

WAY
BACK
WHEN

Let's Get Organized!

BY VERA MILLER



"Ma, where's my curling iron?"
... "Look in the top!"
"Mamale, so where's my collar pin?"
... "It's in the top in the underneath!"
"Ma, the pencil sharpener, where is it?"
... "Tzunele, on the side in the top!"

In every house there was a 'top.' In the 'top' were the keys to the garage, the old wedding invitations, the American Family soap coupon collection, the Bar Mitzva fountain pens. Maybe the 'top' was the drawer near the kitchen stove or maybe the side drawer in the dining area divider—but every family had one.

JUNK DRAWER

Remember the 'top' in your parents' house? This was the junk drawer and everything was in it that kept the family together. You grew up, got married and when you came with the family for dinner on Friday night, you knew you could still look in the drawer and find the same tea strainer that needed the handle tightened, the tortoise shell comb that was Bubbe's, the tarnished silver pickle fork—never used for pickles but handy when you used to take out the cork inset rounds of the pop bottle tops, to wear triumphantly on your jacket when you were a kid. In the drawer there always seemed to be a state of organized confusion.

HOW ELSE?

Methinks the manufacturers of those desk and drawer-organizers now flooding the market must have been raised in homes where there was a junk drawer. How else would they know so instinctively about the odd divisions of space when they place such a unit for sale. However, these same manufacturers must have inward longings to retain the honored tradition of the family junk drawer, because they make the dividers just a little bit shorter or a little bit narrower, so that you can still put something "underneath on the side." Today you can quickly install a peg board to display in the kitchen the ice tongs, the can openers, the measuring spoons, etc., and etc., et al.

RUNNING RAMPANT

You can even buy an assortment of plastic boxes to keep things in systematic order. Do you recall being sent to the drawer for something? Whole vistas of imagination ran rampant as you searched for things. Maybe you didn't find what you were looking for, but the reve-

lation of finding the rubber band nest, the striped top you used years ago—complete with the green string and the round wooden button on top, the marbles tied in the foot of Pa's sock, or what nostalgic memories.

If the interior decorator of today wants to do a home with a real touch of yesteryear, all they have to suggest is, "Mrs. Homemaker, in what room do you want the junk drawer?" Looking for something in the drawer is therapy. Maybe Pa and Ma never realized it, but when there was a good old fight going among the kids, all either of them would have to come up with was "... could you find for me in the top?"—and the anger was dispelled as the drawer became a cave of surprises, and even a head bump or two could be forgotten when the eldest would find an old treasured possession no longer useful and pass it on down to the next in line.

Going to the folks' for supper Friday night? Go look in the 'top!'