

Recycled into Miniatures II

By Dena Hamlin, Shoreline, Washington

Once again, these ideas are generally meant for 1" scale.

Post-it Notes

I've seen people using an inverted plastic yogurt lid on which to squeeze out a dab of glue to be used up within a few minutes. Then you have to scrape off the old glue when finished. My simpler solution is to use a small pad of Post It Notes. After I am finished using the dollops of glue on the top page, I simply toss that one. All is clean and ready to go again.

Sliding Closet Door

Most dollhouses do not have closets in which to hang clothes. You could use an armour. But why not try to install a sliding closet door or perhaps a glass or screen door? Get an old umbrella. Do NOT cut up grandma's favorite one! In the older ones, the ribs are made like half a pipe, cut lengthwise. Place two cut sections next to each other to make excellent sliders. I can just see some very tiny decals on a thin plexiglass door so the miniature person will not try to walk through a closed sliding glass door!

Flooring and Counter Tops

I purchased two different rolls of Contact paper with tiny designs at a Dollar Store. I thought one would work for flooring and the other, for a counter top. But it is most difficult to try to spread it evenly inside the house or roombox. I recommend cutting a piece of thin cardboard to the exact size of the floor. Then carefully cover it with the Contact paper. You can move it and turn it around so much easier than if it was already in the house. If a bubble appears, you can poke it with a pin and smooth it out without it showing.

When your floor is "perfect", you can glue it in and it will look just like a linoleum floor. Same for the counter tops. Easier to manage going around inside, outside or rounded corners. This tip can even work for other types of floors too. Even if you are using fabric designed for wall-to-wall carpet, it may be easier to apply it to a separate piece of cardboard and then inserting it into place. A spray glue might be just the thing to use.

Light Fixtures

I'm into inexpensive light fixtures. You can go to the hardware store and buy a package of four clear clips to hold a full-length mirror on the wall. There is a screw hole in each piece. Try sawing off the end that would normally go over the actual mirror and you have four little "light fixtures". Some are really cheap and are just plain plastic. Pay a few cents more for the ones with decorative lines on them. Kind of looks like maybe from the 40s.

Insert grain-of-wheat bulbs into the

screw holes. Two together look nice, with perhaps just the tiniest end of the bulb showing below the "fixture". Make sure the cut edges face the rear of the room. To make them shiny, use a bit of clear nail polish or hold a lighter flame to the cut part long enough to melt away the saw marks and make it clear too.

Filling Your Market Stall

Our miniature club made little market stalls. Mine was called The Merry Christmas Nook. Around October, November, thrift stores start putting out earrings with other Christmas items. I found lots of snowmen, angels, Santas and teddy bears, etc., that could stand alone. Scour craft stores or the craft section of fabric stores. Even some buttons may work into your scene. Just keep your eyes open. You never know what you will find!

Packaged Food

Sometimes a real package of food or animal kibble will have a picture of other flavors available perhaps on the back of the package. I once bought a bag of kitty food and on the back was a picture of three other flavors. It so happened that the background was dark blue with a thin, light blue stripe. And one of the other bags was pictured right next to a plain piece of the background design. I carefully cut out a "shopping bag" shaped piece with the picture of the sack of cat food on the front of it. I glued it all together and filled it about 2/3rds full of Grapenuts cereal. Then I folded the top down a couple of times and glued it in place. Now I can shake the bag and 20 years later it still makes the sound of kibble in it! Never use anything moist!

Instant Relatives

Now that we have computers that can enlarge or reduce pictures, it is far easier to make miniatures of real life products. Way back, over four decades ago, a lady I knew laid a number of old-fashioned family photos out and took a single picture of all of them. When she developed the film, there were wonderful miniature pictures of all the large ones. She called them Instant Relatives.

Old Fashioned Picture

We made a project in our miniature club, where we glued a tiny picture into the empty oval of a clip-on earring that could have had a fake stone glued in it. Then we poured in a two-part Epoxy-type resin and when it dried, it did indeed look like an old-fashioned picture. Plus, it sat up by itself because of the clip on the back.

Candy Jars

You never know how long The Dollar Stores will carry something. Recently they have some little bottles about one

inch tall with nail glitter in them in the make-up aisle. Eight to a card. I tossed the glitter and now have several wonderful little glass jars. I don't much care, however, for the plastic top. If you size a dowel into the top, you can cut off about 1/4" or less and use it for a stopper. If you put something delicious in the bottle, people will notice it and not focus on the stopper or "lid". I've seen some wonderful jars of miniature candy.

Bags of Candy

I have never smoked a cigarette, but I have asked friends who do, to save the thin, "plastic" (cellophane?) wrap around each package for me. If you cut out a tiny square about 5/8ths" and fold over and twist the ends around a bead or actual piece of clay "candy", it stays twisted. I'm still trying to figure out how I discovered that! Regular food wrap is a bit stretchy and comes untwisted immediately. But please don't start smoking just to get the plastic wrap!

Bric-a-brac Animals

Hunt for beads in scale, shaped like animals. I just found a pair of earrings with a perfect set of giraffe beads! A bit of filler and a dot of paint or felt-tipped marker can cover the top hole. Sometimes you can find entire necklaces of animal beads at thrift or import stores. Add a couple of animals here and there in a bookshelf of books or for bric-a-brac on an end table. Perhaps a desk could use one or two. Or a set them on a mantle or special shelf.

Fireplace

While browsing in a model train supply store, something like a 1" scale fireplace caught my eye. Come to find out, it was the portal of a tunnel where the trains come out of a mountain! Also, some picture frames (5X7" or smaller?) can be cut about in one-half to look like a mini fireplace. You can insert painted cardboard to make a smaller opening within the frame. Another idea is to make a bunch of thin cardboard bricks, paint them black and arrange them inside the fireplace. You may need to cover the sides with strip wood and secure a mantle on top. Then decorate.

Train Store Finds

Also at the train store I found some extremely small old-fashioned milk cans about 1/2" tall. They could be interesting salt and pepper shakers for a 1" scale table. I actually once owned a real pair shaped like that. Plan on spending a LOT of time in a model train store! I also found some white plastic 1' lengths of "dowel" as thin as a narrow pencil line, that would make great lollipop sticks.

— Continued on next page

Recycled into Miniatures

— Continued from page 33

Coffee Tables

I've seen small stands for egg ornaments used as the base for a miniature end table. Even one or two to make a coffee table. They are getting harder to find, but if you spot an old mom-and-pop hardware store, you may still be able to get round replacement glass for flashlights. Then you can have glass end tables. I've actually seen miniature slices of unusual wood or petrified rock for the top of a coffee table. Some had remarkable small, decorative wood burls for bases.

Natural Light

I used to make a room box and then have to come up with some creative lighting to brighten each corner. Try using glass or plexiglass for the ceiling of an individual box. You may still want to put in some lights, but the light in the room is usually sufficient to illuminate it. I noted that at Hobby Lobby, they carry a perfect "room box", only it is meant for displaying a football, with an oval indentation in the middle. I'm just aching to get one and make a four-sided scene with clear ceiling as well. A rug over the indented oval will conceal it nicely, perhaps with a cardboard backing.

Garage Sale

If you have some ersatz minis you don't know what to do with, why not

try making a "garage sale"? I built a 16" square "garage" with a plexiglass ceiling and front and put "2X4s" all around the walls. Then I put in a rug and placed my goodies on it. I had found a set of Westinghouse salt and pepper shakers in the shape of a washer and dryer. They sit in the corner and there is a sign on them, saying that they are NOT for sale. Between the studs I placed extra pieces of moldings, wire, rope, etc. Just bits of this and that. All sales are final and if you don't see a price, the customer can pick it up and look at the bottom!

Under Construction

I have always wanted to build a room "under construction". You can have stacks of boards for hardwood floor usage, plastic wrap over some furniture in the middle of the room, a rolled up rug, yardsticks, wallpaper rolls, a ladder, moldings, a can of coke and an apple core. Paint brushes and cans. Just the usual stuff in a room under construction. You can even put in "studs" and I figured a 4"X8" piece of white cardboard could pretend to be a 1/12th scale piece of sheet rock. It would look cute to put on a piece of "sheet rock" and see the 2X4s beneath it. Wires could dangle from the ceiling for the intended light fixture or stick out of the wall for outlets. Maybe use ideas from your own real remodel!

Tiny Art

Another discovery at The Dollar

Store was a round container of nail art. Thin little flowers less than 1/4" wide and some clear ones of different shapes and shades less than 1/8th" wide. They would look cute on the front of a perfume bottle for a spot of interest. Maybe used in a modern teen-age girl's bedroom on a cork board or bed frame decorations.

Cork Board

And I'm sure you know you can buy extremely thin cork. I once made some darling cork boards about 2"X3". But my mistake was that I used water-based glue to put actual mini picture frame molding around them. They warped diagonally. Had I used a silicone-based glue and weighted them down while the glue dried, I believe they would have worked out just fine. I had some actual mini newspaper so I cut out articles and used mini photos to place on them. For push pins, I cut the heads off the smallest sewing pins I could find and pushed them into and glued them onto the cork board.

Try making a "crayon" child's picture to put on the cork board or refrigerator. Maybe have an actual child make the picture out of sharpened colored pencils or fine-tipped felt markers or iniaturize a real picture your child made.

So for now, happy miniaturizing! Think "small" - in a "BIG" way!

Thank You

to the individuals and organizations who have made generous donations to NAME.

October 1st - November 30th

BOOSTER \$5-\$49

Jacqueline Bulwith-Fein
Helen Cole
Cindy Cooper
Sharon Frazier
Gail Green
Debbie Heard
Sharon Hesterlee
Megan Kasper
Sandy MacDonald
Maryann McGovern
Carolyn Mitchell
Jackie Nelson
Nancy Oram
Carol Pitman
Susan Sanchez
Linda Schwarz

CONTRIBUTING MEMBER \$50-\$99

2nd Annual Mooresville NC
Dollhouse Show
Maria Cannizzaro
Central Coast NAME Club (CA)
Little by Little (WI)

SUPPORTING MEMBER \$100-\$249

Lehigh Valley NAME SOS
Louisville Miniature Club (KY)
Vivienne Smith

SUSTAINING MEMBER \$250-\$499

Mini-Imaginations Miniature Club (CA)
Retreat Into Miniatures (WI)
Tri-City Miniatures Makers (MI)

PRESIDENT'S CLUB \$500-\$999

Quarter Connection
The First State Mini Club (DE)

Dollar Club

Karen Barone
Sarita Speros

Love of NAME

Lorna Whitlow
Mini Endeavors (TX)

MUSEUM FUND

NE State Day

NAME DAY

HI NAME Day
Midwest Miniature Guild (MN)
San Diego Miniature Crafters (CA)

IN MEMORY OF SALLY COLWELL

Tiny Tinkers of New Bern (NC)

IN MEMORY OF CARLOTTA GRINAGE

Dani Muckleroy

IN MEMORY OF BILL HAMILTON

Julie Fisk
N.U.T.S. (TX)

IN MEMORY OF BONNIE JOHNSON

Raleigh Miniatures Guild (NC)