

'Home Sweet Home' in a geodesic dome?

By PATRICK TONNEY

The large white dome rises up from the rural Plymouth Township landscape like a well-designed mushroom. At the very top, three triangular panels of black glass glint in the sunlight.

But nestled snugly into the hillside is the tip-off—the familiar wooden form of a house under construction. However, your three-bedroom brick ranch it's not.

"It's the first one that I know of in the area," said Howard Meyer, sweeping his arm toward the top of the

house. "In fact, it's the only one."

And there's not much of a question about it. There aren't that many geodesic domes in this neck of the woods.

The structure of the first two levels is not all that unusual: A basement and main floor built out of wood and cement. Beyond that, the similarity with the housing mainstream ends.

Placed over the framework like a giant umbrella is the dome itself, 60 interlocking triangles fitted together in a pattern that looks like it came straight out of a geometry textbook.

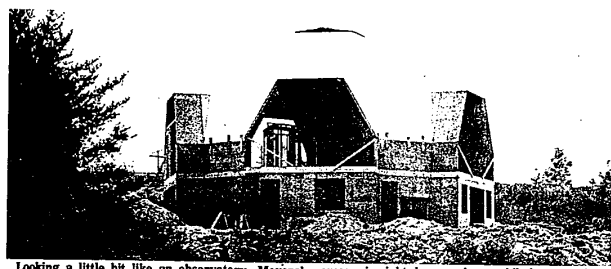
Not all that surprising, either. The originator of the geodesic dome was none other than Buckminster Fuller, engineer, mathematician, designer and philosopher.

Meyer, an engineer himself, said he knew absolutely nothing about Fuller or his theories on the dome when he first became interested in it. But he says he has since "read a few of Fuller's books."

WHILE MEYER admits that maybe Fuller had something with his more abstract ideas on the benefits of living in a dome, he is definitely sold on its practicality.

First off, Meyer will tell you that the dome construction uses one-third less wood than a regular house of comparable size. Then he will point out that because of the circular roof, interior air currents flow more freely, reducing the heating cost by one-third.

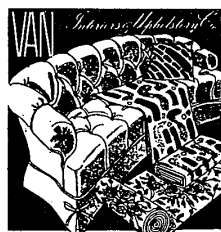
And that doesn't say anything about inside design. To begin with, there is only one square room in the whole



Looking a little bit like an observatory, Meyer's geodesic dome house has a panoramic view. The only geodesic in sight, he says, is a mobile home park and he plans to replant some big trees to block that out.



Howard Meyer sells dome houses and will soon live in one himself.



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