

# Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300



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(F1E)

## Redesigning for better use, more light

By Corinne Abatt  
staff writer

**WHAT WOULD HAPPEN** if you turned your living room into the dining room, the dining room into a study and the family room into a wonderful great room with some sophisticated touches and all kinds of leisure offerings? You say that in your particular house, that would create pure, undiluted chaos? Well, maybe. But here's a story that could change your mind.

Cynthia Ohanian, interior designer with Walter Herz of Birmingham, had clients who loved their Franklin Village colonial, but knew as soon as they bought it, that it needed some help. The 12-by-12-foot dining room was too small for family gatherings when the grown children and their families came for dinner. And with the many relatives who were often there, it was far too small for the sit-down dinners they liked.

And the house, nestled in a grove of trees, was dark, dark, dark. They had the trees in front and along the shallow ravine in back cut or trimmed. Suddenly there was an unexpected amount of daylight, but not much direct sun; there were lots of trees left to deflect that.

**INSIDE, THERE WAS** lots of work to be done to bring a light,

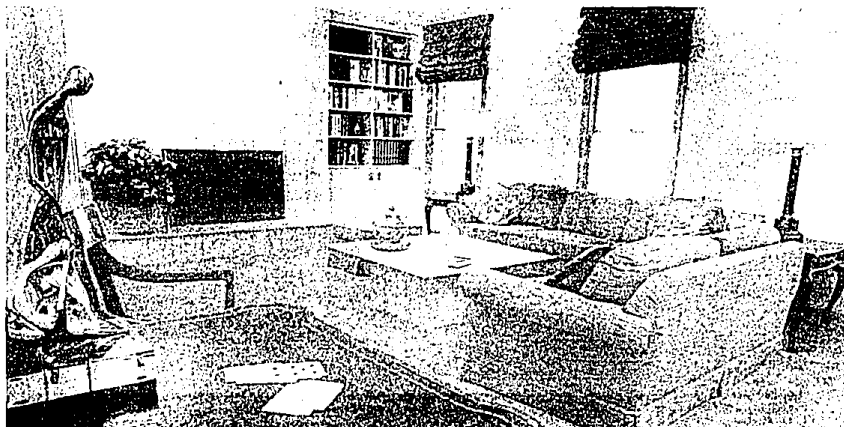
fresh breath-of-spring feel to the sullen rooms. Ohanian chose to work with the peachy pink section of the palette. She proposed to change the function of the living and dining rooms and her clients accepted the idea. Major structural changes were also planned for the upstairs master bedroom suite.

Ohanian said that from the beginning she knew "the possibilities were there." Implementing all of the changes meant tearing up the home for extended periods of time, but now that everything is done, all agree that it was worth the effort and inconvenience.

Ohanian said the Baker Queen Anne dining room set from the other house, which the family wanted to use, wouldn't fit in what was originally designed as a dining room at the back of the house.

But there's plenty of room for it in the new dining room, along with a charming sitting area at one end for those who want to relax in an easy chair over after-dinner coffee. The carpet is beige and the walls a soft peach. A beautiful new chandelier directly over the table further establishes the room's new identity.

**THE NEW SITTING ROOM,** just off the dining room, has a lovely view of the ravine. Ohanian placed a couch under the windows and matching love seat along the wall.



Family room, tasteful and sophisticated, with a new marble fireplace. The custom-designed entertainment center and game table accommodates a lot of people with a variety of leisure

interests. The peachy-pink shades are accented with touches of green and taupe.

Those seated on the couch face a mirrored wall, so the view of the treed ravine is never lost. There's a glass console in front of the mirror, but no TV. It's room for quiet relaxation and a wonderful place to read, Ohanian's clients report.

The brick fireplace wall in the family room was replaced by cream marble. The carpeting is a bit darker than that in the other rooms because of the amount of activity which takes place here.

Ohanian designed an entertainment center in a cream laminate and brass to accommodate the 35-inch TV and other electronic equipment, the square pink marble coffee

table and the wall-hung buffet. Since this family likes to play cards, there's a natural wood game table with handpainted Maitland-Smith chairs, soft olive green with red and gold Oriental figures and detailing.

There are ornate touches throughout the home in hardware, porcelain and other accessories. The pink and green flowered chintz on the chair seats is repeated in the throw pillows on the sofas, which are covered in a subtle taupe and cream fabric. This a room where the sports fans can all gather on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon to watch the events or relax and talk.

**UPSTAIRS, A FIFTH bedroom** next to the master bedroom was sacrificed. It was split into additional space for the master bedroom and a new, elegant private "his" bathroom. The original master bathroom, now "hers" was enlarged to accommodate a large tub with a Jacuzzi in a setting of soft beige marble.

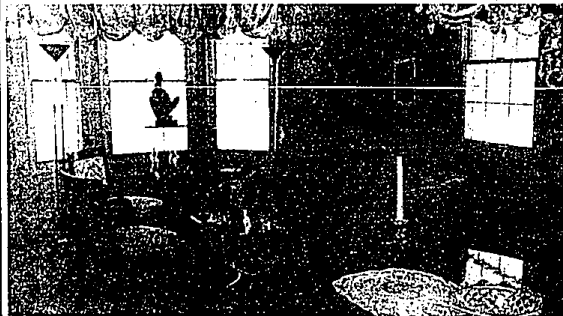
Ohanian chose to drape the entire wall behind the bed although there are three separate windows along it because, "I didn't want to cut up the wall space."

The same colors — peach, blue, pink and white — are in the con-

temporary, abstract design of the lined cotton drapes and the traditional print, quilted spread. With the exception of the wing chair and side table, the bedroom furniture has been in the family.

Standing in the master bedroom, Ohanian said, "If you buy good furniture, it's really less expensive. Look at this — it's beautiful, we wanted to use it."

There are balloon valances at all of the windows on the first floor, since the setting is private and the homeowners wished to be able to enjoy the views of the woods and trees.



Dining room, formerly the living room, has ample space for a long oval table and sitting area at one end. The light peach

walls and natural wood furniture make for a warm, welcoming atmosphere.



A second bath ("his") and more space were created for the master bedroom by

eliminating a fifth bedroom. A wall, just beyond the night table, was removed.

Staff photos  
by Dan Dean



Carol Carpenter  
fiction 'truly a labor of love'

STEVE FECHT/HART photo, O&E

## Short and Sweet Concern prompts winning story entry

By Mona Grigg  
special writer

**ON A CLEAR day** you can see Pontiac's puff silver mushroom from Carol Carpenter's 15th floor Southfield office. In between lay miles and miles of miniature silicon cities: high-rise, high-tech, high power, high-pressure.

Carpenter can look out of her window and see it all. And what she can't see, she can imagine. And if what she imagines becomes a good story, so much the better.

Carpenter, 44, is vice president and one of four partners in the High Performance Group Inc., a training, communications and consulting business staffed by 12 full-time employees and a "huge network" of freelance people.

The business, started on a mere shoestring less than three years ago by former Sandy Corp. employees Carpenter, John Wrayner and John Inacett (later joined by another Sandy cohort, Carol Valentine), is "exactly what I've always wanted to do," Carpenter says. "When I'm not doing the other I've always wanted to do."

The "OTHER THING" is fiction writing, and, as if to completely remove herself from the mentality needed in her 15th floor corporate world, Carpenter works at her fiction in an unfinished basement

room in her Livonia home. There she shares her office with a washer and dryer.

Switching gears requires switching locations and working tools. "Some days I'm working on my computer from morning until night," Carpenter says, "but when I'm ready to write fiction or poetry, it has to be on lined paper and written with a pen. I need that mechanical feel of a pen or pencil moving along with me. And I need to be in a quiet place."

Carpenter, who holds a doctorate from Wayne State in curriculum development and leadership, had her first piece of fiction published in Green's Magazine in the mid-'60s when she was teaching writing at Redford High School.

Since then she has had numerous short stories and poems published in literary magazines and small press publications. This month her short story, "Big in the Bars," won \$500 and second place in the 1988 Auto Show Short Story Contest. It's the second time in the four-year history of the contest that she has won a prize.

She wrote the story more than two years ago, but, as with many of her stories, didn't work hard at getting it published. "For me, my fiction is truly a labor of love. If nobody else ever read it, I'd still write it. I write for me. I indulge myself in my basement. I think because my business writing is so very much directed

toward a specific audience."

"BIG IN THE BARS" is written from a man's point of view and follows the friendship of two men, one a department store huckster ("The magic little machine that slices, dices and shreds"), the other a blue-eyed Greek pining for a bar of his own.

Carpenter says, "I submitted it primarily because I think the contest is a great idea — there are so few things around to encourage writers — but also because I read in the paper that people weren't submitting stories. I didn't want the Auto Show people to think that nobody cared. 'Big in the Bars' was the only unpublished, finished story I had left so I sent it in."

Creative writing comes naturally, Carpenter says. "I've always written. My parents are Southern and great story-tellers with a strong sense of oral history. I've always read and always written and always told stories. Before I was old enough to write, my parents would write down stories for me."

For her dissertation, presented two years ago, Carpenter looked at how different personality types go about writing.

"I'm fascinated with how other people write and how they get their ideas. How they revise and when they revise," Carpenter said. It start-

ed with observing her own students and how they went about writing.

"ONE OF THEM" might sit down and write nonstop, barely taking a breath, while another one sits and stares at the walls waiting for something to come — and yet in the end one piece of writing is not necessarily better than the other."

For her dissertation, Carpenter looked at three groups: Wayne State remedial writers, regular freshman writers and faculty members who had published creative fiction.

"It turns out that there are distinct writing profiles according to personality types," Carpenter said. "Teachers are big on outlines, so students tend to think they can't possibly write unless they begin with an outline. During the course of my research, I found that the professional writers could use an outline if they absolutely had to, but their preferred way was to use the discovery method."

"That's where you're very comfortable going in a million different directions, where one word might give you an idea, and you don't mind false trails. The problem with remedial writers was that they were being forced into a mold — using the outline — that they weren't comfortable with, and were being given the idea that their preferred way, the discovery way, was unnatural."

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