

# Christmas Decorating Tips Abound At Berks Co. Extension Program

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LEESPORT — Over 1,000 homemakers and craft enthusiasts attended the annual Berks County Extension Homemakers Christmas Program held last week in the 4-H Community Center.

With a theme of "Make '86 A Christmas to Remember," the program, which was extended to three days to accommodate all ticket requests, featured holiday hors d'oeuvres, and homemade Christmas decorations. A beautiful and delicious noontime buffet plus door prizes were added attractions on Wednesday and Thursday, Nov. 12th and 13th, as over 400 women attended these sessions. A mini session was also held Tuesday evening for those unable to attend during the day.

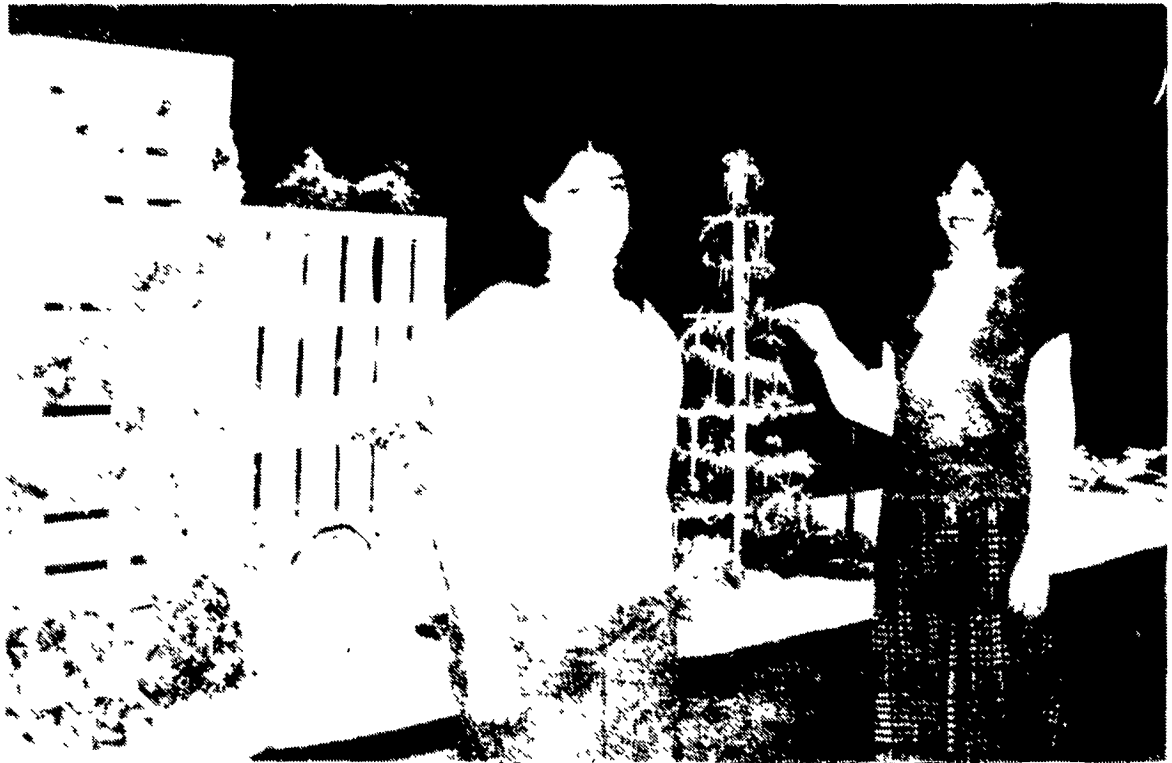
Dale Schwoyer, Home Economics Advisory Board, was the mistress of ceremonies and introduced each of the well-known professionals serving as speakers for the program.

Sandy Witman, associated with

Simply Scrumptious, a specialty food service and restaurant in Reading, began the program with instructions for preparing delicious and easily made hors d'oeuvres. Her selections were "really flexible and easily adaptable for different reasons," Witman said. She prepared Brie and bacon turnovers and individual Seafood Rounds. The recipe for the individual Seafood Rounds can be found at the end of this article.

"Home Decorating Can Be Fun" was the title of the presentation given by Donna Derr, representing Rileigh's of Allentown, a craft supply store and gift shop. Making a stencilled light switch cover, potpourri wreath, stencil on wooden spoon, and a basket lid wall hanging, Derr fashioned crafts for each room of the house that could be coordinated for the seasons.

"Gifts of Everlasting Beauty" were created and shown by Mary Haldeman and Diane Maguire, craft designers for Sycamore



Mary Haldeman and Diane Maguire displayed many natural crafts for home decorating.

Springs Farm, R1, Leesport. Professional floral designers, Haldeman and Maguire advocated using natural materials such as dried flowers, pine cones, cinnamon sticks and grape vines to enhance home decorating.

Last on the program but gaining increased attention throughout the day because of the beautiful Christmas trees displayed in the room, was W. Eugene Burkhart, Jr., author and lecturer from Blandon, who addressed "Christmas All Around the Room."

Burkhart is the author of "Decorating Christmas Trees" and specialized in designing trees with a central theme that can be adapted to coordinated decorating throughout the home. With six of his special trees on display, Burkhart made several holiday decorations for the home that

matched the theme of the tree decorations.

The "Old Fashioned Christmas" tree was decorated with cornhusk doll ornaments. A grape vine basket with holiday greens for a centerpiece and a grape vine bell wall hanging were fashioned to complete this home decorating theme.

Burkhart also educated homemakers on preserving holiday trees. One method to prolong the life of a fresh tree and possibly save it for future years if stored carefully is flocking. Flocking is using a special preparation that resembles snow and blowing it while wet onto the tree. He advised using the special vacuum cleaner attachment that can be purchased for this procedure and flocking the tree outside. The white "snow" coats the branches and helps to preserve

the moisture in the tree and keeps the needles from drying out and falling off. It also adds realistic winter decoration to the tree.

Burkhart's wreaths, candle arrangements, and floral centerpieces, adapted to coordinate to the trees, were a favorite with the crowd and several were given away as door prizes at the end of the day. His book, "Decorating Christmas Trees," can be purchased for \$8.95 from W. Eugene Burkhart, Jr., P.O. Box 407, Blandon, Pa. 19510. Burkhart works out of his home and does special decorations and trees on request.

The recipe for holiday hors d'oeuvres follows.

**Individual Seafood Rounds**

- 1 loaf French bread, thinly sliced
- or 1 box water crackers
- 6 ounces cream cheese, softened

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Donna Derr, representing Rileigh's Inc. of Allentown, fashioned a basket lid to be used as a door hanging. She used different arrangements for each season of the year.

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