

Creative Living

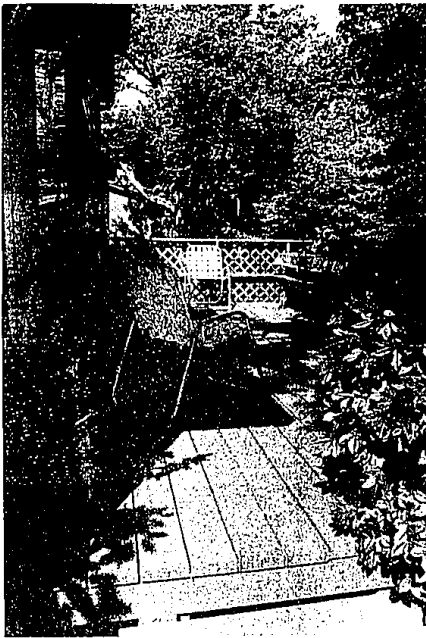
classified real estate and homes

Corinne Abatt editor/644-1100



Thursday, August 1, 1985 O&E

(P)15



The deck (at left) overlooks the broad brick patio down one story on the edge of the gently sloping ravine. Above are the wide steps to the deck, which follow the

contour of the land. Behind the shallow pond below is a bridge that offers an intimate view of the woods and wildflowers.

Staff photos by Jerry Zolynsky

20-year old patio ages gracefully

Mary and Bill Basse of Beverly Hills, consummate do-it-yourselfers, designed and built a two-level brick patio and deck nearly 20 years ago that continues to delight them.

During the two decades of living with it, they have watched the dogwoods and other trees and shrubs they planted mature. Their view has few rivals in displaying the changing seasons and providing color and nature-oriented interest all year long.

The back of their house faces a ravine with a tributary of the Rouge River running through it. Shortly after they moved into the house in the mid '60s, they began work on a tiered brick patio with steps leading up to a deck off the family room on the street level.

THERE IS a background of mature trees down the sloping ravine. They built a shallow, in-ground pond at the far edge of the patio and landscaped around it with rocks, annuals and perennials. This, and a bird feeder suspended at the second-level

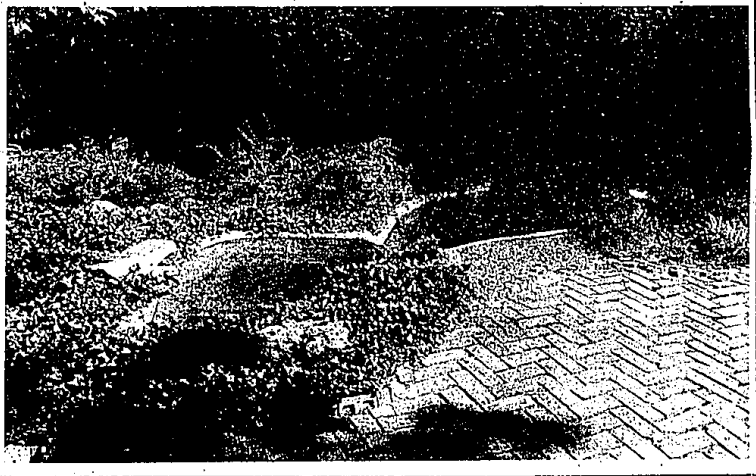
kitchen window, attract lots of small birds. The chickadees, especially, love the bird feeder.

Mary Basse designed the entire project before the house was even completed. She knew she wanted a picnic table on the deck, easily accessible from the kitchen. Much to the delight of visitors, it offers a panoramic view of the ravine, brick patio and landscaping below.

At the time they did it, the work on the patio seemed endless, each brick was set on the carefully prepared base. Some had to be taken out and done again. It was difficult and time-consuming.

But when balanced against the more than two decades of enjoyment for family and friends, it was worth it — and then some.

See related story on Page 9E



Harpist joins Michigan chorale on tour

By Mary Jane Doerr
Special writer

After her performance one evening in July of "Fantasie pour harpe" by Grandjany and "Chanson dans la nuit" by Salzedo, the Lord Mayor, Reginald Roberts of Conway, Wales, declared that Kirsten Agresta looked and sounded like an angel.

The 14-year-old sophomore at Seaholm High School, Birmingham, played for Roberts and 50 other parishioners at St. Mary's Church in Conway (immortalized in Wordsworth's poem "We are Seven"), as a part of the Michigan Festival Chorale's annual European Tour.

Last fall, Kirsten auditioned for Music Director John Dovaras of Birmingham and Conductor Eugene Branstrom, also of Birmingham, to sing with the chorale. During the winter months, they asked her if she would perform on the harp during the tour.

Taking a harp on tour isn't as simple as taking other instruments. Kirsten's mother, Valerie Agresta of Bloomfield Hills, wrote to a number of places where the chorale would be giving concerts asking if anyone would loan or rent a harp so Kirsten could perform.

A GOOD concert harp can cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$25,000, so not many people were very anxious to loan their instrument.

"I really did not expect to perform in any more than four or five places," said Kirsten. "About a month ago, on the spur of the moment we decided to rent

a harp in London and take it along on the tour."

The Agrestas rented a brand new Salvi and a car so they could travel with the tour bus to England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Adjusting to the more difficult action of the new harp, its larger size and the different tone were just a few of the problems Kirsten had to deal with on tour.

The temperature changes outdoors where the harp was tuned contrasted with the cold interior of the old stone structures causing the it to go out of tune before she had even begun playing.

In the cold wind that passed across the courtyard of Conway Castle, where the group was performing one Sunday afternoon, Kirsten quickly brought the upper strings into tune with her perfect pitch before she played for some 100 people in front of the 800-year-old stone walls.

"This is a special instrument for the Welsh people," said Kirsten referring to the long history of harps in Welsh music and the number of fine harpists from Wales. "When I play here, the audiences are not normal audiences. These people know this instrument."

IF THE WELSH know the harp, so does Kirsten Agresta. Last year she won the American Harp Society National Competition in Minneapolis against harpists from all over the country.

"I am very proud of that award," said Kirsten. "I worked over a year get-

ting ready for that competition. It was the most challenging thing I have ever done."

Although the harp is a difficult instrument because of the use of feet and hands at the same time, Kirsten admits that she hasn't found it particularly difficult to learn.

Since who was 5 she performed on NBC Junior Hall of Fame, CBS Kids World, and in countless concerts. She has been the subject of major newspapers and magazines including People.

"I enjoy looking back at the videos of myself on TV," she said. "I guess there is just something cute and amazing about a little girl playing the harp that attracts the media. They have likened me to Mozart and Beethoven."

Although she is obviously accustomed to interviews, Kirsten doesn't do them with a biased attitude. She takes her music seriously and is considering a professional career.

During the winter months she flies to New York once a month to study with Nancy Allen at Julliard and drives to Indiana University to study with Susan McDonald.

Not only has she received awards for harp performance, but she has won honors in piano competitions for the Michigan Federation of Music Clubs, the National Federation of Music Clubs, the Detroit Musicians League and Birmingham Musicians.

SHE HAS SOLOED with the Warren Symphony, the Oakway Symphony, the Oakland Youth Symphony, the Liversia Youth Symphony and the International Youth Symphony.



The Lord Mayor, Reginald Roberts of Conway, Wales, was delighted with the presence and music of 14-year old Kirsten Agresta of Bloomfield Hills. She performed outside of St. Mary's Church of Conway while on tour with the Michigan Festival Chorale.