

m.m.memos

A month into life in our new home, I keep getting asked if we're settled. That's relative, I guess. A room and a hall are painted, furniture is in place, a lot of pictures are up.

Several new purchases have been made, chairs and tables and cabinets at least tentatively arranged, windows are curtained.

And, wonder of wonders, we have succeeded in transferring the zillion boxes and contents thereof from on and under the ping pong table to our newly-erected shelves.

But we still are less than satisfied about how the living room is arranged and I find I keep changing my mind about what I want to do with the kitchen area. So, when a colleague inquired recently as to our state of settlement, my answer was that things were going along well, but there were still a number of things to do.

"You never finish everything," said she, also a home owner.

Well, maybe not, but this time I hope to come a lot closer. Our previous house was home for 20 years, and we



By MARGARET MILLER

never came close to accomplishing all the things we planned.

We made a lot of changes there, but many other ideas for the place never moved beyond the dreamer state. Right up to moving-out day, we could see a lot of things undone that we had intended to do.

We certainly never finished everything.

This time, though, I figure it will be different. The job is not monumental as the last was. A few decisions here, a bit more wielding of the paintbrush and hammer, and we should be having things the way we want them.

Well, maybe I'd better qualify that last just a bit. Recently we have kept coming to mind a not-particularly-glam magazine story I read years ago.

The central figure was a woman making the rounds of elegant shops for the absolutely-perfect accessory to place on the absolutely-perfect table in her absolutely-perfect room.

She found it and she was absolutely delighted with the effect. And then, as the story ended, she was sinking deep into depression because her home was complete; there was nothing left to do. I'll make sure I'm not like her. Scratch a few decoration plans.



ELIZABETH PLAGENS, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cass Plagens of Traverse City, graduated from Harper Hospital School of Nursing this spring. Ms. Plagens, who was known as Betsy when she lived in Farmington, was awarded the hospital's highest achievement award for nursing of children. She is employed with Henry Ford Hospital.

New Voices

MR. and MRS. WILLIAM JANIGA, of Farmington Hills, announce the birth of their son, Joseph Conrad, born June 27 in Providence Hospital.

The infant is welcomed by his 2 1/2 year old sister, Jennifer Lynn. His maternal grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hamm, of Westland, and his paternal grandmother is Nettie Fisher of Taylor.



Room for Design Give second hand a new life



by Gloria Cohen

Last week we were concerned with the adventures of second-hand furniture shopping. I suggested some of the possibilities available to you at garage sales, second-hand stores, the corner of someone's attic, auctions and ads in the newspaper.

If you followed these steps and have come up with a treasure — a piece of furniture that can be made over and used again for many years — you may need to know how to bring it back to life.

If it's of good design, good wood, and sound construction, it's worth refinishing. Many a prized antique has been rescued after being hidden for years under layers of paint.

TO SUCCESSFULLY bring old furniture back to life doesn't require any special talent. What it does take is a desire, a great deal of patience, a little hard work and some quality materials to work with. The satisfaction will be worth the effort.

The success of any wood finishing project depends on a clean surface that is free of dirt, dust, wax, oil, stains, smudges and grease. It should be smooth, free of dents, gouges, and scratches.

When a previous clear finish is dull or worn but not cracked or peeling to bare wood, simply wash the surface with a solvent to remove accumulated wax, dirt and grease. Rinse thoroughly and wipe dry with clean clothes while the surface is still wet. Sand lightly with fine paper until smooth and remove all dust with a tack rag or a vacuum.

If the previous finish is badly deteriorated, chipped, or peeling, remove the old finish entirely with a paint and varnish remover. Don't be fooled into buying inexpensive, poor quality remover. Several coats may be required, so pour out the liquid generously and allow it to set for a reasonable length of time. When the finish can be easily lifted, remove with steel wool, rags, or putty knife.

Always work with the grain to avoid scratching.

Allow to dry and remove all dust and loose matter by brushing or wiping with a lint-free cloth. If the wood is smooth after the use of remover, no sanding is needed.

FOR WOOD SURFACES not previously finished, use fine sandpaper to remove minor smudges and soil marks. Some unfinished woods require filling before finishing. The basic purpose of a paste filler is to fill the open grain of course-textured woods such as oak, mahogany or walnut so that the final finish will be level and smooth.

The paste filler should precede staining. Apply the stain by rag, sponge, roller or brush. Work a small area at a time. Wipe off excess while still wet using a damp cloth. The longer a stain is allowed to stand before being wiped, the deeper the color. A helper speeds the job, one person staining and other person wiping.

Each wood takes stain differently. Softwoods such as pine and other conifers are more absorbent. Test a small section before you begin. A sealer may be necessary to assure uniformity.

Painting is the quickest and least expensive way of bringing new life to worn surfaces. The right paint will work real magic, whether it be a non-descript door, an ugly fireplace, or a battered piece of furniture.

Colors should be chosen with great care, for color has power. Today's paints are easy to apply. They dry with incredible speed and they hold up under hard wear. There are tools to speed up the painting process and produce a smooth, professional surface.

Some new paints on the market today have remarkable properties. They can cover any surface, hold up under the most trying use and produce beautiful surfaces.

LINSEED-OIL PAINTS still account for 40 percent of the paints sold today. Plastics have invaded the paint can. Plastic resins stirred into newer solutions are the base for a range of paints which produce extremely durable surfaces. They are odorless, quick-drying, washable and easily applied.

Latex paints are water-mix paints so that the clean up job is easy. Latex is quick-drying and its odor fades quickly. Since latex includes several varieties, one must

depend on familiar and reputable brand names.

Alkyd paints are resin enamel paints which have been around for a long time. They are popular because they dry fast, they resist yellowing and usually cover with one coat.

Alkyds are produced in high gloss, semigloss and flat coating. They are used best for metal. They must be thinned with turpentine or solvent.

Epoxy paints may be used on surfaces such as worn laundry tubs, basement walls,

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