

# The Household WORD

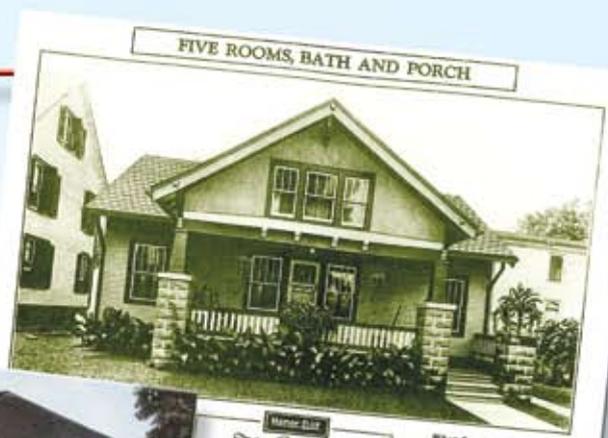


ISSUE 10  
NOVEMBER '06

A Newsletter  
about homes,  
you...and Bill

*In this issue:*

- Sears Homes Through the Mail
- Odds & Ends
- Bits & Pieces
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- Guest Chef: Ruth Sachs Allison



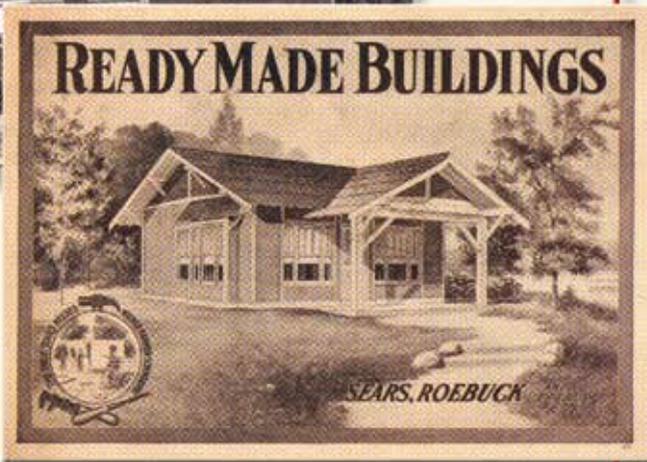
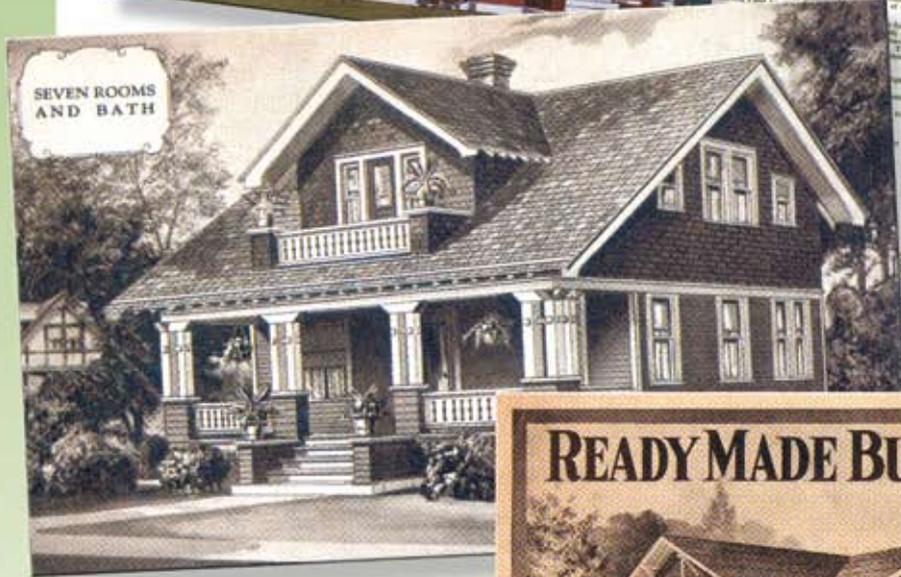
**Home Call**  
**The Conway**  
New Price "Already Call" \$1,707.00  
and "Fixed" \$1,613.00

**What Our Price Includes:**  
As the lowest priced new home in the area, this house is a real value. It features a full kitchen, living room, dining room, and two bedrooms. The house is built with quality materials and has a beautiful exterior. The price includes everything you need to move in.

**The Location:** Built in the location that is the best for you. It is close to schools, shopping, and recreation. The house is a great investment and will hold its value for years to come.

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# YOUR HOUSE IS IN THE MAIL!?!?



SEARS ILLUSTRATIONS AND PHOTOS FOR THIS ARTICLE COURTESY OF THE JAMES C. MASSEY ARCHIVES

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# Did you know that at one time Sears sold houses?

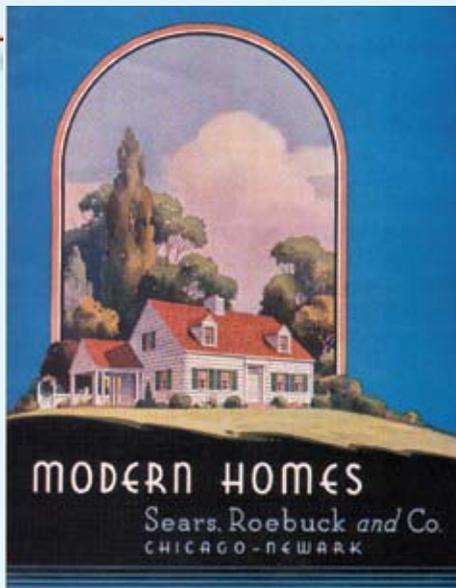
For that matter, cars too (highwheelers resembling carriages in the early 1900s and the Allstate in the 1950s)? Sears, Roebuck and Company sold homes through its catalogs from 1908 to 1940. Estimates are that 70,000 to 100,000 were sold during the time period. Precut houses ordered from Sears were shipped by boxcar in 30,000 pieces—including shingles, nails, and paint—and assembled either by carpenters or by the homebuyers themselves. Style variations were great, with prices ranging from \$445 to nearly \$6,000. Detailed instructions and numbered pieces made it possible for someone with little construction experience to build his own house. There were literally hundreds of designs of houses, but kits also included apartment buildings, garages, cottages, school-houses, barns, and outbuildings.

Frank W. Kushel was the merchandising genius credited with inventing what was then known as the Modern Homes program. Kushel was the manager of Sears' china department when he was given the job of overseeing the company's money-losing building materials department. Sales were off and warehouses were filled with inventory; Kushel had an idea. He was confident that the company could turn a profit if the storage of the goods could be centralized and their distribution accomplished more rationally. Rather than selling building materials in random bits and pieces, why not offer them as a package shipped directly to the railroad station nearest the building site? Don't forget that Sears' general merchandise catalog was filled with everything needed to furnish the house, from furniture and appliances to pots and pans: literally everything, including the kitchen sink. The company's first 44-page catalog called *Book of Modern Homes and Building Plans* (issued in 1908) was an immediate success.

About 1911 the company began including framing lumber in its packages, and by 1914, pre-cut lumber; prior to that time, the lumber had to be cut to fit at the building site.

The houses owed their popularity to suburban sprawl, as Americans moved to the 'burbs from crowded city centers, as well as to the rise of company towns. By 1911, Sears encouraged sales to families with steady incomes by offering financing—a down payment of 25% of the cost of the house with as little as 6% interest for a 5-year term, or a higher rate for terms up to 15 years. The application form contained no questions about race, ethnicity, gender, or even finances! But as with many other successful ventures, the Depression took its toll and Sears stopped selling the "kit" homes in 1940. Nevertheless, the homes are quite symbolic of the American Dream.

The homes were available in several versions. Prior to 1914, homes were offered as a house kit. Sears provided building plans and specifications along with lumber and



materials such as nails, screws, and paint, as well as staircases and dining nooks. Bricks and cement blocks for the foundation were not included (they were to be procured locally). Lumber was cut to size at the home site prior to being assembled by a local builder.

The Ready-Cut House package appeared in 1914. It included building plans and specs as well as detailed assembly instruc-

tions, along with pre-cut and factory-fitted lumber and all building materials (except masonry). The lumber was stamped with the Sears name and numbered to correspond with the plans provided.

The **Honor-Bilt** line (established about 1918) used quality materials and heavy framing. These homes featured sub-floors and a 13/16" finish floor of maple or oak, oak wall paneling, doors, trim, and cabinets, three coats of exterior paint, and higher-grade hardware. Sears encouraged **Honor-Bilt** buyers to upgrade to more deluxe bathrooms, while electrical systems, water heaters, and furnaces were separate options. Sears furnished lath for plaster, but not the plaster. Also available was "sheet plaster," an early form of drywall, at extra cost. One could choose from red cedar roof shingles or a costlier "Oriental Asphalt" which offered a 17-year guarantee.

**Standard-Built**s were less expensive and of a lower quality, likely used for summer cottages and hunting cabins, and were generally smaller. Sears recommended them for warm-weather situations. They were usually not pre-cut or fitted.

Finally, there was **Simplex**. It was a prefabricated, panelized, one-story building that could be easily taken apart. These were utilized as garages, summer cottages and cabins, and for small utility buildings that the homeowner wanted to move from place to place. They were offered in a separate catalog as early as 1911.

The mail-order houses offered big porches and were made of high-quality materials such as cypress—possibly why so many exist today. No one knows just how many *do* exist today, as Sears never kept sales records and most of the structures have been modified to meet modern lifestyles. In addition, other companies such as the Aladdin Co. of Bay City, Michigan, and Gordon-Van Tine Co., of Davenport, Iowa, produced houses that closely resembled Sears homes, selling them through Montgomery Ward stores.



AFTER



BEFORE



in order. Lo and behold, I found what I believed to be some clues. I bought the Pointers a book about Sears houses, and a best guess is that Jim and Susan's house is a "Conway," model #P13052. It was advertised as "five rooms, bath and porch." (see front page) True to form, Jim and Susan's house has been modified inside, with the original separate dining, living, and "front" bedrooms now one giant great room encompassing the

entire length of the house. The finished second floor was optional at additional cost above the \$1,707 base price. Jim and Susan's second floor (with two bedrooms and a bath) is also finished; whether it was a later addition one cannot say for sure, but it is likely that the second bathroom was not original.

During our visit, Jim and Susan indicated they wanted to paint the all-white house and give it a little shot of color.

Aladdin was best known for its "dollar a knot" guarantee which meant the company refunded \$1.00 for every piece of red cedar siding that had a knot. This was quite a pledge in the early 1900s, considering the price of houses at that time. Aladdin stuck with kit homes through 1981. Other firms that built kit houses included Pacific Homes, of Los Angeles, California; Lewis Manufacturing (later called Liberty Homes) and Sterling Homes, both of Bay City, Michigan; Harris Brothers, of Chicago; and Miller Ready-Built Homes, of St. Louis.

Styles began with a simplified Queen Anne to Arts & Crafts bungalows and Foursquares in the 1910s and 1920s. Later French, English, and Spanish Revival interpretations became available, then Colonial Revivals, Dutch Colonials, and Cape Cods in the 1920s and 1930s. Sears even offered an International Style house called the "Bryant" in its 1938 and 1939 catalogs.

Verifying that one owns a real Sears house can be quite difficult. Sears archives list more than 447 different designs offered during the 32 years of catalog sales. Even if the house looks like one in an old catalog, the house could be a copy produced by a local builder. Sears-labeled woodwork can also deceive, as Sears sold such components separately. Some possible clues: a stamp of a letter and a three-digit number on beams which were marked to ease assembly. Wall studs are often 15 inches apart as compared to the customary 22-24 inches apart.

While KT and I were visiting with Jim (who I call Pointerman) and Susan Pointer at their Cape May, New Jersey, home, Jim commented on the fact that many of the homes in their neighborhood had arrived by railroad in kit form . . . which got me to thinking. I wonder if the Pointer house might be a kit house of some kind? Jim was pretty confident it was, so a trip to the bookstore was

Jim asked me, "Willie [Jim is the only person allowed to call me that], what colors might look good on the house?" Never one to not offer my opinion, I gave it some thought, and upon returning home provided Pointerman with a Benjamin Moore color chart. My recommendation was Sag Harbor Gray for the main part of the house, Carrington Beige for the trim, and Hale Navy for the details. Much to my surprise, the Pointers used the color scheme I recommended! Jim points out there are still details that need to be done around the windows, but the transformation is terrific. Jim says, "The book of the Sears houses is great. I copied my house, framed it, and have it hanging in the house. All of my guests ask about it, hence there is a story about my friend Willie that gave me the book and helped with the exterior colors. The legend of Willie lives on at the Pointers' house in South Jersey." Thanks Jim (and Susan). I couldn't ask for a nicer compliment!

**Note:** Think you know someone with a Sears house (there are quite a few here in Lancaster County)? More information is available on-line at [www.searskithouse.com](http://www.searskithouse.com), or you can log on to the Sears Archives Modern Homes Web site at [www.searsmodernhomes.com](http://www.searsmodernhomes.com). Dover Publications has reprinted many Sears and Aladdin catalogs, including *Houses by Mail: A Guide to Homes from Sears, Roebuck and Company*, by Katherine Cole Stevenson and H. Ward Jhandl (1986, John Wiley & Sons). Also, check out *Houses That Sears Built: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Sears Homes*, by Rosemary Thornton (2002, Gentle Beam Publications), and *Putting Sears Homes on the Map*, self-published by Rebecca Hunter, P. O. Box 608, Elgin, IL 60121. ■

# Odds & Ends

**Got voles?** For the uninformed, voles are a lot like moles. In a word, pests! They feed on grubs and the roots of plants. You know you have them if you have holes in your flowerbeds. They especially like the roots of juniper bushes. Think of it as a vole martini (juniper berries are used to make gin). My yard was blessed with the varmints; I was convinced I was rid of them when the creeping juniper was removed. NOT! They reappeared. Russ and Laura Flick suggested how they have rid their yard of the pesty critters: bubble gum. Yes, that's right. Put little pieces of bubble gum down the holes they've dug, and the voles eat the gum and, well, expire. It appears to have worked. I'll report back and let you know.

Get a load of this! It's a load of something alright. This esteemed rag you are reading has won an award. Nothing I did, however. I just write and photograph the thing. Sharon Tschudy, of Trump Tschudy Design, does the layout and design of the newsletter. **The newsletter received a 2006 Apex Award of Excellence** for newsletter design and layout. Apex Awards are given by Communications Concepts of Springfield, Virginia, for publication excellence among professionals who write, edit, and manage business communications for a living. Check out [www.apexawards.com](http://www.apexawards.com). Congratulations, Sharon!

In Issue 5, July 2004, of this newsletter, I went on a rant about the ailanthus plant, which is also known as the **"tree of heaven."** The July 12, 2006, issue of the *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal* featured an article by P. J. Reilly titled "How to Get a Tree to Leave—Conservancy to Rid Preserve of Tree of Heaven." Seems Greg Wilson (who brought the tree to my attention), I, and the State of Pennsylvania are not alone. The article goes on to describe the non-native tree as a true devil. When this tree takes root, it crowds out native trees and shrubs. The Alcoa Foundation has donated \$6,852 to the Lancaster County Conservancy as part of a \$38,000 effort for the non-profit land preservation organization to rid a 40-acre section of Reed Run Nature Preserve in Martic Township of ailanthus and replant the area with native wildflowers and warm-season grasses. Teams of people will rip up the ailanthus by hand and spray the trees with herbicides to remove it over time. Just look at the cost to get rid of 40 acres of trees! I can count my blessings that I had just one tree to deal with. If you have these trees, make every effort you can to get rid of them.



**Voice Mail 101:** Make your life easier by following these simple rules. 1) When you leave a message for someone, first say your name and phone number. Example: "Hi. This is Bill Rothermel from RE/MAX Associates of Lancaster returning your call. My number is 717-581-4904." This way the recipient does not have to wait through your entire call to get your phone number. 2) Leave your last name in addition to your first name. So often I will get a call and someone says, "It's Bob. Call me." Bob *who*? And what's your number? 3) Make sure to say the number slowly so the person can write it down. 4) In case the person you are calling does not know you or is someone you only recently met, say your name slowly and clearly, and consider spelling out your name, first *and* last, especially if it's unusual. 5) **Most important, leave a detailed message as to why you are calling!** There is nothing worse than playing phone tag all day when the initial caller does not leave the reason for the call. Most calls can be dealt with simply and quickly if the reason for the call has been given in the first place. Trust me. This works and makes life a lot less stressful.



**Do you think you have what it takes to be an architect or designer?** Math, never my strong suit, eliminated any chance of me ever being an architect. But I know enough about designing a house to be dangerous. Problem solved. Lots of software is available for the budding architect, offering realistic graphics and the ability to easily add cabinets, textures and landscaping. Chief Architect, Inc., under its Better Homes & Gardens brand, has products that range from \$19.95 for a program called "Picture Painter" to a \$495.00 "Home Designer Pro" program that includes more than 1,500 sample plans with thousands of windows, doors, and lighting that users can drop into virtual rooms. For those on a more realistic budget (read no-charge), you can go to [www.bhg.com/decoratinggallery](http://www.bhg.com/decoratinggallery) to see details of designer rooms; [www.bhg.com/coloraroom](http://www.bhg.com/coloraroom) to mix and match fabric, wall colors and flooring; and [www.bhg.com/arrangearoom](http://www.bhg.com/arrangearoom) to try a new furniture layout online. They also offer free decorating tips at [www.bhg.com/sipnewsletters](http://www.bhg.com/sipnewsletters). Other no-charge sites include <http://sketchup.google.com>, which enables you to create house models from a virtual warehouse and drop them into a scene. The program is compatible with Google Earth, the satellite mapping program,



allowing you to see how it fits within the neighborhood. PPG Industries, Inc. has created [www.voiceofcolor.com](http://www.voiceofcolor.com) so you can try out different colors in model rooms. E. W. Scripps Co. (the parent of HGTV) has launched [www.HGTVKitchenDesign.com](http://www.HGTVKitchenDesign.com) and [www.HGTVBathDesign.com](http://www.HGTVBathDesign.com), offering three-dimensional designs where you can drop name brands such as Viking appliances into virtual rooms. Give them a try and satisfy your inner architect/designer.

I wasn't sure whether or not I was going to bring this up, but here goes. After mailing out the April 2006



newsletter, I received an unsigned, anonymous, typed letter criticizing me and the content of the newsletter. To call it spiteful and hurtful would be an understatement. Apparently, someone is on my mailing list that does not care to be there. Unfortunately, despite their nasty commentary, they didn't have the guts to sign it nor did they ask me to remove their name from the mailing list, something I would be glad to do (especially after learning their feelings about me). This newsletter has been nothing more than the same thing from day one, "A newsletter about homes, you . . . and Bill." Whoever it is really has it in for me. Suffice it to say, I will likely never learn who sent the letter (it was post-marked Lancaster with no return address), but I am very sorry if I have offended this person in some unknown way. I can only hope I never do so again. ■

# Bits & Pieces

Sandy and Jon May wanted to **display their family photos**. What to do when you not only have many, but all different shapes and sizes? First of all, find a space sufficient to accommodate all the photos. The Mays chose the wall leading from the foyer following the staircase to the second floor of their home. Sandy bought lots of inexpensive frames and painted them all black to unify the space in one common theme. Experts say to start with the largest works and then add smaller ones, maintaining a similar space between the frames. Use architectural details such as doors, windows and trim as guides. To work out the final layout, cut pieces of kraft paper the size of each framed picture and tape them to the wall with painter's tape. Once you are satisfied with the arrangement, make small pencil marks around the edges of the paper to use as a guide in hanging the framed photos. Voila! Good work, Jon and Sandy.



In a recent issue of *Renovation Style* magazine, I saw a clever **exterior-mount pocket door** offered by Johnson Hardware. Called simply The Pocket Door Hardware Set (2610F), it allows for simple installation that eliminates the expense of installing a pocket door inside the door frame. The aluminum track mounts on the wall and supports



a door up to 125 pounds (looks kind of like a barn door). Check it out at [www.johnsonhardware.com](http://www.johnsonhardware.com).

It's time for that seasonal household **plumbing and heating checklist**.

- Schedule the annual servicing of your heating system.
- Change the filter on your HVAC system.
- Adjust your high/low air returns. Remember: heat rises, so during heating season open the lower registers and close the upper registers.
- Check your water heater for leaks.
- Remove all hoses from exterior faucets (even if they are frost-free).
- If you have a heat pump, make sure that there is a least 1 to 2 feet of clearance around the exterior unit so it operates efficiently.
- If you have a direct-vent gas furnace, make sure the vent is clear. This is especially critical when the snow falls, as carbon monoxide poisoning could enter the house with deadly consequences.
- Test smoke, fire, and carbon monoxide alarms. Change batteries once a year. Consider doing this on your birthday, New Year's Day, or other day of significance you can remember. ■

## 10 SIMPLE WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM IDENTITY THEFT

Short and sweet, here are ten simple steps to guard you and your family from having your identity stolen.

- 1 Actively guard your social security number. Use it carefully.
- 2 Keep an eye on your credit report by regularly checking it.
- 3 Buy a good cross-cutting shredder and use it whenever your name and/or account numbers are on printed materials. This includes junk mail.
- 4 Be careful what you carry in your wallet or purse (**never** carry your social security card).
- 5 Choose direct deposit for payroll or benefit checks you receive.
- 6 Keep duplicate records for anything you might carry in your wallet or purse.
- 7 Mail payments from a safe location, never from your mailbox where they could be stolen. Always mail directly from a post office or from a Postal Service drop box.
- 8 Monitor activity in your Social Security account by ordering a benefit statement annually to check for fraud.
- 9 Closely watch your credit card activity for charges that are not yours. If you are not using credit cards, close the accounts and destroy the cards.
- 10 Know the people and companies you are doing business with. Never give out account numbers unless you have initiated the call and trust who you are doing business with. ■



Drive through any suburban neighborhood with young kids and you are likely to see trampolines and skateboard ramps. Any kid will tell you that trampolines and ramps are just plain fun. The stats, however, disagree. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) says that in 2003 there were 98,400 trampoline-related injuries, 70 percent of which involved children ages 5 to 14. The same group suffers more than 50,000 skateboarding injuries each year, according to CPSC statistics. The majority of skateboarding-related hospital visits are by teenagers, with more than 86% being male skaters. No doubt, kids try to emulate what they see on TV.

The CPSC doesn't classify skateboarding as particularly dangerous, mainly because the use of proper gear can significantly decrease the risk of injury. Helmets, wrist guards, kneepads and elbow pads can help reduce serious scrapes and breaks.

Because of the risks associated with skateboard ramps, half-pipes, and trampolines, these can have a dramatic effect on your homeowners insurance policy—from higher premiums to coverage exclusion to cancellation of your policy. According to Hadley Brown of Brown & Associates Nationwide Insurance in Willow Street, the problem is the lack of adult supervision. Kids are trying dangerous and risky tricks, sometimes with more than one person on the apparatus at the same time. They are untrained and unaware of the risks involved. This combination of characteristics is at the heart of the insurance industry's concern, with trampolines in particular. Children's brains may be wired to take risks, but parents' should be wired to avoid them.

Lawsuits filed on behalf of those severely injured have been resolved at great expense to individuals, families and insurance carriers. And with the popularity of extreme sports, the trend is likely to continue. What's a parent to do?

- 1) Ensure that your children or inexperienced persons use the trampoline only with mature supervision.
- 2) While jumping on the trampoline or using a skateboard ramp, only one child should be on the apparatus at a time. With trampolines, it is recommended that parents prohibit flips or somersaults (to prevent landing on the neck), and that padding covers all springs, hooks and framework.
- 3) Teach your kids to practice specific safety behaviors, including wearing all of the gear such as a helmet, warming up properly, and being checked by a physician before their first session.
- 4) Make sure the apparatus is properly secured and, when not in use, access is restricted within a fenced area and is guarded by a self-latching gate.
- 5) Check with your insurance carrier about your coverage. The distinction is whether the ramps and trampolines are used by your own kids, or whether a whole bunch from the neighborhood is there. The last thing the insurance carrier wants is an injury, especially if it is not the insured.

*The moral of the story: think twice before turning your backyard into an extreme sports zone. ■*

# Guest Chef—Ruth Sachs Allison

Call her Ruth, Rudy, or Nana. No matter what you call her, call her one great cook. I first met Ruth along with her late-husband Ross sometime in the early 1980s. Ross and Ruth were married over 51 years until his passing in 2001. The Sachs' moved from Baltimore to Lancaster in 1966 with daughters Ginny, Christine and Barb, and son Ross, in order for "Big" Ross to begin his career as the F&M College lacrosse coach where he worked until retiring in 1987. Ruth remembers that her first job in Lancaster was to teach cooking at the YWCA. Suffice it to say she hasn't stopped cooking since! Ruth is mom to four children and grandma, er, "Nana," to fifteen! She proudly recites them as follows: Ginny and husband Craig live in Connecticut and they are parents to Jocelyn, Lindsay, and Craig; Christine and husband Jim live in Indiana (the state) and are parents to Patrick, Paul, Julie, Jay, and Joanna; Barb and husband Ted live in Lancaster and they are parents to Gregory, Elizabeth, Andrew, and Christine; and Ross and wife Dana, also living in Lancaster, are parents to Nolan, Reece, and Mitchell. Got that? Son Ross is responsible for my introduction to his parents, but KT and Ross go all the way back to junior high in the '70s. Ross's wife Dana and I joked about featuring *her* mom in a future newsletter as guest chef, but the only thing her mom, Karen, knows how

to make are reservations (sorry, Karen . . . Dana dared me to do it)!

Ruth married Richard Allison (nicknamed Dody) three years ago; she and Dody dated when she was a freshman at Gettysburg College more than a few years ago. They live in Manheim Township. In addition to being a great cook, Ruth is an avid bridge player and loves to travel. She and Dody have traveled to Hawaii, Alaska, Texas and California in recent months. Next year she reaches a milestone birthday, but you would be hard-pressed to guess what number it is! I say a celebration is in order. How about dinner? That's exactly what Nana has prepared for you in this issue of the newsletter. This, too, is the first time a guest chef has provided recipes for an entire meal, including a tossed salad with celery seed dressing, crepes aux fruits de mer, peas and cabbage, and lemon bisque for dessert. Sounds good to me. Thanks, Nana.



## Celery Seed Dressing

Combine: ½ cup sugar, 1 tsp. dry mustard, 1 tsp. salt, 1 or 2 tsp. celery seeds.

Add 3 Tbsp. grated onions.

Gradually add while beating with a whisk: 1 cup oil, 1/3 cup cider vinegar.

Makes 2 cups and will keep refrigerated about two weeks.

Serve atop your favorite mix of salad greens.

## Peas and Cabbage

One 10 oz. package of frozen peas

1 beef bouillon cube • 2 Tbsp. hot water

2 cups finely shredded cabbage • 2 Tbsp. butter

Mix bouillon cube with hot water until dissolved. Pour over frozen peas. Place shredded cabbage atop the peas and top with butter. Cover and cook about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serves 5.

## Lemon Bisque

Beat until spongy: 2 egg yolks, 6 Tbsp. sugar, and the juice and rind of 1 lemon.

Beat 2 egg whites until stiff. Slowly add ¼ cup sugar. Fold whites into the yolk mixture.

Whip 1 cup heavy cream and gently fold into the above mixture.

Prepare graham cracker crumbs made from about two-thirds package of same.

Sprinkle about half of the crumbs into a 5"x7" Pyrex dish; add the lemon mixture and then top with the remaining crumbs. Freeze.

Cut into squares and allow to stand for about 10 minutes before serving (serves approx. 8).

## Crepes aux Fruits de Mer

### Filling for Crepes:

3 Tbsp. butter

8 oz. crabmeat

8 oz. shrimp

2 hard-cooked eggs (finely chopped).

Stir until thoroughly mixed and keep warm.

### Sauce:

4 Tbsp. butter

4 fresh mushrooms (sliced)

½ tsp. lemon juice, 3 Tbsp. flour

1 cup clam juice (one 8 oz. jar)

2 Tbsp. butter

¼ cup half and half,

2 egg yolks mixed with 2 Tbsp. half and half.

Melt butter in large skillet, add mushrooms and lemon juice. Stir in flour, mix in clam juice and stir while boiling; add butter and half and half. Simmer for 5 minutes.\* Add egg yolk mixture and thicken. Add filling.

\*You may do ahead until here, then reheat.

**Crepes:** To make the batter you will need 3 eggs, beaten well, and 7/8 cup flour; sift into eggs, then add 1 ½ cups milk. Heat until smooth while adding a dash of salt. Let rest in the refrigerator one to two hours.

*Now turn off the TV and cell phone to proceed!*

Assemble a #5 (7") iron skillet or crepe pan, knife, ¼ lb. butter, soup ladle, hot pad, wax paper squares, and a spatula.

Have your burner on high (if cooking with electric). Warm your pan. Add 1 Tbsp. butter and heat until sizzling. Working quickly, add a soup ladle of batter (3 Tbsp.) to the pan and rotate the pan so the mixture covers the bottom. Small bubbles will form and the edges will begin to brown. Carefully flip the crepe to the other side and leave it on the heat for only a few seconds until it begins to color. Remove from the pan to the counter to cool (Ruth notes the first one is always bad, so just throw it out). Then, still working quickly, add a teaspoon of butter to the pan until it heats up again, repeating the above procedure. Ruth adds that this gets much easier as you go and it becomes great fun. If the crepes look funny, just put some syrup on them and eat them (after all, these are just pancakes, so don't be afraid of them, says Ruth)! Let the crepes cool on your counter and then stack them together with wax paper between each one. Freeze them until needed. This yields 10 to 20 crepes depending on how proficient you are.

To assemble the crepes, add filling, roll up, and place seam-side down into a buttered casserole. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese. If desired, garnish with halved shrimp. Brown briefly (4 to 5 minutes) in a pre-heated broiler and then serve.

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ISSUE 10, NOVEMBER '06

A Newsletter about homes, you...and Bill



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## Strange Sighting in Manheim Township

Imagine my surprise in finding this in my backyard! One day this past May I looked out the window and saw a brown lump in the yard. Curiosity got the best of me, so I walked downstairs and went outside to find this



guy lounging in the grass. Hurry and get the camera because nobody will believe this. Back inside and a few moments later, he progressed to the sidewalk, which gives one a reference point as to the size of this snapping turtle. The walk is about 30 inches wide making the turtle about 18 inches in diameter! His tail was about 8 inches long and his neck and head were about as big around as my leg at the knee joint. I didn't hang around to see where it was that he went to, but let's assume back to water. The next day another appeared in my lower yard (this time witnessed by neighbors the Vafeas - further proof I am not crazy) but was only a fraction of the size. Maybe his mate? I have never seen them before or since! One can only conjecture that they both crawled out of Landis Run at the back of my yard. The question remains, however, how the big one managed to climb the bank behind my house (which is near vertical). Add to this the hawk with the 6-foot wingspan and the blue heron making periodic appearances and I have my own nature preserve.! *Ah, nature!*

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