

A RETIRED DOCTOR'S GUIDE TO COUNTRY LIVING PART TWO

INDREPTARUL MEDICULUI PENSIONAR RETRAS LA TARA PARTEA A DOUA





COUNTRYSIDE LIVING:
PRACTICAL MATTERS
1994-2001

VIATA LA TARA:
CHESTIUNI PRACTICE
1994-2001

Letter from Father to unnamed friends:

January 1995

Dear friends,

We, the undersigned, Lia and Viorel Florea from Baia Mare are letting you know that we have not perished, and that, being alive and well, have not forgotten you, not even for a second. You may find my attempt at rekindling our correspondence in its present guise a little strange, unconventional; however, we thought it was of utmost importance to counteract any ominous presumptions on your part (which presumptions would have been warranted by our culpable, persisting silence). And this, after we misled you when inviting you for a vacation in the Rodna Mountains, on our new property.

Scrisoare de la tata catre prieteni nenumiti:

Ianuarie 1995

Dragii nostri,

Subsemnatii Lia si Viorel Florea din Baia Mare va facem cunoscut ca nu ne-am prapadit si ca in viata fiind nu v-am uitat nici o clipa! O sa vi se para ciudata si neconventionala-atipica reluarea sub aceasta forma a corespondentei, am considerat insa de cea mai mare importanta sa spulber sumbre eventuale presupuneri din partea voastra, presupuneri justificate de tacerea noastra vinovata o perioada atat de indelungata. Si aceasta, dupa ce v-am amagit cu invitatia la un sejur la poalele Muntilor Rodnei pe noile noastre proprietati.

We kept mum all summer long, and the fall, too, for one simple reason: we've been overwhelmed with formalities, activities, and hard work, which in the end resulted in:

- the building of a 100-meter long fence to enclose our property

- the purchase and hauling of 6 cubic meters of large logs which were subsequently split and made into planks for our floors

- the building of a new roof (5,000 wood shingles)

- the making of 4 pairs of shutters for 4 windows to obliterate the exterior, so that the house looks like a citadel.

In spite of all of this, our consciences were pricked on a daily basis because we didn't write to explain that the ongoing construction at our little house in Borsa would prevent us from offering the minimum degree of

Am tacut toata vara si toamna, dintr-un singur motiv: am fost coplesiti de demersurile, actiunile si truda care pana la urma s'a soldat cu:

- ingradirea gradinii si curtii pe 100 metri liniari

- procurarea si transportul a 6 metri cubi busteni, taiati apoi in grinzi si scanduri pentru dusumele

- refacerea completa cu sindrila (5.500 bucati) a acoperisului, care era total putred

- confectionarea a 4 perechi obloane de scandura pt. obliterationea exterioara a 4 ferestre, de asa maniera incat in prezent casa arata ca o reduta

Cu toate astea, aproape zilnic ne-am facut mustrari de constiinta ca nu va scriem explicandu-va ca in starea de santier casuta noastra din Borsa nu v'ar fi oferit minime conditii de odihna si confortul psihic absolut necesar

relaxation and emotional comfort necessary to enjoy the landscape—of which we cannot have enough. However, all the things described above should by no means cancel—as they say—the invitation we launched from the bottom of our hearts. On the contrary, we are firm in our desire to have you with us.

To make at least two of the four rooms suitably livable, we need new floors. Work on the floors will start in spring, when we'll begin work in the garden as well:

--ploughing the land and sowing potatoes, onions, garlic, red beets

--caring for the 35 fruit trees we planted in April 1991

Not that we are too sure all things will evolve as planned, but we hope that by late July—when rhododendrons will be in bloom—we'll be able to greet you at the Viseul de Jos train station.

FONDLY,

Lia and Viorel

pentru a savura peisajul—de care noi nu ne mai saturam.

Cele prezentata mai inainte nu anuleaza—cum s' ar spune—invitatia pe care v'am facut-o din tot sufletul. Ba din contra, insistam asupra dorintei sincere de a va avea langa noi.

Pentru a face locuibile in mod decent, cel putin doua din cele patru incaperi, e necesara podirea dusumelelor, treaba pe care o incepem din primavara, cand de altfel vom incepe si lucrarile in gradina:

--arat si semanat cartofi, ceapa, usturoi, sfecla rosie

--ingrijirea celor 35 pomi fructiferi plantati in aprilie 1991

Nu suntem noi prea convinsi ca lucrurile vor evolua asa cum le planificam, dar speram ca pana la sfarsit de iulie—cand vor inflori si rododendronii—sa ne intalnim asa cum v'am spus in gara CFR Viseul de Jos.

CU DRAG,

Lia si Viorel



Lia

Cum sa faci covoare din carpe

The urci în pod și culegi toate carpele, le scuturi bine de praf, cobori în bucatărie, tai carpele în fasii înguste cu o foarfeca ascuțită, le cosi la capete, apoi le infasori în gheme multicolore pe care le duci la o tesătoare sau un atelier de tesătorie. În felul acesta, după o vreme vei avea covoare din carpe facute în casa, cum e cel de sub fereastra din **Berarie**.



Cum sa faci o plapuma noua dintr-una veche

Desfaci plapuma veche, îi scarmeni bine continutul (adica lana existenta). Mai scarmeni 1 kg de lana pe care probabil il ai prin casa de cine stie cand, într-o debara, în camera, sau prin vre-un alt cotlon ascuns și rar vizitat. Adaugi lana noua la cea veche și bagi totul înapoi în plapuma. Cosi fetele plapumei în patratele mici, ca sa nu fuga continutul dintr-o parte în alta. Vari plapuma într-un cearsaf în forma de sac, și te poti înveli cu ea și dormi excelent.

Lia

How to Make Rag Carpets

*Climb up to an attic and collect all the rags, shake them well to get rid of dust, come back down to the kitchen, cut the rags into narrow strips with sharp scissors, stitch the strips together at the ends, then twist them into balls, yields: lots of multi-colored rag balls which you should take to a weaver or a weaver's shop, and in due time you shall have home-made carpets, like the one by the window in the **Beer Hall**.*



How to Make a New Duvet from an Old One

Undo an old duvet and comb well its contents (that is, the existing wool). Comb an additional kilo of wool you may have kept for a long time in a closet, pantry, or some other hidden and rarely visited corner of the house. Mix the old wool with the new and place it back inside the duvet. Sew back the duvet making small squares so the wool doesn't continuously shift from one side to the other. Place the duvet in an envelope-shaped cotton sheet, and you can cover yourself with it and sleep excellently.

Viorel: Aparate, instalatii si alte lucruri dibace

Cam sa construiesti si igienizezi o latrina

In primul rand construiesc latrina sau casa din afara la o oarecare distanta de locuinta, pe o panta, conform unui design traditional si a unei proceduri asisderea, pe care vecinii din stanga si din dreapta o cunosc, si pe care ti-o vor comunica cu bucurie. (Noi n-am construit-o pe a noastra: am mostenit-o de la fosta proprietara). Deseurile umane se colecteaza intr-o lada de lemn asezata sub scaunul latrinei. Pentru antiseptizare vei sapa o groapa in pamant, vei extrage lada de sub scaunul latrinei, o vei cara la groapa si ii vei arunca continutul in aceasta. Apoi vei acoperi groapa cu o gramada de pamant si o multime de iarba, folosind mult var pentru a igieniza lada. Cara lada inapoi la locul ei si plaseaz-o sub scaunul latrine. Asta-i.

P. S. Planteaza niste caprifoi langa constructie, iti va parea bine ca ai facut-o!



Viorel's Appliances, Installations, and Other Hardiwork:

How to Build and Operate a Countryside Latrine

First, build your latrine or outhouse at a distance from the main house, on an incline, and in accordance with a time-honored design and procedure which your neighbors left and right will know and be glad to inform you about. (We didn't build ours, though: we inherited it from the previous owner.) The refuse is collected in a wooden container placed under the seat. To sanitize, first dig a hole in the ground, extract the wood container from under the seat, carry it to the hole and discard its contents in the latter. Afterwards cover the hole with dirt and grass in abundance, using plenty of lime to sanitize the container. Carry the container back to its place in the outhouse and position it under the seat. Voilà!

P. S. Plant some honeysuckle around the outhouse. You'll be glad you did!



Cum sa consolidezi un soclu

Socul se poate consolida folosind gardul de sarma din fundul grădinii în chip de "plasa rabbitz." Aceasta plasa se îndoieste sau se pliaza chiar de 3 ori. Apoi se fixeaza de soclu—inclusiv 15-20 cm sub nivelul solului—prin piroane (cuie de 20 cm) infipte destul de des în spațiile dintre doi bolovani. Plasa se leaga de piroane cu sarma subtire lasand un spatiu de 5-7 cm între ea și soclu. Se face un mortar cu mult ciment în amestec cu nisip care apoi se aplică în 3-4 straturi pe plasa rabbitz (între straturi sa treaca cel puțin 24 ore ca sa faca prize buna).

Materiale:

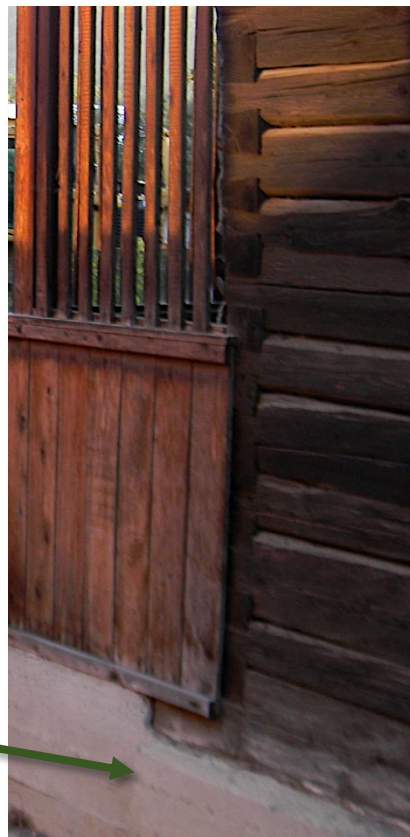
*cuie de 20 cm 3 kg? (în principiu cam 100 cuie)

*sarma subtire (tip fierar-betonisti)

*ciment

*nisip

*gardul de sarma recuperat

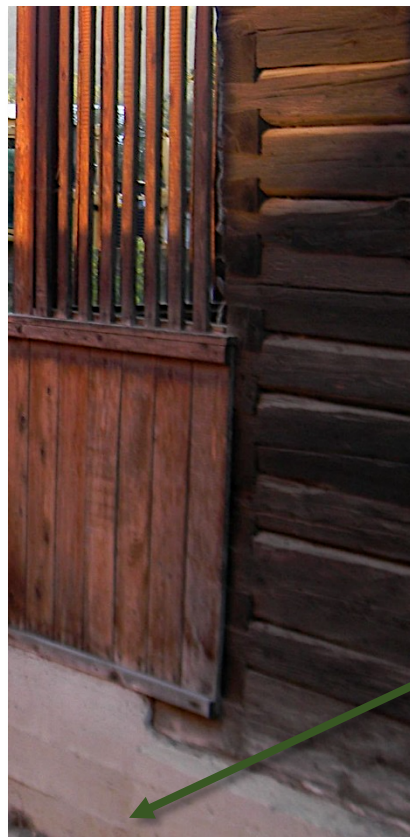


How to Consolidate a House Foundation

The foundation can be consolidated using the wire fence from the garden back side as Rabitz Net. The net should be twisted or bowed up to 3 times. Then it should be affixed to the foundation—going as deep as 5 to 20 centimeters underground—with bolts (20-centimeter nails) placed at small intervals in between the [foundation] boulders. The net must be tied to the bolts with thin wire, at a distance of 5 to 7 centimeters from the foundation. Mortar should be made with much cement mixed with sand, and applied to the Rabitz net in 3 to 4 layers (leave at least 24 hours between any two successive applications, so the mortar hardens).

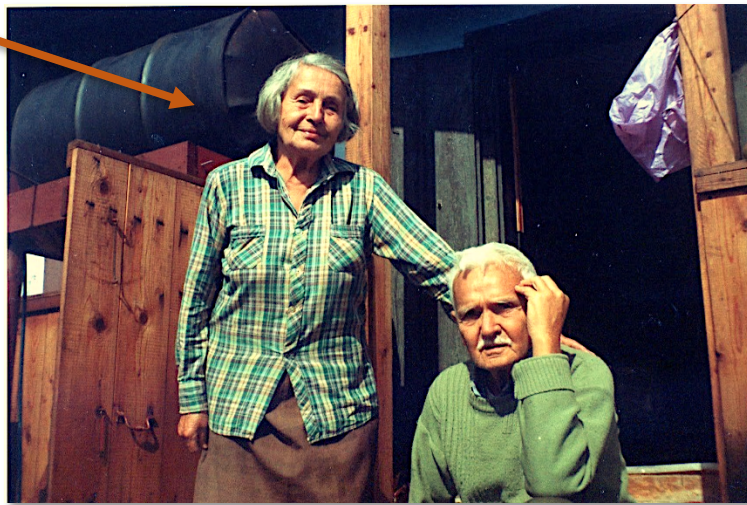
Materials:

- *20-centimeter bolts 3 kilos? (in principle, about 100 bolts)*
- *thin wire*
- *cement*
- *sand*
- *the salvaged wire fence*



Cum sa faci un dus dintr-un butoi de tabla

Iei un butoi din tabla cu capacitatea de 200 litri si il vopsesti cu un strat gros sau doua de vopsea neagra. Faci o gaura rotunda in butoi si instalezi o teava nu prea lunga, la care atasezi un robinet prevazut cu un cap de dus. Asez butoiul pe un suport din lemn, cu patru picioare, chiar in fata tarnatului, asa incat atunci cand faci dus sa poti admira Pietrosul si Piatra Alba in departare. Cand e senin, soarele incalzeste apa din butoi si astfel, cu o simpla rasucire de robinet, vei putea face dusuri dupa dusuri, dupa placul inimii.

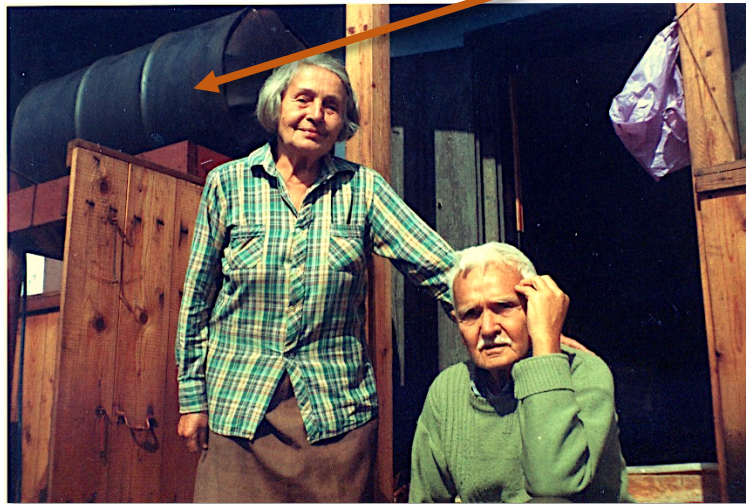


Ce este Uleiul Csorba si cum sa il folosesti

Csorba era fierar in Baia Mare si mare prieten cu Viorel—fapt dovedit fara umbra de indoiala de vizitele zilnice pe care Viorel le facea la atelierul lui Csorba de pe podul din Centrul Vechi. Cei doi isi petreceau ore intregi discutand virtutile practice ale diferitelor tipuri de fier, otel, arama si tinichea; piroane, cuie si suruburi; lacate, arcuri, sine si bare; cabluri, sarme, filamente si corzi; ale unei infinite varietati de uleiuri, vopsele, lacuri, diluanti si solvent, si altele asemenea. Poate ca Dl. Csorba detinea patentul sau poate ca nu, dar cu siguranta era mandrul inventator al Uleiului Csorba, care era de fapt ulei de motor uzat (ars) folosit de fierari pentru a cald arcuri incandescente de otel [informator: Lucu]. Lucu afirma ca acest ulei asigura cea mai buna protectie impotriva intemperiei. Uleiul Csorba a fost folosit la impregnarea bustenilor falsi de pe peretele exterior al casei din Borsa; de asemenea, la impregnarea sinderilei de pe acoperis.

How to Build and Operate a Tin-barrel Water Tank

Take a 200-liter tin barrel and apply a thick coat (or two) of black paint on the outer surface. Drill a round hole in the barrel and install a pipe, then a faucet provided with a shower head. Install the barrel on a wooden, four-legged frame placed in front of the porch, so you can admire from a distance Pietrosul and White Stone Mountains while taking showers. On clear summer days the sun, fiercely beating on the barrel will cause the water to become very hot. Thus with a simple turning of the faucet you'll be able to take shower after shower to your heart's content.



What is Csorba Oil and How to Use it

Mr. Csorba was a Baia Mare smithy, and a great friend of Viorel's—a fact proven beyond the shadow of a doubt by the daily visits Viorel paid to Mr. Csorba's workshop on Old Town Bridge. The two of them would spend hours discussing the practical virtues of this or that type of iron, steel, copper, tin; nut, bolt, nail, screw; lock, spring, rail, rod; cable, wire, filament, cord; and an infinite variety of oils, paints, lacquers, thinners, solvents, and such like. Perhaps he owed the patent, and yet again perhaps he did not, but Mr. Csorba was the proud deviser of *Csorba Oil*, which was used (burned) motor oil that smithies used to temper incandescent steel springs [*informant: Lucu*]. Lucu says it ensures the best protection against all sorts of bad weather. *Csorba oil* was used as exterior wall paint at the Borsa house to impregnate the fir logs, and as an insulator for the wood shingle roof.

Cum sa faci si sa repari un gard

Informator: Lucu

Intai si-ntai socotesti de cati stalpi ai nevoie. Apoi sapi tot atatea gropi, fiecare cam de lungimea bratului in adancime, in latime—cat o fi. In fiecare groapa bati cate un stalp si in jurul lui ingramadesti bolovanii carati de la rau, ca sa-l proptesti bine. (Daca nu ai o roaba, vei cara bolovanii cu o galeata. Eu i-am carat cu doua.) Bati bolovanii cu un trunchi de lemn pentru a-i presa cat mai bine. Apoi presari pamant si il presezi si pe acesta, adaugand din cand in cand apa pentru a face namol, asa incat pamantul, umezit, sa se aseze temeinic printre bolovani. Asta-i.



How to Make and Fix a Fence

Informant: Lucu

First and foremost you must know how many pillars you need. Then you dig the exact same number of holes, each one about a forearm's length (one cubit) in depth; as for width—it doesn't matter that much. Place one pillar in each hole and surround it with boulders you carried from the river, to support the pillar. (If you don't have a wheelbarrow, you'll carry the boulders in a bucket. I used two.) Pound the boulders into the hole with a wood plank or some such contraption to force them down. Then scatter lots of dirt and press it down as well, adding water from time to time to create mud so that the moist dirt lies firmly among the boulders. That's it.



Cum sa faci un tablou dintr-o fereastră oarbă

Informator: Lumí

*În primul rând trebuie să ai o fereastră oarbă prevăzută cu rafturi pe unul din peretii din Berarie. În al doilea rând e necesar să fi fost în Mexico City și de acolo să fi adus un calendar cu reproduceri după opere de artă, printre care și un tablou intitulat *Bufet* (ca. 1769), semnat de Antonio Perez de Aguilar, pe care îl vei folosi ca sursă de inspirație. Odată ce pozezi aceste două elemente, ești pregătit să-ți dirijezi imaginația de așa manieră încât să folosești cu înțelepciune, după modelul oferit de Perez de Aguilar, o seamă de obiecte până nu demult zacătoare prin diverse unghere și ca atare cu totul nefolositoare: Ia câteva farfurii de ceramică, niște lampi de petrol, câteva halbe de bere, o pensulă-două, o talangă din metal, un suport vechi de lumanare, o damigeană, o rașchitoare din lemn cu dinți de metal și aranjează-le după plac pe rafturile practicate în grosimea ferestrei oarbe. Ai acum *Bufetul* tău. Totuși, pastrează calendarul.*



How to Turn a False Window into a Painting

Informant: Lumí

*First, you have to have a false window provided with shelves on one of your Beer Hall walls. Second, it is imperative that you'd have been to Mexico City, from where you should have brought back a calendar containing pictures of works of art, including a still life painting titled *Cupboard* (c. 1769) by Antonio Pérez de Aguilar, which will become your source of inspiration. Once you're in possession of these two elements you're more than ready to employ your imagination in such a manner as to use wisely, according to your model, a number of objects until not long ago completely uselessly laying in various corners of the house. Take a few ceramic plates, some gas lamps, some beer glasses, one or two paint brushes, a sheep or goat metal bell, an old candle holder, a wine cooler covered in straw mesh, a comb with metal teeth used to comb wool, and arrange all of these to your liking on the false window's shelves. Now you have your own *Cupboard*. Don't throw away the calendar, though!*



Cum sa podesti o camera

Informator: Lucu

Procuri si faci sa fie transportati 6 metri cubi busteni, care se taie in grinzi si scanduri pentru dusumele (aceasta cantitate de busteni este suficienta pentru podirea a doua camere: Beraria si bucataria). Lemnul este, fireste, brad, care creste in abundenta in zona.

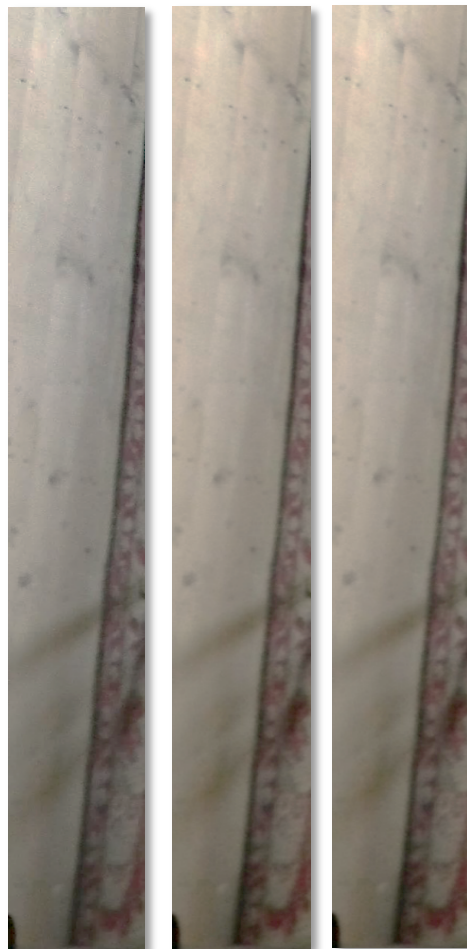


Scandurile se aseaza una langa alta pe un grid de lemn: sa fie bine presate laolalta, pentru ca lemnul se usuca si daca nu le-ai presat cum trebuie, s-ar putea ca mai tarziu sa apara spatiu intre ele. Scandurile se bat in cuie pe grid, iar pe laterale se pun sipci subtiri.

How to Lay Wooden Plank Flooring

Informant: Lucu

You purchase 6 cubic meters of large logs and have them hauled to the house. The logs are subsequently split and made into planks for floors (this quantity of wood is sufficient for the flooring of two rooms: the Beer Hall and the kitchen). Naturally, the wood comes from fir trees which grow in abundance in the area.



Each plank should be tightly wedged to the preceding one on a wooden frame: be careful to press them well against each other because wood will become dry and if you don't do a proper job it's very possible that spaces will form later on between the planks. Use nails to affix the planks to the frame.

