



WINTER 2021

Penn

journal of everyday life

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Seasonal: *Gingerbread*

Years ago I became interested in gingerbread-making. As with many things I approach, I include historical research in my creative process. Coming from a family that included Germans and

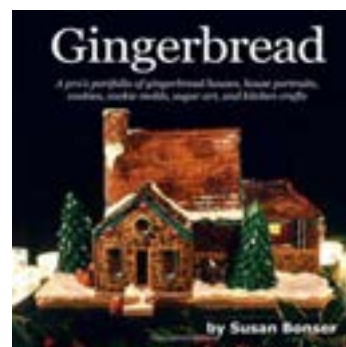
English, there was a family tradition of gingerbread. I set a challenge for myself in the 1980s to create a totally edible tabletop and cookie baskets for serving were one of my experiments. The cookie baskets on these pages were made using a mold I



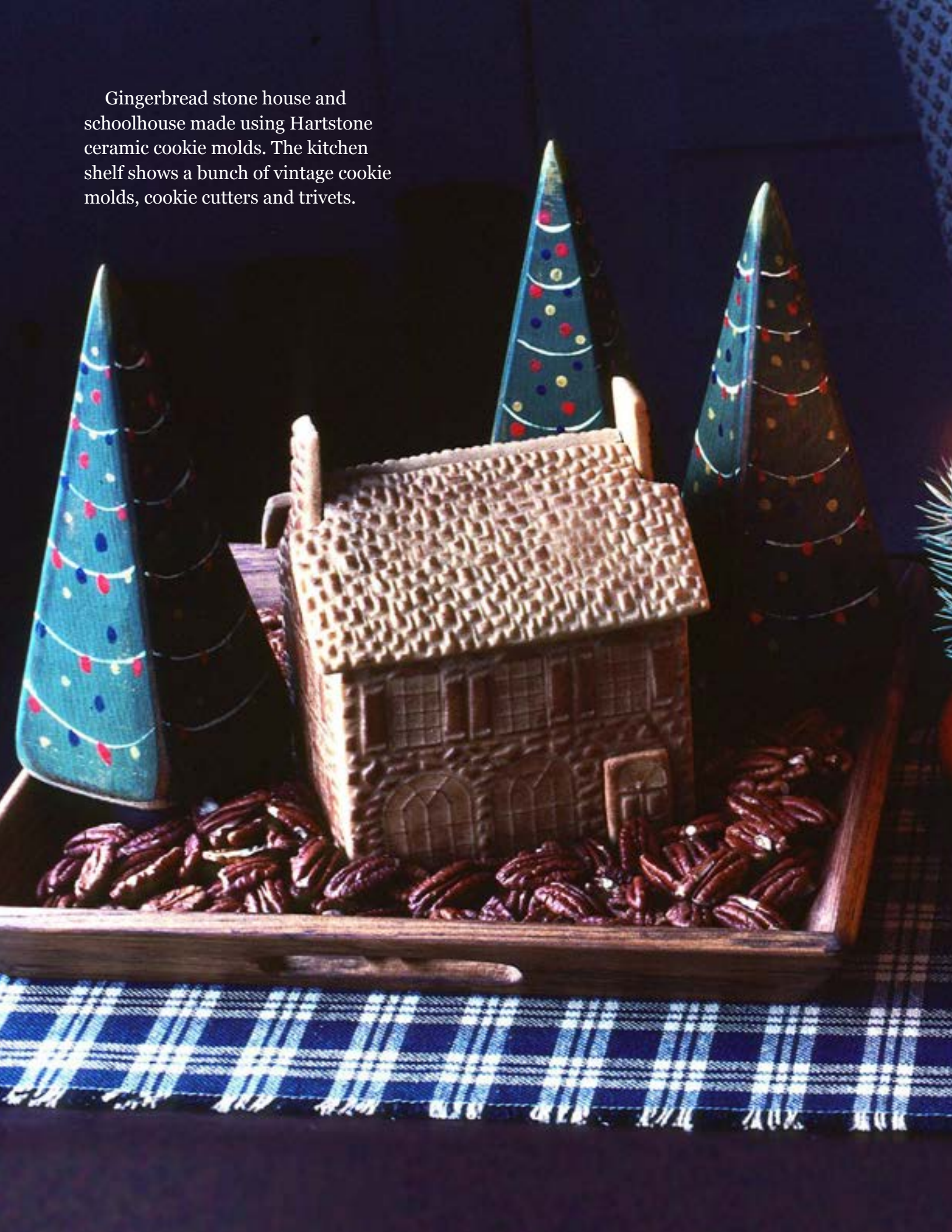
Seasonal: *Gingerbread*

had designed and licensed to Hartstone. I still love to make the baskets. They work for many holidays.

I put some of my gingerbread houses, baskets, and plates into a book a few years ago along with recipes. While any gingerbread recipe works, the recipe with the Hartstone molds originally came from CPC, manufacturers of Karo corn syrup. It makes a stiff dough that holds the imprint well.



Gingerbread stone house and schoolhouse made using Hartstone ceramic cookie molds. The kitchen shelf shows a bunch of vintage cookie molds, cookie cutters and trivets.



Seasonal: *Gingerbread*







Day Trip: *Mr. Pastie*

My first awareness of meat pies came when I saw the Broadway show, *Sweeney Todd* with Angela Lansbury many years ago. Not a desirable introduction to sitting down to a pasty, but an interesting first experience. Pasties were, on the other hand, a part of David's growing up. His mother often made pasties from scratch. The local firehouse sold pasties as a fundraiser—still do. His cousin Marsha worked for many years in the factory in Pen Argyl.

We decided one day recently, when the weather turned colder reminding us of his



Day Trip: *Mr. Pasty*

mother's pasties, to plan a visit. Pasties are often described as of Cornish origin, brought to America by the miners. Since northeast Pennsylvania was called the slate belt and the Pottsville region was known for coal mining, it made perfect sense that there was a tradition of pasty-making here. Mr. Pasties is no longer owned by the same people David remembers from his childhood, but it is in the same building. What looks like it was once a house sits across from the fire station just off the main street in Pen Argyl. They have a remarkable menu of choices for pasty fillings. You can take them frozen or order ahead for your pasties hot out of the oven. We chose hot. They came in white paper bags in a sack. A perfect lunch bucket meal.







Art: S. Arthur Shoemaker

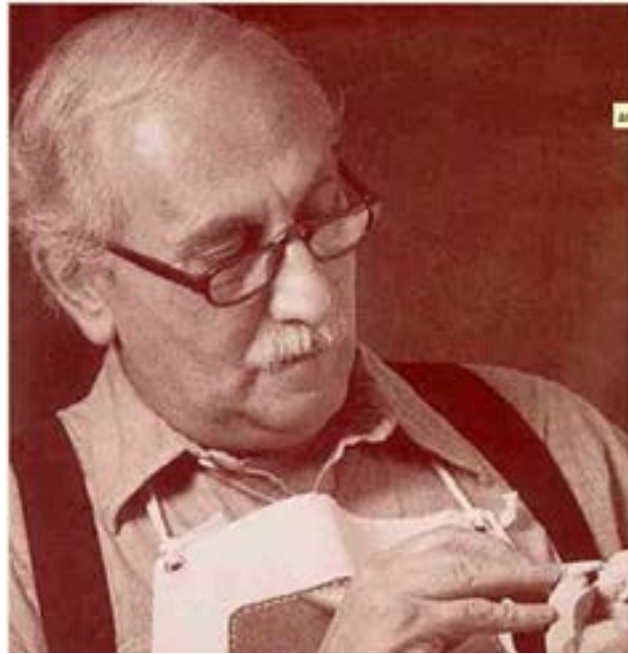


We were attracted to Arthur Shoemaker's Santas and elves and have been collecting them for several years.

One day, we would love to see the putz he carved depicting the nativity story in 12 scenes. Shoemaker carved more than 30 figures for this display at the Lancaster Moravian Church. His unique carving style is complemented by his beautiful finish combining oil stain over acrylic and an application of paste wax. At 88, Mr.

Shoemaker continues to carve while his wife, Nelda, helps with the painting.

S. Arthur Shoemaker graduated from Millersville University with a Bachelor of Science in Education then taught Industrial Arts for 32 years. While he has many skills, Shoemaker has probably become most well known for woodcarving. He is a juried member of the PA Guild of Craftsmen, awarded "Best of Show" in the annual PA Guild of Craftsmen state juried show multiple times. You can often find his pieces for sale at the Guild shop in Lancaster.



Shoemaker's list of recognition for his handwork is long, but he puts at the top that he was selected to create an ornament for the White House Blue Room Christmas tree in 1999. He was also selected for the *Early American Life* 200 Best Traditional Craftsman every year from 1994 to today. His carvings were pictured in the Christmas issue of *Early American Life* in 1994, 1995, and 1998 and 2005 and on the cover of the 2002 issue.

The quintessential teacher, Shoemaker was a featured wood carver and regular contributor to *Wood Carving Illustrated Magazine* with pictures and patterns of his work. He had several multi-page spreads of "How to Carve a Cat Bear, Owl" and others with photos and explanations. He appeared in the *Reader's Digest* video "America the Beautiful" released in 1996. According to his website, Arthur Shoemaker "has always been active in furthering the education of crafts and encouraging young people."



Harvest: *Pies from the canning cupboard*

When the fruit is available it is a rush to bake, cook and can to save it for later in the season. Canning fruit makes it really simple to make a pie later. All you have to do is assemble the crust and dump in the contents of a jar. This year we canned pie filling recipes using peaches,

blueberries, cherries. The cherries had to be pitted before canning. We did that using a pitter that works on one piece of fruit at a time. It was a little tedious but working together made the job pass quickly. We used dark, sweet cherries.

Our peaches came from Adams county. Our cherries came from Heckman's in Monroe county. This year we planted



blueberry bushes, but since there was no fruit yet we purchased 10-pound boxes that the Rotary sells as a fundraiser. The berries are consistently beautiful and raised in New Jersey. It's our practice to test out a jar and make a pie after each fruit we can. With the blueberries, we made a pie and a galette.

The galette is simple to make. There are lots of recipes for the crust on the Internet. We chose one that has a little fresh lemon zest in the crust. Rolling out a single crust on a baking sheet, we filled it with the processed fruit and then folded over the edges of the crust before baking.



Harvest: Pies from the canning cupboard

Sometimes we make our pie crust from scratch. Sometimes we use the Pillsbury ready-to-use crust. We have test a few and found the Pillsbury crust works well. The only thing to remember is that it is not a sweet crust because it is made for both sweet and savory pastry. (It's the same crust we use for chicken pot pie.) For fruit pies, we finish the crust with a brush of milk and sprinkling of sugar before putting the pie in to bake. We like to serve our pies with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

Pictured here, blueberry pie on this page and blueberry galette on the right page.





Celebration: *New Years Day*

It doesn't make the best looking food picture, but the traditional German New Year's meal of pork and sauerkraut is delicious and something we look forward to as much as the Thanksgiving turkey or the Christmas ham.

At our house, the meal consists of roasted pork, Silver Floss sauerkraut, mashed potatoes and freshly made applesauce. Sometimes the sauerkraut is heaped right on the mashed potatoes. We add a spicy horseradish mustard to the plate.





Garden: *Infused Vinegar*

After we bring the outdoor pots of herbs inside for the winter, we look for ways to use them before the indoor heating takes its toll. One of our new favorite projects is to make infused vinegars. Instead of using canning jars, we found some nice stopper bottles on Amazon.

We filled them with Dr. Bragg apple cider vinegar, distributing the mother, and then added whole garlic, rosemary branches, fresh lemon peel, and thyme.

We wash and use the whole plant rather than strip the leaves. We refrigerate the filled bottles to make the vinegars last longer. They say you can remove the herbs



Garden: *Infused Vinegar*

and replace them with fresh ones after a time to get an even stronger flavor. Once we open a bottle to use, we mix what we need for each salad. We make the proportion of olive oil to vinegar two to one. To serve two people, we use $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of oil to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vinegar. We are fortunate to be able to harvest most of our salad greens from our indoor hydroponic garden all winter long.



Garden: *Apples*



With sheet pan recipes so popular, we decided to try the Crumble Lovers' Sheet Pan Apple Crumble. Like all sheet pan recipes, it was super simple. The apples were spread on the sheet pan first, then covered with the crumble mixture of brown sugar, butter, cinnamon and rolled oats. We added walnuts to the mix. After

baking and cooling a little, we scooped the apple crumble into a bowl and smothered it in whipped cream. The recipe recommends serving it with vanilla ice cream. It's one of those recipes that makes the house smell wonderful and wintry.

Another of our favorite uses for apples in Waldorf salad. Sometimes we make it with raisins, walnuts and mayonnaise. Often we forego the mayo and serve it with just the





Left and above, making potatoes, onions and peppers was our favorite use of the potatoes and peppers we grew this year.

fruit and nuts. We love to make our own applesauce. the store it in quart jars.

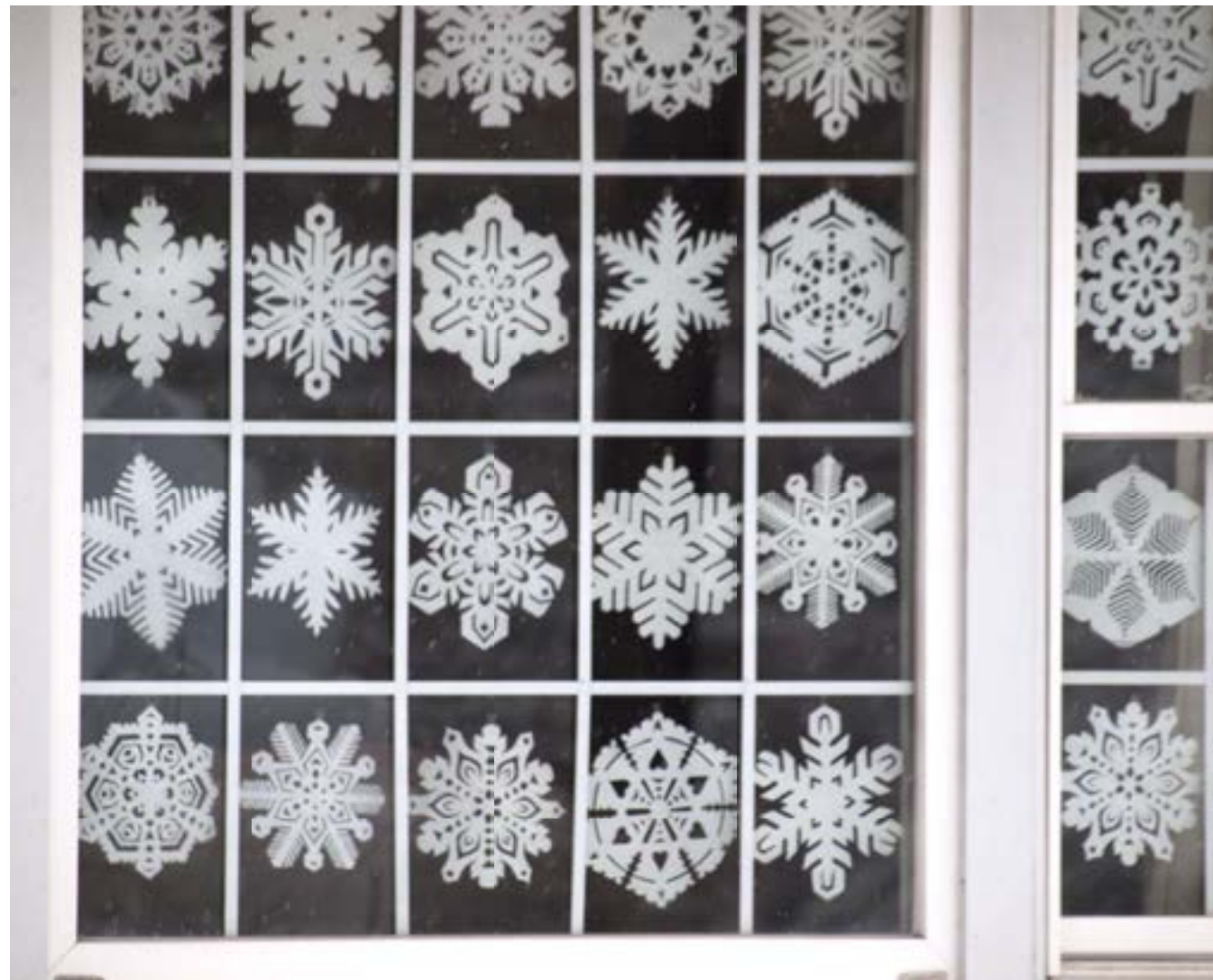
Baked apples are another way we use our apples. We have a set of vintage Hartstone apple baking dishes in which we place a cored apple. We fill the hole with butter, brown sugar, raisins and nuts. Though the recipe with the dishes doesn't recommend this, we place the apple bakers in a large Pyrex pan with a little water.





Finally, one apple recipe we make again and again each year is apple pie. We have also started making the one-crust apple galette. We get our apples locally and use whatever is being picked at the time we are ready to bake.

Crafts: *Snowflakes & Stockings*



More than 30 years ago we made paper snowflakes for decorating at Christmastime. We still have the book we used. We copied the pages so the book is still intact. Each page included a kind of Origami folding instruction and guidelines for cutting out the snowflake shape with very sharp little scissors. We tape the paper snowflakes

to the windows then carefully take them down and store them away each year. We use 8 1/2 x 11 inch white bond paper to copy the snowflake patterns. It's a good weight of paper that is pretty easy to cut when folded. To remove the fold lines, we carefully iron the paper snowflakes with a hot iron. When we store them away for the year, we make sure they are flat and in a zip storage bag to keep out humidity.







Way back in the 1950s, my mother used a popular pattern to knit Christmas stockings for our family. She knit another set for everyone when her grandson was born. This year, I decided to knit another set. It's true what they say about the Internet, you can find just about anything. I located what is probably the same 1950s knitting pattern that my mother used all

those years ago, so everyone got one this year—even the cat.

While the original stockings were knit in wool, I used acrylic yarn this time around. The only thing different is how they are blocked. While I pinned them to styrofoam to hold the shape, instead of steaming them with an iron I used a hair dryer at the hottest setting. You can see the difference between the blocked and unblocked stockings in the picture, *right*.





Local Eats: *Gettysburg Baking Company*



We were so glad to hear that the Gettysburg Baking Company was returning to Biglerville, we made a special trip to make sure we bought their goodies the first week they were open. When they moved to downtown Gettysburg into a store on the circle several years ago, it was just a little harder to patronize because of the challenge of parking and crowds. But now that they are back in the neighborhood, we are sure to see them more often.







Home Sweet Home: *PSU Ice Cream*

Searching for a great wedding anniversary present, I looked to Penn State because David had graduated from their engineering program in 1968. He returned to graduate with his masters a few years later. Penn State holds a very fond place in David's heart—as it does many Pennsylvanians. He still carries his student ID.

The decision was to order Penn State ice cream, another fond memory, from the Berkey Creamery on campus. They have a robust mail order program so it was very

easy to do. I have to say, this was the best ice cream I have ever had. We received ten half-gallons in a variety of flavors. It was difficult to choose the flavors because they have so many, but it was a fun couple of months trying them all out after they arrived. The only downside was when we went for our annual blood work. The doctor wondered why our numbers were up. When we told him the story, he looked surprised and remarked that the gift was very creative. We imagine what he really wanted to say was to not do that again.



Photos: Right, one of our half-gallons. Below, photos from the Berkey Creamery web page. Ben and Jerry often shared that they had taken the Penn State ice cream course before launching their own ice cream business. The professional development program is still available to people in the business.



Roast Beef on Weck



Recipe courtesy of Bobby Flay

Show: FoodNation with Bobby Flay Episode: Buffalo, NY



Level: Easy
Total: 15 min
Prep: 5 min
Cook: 10 min
Yield: 4 sandwiches

Ingredients:

Kummelweck Rolls:

- 2 tablespoons coarse salt
- 2 tablespoons caraway seed, whole
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/2 cup water, warmed
- 12 hard rolls or Kaiser rolls

Beef on Weck Ingredients:

- 1 cup au jus gravy, reserved from roasting the beef
- 20 ounces cooked roast beef, sliced thinly
- 3 ounces prepared horseradish

Directions:

- 1 Combine equal parts coarse salt and whole caraway seed. Store in clean jar. Heat 1 cup water to a boil. Dissolve cornstarch in 1/2 cup warm water and add to boiled water. Return to a boil and thicken until it coats a spoon. Cool and store in refrigerator.
- 2 Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
- 3 To make kummelweck rolls, take 12 rolls and place on baking sheet. Brush top of rolls with cornstarch solution and sprinkle with seed mixture. Place in oven for 4 minutes or until kummelweck dries.
- 4 For the Beef on Weck: Heat au jus in saucepan until simmering. Dip sliced roast beef in hot au jus and place on cut kummelweck roll. Top with a dollop of horseradish and dip the top of the roll in the au jus.



You know how you think about all the great stuff from your childhood? (This is not a Pennsylvania thing, because I grew up near Lake Erie in New York state.) What I remember is the very special treat of getting roast beef on kummelweck sandwiches when we went to Buffalo. Now, Buffalo is really most famous

for wings, but roast beef on kummelweck is very close behind.

We looked for a recipe and found the one above by Bobby Flay on the *Food Network* web site. It is very close to what I remember. We tried it, though we did not have caraway seeds. We used John Martin rare, thin-sliced roast beef. It was really good. A delicious blast from the past.



Best Views: *David's Ice Sculpture*



Above, David's traditional ice sculpture in the front yard. *Previous pages*, a winding snowy lane to the house.

Penn, journal of everyday life

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