

# A craft room invites togetherness

Everybody's heard about those old-fashioned quilting bees where pioneer women got together for a few hours of socializing and work. Togetherness: that's the spirit of crafts.

These days, though, you're more likely to find the typical craftsman (or woman) holed up by himself (or herself) in a solitary workroom in some distant corner of the house. The "crafty" person has been practically banished from mainstream family life.

That's usually unnecessary. With careful planning, many family rooms can serve as craft workshops too. A recent issue of "Decorating & Craft Ideas" magazine shows how.

The first step is to set aside separate areas for craft and non-craft activities. The second is to draw them together again through certain decorating tricks that give a room unity of design.

The magazine's family room is intended for a quilter and a miniaturist (someone who makes dollhouse furniture and scale models), although it can be adapted to other uses. The larger portion of space is devoted to a craft area and the remainder is taken up by a "conversation alcove," with plushy love seats.

There's lots of storage: a must for storing tools and materials. It's ranged along the walls, leaving the center of the room clear. Why? So there's plenty of space to operate the 8-foot-long solid maple quilt frame. When the frame is not being employed, the quilting surface tilts up vertically and the whole apparatus fits flat against the wall.

**THE STORAGE** includes a closet for compact power tools, complete with work platform and a fan to suction off sawdust.

The Armstrong Solarian no-wax floor

in a small tile pattern is a good "thread holder." The color is called "toast." And unlike carpet (installed only in the alcove) no-wax floors don't lend themselves to pins finding their way beneath the surface, perhaps to pop out later as a painful surprise. Also an important consideration for a craft (or indeed any) area — no-wax floors are easy to clean and don't need much care.

The unification of the decor — the

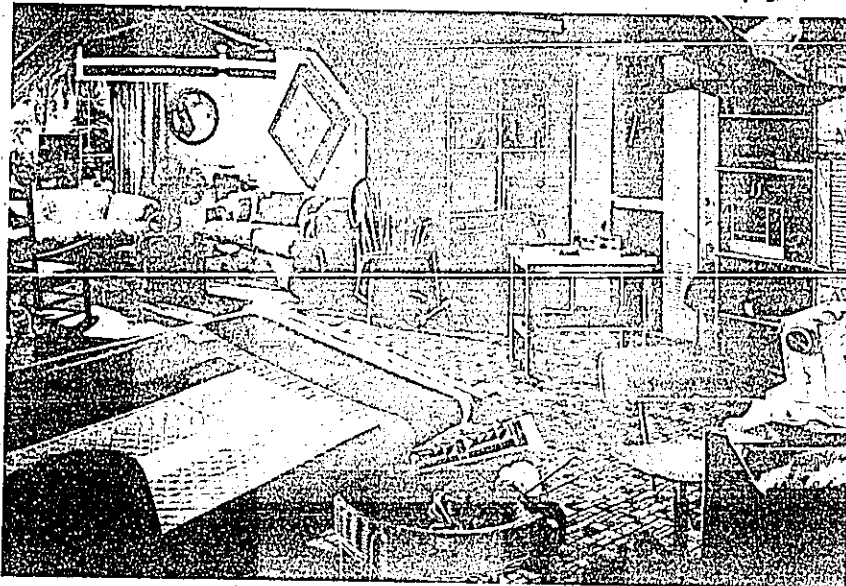
drawing together of all elements of the room into a harmonious whole began with the choice of wallpaper. It's a crisp, neat windowpane check (cream-colored stripes on a hunter-green field) which provides a nice contrast to the clutter in the craft area.

The love seats in the conversation alcove are upholstered in a fabric color-coordinated to the wallpaper. This establishes a strong visual link between and

craft and non-craft areas. The wallpaper and fabric are from the same source.

The visual link is further strengthened by framing the arch between the alcove and the craft area in bands of the pastel colors found in the alcove furnishings. It's such simple touches as these that give the entire space the unity it enjoys.

Decorating accessories are completed crafts and works in progress.



## Before buying siding, do your homework

You've finally decided it's time to stop painting the house and look for a better solution to exterior maintenance. What's best — aluminum or vinyl siding? How

can you get the most value for your money?

Before you spend thousands of dollars on your home's exterior, begin by getting

the facts both from manufacturers and from people who've bought siding. You can find magazines that list siding manufacturers' names and addresses. Write to them for literature.

Ask reputable siding contractors to give you the names and addresses of homeowners who have siding. Try to get a variety of types of siding. And ask for homeowners whose siding is several years old. They can tell you more about how the products hold up and what maintenance has been needed, if any.

Buying siding is like most purchases. You can always find a cheaper grade at a lower price. It isn't the lowest price in the long run, however, if it doesn't hold up. Buying brand-name siding made by a reputable company is your best investment for long-term satisfaction.

● **Appearance.** You'll be considering several factors. Of course appearance is important. Does the siding look good not only when it's installed but for years thereafter?

● **SIDING COMES** in a variety of styles and colors that look like 4-inch, 5-inch or 8-inch clapboards and also in a more contemporary-looking vertical style.

● **Maintenance.** What are the physical properties of the siding? One that is solid color clear through, such as vinyl, has no painted surface to scratch or wear

off, so it will provide low maintenance for many years.

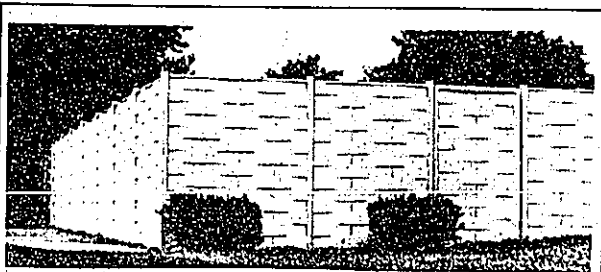
● **Accessories.** You may want to consider which companies have special decorator accessories to match their siding. The accent of a door surround or wide fluted corner posts, for example, now can be had in low-maintenance materials.

● **Warranty.** Consider the manufacturer's warranty. Some sidings have up to 50-year warranties that even include hail damage. Has the manufacturer been around long enough to justify giving such a long warranty? Is it a well-established company that will be around to fulfill that warranty, should you ever need it?

Equally important, look at the contractor's reputation and stability. Check references before signing that contract.

One source for free vinyl-siding literature is the Mastic Information Center, Dept. F83NS, P.O. Box F, Berrien Springs, Mich. 49103. Mastic is a subsidiary of Bethlehem Steel.

For consumers who want to test actual siding samples personally, Mastic offers a Tough Customer Kit for \$5. It includes a complete testing kit with samples of aluminum and vinyl siding so you can test them yourself, plus literature, color swatches and "A Guide to Designing Your Home's Exterior." Send a check or money order to Mastic Information Center at the address shown above.



### Do-it-yourself privacy

It is now possible to have a distinctive beautiful basket-weave design privacy fence that will require no maintenance. The massive anodized aluminum extrusions combine with double-thick baked enamel aluminum panels give lasting protection that withstands weather and use. It is available in a variety of heights and colors that never need painting. The construction makes it an easy do-it-yourself installation. For additional information, write to Jerith Mfg. Co. Inc., 2718 Salmon St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19134.