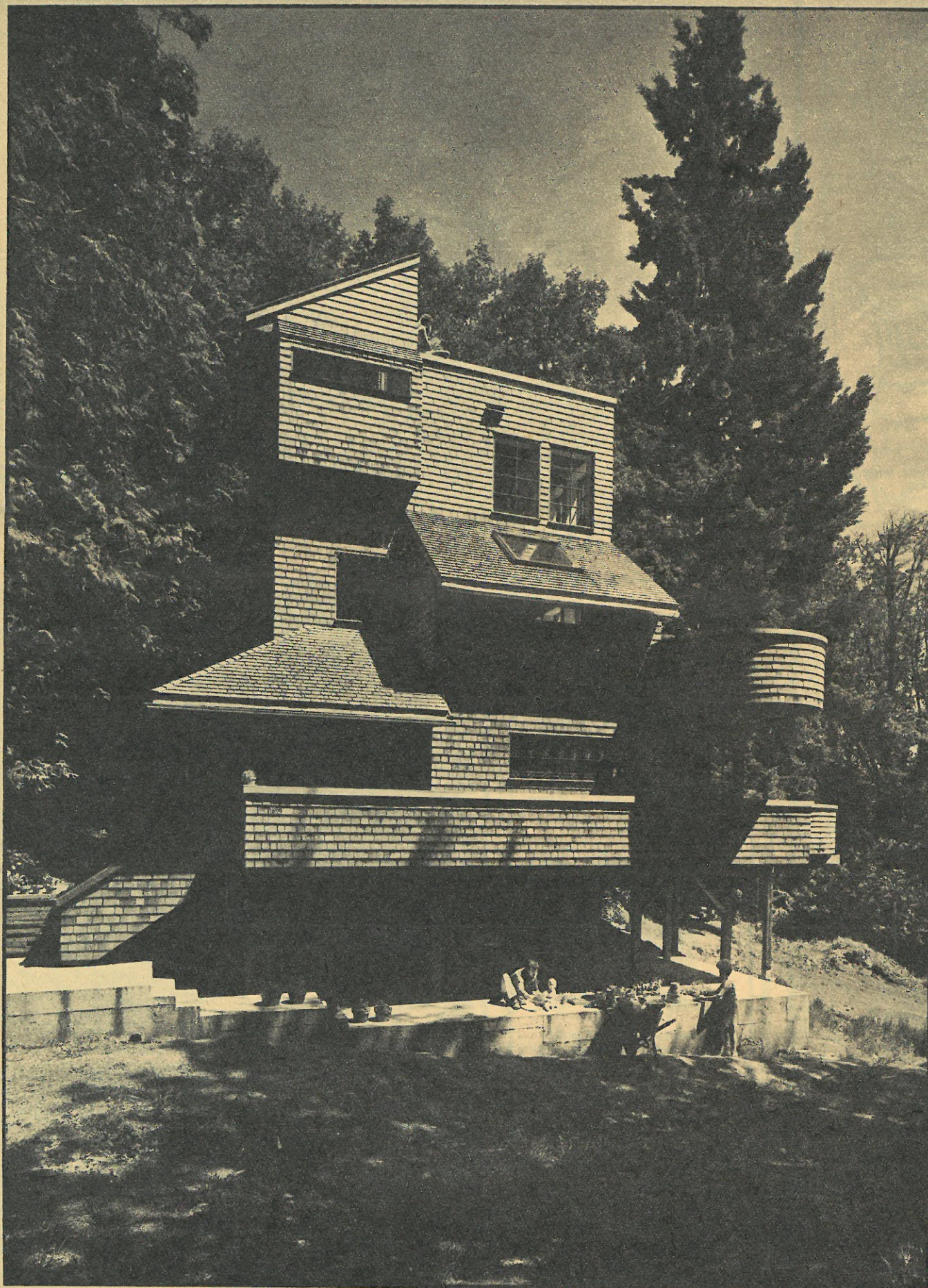


Land Yacht on Bainbridge

WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH RHODES
PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAUL HARPER



Bill and Minne Isley, and their son, Benson, tend plants on the lower level of their Bainbridge home. Isley, an architect, designed it.

You can't see the dramatic, soaring cedar-shingled home from the road, but if you could, what you'd be seeing is a land yacht surrounded by an acreage condominium.

Huh?

That's exactly what it is, this three-year-old home owned by the Isleys — Bill, the architect who designed it, and Minne (pronounced "Minnie") who designs and manufactures baby clothes. The couple has two children, Sara, 15, and Benson, 3.

The Isleys' Bainbridge residence is the result of some highly individualistic thinking. To begin with, it borrows heavily from their previous home, a vintage 50-foot yacht on Lake Union. After living there five years, the space-strapped family decided to move but without giving up the charm and coziness of their ocean-going home.

"We love old things," Isley said, "but we didn't want to buy an old house because it didn't suit our needs. So we built an old house — a land yacht," he laughed, gesturing toward the oval deck off the dining area of his home. "The deck is like the fantail of a yacht."

"Once we decided to build, we spent two years planning it," the architect continued. "Our main consideration was to build in a place where the area will continue to stay nice, where your neighbors can't come in and log the land off and put up fences."

The answer, he decided, was to form a condominium — not a building condominium, but a land condominium.

Seven owners, now neighbors, each own a fee-simple share of an eight-acre wooded lot. There are seven 100-foot circles inside the eight acres and each owner has total control only over the area within his circle (that area being about 7,200-square-foot — the lot size common on Queen Anne). The rest of the land, approximately 6½ acres of heavily forested green belt, is held in common, governed by bylaws and maintained by monthly condominium fees.

"We got pretty philosophical about the whole thing," said Isley, who based the legal work on state condominium laws.

"What he did was design a neighborhood. If something goes wrong, we have the mechanisms to deal with it."

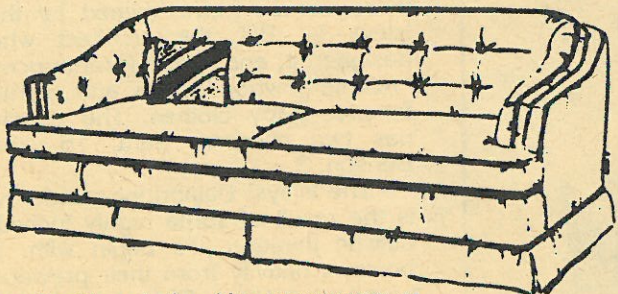
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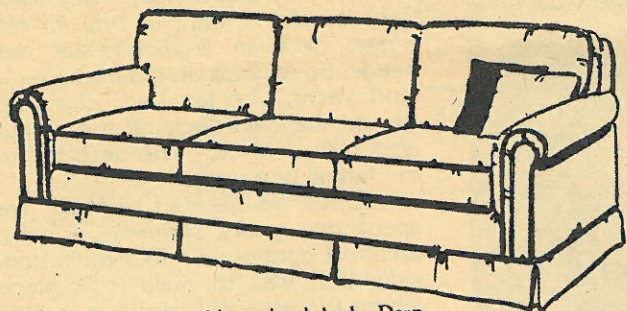
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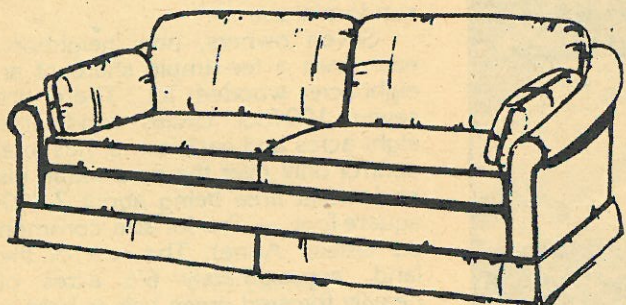
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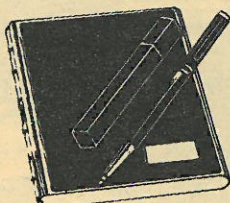
LAND YACHT



This view from the railing of the fantail-shaped deck off the dining area also shows the deck off the master bedroom above. Behind the multi-pane windows to the right is the living room.



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Minne Isley in her elevated sewing area off the living room. An accomplished designer, she wanted a comfortable work area she could use daily and never have to put her materials away.

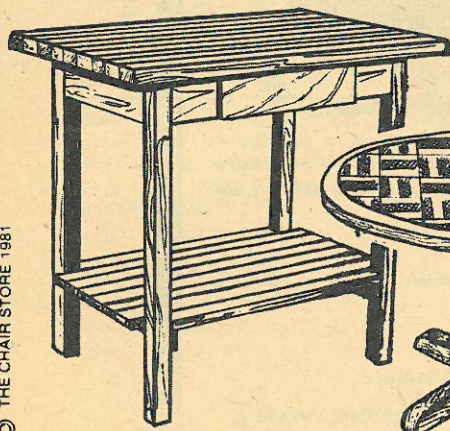
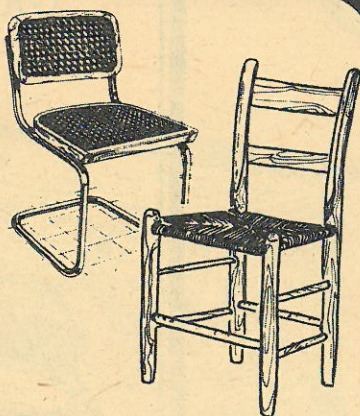


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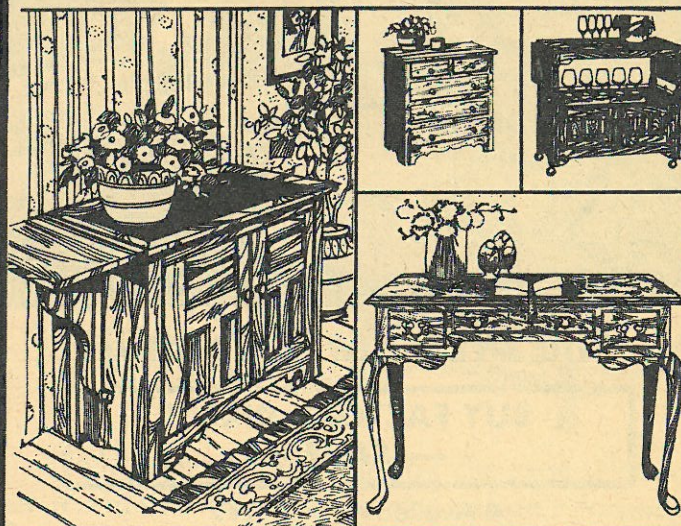
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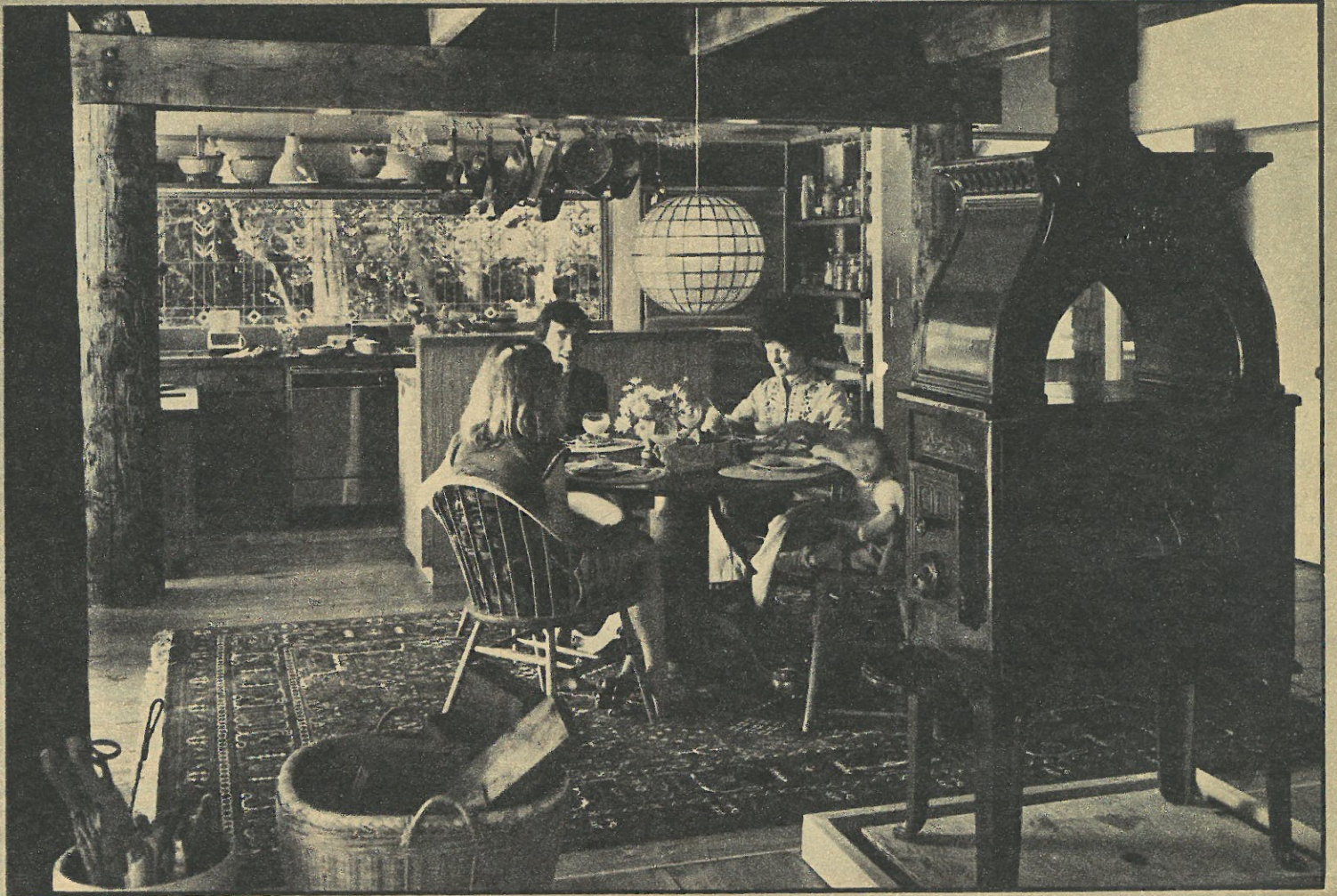
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LAND YACHT



The Isleys, and their children, Sara and Benson, in what is truly the heart of the house — the dining area. Mrs. Isley particularly enjoys the open kitchen which keeps her in contact with the family. To continue that feeling, she requested that the storage areas, such as the shelf above her head to the right, be open so everything is exposed. The dining table is antique, but the wool carpet, made in Holland, is new, as are the chairs.

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The owners, not all of whom have yet built, include two architects, a carpenter, a teacher, the owner of a stationery store and an attorney. They have a communal orchard, a semi-communal garden plot and a large open-sided pavilion, called "the barn," that's used for everything from picnics to playing basketball to kids' birthday parties.

"However this is not a commune," Isley stressed. "We're all very private people. This idea really isn't uncommon. Broadmoor (in Seattle) is the same idea."

The houses themselves were designed by several people; there was no rule that they had to look alike, only that they be harmonious.

"We wanted to create an atmosphere like having a cabin in a national park," said Isley, "and it's a hell of a secure feeling to know your kids have six acres to play in."

The Isleys' home has a rustic coziness that's uncommon in many modern homes with their white walls, soaring ceilings and expanses of glass — all of which the Isley home also has. The coziness is by design.

"We wanted this to be like a farmhouse — so as soon as you come in you feel comfortable," says Isley, who adds that family and guests commonly choose to go barefoot indoors.

To achieve the desired coziness, the Isleys "wanted the whole thing to be heavy timber," he explained. This they accomplished by buying vintage lumber — 18,000 board feet of 3-by-12-inch select-grade fir timbers that formerly made up the old General Services

Administration Building near Boeing Field.

The house is supported by four old telephone poles salvaged from Fort Lewis that are anchored approximately 6 feet into the ground.

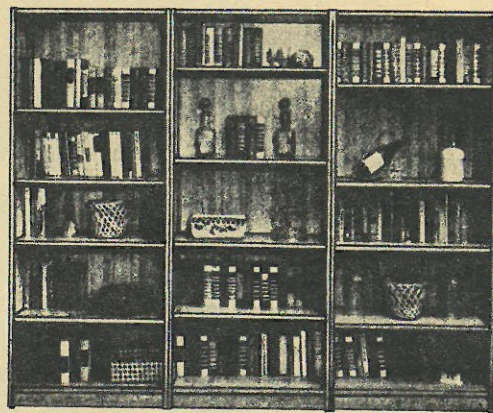
Other borrowed touches include the wood windows, formerly from the old Kirkland shipyard (purchased for \$3 each, "we spent literally hundreds of hours refinishing them," Mrs. Isley said) and the bronze door latches. That hardware came out of the White-Henry-Stuart building demolished to make way for Rainier Tower. Other elements, such as the ornate leaded-glass window that's a focal point in the kitchen, were collected over the years in antique shops.

The main floor, actually one story up from the ground, houses the living, dining, kitchen and sewing areas. In essence, this is one large space broken up by the different heights and levels of floor and ceiling. Minne Isley especially requested a kitchen compact enough that others couldn't be underfoot, but open enough so she wouldn't be exiled from the rest of the family.

Up one flight of stairs is the couple's bedroom (actually a balcony adjacent to the living room) and above that is a combination bedroom and bath shared by the two Isley kids. The first-floor area under the living room will be finished into a room for three-year-old Benson; the adjoining area will become a tile-floored family room.

The top story of the Isley is a balcony that provides a fine view of Puget Sound. From it, the family really feels they're on a land yacht.

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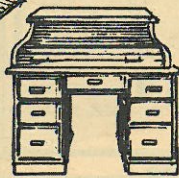
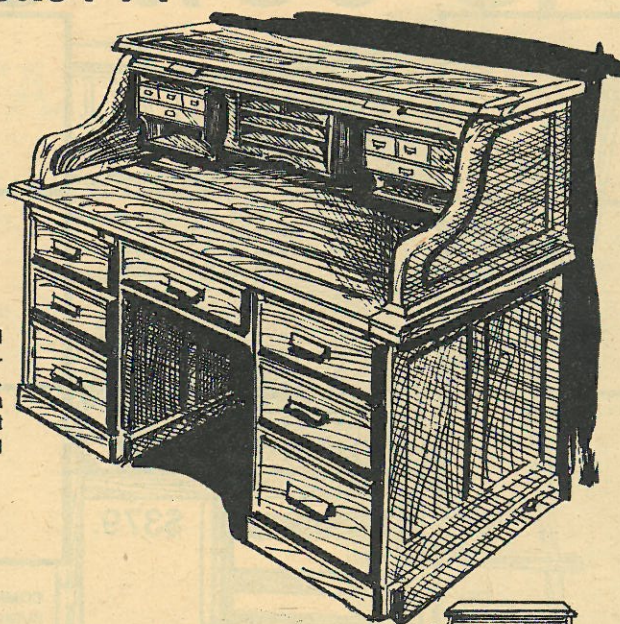
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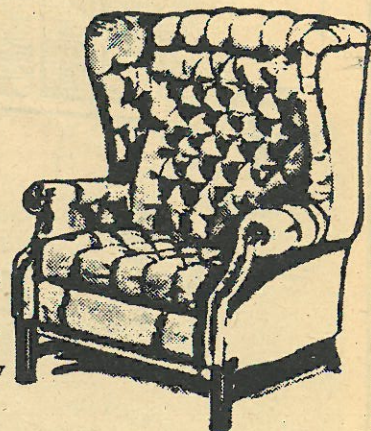
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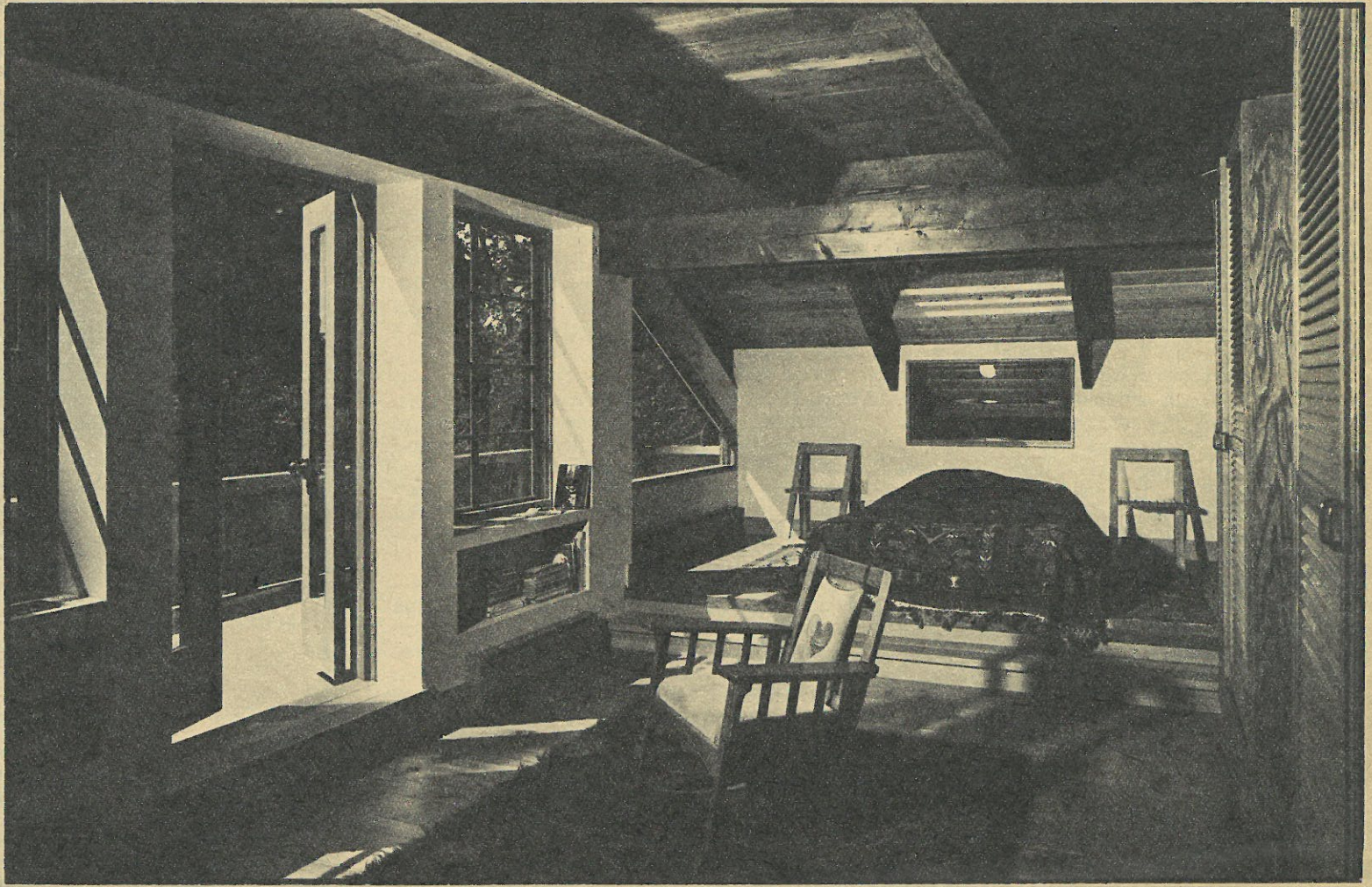
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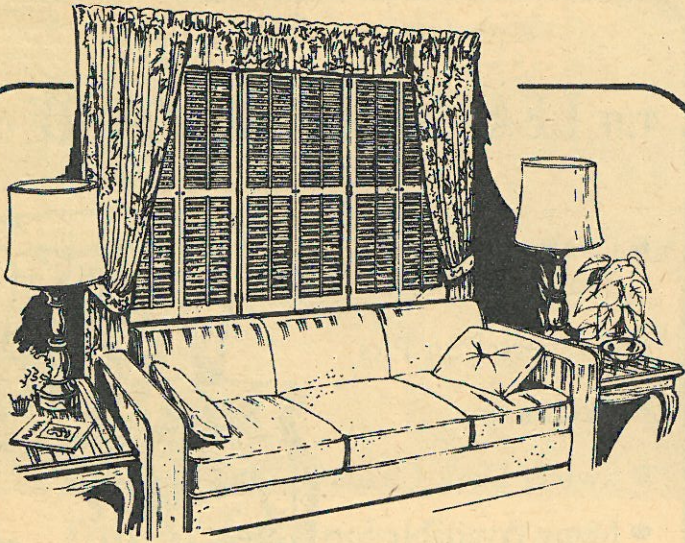


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The Isleys' loft bedroom features a raised sleeping platform lit from above by a skylight that opens. The bedspread, red with a colorful folk pattern, is from Crete where Mrs. Isley lived for a year. To the right, behind the louvered doors, are closets. Between them is a passageway leading to a spacious master bath with a raised tub.



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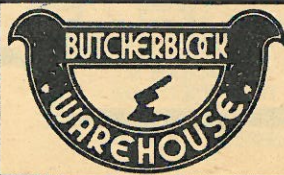
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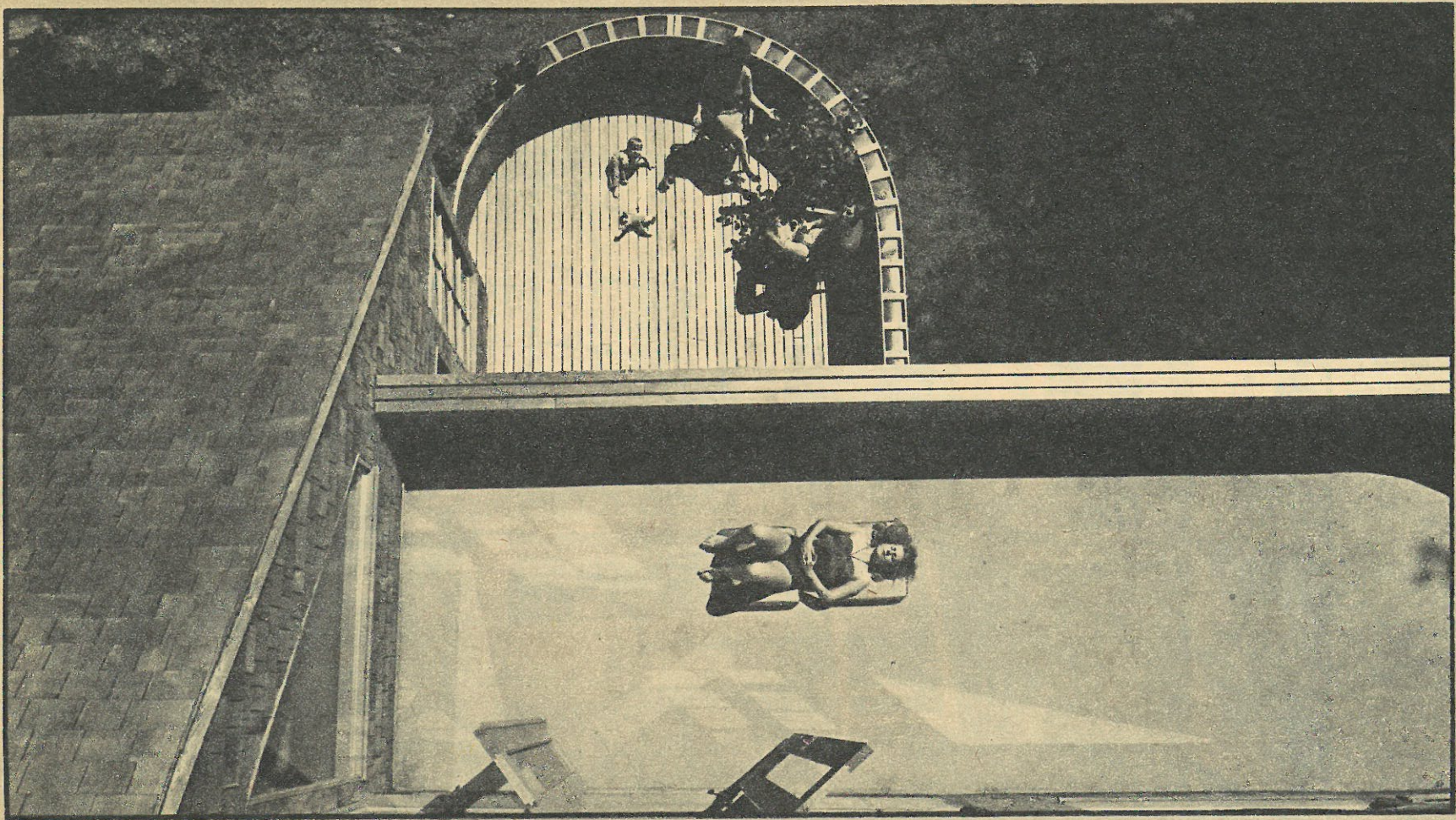
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Sara sunbathes on the deck adjoining her parents' bedroom while they relax on the deck below. This picture was taken from still another deck.

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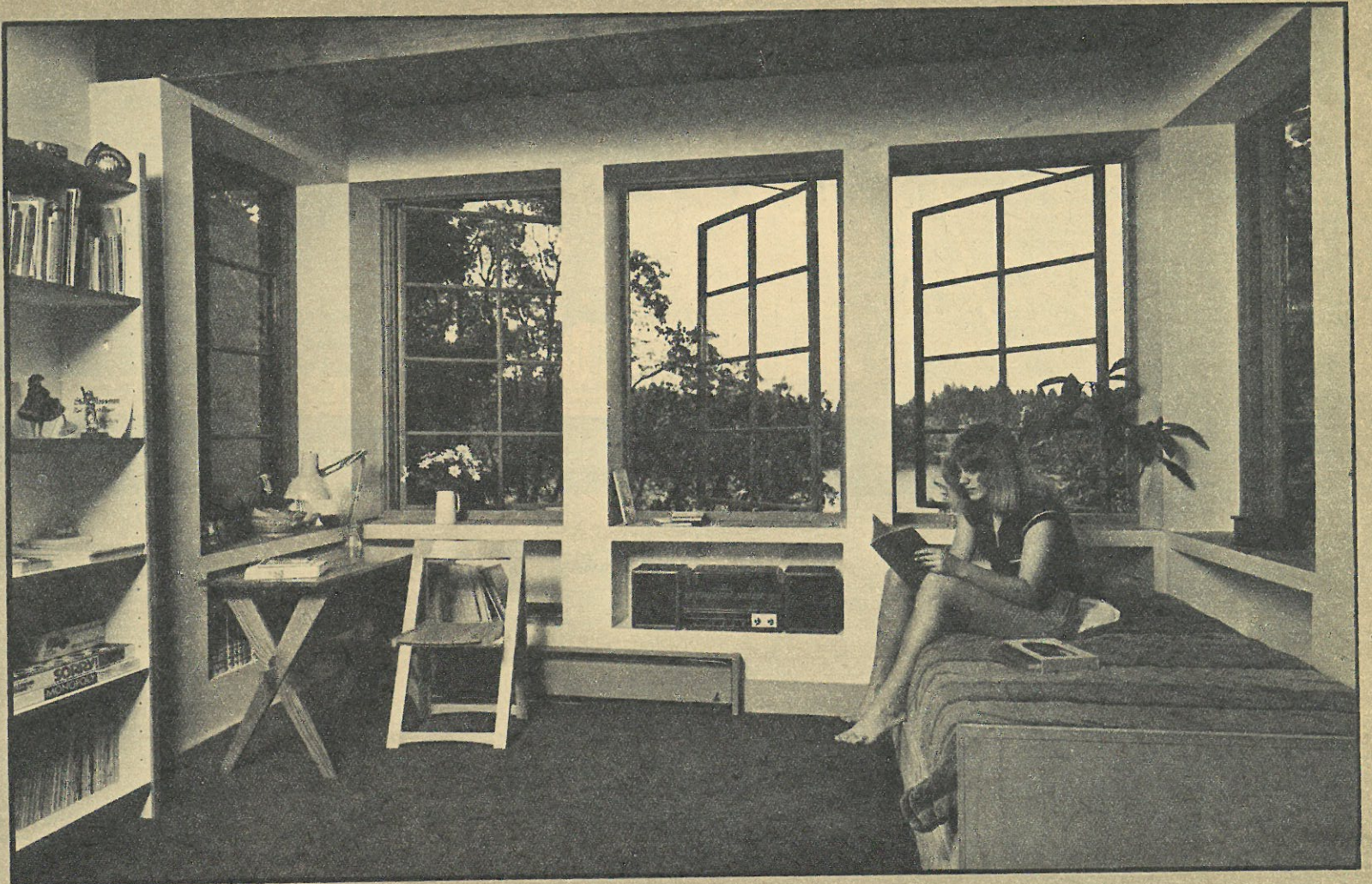
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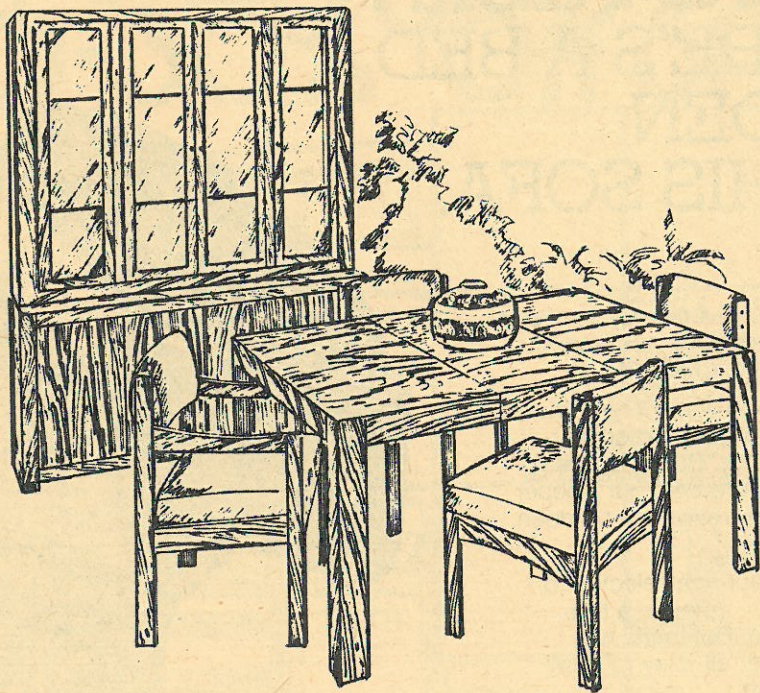
Sara reads in her bedroom. Just visible out the windows is a view of a Puget Sound inlet.

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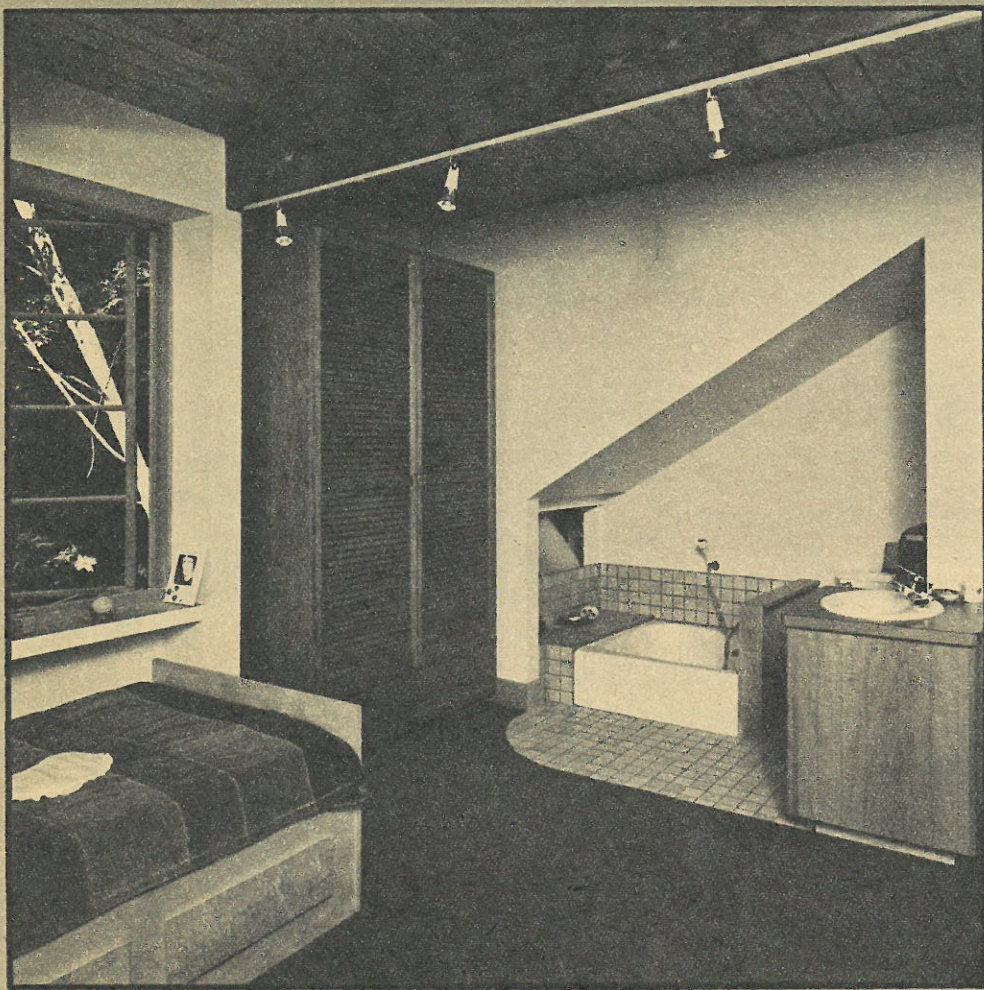


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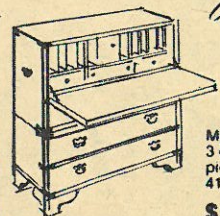
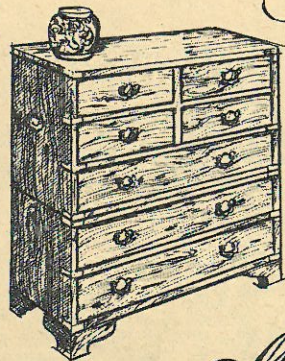
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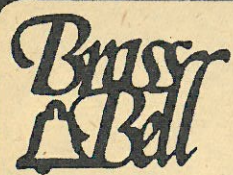
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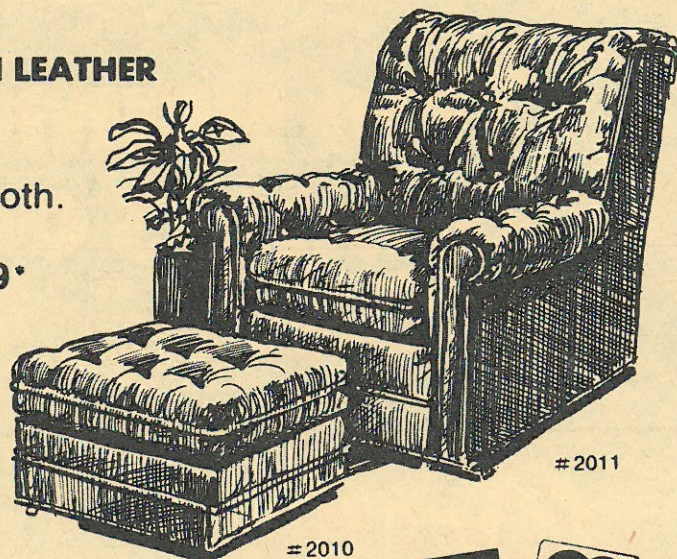
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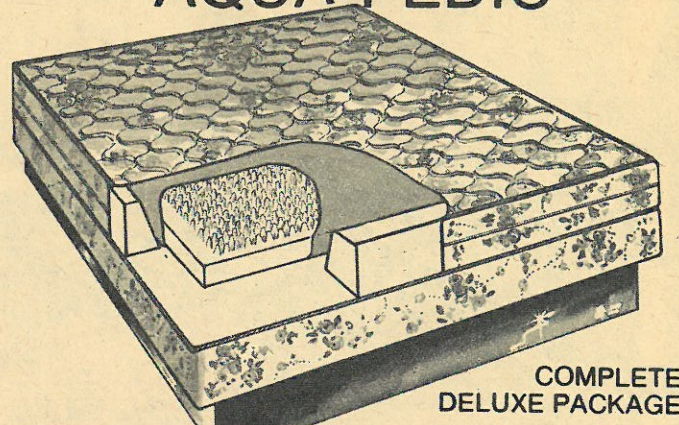
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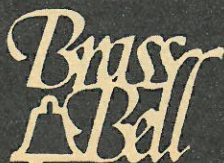
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