

Dollhouse is a dream come true

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Staff photos: MINDY SAUNDERS

Dorothy Knybel always wanted a doll house. She finally got one by building it herself.

The house has everything in it any child would want, including items to make an adult happy.

Each room of the nine-square-foot house is decorated in detail, from the wainscoting on the walls, to the lighting fixtures, to each piece of furniture. "The house has a real meaning to me," said Ms. Knybel. "I have something in it from everyone in my family."

The Avon Township woman started collecting miniature objects 10 years ago. On her trips in Europe and the U.S., she would buy tiny tea sets, pieces of furniture or other small items and store them.

About four years ago, she made the decision to make the doll house she always wanted. She designed the colonial-style, two-story house, hired a carpenter to make the frame, and set out on a task that isn't yet finished.

"I've just started on the landscaping," she said.

The house has a garden on one side, with dwarfed tools and a garden hose. The other side has a planted area similar to landscaping Ms. Knybel had in another house. But she wants to do more.

THE INTERIOR is complete, however. So is the planned tour of the house.

When Ms. Knybel shows her creation, she first turns on all the lights in the house and turns off the lights in her family room. After creating a mood and hearing her guests state how beautiful the doll house is, she invites them into "her home" via a tape recording.

The tape takes the visitors through each room, describing the type of wallpaper used, the art work on the walls and other small details one may miss if looking at the room alone.

For instance, in the dining room, Ms. Knybel used Thibony wallpaper on the walls above the wainscoting. The beautiful wood dining room table is completely set up for a birthday party, the theme of why the visitor is at the house. On a side table is a birth-

day cake and boxes of candy and Cracker Jacks that can't be more than a half-inch long. On the ceiling is a crystal chandelier. There's a Bible and a copy of Webster's dictionary on a book stand in one of the corners and a bar in another.

One of the bathrooms upstairs has toilet paper on the roll and gold swan faucet handles. Even the bathtub has a gold water drain.

The bedroom, designed for two boys, is complete with two bunk beds, an aquarium with fish, a bulletin board with signs of the times, like "Blow your mind," a photo album on the floor, an old victrola and a sterling silver miniature barge.

EACH ROOM is as spectacular as the next, and nothing is missed. There is soap for washing, games for playing, food for eating.

There's even a kitten in the kitchen, leaping up spilt milk on the floor. Other rooms in the house include the birthday girl's pink, feminine bedroom, a warm-looking family room with a brick fireplace and a kitchen dinette.

What's outstanding about Ms. Knybel's house is that she made so many of the items herself. Things she didn't have in her collection of miniatures she made from odds and ends collected from friends and family.

When she looks at what's in her house, she's reminded of those she loves.

Since Ms. Knybel's mother, who lives with her, likes to knit, there's a basket of yarn and knitting needles in the family room. Her father, who is deceased, is remembered with his cuff links and other items displayed as a collection in a glass wall case.

Pictures of nieces and nephews are hung in antique frames in a room.

The dining room crystal chandelier is constructed from a relative's necklace and some Christmas lights. Material from her sister's slip has been sewn into chandelier curtains in another room, and curtains in the master bedroom are from someone's gown.

THERE'S A LOT of love evident in Ms. Knybel's house. Many of the people she has remembered with memorabilia made things for her. There are handmade rugs, carpets and



Everything in the house is held together with Elmer's glue, according to builder Dorothy Knybel.

a handmade car parked on the lawn outside.

One also notices the imagination Ms. Knybel used in decorating. She recycled popsicle sticks into kitchen paneling, buttons into records and toothpaste tops into lamp shades.

The outside of the house is as attractive as the inside. The white siding and red shingles are made from posterboard, each piece cut out by hand.

"Everything in this house is held together with Elmer's glue," Ms. Knybel said, laughing.

The house is sturdy, however, able to take a move to and from Florida with minimal damage.

Now that her task is almost done, Ms. Knybel has just begun taking a look at what she's done.

"Making this house wasn't an easy task. I did everything by hand. I like to be creative but I never thought the house would turn out like this."

Film series to start at OCC

A series of documentary films called "How Should We Then Live?" is now underway at Oakland Community College, 27055 Orchard Lake, Farmington.

Each 30-minute film focuses on a major historical age. They will be presented each Wednesday at 7 p.m. through Dec. 6. Written and narrated by Dr. Francis Schaeffer, the films trace the rise and decline of western

thought and culture. They were filmed on about 100 locations in 12 countries, taking two years and \$1.1 million to complete.

In the final film, Schaeffer, a theologian and philosopher, reviews the last two decades and concludes that man's only hope is a return to truth as revealed in Jesus Christ through the Scriptures.

For more information call OCC at 476-9400, ext. 500.

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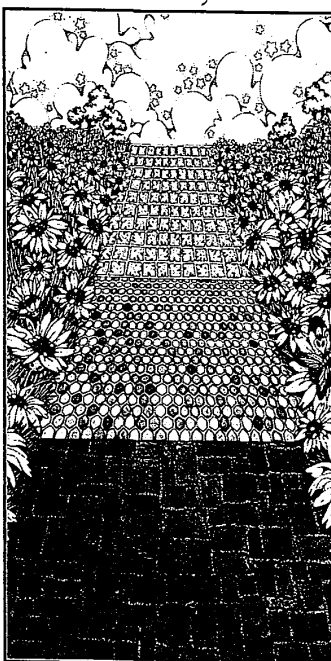
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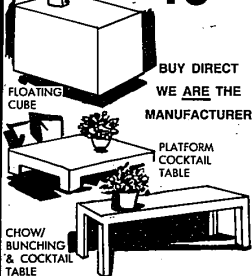
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