

# The American Girl

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For All Girls and Girl Scouts

JULY, 1931



*Beginning*

**Mystery on the Mountain**

*A three part story by*

**ETHEL COOK ELIOT**

# Have You Taken Up



By ANNA  
COYLE

AT CAMP OR AT THE BEACH, THIS SUMMER, YOU WILL FIND BACKGAMMON FANS PORING OVER GAILY COLORED BOARDS

**H**AS the vogue for backgammon seized your crowd yet? If not, you will want to be the one to introduce it. Or, perhaps you are already among the experienced players sharing the good times at the jolliest kind of backgammon parties. It is a game with a fascination, certainly, as you know if you have heard real fans discuss it, and is a game to be reckoned with, too, for it is gaining in popularity every day.

No matter whether you are an enthusiastic beginner or an expert in the strategies and principles of the game, half the fun is in having a new backgammon board of which you may be proud. There are such stunning ones to be had. First, I want to tell you something about the finer sets that may be seen here and there. Then, let me tell you how you can indulge that artistic impulse and make your own board, easily and inexpensively. Just the kind of board that will make your friends exclaim, "Where did you get it, Jane? Do tell us how to make one!"

You would hardly expect to start your search for a game in the great Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Yet, that is where I wish you could see the one of historical interest. It is Italian, sixteenth century, and is in the Morgan Collection. Backgammon is an old, old game, dating way back to Egypt of thirty centuries ago. In our own country it has been played, in a primitive sort of way, by the Aztecs even before Columbus discovered America. No wonder the mellowed old boards are in demand as antiques, and find their way to museums.

Among the very new and modern backgammon boards, one of the most interesting to me is a gorgeous affair covered with rich-looking leather and framed with the identical steel that glistens up the dizzy heights of the tallest building in the world—the Empire State Building in New York. To add to the richness of the board and carry out the modernistic feeling the fine leather field is decorated with points of brilliant blue and black. Instead of the conventional black and white men, jewel-like men of blue and white are used.

Very unique is the backgammon set that is magnetized to be used when traveling. And, now that vacation time is here, this board should be decidedly popular on fast moving trains and unsteady boats. It is conveniently compact, not measuring more than eight inches the longest way when folded and looking quite like a small writing case. Some of these magnetized boards are leather, others are leatherette—

field, binding, and back. The men are like so many little flat red pills that cling to the board wherever they are placed, due to the magnetism, of course. The dice cups are collapsible to economize space when packing.

Among the inexpensive boards that promise to enjoy wide popularity at the beach and summer cottage are the folding ones. Some of these are paper covered and are perfectly flat when opened out. They fold just once for convenience in carrying them about. Others have cork tables and wood frames that close up with hinges to form a case in which the men and dice may be carried.

One of the finest of these folding sets is shown by a well known gift shop. The antique finish and the beautiful reproduction of an old painting mounted on the back make this set look like a rare old book when not in use.

For backgammon parties the card table cover, decorated on one side with a backgammon board, is perhaps the most popular arrangement of all. A hostess frequently buys as many as eight of these covers at a time. Very attractive ones are of black waterproof fabric, decorated with gold and bright red points. Others are in lighter shades, such as light green decorated with red and black points. My own favorite covers are of a lustrous fabrikoid which is made especially for card table covers and has a felt back. And a veritable carnival of color they bring to my parties when I dress each table in a cover of a different color—bright red, blue, green, black.

I particularly want to tell you girls how to make these covers, for they will be handy to have if your troop wants to plan a backgammon party to raise funds. Then, too, they should bring a very nice price at a Girl Scout sale if you wish to make them to sell. And if the whole troop got together and worked it would take hardly any time at all to make a great many of them.

In case you are not familiar with a backgammon board, I will try and give you an idea what it is like. The illustrations on the opposite page will help you to understand the layout. The board is divided through the center into two halves, called "tables." The partition, or division line, is called the "bar." There are twelve points on each side, twenty-four points in all, colored alternately in two contrasting colors on a field of a third color. The points must be sufficiently long to hold five men and wide enough to hold one man on each point, six abreast.

Each player uses fifteen men, usually black for one player and white for the other, though red and black, blue and white, or other color combinations are sometimes used to

# Backgammon?

Illustrations by Miriam Bartlett

carry out the color scheme of the set. Each player also has a pair of dice and a dice box sufficiently large to allow the dice to be shaken freely. Dice may be bought in various colors to match almost any set. Large red ones are particularly attractive.

For those who play a great deal the board is preferably made of a material that is silent—cork, felt, leather, or felt-backed fabric.

## A Backgammon Table Cover

The materials necessary for stenciling are: Stencil paper, pattern, a special stubby stencil brush, decorator's oil paint, turpentine, Japan drier, carbon paper, and plenty of soft, absorbent rags.

First, draw the design on a large sheet of paper. The field should be  $21\frac{1}{2}$  inches square, with six points at each end on either side of a bar one-half inch wide.

In the illustration on this page, the pencil is pointing to the bar. There is a small space between the points and one-half inch all around them at the edge of the square. Each point is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches wide at the base. To cut out the stencil, place the paper with the drawn design on a hard surface, preferably a piece of glass, and cut out with a sharp knife or a razor blade the parts that are to be painted.

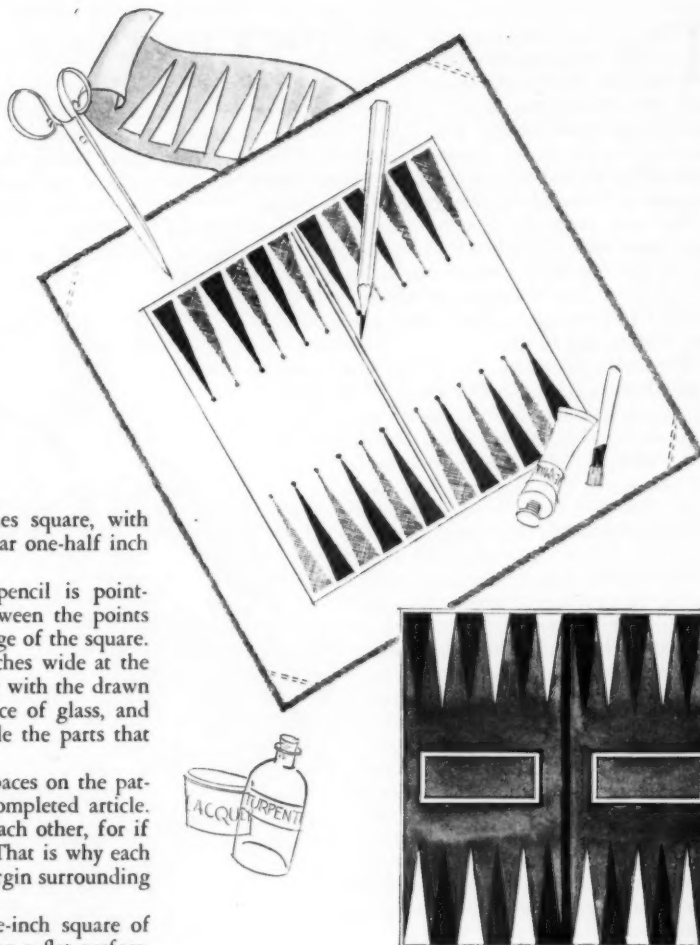
It must be remembered that the open spaces on the pattern represent the painted spaces on the completed article. No two parts of the design should touch each other, for if they do the stencil pattern will fall apart. That is why each point is made as a separate unit and the margin surrounding the board is not joined at the corners.

With the stencil cut, fasten a thirty-one-inch square of fabric securely in place with thumb tacks on a flat surface. Place the stencil design carefully in the center and either catch it in place with a pin driven in at each corner of the design (the paint will hide the pin hole) or have someone hold it for you while you work. This is important as the paint will smear if the design is moved while working.

Now, mix sufficient paint to complete the design, using equal parts of turpentine and Japan drier to thin the paint. Apply paint on the open spaces. Hold the brush in a vertical position and use with a dabbing motion. Work with just as little paint on the brush as possible, yet cover the surface of the fabric well. First, paint all of one color, then all of the other color. Protect the adjacent pattern with a blotter held in the left hand while working. Use the paint as dry as possible to prevent running.

It is usually possible to buy just the shade you wish to use. If, however, the shades are too dark they may be brightened up a bit with white. In the cover shown in the accompanying illustration the waterproof cloth is light green. It is bound on the edges with black bias binding, one-half inch wide. At each corner a strip of narrow elastic is caught under the binding and is used to slip over the corner of the table to hold the cloth in place while playing. The bar, the margin around the board, and twelve of the points are black. The alternating points are vermilion red. This combination of colors is very effective.

If you are using black fabric, you will find that ver-



million red and gold will make a striking color combination. You can buy bronze powder and mix it with bronzing liquid to give you the gold decoration.

## A Modernistic Backgammon Board

Perhaps the most popular material of all for backgammon boards is cork framed with a simple wood frame finished in mahogany or walnut, or stained black. To make a board of this type, cork floor covering may be had. A good-looking board may be made of green cork, stenciled with alternating points of red and black, each point being outlined with a margin of gold, which is drawn on with a pointed brush after the stenciling is done. A thin coat of clear shellac is applied to make the board more durable. As the cork is bought by the square yard you might make a board that would just fit the top of a card table. And, if you are a girl who is handy with rule and saw, you can make your own frame of any easily workable wood. The frame for a board as large as this one should be about two inches wide and half an inch thick, and the bar should be a part of the frame.

## A Folding Backgammon Board

One of the handiest boards of all for informal games and for play at the beach is made of (Continued on page 39)



Worthington as she was striding purposefully toward a thicket near the tent. She ordered him curly out of the way.

But Bender did not seem to understand. "S'matter, old girl? You lost something?" his look of bright inquiry meant. But the lady brushed past him and began poking the bushes with a stick.

If Bender felt he was being ignored, he gave no sign. Besides, he was not the sort of dog that could be ignored for long and, charging past Aunt Worthington, he made a great show of searching the bushes. He crashed back and forth and sniffed gustily at everything.

"Get away," the lady commanded.

"Use your nose—not a stick. That's the way to find things," Bender's renewed inhalations might have meant. Then seeing she would not take his hint he sat down and stared fixedly up at the trees overhead. "Bet it's up there," his yip said. But already Aunt Worthington was calling to the girls to search in the opposite direction while she worked her way toward the lake.

Bender decided to go with her and when she began calling "Hor-ACE" in her deep contralto he broke into delighted barks.

Once when she stopped to prod a thickset with her stick Bender gave an understanding yelp which meant "Rats!" and began to burrow. Before Aunt Worthington could get clear she was being pelted with clods from his flying paws.

"You wretch. Get out of this," she shouted, waving her stick. But if her stick had been a sword waving him on to the attack it could not have encouraged Bender more.

Five minutes later when they came to the shallows Bender was still intent on lending his unwanted assistance. Aunt Worthington was striding along the beach when something stirred in the bushes a little way ahead and the disheveled Horace walked into view.

"You darling! Whatever in the world have they done to—"

But her alarmed question was never finished for at that instant Bender, the oaf, cut in front of her and only by a feat of unexpected agility did Aunt Worthington prevent herself from being tripped. To have

Bender glare back at her in a way which meant "Watch out whom you're pushing," was the last straw. With a vicious swing of her stick she rushed at him, but Bender ducked and then, dodging back and forth in front of her, he launched a series of jeering barks.

"Come on, you razz her, too," he yipped to Horace.

But in the last quarter of an hour the spark of rebellion had begun to flicker in the little spaniel. It died when he found himself face to face with his forceful mistress. Instead of joining the terrier he crouched and then, as his mistress stooped over him, he rolled on his back and with uplifted forepaws pleaded for leniency. The sight was too much for Bender's robust spirit and with a snort he vanished into the bushes.

It was two hours before he went back to camp. He was peering cautiously around the tent when Flo caught sight of him and broke into a laugh.

"She's gone. You can come in," she called. "Let's feel your ears. They should be burning."

"Aunt Worthington said frightful things about you," Donna told him. "If Horace gets infection from that mud bath it's your fault. She caught the afternoon boat so as to get him to a vet before he contracted fatal after effects from the wretched food you let him eat. She's terribly upset about it all."

"That's what she thinks," Flo went on. "But we think you're wonderful. Look here," she added, taking a sheet of paper from the table and holding it before Bender's mud-daubed nose. "This is a telegram we're sending Tommy. It says: 'Bender the making of our trip. Ten thousand thanks.' Doesn't that thrill you? It ought to."

But Bender only looked puzzled and not until Donna took all that remained of the cake she had made and placed it in front of him and coaxed him to eat it, did his face brighten.

"Now you're talking in a language a fellow can understand," his wagging tail stub said. Then with characteristic enthusiasm and singleness of purpose he consumed the offering.

## Have You Taken Up Backgammon?

(Continued from page 11)

spectrum colored papers mounted on news-board, both of which may be bought in the art department or paper department of many of the better stores.

To make a board of this type—which is shown below the fabric cover on page eleven—cut two pieces of heavy news-board seven inches by fourteen inches, and join them in hinge fashion with a strip of black cloth mending tape one and one-quarter inches wide. In joining, the boards should be placed together along the fourteen-inch side and plenty of space should be allowed between them to give the tape sufficient play so that the boards may be folded up as you would close a book. Cut four pieces of bright blue glossy finished paper thirteen and one-half inches by six and one-half inches and mount them on both sides of the board, back and front,

using vegetable glue. Twelve points of silver and twelve points of black paper should next be cut and mounted alternately with the same glue. These points are five inches long and one inch wide at the base. Just to make the board more interesting, a panel, six and one-quarter inches long by two and one-half inches wide, is outlined in black and silver, in the center of each side of the board between the points.

The outside edge of the board is bound with the mending tape, and the corners are mitered. When finished the board is given a coat of white shellac to make it durable and waterproof, as well as more attractive.

This is just one suggestion, of course. Other color combinations may be worked out to suit the individual from the wide choice of papers available. Gold or silver cardboard may be had in sheets twenty-two by twenty- (Continued on page 43)

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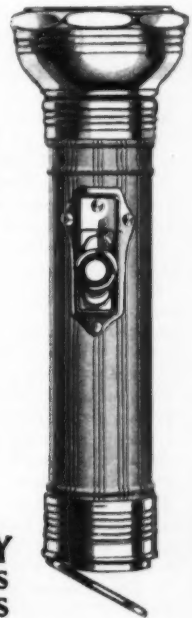
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he finally ambled over to her side and at her direction peered over her shoulder into the finder. "Do you see your brother in thar?" asked Holly.

Jack bent lower. Then suddenly he jerked away. "Fer Lord sakes. I seed hit, Hart. You're astanding in thar as clear as clear. And the woods. And Dan! Hit's witchery. That's what hit is."

But Hart was not convinced. And so he came to take a look while Jack stood before the camera. After gazing in the finder Hart backed away from Holly shaking his head and muttering, "I'll be dad-burned but I seed you, Jack, right in that box. Hit's a charm box. Hit is that."

"I never knowed ary charm doctor could make a thing like that," answered the other boy.

The two Cobbs walked to the other side of the glade and stood in consultation. "Aw, I'm agoing to take hit away from her. We can't leave no sheriff get hold o' that," cried Hart harshly and moved toward Holly.

"Come on. Touch this charm box," challenged the girl. "But gin you put one finger to hit, evil will befall you all your days. Gin you got ary sense in your skull-pieces you'll say as you'll never do harm ag'in to Dan or ary Stevens and that being done I'll keep my witchery for my onwself and not show my picture to the sheriff."

Hart still hesitated, half inclined to take the camera. But Jack, whose eyes were glued on the kodak, took hold of his arm

and drew him back. "Leave her be," he muttered. "Don't have no dealings with magic." Then lifting his voice he said in as casual a manner as he could muster, "We jest aimed to have a little fun with Dan. I allow we're done through and won't be meeting up with you-all ary more. Waal, Hart, I allow hit's time we was getting home to feed the property."

Together the Cobbs edged into the woods, casting furtive backward glances at Holly and her weapon. Then they disappeared.

Holly waited until the sound of their footsteps had died away. Then she raced over to Dan. "Dan, Dan, are you all right?" she panted, as she tugged at his rope.

"Shore. But I didn't dast say a word whilst they was here. Lawsy, Holly, you shore are one smart-turned gal." Dan looked at her with admiration.

In a few minutes the knots were loosened and Dan stepped free. Holly clasped her kodak in one hand and gripped her brother's arm with the other as they hurried back toward the trail. Too relieved to speak, they slipped along in silence. Suddenly Dan stopped short. "Holly, I just thought. You had to use your onliest picture on them no-count Cobbs—the picture you been seeking for all this while. Golly, but I'm sorry."

Holly's eyes misted. "Shucks," she said huskily. "I'd most as leave have used hit for that as for a bird or a mountain. I allow hit will make a right smart picture, Dan."

## Have You Taken Up Backgammon?

(Continued from page 39)

eight inches and could be used for these boards by mounting the spectrum papers on the gold or silver background and binding the edges with gold or silver *passé partout* binding. The back of the board might also be decorated in an original way with an attractive silhouette, a Godey print, or even an illustration cut from a magazine.

As to the men and dice used with the backgammon boards described here, they may be just as elaborate or as simple as you like and as your budget allows. Jewel-like ones of a composition material may be had in brilliant colors, or strictly useful ones of black and red may be had at the five and ten cent store. These may be painted to match the colors of your board. As a guide in your selection, the size of the men should be decided by the size of the board. If you are ingenious you may, of course, make your own dice cups to match your board or you may buy them in a number of different styles and colors, to suit your fancy.

Since I haven't room here to discuss the game of backgammon, I am listing a few books that will lead the beginner by easy steps through the strategies and technicalities and will bring to the expert added pleasure in her game.

*Vanity Fair's Backgammon To Win*, by Georges Mabardi (Horace Liveright). To quote the sponsors, "The author of this book is acknowledged—by both experienced players and authorities—to be one of the finest exponents of the game, and

one of the most successful players in America today." It seems that Mr. Mabardi must have inherited his skill, as he is an Egyptian by birth and has played the game since he was a child. The book is designed to save the beginner much bitter experience and increase the pleasure of the more experienced and is a very valuable aid to the lover of backgammon.

*Laws of Backgammon 1931*, prepared by The Backgammon and Card Committee of the Racket and Tennis Club of New York (Charles Scribner's Sons). A brief summary of the rules of the game by a group of experts.

*The New Backgammon*, by Elizabeth Clark Boyden (Harcourt, Brace and Company). In this volume the principles and latest developments of the game are treated in an interesting way.

*How To Play The New Backgammon*, by Lelia Hattersley (Doubleday, Doran and Company). The principles of the game are given in an attractive and interesting style.

*Backgammon Tactics*, by Harold Thorne (E. P. Dutton and Company). This book contains fifty concrete examples of how to play different casts. Each problem is shown in a diagram and the correct answers to the moves are given, so that by careful study the player can learn much.

NOTE: Read, in the lower left hand corner of page forty-four, our unusual offer of a book on backgammon.

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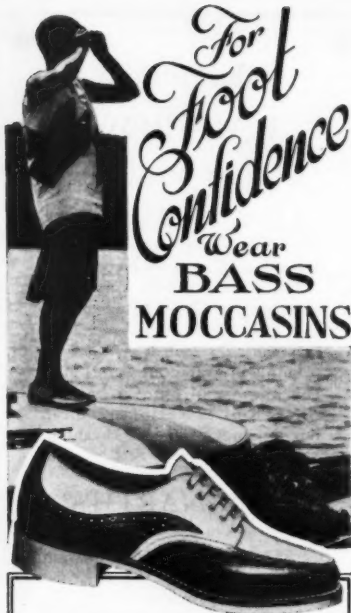
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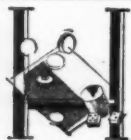
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## Warm Days and Cool Fruit

(Continued from page 21)

baskets that may be bought at the five and ten cent store. When the French serve berries in this manner, they serve also little brown jugs of cream. If you haven't these, you may use tiny individual pitchers, which also may be obtained at the five and ten cent store, and which help make the table attractive.

The appearance of grapes and cherries, peaches and pears is also improved by the addition of a few of the fresh leaves. Perhaps, with the exception of flowers, fruit makes one of the most attractive of centerpieces, but it can be made more attractive by adding sprays of green leaves.

There are many ways of adding variety to cooked fruits. When you make applesauce, for example, try adding grated lemon or orange peel and a little lemon juice, or a small quantity of left over jam or jelly, or canned fruit juice. This will make an ordinary dish taste unusual.

When you bake apples, peel a strip around the middle, fill the scooped-out centers with dates, raisins or chopped fruit, and cook in juices from canned fruits. Prepared this way they will taste especially good and the family will enjoy them.

As a variation in serving prunes, cook them until the syrup is thick; then to each serving add two or three sections of grapefruit or orange or a slice or two of canned peaches or canned pears.

There are one or two ways of serving fruits as vegetables. Broiled or sautéed bananas are delicious with broiled ham or bacon.

### Broiled Bananas

Peel and cut the bananas in two, cross-wise, and cut the halves in two, length-wise. Dip each piece in lemon juice and then in melted butter. Put in a shallow pan, and set under the broiler. When brown, arrange on top of the ham or place around the slice as a border. Canned pineapple may be used in the same way.

This month, too, it might be wise to begin to put up a few glasses of jam or jelly. If you use small individual glasses, they may serve as the beginning of your reserve of Christmas gifts. Two, four, or six of these tiny glasses, each topped with a Christmas seal, and tied in red or green cellophane paper and packed in a box, will make a welcome gift. Then if there are children in the family who must take lunches to school, these tiny jars are excellent for the lunchbox. Again, with several girls working together, enough may be made to sell at the Girl Scout booth at a fall fair.

If you are making jelly for yourself, I would advise starting out with a small amount of fruit, say about a quart, until you have gained some facility. Then you may work with more.

Some fruits, notably currants, grapes and apples, carry their own jellifying material, pectin. Many fruits—among them strawberries, peaches and pears—do not, and these must be mixed with apple, currant, or grape juice or with commercial pectin, to make them jell.

I shall give you directions for making

currant jelly because currants carry a great deal of natural pectin, and hence jell readily.

### Currant Jelly

1. Select fruit that is not over-ripe.
2. Wash and stem.
3. Put in a kettle and add one-fourth cup of water.
4. Cook until the skins burst. You may hasten this process by mashing the fruit with a wooden spoon.
5. Pour into a wet jelly bag, and suspend over a bowl.
6. Let stand until the juice ceases to drip, but do not squeeze the bag. This tends to produce a cloudy jelly.
7. Measure the juice into a large kettle, being sure not to fill it more than one-quarter full. This gives the juice a chance to boil up without boiling away.
8. Measure out an equal amount of sugar.

9. Allow the juice to boil from three to five minutes, skimming if necessary.

10. Stir in the sugar and let it cook until it jellies.

11. To test for the jellifying point, dip a little of the juice out into a spoon and pour it back into the saucepan. When two drops instead of only one form side by side at the edge of the spoon and then run together into one, and finally "sheet" off, the juice is ready to jell and must be taken from the fire.

12. In the meantime, rinse clean glasses in cold water and set them on a cloth.

13. Pour the juice into the glasses to within an eighth of an inch of the top, and set away to stiffen.

14. When the jelly is stiff, melt paraffin wax in a saucepan and pour over the top. Be sure that the paraffin completely covers the jelly and seals the edges of the glass. Otherwise, the jelly will leak.

15. Cover and wash the glasses. Label and put away—for Christmas or for the fair, or for the children's lunch or for the plain everyday dinner.

If the glasses are to be used for Christmas gifts, they should be decorated with Christmas seals, wrapped in cellophane paper—green, purple, red, yellow, or whatever color scheme you happen to be using this year—and tied with silver cord. This should not be done until you are ready to send your Christmas gifts.

If your jelly jars are to be sold at a fair, they should be attractively labeled. Red-bordered labels with the name of the jelly neatly printed or typed are effective. The glasses should be displayed in neat rows on shelves not more than four or five inches wide and six or seven inches high. If you use individual glasses, the shelves should not be more than four inches apart.

In order to make your jellies more decorative, you may drop a cherry, a strawberry, a spray of mint or a rose geranium leaf into each glass.

To make strawberry, cherry, quince, raspberry, and blackberry jellies, combine the juice either with equal parts of currant or apple juice, or with commercial pectin. Directions for making jelly from fruit juices combined with pectin come with the product.

Jerome Bohm writes on Beethoven in August—