, fox and deer may visit your fountain, providing entertainment for you and the family.

When choosing a flower or ornamental plant arrangement for placement in your fountain, be attentive to what types of plants will thrive well in a moist environment (and survive visitations from deer.) Again, native plants are best. Consider floating plants. These plants or flowers float on the water but have their roots submerged under water. These include cattail, arrowhead and water lilies. Floating plants are not only beautiful, but they create a rest stop for frogs, birds, butterflies and dragonflies.

To add flowers as a border or accompaniment to your water garden, choose hardy annuals or perennials that like a bit of water. Think about a variety of plantings that will provide bloom through the months of the season. If you want to keep flowers in pots around your water garden, you can plant almost anything. Red and bright pinks have a particular attraction for hummingbirds.

Most any home and garden center will carry plants and flowers that will do well around water. It's always a good idea to ask the staff for suggestions when choosing your bedding or floating plants.

Fish

Monticello Farm Home and Garden carries pond fish as well. Not all

types of fish can live in a pond, especially with the varying temperature changes that we face each year. Aquarium fish generally do not do well.

Koi fish, a type of carp, are brightly colored fish that adapt well to pond and fountain life. Koi fish are beautiful, coming in a variety of sizes, colors and patterns. Metallic golds, silvers and coppers, brilliant tri-color combinations, blues, lemon yellows, bright oranges and platinum white are all colors that can be found in different koi fish. This breed is also quite smart. They have been trained to hand feed and even to jump through hoops. They will provide visitors to your pond or fountain with ample entertainment. Watching fish is also supposed to be a wonderful stress reliever.

In our area, water freezes during the winter. Make sure that the water does not completely freeze solid in the pond. You will need to put some sort of de-icer on top of the pond to keep it from freezing solid and killing the koi.

You do not need to feed your fish during the coldest months of the winter because they hibernate and do not eat.

Go whimsical

When planning your fountain, think about adding a whimsical element to your design. How about iridescent stones on the bottom of the pond? The water and the stones will create beautiful arrays of light when they meet.

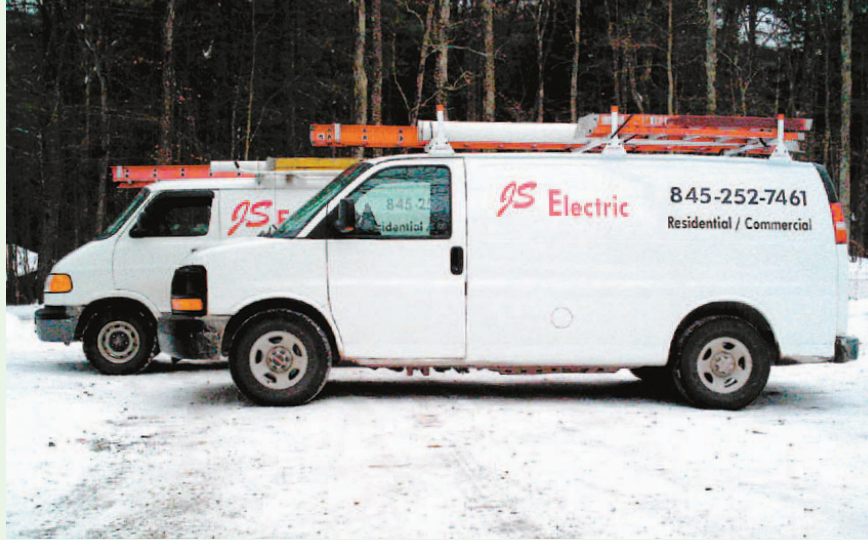
Statues of gnomes, fairies, woodland creatures and other fanciful figures can be fun as well. You can even buy sensor frogs that lie on the rocks and "rib-bit" as you walk past. Sun catchers can be mounted to posts and placed in or around your pond for rainbow effects. Wind chimes are also a beautiful addition.

There is so much that you can do or add to your fountain to make it your own special creation. And once you have your fountain set up, add a bench or two, for it will be a most restful and popular back yard nook.



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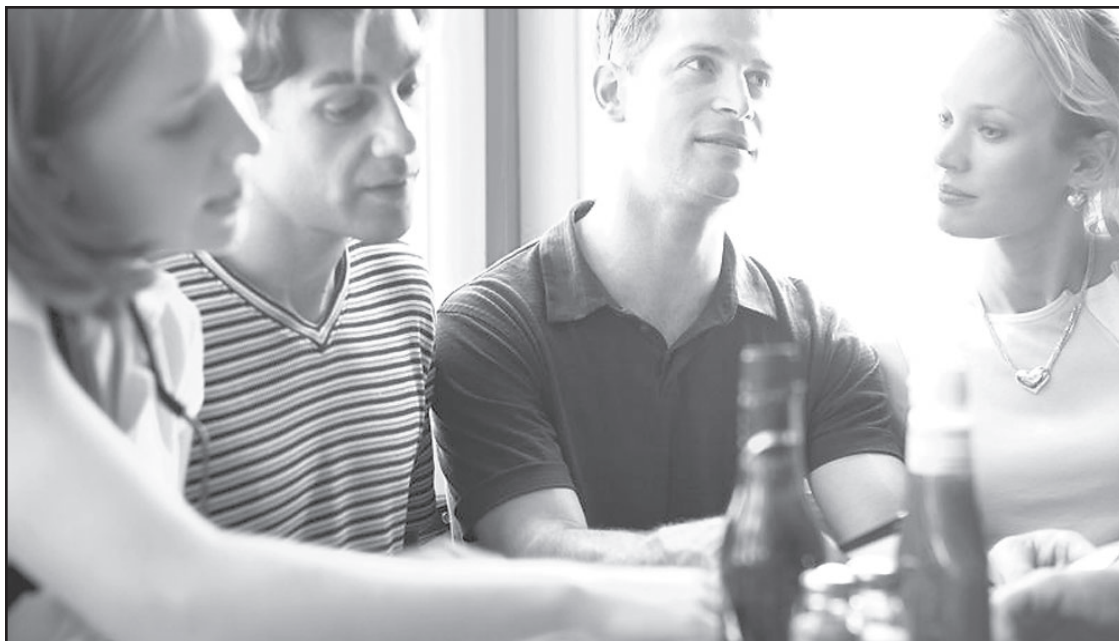


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“For decades, health gurus have been telling us that the shorter the time and distance from source to table, the more nutritious the food.”



TRR file photos

Let's Do Brunch

'Eating local' comes into its own

By DOROTHY HARTZ

My great grandparents, arrivals from Germany to the Beechwoods and the Town of Fremont, NY, milked their own cows; butchered and smoked their own pigs; kept chickens and geese; tended kitchen gardens and small orchards and beehives; harvested nuts and berries; bottled their own beer, wine and cordials; and dried, pickled, potted, preserved or buried in a root cellar anything that couldn't eat or overgrow them first. When weather and other vagaries cooperated, they were indeed well nourished. It seems they had time for little else, so as their families grew and established homes of their own, they would gather, when the weather was good, in one kitchen or another for a weekend meal. My father recalled an occasion of great satisfaction when his father's home-cured ham was mistaken for the supposedly superior Western ham freighted in on the Erie. I can imagine the rest of that meal. It probably was a noon dinner or early supper, with perfect potatoes, bread and butter pickles, applesauce and the requisite two vegetables, one fresh or home canned, served plain, and the other, the previous day's leftovers, creamed.

Or maybe it was more festive, even adventurous. Would they have served the ham with their storied dandelion and elderberry wines, deviled eggs, dilly beans, stewed rhubarb, homemade rye bread, butternut cake? How wonderful it would be to recreate such a meal, to deliver a Sunday brunch with the purity and freshness and flavor of my ancestors' meals, without the time and effort and uncertainty required of them.

Eating local is cool

Presto change-o! It's more than just possible. Eating local is cool and getting cooler. For decades, health gurus from Adele Davis to Dr. Andrew Weil have been telling us that the shorter the time and distance from source to table, the more nutritious the food. Now, articles from the Himalayan Institute's **Joyful Living Magazine** to **The New York Times** proclaim that "local" trumps "organic." Mass produced and expensively shipped food, even when organic, loses points for energy consumption. It is counterproductive to a sustainable food economy and to good nutrition alike. It is subject to many of the same field and processing contaminants as so-called Franken-foods. Witness last year's spinach poisonings, first traced to Earthbound Farms, long a trusted supplier of organic produce. As our friend Kermit the Frog says, "It's not easy being green," even if intentions are pure and wallets fat.

The good news is that, here in the river valley, a cornucopia of fresh, often organic produce is widely available, as well as an expanding variety of food products, wholesomely manufactured as cottage crafts or light industry.

It has never been more possible—and pleasurable—to eat as nutritiously, as elegantly and as mindfully as it is today, thankfully without the backbreaking labor of total self-reliance. In today's economy, "local" translates to a 100-mile radius from the consumer. This includes our tri-county area as well as Orange County and the Hudson Valley.

Now, let's do brunch...

one way...

Go to a Sullivan County or Pennsylvania Farmers' Market, open in various locations between Thursday and Sunday.

Bump into two or three or four friends and issue a spontaneous invitation. Dogs optional.

Buy something bready, something cheesy, something fruity, something crunchy, something sweet and something substantial (eggs, meat, a prepared quiche).

Beat your guests home by several minutes. Put on a pot of coffee. (One or more of them will bring a bottle of something.) Throw a vintage cloth or quilt over the table, outside or in as weather dictates. Pick some wildflowers or flowers and herbs from the garden, if you have one.

Tune in WJFF Radio Catskill at 90.5 FM or select a CD of a local musician or opt for birdsong if you're in a particularly peaceful area.

Greet the first arrival.

Carry on. You're having fun, and you're going to eat well.

...or the other.

Plan ahead. The following menus, on page 24, specifically emphasize local products and resources. Some individual items can be purchased not only at a Farmers' Market, but at local food stores and related businesses. Some can be wild harvested and some are easy to grow.

continued on page 25

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Lets Do Brunch

continued from page 23

Family Brunch

Melon Chunks with Fresh Berries or Currants
Baked French Toast with Maple Syrup (*recipe below*)
Nitrite-free Bacon and/or Sausage
(Any) Sharp Cheese with Apple or Pear Slices
Blueberry Sour Cream Coffee Cake (*recipe below*)
Coffee, Milk, Iced Mint-and-Honey Tea

Up From the City Brunch

Cucumbers in Cream (*recipe below*)
Bagels with Smoked Trout Spread (*recipe below*)
Grilled or Oven-baked Drumsticks (Turkey or Chicken)
Salad of Water Cress, Black Peppered Goat Cheese, Blueberries, and Glazed Walnuts with a Fruit Vinaigrette
Rhubarb or Plum Compote with Oatmeal Cookies
Champagne or Rum Swizzle (*recipe below*)

Recipes



TRR file photos

Baked French Toast With Maple Syrup

1 loaf challah or other white bread, cubed
8 ounces cream cheese, cubed and softened
1 dozen large eggs
½ cup maple syrup
1 cup milk
additional maple syrup or fruit preserves

The night before, line bottom of an 11x13-inch pan with half the bread cubes. Layer cream cheese on top of bread. Layer remaining bread cubes. Beat eggs, syrup and milk together. Pour mixture over bread. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Bake, uncovered, at 350 F for 45 minutes or until lightly golden. Serve with additional maple syrup or fruit preserves. Serves 8.

Blueberry Sour Cream Coffee Cake

½ cup softened butter
1 cup sugar
3 eggs
2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup sour cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon ground cardamom (optional)
2 cups fresh blueberries, washed and drained
½ cup brown sugar

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Sift flour, soda, baking powder and salt together. Gradually add dry ingredients to egg mixture alternately with sour cream, ending with flour mixture. Stir vanilla and cardamom into batter. Fold 1 cup berries into batter and pour half the batter into a well-greased and floured 9x13x2-inch pan. Cover batter with remaining blueberries and sprinkle with brown sugar. Pour remaining batter on top. Bake at 325 F for 45-50 minutes or until cake tests done. Cool 10 minutes before serving.

Cucumbers In Cream

2 cucumbers
1 tablespoon coarse salt
1 cup crème fraîche or yogurt
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon sugar

1 teaspoon tarragon vinegar
chives to taste
Salt and pepper to taste

Slice the cucumbers paper thin. Sprinkle coarse salt over them and leave in a colander to drain for ½ hour. Mix the sugar and tarragon vinegar together, then stir in the crème fraîche or yogurt salt and pepper. Add the olive oil and chives and stir. Pat cucumbers dry and place in a shallow dish. Pour cream mixture over them and serve.



Smoked Trout Spread

1 pound smoked trout fillets
½ cup sliced celery
½ cup sliced red or green onions
½ cup ricotta or cottage cheese
¼ cup cream cheese
1 tablespoon margarine or butter
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
½ teaspoon hot sauce

Combine smoked trout (broken into small pieces) with other ingredients in a food processor and blend until smooth. Serve chilled with thinly sliced dark whole grain bread, bagels or crackers.



Rum Swizzle

(from Grotto Bay Beach Hotel & Tennis Club, Bermuda)

One cocktail	A gallon
½ ounce fresh lemon juice	8 oz.
2 ounces pineapple juice	50 oz.
1 ounce light rum	32 oz.
½ ounce dark rum	16 oz.
½ ounce apricot brandy	16 oz.
dash grenadine	5 oz.
dash Angostura bitters	1 oz.

Shake well with ice and serve in a cocktail glass. Garnish with fresh strawberry or a sprig of lemon balm.

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“Pottery emerges from the fire, formed by nature, shaped by culture and endowed by the artist with its unique earthen spirit.”

Elemental Art

On the pottery trail

By PAMELA JONES

“We somehow manage to harness earth, air, water and fire and turn them into art.” So speak the potters of the **Sullivan County Pottery Trail Map** in their introductory statement.

The ancient art of pottery is at once mysterious and basic, employing clay and other materials from the earth, which are shaped with water by human hands and fired into being as art. Pottery is a favored source among archeologists to study ancient cultures. The craft of turning clay into vessels dates back to 10,000 BCE in China and is believed to have developed later, independently, in North Africa and South America. Pottery and pottery fragments provide valuable insight into these societies of antiquity.

The earliest clay pottery is believed to have been transformed in bonfires, which then led to the construction of pit-kilns. These were holes dug in the ground where the unfired pots were placed and then covered with combustible materials for firing. The pits provided insulation and more control for these early potters. Although many improvements and variations have been made to these early methods to bring us to modern-day kilns, the primitive elements of nature remain a constant in this art form. Pottery emerges from the fire, formed by nature, shaped by culture and endowed by the artist with its unique earthen spirit.

New York

I spoke to Jill Wiener of **Earthgirl Pottery** in Callicoon Center. She is a founding member of the Pottery Trail Map, which began in 2004, and the original project coordinator. Wiener pointed out that, while browsing the shops for local pottery is enjoyable, actually visiting the potters' studios provides a different dimension to the experience. “We want people to visit us,” she said. “It puts a face to art and makes it personal.” I asked her how likely it was to actually see a potter at work when a visitor stopped by. She said that most of the potters work every day and that you can also see works in progress at the studios.

So not only might you catch the magic of the potter at the wheel, visitors can also take in the immedi-

ate environment of the artist and see some of the inspiration that goes into the transformation of clay into art. When I asked Wiener what provided her inspiration, she said that she was inspired by happiness, which may come along in any form, perhaps a bee, a flower or a ladybug. Although, she noted, as with all artists, the inspiration may come from the same source, “the way it comes out is always different.” As an example, she offered that she might look at a flower that inspires her in its entirety, while Carolyn Duke, of **Duke Pottery** in Roscoe, another founding trail map member, may look at the same flower and be captivated by the veins in a petal for her inspiration. Duke's inspiration comes from nature's patterns and rhythms. She even uses pit-kilns to fire some of her pottery to help bring out the natural beauty of the clay.

And don't think that the pottery trail is limited to pots! In addition to the classic wheel-thrown vessels, you can find plates and tiles at **Claryville Pottery**, lamps at **Chris Parrow Pottery**, sculptural works at **Kathy Jeffers Studio** and lighting fixtures, sconces, birdbaths and garden pieces at **Honey Hill Pottery**. Studios at both Duke Pottery and Honey Hill Pottery display works of art in various media from other local artists. You can even pick up some local maple syrup, tapped from the trees on the grounds of Honey Hill Pottery.

In addition to the trail map, Wiener said that the potters hold two events each year. The next event is a pottery festival called “**A Day to See Clay**,” which will be held on Saturday, October 6, 2007 on Main Street in Jeffersonville from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This is a good opportunity to meet most of the Sullivan County potters together in one place and to view their wares.

The Sullivan County Pottery Trail Map can be picked up at local art galleries and antique stores, or you can download it from the internet at www.seepotsspun.com.

Pennsylvania

While there isn't an official pottery trail in Pennsylvania, you can catch some artists who work with clay

and ceramics at their studios during the **Wayne County Arts Alliance Open Studio Tour 5**, which takes place July 27, 28 and 29 from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. There are 27 participating artists in this juried event, opening their studios to the public for the three-day tour. You can check out artist **Tara Wilson** of Bethany, who creates earthenware pottery, and Honesdale artist **Ellen Silberlicht**, who spins bowls, as well as sculpts abstract garden pieces from clay. In Damascus, you can visit the studio of multi-media sculptor **Naomi Tep-pich**, whose work includes carved ceramic wall sculptures. You can also see the studio of sculptor **Raymond Rockland** in Beach Lake, who works in clay, among other media, and is currently exploring terra cotta in his newer work. For more information about the Open Studio Tour 5, contact the Wayne County Arts Alliance, 742 Main St, Suite 201, Honesdale, 570/253-6850, www.waynecounty-artsalliance.org.

Another Pennsylvania potter is David Greenbaum of **Greenbaum Studios**. While David and his wife, artist Joann Greenbaum, are building their new studio in Shohola, which they expect to open next year, you can visit them on the web at www.greenbaumstudios.com to view their wares. In addition to pottery and garden sculptures, Greenbaum Studios offers handmade cremation urns as a personal alternative to the mass-produced manufactured urns.

In Milanville, you can find **Nocera Art Tile**. I spoke to ceramic artist Anne Nocera, co-proprietor of Nocera Art Tile, about their work. While they started out as potters, they became inspired with ceramic tile and subsequently devoted themselves to learning the art of tile making. Their tiles can currently be found regionally in home décor showrooms. Coming full circle, they are now going back to their roots in pottery, so you can find both tile art and pottery at their location.

And if all this talk about pottery makes you want to get your feet, or rather, your hands wet with clay, Nocera Art Tile is offering a one-day clay workshop in August, where you can take your turn at the wheel.

The poetry of pottery awaits you.



New York Pottery Trail Map Members

Duke Pottery

Carolyn Duke
855 County Route 93
Roscoe, NY 12776
607/498-5207
dukepottery.com
carolyn@dukepottery.com
Studio is open year round, Friday - Sunday 11-5 or by appointment.

Earthgirl Pottery

Jill Wiener
92 Bayer Road
Callicoon Center, NY 12724
845/482-4976
earthgirlpottery.com
earthgirl@aol.com
Studio is open year round, by chance or appointment; please call.

Honey Hill Pottery

Ayla
119 Diehl Road
Callicoon, NY 12723
845/482-5280
honeyhillpottery.com
Studio is open March - December, Friday - Sunday 11-5 or by appointment.

Cecily Fortescue Ceramics

Cecily Fortescue
210 Hospital Road
Callicoon, NY 12723
845/887-5740
cecily@pronetisp.net
Studio is open year round by chance or appointment.

Sunshine Pottery

Barbara Brown
109 Stony Road
Lake Huntington, NY 12752
845/932-8873 or 800/941-2251
sunshinecottageandpottery.com
postmaster@sunshinecottageandpottery.com
Studio is open year round by chance or appointment.

Hillside Studios

Anthony N. Biancovisio
111 Hillside Road
Barryville, NY 12719
845/557-3640
hillsidestudios@frontiernet.net
Studio is open year round by chance or appointment.

Kathy Jeffers Studio

Kathy Jeffers
6972 State Rt. 42

continued on page 28

Elemental Art

continued from page 27

Woodbourne, NY 12788
845/434-2987
kathyjeffersstudio.com
kjdoesclay@aol.com
Studio is open by chance or appointment.

Claryville Pottery

Anne-Marie Kremer
982 Claryville Road
Claryville, NY 12725
845/985-2016
Studio is open year round.

Chris Parrow Pottery

Chris Parrow
218 Twins Haven Road
Napanoch, NY 12458
845/985-7564
cparrow@pronetisp.net
Studio is open year round, please call.

Bluestone Pottery

Kim Lust
159 Rio Dam Road
Glen Spey, NY 12737
845/856-7398
klust@hvc.rr.com
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Pennsylvania Potters

Wayne County Arts Alliance Open Studio Tour 5

July 27, 28, 29, 11 am to 6 pm
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570/729-7946
info@art-tile.com
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Tara Wilson

Works include earthenware pottery
180 Sugar Street
Bethany PA 18431
570/253-2578

Naomi Teppich

Works include ceramic wall sculptures
545 Galilee Road
Damascus, PA 18415
570/224-6538

Ellen Silberlicht

Spins bowls and is also a ceramic artist
150 Broad Street
Honesdale, PA 18431
570/253-0285

Raymond Rocklin

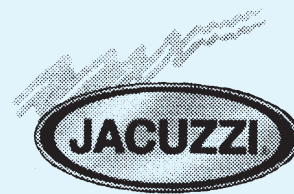
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*Editor's note: most potters suggest
calling ahead to guarantee that they will
be in their studios during your visit.*

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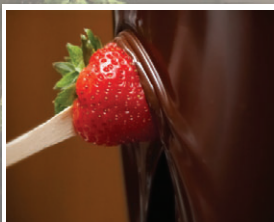
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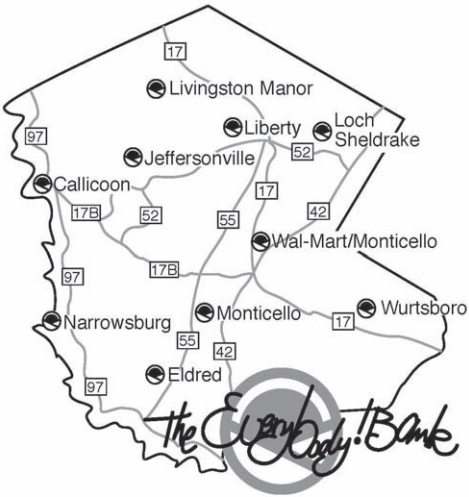
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designed so that in addition to the master bedroom suite there is a guest bedroom suite and a large area that can be utilized as an office or a studio or sectioned off into 2 additional bedrooms making it a 5 bedroom house. Of course, there are bathrooms a plenty, quite a few with claw-foot tubs.

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“A first step is to get rid of all the flotsam and jetsam that is clogging your space, keeping only that which you truly want and need.”



TRR photo by Eileen Hennessy

The Place You Love to Hate

Updating and organizing the garage

By CYNTHIA O. TOLIVER

Spring has passed and summer is upon us. Yet, here we sit with that two-ton elephant in the room... make that the garage. We all know that is where everything that does not have a home goes to linger until heaven knows when. From holiday decorations to old magazines, old golf clubs to broken vacuum cleaners, the garage is a catch-all for our otherwise homeless possessions.

Wouldn't it be nice to visit the garage and find exactly what you need without having to forge a path through an obstacle course? Just once, to find that flux capacitor without searching every box or bag? Have no fear. There is a method to organizing your garage, losing that clutter and creating a neat, tidy space that will give quick and easy access to the things you need.

First things first. Do you even have a garage? That's important. If you don't and wish to acquire one, there are several stores in the area that can help you. **Marshall Machinery** (570/729-7117) has been a family-owned business for over 40 years, located in Honesdale, PA. **Grey's Woodworks** (845/985-7006, www.greyswoodworks.com) in Grahamsville, NY is another family-run business, established in 1979. Their website provides a template for planning out the garage floor and storage place, an extremely useful tool. Both businesses have a great selection of prefab garages.

Now that we all have a garage, begin by compiling a complete and accurate inventory of what is inside. (Who knows? Maybe there is a precious artwork by Pablo Picasso or Romare Bearden hiding behind one of those boxes—hey, it doesn't hurt to dream. Picassos aside, a first step is to unflinchingly get rid of all the flotsam and jetsam that is clogging your

space, keeping only that which you truly want and need. Purge yourself by maintaining this mantra: Donate, sell or throw away. Salvation Army stores, young relatives who are just starting out, yard sales and garbage dumps are perfectly worthy repositories for a lot of that stuff.

Next, place all the items you wish to keep in separate piles. Divide according to use, for example, sports gear, outdoor tools, indoor tools, yard equipment, laundry supplies. Subdivide the piles, if you can. Put all the balls together, all the toys—you get the picture. Once you know what you have, you will begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel. When planning your storage possibilities, don't forget to include items that are currently outside. Lawn furniture, bicycles and grills will need to come inside during winter months.

Now, think about what you want your garage to do. Is it primarily for storage or does it serve multiple duties as laundry room, game room, mud room, exercise room? Start thinking about the walls and ceiling—the idea is to clear up as much floor space as possible. How many things on the floor could be put on shelves or hung from ceilings and walls? Hanging bicycles and tools is much safer and more practical than leaving them crammed between the garage wall and the washing machine.

Finally, before you begin renovations, measure, measure, measure! A full calculation of the dimensions of your garage will prove invaluable when you are planning shelving and other improvements.

Now, it's time to visit your local building supply or hardware store. There you will find a number of useful items that will make your organization

project possible. **Callicoon Supply** (845/887-4804) in Callicoon, NY is a great hardware store, as are the **The Trading Posts** in Liberty, NY (845/292-4300), Rock Hill, NY (845/796-3060) and Monticello, NY (845/794-3075) and **Fallsburg Lumber** (845/434-6161) in Fallsburg, NY.

Industrial shelving, cabinets, bicycle hooks, tool kits, storage bins and plastic crates will make organizing your garage a breeze. And don't forget peg boards and hooks for the walls. Bins or boxes with lids are great for the visual—the uniformity does wonders for that freshly spruced-up look. Cabinets or shelving may line a wall where clutter used to live. Place clear plastic bins inside the cabinets for easy spotting of your special items: one for laundry supplies, one for gardening, one for your collection of old cooking magazines or **New Yorkers**. (Airtight bins will protect against mice and mold as well.) Large or heavy tools can go in heavy-duty bins, with small tools placed in a tool box. Industrial shelving will hold heavy items. For the sake of your back, and general safety, place heavy items on the lower shelves and light items on higher shelves. Have a stepladder or chair handy for reaching the higher shelves.

By the time you've finished this project, you will be rewarded with a neat and orderly place and easy access to your belongings, which now have a nice place to hibernate when not in use. Garages need love too, and once they are clean and organized, they never fail to show their appreciation. You might even find that there is enough space to keep large motorized equipment, like a car or truck. Will wonders never cease?



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“An interesting grass, weed or wildflower can offset the formality of a rose and result in a pleasing and unusual effect.”



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Flower Arrangements

Blooms that delight for table and home

By ANNE HART

Floral design as an art form has a history that is centuries long. In Japan, the art of Ikebana goes back to the sixth century. It has intricacies, rules and principles that require schooling to master. But the most basic element of floral design emphasizes balance and harmony. In Ikebana, the most basic form is a tall, upright central stem accompanied by two shorter stems, the three stems representing heaven, man and earth. These symbols show the need for harmony between all three and the tension that inevitably arises.

Most of us don't have the time or inclination to study floral or other design in depth, but we do delight in the pleasure that a beautiful flower arrangement can bring to our surroundings. It can be complicated and grand or as simple as a single tulip in a bud vase.

Shapes and forms that bring harmony include circles and ovals, which return upon themselves, rectangles and especially triangles of all kinds, which provide a broad foundation leading to an apex.

A simple bouquet of hydrangea bunched together to create the effect of cumulus clouds can be soft and pleasing. One, three or five tall and angular flowers placed in a vase with softer filler surrounding them can create a dramatic effect. (When grouping flowers, use odd rather than even numbers, as flowers grouped in twos, fours etc. look incomplete and unfinished.)

And, for most of us, a jar or a pitcher filled with fresh and fragrant flowers from the garden arranged with no thought at all is just the ticket to brighten our day. The bouquet is designed only to bring the garden and all of its joy inside.

Things that please

Use various hues within a small spectrum of color and a larger range of texture. In July, bouquets

might include soft pinks to soft purples, incorporating astilbe, agrostemma, scabiosa pink mist and pastel pink yarrow.

Think in contrasting colors for a dramatic and splashy look. Deep purples are set off nicely by chartreuse, or combine bold yellows and blues, oranges and reds. Never underestimate what a dash of white can do for an arrangement.

Look around the garden and see what is available. An interesting grass, weed or wildflower can offset the formality of a rose and result in a pleasing and unusual effect. In late summer, wildflowers from the field can bring a profusion and exuberance not seen from any florist's arrangement. (If it's not your field, seek permission first. Use caution with native plants.)

Forage in the herb garden. Basil brings structure, color and fragrance to any arrangement. Rosemary brings sculpture and a strong scent. Chives bring an airy feel and are long lasting. Lavender brings calm and fragrance. Calendula brings dramatic color. Mint gives fragrance and structure. Dill is a nice filler, both in bloom and not.

Consider where the arrangement will be placed—a mantel, a table, a small counter in the bedroom or bath. Scale accordingly. (Big is not necessarily better.) Consider the colors in the room and the lighting.

Don't be boxed in by the confines of a traditional vase. There are a variety of objects that will fill in nicely as an unusual container. Consider an old medicine bottle with a single flower on the bathroom sink, or old milk bottles full of flowers on the kitchen table or bedroom dresser. A bowl crafted by your favorite local potter can be filled with flowers arranged using a frog or a pin holder. Fill an old fish tank.

Keeping your flowers fresh

Cut in the morning or afternoon, placing stems immediately in cool water. (Try to avoid cutting during the hottest part of the day.) Make sure that your shears/scissors are clean and sharp. Make sure that your container is clean and filled with clean water. Remove all leaves and flowers from any part of the stem that will remain under water. Change water daily, if possible. Keep out of direct sunlight. Certain flowers, such as delphinium, are ethylene sensitive, so keep out of range of car exhaust, cigarette smoke and so on.

Flower preservatives aren't usually necessary with freshly cut flowers. Fresh-cut flowers that are well cared for should look good for at least a week. Be sure to remove any dead flowers as time progresses, perhaps cutting and reshaping your arrangement for longer life.

Places to find fresh flowers

The Cutting Garden, Youngsville, NY, www.cuttinggarden.com, 845/482-3333. Large variety of fresh flowers, you-pick or staff will assist. Open Friday—Monday 10:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.

Sullivan County Farmers' Markets, www.sullivancountymarkets.org, 845/292-6180. Locations in Jeffersonville (Thursday), Liberty (Friday), Roscoe (Sunday) and Callicoon (Sunday).

Barryville Farmers' Market, Barryville, NY (Saturday).

Kauneonga Lake Farmers Market, Kauneonga Lake, NY (Friday).

Harvest Festival at Bethel Woods, Bethel, NY (Sundays beginning August 26).

Wayne County Farmers Market, Honesdale, PA (Saturday).



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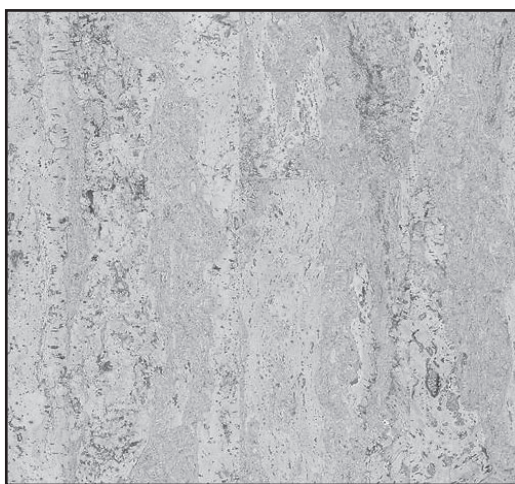


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“Some flooring companies are even taking steps to improve their products’ environmental footprint through recycling.”



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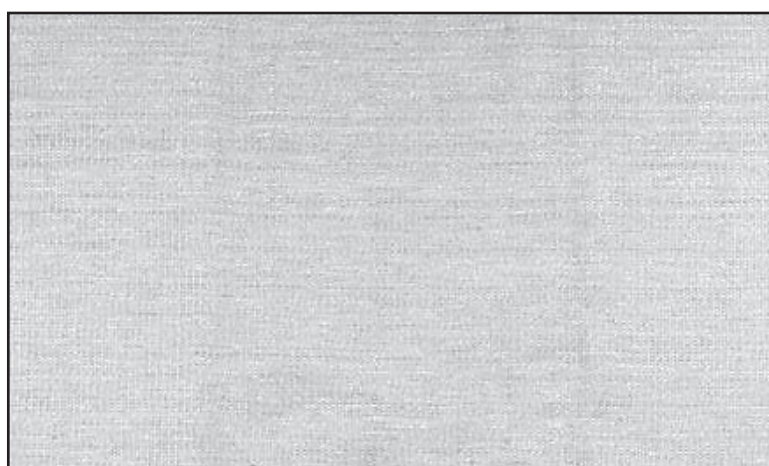
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TRR file photos

Today's Flooring

Greening what goes under our feet

By SANDY LONG

When it comes to making choices about today's flooring options, the horizon is looking brighter than ever. With natural products like wool, hemp, sisal, bamboo, jute, marmoleum and cork as alternatives to petroleum-based products, consumers can make healthier and more environmentally sustainable choices when it comes time to replace flooring or when selecting flooring during new construction.

For those who love the enduring beauty of wood, a trend toward reclaiming and reusing wood from old warehouses, mills and other retired structures offers consumers an opportunity to recycle materials laden with individualized character and interesting evidence of earlier uses. Companies like **Heartwood Pine Floors** (www.heartwoodpine.com) and **EcoTimber** (www.ecotimber.com) sell salvaged timber and certified sustainably harvested wood.

When selecting new wood products, look for Forest Stewardship (FSC) certification, which ensures that forests are managed in a sustainable way. Don't be misled by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), an industry-backed certification process that allows companies to set their own compliance criteria rather than meet independent standards.

Finish wood flooring with non-toxic alternatives such as oils, waxes and resins, like those offered by **BioShield**, which also carries a line of environmen-

tally friendly household cleaners and soaps (www.bioshieldpaint.com).

Although carpeting is still America's favorite floor covering, options are no longer limited to those manufactured from petroleum byproducts, nylon, acrylic and polypropylene. One good alternative is wool, which features subtle natural variations in color. Warmth and durability are additional qualities of note, but it is not a wise choice for areas subject to moisture, such as bathrooms and kitchens.

Earth Weave Carpet Mills, Inc. (www.earthweave.com) is one source for natural carpeting that is biodegradable, sustainable and manufactured in North America. In addition to wool, the company sells hemp and jute floor coverings, all devoid of dyes, chemicals and pesticides. When the wool-based carpet padding eventually needs to be replaced, it can be recycled to the backyard compost pile, where it will completely decompose over several seasons.

For other unique alternatives, **Eco Friendly Flooring** (www.ecofriendlyflooring.com) offers cork, bamboo, stone, recycled metal and glass tiles, and recycled and sustainably harvested wood. **The Natural Carpet Company** (www.naturalcarpet-company.com) specializes in unique natural fiber products, such as silk, abaca, rafia, buri, seagrass, cotton and rattan.

Those who are looking for rich textures, warm tones and sound absorbency will find each of these

in cork flooring, a natural choice with the added benefit of being hypoallergenic. **Natural Cork** offers cork tiles, floating floors and underlayment at www.naturalcork.com

Another of today's freshest flooring choices is Marmoleum, a resilient product made from natural ingredients like rosin, linseed oil, limestone and wood flour. Marmoleum is backed with jute and is both allergen-free and biodegradable. One source is **The Marmoleumstore** (www.themarmoleumstore.com).

Some flooring companies even are taking steps to improve their products' environmental footprint through recycling. **FLOR's R&R Program** (Return-recycle) is part of its parent company's "Mission Zero" initiative, which seeks to eliminate the company's negative environmental impacts by 2020 (www.florcatalog.com). For customers who are ready to replace old FLOR product with new FLOR product, the company will arrange to remove and recycle the old floor covering through its R&R program.

The increasing number of environmentally sustainable flooring choices available to consumers will make it ever easier to establish livable green interiors that support human and environmental well-being. Visit www.flooringalternatives.com or the [naturalflooringcompany.com](http://www.naturalflooringcompany.com) for additional information.

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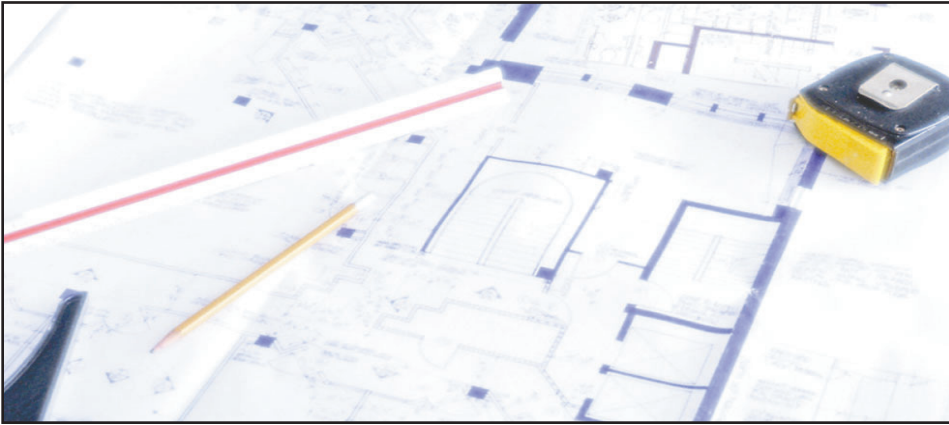
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“A quick rule of thumb is to figure one month for every \$15,000 dollars of budget, meaning that a \$45,000 budget translates into a three-month project.”



TRR file photos

The Long and Winding Road

Will your next project be on budget, on time and quality driven?

By CHARLES PETERSHEIM

As a builder and contractor in Sullivan County, it's clear by now that we have failed to meet all the expectations of all customers all the time. On the flip side, there have been some fairly memorable times where we ended up with the short end of the stick. In any event, one of my customers quipped that in New York City, it's fairly common to send sympathy cards to people enduring construction projects.

What can be done to ensure your next project is on budget, on time and quality driven (i.e. “pain-free”)? Short answer—not much, but here are a few suggestions.

Set realistic expectations

Construction projects take time, and small renovations and additions involve as many craftsmen and as much need for coordination as large ones. A quick rule of thumb is to figure one month for every \$15,000 dollars of budget, meaning that a \$45,000 budget translates into a three-month project. Most new homes, gut rehabs and large additions will take most of a year. If you try to rush a project, it never really goes any faster, but the process has lost any hope of being enjoyable.

Have a good plan

If you are trying to save money by asking the contractor to lead the design phase, it's safe to say

most homeowners will not repeat this mistake. While many contractors have a good eye, can communicate well and understand the aesthetic of the homeowner, some don't. The job of a good architect is not only to create a road map for the builder, it's also to fish out the priority items of the homeowner. Most cost overruns result primarily from three factors: misunderstandings of the specifications of the project, change orders and upgrades from the homeowner and a deliberate strategy on the part of the contractor. An architect can help avoid the first and last.

Have a good contract

Construction projects are exciting and the rush to get started can lead to a mistake I've seen top the list of every home-improvement pundit. Have a contract and set the specifications, job scope, costs, timing and payment schedule on paper. Some paper trails are provided by the e-mail collaboration, but not all contractors up here use e-mail yet.

Know your locale

The Upper Delaware River region isn't Manhattan, and that's why we live here. Calls don't get returned immediately, lumber yards aren't perfect, there are only two tile stores within an hour's drive and so on. Also, construction labor is in short supply, and

even a perfect contractor (oh, if only there were only such a thing!) can lose an employee which completely disrupts his well-laid-out plan. Most good construction companies only consist of a few employees and have very tight schedules.

Records

Keep good records of invoices and payments. Pay when you are supposed to—withhold some money if not all payment criteria are met.

Fasten your seatbelt

It's a rare project that doesn't at some point hit some real speedbumps and hairpin turns. Besides making movies, not much else besides construction is dependent on as many factors to get it done. Weather, inspections, financing, change orders, labor supply, material supplies, special orders and the logistical difficulties of our sometimes remote locale all combine to create a bumpy ride. My advice—be patient instead of rushing. Be sure you can afford your project, and mostly, approach the project with your sense of humor at the ready.

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

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