

WOODWORKER'S JOURNAL

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Classic Project



In this plan you'll find:

- Step-by-step construction instruction.
- A complete bill of materials.
- Construction drawings and related photos.
- Tips to help you complete the project and become a better woodworker.

Scrollsaw Christmas Puzzles



Scrollsaw Christmas Puzzles Santa's Village and Nativity Scene

SPECIAL PULL-OUT SECTION

46 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1997




These two clever little holiday scenes work both as puzzles, and decorations. For display, you pull the individual parts out and stand them upright in front of the frame. The frame serves as a backdrop for the individual pieces, and also as a storage container when you're ready to fit the pieces back together. Kids will love arranging and playing with the individual pieces. Rather than paint all these elaborate scenes and characters, you can simply adhere the colored patterns we provide to a piece of MDF and cut out along the lines. Here's how it works.

Three Basic Parts

Each puzzle consists of three parts: a backer board, a 1/2"-wide perimeter frame, and the individual puzzle parts that fit inside the frame. Note that on Santa's village, the back and the front sides of the backer board have patterns adhered to them. On the nativity scene, only the front side of the backer board receives a pattern. The frame and individual puzzle parts are cut from 3/8".

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ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Debi McGary started designing and building these puzzles to give her six children toys with a personal touch and special meaning. Her first puzzle, "Noah's Ark," was designed for Sunday play. The "Grandpa's Farm" puzzle commemorated her first five years of marriage spent on the family farm. And in similar fashion her "Ocean Friends" and "Forest Friends" puzzles have reflected the family's appreciation of the different places they have lived. If you are interested in these or some of the other puzzles Debi has created, you may want to get a copy of her book *Wonderful Wood Puzzles*, published by Plaid Enterprises, Inc., Norcross, Georgia; or contact McGary Enterprises, 915 Hill View, Rexburg, ID 83440.



thick MDF, the backer board can be 1/2" or 3/4" MDF.

To start, remove the patterns from the magazine by bending out the staples and removing the insert. Take it to a place that makes color copies and have the patterns copied. (Kinko's and Wal-Mart provide this service.) If you want the painted images on the backside of the Santa's Village puzzle, you'll need to make two copies, one of the front side of the sheet and a separate copy of the backside. Note that color copiers vary in quality of reproduction. Browns are particularly hard to reproduce accurately. Check your copies carefully and ask the copy service to

adjust the color if you don't get the shade you want.

Cut From MDF

Adhere the pattern for the individual puzzle pieces to a piece of 3/4" MDF using a spray adhesive or Modgepodge. (You can find Modgepodge at most crafts stores.) Scrollsaw the perimeter of the pattern, but don't cut out the individual pieces just yet. Lay your perimeter cutout on another piece of MDF and trace two lines around it—one line on the perimeter and another line 1/2" wide and parallel to the perimeter line. (This will form the frame that holds the pieces

together in the storage configuration.) Scrollsaw along the outer line on the frame, then trace it onto another piece of MDF (1/2" or 3/4"). Now, cut out this piece to form the backer board.

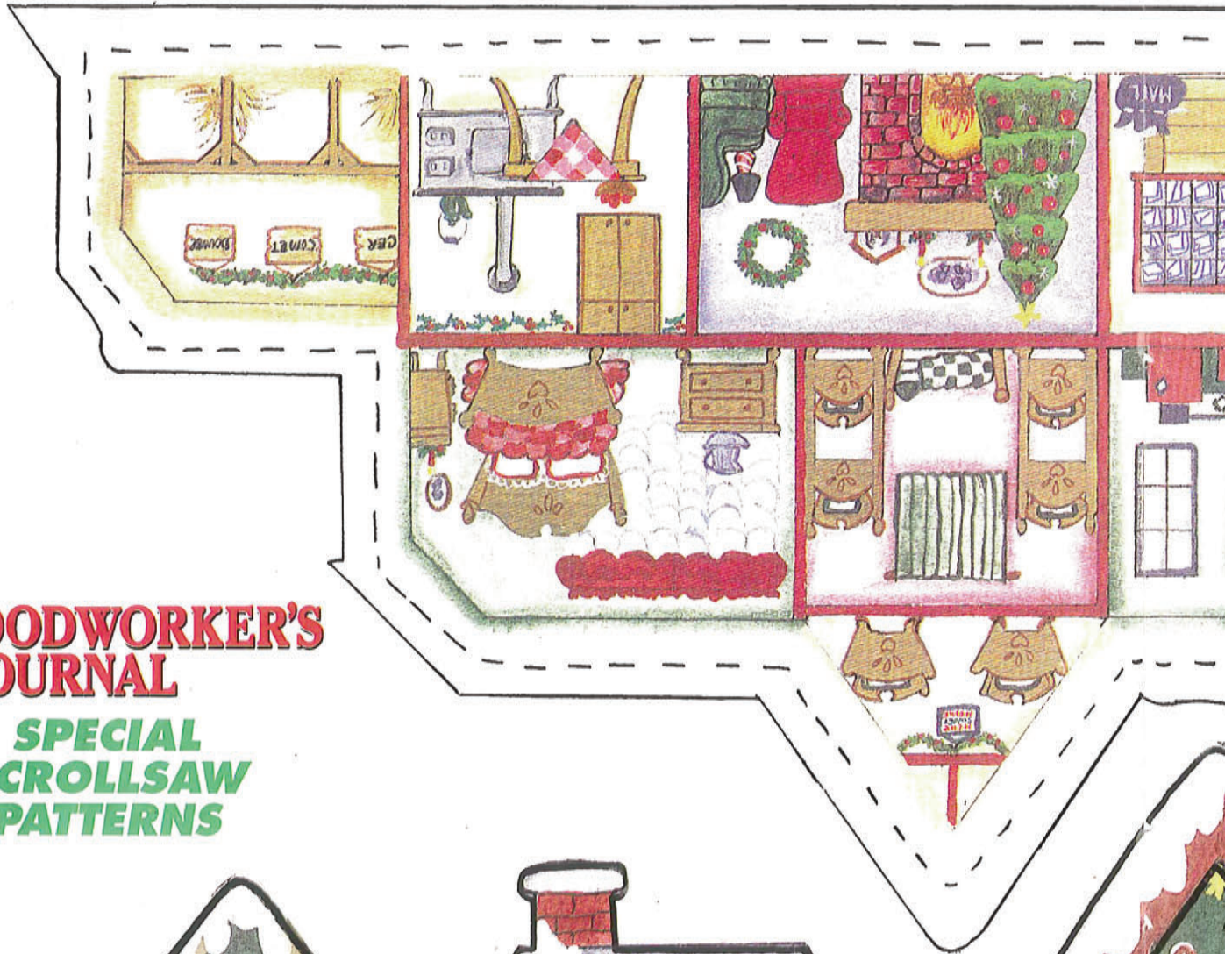
Assemble the Parts

Cut out the interior section of the frame piece, then glue the frame to the face of the backer board, align their outside edges flush. After the glue cures, clean up any squeeze-out and sand the outside edges smooth. Paint the edges of the frame and backer board a color that matches the painted pattern. Then, cut out your background patterns and adhere them to the backer board, making sure they fit neatly inside the frames.

Now, cut out the individual pieces of the puzzle using a fine-tooth scrollsaw blade to avoid tearing the paper edges. Sand or file off any fuzziness, then paint the edges to match the edges of the backerboard and frame. Test the fit of the pieces in the frame, then remove them. Spray-finish the frame/backer board assembly and the puzzle pieces with a clear polyurethane or varnish. Avoid lacquer or acrylic spray formulations as these may cause the adhesive under the paper to wrinkle or bubble. 

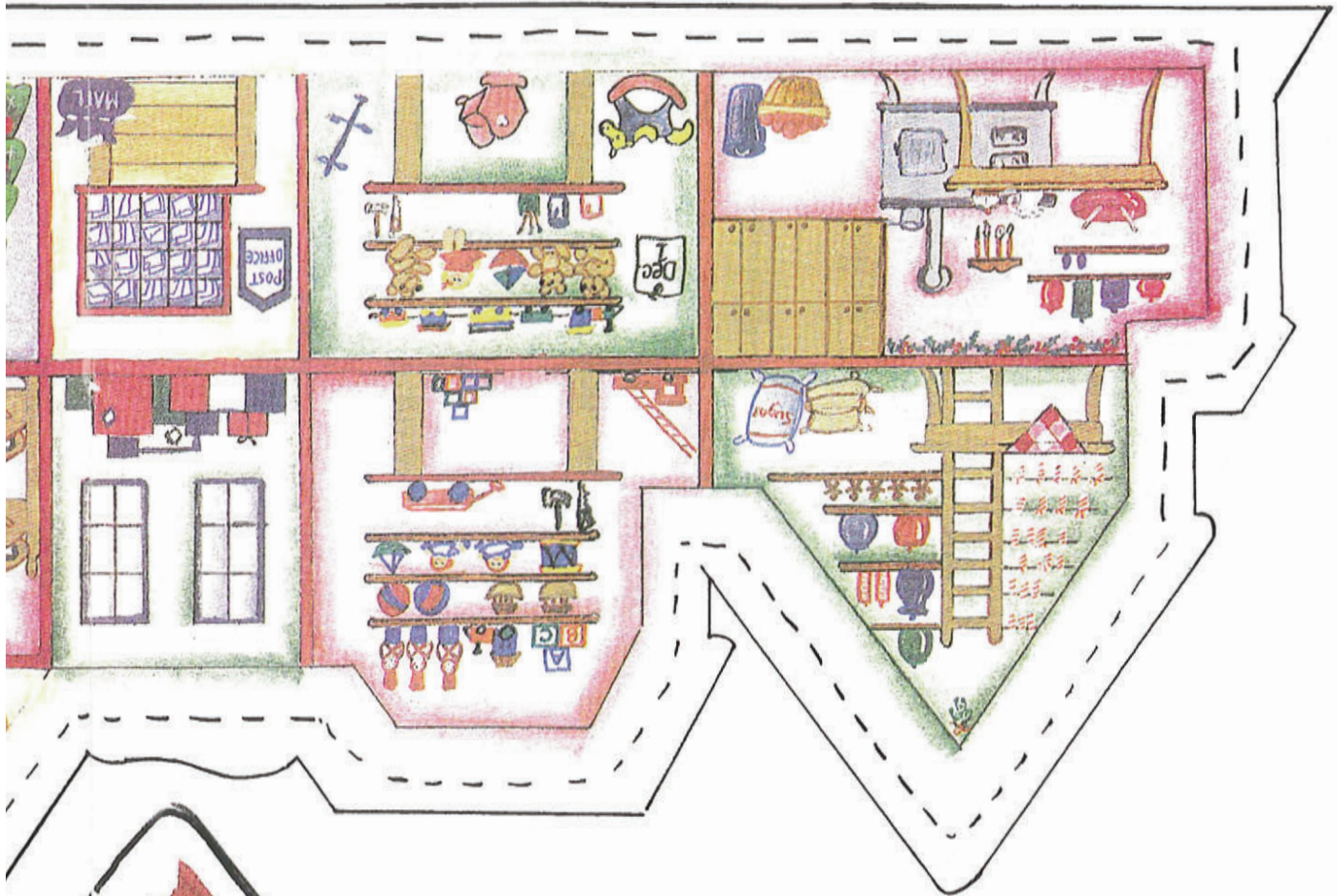
Project designs: Debi McGary

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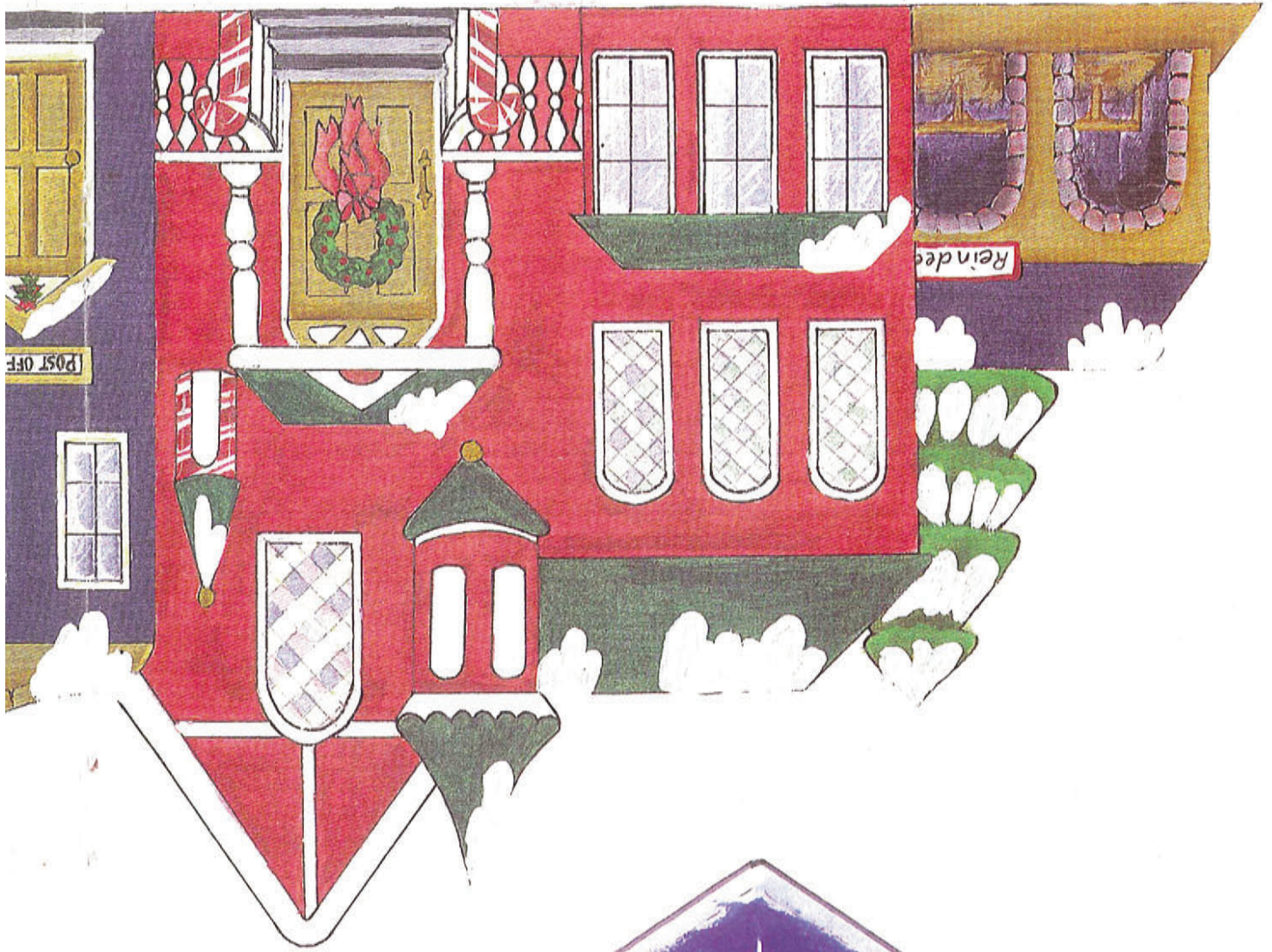




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Matt Becker
Internet Production Coordinator