

Christmas In October For The Creative Giver

BY LOU ANN GOOD

LANCASTER — You may complain that October is too early to think about Christmas, but for the do-it-yourselfer a headstart is needed to create lovingly-crafted gifts and holiday decorations.

More than 500 women gathered at the Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, this week for the annual extension-sponsored "Christmas in October."

The workshop started with Audrey Hallgren, freelance home economist and columnist for Microwave Cooking, sharing hints and recipes to make heart healthy holiday dishes. Many traditional Christmas recipes are loaded with calories, and Audrey shared a few ideas and recipes that can make holiday meals healthier.

Since holiday snacking seems to be a part of everyone's life, Audrey shared several easy-to-make recipes. One called "Date Surprises" calls for 12 whole dates split open and the seeds removed. Insert a shelled almond into each hole. Pinch the edges of the date

back together. Serve immediately or store in the refrigerator.

This year, the toy industry is marketing some amazing new concepts in toys. Doris Thomas, Lancaster Extension Home Economist, presented a short slide presentation on new toys. The audience found it mind-boggling to discover there are dolls that can actually carry on a conversations with others with a vocabulary that expands daily over a two-year period.

Sherry Kalbach, better known as the garbage can lady because she uses junk for her crafts, again participated in the annual workshop and demonstrated inexpensive ideas made from scraps like dryer lint. To make a modeling material from dryer lint, Sherry instructed, "Take 3 cups lint, 2 cups water, 1/3 cup flour, 3 drops oil of wintergreen or cloves and cook over low heat, stirring constantly until mixture forms peaks. Pour onto several thicknesses of newspaper to cool. Shape over boxes, bottles, balloons and other

forms for molding like papier-mache. It dries in 3-5 days to felt-like consistency.

To give Christmas use to battered Easter baskets, Sherry suggested that they be sprayed and then stenciled with hearts or holly. The baskets can then be filled with small gifts appropriate for the age of interests or recipients. For children, Sherry displayed homemade games made like "Concentration" which she made from cardboard covered with fabric and wallpaper.

Baskets used to give a mother of small children a break can be filled with bathroom supplies plus a certificate for two hours of babysitting service so the mother can enjoy a leisurely bath.

To custom design a sweatshirt for that special person on your list, Sherry suggests that you purchase a pastel-colored sweatshirt and draw or stencil a design on it with glitter pens. If a mistake is made the glitter can be washed out as long as it has not been permanently set with a hot iron.

Into her humorous Christmas demonstration, Sherry crammed a few ideas for other special occasions. For example, "If your child loses a tooth. Sprinkle some glitter on the bedroom carpet and on the pillow to awe your child with the thought that the fabled tooth fairy actually has visited." And for the Easter season, Sherry showed a stencil of a gigantic rabbit footprint. She sprinkled flour in a rabbit-like foot trail over their yard that led to the Easter basket's hiding place.

When you use glitter, traces of it does get scattered across the floor, but Sherry points out, "It's classy dirt."

As an innovative idea person, Sherry admits her housework usually gets shoved aside. Since many homemakers can identify with the frenzy of holiday preparations, Sherry offered her favorite cleaning tips that can save your housekeeping reputation from unexpected guests. She said, "Keep your vacuum cleaner inside the front door. When unexpected guests arrive, pull it out and say, 'Oh, I was just starting to clean.'"

If you're wondering what to do about the stacks of Christmas cards accumulated over the years, Sherry suggests you recycle them by cutting off the picture part in a 4x6-inch size and send them out for Christmas post card greetings. Sherry admitted, "Some people think it's tacky," she said with her typical humor, "but what I think is tacky is mailing them the same card they mailed you last year."

Doris Wallace, from Wallace's Antiques and Crafts in Witmer, wrapped the afternoon session by demonstrating country crafts. One of the new products on the market is a ribbon called Creative Twists which can be used and reused. The treated paper ribbon has a texture similar to dried corn husks and comes in natural and pastel colors. Creative twists are used not only as package decoration but also braided, twisted or bowed for unique wreaths.

To line your walkway with light and give a merry welcome to guests, Doris suggests partially filling mayonnaise jars with cat litter, and inserting 1 1/2-inch diameter candles in the litter. To extin-



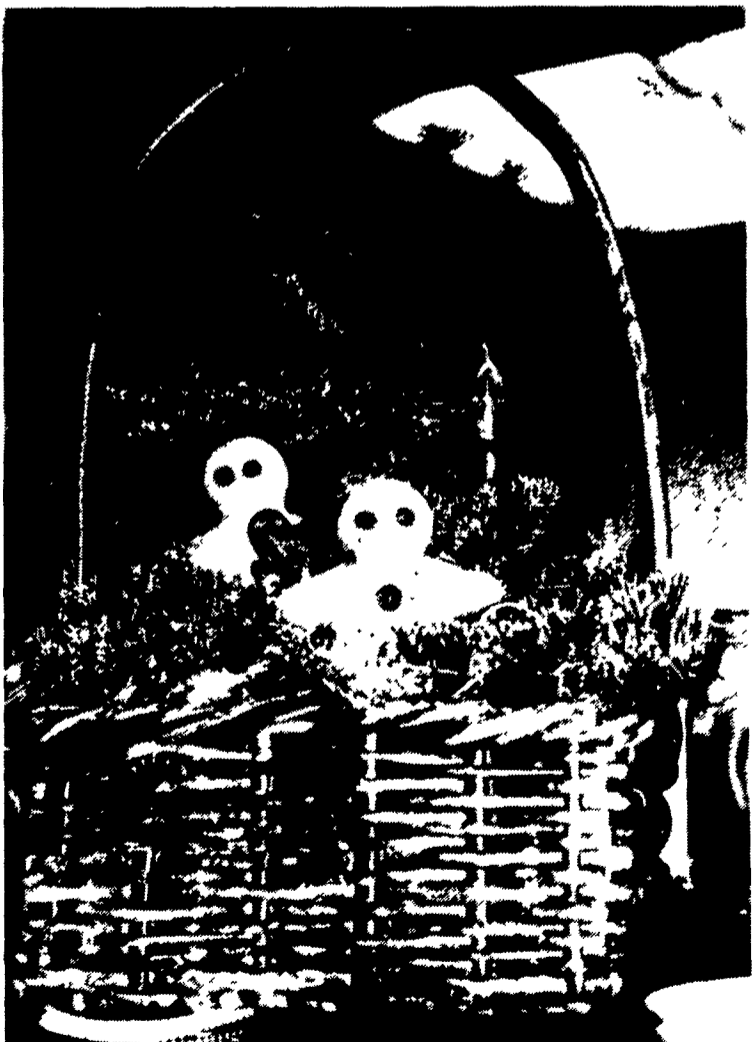
Are you frustrated by the growing stacks of outdated neckties? Sherry Kalbach, who thinks of a use for everything, suggests making a Christmas tree skirt out of them.



Doris Wallace demonstrates the use of Creative Twists, a treated paper ribbon used for package decorations, wreaths and other crafts.



Sherry Kalbach shows her recycled basket filled with inexpensive presents to Lancaster County Extension Home Economist.



The audience at the "Christmas In October" program discovered that many holiday decorations are simple to make and very impressive. Here, Doris Wallace from Wallace's Antiques and Crafts, plopped some greens in a basket with a light and some gingerbread men.

quish the flame, screw the lids on the jars and you have easy to care for luminaires.

Doris demonstrated dried and silk flower arranging. She stuck greens in a basket, placed a globe light in the center and inserted gingerbread boys around in and

several long cinnamon sticks in the back that gives a festive touch to typical country asseories.

Several farm women groups provided the luncheon. Others set up craft and food displays. The same program was offered on Monday and Tuesday.



This elegant swan is fashioned from dried branches. By changing the bow and the silk and dried flowers that flow from the back, the swan becomes a Christmas decoration for Doris Wallace.

Alternate Ag Conference Scheduled In Reading

NEWARK, De. — A two-day regional conference on marketing specialty foods, ornamentals and flowers will be held November 18 and 19 in Reading, Pa.

Open to growers, producers and marketers, the conference will focus on how to develop new markets through direct marketing techniques, wholesaling to restaurants and promotional campaigns. The conference will also offer sessions on organic farming cooperatives, aquaculture, perennials, herbs and edible flowers, and game birds and specialty fowl.

The first 450 registrants will be

accepted. Preregistration fees are \$15 for the first participant and \$10 for each additional person registered from a farm family or business.

To obtain a copy of the program and a registration form in Delaware contact county Extension offices in Newark (451-2506), Dover (697-4000) or Georgetown (856-7303).

The conference is sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Systems of Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland and the Departments of Agriculture in Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland.