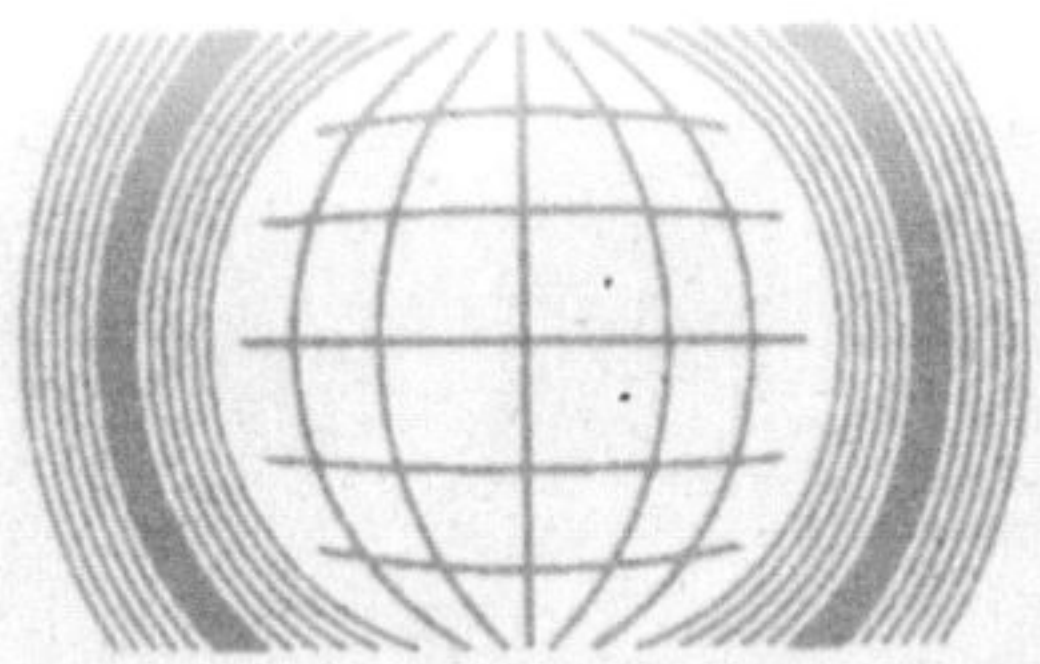


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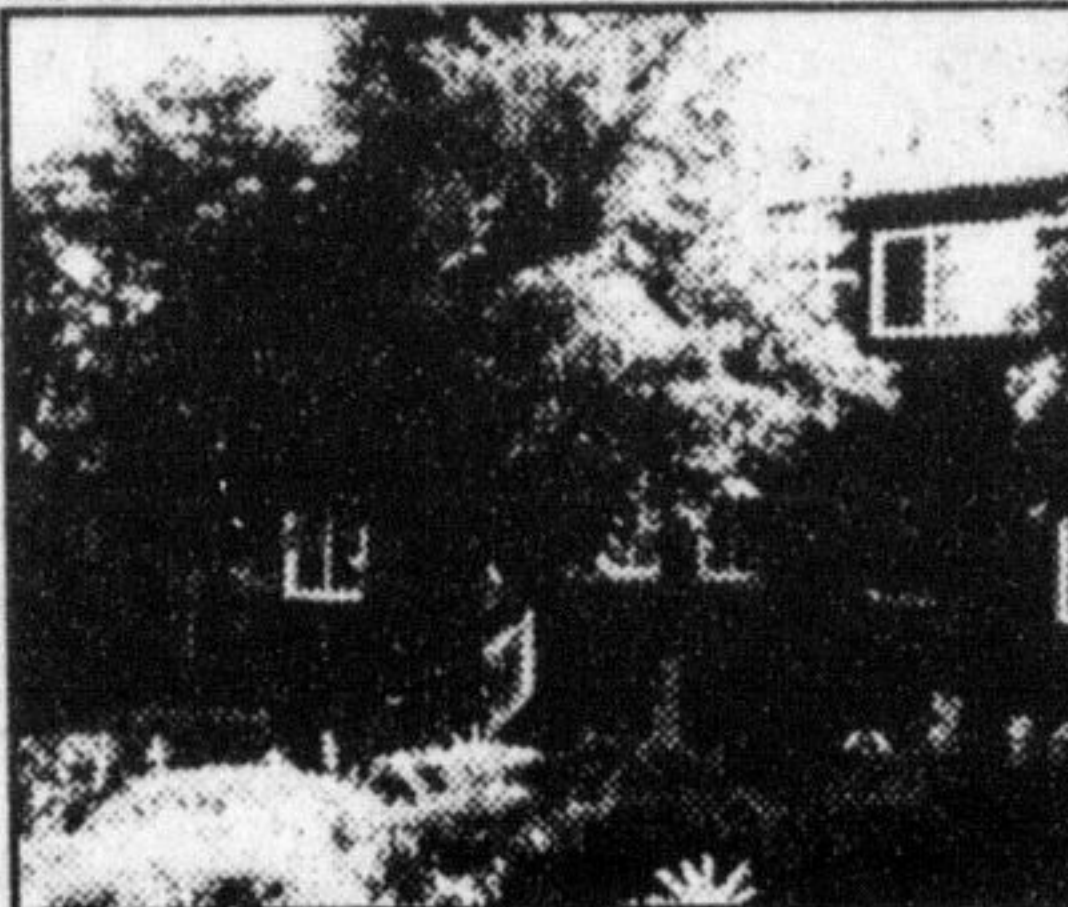
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**Eclectic composition**

If you have ever had the task of combining furnishings from two different households, you know the difficulties this presents. Whether it is a blended family, a new marriage, or even new housemates, people often bring with them a whole house of furnishings. Mixing the various elements from two different styles of decor can be difficult. Here are a few tips to help you get started.

First, take an inventory of all the pieces. Include not only the large items such as furniture, but also include such items as area rugs, lamps, pictures, and even accessories that you may incorporate into the decorating scheme. Once you have your lists, go through it and check off the items you definitely want to keep. This may include antiques, high quality furnishings, and items of sentimental value. It even may include that comfortable old chair in which you just love to read in.

But what if the items do not match? Take heart. The eclectic look is officially "in". Gone are the days when every single piece has to match. The Cleavers may have had a perfectly matched "suite" in every room, but not the family of the 90's!

There is, however, a difference between not matching and not coordinating. In fact, synonyms for eclectic include discriminating, particular, and selective. So if a piece does not belong - get rid of it! The classifieds or a garage sale may even bring you extra cash for decorating.

Now for that comfortable, worn out chair I mentioned ... consider recovering or refinishing some of the pieces to fit a particular room or to match the color scheme. For a more informal look, slipcovers may do wonders for pieces that look worn or tired. Large pieces of furniture, such as armoires or cabinets may be converted to hold audio/visual equipment, or even extra linen or clothes.

Finishing touches can do wonders to unite a mixture of furnishings.

Look for common elements in your pieces. Is there a color or texture that catches your eye? Perhaps a pillow in a patterned fabric that picks up colors from a couple of the blended pieces will unify the area. Or change the frame or matting on a picture to give it a whole new look.

*This article has been provided by June Wilson of Decorating Den, Milton*

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