

AMERICAN HOMEBODY

Issue 5

Lisa Anne Auerbach & Friends

AMERICAN HOMEBODY

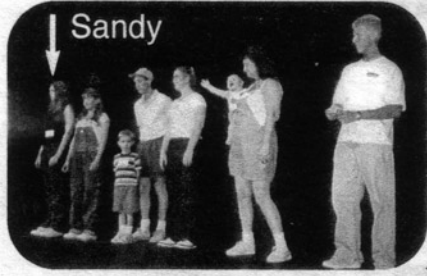
Autumn, 1999

One Dollar



In the Farmer's Daughter Issue: A flower that stinks! Jewish Holidays that rock! Bugs that may or may not enter your bloodstream! Mayhem! New Plumbing! Rwanda! Pie Crust Debate! Sour Cream Mystery Solved! Butterflies! Spiders! Feng shui! The County Fair! Melons! Cheese! And More! More! More!

The Return of the Feral Spaniels



As the season changes from ripe tomatoes to crunchy leaves underfoot, we welcomed the autumn with a delightful field trip to the County Fair. A ragtag team of Feral Spaniels made their way down the pike to Pomona, just in time for the LA County Fair Redhead Contest. Rooting for the home team, Runt and Fang were deliriously happy when Sandy Johnson from South Pasadena was awarded first place in the blue eyed division of the Fair's mysteriously inelegant version of a beauty

pageant. Too feral to stay for the green eyed results, we snivelling spaniels went off in search of bovines, which we found by the barnload over in the animal section of the fair. They were lolling around, hooked up to milking machines, variously friendly and couldn't-care-less. We



saw hefty farmgirls wrestling with sheep, trying to get their noncooperative heads into shearing position. There were acres of hogs and pens of delightful goats.

After sniffing around the animal pens for awhile, us doggies checked out the creativity of the Creative Living section, where the theme of every needlepoint masterpiece seemed to be a riff on the Last Supper. Runt bought an overpriced fruit smoothie to take the edge off, while Fang preferred to drool. The cakes were magnificent, rotting within glass cases, perfection at its most maggotty. We went on to enjoy gardens and we spoke to a manufacturer who promised us cut-rate coffins and showed off the naked nymph lying within his belt-buckle casket. There were Mexican fiestas afoot, as well as dancing Chinese and, just as exotic, skateboarders sliding around for an audience of bored families and cotton-candy eating little sisters.



American Homebody #5

Top Dog: Miss Lisa Anne Auerbach
Kibbles & Bits: Mr. Daniel Marlos, Mr. Fredrik Nilsen

Big sloppy licks and nuzzley noses go out to our wonderful readers. Thank you very much for supporting *American Homebody*. We appreciate your interest and contributions, and encourage submissions in all categories, even ones that don't yet exist.

Bones, rawhide, and succulent thighs can be sent to us at our doghouse, Post Office Box 983, South Pasadena, Calif. 91031, or emailed to anniebach@earthlink.net.

Those interested in receiving the next issue via post may send \$1.00 and two postage stamps. Individual copies of *American Homebody* may be purchased for \$1.00 directly from the publisher or from a homebody in your neighborhood. Those interested in becoming a Local Homebody may purchase copies of *American Homebody* in bulk, 13 copies for \$10.00.

Woof.

Letters

Miss Auerbach,

Congratulations! I assume that we will receive our usual complimentary copy. (*Note to readers: American Homebody, being a family publication, extends complimentary copies of each issue to immediate family members of the editor.*) I am looking forward to this. I hope the next issue is a web issue. That would really be exciting to view online.

With best regards,
Mr. Auerbach (your father)

Dear Mr. Auerbach,

There are currently no plans to put *American Homebody* online. Our readers appreciate the portability of the printed publication, as well as the nonexistent download time. However, should anyone want to transform our modest homemaking magazine into a Web empire, we are open to negotiations.

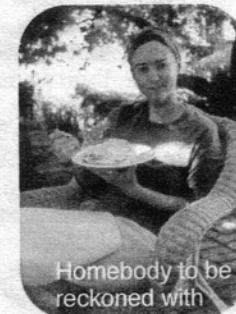
Dear Ms Auerbach,

I am happy to report that today I received the most delightful package in the mail. What was inside you might ask; the brand new issue of *American Homebody*. Well, you can imagine my excitement as I tore through the pages of that fine publication. Of course I immediately took it around town to spread the good word to *American Homebodies* exiled in this city so far away from the paradise that is South Pasadena. Needless to say, its presence was appreciated

Sincerely,
a Homebody away from home.

Dear Faraway Homebody, (whom our intelligence agents have identified as Mr. Alex Slade),

I'm tickled to hear that you've been spreading the back-home Homebody word to your fellow Berlin travelers.



Homebody to be reckoned with

Thanks for being an unofficial Homebody ambassador, and we look forward to seeing you when you return home! Until then, your wife has been making uncharacteristically domestic appearances in the U.S., serving delicious breakfasts and snicky-snacks, in between meetings with all sorts of headache-y folks, trips to god-knows-where, and visits to various laboratories and suppliers.

Dear Miss Auerbach,

Please find enclosed in this very envelope some photographs that your readers at *AHB* might find delightful. I am proud to say that as of the 28th of July I have been a full-fledged citizen of this country (and have digital footage shot by Miss Susan Lutz of South Pasadena to prove it). Since then, I have been up at all hours of the night wondering what I could possibly do to better my country? Just in case you might be wondering, I have already registered to vote, and reported a neighbor for illegal parking on my block. These petty day to day good deeds just don't quench my thirst to make America a better place. Perhaps you and your lovely readers might have something in mind. If so, I would appreciate a response in your next issue of *AHB*. Thank you very much.

Regards,
Giovanni Jance
Bearer of Naturalization Certificate # 24841488



Dear Mr. Jance,

Welcome to the United States of America. Thank you so much for writing and for sending the lovely photographs of your first soiree as a U.S. citizen, as well as a copy of your naturalization certificate, which *AH* would have loved to share with our readers, were it not for the fact that printing, copying, or photographing the certificate is unlawful. Of course, we're sure you had the proper authorities on the line

before taking it to Kinko's. I'm sure our readers would have plenty of ideas on how to make America a better place, and I encourage everyone to write in with their suggestions. In the meantime, perhaps you could pick up one piece of litter per day.

Many thanks LAA of LA for the fascinating issue of American Homebody. I have canceled my subscription to MARTHA STEWART LIVING which pales next to AH. Who needs picket fences when you've got incendiary devices? Hope all is well or better out there...we're cranking up to return to hell all too soon here I'm afraid...oh well...a few more wonderful days and nights as an American homebody

Love and mucho thanks for the great readin....Weiss

Dear Mr. Weiss,

If only all of our readers would throw away their Martha Stewart crutches, maybe AH would get to have our own line of basketweaving supplies, ammunition, lingerie, and Y2K provisions, not to mention a cooking show and a sweatshop!

Dear American Homebody and Miss Auerbach,

I would like to congratulate you on the superb and phat July issue. I like the way it flows. Your down home humor is so coool, my sister Gracey and I are totally down with you. It is so our thang, girl! We would love to know more about the Homebody Contest. Do we need to send actual object or pictures will do?

from the ghetto queen Allenina

Dear Queen Allenina,

Since there are no rules for the Homebody contest, anything goes! We look forward to receiving your entry!

Dear Homebody,

I would just like to say that as an American who works at home (or lives at work, depending on how you look at it), it has been a very difficult summer for me. Not only did my downstairs neighbors (who seem to have an overblown sense of responsibility to animals) insist on my putting up with about 20 stray cats who set up shop in my garage and infested it with fleas, but the house-music fan across the hall plays awful, bass-heavy, spiritual-techno-inferno music during all of his speed binges (more and more frequent)—and viciously defies my cringing attempts to ask him to turn down the volume. Even worse, the weird building next door features an obviously deaf resident who has a clock-radio alarm that has gone off since June every day at two min-

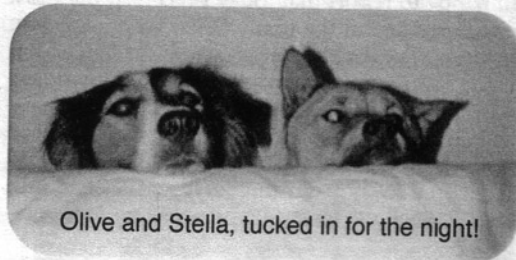
utes to noon FOR A WHOLE HOUR. I left the building manager a message or two—even one that began "Obviously you are a very insensitive person..." and that seemed to work for a few days, but I am living in fear.

Other than leaving town, which thankfully I will do soon, does anyone have any suggestions?

Sincerely,
Marina Rosenfeld

20 cats living in a garage certainly qualifies as animal abuse. Contact your local humane society, who may be able to rid your flea problem.

As a working Homebody with a neighbor who has a leaf-blower obsession, I can relate to your noise-dilemma. Still, unlike speed freaks, he is predictable. Every afternoon at 4p.m., the gentlemen next door erases all evidence of the impending autumn from his yard, deck, and walkways. Each week, the house I live in receives its own barage of yardworkers and their accompanying sounds- lawnmowers, weed-wackers, gasoline-powered leaf blowers. During these times, I close my windows and quietly wait for the peace of suburbia to return. I attempt to train myself in the virtues of tolerance. My success rate is low. I cannot advise in this department, feeling victimized myself by the noise of humanity. Earplugs are no help- who wants to wear earplugs in their own home? Perhaps our readers can offer suggestions for you. Readers?



Olive and Stella, tucked in for the night!

Hi Lisa—

I'm also glad that you like the photo of the sweet canine pals, Stella and Olive. I was concerned by the traces of dog resentment I detected in the last issue of American Homebody. The photo was taken by Heather Levine.

Best regards,
Sojin Kim

Dear Lisa,

So sorry I walked off without paying. Please find enclosed \$1.00. What was in the package?

Keep up the good work...

—James Benning

Dear Mr. Benning,
Potpourri.

On Location with Susan Lutz!

We recently had a chance to attend a taping session for Former Homebody of the Month Miss Susan Lutz's video project, *Sunday Dinner: Food, Land, and Free Time*. Lucky for the Homebody editor, the shoot took place at the American Homebody test kitchen, which feels right at home. Describing her video as, "a great excuse to eat lots of fabulous foods with friends and family," Miss Lutz has been documenting various American food traditions. Until recently, the bulk of the Sunday dinner items she investigated were from her home state of Virginia. Before her California shoot, she'd already logged over 50 hours of footage, which includes scenes of hog butchering, apple butter making, and ham curing.

Realizing that her friends might add an interesting dimension to her project, Miss Lutz set about organizing a Sunday shoot in two nearby homes.

At Homebody, she shot Miss Stephanie Ford and Miss Lisa Anne Auerbach as they prepared a challah according to Miss Auerbach's great grandmother's recipe. Grandma K's recipe



Miss Ford shows off the dough.... called for



plenty of breaks while the bread dough rises, so Miss Lutz took advantage of this time to drive her heavy duty pickup truck across town to document Mr. Daniel Marlos as he sweated through the preparation of his famous Molé. Though Mr. Marlos is Hungarian by birth, he has adopted many of the customs of Mexico, including those which the Mexicans no longer follow. His Mexican housemate, José, prefers the ease of molé from a jar to the arduous and monumental task of cooking from scratch, but, of course, with Daniel around, who needs the jar? José's expertise is in dismembering the turkey, which he did with a cleaver and aplomb.



... while Miss Lutz points the camera!

What's That Bug?

Everyone seems to be concerned about which bug does what damage. This issue I have decided to publish profiles on one pest and one beneficial "bug". The pest of the month is the "tomato bug" a bane to any backyard gardener. I myself have three tomato plants growing in containers on my patio. This season I have plucked three healthy "tomato bugs" off of them. The bugs are the larval form of the Tobacco Hornworm Moth, *Manduca sexta*, and are large, green caterpillars with a spine at the tail end. They can be as large and as fat as a person's middle finger, and a single "tomato bug" can do considerable damage if not disposed of. A tell-tale sign of

the unwanted grazer is the appearance of decimated leaves which are reduced to twigs. This year my pests even nibbled on some unripe tomatos. Their green color blends well with the plants, and the easiest way to find the culprets is to carefully locate their large, green, pellet-like droppings. They don't bite, so remove them with your hands and crush the life out of them. If you don't, they will eventually tire of eating, burrow into the ground, pupate and emerge as a large (4 to 4.5 inch wingspan) mottled grey sphinx or hawk moth with six rows of orange spots on the abdomen.

Sun Spiders or Wind Scorpions are neither insects, spiders nor scorpions, but hairy arachnids of the order Solpugida, family Eremobitidae.



Tomato Bug, *Manduca sexta*. Larva state of the Tobacco Hornworm Moth with telltale droppings and decimated tomato Vine. Photograph by Mr. Daniel Marlos

Though they possess formidable jaws and can pinch with some force, they have no poison nor stingers, so they are actually harmless. They can grow

to two inches in length, and bear a resemblance to Jerusalem crickets or potato bugs for which they are often mistaken. Sun Spiders are rapid runners though, and they have suckers on their front appendages which allow them to scale smooth surfaces like glass with little trouble. They inhabit hot dry areas and may be attracted to indoor lights at night. All species are nocturnal, and voracious carnivores, crushing and tearing captured invertebrates to shreds before devouring them. This characteristic makes them valuable for destroying unwanted pests from the garden.



Sun Spider or Wind Scorpion
Order: Solpugida
Photograph by Mr. Daniel Marlos

Ask The Bug Man

Dear What's the Bug?

Even though I'm not a homebody, I am concerned about some bugs invading my home. There are some pesky critters flying in, on and around my hibiscus bush in the front yard. These tiny flying pests have covered the leaves and pink flowers so that the whole bush appears to be spray-painted white. To make matters worse, these insects are now stuck in my window screen because the humid weather compels me to leave my fan on all day and night. As a result, I will have to remove my screens and hose them off, allowing these white, yucky bugs into my home. What are they?

Sincerely,
Nechelle Wong,
Highland Park, CA

Dear Nechelle,

Based on your vivid description, I have no doubts that you and your hibiscus are being plagued by whiteflies. These minuscule insects belong to the order Homoptera, which is sometimes grouped together with the order Heteroptera, the true bugs, into an order called Hemiptera, because the insects in the two groups share similar sucking mouthparts and undergo incomplete metamorphosis. Hogue writes in his now legendary book, *Insects of the Los Angeles Basin*, "Virtually all homopterans have wax-producing glands in the integument, and many excrete honeydew, a sugary sticky solution that may attract symbiotic associates (especially ants). A great number are plant pests because of their great fecundity and ability to bleed their hosts of life-giving sap. Some also injure plants by transmitting pathogenic organisms, especially viruses." There are several species of whiteflies found locally, and they are difficult to distinguish from one another. They all belong to the family Aleyrodidae, and are approximately 1/16 inch long and frequently infest ornamental plants. When disturbed, the adults fly from their perches, usually the undersides of leaves, in a flaky cloud. The flightless nymphs so most of the damage, sucking sap from plants in a manner similar to their relatives, the aphids, scale insects and mealybugs. They can be difficult to eradicate, though I rid my fuschias of them several years ago by diligently spraying the leaves with a mild solution of dish soap in water. The slick surface imparted on the water by the soap causes the insects to drown.

Dear Bug Man,

I received the following letter and thought it might make an interesting addition to your *American Homebody* column, "What's That Bug?" It's from my cousin Kaya Adams, who is currently residing in Kigali, Rwanda, acquainting herself with the local insect population

Dear Lisa Anne,

I feel compelled to share my own critter tale in response to your disturbing mite write of July 4th Homebody. As you know, I too was a victim of tiny visitors a little over a year ago, while travelling to and from England.

About two weeks after returning from a friend's wedding in SC, I developed itchy little bumps in the webs between fingers. Friends advised me this was probably eczema from the hard water in Britain, but moisturizers and hand cremes did

nothing. The over-the-counter pharmacist at Boots prescribed Cortisone, thinking it could be an allergic reaction. Instead of clearing up, it spread. Itching was bad enough during the day -- wreaking havoc on my concentration at work -- but it was utterly intolerable at night, when I would peel off every chafing layer and lie in bed trying to let mind overcome matter.

After two weeks, I went to the doctor, who immediately told me I had been infested with scabies! What, you might ask (as I did), are scabies? They are little burrowing parasites which cling to fabric fibers before puncturing your skin and crawling inside. They then lay their eggs into your bloodstream, enabling them to travel all through your body. The itching is worse at night in correspondence to their most active life cycle. The original animals eventually die and get sloughed off with your dead skin, but until they do, their bodies are visible as tiny grey dots in each bump. The bump is actually your body's reaction to this foreign inhabitant.

The only way to cure scabies is to coat your body — neck to toe, nether regions included — with Malathion. Yes, that same pesticide used for crop dusting in Florida! This cuts the scabies' oxygen supply, but only if kept on for 72 hours. If you wash your hands, you have to reapply the Malathion immediately. This creates unimaginable problems just eating or bathing. The itching lingers 2 weeks, or until all the dead scabies are expended. No one knows how long scabies can survive without a host; estimates range from 7-14 days. Clothes and sheets either have to be frozen overnight, heat pressed, or dry-cleaned. But whereas your critters, Lisa, crawled through a 270-count pillowcase, scabies dwelling in a mattress or pillow are generally blocked by bed linens.

"The only way to cure scabies is to coat your body with Malathion."

Most people catch scabies by sleeping in shady locales on infested mattresses or by sleeping with someone with 'cooties'. Scabies love warm places and are most common in impoverished areas, usually in the developing world. Apparently, they are on the rise, though, in Europe and the States due to the increased prevalence of HIV. The immune system of someone positive won't respond as quickly to the scabies. This lag time means they won't notice the infestation until

Recipes & Recommendations

food for thought from our readers

Leftover pizza makes for a delicious, nutritious, rather filling omelet. Heat a slice in a toaster oven while beating eggs and pouring into pan, then when it's time to fold the omelet, slip that hunk of bread, cheese and sauce in there for a hearty start to the day — guaranteed to please any overnight guests, especially hung-over ones. —*Mark North, north@sprynet.com, Steamboat Springs, Col.*

Dear Miss Auerbach,

I received your request for proposals from Andrea Zittel. I am a friend of hers and I live in her house in Brooklyn. I would like for you to consider my potato salad recipe for AmericanHomebody. I make it quite often and now that I have fresh mint growing in the backyard it make it even more a household staple and crowd pleaser.

Potatoes Fontecchio

5 1/2 pounds red new potatoes
8 cloves garlic, finely minced
1 large or 2 small bunches fresh mint, stems removed, leaves finely chopped
2 tablespoons coarse salt
Freshly ground pepper to taste
Preheat oven to 350°F. Scrub potatoes and prick each one with a fork about 6 times. Place in a shallow roasting pan and roast for an hour and 45 minutes.

Cut each potato in half. Toss the potatoes with garlic, oil mint, salt and pepper. Let stand for 30 minutes. Guaranteed to be a hit; my mouth is watering. —*Austin Thomas, Austin345@aol.com, Brooklyn, New York*

I am looking for a good Italian restaurant in the Pasadena/South Pasadena area, not one of the spaghetti and meatballs variety, but a REAL Italian restaurant. Any suggestions? Any restaurant recommendations for this area in general? I feel as though I've visited almost every restaurant in South Pasadena that I know about. I'd like to try something new. —*Miss Elizabeth Saveri, esaver@earthlink.net, South Pasadena, Calif.*

Tasty Snack

1. Attractive scallions
 2. Gray Poupon Dijon Mustard.
 3. Your favorite plate.
- Clean scallions. Put a blob of mustard on plate.



Arrange scallions next to mustard. Dip scallions and crunch crunch. Yummy.

Quick and Tasty (with few ingredients!)

Here is my favorite quick meal called **Spicy Fish**

All you need is

1. Your favorite fish
2. A jar of your favorite salsa
3. Olive Oil
4. A baking dish

Olive oil the baking dish. Drizzle a little olive oil on fish. Pour your favorite jar of salsa on top.

Bake. —*Miss Maria Demarse, 104243.2650@compuserve.com, Brooklyn, New York.*

The City of Culver City does not, it seems hold much in the way of wonderful foods, but just on its border is the extremely wonderful **Uncle Darrow's Cajun Food**. More of a concrete food stand, with an indoor and outdoor patio, Uncle Darrow serves up some of the most tasty catfish po'boys that this reader has ever had. Not being a

meat eater, I only vouch for the gumbos and other fare by the smiles and praises given by my dining companions. With the sound of KACE and some perfect pink lemonade, Uncle Darrow's cannot beat. Located on Venice Blvd., east of the 10 freeway and west of La Brea on the north side of the road. Go there now. —*Mrs. Charles Greer, South Pasadena Calif.*

Bread Pudding

2 loaves slightly randy three day old baguette torn in chunks twice as big as your thumb
3 cups whole milk
6 eggs, lightly beaten
2t cinnamon
1t ground nutmeg
dash ground cloves
dash mace
double handful raisins
14 oz can crushed pineapple, drained
2t vanilla

Butter the hell out of a deep baking pan and dump all ingredients in. Slosh around with your hands to coat the bread and flatten out the top. Bake at 425 degrees for over an hour, until puffy at center. Serve with whipped cream and bourbon sauce. If you have a good recipe for bourbon sauce, send it to us; we keep fucking it up. No one likes a grainy glaze on an otherwise sublime desert. —*Team Orange/Sibling Summit, 327-b Sycamore Place, Sierra Madre, Calif., 91024*

For an easy lunch try this...**Baked Potato Special.**

1. Potato
2. Cut-up tomato
3. Cut-up zucchini(not as much as tomato-you want to have more tomato than zucchini)
3. Crumbled feta

Microwave or bake your potato. Crack open your potato, when it's done. Put generous pile of raw tomatoes inside potato. Then zucchini and then feta cheese. Eat. If you don't have cheese around, try Soy sauce or salsa or hot sauce instead. They all add an extra kick.

Bacon Salad

1. Your favorite lettuce
 2. Bacon
 3. Salt and pepper
 4. A nice big bowl.
- Put a lot of lettuce(remember to tear leaves) in your bowl.

Fry bacon. Crumble bacon. Put crumbled bacon on lettuce. Toss till leaves glisten (you might need to add a little more bacon drippings). Add pepper and salt as needed. Eat with crusty French bread —*Miss Maria Demarse, 104243.2650@compuserve.com, Brooklyn, New York*

I have been racking my brain for things to offer for a trade but don't have anything of true value. However, I did invent a new **Food for On the Go** — 3/4 cup warm brown rice, tablespoon hummus and 3 tablespoons Verde Salsa from Trader Joes. Delicious on its own or wrapped in a toasted corn tortilla. —*Miss Laura Owens, LAOWENS@aol.com, Eagle Rock, Calif.*

FYI

The Williams Sonoma catalog offers convenient one-stop shopping for a dandy assortment of kitchen stuff--like a \$34 set of 4 one-ounce chocolate cigars--and the catalog copy is source of wordly wisdom that transcends mere product descriptions, like:

1. "Since gelato is denser and a bit stickier than American ice cream, it is best served with its own special utensil." (Gelato Spoon)
2. "The incomparable texture and taste of authentic tortillas are now available to those of us outside Mexico." (Fresh Tortillas)
3. "An elegant handblown vase from Poland has a charming simplicity that never competes with the natural dazzle of a floral display." (Perennial Glass Vase)
4. "The French are known for their stylish simplicity, and this gleaming flatware is no exception." (Guy Degrenne Flatware)
5. "This hand-assembled stainless-steel and aluminum toaster earned its reputation in European bistros and cafes, where efficiency and reliability are a must." (Dualit Toaster)

6. "Dining takes on a tropical air when natural bamboo-handled flatware sets your table." (Bamboo Flatware)
—*Mark North, north@sprynet.com, Steamboat Springs, Col.*

20 pound bag for six dollars and raced home to squeeze myself a glass of juice. Having now consumed the glass of sticky sweet wonder, I can confirm that those oranges are a bargain while they last.

Note to patrons of the Alhambra Market: The gold-toothed vendor from the root vegetable stand was nowhere to be found... just one more reason to stick with the Alhambra venue.

—Miss Susan Lutz

Please note: Since Miss Lutz's report was filed on the occasion of the first week of the South Pasadena Farmers Market, things have changed for the better (even Miss Lutz herself will attest to that!) From 4 to 8 each Thursday evening, shoppers can fill their bags with delicious organic produce, delightful flowers, wonderful and juicy fruit, the famous Gouda cheese, and a jar of sweet, locally-produced honey.

Dear American Homebody,

In the July 1998 issue of your magazine, Miss Susan Lutz, former Homebody of the Month, wrote a letter for my benefit regarding several recipes clipped by her grandmother from THE DAILY PROGRESS of Charlottesville, VA (day, date and year unknown). The newspaper printed two recipes which came from a booklet of sour cream recipes submitted by Miss Lois of Chicago. In a follow-up letter in the September 1998 AH, Miss Lutz submitted the actual recipes for Asparagus Cream Soup and Orange Ginger Pork Chops. You can't begin to imagine my thrill when I recently received two vintage sour cream cook booklets from Susan Auerbach of Riverwoods, IL, who is well aware of my fondness for the much maligned dairy product. Both booklets were published by the American Dairy Association in Chicago. As I carefully perused through the toothsome treats, I came across an Orange Ginger Pork Chop recipe in the booklet entitled A SAMPLER OF MODERN SOUR CREAM RECIPES (fittin' for clippin'). When I cross-checked the ingredients with the recipe Miss Lutz submitted via her grandmother, via THE DAILY PROGRESS, via Miss Lois, I found them to be identical, printed verbatim. Ditto for Asparagus Cream Soup. I can only deduce that Susan Auerbach has unearthed the lost source for the original recipes, a source that is now in my hands. I want to publicly thank Sue for thinking of me.

—Mr. Daniel Marlos

The Corpse Flower Report

I spent much of the winter assembling a succulent garden from road-killed "cuttings" knocked off by passing mirrors on the narrow hillside street where I live. A flower named after a corpse, I reasoned, had to be some kind of patron saint to my garden, so I dropped all plans and headed out to see it. It had been a while since I had been to the Huntington, so I wasn't even sure I was there when I hit the gridlock. And in fact I wasn't there—I was still five blocks away.

It was 2:30 in the afternoon, hot as blazes and looked like a street festival or parade had just broken up—seniors, families with kids, professionals, you name it. They were all there and streaming toward me. There were organized groups, extended families, people who had taken the day off work to get there. Turned out good that I parked so far away because I passed a big family, the grandmother of which asked me, "Are you going to see the flower?", then insisted I take her admission badge.

"The Fire Marshall has made them close the gates," she said, "but maybe they'll let you in if you show them you already paid." Granddad said to tell them I left something back by the flower. When I got to the gate, cops and security guards were sure enough turning everyone away, even though it was 2 hours early. A middle-aged woman suggested, helpfully, that it would be a good idea if someone communicated this closure to the media, who were apparently still promoting the



attraction, impressing people with its once-in-a-lifetime occurrence and short duration. My nose rubbed in these same facts and facing a full day's docket mañana, I made my decision quickly. In a well-timed lull between desperate families with heat-rash-babies in strollers, I made my move. As one long-faced group slowly choreographed their U-turn against the crunch of all the others—in this back-eddy of would-be necro-florists—I affected a concerned gaze and scanned the assembled crowd furiously, as if for one last desperate time before jerking my head back to the guards, and breathily announcing that I could not find my nephew anywhere—he had failed to show up at the car so I feared he was still inside, by the rotting flower or who knows where, the grounds are so huge. The guard asked who we were with and I plaintively said "No one—just the two of us" while pointing to the bar-coded admission sticker I had carefully re-stuck to my shirt pocket. He scanned the crowd nervously to see who was watching then silently flicked me in with his thumb over his shoulder and a quick nod of the head.

People continued to pour out, which was helpful as I had no idea where the flower was and could simply walk against their flow until I found it. The gate closure now played into my hands nicely, as the line to see the actual flower was mercifully short, and once through it no one seemed interested in enforcing the "please limit your viewing to 5 minutes" sign.

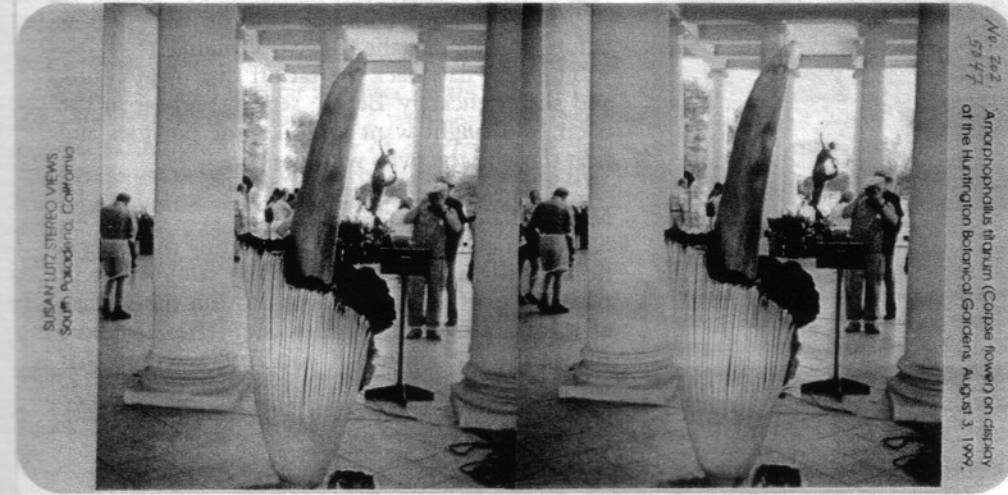
There it was, about six foot tall stem to stamen, with one gigantic and corrugated petal wrapping around it like a maroon velvety muumuu, and flies swarming it, a nice touch I had to admit. It sat, under a portico with a bronze cupid at the other end, in a relatively small pot with a hygrometer at its feet. I marveled that such a tight root ball should produce such a prodigious bloom. A roped-off viewing perimeter, at about a 12-foot radius

from the plant itself, completed the museological apparatus, apparently much to the delight of the audience, most of whom were shooting photos of each other holding their noses, and of the TV reporters allowed within the no-go radius. Japanese tourists coaxed the news guys into their pictures, next to the plants, whether for their star-value or simply for scale I couldn't be sure. In fact, thanks to the constraints of the portico and prevailing winds, only in one place could you really smell the plant's advertised scent of rotting carrion. Dead-downwind (sic) was not aligned with the optimal photo-spot angle and only one person, a 14 year-old boy with bad-luck acne, seemed to prefer the scent to the sight. I watched him for a good half hour before elbowing him aside to get a noseful, but then shortly found it genuinely nauseating. Normally I have a very good stomach for those kinds of things, but my lunchtime tortillas showed a little mold on the edge and 3 days before I got a tamale that, I found out two bites into its fuzzy center, had been left in the steamer a couple of days and a couple of nights.

After an hour or so I left the furry microphone booms and video monitors to wander among the gardens, realizing I had hardly been able to look at the thing, or, having looked at it, to register what I was seeing with any reverence whatsoever for its superlative character. I thought maybe it was a weakness on my part, not to have found a mystical moment within the fray, but rather than dwell on that possibility I chose to blame the stench and the self-consciously transgressive grin on that downwind kid. Oddly, however, nothing really smelled good anywhere else in the garden, not even by comparison. Everything else had its own stench, just a different one, all of them hot. Even my beloved cactus garden wasn't that refreshing. I began to feel poisoned, and took several

drinks of water and a long walk through the parking lot until I got lost in some non-visitor parts of the grounds. I explored there for almost an hour before finding an opportune gap in the fence to sneak out. How could I face the guards without my nephew?

—Mr. Dave Bailey



SUSAN LUTZ STEREO VIEWS
South Pasadena, California

No. 222
53 57
Americanist's titulum (Corpse flower) on display
of the Huntington Botanical Gardens, August 3, 1997.

Recipes

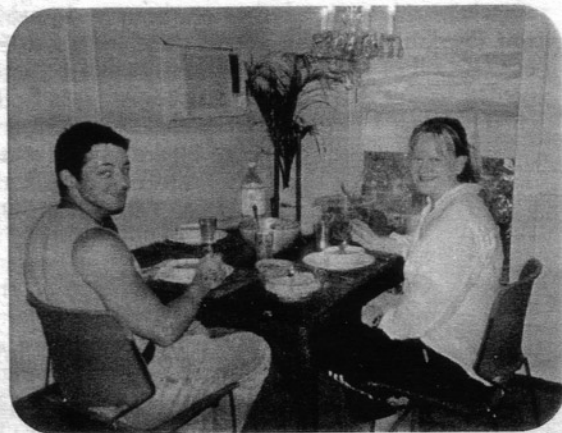
Dear *American Homebody*,
I'm enclosing the following recipe for Corn Soup as requested. Hope your readers enjoy it.

Fresh Corn Soup

1 T butter
1 T olive oil
1 1/2 c. onion
2 lbs. fresh tomatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 1/2 T tomato paste
4 c. chicken stock
1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme or 1/2 t dried thyme
1 tsp. chopped fresh dill or 1/2 t dried dill
1/4 c. packed fresh basil, chopped
2 c. fresh corn kernels
salt and pepper to taste

In a large saucepan, heat butter and olive oil, add onion and sauté until softened. Add tomatoes, tomato paste and chicken stock. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer the mixture for 30 to 40 minutes until vegetables are tender. In a blender or food processor, puree mixture in batches. Return to saucepan, add herbs and corn and cook 5 minutes longer. Add salt and white pepper to taste.

—Miss Susan Lutz



Miss Susan Lutz welcomes South Pasadena's newest resident, Mr. Eberhard Huhn, with a pot of delicious Fresh Corn Soup (see recipe above and welcome someone to your neighborhood!)

Rosh Hashanah!

However you spell it, Rosh Hashanah means New Year's Day! This year, we celebrate the beginning of the Hebrew year 5760 by eating a huge meal full of traditional foods. Forget the whole grain/ organic diet for an evening and bask in the splendor of refined white sugar, white flour, beef and tradition, tradition, tradition!



Grandma Gertrude Kasakoff's fabulous brisket, as seen in an archived publicity photograph of her 5759 Rosh Hashanah dinner. Photo by Mom.

Grama Gert's Delicious Brisket

For 6 people, Grama recommends a 5 pound brisket. You wouldn't want to short anyone on brisket, and if there are leftovers, all the better. Put the slab 'o beef, fat side up, in a baking dish, and spoon on 3/4 c. red wine, 1/4 c. water, and a package of Lipton Instant Onion Soup mix (all mixed together). Cover tightly with 2 layers of tinfoil and bake 2 1/2 to 3 hours at 350°.

When it's done cooking, cool on the counter before putting into the fridge overnight.

The next day, hack the fat off that meat chunk and slice delicately. Before serving, reheat in the oven. You might want to boil some potatoes and heat those in the oven with the beef.

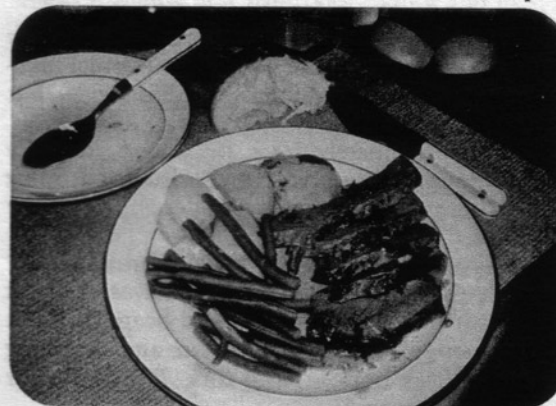
Matzoh Balls

Matzoh balls have had cooks fretting for generations. Will they turn our hard as stones or will they fall apart and mockingly float on the surface of the soup like industrial waste? The *Homebody* advice on the matter: if you find a recipe that works, stick with it. We found the following recipe in a diminutive tome entitled *A Little Jewish Cookbook*, by Barbara Bloch.

Matzoh Balls

1 T freshly choppe parsley
1/4 tsp. ground ginger (optional)
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
4 T melted schmaltz or vegetable oil
1/2 c. sparkling water
1 c. matzoh meal
4 eggs beaten

Stir parsley, ginger, salt, and pepper into schmaltz. Add eggs and sparkling water and beat to blend. Stir in matzoh meal. Refrigerate for 1 hour. Wet hands and form into walnut-sized balls. Drop into boiling soup. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 20 minutes or until balls float to top.



Pasadena Rosh Hashanah dinner featuring Grandma Gert's brisket, as cooked by Miss Stephanie Ford and sliced by Mr. Charlie White.

Dear A.H.

First of all, I would like to say that I am deeply honored to be the lucky recipient of the Frolicking Fraulein award. Secondly, I would like to share the following **Cornbread** recipe with homemakers of both genders looking to add an authentic Southern touch to their summer meals.

Preheat oven to 450. Put a well-seasoned cast-iron skillet with 4 T butter or shortening in the oven to get very hot. When the batter goes into the pan, it should sizzle wildly- this will ensure delicious crusty edges.

Meanwhile, mix together:

1 3/4 c white cornmeal (maybe this is a little hard to find, but far superior to the grainy yellow variety.)
1/4 c sugar or honey
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda 1 tsp salt

*some people might put in 1/4 c all purpose flour, but they would be called Yankee in my home town.

1 jumbo egg
2 c buttermilk

Bake 20 minutes in the aforementioned hot buttered skillet or until a knife inserted in the center comes out dry. Serve with five overcooked vegetables and you'll be whistling Dixie!

Finally, I would like to invite readers to join the PEE STORIES MAGAZINE staff for our weekly dinner every Saturday in our downtown offices. Just call me a few days in advance to make your reservations. 323.586.9457. These get-togethers are quickly becoming an institution.

Sincerely, Matthew Greene

Thanks for the cornbread recipe. We look forward to the weekly Pee Stories dinners, as well as the next issue of Pee Stories Magazine. We hear it should be out by Christmas — a wonderful gift for the holidays!

Pie Crusts

Lively conversations between Homebodies near and far have often concerned themselves with the various ingredients which are used in baking pie crusts. It's undeniable that all pie crusts are not created equal, but is it possible to say that one is better than another? A delicate mix of flakiness and flavor is necessary for any crust, but the proper way to obtain this perfection is subject to debate.

To fuel the fires of pie snobs everywhere, *American Homebody* presents three recipes, all of which have been used to some degree of success. From Uncle Gus, who has been cross-breeding apple trees for ... years in order to grow the perfect apple in his Skokie backyard, comes a recipe which relies on solid vegetable shortening. Mixing the flavor of butter with the flake-potential of Crisco, Mom's recipe has been a raging success, satisfying Chicagoland Homebodies for years. A more traditional, but definitely un-kosher variety of the old standby comes from Mr. Daniel Marlos' "grandma," who uses flavorful lard.

Mom's Pie Crust

For a one-crust pie
1 1/2 c. all purpose bleached flour
3/4 tsp salt
3 T butter
3/8 c. shortening

3 T cold water

For a two-crust pie (double the recipe)

3 c. all purpose bleached flour

1 1/2 tsp salt

6 T butter

3/4 c. shortening

5 T cold water

Combine flour and salt in mixing bowl.

With a pastry blender or 2 knives, cut in the shortening and butter until little balls about the size of peas are formed.

Sprinkle the water on, one T at a time. Mix lightly with a fork until the mixture is blended.

Gather the dough together and press firmly into a ball (or 2 balls). Put between two sheets of plastic wrap to roll into a round. Pinch broken edges together as you roll. Make sure the pastry is 1" bigger all around than an inverted pie pan to allow for the depth of the pan.

Fold the pastry in half over your rolling pin, remove the bottom plastic wrap, and transfer to the pan. Remove the top plastic. Poke holes in the bottom with a fork. Swish an egg white around to coat the pastry. Dump out the extra egg. This will help keep the bottom crust from getting soggy.

This recipe always makes more than you need so there is always enough for a thick crimped edge or decorative leaves for the top. There will still be leftover dough. Make cookies! Roll out the extra dough. Sprinkle with sugar. Bake til golden.

Uncle Gus' Pie Crust

2 2/3 cups sifted flour (Gold Medal is best)

1 tsp salt

1 cup Crisco

Up to 8 tbsps ice water

Mix the flour and salt in a bowl.

Add Crisco and cut it in.

Sprinkle ice water, a tbsp at a time, and toss with a fork until it sticks together and you can make a ball with your hands.

Roll it out of the bowl and make a little ball.

Divide in half. Pat into little pancakes.

Wrap in Saran Wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Roll out with pastry cloth and cloth covered rolling pin.

(shake out the cloths and soak in water until you can throw them in the wash)

After the pie is put together, paint the top with a mixture of 2 tbsp milk and 2 tbsp water.

Grandma's Pie Crust

(As told to AH by Mr. Daniel Marlos)

1/3 lb. Lard

2 c. flour (all-purpose)

pinch of salt

Incorporate ingredients together with a pastry "thing," or you could use two knives (Daniel illustrates slice & dice movements with his hands), but that takes forever.

Add approximately 2/3 c. ice water* gradually until dough becomes proper consistency. It must hold together. Do not overwork dough after water is added.

Chill, covered, approximately 10 minutes.

Divide dough into two unequal halves. Roll out the larger of the two on a floured board until it's large enough to fill a 9" pie plate and overhang slightly. Prick bottom with fork. Fill with your favorite fruit topping.

Roll the smaller half out and lay it over the fruit. Pinch edges together.

Stab with knife to release steam.

Bake at 375° for 67-70 minutes.

Recipe amounts subject to change depending on the barometer, altitude, temperature, and humidity. Adjust accordingly.

*ice water must be absolutely as cold as possible. Daniel suggests that crust-makers start cooling the water with ice before even measuring the lard.



A New Can!

With little fanfare, Christina pushed back her chair and announced to the assembled dinner guests that she was leaving for the bathroom. At any other party, her statement would have been barely acknowledged, but this was not just any party, and this was not just any bathroom.

Her host, Mr. Daniel Marlos, had just installed a brand spanking new bathroom facility, and he was absolutely thrilled that one of his guests would be able to christen the porcelain. Delighted, he handed Christina the long handled tailoring scissors for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

After oohing and aahing over Miss Susan Lutz's generous gift of 12 rolls of Unscented Charmin, Christina cut the yellow ribbon, opened the door and looked inside. The guests, who had left their meals to witness this historic event, were nearly



Christina was so flustered by the excitement that she promptly dropped the over-size scissors into the toilet! Needless to say, the gaiety of the occasion was not spoiled by a simple mishap like this.

After gamely retrieving the scissors from the bowl



(after all, it was a virgin potty), Christina invited Sharon Lockhart in to wash her hands for a photo-op, before kicking everyone out so that she could have quality time with the new fixtures.

American Homebody extends our most sincere and heartfelt congratulations on the new bathroom to Mr. Daniel Marlos and Señor José, who had been living with a collapsed bathroom wall for much too long.



blinded by the sight of so much clean white tile and porcelain.

Homebody of the Month

José



Visitors to the home of Mr. Daniel Marlos may have noticed a shadowy underground presence lurking below the living room. For those who have yet to be introduced, that's José, and he's our Homebody of the Month.

José spends virtually all his time at home. He claims that his favorite things do at home are relaxing and being by himself, but we've noticed that he spends a lot of time working. José's home office is in the large downstairs of the Mt. Washington gray hilltop house he shares with Mr. Marlos. The soft whirring of his industrial sewing machine

signals that José is on the job.

As a custom tailor, José's clients range from those who simply want their pants shortened to far taller orders. When a representative from *Homebody* called on him, he was producing hair accessories for dolls. The golden bows were made to match twenty fur-trimmed ice-skating outfits, which he'd made the day before. Hanging behind him were scraps of antique kimono, which he uses to make exotic purses and bags, and neckties in various stages of construction. José also produces custom wardrobe for the movie industry, and was currently working on a set of three identical bathing trunks, to be worn by a character who falls into a swimming pool.

José hails from Guerrero, Mexico and has been in Los Angeles since 1985. The farm he grew up on, which grew corn and sesame, is a far cry from the trainyards and the 5 freeway which he looks out at from his cozy studio.

Homebodies longing to check out the new upstairs can featured in this issue of *AH* should be sure to run downstairs and say hello to this month's featured Homebody, José.

Photograph by Mr. Fredrik Nilsen

Up to the Minute **HOMEBOODY NEWS...** from the editors of *American Homebody*

LEFT HOME!!!

With barely time for a goodbye, Miss Sarah Gavlak whirlwinded out of Los Angeles sometime last week. *Homebody* sources tell of an out-of-control bacchanal at her Silver Lake residence. Did *American Homebody* just misplace our invitation, or did Miss Gavlak leave some gaping holes in her guest list? We're told that Miss Gavlak is gone for good, that the broad has gone abroad. Best of wishes to the absent-minded Miss Gavlak, wherever her travels may take her.

ROBBED AT GUNPOINT IN SOMEONE ELSE'S HOME

Mr. Giovanni Jance, newly christened United States citizen, got an unorthodox welcome from two good-looking, well-dressed gunmen who tied him up with silk scarves and stole his computer. Mr. Jance, who was photographing a fancy, modernist home in Nichol's Canyon (in the swank Hollywood Hills), had opened some sliding glass doors in the dining room to avoid unsightly reflections in his photograph. While shooting the kitchen, adjacent to the dining room, a handsome Hispanic man carrying a briefcase (Hermés, no doubt), asked if he was working there. He replied that he was, assuming that this gentleman was friends of the home's owners. Mr. Jance then noticed another man's hand in the doorway, holding a gun. The man with the briefcase then pulled a handgun out and placed it forcibly against Mr. Jance's head. "At that moment, I thought I was going to die," said a still shook-up Mr. Jance, days after the incident. Heading upstairs, the criminals herded Mr. Jance and the home's owners into the bedroom, where the victims were tied with flowery silk scarves and blindfolded with towels. After then men ransacked the home, taking the homeowner's \$4000.00 cash and half an ounce of marijuana and Mr. Jance's computer, cameral equipment, wallet, and car keys, they vanished. Mr. Jance was at the residence photographing for InSite, a guidebook to rentable locations for still photography in Los Angeles. Looking to rent a crime scene, anyone?

A NEW HOME

Mr. Eberhard Huhn, who, as of late has been cavorting around the Homebody offices well into the night, has finally found a place to really call home! His South Pasadena bachelor pad comes with all the amenities- air conditioning, running water, electricity, and a fun gal who lives just a block away. Congratulations, Mr. Huhn, on finally getting a place spitting distance from the Farmer's Market, and Welcome to the Neighborhood!

HOME-TRAINING!

Ivan and Ardley, two adorable daschunds, have moved into the lovely Pasadena apartment of Mr. Charlie White and Miss Stephanie Ford. The diminutive puppies, who, even when standing, are very low to the ground, have endearing personalities and freakishly good looks. The dogs are being dutifully trained by their human companions, who keep them lovingly confined within the kitchen.

POSSIBLY HOMELESS

Mr. Daniel Marlos, who, along with the lovely teenage feline Mathilda, and our Homebody of the Month, José, have been told by their out-of-town landlady, Miss Sabina Ott, that their Mt. Washington shack is going on the market. There's no telling when or if a sale will transpire, but if there is to be one, *American Homebody* hopes that Mr. Daniel Marlos will be the buyer! The ruckus started when Miss Ott, a belle of St. Louis, heard that property values in the hilly, scrappy, and verdant neighborhood were soaring, much like the Arch, making it the opportune time to evict and sell. Miss Ott may just need a long-distance reality check. Last we heard, the place, located a few blocks from the so-called Avenue of the Assassins, was covered with graffiti and surrounded by crack houses!

DROPPED DEAD AT HOME

Philip the dog, of Altadena, was found dead of mysterious causes one sunny afternoon. No further information is available.