

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

Handyman fixes 'hurry up and wait' problem

I wonder how many men in this country are married to Martha Stewart? I know I am, and with great pride, as I see all of the talents that Valorie possesses.

Recently she decided to renovate the lower level man's bathroom in the house and seeing as how I'm the only guy in the house, it's mine. She pulls the medicine cabinet out of the wall and wants the hole filled in with a piece of dry-wall, then she can't get the wall-paper off behind the toilet so she removes the toilet itself. Guess what folks, I'm getting a new toilet.

Not only that, I'm getting new toilet paper holder, towel bars, mirror, window shade and curtains and a complete new paint job.

Oops - I forgot, a new door and new faucet assembly for the sink.

This all shows how thorough a school principal can be and how some of the responsibility falls on my shoulders. She can't lift the new toilet, the door or sheet of dry-wall and because I'm as handy as a frog on a surf board, I call in my handy-guy named Walter. He tells me he will be at our home the next morning at 8 a.m. sharp and I kind of chuckle a little. I figure that nobody in the United States shows up at 8 a.m. sharp, but the next day the door bell rings, you guessed it, 7:59 a.m. and sharp.

I asked Walter to sit down with me and have a cup of coffee. I wanted to ask him a question which was, "What is your biggest strength as a little business?" His answer shows great wisdom from a common man who wields a hammer, but so did Moses when he carried two stone tablets. He replied, "Mr. Gagnon, when you need service today, the majority of appointments made and committed to are always late, especially those small jobs like yours which so many big companies don't have time to do. There is nothing more irritating than going to a doctor's appointment set up for 4 p.m. and he or she doesn't see you until 5 p.m. There are many service providers today who simply tell you to be home all day between 9 and 6 and they don't show up at all, or not even a phone call.

"When a service provider of any sort fails to keep a promise or commitment they have automatically built in a certain amount of 'mistrust' into the customer's train of thought. Even though you may still get the job, even after the abuse of a person's precious time, it is now human nature that they will be skeptical of the price you charge and the quality of your work. Make one tiny little mistake during the job and it is now a big thing in the consumers mind.

"All of this is so important to me that I've been thinking of doing something different. I would like to offer a homeowner a discount of \$50 anytime I don't show up at the time I promised. I already know that this is one of my biggest strengths in business and think of the strong bond that I would build with every consumer I do work for."

Folks, I sat at the kitchen table with Walter and listened to his conversation with great interest. I have stood in front of customer service companies giving seminars for many years and I don't believe I have ever made my point as pronounced as Walter did with me.

Big business in this country could learn a lot from him and from you, if they could listen. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard Saturday and Sunday on 160 WJLR. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (313) 873-9789.

Future Designers

Students show their skills by designing rooms centered around rugs

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BY LANA MINI
Staff Writer

ARA DANCEY OF GARDEN City knows what style of room she'd lay a "Valencia" rug in.

The Eastern Michigan University student sketched an illustration of a colorful Georgian parlor room that included the handmade, medallion-design rug for the 13th Annual Ghiordes Knot and American Society of Interior Design's Student Creative Space Contest.

Limor Gutnick, of Ann Arbor, who designed a 15th Century Renaissance-era sitting room, received an honorable mention for the work. Gutnick also used a Valencia rug.

The contest, to design a room that includes one of two specific rugs available at the Ghiordes Knot showroom at the Michigan Design Center in Troy, is held every year. The 61 student entries will be displayed there Friday, April 12 during Student Career Day.

The contest challenges students to create an illustration of a room using the carpet as a focal point. They have two choices, both high-end, unique rugs from the center's collection.

This year, one was a hand-woven blue Metok Kyina rug, which the students were to depict as 9- by-12 feet in size. The rug design was inspired by antique Indian chintz. In Tibetan, "Metok" means flower and the rug is adorned with flowers. The hand-knotted rug is made in Nepal, and sold by Odegard Carpets.

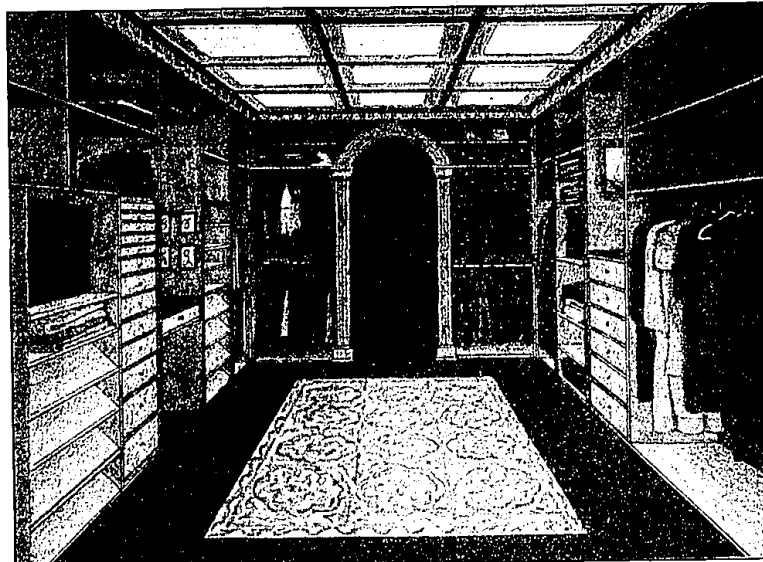
The second choice was the Valencia rug with its creamy yellow color that students were to depict as 6-by-9-feet. The Italian Renaissance-inspired rug features Italian medallions in tones of pearl and flaxen gold. It is hand-woven in China, and manufactured by Asmara.

Most students, who received photographs of the rugs, chose the Valencia.

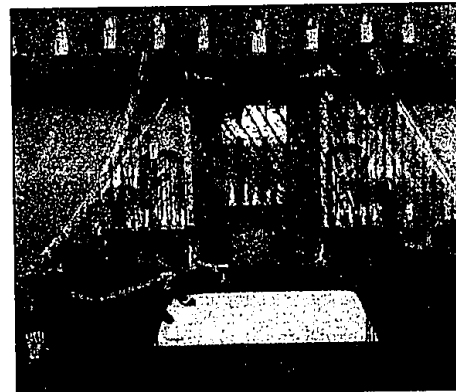
"It's a wonderful opportunity for the students' portfolios," said Ann Parker of Ghiordes Knot. "We get a wide variety of illustrations... all unique.

"The beauty of rugs is that they can be used anywhere, and the quality of these rugs is such that they clean beautifully and withstand a lot of traffic."

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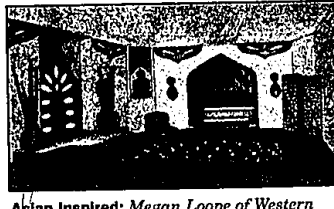
First Place: Suzanne Danford, of Western Michigan University, earned first place in the 13th Annual Ghiordes Knot - ASID Student Creative Space Competition. Her job was to illustrate a Valencia rug as the focal point of a room. She chose a luxurious walk-in closet.



Honorable Mention: Jeannie Romant, of EMU, earned an honorable mention for her use of a Valencia rug in a "Moulin Rouge" inspired room.



More honors: Limor Gutnick, of Eastern Michigan University, earned an honorable mention for this 15th Century style room accented with art by 15th and 16th century Italian painters.



Asian Inspired: Megan Loope of Western Michigan University, was one of the few student designers who choose the Metok Kyina rug. Her room illustration has an exotic Asian feeling that features elements from India.



Charming: Sara Dancey, of Garden City, chose a Georgian Parlor room as inspiration for her entry that showcases the Valencia rug.

Upcoming shows feature flowers, antiques and modern furniture

BY LANA MINI
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Get ready, set - mark your calendars for three very popular homestyle shows. Each features different design elements, and will be presented in the metro area in April and May.

The three topics are: 20th century design, plants and flowers, and antiques.

The Michigan Modernism Exposition - Saturday-Sunday, April 27-28 at the

Southfield Municipal Complex, is known as one of the top four shows of its kind nationwide! You don't have to travel to New York, L.A. or Miami. The Michigan show features 78 prominent Modernism merchants offering pieces designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Herman Miller, Heywood Wakefield and Salvador Dali; plus other designers known for Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Prairie, Arts and Crafts and Neo-Classical styles.

For the novice, there'll be fun things to

see like original concert posters from the 1950s and 1960s, original Lava Lamps, and Peter Max work.

Here's some advice for new collectors from Bill Triola, owner of Triola's Mid-Century Objects As Art in Lansing. The four areas that experts think about before buying are: The condition of the piece, its rarity, how desirable the item is and the cost.

Well-designed utilitarian items are the stars at the expo.

"Don't buy it to look at it, buy it to use

it," he said.

Antiques

Then in May, it's time again for one of the most prestigious antique shows in the nation: The 18th Annual Greenfield Village Antique Show & Sale at Greenfield Village in Dearborn.

Music is the theme of Saturday-Sunday, May 18-19 show in honor of the Sounds of America exhibit at the Village.

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