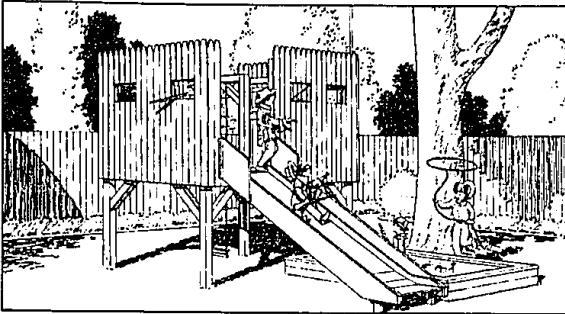


The Weekly Do-It-Yourselfer



Stockade Playfort

To encourage outdoor fun, exercise and creative thinking for your children, this playfort will be a much-appreciated addition to your yard. The features included in this design are a do-it-yourself or manufactured slide and rope ladder, along with a 2' by 2' raised look-out platform with portals. Also included is a spacious 4' by 6' sandbox. With our complete

materials list and complete, easy-to-follow instructions, you can save time and cut waste. Each plan comes with construction details for both the raised platform and the sandbox. Framing plans, 3-D cutaway drawings and assembly details for your slide are also included. Your children will thank you once you have completed this project.

- Send me the Stockade Playfort Construction Package (ready-to-build blueprints). Includes 2 prints and complete materials list . . . \$22
- Send me Garlinghouse Project Plan Information Package (3 brochures featuring complete line of 53 project plans including decks, garages, room additions, gazebos and much more . . . \$3.50

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New registry allows wedding gifts to be given for purchase of homes

(AP) — A new house may seem like a little much to put on a bridal registry. But a new account allows couples to register to have money deposited by family and friends into such a specialized account.

With the lending institution account, a Bridal Registry Account similar to a department store merchandise registry, couples can use the money for a down payment toward a home.

"A lot of people in their 20s and 30s don't have large savings accounts," said Aylin Gonen, a spokeswoman for U.S. Housing and Urban Development, which is promoting the program. "This is just another way to help out a young couple."

Tony Schafraan, a 23-year-old

Wixom resident who plans to marry in November 1997, said the concept appeals to him.

"That would probably be a good idea for us because we're planning on buying a house right after we get married," he said.

So far, 33 lending institutions across the country have signed up to offer the accounts. Participating institutions include Flagstar Bank of Bloomfield Hills, Source One Mortgage Service in Farmington Hills and MCA Mortgage Corp. of Southfield.

Sam Delaney, manager of Flagstar's government lending department, said his institution signed up to offer the accounts last week. Because the lending institution hasn't advertised the program

yet, most customers are unaware of it, he said, adding that it will help change the mind-set about appropriate wedding gifts.

"It will get people thinking about alternatives to toasters and place settings and increase the home ownership in the country," Delaney said.

Gonen said while 65.4 percent of the heads of U.S. households own homes now, less than 69 percent of household heads younger than 35 own homes. Gonen said the government wants to close that gap.

She said the interest-bearing bridal accounts don't offer a tax or interest advantage and the bridal registry is a more polite way for a couple to ask for money.

Booklet advises wood burners

"Burning Wood and Coal" includes advice for both the veteran with solid fuels and the complete novice.

This comprehensive manual provides detailed sections on evaluating solid fuel options, fireplaces, stoves, furnaces and boilers, installation, chimneys, wood and coal as fuels, and an appendix on safely cutting firewood with a chain saw. Many comparative tables and informative diagrams are incorporated.

Although the amount of radiant heat is undeniable, any solid-fuel system is costly and requires a change in life style. It is important to analyze home-heating needs and be

aware of both immediate and long-term costs. Wood and coal are less expensive than natural gas, oil, or electricity because the heat provided by solid fuels is not as even or as controllable as the heat from these more expensive options.

It pays to be well-informed before shopping for that new stove. In addition to the many personal factors to consider—economics, convenience, comfort, and labor intensity—many types and sizes of stoves and heating units are available from which to choose.

Since the strong revival of burning wood for home heating in the 1970s,

major advances in stove design have caught up with present-day demands for convenience.

Burning Wood and Coal stresses safety when installing wood and coal stoves and shows both present and future stove owners how to protect walls and floors near the stove.

NRAES-23, is available for \$5 plus \$3.50 shipping and handling from NRAES, Cooperative Extension, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Ithaca, New York 14853-5701.

For more information, contact NRAES by phone at (607) 255-7654, by fax at (607) 254-8770, or by e-mail at nraes@comell.edu

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Heat pumps getting better

An electric heat pump is a single appliance that can heat your home in the winter, and then cool it in the summertime. Buying one appliance to do the job of a furnace and an air conditioner can save you money, according to the Edison Electric Institute, the national association of electric companies.

Electric heat pumps can do both tasks because they exchange heat instead of creating it, like furnaces must do. Many technological advances are making the electric heat pump more energy efficient.

Electronic, variable-speed drives use a compressor that continually adjust their speed to match the desired heating or cooling demand, pushing the standard energy-efficiency ratings up 30 to 40 percent.

Scroll compressors have only two moving parts, giving them a 15 percent improvement in overall operating efficiency, quieter operation, and a longer life.

Integrated heat pumps supply hot water as a free by-product of air conditioning. At other times, the heat pump heats the water directly for the most energy-efficient method of water heating.

In northern climates, two types of heat pumps now can eliminate the need for electric resistance back-up heat:

Dual-fuel heat pumps can use both natural gas and elec-

tricity. The heat pump uses the most economical fuel, depending on the outdoor air temperature.

■ "Add-on" electric heat

pumps add on to an existing furnace. As with the dual-fuel heat pump, the fossil fuel burns on only the coldest nights of the year.

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