

# Apron Memories®



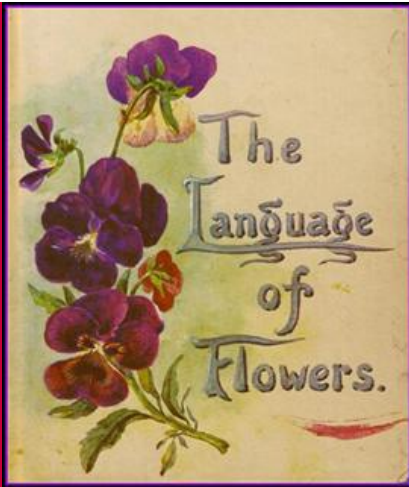
## EllynAnne's Apron Memories® Newsletter | March 31, 2011

Y'all, Hey! So how to begin, but with the most pressing matter of the moment: my modern-day nightmare - the dishwasher broke.

Interestingly, the dishwasher hasn't always been my personal convenience. Growing up in a family of eight - no dishwasher. Living on my own - no dishwasher. As newlyweds, that all changed.

Living barebones in an unheated log cabin, one wedding gift - a plastic, counter-top dishwasher - was like we'd hit the jackpot. A non-electrical appliance, the dishes were cleaned via water pressure through a hose connected to the spigot. Standing sink-side, we watched the cleaning process through the plastic top, transfixed as though looking at exotic fish in a saltwater aquarium. Life without a dishwasher would become unimaginable.

The point to mentioning my dishwasher history is to note that the invention we've taken for granted for the past 100 + years is courtesy of a woman, Josephine Cochran. Her home of Shelbyville, Illinois, erected a marker to the town's most famous resident:



### Dandelion...the Rustic Oracle

If you are separated from the object of your love, pluck the feathery spheres, charge each with a tender thought; turn toward the spot where the loved one dwells. Blow, and the aerial travellers will faithfully convey your message to his or her feet. Blow again, and if a single aigrette is left upon the stalk, it is proof that you are not forgotten.

*a Floral Offering, 1852*

### Vintage Om

In an Age of Anxiety, nothing is more tranquilizing than a quiet hour of needle- work. While your hands are creating beauty, they cannot be hurrying. Peace-fulness comes from them to you.

It isn't possible to be agitated while doing needlework. You are still, you are at rest, you are refreshed.

*Woman's Day Book of American Needlework, 1963*

Washday Know-How  
Questions and Answers to  
Inspire You to Revamp Your  
Washday Techniques

*My husband hates nylon hose hanging in the bathroom. Dare I dry them in my dryer?*

Surely! Place nylon hose in a nylon mesh bag to keep them from tangling.

*The timer on my dryer sticks in one spot and the dryer won't shut off automatically. What should I do?*

Call the serviceman.

*I'd like a water softener, but my husband says, "What's so bad about hard water?"*

Tell your husband that hard water is old-fashioned water because it's hard on everything - fabrics, hands, hair, as well as the pocketbook.

*Household, the Magazine of Home Service, March 1958*

### **The Kitchen Adventures Club of Junior Home Magazine**

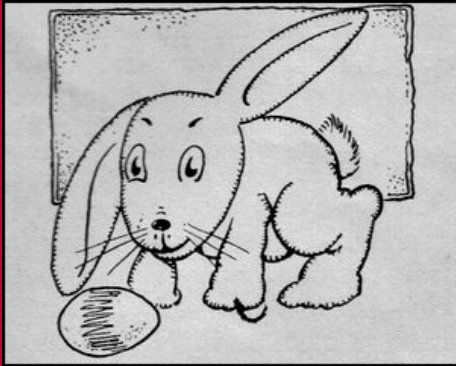
Mothers are invited to send in recipes which are delightful to children. The recipes must combine three factors: they must be made of foods that are good to children; they must be simple;



Josephine, who entertained often, wanted a machine that would wash dishes faster than the servants, and without chipping her heirloom china. When she couldn't find such a machine, she invented one herself.

and they must have unique names. A six months' subscription to JHM will be given for each recipe that is published.

March 1933 Winner  
Courtesy of  
Mrs. Olive B. Mosher  
**THE EASTER BUNNY**



Mashed Potato  
Mashed Carrots  
Rounded Tablespoon of Spinach  
Rounded Tablespoon of Salmon

Form a spoonful of mashed potato to look like a bunny. Shape mashed vegetable and salmon to resemble eggs.

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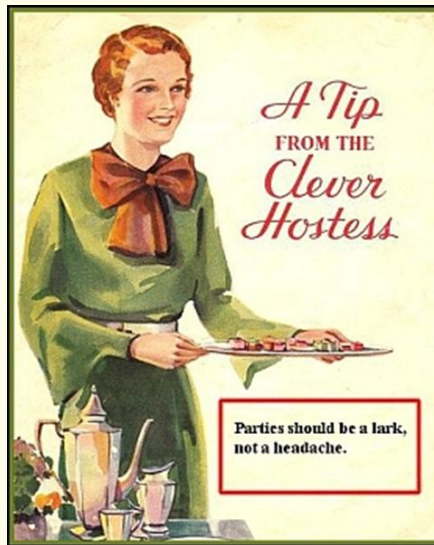
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Josephine Cochran forever changed the domestic lives of women. I imagine if she hadn't been so focused on designing the dishwasher, she would have also have built the first mousetrap, which wasn't invented until 1897.



In the 1941 edition of *The American Woman's Cook Book*, the chapter on TABLE SETTING and SERVICE was sixteen pages and included instruction on the importance of the dining-table's setting adhering to a definite artistic standard.

Harmony of dishes apparently affected the appetite in a good way, with the mismatching of dishes within a single course a cause for stomach upset.

Click [here](#) for the Clever Hostess's tip for a harmonious appetite.

## Vintage Voltage

One never knows when the vintage domestic lightening bolt will strike.

On an evening stroll down the cozy street where my sister Carol lives, we stopped in to chat it up with her neighbor, Penny Christian. While



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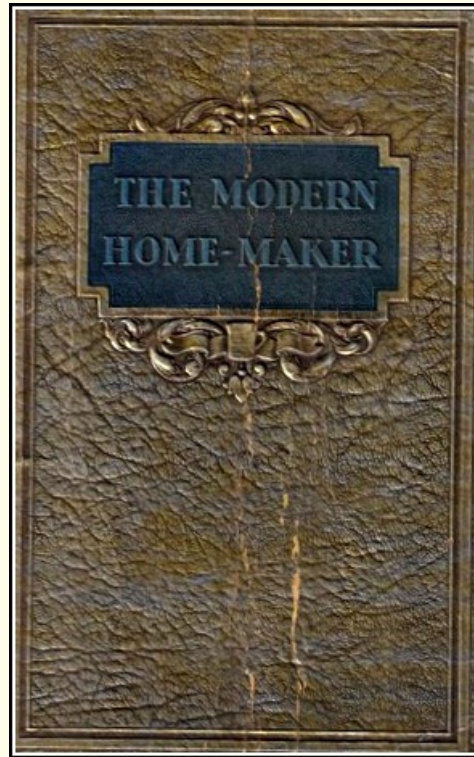
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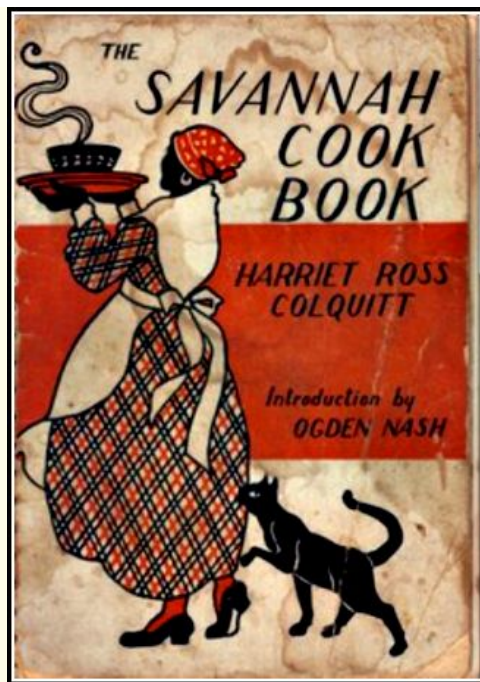
Penny pattered about her kitchen in dinner preparation mode, I noticed a 3-shelf book nook loaded with cookbooks. Penny obviously enjoys cooking. Curious if her family had always loved to cook, I asked if she had cookbooks from the women of earlier generations. Oh, my! did I ask the right question. Turns out, Penny is her family's culinary historian!

In an adjoining room are floor to ceiling shelving, each filled with homemaking memorabilia, including this volume published in 1929



which devoted a section to *Menus for Nervousness*. Given the times, the menus would have appealed to women nationwide, not just the Belles of the South.

And this one...the cover a bit awkward in this day, but in 1933, perfectly respectable.



The gloriousness of this particular cookbook is the author's authenticity, as she visited the kitchen's of Savannah's finest - who were her friends - and she writes in recognition of the women who actually worked the kitchens of her friends' homes.

Aside from the recipes, among which is this gem for preparing Possum and 'Taters: *Before you go to bed, scald the possum with lye and scrape off the hair. (Or have it done, which would be altogether more pleasant all around.)* are kitchen tips that I have never before run across.

This tip, especially, caught my eye: "After preparing rice, pour off any remaining water and preserve it for starching the laundry."

My first thought was, Brilliance! The second - mmmm, would food starch not provide a dining opportunity for bugs to nibble on one's dress or napery?

I turned to the ultimate source on such queries, Kathleen Huddy at the Good Housekeeping Research Institute. Her reply: *I spoke with Carolyn, who is our homecare expert, and we both agree that although this would work, you are taking a risk at putting "food" on your clothing that might attract animals or bugs. We guess this was way before spray starch was invented!*

So, there we have it - a modern perspective to vintage life.

**Quivery-Tender in Six Flavors!**



In 1930, Jell-O introduced "the new, wonderfully refreshing Lime" to the existing flavors - Strawberry, Raspberry, Orange, Lemon and Cherry, bringing the total to six delicious flavors.

Anticipating that seventeen million women would be clamoring for recipes made with ... "the newest of the new Jell-O," this booklet did not disappoint in providing this flavorful addition to elegant dining:

#### Cucumber Tang Relish

1 package Lime Jell-O      2 teaspoons vinegar  
1 pint boiling water      1 cup cucumber, diced  
1/2 cup sour pickles, chopped

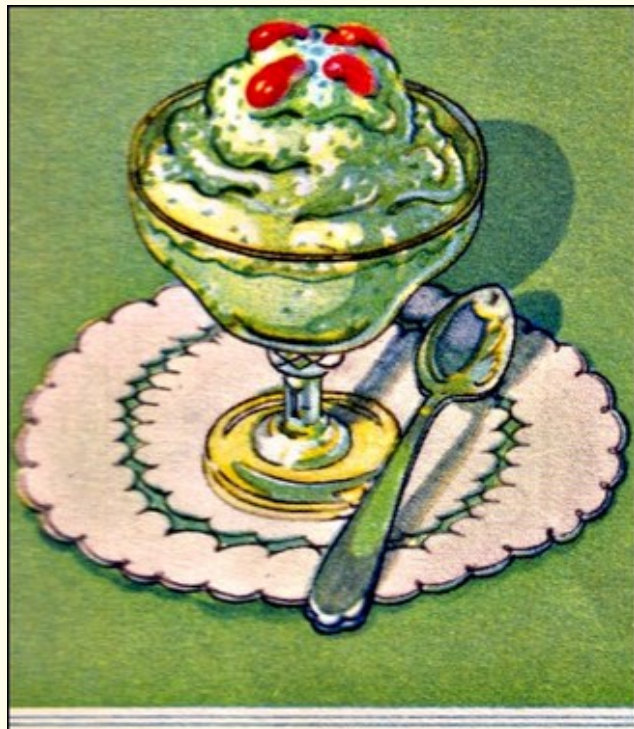
**DISSOLVE** Jell-O in boiling water. Add vinegar. Chill. When slightly thickened, fold in cucumbers and pickles. Turn into mold. Chill until firm. Unmold on crisp lettuce. Serve as relish or salad with mayonnaise. Serves 6 to 8.



And for dessert, Lime Mallow Sponge

1 package Lime Jell-O      1 pint boiling water  
10 marshmallows, finely cut

DISSOLVE Jell-O in boiling water. Add marshmallows and stir until dissolved. Chill until cold and syrupy. Place in a bowl of cracked ice or ice water and whip with rotary egg beater until fluffy and thick, like whipped cream. Turn into molds. Chill until firm. Unmold. Serve with marshmallow sauce, if desired. Serves 10.



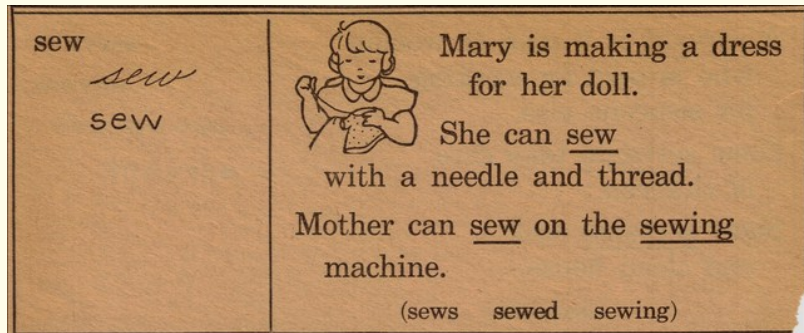
At the back of the booklet, individual Jell-O molds are offered "AT A BARGAIN PRICE" of twenty-five cents each. Eighty some years later,



I didn't pay much more for these. At this point, I have dozens, which I use as bitty hors d'ouves holders or fill with a nibbly and serve with a drink, so each person has their own little nut bowl. Given the versatility of a Jell-O mold and the variety of designs, I'm shocked anyone would dispose of them. Shocked.

## News from the Apron-Hood

### If Mary Can Sew, Sew Can You Giveaway!



With spring's arrival, it's the perfect time to plant a bit of inspiration with a giveaway that will provide one very lucky winner with:

**yardage for aprons**, designed by graphic artist [Caleb Gray](#)



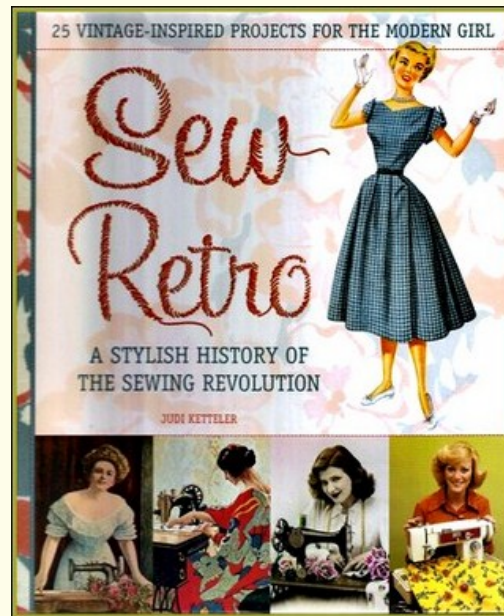
and courtesy of [Robert Kaufman Fabrics](#)





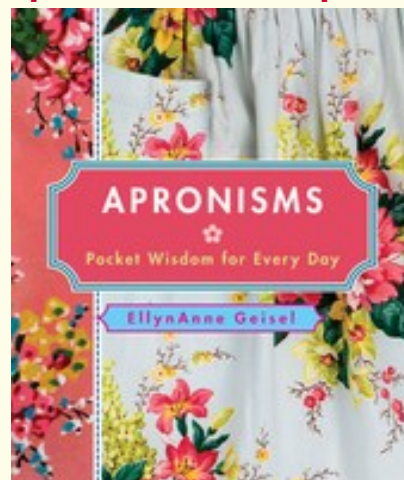
+

a personalized copy of [Judi Ketteler](#)'s fabulous new publication



+

2 personalized copies of



my very adorable little book, which will slip perfectly into the pockets of your new aprons! So, how to win? Click [here](#) and leave a comment.

**\*\*\*Bonus Entry:** "Like" [Apron Memories on Facebook](#) , come back to the blog and leave an additional comment that you've done so.

Deadline for comments is late Wednesday. Winner selected by Random Human and announced APRIL 7th.

## Update

**Sew It All**, Ellen March's new PBS show, is beginning to air on PBS stations around the country! The April schedule can be viewed [here](#).



Along with air dates and times, the first show of that particular station's lineup is also listed. My segment is Awesome Aprons, first up on PBS Dallas, Las Vegas, Amarillo, Minneapolis, Wichita Falls and Seattle. I haven't yet seen my segment, but I'm sure the producer presented me at my most...awesome.

Please click [here](#) to see the promotional video and find info on bugging your local PBS station to carry the show.

**Sew It All is having a giveaway!!** To enter, click [here](#) and in the comment section, post which segment you're most looking forward to.

## Update



**The American Interest** article about my apron journey is now posted [here](#). With every article, I submit accompanying photographs, but not always is each picture used. I was delighted with the three storytellers selected for TAI piece, but saddened that due to editorial decisions, the accompanying photos for two storytellers were not shown, like this one of Martha Marie Barnes in the arms of her loving mother. To see more photos

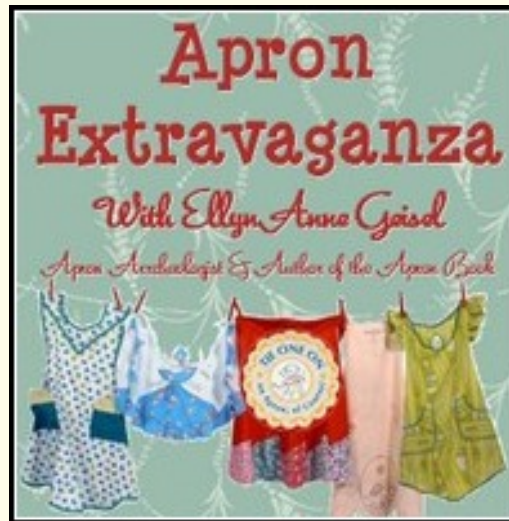


that were originally to accompany the article and to read the complete versions of their stories, please click [here](#).

### **Tennessee to Tie One On...**

**May 6 & 7** will find me in Gallatin, TN, where I'll be participating in an

## Apron Extravaganza!



Sponsored by the University of Tennessee and the Sumner County fce (Family Community Education Club), this event includes an apron exhibit of domestic wear from the area, with prizes for the "best of" in a dozen + categories, and an Apron Mall! This event has been a year in the planning, and promises a fresh take on celebrating the apron. Details, contact info and all such can be read [here](#). fyi: Gallatin is very near Nashville.

### **Lastly**

The Jell-O booklet is a true gem. Not only for the brilliant graphics, which speak to the artistic expertise of the illustrators, but for the upbeat prose, too. Published just a year into the Crash, the booklet is one big exclamation point of positiveness...as the woman who serves Jell-O to her family will have them thinking, "She's a wonder, a cook in a thousand!"

Things were tight and got much worse, but there was always hope upon the horizon and dessert.

Wishing everyone a spring of recovery (!) and renewal (!), and if topped with whipped cream, all the better!

xxea