

*Door*

*By Harry Zirkelbach 09-20-2010*

*Building Codes in most states require two exits to any dwelling, for fire and related safety concerns.*

*While this is reasonable and universally accepted, in all homes of youth, every home had one door where the world entered the house.*

*This was the back door through which deliveries and visitors were welcomed.*

*And in the years there, no neighbor ever locked the back door. Later we would learn there was a secondary reason for this. The homes, built just after WWI, all locks using the same skeleton key. And, just in case, adults knew there would be a nail somewhere on the porch from which hung a skeleton key.*

*During summer that back door was seldom shut.*

*Instead, the entry was guarded by the screen door. This door always shut with a bang, caused by a amazingly sturdy wire spring, attached on one end to the inside jamb of the door frame and on the other, the screen's lower mid-level crossbar. When a stranger knocked on the front of our house, they were instructed, "Go around back." In fact our parents had locked the front door once, said they lost the key, were reluctant to have the front door used.*

*Banging of the screen door was performed by everyone in our family, and guests too. Its tattoo expected at every home in the village. Especially on departure; Entering was another trial, swinging*

*the screen back out far enough to prevent it from hitting those entering, either on leg, foot or butt. Still a great bang.*

*It helped that our screen door was sturdy, lightly made, mostly screen. Dad fit the screen snugly to the door which did not bounce on closing. It was a rare home where the screen door had a cleverly designed closer, that kept the screen closed for lesser events, like the cat opening the door with its nose, then head, go get out. Besides, our well fitted screen kept a decent seal against flies and the other flying critters, for at least one summer.*

*In those Pennsylvania winter, the screen door would take a beating when snow storms were accompanied by gales winds. Snow would build up on the open porch. Those opening the back door were greeted that wall of thin snow adhering to the screen, and a few handful of sifted snow on the thread. Then this duty. Knock the snow off the screen with any bang to the door itself, then the gentle forceful push near the bottom of the screen, to force the snow on the porch far enough away to exit, grab the shovel and clear the porch, then the steps to the ground.*

*That annually rebuilt screed door created invigorating days for our family and their many guests.*

*Sorry I can't repeat them today.*

*We have no screen door to our exit from Windsor Gardens.*