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The Monahan front yard with fountain and lions owned by Jon and Peggy Monahan Photos courtesy Jenna and Kyle Jordan

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On our cover

The living room at the home of Suzanne and Paul Loechl in Champaign. Over the sofa is "Seaside," an oil on panel by Suzanne.

Photo by Robin Scholz.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Spring is in the air



Carolyn Maille-Petersen
At Home in Central
Illinois editor

As I write, the temperatures in central Illinois are on a rollercoaster ride, and it's giving me whiplash!

Be that as it may, we know that this typically wacky late-winter weather will eventually give way to longer days and higher temperatures, and then we can get outside and try out these nifty, new-to-me grow bags that Champaign County Master Gardener Karen Pollard writes about in this issue. Get ready to grow so many zucchinis that you'll be leaving them on your neighbors' doorsteps in the dark of the night.

Until then, while away those chilly weekend evenings with one of the tasty cocktails dreamed up by Lucy Moynihan, or warm your belly with the stroganoff recipe from Chef Ryan Rogiers of Homegrown, the new farm-to-table restaurant in Urbana. Try making it yourself, or better yet, head over to the restaurant and let him and his staff do all the work.

Of course, no issue would be complete without peeking inside our neighbors' homes to see how they've made the spaces their own.

Whatever your interest, I hope you learn something new.

And if you have suggestions of homes, gardens, barns, foods or drinks we should consider featuring, please let us know. We'd love to hear from you! Email your suggestions to camaillepetersen@gmail.com.

Cheers!

-Carolyn

Back at the RANCH

Light strings decorate a rusty rail used for moving manure out of the barn.

Story **Kevin Barlow**

Photos **Robin Scholz**

URBANA – Becky Prather is a retired educator but she never stops learning about history.

She and her husband, Jim, a retired Urbana road commissioner and full-time corn and soybean farmer, love to travel. As Jim drives, Becky will often open up one of the

diaries from Jim's grandparents for a look into the past.

"Jim knows a lot of the history from growing up with it, but it's fun for me because I love the personal details in the journals," she said. "They will mention things that happened in history such as Amelia Earhart going missing or their feelings as the war started."

What intrigues the Prathers the most are the stories about the family's history of



Above: **Items waiting for an upcoming sale.**

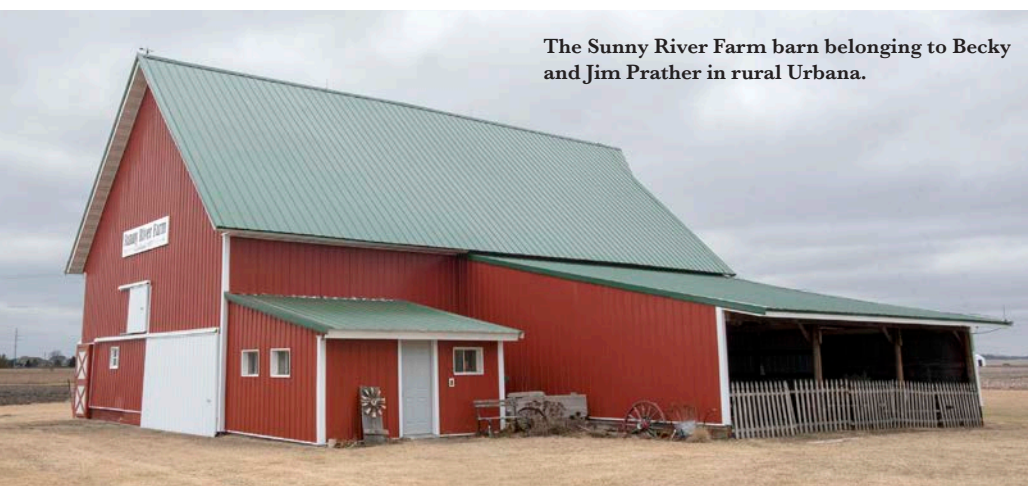
their farm, Sunny River Farm, which was established in 1871 at 3604 E. Windsor Road in Urbana.

"It has always belonged to my husband's side of the family," she said.

According to the Prathers, Jim's great-grandparents, Louis and Lulu (Werts) Prather, secured the land and named it Sunny River Farm, registering it with the Prairie Farmer Directory.

"We have no idea where the name came from since there is no river on the property," Becky said. "There is a creek behind the barn, but it's not a river by any

The Sunny River Farm barn belonging to Becky and Jim Prather in rural Urbana.





Right: **Becky Prather** with a milking stanchion.



Below: **The main room is filled with finds.**

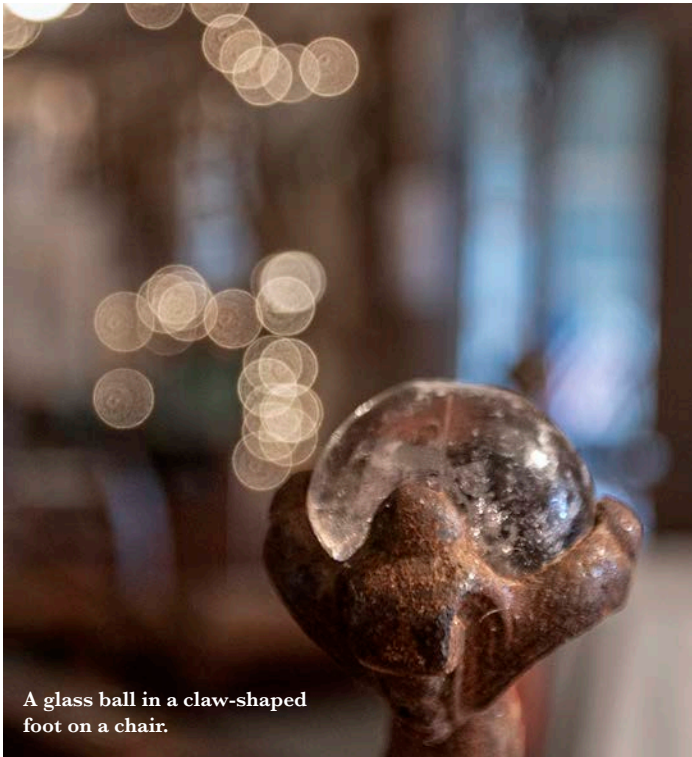


means. But, we love it here. It has the roots that make this area great and it has such a history."

Part of the history even includes being the site of Jim and Becky's wedding.

"There have been a lot of times where people will just stop and want their picture taken by the barn," she said. "People have taken graduation pictures out here. A sorority came once to have pictures taken."

It offers scenic views, and the Prathers understand it takes more than just one family to make it a special place.



A glass ball in a claw-shaped foot on a chair.

"There are a lot of family and friends around here with a connection to this place," she added. "Every once in a while, someone will be here and will talk about their experiences or how their relatives talked about it. They share memories of Jim's parents or grandparents. Those stories are always special."

On the property sits a barn that has been in existence since at least 1917. When first built, it housed several different animals such as horses, dairy cattle, pigs and sheep. Over the years, it became a dairy farm. Jim's grandparents, Dewey and Doris Prather, chose to get out of the dairy business and concentrate on corn and soybeans.

The barn stood for 100 years as wood, but then it was re-sided with metal.

"It belonged to my grandparents and, when they passed it went to the family, and as a family, with the help of my cousins, we decided to put the metal siding on it to make it last," Jim said. "That was a way to honor the past, to ensure that it would remain."

After the metal roof was installed, a huge hail storm hit. The roof had to be replaced, but the Prathers hope it will last another

100 years.

Inside the barn, Becky hung some burlap and little white lights to add to the ambiance of the sales, but you can still see some milking stalls and the milkhouse.

But it now serves a different purpose. Besides storage, the barn is used for semi-annual barn sales.

"Jim and I realized that we had quite a few antique pieces that wouldn't fit in one house and so we decided to have a barn sale and see how it would go," Becky said.



Above: Accumulated things at a barn.

That was in October of 2017.

"The first one went so well that we thought we would try it again the next spring and it's been growing ever since," she added. "No two sales are ever the same since we are always finding new treasures. It's a fun way for me to be creative."

Sure, the sales usually result in a small profit. But it's more than that, she says.

"One of the best and most rewarding parts of the sales have been the friendships we have formed. It's almost like a reunion and people really look forward to it."

Developing new friendships is also part of the charm. So is hunting for new items.

"Jim and I like to just get in the truck and travel the small towns and back roads and that's where we find most of our unique



Lights reflect in an old mirror at a barn

items," she said. "I've gotten to know our clientele so I know what kinds of items they like. Some people even ask us to be on the lookout for special things for them." Last summer, the couple traveled to the East Coast.

"We went to Maine and found so many unique items that we could never find around here," she said. "We travel to Michigan several times a year to visit friends and find great items there as well. Our main goal is to find treasures reasonably priced so we can pass it on to our friends. We try to stay away from antique stores, but we love to find the little shops in small towns."

While visiting Michigan, they stumbled upon a moving sale.

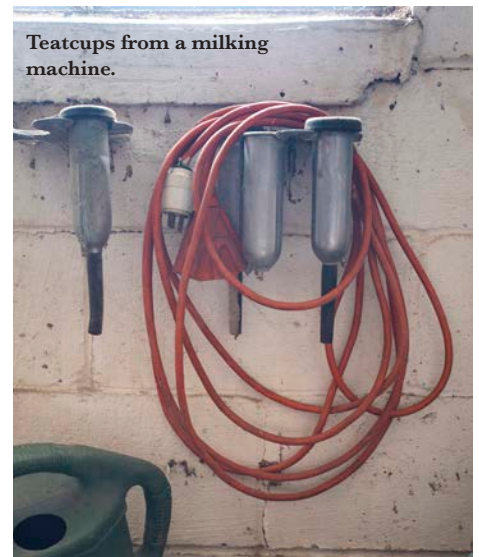
Top Left: Becky holds up a cover to reveal breeding records still hanging on the wall.

Top Middle: An advertising calendar from 1963 still hangs on the wall.

"We got some absolutely beautiful things at great prices," she said. "We have no plan. We see little places alongside the road such as a moving sale and we stop. The treasures we found there were unbelievable."

The spring sale is scheduled to start June 4 and Becky is already preparing for it.

"I start early in preparing for them because I want to make sure it looks good and that it is interesting to those who come," she said.



Teatcups from a milking machine.



Above: An old stove used for heating.

Left: Becky and Jim Prather outside their barn in rural Urbana.



Windows of opportunity

They're big. They're beautiful. And they fill the Loechls' Clark Park home with light.



Above: An oil on panel by Suzanne over the fireplace at the home of Suzanne and Paul Loechl in Champaign.



Right: A yoga room in what was originally attic space.



Everywhere you go in Suzanne and Paul Loechl's home, big, beautiful windows abound, filling every nook and cranny with light.

That is what attracted the Champaign couple to their Clark Park home when they bought it nine years ago.

"We came in March ... and the sunshine was just so gorgeous," says Suzanne. "There's not one part of the house that doesn't get sun."

Suzanne, a successful local artist and retired landscape architect, fell in love with the sunlight-saturated home immediately. Paul, on the other hand, needed to be persuaded.

The kitchen was small and closed off from the front of the house, there was a sunken area with a table and benches behind the kitchen that wasn't practical, and the bathrooms were dated, among other things.

Although he admits to being something of a do-it-yourself kind of guy, even he didn't want to take on an older home.

"I said to her, 'Don't buy a fixer-upper. I'm tired of fixing up houses,'" he says with a grin.

But in the end, the price was right, the lighting was fantastic and it got them



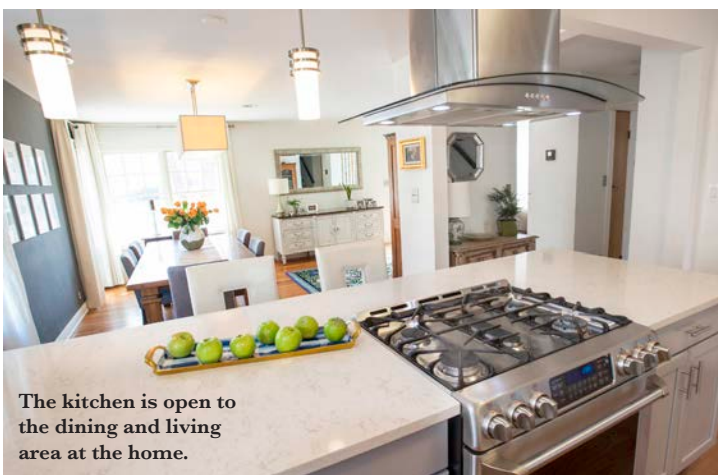
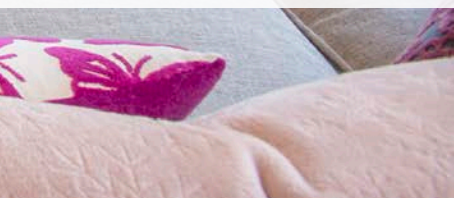
A mixed media piece by Janet Bloch hangs over a bench in the main room.

back to the Clark Park neighborhood they love so much.

The home, a modified Cape Cod built in the wake of World War II, had a lot more space than is typical of the style, thanks to a vertical addition. "There was an architect in the '80s who transformed the house by building up and back," says Paul, also a retired landscape architect. And what a difference it made. The home went from one-and-a-half stories to two-and-a-half stories, not including the basement, with four bedrooms on the second floor and a loft area that is used as a meditation/yoga space.

"I think we knew what we wanted to do throughout the house," says Suzanne, "but we had to pace

Story **Carolyn Maille-Petersen**
Photos **Robin Scholz**



The kitchen is open to the dining and living area at the home.



Paul Loechl tries to get the family dog Izzy to see herself in the mirror.



Above: The dining room at the home of Suzanne and Paul Loechl in Champaign.

ourselves because of money. We couldn't do it all at once. It wasn't like HGTV," she says with a laugh. "It was a gradual thing."

They contracted out most of the work, refinishing the wood floors, painting the walls and adding a powder room on the main floor.

Probably the biggest undertaking, though, was the kitchen, which they tackled immediately. The original kitchen was small, U-shaped and closed off from the living and dining room at the front of the house. Renovating it involved ripping out a wall

and all the cabinetry, filling in the sunken area behind the kitchen and matching the wood flooring with the rest of the house. Paul drew up the kitchen plans, including the electrical work. Together they decided on the layout, picked out new cabinets and countertops and made it into an inviting open-concept space that allows them to work in the

kitchen while still interacting with friends and family in the dining room.

"In the end, we did the whole first floor," says Paul. They also renovated all three bathrooms, built decks out front and back, and added a fireplace and built-ins in the family room. "It's more than I really wanted to do," says Paul, "but ... we got the house we wanted."

One thing that never changed, though, were the windows. Other than replacing them with newer, more energy-efficient versions, they



One of the upstairs bedrooms.

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Above: 'My Three Food Groups,' an oil on canvas by Robin Riggs, hangs in the kitchen and a lake vacation find hangs on the blue door in the back hallway.

remained the same, welcoming in the sun that drew Suzanne to their lovely home in the first place.

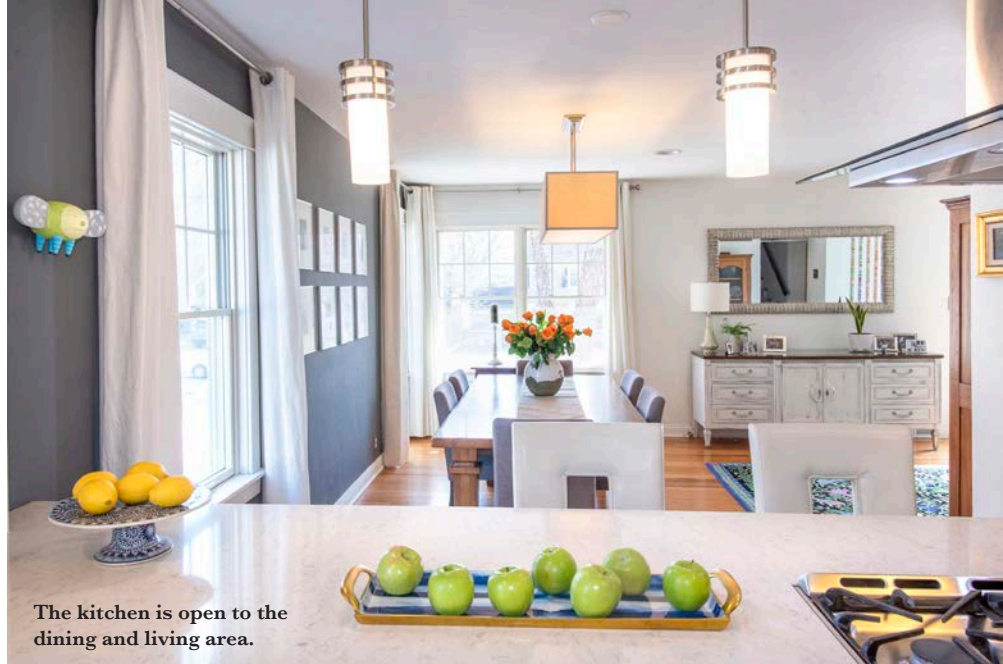
The home now exudes the same friendly, relaxed vibe as its owners. Suzanne and Paul's home is decorated with comfortable, no-fuss furniture that they have collected over the years. Her philosophy: "If you love something and you put it in the room, somehow it's going to go with the other things you love."

Suzanne calls her style "modern English" because she likes more modern furniture, but also patterns, flowers and birds. "I love a lot of neutrals with pops of color. That's how my paintings are too."

However, despite being an artist in her own right, you won't see many of Suzanne's works in their home; to see them, you'll need to

visit Texture Home. Instead, their home is a de facto art gallery of beloved pieces created by family and friends. There are muted watercolor landscapes painted by her mother, affectionately referred to as Bubby, in the living room and the guest room. The dining room is home to a bank of framed family photographs taken by Paul. Next to the kitchen, a "junk food pyramid" painted in oil on an oversized canvas bursts with color and humor. The piece was painted by Robin Riggs, a dear friend who died of cancer in 2014. Walk around the corner to the living room and you'll find a mixed media piece by Janet Bloch. The piece, a collection of two-inch wooden discs decorated with brightly colored paint, glitter and

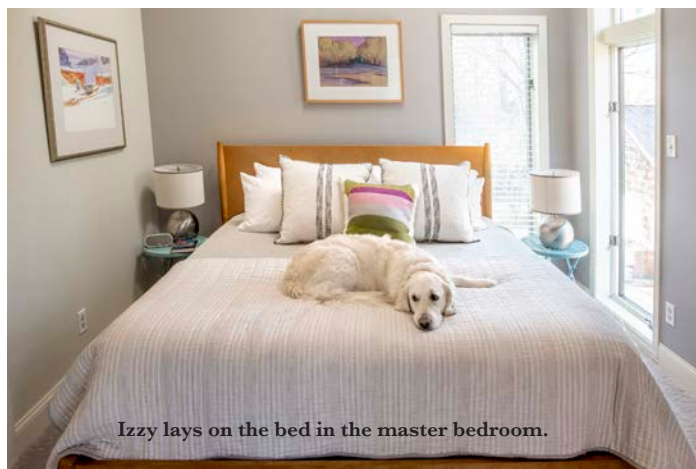
Right: Suzanne Loechl and her husband Paul Loechl and their dog at their home.



The kitchen is open to the dining and living area.

random objects and mounted on six vintage yardsticks, hangs vertically on the wall and is the first thing you see when you walk in the front door. Also in the living room is one of Suzanne's more personal works – a vivid blue and yellow oil painting of a stylized beach with their young son standing in the foreground. Even more artwork hangs elsewhere in the house, providing those pops of color Suzanne likes so much.

If a home reflects its owners, then this house is a mirror of the Loechls. From the art on their walls to the open, airy spaces, it exudes charm, warmth and light. It makes you want to sink into one of their comfy chairs and sip a cup of tea. And if you ever meet them, they'll undoubtedly invite you in to do just that. 🍵



Izzy lays on the bed in the master bedroom.



CORONA

COVID-19

Cocktails

Story **Carolyn Maille-Petersen**

Photos **Provided**

It all started with a Facebook post.

Lucy Moynihan, a librarian and amateur philatelist, and her wife, Chris D'Arpa, a professor, have always enjoyed a good cocktail. Pre-pandemic, they had visited several artisanal cocktail bars in different cities and it inspired them to start making their own at home.

They checked out estate sales around town and found pretty, inexpensive glasses, created a small, unassuming home bar and got started.

Then the pandemic hit and they were stuck at home.

All. The. Time.

They were making cocktails and hors d'oeuvres to accompany their game nights and evenings spent sorting through Lucy's exotic stamp collection, and began to share their creations online. "I just started posting to Facebook and people enjoyed it," says Lucy. "Naming them was part of the fun." It struck a chord with friends.

Now that Lucy is back to working in person, her co-workers want to know what she's concocting, so she's continued posting photos of their libations. And now, she's going to share some of her own personal creations with us.

When making cocktails, it's all about what's already on hand, says Lucy. Whatever is available

Below: **Lucy Moynihan and Chris D'Arpa.**



is fair game: slices of fruit or vegetables, olives – especially anchovy-stuffed olives – and of course, a parasol. “You can’t ever forget the parasol,” jokes Lucy. She also doesn’t use a recipe when making drinks, but she does have some guidelines for those of us who need some guidance.

“Ingredients are key,” says Lucy. “Their taste and characteristics determine the final composition of the drink. We generally start with two ounces of ice cold gin, bourbon or tequila; sometimes vodka. Never more than a few dashes of bitters. Usually just a suggestion of vermouth for martinis. Fresh juice is by the tablespoon and to taste. Garnishes complement the liquid ingredients.

The three cocktails here are all stirred; not shaken! And of course, don’t forget the umbrella!

Checks and Balances:

gin, vermouth, orange bitters, orange slice for garnish

Homesick:

tequila, pickled sour cherry, fresh lime juice, fresh orange juice, mint for garnish

Martini, the @prairiephilatelist’s drink of choice:

Hendrick’s gin martini with Castelvetro olives hand-stuffed with anchovy 🍷



Vegetable Garden with Grow



By **Karen Pollard,**
Champaign County Master Gardener

Growing vegetables can be a fun and rewarding hobby, but sometimes people don't have the space for a garden. As long as you have a small space that gets a lot of summer sun, you should have room for a garden of grow bags. Grow bags cost as little as a few dollars each. They come in sizes holding three gallons of soil and beyond. Just about any vegetable can be grown in a bag.

Grow bags come in fabric and plastic. Last year I successfully grew peppers, potatoes, tomatillos, tomatoes and zucchini in five-gallon plastic grow bags. The bags are a very durable black plastic that will last several years. The opening at the top is 8x9 inches and they are 16 inches deep. Next time I purchase grow bags they will be fabric for the aesthetic factor,

and I will bump the size up to seven gallons. For potatoes I would probably use at minimum a 10-gallon bag to increase yield.

When selecting grow bags, consider whether you will need to move them. If so, look for some with sturdy handles. Fabric bags come in lots of colors, but darker colors may look better longer.

ning row Bags



that have “bush”, “dwarf” or “patio” in the name. When growing tomatoes, avoid the biggest beefsteak tomatoes unless using at least a 10-gallon bag.

You can either purchase a potting mix or make your own. The Urbana Landscape Recycling Center (LRC) sells screened garden compost by the bucket. For \$6.50 you can load up seven five-gallon containers. The compost can be mixed with a store-bought potting mix for a lighter soil mix. Because vegetables in pots only have the soil they are growing in to pull nutrients from, your plants will benefit from being fertilized every couple weeks. If organic produce is important to you, purchase a liquid fish emulsion and use as directed.

The only downside to a grow bag garden is they require regular, possibly daily watering. Adding a layer of mulch can help retain moisture. It's so worth the effort to have delicious homegrown produce. 🌱

people think they don't
s at least six hours of
gs can be purchased for
of soil up to 20 gallons and

and protect plant roots better by keeping the sun from infiltrating the bag. Bags take very little storage room if they are emptied and folded up at the end of the season.

Depending on the type of vegetable, you may need to stake the plants. If you want plants that will not take over your space, look for varieties





Ask the expert

Karen Devine, owner of Devine Designs and a member of Central Illinois Business magazine's Class of 2011 Forty Under 40, answers reader questions each issue. Submit them at karendevine@yahoo.com.

Q: I am trying to follow the 'don't plant annuals until after Mother's Day' rule but I am so anxious for summer! How can I bring the outdoors in NOW?

A: When I think of spring, I think of regrowth, renewal, warmer days, sunshine, buds on the trees and FLOWERS.

If you're anything like me, you want to bring spring inside to enjoy! A great way to do that is to purchase fresh-cut flowers from your local grocery store or florist or just pick them from your newly blooming yard.

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But how do you put together an arrangement? Well, with the following steps you can come up with an arrangement that will delight the senses and lift your mood.

1. Pick flowers and foliage with multiple textures. You can choose a monochromatic arrangement or one with complementary colors. You may want to consider the colors in your home and pull together similar colored flowers and foliage for your arrangement. This time of year, some focal point flowers you might find are tulips, hyacinth and daffodils from your garden. You may also find roses, hydrangeas and a multitude of other flowers at the store.

2. Find a vessel for your arrangement. It does not have to be a glass vase. It could be a ceramic container, a pitcher, or you can even use a wicker basket. If the container is too large for the flowers or is porous, you can always add a plastic or glass container inside to hold the water and the foliage. You can also crisscross tape on the top of the container to hold your flowers, foliage and the internal container in place. It is key here to make sure your vessel is thoroughly cleaned with soap and water. This will avoid any bacteria that could affect the length of time that your arrangement will be fresh. Then, add fresh water and floral arrangement plant food. If you don't have any ready-made plant food available, you can make your own with the following recipe:

1 quart water + 2 tablespoons
lemon juice + 1 tablespoon
sugar + 1/2 teaspoon bleach.

3. Cut all the flowers and foliage to a length that will fit the vessel you chose. When cutting the flowers, do so at an angle. Remove any leaves or damaged petals from the flowers and foliage. Also, make sure to remove any foliage that would be below the waterline. Then immediately place the flowers and filler in water. This does not have to be in the final arrangement vessel.

4. Place larger greenery in the container you have chosen for the arrangement as a base. This foliage could be fern, hosta leaves, hydrangea leaves or other large sturdy greenery. Try to disperse the greenery in a triangular manner.

5. Place your focal point flowers. The focal point



flowers typically are the largest in the arrangement. Group them together as you would see them in nature. Typically, grouping in odd numbers is best.

6. Add smaller flowers and fillers to round out the arrangement. Again, do not place them all in one area. Try to spread them out but grouping like flowers together.

7. Add more delicate fillers such as ivy, dusty miller, or even baby's breath. This is also a great time to add some blooming stems such as cherry, crab apple or dogwood which may be in your backyard.

At this point you should have a wonderful arrangement that will perk up your day and remind you of the summer to come! 🌸



ROADS TO GLORY Second in a series of famous routes in area towns. Where should we travel next?
Email N-G Vice President/News Jim Rossow at jrossow@news-gazette.com.

You can learn a lot on University Ave.



Story **Carolyn Maille-Petersen**
Photos **Jenna and Kyle Jordan**

University Avenue, the grand dame of Champaign streets, is chockablock with beautiful old homes.

Each is distinctive in its own right, including one particular brick beauty designed by local architect George Ramey in 1903 for wealthy grain dealer Clarence T. Walton and his wife, Olive. Now owned by Jon and Peggy Monahan, it has curb appeal to spare with its classic French formal garden style front yard, complete with a working fountain and matching concrete lions guarding the front entrance.

The home is a modified foursquare according to Peggy, owner of Grand House, LLC, Interior Solutions, which was popular back in the early 1900s due to its symmetrical design and affordable price. "It was the first concept of a track home," she says. People could buy the floor plans from companies like Sears, Roebuck and Co. and have the blueprints and pre-cut materials sent to them. "They were very economical to build," she says, "but then people pumped them up if they could afford to." It seems pretty clear that the Waltons did "pump up" their home, upgrading to a brick exterior and an Italian Ludowici clay tile roof (they are still in business today), among other amenities, as well as adding a porte cochere on the east end and a detached coach house in the backyard.

Foursquare homes are aptly named in that they have four rooms per floor. However, depending on the home, the sizes of the rooms aren't always equal. In the Monahan home, the living and dining rooms take up more than half the space



at the front of the house, with a much smaller library, breakfast nook and kitchen across the back. Upstairs, the bedrooms are all fairly similar in size, with their son's and daughter's bedrooms across one side of the home and the master bedroom, pass-through dressing area and closet on the other side. The southwest corner of the second floor is a home office. Originally, this space was a sleeping porch, also a typical foursquare feature.

There are two bathrooms on the second floor – a tiny three-quarter en-suite bathroom in their daughter's room and a full bathroom in the hallway. Based on the original blueprints, it would appear that the en-suite bathroom was created years later by taking some space from the original hallway bathroom, says Peggy.

The third floor would have been the maids' quarters back when it was





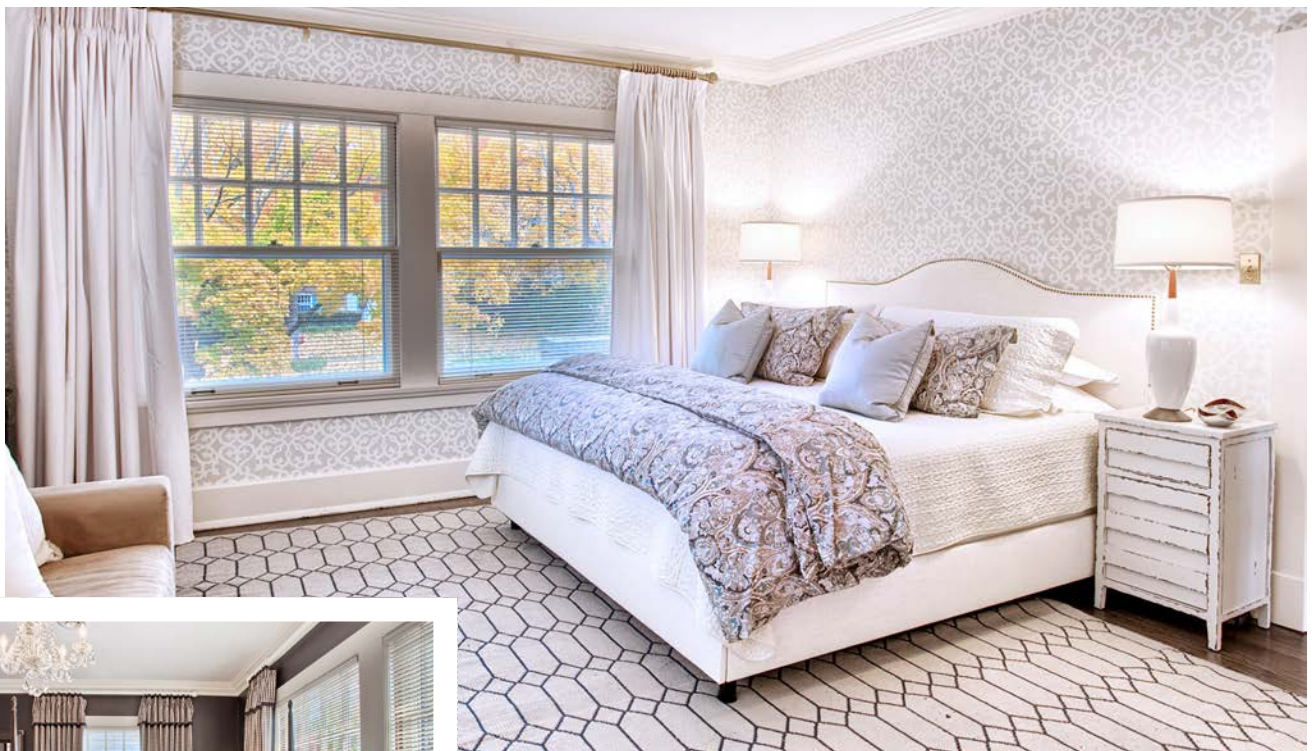
renovation. The previous owner put a lot of work into it as well, having all the original windows “dipped” to strip off all the old layers of paint without damaging the woodwork, and then repainted and reinstalled. She also had the kitchen and butler’s pantry cabinetry stripped and repainted and new granite countertops installed. Most of the renovations undertaken by the Monahans have been ongoing maintenance and cosmetic – from tuckpointing to painting to installing crown molding where there was none. They did finish a portion of the basement for use as a family room, taking care to stay indicative of the time period with the addition of beadboard and old-fashioned Edison-style light fixtures. A previous owner added a narrow powder room in a former closet on the main floor.

built, and includes a bedroom, a full bathroom with a clawfoot tub, sloped ceilings and dormer windows. It is rarely used now, according to Peggy, except by the occasional guest. There is a secondary, back staircase that is connected to the third floor and winds all the way down to the

basement, with doors tucked away on each floor that the hired help would have used to come and go inconspicuously.

Since moving into the home in 2013, the Monahans have done what Peggy describes as “three waves” of

Preserving the original features of the home was important to Peggy. She kept the ornate crystal chandeliers that were originally in the living and dining room but



moved them upstairs into the kids' bedrooms. In their place she installed reproduction Italian light fixtures to match the historical aesthetic of the home. "I like to keep things consistent," she says, so the new light fixtures in the living and dining room are similar in style. She also replaced the quirky original wall sconces on either side of the fireplace with new ones that matched the chandelier. Those quirky sconces – shaped like an upturned hand holding a frosted glass globe – were reinstalled elsewhere: one over the sink in the powder room and the other in the pantry.

As for color, she is a big fan of white; there are four shades of white paint and tonal damask wallpaper throughout much of the house, with a few notable exceptions. "The library was already paneled and pickled a sage green, and I just went with it," she remarks. The dining room also had dark

wood paneling and trim, which she counterbalanced with light-colored wallpaper and furnishings. Her son wanted his room painted black, so she obliged him as well. She kept the black from weighing down the room by painting the trim white and dressing the bed in white linens. She loves a good pattern too, and you'll find it particularly in the wallpaper throughout her home, from the blue and gold contemporary paisley in the dining room and the black and white damask in the main floor powder room to the splashy oversized orange floral print in their daughter's room.

"I love the juxtaposition of the age of the house plus the more current decor," she says. This extends to her furniture as well. Not one to replace furniture with every new trend, Peggy and Jon have moved most of their furniture with them everywhere they have lived. She describes her furniture style as "fresh and timeless" with a nod to her Southern

roots and aesthetic.

Thanks to Peggy's deft touch, their home is elegant and inviting. And thanks to the care and concern taken by the Monahans and previous owners, it should last for another century or more, captivating all who pass by or are welcomed into this graceful abode. 🐾





A beach-themed cabinet in a bedroom

Deco

with vintage antique items

Everything old is new again in Paula Hays' home.

Walk into her buttery yellow and white ranch in southwest Champaign, and you'll find a cornucopia of vintage items scattered throughout.

Though her home is only about 30 years old, it hasn't stopped her from mixing it up with a blend of old and new to give it the cozy cottage look she loves.

"I have a lot of antique decor pieces, but my furnishings are modern ... so that's how I think they blend together," she says. "I couldn't have colonial primitive style (furniture) in my house, but I can



Antiques on the front porch

Decorating the and ns

Story **Carolyn Maille-Petersen**
Photos **Robin Scholz**

take the furniture and antiques and make it cozy.”

Paula, whose business, Spring Chicken Vintage, has booths inside antique malls in Savoy and Mansfield, caught the antiques bug years ago when she was living in Bloomington-Normal. She discovered the Third Sunday



Paula Hays with her sideboard at her home in Champaign.

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Above: A door hanging over the sofa in the living room.

Left: A dry sink in the entry

Market, a seasonal sale that features hundreds of dealers from across the country selling vintage, antique and collectible items. And though her taste has changed over time, her love for vintage and antique goods has not.

She has learned a lot about shopping for these items by watching The Antique Nomad on YouTube and joining Facebook and discussion groups. She refined her decorating style by following lifestyle blogger and author Liz Marie Galvan, who wrote *Cozy White Cottage*, one of Paula's favorite books.

Some of the best places to search for goods, she says, are at estate sales, flea markets, thrift stores and garage sales. But this can be intimidating for someone who is new to it.

Paula's advice: "If it's what you want to make a statement in your house, then it's worth it."

If you're not sure if the





Above: **Antique Corbels.**

Right: **A framed quote
on a old wood door**



asking price is reasonable, she suggests checking on eBay to find similar items. It's not always about whether something is valuable, though.

"Some of my favorite things aren't valuable, but I enjoy them," she says.

For Paula, the statement piece in her home is the "chippy-looking" blue-green buffet in her dining room.

It came from a brownstone in Chicago and now has



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Above: An antique rocker at Paula Hays' home in Champaign.

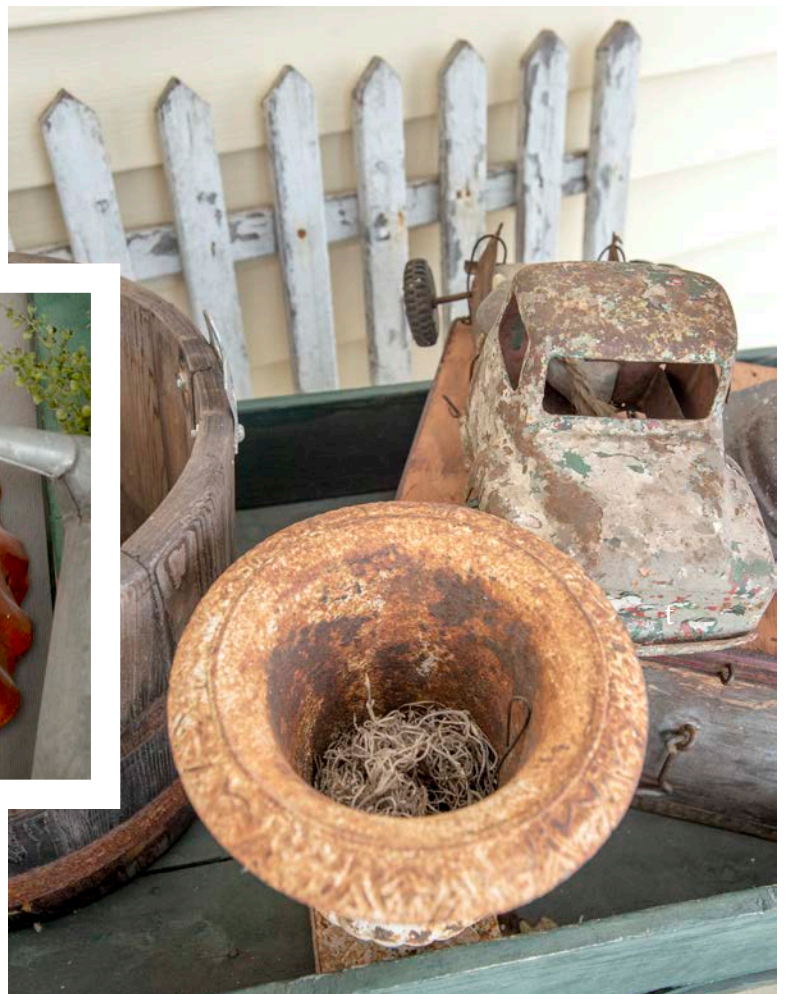


a second life as a place to store dishes and linens, and as a showcase for some of her favorite items, including a decorative brass vase that belonged to her grandmother, a small ceramic pitcher with a brightly painted vegetable motif that belonged to her

Below: The Pepsi-Cola top sign.



Left: Antiques on the front porch.





Above: **White Hobnail** on a shelf.

husband's grandma, and a collection of old glass bottles that bear the Hays name.

While many of the antique items in her home come and go as she tires of them and puts them up for sale in her booths, the buffet has stayed. Likewise, the embellished dark blue antique screen door that hangs sideways above her sofa in the family room is also a keeper. That screen was a particularly serendipitous find, says Paula, because it solved a problem she had long struggled with when trying to figure out how to decorate around the thermostat that sits squarely in the middle of the wall. The screen wraps around the thermostat, camouflaging it, while also providing a frame for a large leafy green wreath.

One of the great features about her modern home are the



A book on the coffee table

partition walls that divide her living room from the family room and kitchen. Those walls with their wide flat spaces on top have proven to be a great place for displaying her finds. They are artfully layered with everything from battered wooden storage boxes and corbels to antique baskets and a larger-than-life Pepsi-Cola bottle cap that her mom, a former real estate agent, was given by a client.



Seltzer bottles

She gives her mom credit for her decorating acumen. "We always had a well-decorated house growing up, no matter our income level. She isn't into antiques as much as I am, but my love for decorating definitely came from her." Even now, Paula's mom accompanies her on her treasure hunts, offering advice and encouragement.

Blending old and new definitely takes talent, as does creating a space that invites people in and makes them feel welcome. Paula's home checks all the boxes. "With a modern house structure, I will never have the full charm of an older home," she says, "but by using vintage decor, I can add some coziness and warmth." 🌸

Homegrown

Comfort Food with a Twist



Story and Photos **Carolyn Maille-Petersen**

Looking for something familiar to feed your soul and your belly during the highs and lows of living through these “unprecedented times?”

High-tail it to Homegrown, the new farm-to-table restaurant at Atkins Golf Club at the University of Illinois. The eatery is the second local venture for Ryan and Abbie Rogiers. The Rogiers also own The Wheelhouse restaurant in St. Joseph, because apparently operating one restaurant during a pandemic isn’t enough of a challenge.

Homegrown opened in February and has been welcoming guests with what Ryan calls “comfort food with my little twist.”

Ryan and Abbie hail from St. Joseph, but after graduating from culinary school in San Francisco in 2001, Ryan never expected to be back. He was busy gaining experience at restaurants around the country, including Michelin three-starred restaurant Alinea in

Chicago. Then he met Abbie, moved home and opened The Wheelhouse in 2017 at the urging of his wife.

A second restaurant wasn’t on his radar until Illinois athletic director Josh Whitman came to eat at The Wheelhouse and broached the idea of opening a similar concept at the UI’s golf course in Urbana. The rest is history.

The restaurant serves up the same style food as The Wheelhouse but with slightly different menus, says Ryan. From rainbow trout to steak, Midwestern-style food with flair and the aforementioned “twist” are what you’ll find. For instance, beef stroganoff is a classic, says Ryan, but he decided to change it up and make it with chicken instead. Simple, timeless, tasty. And now Ryan is sharing it with you:



Chicken Stroganoff by Ryan Rogiers

For the Braised Chicken:

- 4 chicken leg and thighs
- 2 cups red wine
- 8 garlic cloves
- 1 onion, medium dice
- 10 thyme sprigs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a Dutch Oven, sear the chicken leg and thighs with skin on and seasoned with salt and pepper until they are golden brown, approximately 4 minutes on each side. Add the red wine (we like cabernet sauvignon for this), garlic, and thyme and put into the oven for 90 minutes. Let cool and pull from the bone; discard skin.

The Sauce:

- 1 cup sliced oyster mushrooms
- 1 cup sliced cremini mushrooms
- ½ cup diced onion
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup red wine
- 1 quart heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Sauté mushrooms, onion and garlic for 3 to 4 minutes. Add red wine, Dijon, and Worcestershire and let simmer for 4 minutes. Add heavy cream and let simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper to taste.



We use orzo pasta for ours, however you could use any pasta.

To finish, toss pulled chicken with the pasta and sauce, then garnish with green onion and some sour cream. 🍴

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