# Remember the House Out Back?

## "Henhouse" Flap

ON ONE particular summer visit to the outhouse, my sister, Lois, heard a loud squawk.

A hen flew up underneath her and then out the other hole on the seat. Lois certainly was startled to have all that commotion going on under her and then beside her as she let the hen exit.

I know that hens hide their eggs in strange places, but I can't imagine our hen would've chosen to nest beneath the outbuilding.

—Wilma Mueller, Colorado Springs, Colorado

## Farm Housing

"BIG HOUSE, little house, backhouse, barn." We used to skip rope to that beginning to a rhyme when I was a child. I didn't know at the time that it described our farm buildings in New Brunswick, Canada. Outhouses were stand-alone buildings; backhouses were incorporated into barns.

In the days when many people couldn't read, a little crescent moon on the door or side of the outhouse meant it was for the ladies. The men's privy sported a full moon. The farms of my childhood usually had just one outhouse for everyone, with the crescent-moon design the norm.

When my cousins from town would come to visit, I remember they brought their own toilet tissue. They weren't used to scrunching up and softening our rough paper, which could be newspapers, catalogs or any kind of paper.

It's a part of the good old days I don't miss at all.

—Marie Lauridsen, Pembroke Pines, Florida

## Life on the Hot Seat

WHEN I was a kid, wooden wall phones had a crank on the side connected to a magneto, which put out a current telling the operator you wanted to talk with someone.

I still don't know what came over me—I guess the devil made me do it—but I hooked up a spare magneto to the outhouse seat. I sat behind the outhouse, and when the next person entered and sat down, I turned the crank just a little.

You would have thought the roof of the outhouse had been blown off. Such a yell I had never heard before or since.

I can't tell you how fast I ran or who was doing the chasing, but it was hours before I was allowed back into the house and up to my room. I can tell you that my days of tinkering with spare telephone parts were over with for a long time.

—James Gallagher, Bondurant, Iowa