

Homestead Notes

Pat Erway, Editor



Use The Art of Decoupage to Express "You"

By Sally Bair
Feature Writer

Decoupage is an 18th century French art which is enjoying quite a comeback, and Mrs. Norman Shenk, Mount Joy RD2, believes it is a useful hobby which today's woman can use to fulfill herself.

Speaking at a regular meeting of Farm Women Society 25, Jean Shenk said, "Happy people are ones who always have things to do." She said she feels it is a wise investment for busy women to use "squeezed in" time to learn to be creative with their hands.

To her, decoupage is "easy and always a satisfaction." She adds that she feels that hobbies shouldn't be hard on your budget, so in demonstrating her technique of decoupage she always stresses using items which are already in the home.

With the holiday season approaching, decoupage just could be the answer to that oft repeated question, "what can I give to...?"

Jean suggests using things you have been saving as the basic picture which you want to decoupage and preserve. Calender prints, church bulletins, cards, photographs, old song sheets are just a few of the suitable items which can be used, and whose beauty and value will

be enhanced. She does caution not to start out with something you have sentimental value for until you've experimented and learned the technique.

Besides the picture, other materials you will need include a board, materials for finishing the wood in the manner you desire, white glue, a rolling pin or rubber roller, waxed paper, pastry brush or small paint brush, white vinegar, rotten stone and linseed oil, and some old soft cloths. An important item is the finish you want to use. Jean Shenk recommends a urethane varnish. In the more traditional method of decoupage, you would use the regular commercial decoupage finish.

Before you begin the actual work of decoupage, you must choose the print and then a board which will show off the print to its best advantage. The best and cheapest source of boards are scraps you may have around the house. Jean Shenk says she uses rejected kitchen cupboard doors. Other possibilities include pressed wood, wood from an old barn or boards left over from a remodeling job around your house or barn.

If the wood has a nice grain, Jean suggests just using sanding sealer on it. For effect, some people like to add character to



These are the materials which will be needed before you can begin your

decoupage project. Most are found in the home, or can be purchased inexpensively.

the board by denting it with a hammer or a chain or putting nail holes in it. You can characterize the board to match your taste and the type picture you are using, but it should be fairly smooth under the picture. You will need to sand the board, and you may want to stain it or paint it.

In preparing the print, you may wish to burn the edges with a candle for a ragged effect. Jean says to do it over a sink, so that water is readily available. The picture edges can also be torn, or left intact. If the print is particularly delicate, you may want to spray it with a sealer made for that purpose.

The print is glued to the wood with white glue, thinned with some water. You may use a small brush or your finger to spread the glue over the entire surface of the print; then making sure it is centered, press the picture in place.

To make sure the picture is glued firmly, place waxed paper over the picture and board and roll as hard as you can over the entire surface with the rolling pin or rubber roller to get all the bubbles out. Mrs. Shenk advises, "Roll longer than you think is necessary."

To remove any excess glue which was forced out by the rolling, use white vinegar and a lint-free cloth (an old sheet is perfect.) Be sure there are no bubbles, and then allow to dry at least 12 hours before proceeding.

At this point Mrs. Shenk's method differs from the more conventional way of doing decoupage. In the conventional method, you begin now to brush on coats of decoupage finish at intervals of an hour until you have completely submerged the



After spreading glue on the print, it must be positioned on the board, covered with waxed paper and rolled, to be sure it is glued securely in place.

print. Depending upon the thickness of the print you are using, this could require up to 40 coats of finish. Advocates of this

method advise brushing from one side only for each coat - do not brush back and forth. For the

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In Mrs. Shenk's method of decoupage she spoons a urethane varnish over the surface of the board.



Mrs. Shenk holds one of her finished products with the others in the background.

They add unique touches to your home, and make a thoughtful gift for others.