

Kitchen With A Heart

By James McConnaughey

Our "Operation Functional" began one night when my wife found me banging cupboard doors in the kitchen and muttering imprecations on the habits of our absent cook, Carrie. Carrie is a wonderful person, but not terribly systematic, to put it kindly.

"No wonder I can never find anything here. There are 16 cupboard doors and 10 drawers for things to be hidden in and behind!"

"You have-to-put-things-someplace," she pointed out mildly.

"But you don't have to make a guessing game of it. This kitchen is so unfunctional it had to be designed by an architect who never cooked!"

My wife and I are writers and newspaper publishers, and I'm the cook in the family simply because I like cooking and she doesn't. Naturally, I'm only a part-time cook, on Carrie's nights out and on special occasions.

The house was not old, and its kitchen was a standard, 1938-model, by which I mean it had the usual appliances, linoleum-covered counters with cupboards above and below, and a butler's pantry. The refrigerator was in its own alcove, the stove across a doorway from it, and the sink on the opposite side. The table and chairs in the middle of the room had to be skirted on every trip from sink to stove, or refrigerator to sink.

As I looked at it that night, it was an exasperating kitchen.

Not everybody, I realized, had the problem of re-orienting themselves in their own kitchens every Thursday and Sunday night. But a valid point seemed to be: wouldn't a "Carrie-proof" kitchen (as I was beginning to think of it) be a better and more functional kitchen, regardless of whether it was owner-operated part time or full time?

Before anything could be done about the kitchen, the first problem was to determine what was *unfunctional* about it.

The list was fairly easy to draw up. It included al-



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most everything. The refrigerator, stove and sink were absurdly placed for efficiency, but it would be a simple matter to bring them into better relationship with each other.

That left the rest of the kitchen to deal with. Here, the problem seemed to be that nothing had been engineered to the primary function of a kitchen, which is to provide for the preparation of food.

The storage area was simply so many feet of shelving, above and below counters, stretching around the room. This space was supposed to accommodate such diverse objects as a sack of potatoes, a waffle iron and a box of raisins.

The shelves under the counter, being as deep as the counter, were nothing but a gross misuse of space. How is it in your kitchen? Do you have to stoop, squat and squint to discover what's behind the soup pot in the dark corner on the bottom shelf?

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Here is the heart of the kitchen with staples and pots and pans and utensils and work area in one compact unit of space. Note appliances, bright in their corner, ready to use.



The new storage cupboard runs the full width of the room. Doors are fibre-glass panels made-to-slide-on-nylon-rollers. Inside lights suffuse the surface with a soft glow.