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Students revitalize dorm rooms with antiques, rainbows

By Kara Woodham

Tucked away in a secluded corner of Custer Hall is the antique haven of Deborah Abraham, graduate student from Orlando, Fla.



Seated on her antique "throne," Deborah Abraham, Orlando, Fla., graduate student, is queen of her Custer castle.

Abraham, co-champion of the annual Undormit contest, has proved that even a dormitory room can be transformed with ingenuity, patience and work.

Purpose of the contest is to give students an opportunity to personalize their rooms through painting, remodeling and redecorating—"to make it more of a home than just four walls," said Jim Long, assistant head resident at Wiest Hall.

"I don't go home on vacations," said Abraham, who once worked for a traveling Broadway company in Florida. "The dorm is my home and I wanted it to look like a home."

As a set designer, Abraham learned how to buy junk and turn it into beautiful and useful props through reupholstering, painting, sewing, and cleaning. "I have countless odds and ends, gathered from shopping at thrift and junk stores," she said.

A few of these "odds and ends" in her Custer hideaway include brown chapel curtains, an intricately carved oak loveseat, a king size

oak bed, and numerous antique picture frames and knick knacks.

The \$80 prize money she received in the contest won't pay her expenses, but "it will come close," she said. "It's easy to accumulate inexpensive bits and pieces, and with time and effort you can make your room look super."

Sharing the championship with Abraham was Carol Gutsch, Goodland freshman, whose decorating theme was rainbows.

"I've received rainbow cards, posters, and pillows for years now," Gutsch said, "so I didn't spend much money getting my room ready for the contest." Using white bedspreads and walls as her background, she painted multicolored arches in every nook of her McMIndes Hall quarters. A bright blue throw rug provided the finishing touch.

More than 50 took advantage of the offer to redecorate, and 22 of them won cash prizes. However, parents will not be surprised to hear that most students have not changed their housekeeping habits drastically since leaving home.

As they passed open dorm rooms, contest judges noted that by far the most common wall decorations were posters of stars such as Olivia Newton-John and Sylvester Stallone, and the most prevalent bed coverings were piles of unwashed and newly washed laundry.

If the name of your son or daughter does appear in the following list of contest winners, you can be sure that all those years of nagging your child to "do something about your room," has finally paid off:

Lori Sprenkle, Andy Dodson, Abilene; Andy Beck, Claflin; Alan Stormont, Dighton, Mark Moore, Grainfield; Joe Carpenter, Goddard; Carol Gutsch, Goodland; Alan Shuler, Hays; Rob Mosier, Hutchinson; Lori Ann Henderson, Halstead; Kevin Bryan, Liberal; Luetta Duffey, Menlo; Kent Sibley, Minneola; Dave Leavitt, Oakley.

Deborah Abraham, Orlando, Fla.; Stacey Stromgren, Osage City; Sondra Williams, Scott City; Brenda Carmichael, St. Francis; Marty Hollern, Stockton; Ken Blankinship, Wichita; Rick Whitmer, Wilson, and Leanne Keller, Winona.