

CHAT ROOM



Marti Stupica

Welcome Wagon gives newcomers circle of friends

I've got to tell you about a terrific club I've joined. It's the Welcome Wagon Club, which is a ladies' social club that offers lots of fun day and evening activities of all kinds.

So far I've joined a buncos group, a ladies' night out group that visits a different area restaurant each month, the lunch bunch, dinners for eight group and couples' euchre.

And I'm thinking about joining the golf league next season. You don't have to be a good golfer to play with these ladies. I'm having so much fun. And so is my husband, Bob. He's really enjoying the other husbands we play couples' euchre with. We went to a progressive Halloween costume party last month. Nov. 8 we went on a hayride/bonfire and in December a bunch of us are going to see the New York City Radio Music Hall Rockettes performance at the Fox Theatre. I can't wait.

What I really enjoy is how diverse membership is. We've got it all. From young stay-at-home moms to retired grannies. And they each contribute something different to the group. I've met some vastly interesting people, made some great new friends and have broadened my horizons a little, I think.

I have finally learned how to crochet. And the quilting group has

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Retiree carves his niche in wood

When Harold Grix put down his pen, he picked up a saw and began building things.



By Mary Rodrigue
STAFF WRITER

Harold Grix's Farmington home is a testament to his hobby. The woodworker has hand-carved candle holders on his table, a cherry and maple kitchen floor he put down last year, decorative birdhouses, wood picture frames on the mantle, and a sturdy wooden rocking horse that has survived four grandchildren.

The piece of resistance among his handiwork treasures is a queen-size sleigh bed featuring inlaid wood veneer and white tiles in the headboard. It's being stored in the basement awaiting a trip to the family cottage in Lexington.

The former National Bank of Detroit vice president says retirement afforded him the opportunity to pursue a lifelong interest in building things out of wood.

"What is good about wood is that it surrenders to you," said Grix. "If you make a mistake, you can correct it. It's forgiving."

For raw materials, Grix saved 18 feet of trunk from a walnut tree cut down in his front yard and had it cut into boards. His other supply sources include Armstrong Lumber on M-69 and Beaver distributors of Farmington.

Grix says he doesn't do woodworking every day, only when "I have ideas in the back of my mind." Family requests are another impetus.

Each grandchild has a handmade captain's bed with six drawers. He's contemplating the construction of a miniature dollhouse for his only granddaughter. And his two daughters, Christa Grix-Mullen and Colette Rizik, both of Northville, make their own requests from time to time. An oak

cabinet he made for his daughter Colette looks like an antique.

"She put stained glass in it and uses it to hold her stereo," Grix said.

In a surprisingly small basement work area, Grix has a professional table saw, a powermatic lathe, a used rebuilt Delta band saw, and a shaper.

"I have the tools," he said. "I'm not afraid to make things."

He even built the large wooden backyard playset for the grandkids while one of his arms was in a sling.

"My rotator cuff was operated on. It didn't hurt," said Grix, who also enjoys playing golf and tennis.

He credits his wife, Betty, with having the vision to imagine projects in their finished state. It was her idea to paint the sleigh bed white and add white inlaid tiles to the headboard. It will complement the white wicker furniture already in use at the cottage.

He figures he spent 80 to 90 hours chiseling away the four large pieces that together comprise the main frame of the bed, which is shaped like an old fashioned sleigh.

"The first sleigh bed was made for the daughter of (World War Two) General George Patton," he said. "It cost between \$60,000 and \$80,000. The model I made was adapted from that pattern."

He found the pattern in a woodworking book. For the scroll of the footboard, Grix used four pieces of flat board and achieved the rounded look through sawing and sanding.

A class he took in the Redford Union Schools adult education program helped further his understanding of the woodworking process.

"I really enjoyed it and I got some training," he said.

There are more projects on the back burner. His son-in-law wants a headboard featuring built-in bookshelves — like the kind he remembers from childhood — and Grix's sister-in-law wants him to make a headboard as well. One daughter wants a cabinet. And he's

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Fine crafts: Harold Grix made this decorative birdhouse (left), one of many such specimens adorning his Farmington home, inside and out. Below, Grix with the queen-sized sleigh bed he recently made for the family cottage in Lexington. It features inlaid wood trim and white tiles in the headboard.

STAFF PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMEYER



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