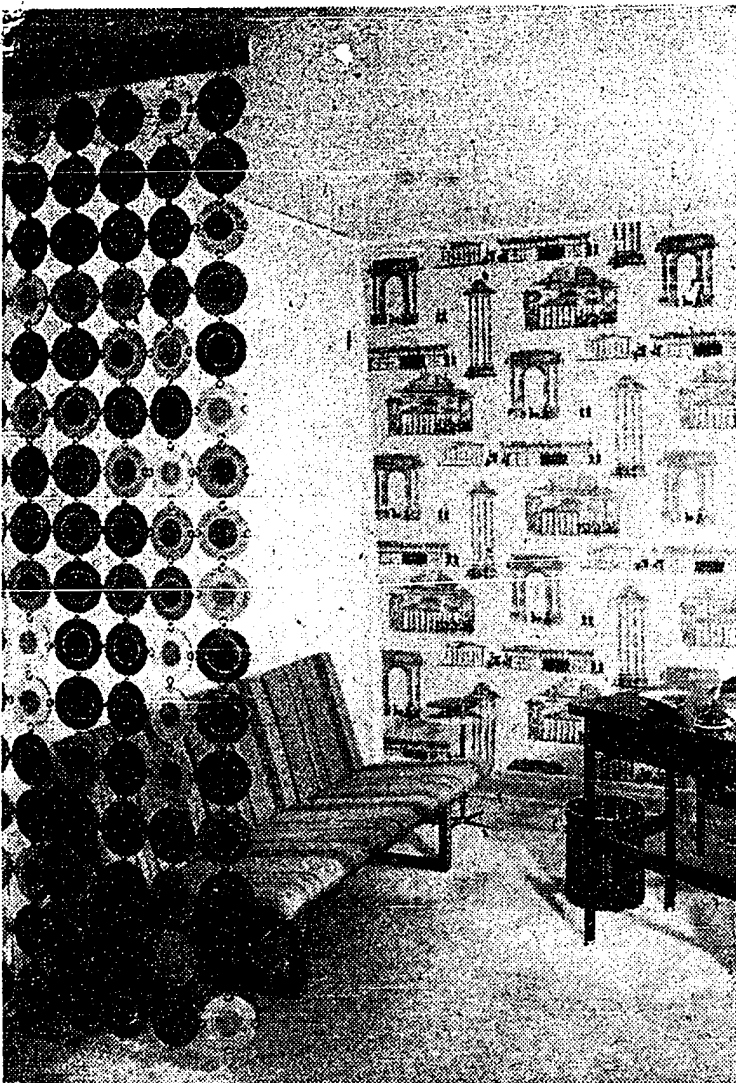


U.S. Home-Based Crafts Increase

By Bernice Stevens Decker Written for The Christian Science Monitor

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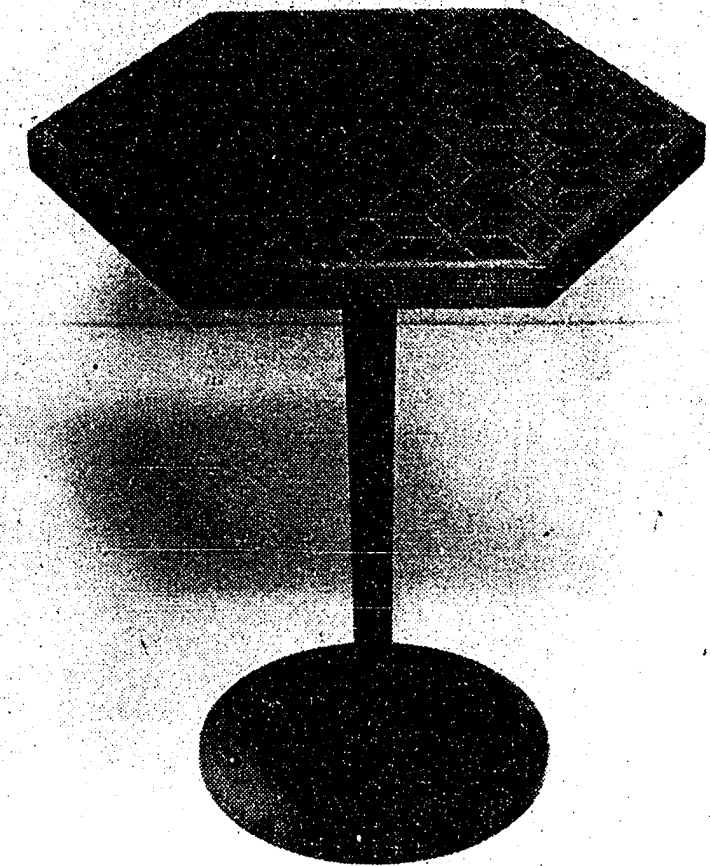
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Denst & Soderlund
Multicolored translucent glass circles designed by Mr. and Mrs. Michael Higgins of Chicago form room divider or screen.



Custom-made tile table provides setting for stoneware table accessories by Jane and Gordon Martz, husband-and-wife designer team working together at Veedersburg, Ind. Their business has developed gradually from modest beginning.



Another table from the workshop of Jane and Gordon Martz shows versatility of this team of designer-ceramists.

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There is a lively revival of handcrafted items appearing in this country. It is producing fine decorative pieces of pottery, complete sets of dinnerware, curtains and draperies of unusual design, beautiful glassware, delicate silver and gold jewelry, for discriminating customers.

This revival means also a dependable source of income and often a complete living for many husband and wife teams and individual workers. For some older or handicapped persons it provides partial income.

For some, working in one of the crafts is a part-time activity. This is particularly true of a homemaker who may make jewelry in a corner of her kitchen or den, who may have a pottery kiln in her basement, a loom in her bedroom. In some cases the husband may be the craftsman.

The work of craftsmen is sold at craft fairs, special exhibits, in stores (usually contemporary shops), and in their own studios. Cooperative craft organizations help in the marketing, too. This revival in crafts is encouraged nationally by the American Craftsmen's Council in New York City.

Nearly all of the crafts lend themselves ideally to husband and wife teams. Some work alone selling just what they themselves produce. Others go into limited production and employ assistants, so that they operate their own small businesses or factories. The growth of some of these small businesses has been amazing.

Mrs. Edith Heath of Sausalito, Calif., started out with a few pieces of ceramics during World War II. A department store,

asked for more. She began making dinnerware service, and it sold in such quantities that her husband became a full-time partner. The Heath Ceramics, which was the result, now employ 22 persons.

Jane and Gordon Martz graduated from Alfred University just a few years ago. They settled in Veedersburg, Ind., where Mrs. Martz's parents operated a modest lamp and lamp-shade business. The young Martzes designed and turned out a few pieces of table stoneware and decorative accessories, went on to complete sets of dinnerware. They branched into decorative clocks, wall panels, unusual planters, and most recently into custom-made tile-top tables.

Ceramics probably draws the largest number of craftsmen. Some have reached the stage where their work appears consistently in museums and craft and art shows.

Edwin and May Scheier of Durham, N.H., are among the leading teams in this field. Their work is included in permanent collections in many museums both here and abroad.

California is a particularly productive area. Otto and Vivika Heino, a Los Angeles couple who have exhibited widely and won many awards, produce individual prestige pieces and execute many commissions.

In the same city are the Otto Natzlers, known for their unusual glazes and textures; and the Al Kings who specialize in white porcelain.

Jean and Arthur Ames of Claremont, former painters, are now working in ceramics, enamels, and mosaics. They have recently been commissioned to do an altar for their new local community church.

Karen Karnes and David Weinrib, husband and wife, have

lived from the revenue of their work as potters for some time. They are now part of Gate Hill Cooperative, an incorporated community of artists at Stony Point, N.Y.

One interesting commission was for dressing-room counters in the new Japanese-styled "Motel on the Mountain" in Suffren, N.Y. Karen made pressed sinks and soap dishes; David, the varied tile surfaces in which they were installed.

Many individual women have made names for themselves in the crafts. Mrs. Marguerite Wildenhain, who has her own studio in the San Francisco area, is internationally known as a ceramist. Miss Toshiko Takaezu, who also teaches at the Cleveland Institute of Art, is a consistent prize winner. Miss Margaret De Patta, of Napa, Calif., has been a pioneer in the crafting of contemporary jewelry. Miss Irene Bryner, who started out in California, is successfully practicing the craft in New York City.

Working in the cellar of her home, Miss Edris Eckhardt, of Cleveland, is an outstanding designer and experimenter in new forms of glass. She recently rediscovered ancient processes used by Egyptians in making gold glass.

Weaving is close to ceramics in popularity as a handcraft, but much harder to sell. Handwoven fabrics face stiff competition from easy-care, inexpensive, machine-made goods.

However, there is definitely a renaissance in tapestry and hand-weaving. It has proved particularly attractive to women, but there are a number of leading men designers, too, such as Jack Lenor Larsen of New York

Handcraft—No. 1

Craftsmen from all over the country gathered at Lake Geneva, Wis., for the American Craftsmen's Conference this past June. In the following article, Bernice Stevens Decker introduces some of these artisans who will be the subject of subsequent features appearing on this page.

Chicago are co-owners of Elen-hank Designers, a business which they started together 11 years ago, doing block and screen printing of drapery fabrics for occasional commissions. Mr. Kluck took leave of absence from his regular job to catch up with orders and never went back. Their work now has wide distribution and has won many awards.

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City, and Karl Laurell of Rochester, N.Y.

The work of Mrs. Anni Albers of New Haven, Conn., a designer, artist, and lecturer, has been shown and collected by leading museums—among them the Museum of Modern Art. Marianne Stengell, of Bloomfield Hills, Mich., does large commissions and is a consultant to architects.

Maria Kipp of California employs 24 weavers and operates one of the most commercially successful hand-weaving operations on the West Coast. Trude Guernonprez and Frances Simi-

noff of California, Lili Blumenau and Lenore Tawney of New York City are also well-known weavers.

There are many more craftsmen. In fact there is a growing appreciation of handcrafted, specially designed items, as opposed to those that are machine- or mass-produced.

Most craft items bear the signature of the artist. Some of them, those being done by top craftsmen, are no doubt slated as heirlooms of tomorrow. They can be compared to the work of the early Colonial craftsmen which is so treasured today.