Ideas For

by Susan Menne

MAD moments of insane homemaking ambition overcome the best of us. With the winter winds descending upon the campus there’s nothing nicer than a honey little nest in which to solve the problems of the world. But transforming a bare-walled, scantily furnished cubicle into a home is no easy matter. It takes ingenuity, planning, an eye for the novel and interesting and a deft hand with needle and paint brush.

“Sure,” you may say, “I could make my room look like a million dollars—if I had a million dollars.” But there is where you miss the fun of college living.

First of all, presuming that your room decorations at the turn of the new year consist of one bedspread and a 60-watt light bulb, you and your roommate must agree upon a theme or central idea for your living quarters. She, of course, may come from a long line of home furnishing experts. But her ideas will be mere poppycock compared to the dynamic and novel thoughts that are yours. To convince her of this may take more time than there is available, so it’s best to incorporate a bit and compromise.

Nautical Tastes

If your tastes incline to the nautical, the possibilities are endless. A pale blue bedspread, with full-sailed ships floating across it; an old trunk fashioned after a sea chest and painted a bright blue or red to hold the ship’s treasures, jaunty red curtains tied back with white bows, bright rag rugs and appropriate wall hangings will carry out your theme. Here you’ll find an atmosphere that almost smells of fresh salt air.

And none of these are things that will call for an increase in the monthly allowance. Once your mind starts churning, you’ll think of scores of things in the attic at home that can be shipped to college in less than a week. Old pieces of furniture that have been out of commission for years will look fresh and new with a nail or two and a coat of paint.

For simple but effective furniture, orange crates, the college standby, can be the basis for night stands, benches, vanity tables or stools. Here is where the needle comes in. A splintery orange crate is hardly the thing to offer a well-meaning guest who might drop in for a few minutes of entertainment. With a few yards of inexpensive material you can dress up the ex-home of the orange to look like a true product of the craftsman’s art. The top can be covered with a ready made cushion, or you can stuff your own. Over this cushion cheerful chintz or hand-painted gunny sacking adds that certain something to harmonize with the theme you have chosen.

Fashion some full, ruffly window curtains and tie them back with perky satin bows. For variation you may want to drape a bit of the material across the top of your window. Technically, this trick is known as a swag.
Illustrated by Rosella O'Neil

And here's another idea, especially intended for you worn and weary juniors and seniors. If your draperies and spreads have become dull and faded after 2 years of hard wear and tear, there is an invention called dye that worked for the Egyptians quite a few years back. Those on the market today are fool-proof, easy to work with and certainly less expensive than a whole new ensemble.

Your Bulletin Board

An indispensable item in any room is the bulletin board. Covered with a gay plaid or flowered material and bordered by a bright ruffle, this is the home of your college souvenirs, pictures, dance programs and pin-ups. Here you'll collect memories and pin them up to see and remember as college days progress. A few yards of contrasting ribbon attached to your bulletin board and hung from the moulding by special clips will add another note of color to the room.

Have you often felt you led a blighted life because the director of residence assigned you to an attic room with an unmanageable eave? Or is your sorority house built on that coy but impractical theory with dainty wall recesses? A small table made of orange crates and cut to fit the space provided can be used to hold a new or already established statuary, souvenir or animal collection. Covered to match the draperies or rugs, this table could be the ideal setting for a picture gallery.

Many of the residence houses on campus allow the women a free hand with the paint brush. In some sorority houses every change of roomers finds a room blossoming forth in a new layer of brilliant color. Floors, too, can be made to harmonize with canary yellow furnishings and a sun-shiny atmosphere.

Radiators, Wash Stands

Every room has an eyesore. Upright radiators seem to attract more attention than a white mink rug. Or you may have a porcelain wash stand surrounded by toothbrushes, towels and soap dishes. There must be ways and means of detracting from these objects, and the ingenious decorator will find the answer. Towels and wash cloths are hard to hide if they are to be at all convenient for the morning face splashing, but harmonizing with your color scheme and hung, not thrown, over the racks, they'll be more a part of the room.

A gathered skirt, matching one around a vanity or night stand, can be taped about the lavatory. A shelved box beneath the lavatory will hold all the makeup incidentals. Here, too, shoe polish, cleaning equipment and cherished food can be kept close at hand but hidden from the visitor's eye.

So take a new hold on life in the first of '48. And let that hold be reflected in the tasteful decorations of your room.