

INTERIOR MOTIVES

# Coffee table can perk up a room



NAOMI STONE LEVY

It must be stated that in the history of furniture "coffee tables" didn't exist. The coffee table is a 20th century invention. The need for this important adjunct to everyday living is obvious, and accounts for its popularity.

Grouping your seating pieces around a coffee table is convivial. It makes room for a bowl of flowers, or a bowl of nuts or wrapped candy for the enjoyment of your guests. You will even like putting your feet up and relaxing.

You can visit a furniture store and find many examples that can fit the circumstances. The first consideration is the style of your room. Modern? Keep the selection very simple. "Parsons" design is square, with the legs and apron at right angles (see illustration). The material involved can be metal or wood. The selection of the wood ranges from ash, maple and walnut to mahogany and ebony, stained from natural to very dark.

Creating a coffee table could be a

challenge. Think how proud you would be to exhibit your own design. It isn't as difficult as you imagine.

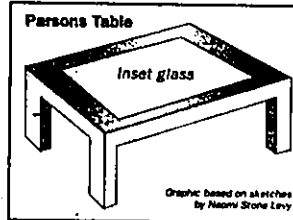
Finding a craftsman is first on your agenda - a woodworking shop is a beginning - or even a metalsmith to work in steel or brass. Glass will often be a byproduct in either venue. When you "do it your way" size is also "your way."

If you need a coffee table for a more rustic space one could be fashioned using silver birch wooden legs. Never to be found in a furniture store.

You aim for traditional? Not as simple as squared modern. Probably you cannot make it yourself, but there are ways to individualize it. Painting or lacquering a modestly priced table to fit your surroundings will personalize it.

Another way to execute your own table is to add a glass top to a drum table. Allow the glass to overhang, not too much to be tippy. Glass, detailed with a deep beveled edge, perfects it.

Some years ago I found some charming antique Delft tiles that I set into a black lacquer frame, and mounted it on legs. My client still adores it, probably



enhanced because no one else has one like it. I haven't mentioned marble or granite. What is there to say? There is nothing more luxurious yet durable. There is a myriad of choices. The colors are unending, and the graining can be mesmerizing. Place a slab on metal or wooden legs.

The slab has more panache if it is thicker than standard. Explore all the possibilities.

Naomi Stone Levy, a Franklin resident, is an interior designer and a former secretary of the American Society of Interior Designers. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1897. Her fax number is (810) 644-1314.

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## First ladies' gowns shown

"Honoring Our First Ladies," a gala opening of an exhibit of 14 inaugural ball gown reproductions on loan from the Frankenmuth Museum, will take place 7-9 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 28, at the Livonia Civic Center Library.

The program includes music, refreshments and a dramatic portrayal of Mary Todd Lincoln by Wilma Maneri. The event, sponsored by the Livonia Historical Society, is a fund-raiser for

the restoration of the Alexander Blue House at Greenmead Historical Village in Livonia.

Cost is \$20 in advance by Friday, Sept. 20. For more information, call Greenmead at (810) 477-7375 or Jane at (313) 422-4061.

The exhibit will run through October. The library is at 32777 Five Mile, just east of Farmington Road.

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