

## Supporting caregivers

**A**re you a caregiver, or do you know someone who is? We are so excited to share an upcoming community opportunity. On Nov. 2, Matt Estrade will facilitate a workshop offering proven strategies of how to manage ongoing stress and grief during and after your caregiver journey. Learn caregiving coping skills necessary to maintain a healthy life balance mentally, physically and emotionally, to better serve the ones you are caring for. This workshop is designed to acknowledge and tackle everyday challenges that can often make us feel defeated and overwhelmed.

With the holiday season almost upon us, for many caregivers there is added stress. Expectations of a “perfect” holiday can contribute to depression for those who don’t feel their holiday is measuring up to what you have experienced in years past. Many people suffer from “holiday blues,” even without the stress of caregiving. The expectation that everyone else is having a perfect holiday while you are not, can even bring on depression.



STELLA MONTANO

During this season, caregivers need to be especially vigilant in recognizing their own, perhaps unrealistic, expectations for a “perfect” holiday, as well as the possibly excessive expectations of others.

Tradition can also play a role in holiday stress. Many family traditions date back years and generations. Sometimes, it can seem as though not following through on every traditional holiday food, activity and decoration could disappoint family members. Some caregivers are responsible for elders and children at the same time. This is very common these days — these caregivers have been designated the “sandwich generation.” There will be the children who want each holiday done like the one before because they are used to the routine. Then there are elders who say, “this is the way we’ve always done it.” The caregiver in the middle can feel overwhelmed.

Estrade’s workshop will offer caregivers an opportunity to learn to minimize stress not just during the holiday season but ongoing.

While we’re on the subject of holiday stress, I’d like to offer some ideas to help caregivers enjoy the holidays. If you have always loved the holidays, but now find them overwhelming because of too many demands on your time, you will need to learn to simplify the season. You may disappoint a few people but this is a good choice if you want to remain somewhat sane. Learn to detach from the negative feedback you may get from others because of changes you’re making. Detaching simply means that you recognize the other person’s feelings, but you will not allow yourself to react or be controlled by their feelings without considering our own needs, as well. You set boundaries by telling others what you can and can’t do. Try using music as a soothing tool for anyone. If you care for an elder, they may enjoy some of the old songs, even some of the older, traditional Christmas songs. Classical music can be very therapeutic and old rock-and-roll or country songs may give you a boost.

Always remember that you cannot and should not feel that you have to be in charge of everything. Ask for help. It’s amazing how many of us think we have to do everything ourselves, even though others would help if we only asked them.

Plan on attending the caregiver conference Nov. 2 and learn coping skills to help you be a better caregiver. The first 80 registered participants will receive the book “Loving Someone Who Has Dementia” by Pauline Boss, PhD. Please call for more information on how we can support you. See you there!

STELLA MONTANO is the director of Family Caregiver Services at The Hub on Smith.



COURTESY PHOTO |

A growing community of dollhouse hobbyists build, rehab and decorate miniature houses. Recently, they have turned to Instagram — for instance #dollhousereno or #moderndollhouse — to share their progress and find inspiration. They are catered to by online shops specializing in accessories such as miniature wall art, vintage furniture and tiny faux plants.

## TINY FURNISHINGS, BIG INTEREST

### Dollhouse design is thriving thanks to social media, and the look skews modern

BY ALICIA BARNEY  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

For five months now, Reagan Baker has spent nights after work hanging curtain rods, assembling chandeliers and installing wood floors. She’s not renovating her New York City apartment, but outfitting a miniature dollhouse camper.

“Everything is just so detailed; I’m using tweezers all the time,” said Baker, a hairstylist by day. “I totally turn off when I’m doing it. I used to be that way when I was running, but now I like to make dollhouses and just sort of zone out. I’ll spend four hours just making one little thing because I’m trying to really make it perfect.”

Baker is part of a growing community of dollhouse hobbyists — mostly young women — who build, rehab and decorate miniature houses. Some work on dollhouses for their children and some, like Baker, just as a creative outlet. Many turn to Instagram — for instance #dollhousereno or #moderndollhouse — to share their progress and find inspiration. They are catered to by online shops specializing in accessories like miniature wall art, vintage furniture and tiny faux plants.

These dollhouses aren’t the Victorian-era type — they tend to be filled with on-trend accessories like mini fiddle-leaf fig trees and wallpaper that looks like subway tile.

That’s what sets today’s trend apart from previous generations’ efforts to create intri-

cate period houses, said Stephanie Wallace, a dollhouse-furniture maker in Ballarat, Australia.

“Maybe I really want that Anthropologie couch, but I can’t have it,” Wallace said. “So creating that in miniature is fun for me. There’s also something in us that gives a visceral response to something tiny. It’s an element of reconnecting with our childhood.”

Wallace, who owned an art gallery before the birth of her daughter three years ago, sees dollhouses as another expression of her love of design. Visiting an elaborate dollhouse replica of Buckingham Palace — complete with “teeny tiny Rolls-Royces and crown jewels” — on a trip to England a few years ago inspired her to return to a hobby of her childhood, when she played with the Victorian dollhouse her grandfather had made for her mother.

“It could be a project that isn’t too big, literally,” she said. “It could stimulate my brain again so I could feel like a human, not just a mum, for a little bit of time.”

She started posting pictures of her project on Instagram, and after a few weeks began getting messages asking her to make things for strangers around the world. She started an Etsy shop where she sells handmade peacock beds, velvet sofas and pedestal tables.

Even with customers who have children, she said, “a lot of the things they buy for themselves.” And show them off on Instagram.

“If the rise of Instagram hadn’t happened, neither would this resurgence of dollhouses,” Wallace said. “All of a sudden the focus has been on visual content. And it’s a way to form connections with people.”

The dollhouse community is positive in a time when social

media can be a source of anxiety and jealousy, she said. “I have never ever had a troll or negative comment,” she said. “The reason is that people are seeking positive human connection. They’re encouraging each other actively.”

Amy Dorman, who works in the insurance industry in Des Moines, Iowa, also found that encouragement online when she began working on a dollhouse project last summer. She built the house from a craft-store kit and has been making every piece of furniture by hand.

“I get likes from dollhouse accounts from people who do such amazing work,” Dorman says. “It inspires you to make something completely different, or something you didn’t think you’d be able to do.”

Dorman’s miniature pink bungalow has a porch swing, farmhouse table and even its own wee dollhouse in the craft area, all shared on a dedicated Instagram account.

“I get just like a child when I finish something and I take a picture of it, and I want to show all my friends at work and all my family,” Dorman said.

In August, her dollhouse won a third-place ribbon at the Iowa State Fair, where there has been a dollhouse competition since 1980. The always popular event has seen an increase in entries the last two years.

Now that the house is finished, Dorman said she’ll allow her 12-year-old twin stepdaughters to play with it, and she plans to build dollhouses for her young nieces in coming years.

New York’s Baker is still perfecting her dollhouse camper — she’ll tackle making bedding and framed family photos next, before displaying it on her bookshelf. But like many dollhouse aficionados, she won’t be putting away her tweezers and glue.

“I’m going to do another one a hundred percent,” she said. “I feel like I’m just getting started.”

### SENIOR HAPPENINGS

- A book signing with Helen Mitchell, author of “Mitchell’s Clear Creek Eggs,” will take place Oct. 9 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The book tells the story of the Mitchells and their four children — Betty, Bonnie, Robert and Jessie — who ran a commercial egg operation from the mid-1960s until 1978. It was, for years, one of the most successful businesses in the Clear Creek Valley. Helen Mitchell dedicates the book to her husband and all proceeds will go to the Clearmont museum. Books will be available for \$20 per copy. The signing will take place in the lobby of The Hub on Smith.
- The next Conversations in History will take place Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. The presentation will focus

on the English influence and horse breeding. The event is free and open to the public at The Hub on Smith.

- The Hub will host an Autumn Fest Pie Social and Wacky BINGO on Oct. 12 at 6:30 p.m. What’s Wacky BINGO you say? A fun family social event with prizes and a chance to holler “bingo.” Pie and ice cream are a bonus.

Come wearing wacky head gear, (hat, headband etc.) and they will put your name in a drawing for a prize. Sign up at the front desk at The Hub or at the community center in Dayton for pie eaters. The cost is \$5 for senior center members, \$6 for nonmembers and \$2 for children ages 10 and younger. The event will take place at Dayton Community Hall.



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Mondays - Fridays

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\*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

Tue- Herb Pork Roast	10:30 a.m.	Lobby
Wed- Salmon w/chimichurri sauce	10:30 a.m.	Community Room
Thurs- Chicken Marsala	4:00 p.m.	Café
Fri- Braised Beef Roast	6:30 p.m.	Dayton Community Hall
Sat- Meat & Veggie Pizza	12:30 p.m.	Art Studio
Sun -Ham Loaf w/pineapple sauce		
Mon- Cod Baked w/carrots & leeks		

**ENTRÉE CHOICE\* or SOUP/SALAD**

Tue- Helen Mitchell- Book Signing

Wed- Conversations in History

Thurs Volunteer Appreciation

Fri- AutumnFest/Wacky Bingo

Sat- Greeting Card Class

Lunch Service Hours: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., 365 days a year at 211 Smith Street  
Home Delivered Meals (307) 672-6079

Loan Closet, Outreach, and Administration Services, 672-2240. Mondays – Fridays.

Help at Home Services, 675-1978. 232 North Brooks: Mondays – Fridays.

Day Break Adult Care Services, 674-4968. 241 Smith Street: Mondays – Fridays.