

2003

Picture This

Sandra Ramos, "The Purple Lady"

"I am a goddess. A magical woman put on this earth for a purpose, to make it a better place. And to have fun."

SANDRA RAMOS



7/6/03

Ringwood

Photograph and story by Thomas E. Franklin

Sandra Ramos is a vision of purple. Everything is purple: clothes, sunglasses, furniture, broom, Volvo, even her home in the woods.

A self-proclaimed hippie, the 61-year-old Ramos lives in a quiet wooded area of Ringwood in a Barney-colored Quonset hut, the same type used to house military personnel. The semicircular structure is a shrine to Ramos and her free way of thinking. Artwork,

newspaper articles, and photographs clutter the interior, as a flower garden and mismatched lawn furniture dot the exterior. It has a Sixties commune feel to it, all right, with all things purple.

But there's more to Ramos than just being purple. She has dedicated much of her life to helping others.

She is the founder and executive director of Strengthen Our Sisters, a shelter and advoca-

cy for homeless and battered women. She was also the founder of Shelter Our Sisters, which she started in her own home in Hackensack in 1970, personally taking in battered women, after being a victim of domestic abuse herself.

When asked about her unconventional home, Ramos said: "It's vivid, it's exciting. It's my favorite place in the world, it's where I feel safe and protected."

Picture This is a regular feature in the photographer with an eye for the unusual, offering a few personal observations

The Record on Mondays. Tom doesn't write news stories. He explains the pictures more from week

Photos and accompanying text are by Tom Franklin, a veteran news He explains the pictures more from week

Record Senior Photographer Thomas E. Franklin welcomes your suggestions at franklin@northjersey.com