

Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser



On Wednesday morning our luxury liner the "Sun Princess" docked at Fort-de-France, the principal trading and shipping center of Martinique. It is a small island about 50 miles by 20 miles and was probably discovered by Columbus in 1493.

After an early breakfast, I took a six hour tour of the small island. A geologist from Oklahoma shared the seat on the bus as we traveled through fishing villages. The fish nets were hung out to dry and the small boats were brightly colored so that a helicopter could spot them in case they were lost at sea. Many homes were made of stucco and had only openings for windows — no glass but sometimes slats. The school children all wore uniforms the same as they did on Barbados. We saw a few Jersey cows on the hilly pastures.

We stopped in St. Pierre for picture taking and were told that in 1902 the Mt. Pelee volcano erupted and killed 29,000 people in three minutes. One man, who was being held in a prison pit, escaped and as

he was a curiosity he died a millionaire many years later.

One oddity was a lily tree whose small branches were used to make fences. Due to the climate, these slender limbs took root and grew. We saw fields and more fields of bananas with each bunch covered with a thin, blue plastic bag in preparation for shipping. The workers here are paid eight dollars per day plus a bowl of food. Our bus also stopped at a pineapple field. This plant takes six months to bear while a banana tree takes nine months and then is cut down.

We were served lunch at a lovely old plantation. It included a fish paste on a large sea shell, rice, chicken, wine and a flaming dessert of baked plantain. On our way back to the ship we saw breadfruit trees, grapefruit and lime trees and papayas growing on the trunks of trees.

We enjoyed a late afternoon tea, then an Italian meal and ended the evening by watching an audience participation program.

Rabbit and Cavy Workshop

NEWARK, Del. — 4-H and Agway are co-sponsoring a workshop on "Rabbit and Cavy Nutrition and Management." The workshop is open to anyone involved in or interested in raising rabbits and guinea pigs. The workshop presenter is Dr. Merle Stillions, director of the Agway Research Center for Animal Nutrition.

The workshop will be held on

Wednesday, March 14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Pencader Grange, on Route 896, on the south side of the intersection with Route 40.

In addition to the workshop, there will be door prizes, free feed samples and the opportunity to have questions on small animal nutrition and management answered. The workshop is free, but call Agway at 738-6563 to register.

Dollhouses

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and also their children. College students have spent hours arranging the furniture in the small rooms during shows on campuses. A bigger percentage of the clients are adults rather than children. Ray tells of people in their 60s and 70s buying and furnishing dollhouses. Also houses that have been around for years are being redecorated. They recently gave a 35-year-old dollhouse a face lift because the owner wanted it "jazzed-up."

The businessmen don't feel that it is unusual for them as men to have an interest in the dollhouses, and explain that their wives are not involved very much. The handcrafted homes are the fragile and treasured investment of both men and women. The shop sees

just as many men as women visiting the establishment. "An awful lot of men come in with their wives and are just as interested," smiles Ray.

Every project is as individual as the client. "We try to do it the way people want it done. We don't try to pressure people. If it doesn't turn out we'll knock it apart and do it again," Ray says.

The partners work on several dollhouses at a time, but don't get much ahead of the demand. It takes around two weeks to actually get a dollhouse completed. That allows for the drying time. They work with all types of wood and don't find it difficult constructing the miniatures. Everything is scaled an inch to the foot. The carpenters admit that the work is not difficult, adding that proper tools are the secret to success.

Bill is a member of the Central Pennsylvania Miniature Club. The co-owners can be found at many shows getting to know others with the same hobby.

Expansion isn't in the picture. They just hope to work at keeping the inventory up. When business slows they attempt to fill orders for their own families. Bill is currently carefully constructing a dollhouse for one of his six children, five of whom are girls. Ray has twins, a son and daughter, and expects to build one for his daughter.

They may be thinking small when it comes to houses and furniture, but they have big hearts for their work and clients.

"We're not into this for a profit," adds Ray matter-of-factly. "If we break even we're tickled. So far we've made expenses." Adding everything up it's possible that sometimes they may make 50 cents an hour.

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