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Top Drawer

WETA RAY CLARK, Staff Writer

An empowering idea

We love the idea of Katrina cottages to replace the FEMA travel trailers handed out after the deadly hurricane that hit the Gulf Coast last year. A group of architects and designers propose the idea in the July/August issue of Cottage Living. Check out the prototypes for attractive cottage alternatives for those trying to recover and rise from the ruins of Katrina. The idea is to provide temporary living with dignity and security. The cost of the small, sturdy cottages -- built to withstand winds of 140 mph -- would amount to the cost of a FEMA trailer. "These new cottage prototypes revolutionize the concept of affordable housing and embody a burgeoning movement to rebuild the soul and character of Gulf Coast towns," says the Cottage Living article, which also displays a model of how a Katrina cottage would work on a lot. (Look for the entire article beginning on page 94 of the magazine. Or read it online at www.cottageliving.com/cottage -- search for "Katrina.") Readers who want to get involved can find a list of groups where donations can be made. Also, visitors to CottageLivingBuilds.com can make donations to the Gulf Coast Community Foundation for building Katrina cottages in Gulfport, Miss.

In stitches

The Scrap Exchange will hold its second Swap-O-rama-rama noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Just bring a bag of clothing and \$10. Resources include do-it-yourself sewing, painting and screen-printing stations to embellish and alter clothing from the swap tables. The folks there are looking for musicians to entertain during the day, so if you're interested, call 688-6960. The Scrap Exchange is at 548 Foster St., Durham. To read about the first Swap-a-Rama-rama, see www.newsobserver.com, key word notions.

A marketable event

Today from 9 a.m. to noon catch Wake County Master Gardeners Hugh Nourse and Sylvia Shepherd at the Wake Forest Farmers Market. They'll share their expertise and answer your gardening questions. For information, www.localharvest.org/farmers-markets/M6442

Backyard sighting

"We saw this tiny toad sleeping on our broccoli plant this morning in the vegetable garden around 10 a.m. I know we woke it up creeping around but he/she held steady for our attempts. ... We think it is a Southern toad but can't swear to it."

-- Jesse and Steven Kaufmann, Hillsborough

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