



Hobby horses are also a specialty at the Biehl woodshop. "I fluffed all those tails," Betty says proudly. All the horses are also personalized with the toddlers name burned into the wood.

## Busy Hands, Creative Minds And Sharing Hearts Describe Biehls

ROBIN PHILLIPS

Berks Co. Correspondent

**MERTZTOWN** — Busy hands, creative minds, and sharing hearts not only describe Santa and Mrs. Claus, but also Charles and Betty Biehl, Mertztown. This Christmas season, as well as throughout the year, will find them busy in the Biehl wood shop creating beautiful cedar chests, hobby horses, and custom made furniture, all which Betty personalizes for each customer.

When not needed to help her husband, Betty is occupied in her kitchen turning out delicious treats for friends and keeping Lancaster Farming well supplied with mouth watering recipes. With a firm commitment to wasting none of life's precious time, this creative couple utilizes all of their resources and enjoys spending their time together.

Right now, much of their time together involves completing the many furniture orders in time for Christmas. Charles Biehl has a full time furniture making business in a wood shop behind the couple's cozy home.

Always enjoying working with wood, Biehl began his hobby - turned business, soon after the couple was married in 1969. Some of his first projects included Betty's kitchen cabinets made to fit in her much desired "old fashioned" kitchen. "I wanted my mother's old sink, so Charles made the cabinets to fit the kitchen," Betty states. Another project was a china cupboard in the kitchen to fit Betty's need. Soon a picnic table was added to the couple's inventory.

Biehl's full-time job as a home builder limited much of his hobby time working, but when the building business started to slow up in the early 1980's, and lay-offs were becoming more and more common, Biehl capitalized on his skill at woodworking and turned his business into a full-time occupation. That was five year's ago and Biehl does not have time to miss the ladder climbing, roof work and unreliable hours of his former occupation. He is too busy turning out over 37 different pieces of furniture, made to order, from cus-

tomers throughout the Eastern part of the United States. He uses his own patterns and painstakingly sands, and varnishes each piece many times to meet his high standards for a finished piece.

As Charles is busy creating the furniture, Betty is by his side personalizing each piece with the name of the new owner, the date the piece was made, and the Biehl signature, with her wood burner. She also assists in painting or varnishing each piece as needed.

Never at a loss for new ideas, Betty uses her homemaking creativity in the woodshop too. With the cedar shavings left over from a cedar chest project, Betty sweeps

them into a pretty, and colorful cloth bag, tightly ties it together, and sells them as sweet cedar balls to hang in closets or place in drawers. The left over odd-sized blocks of wood from Charles' projects do not escape her notice either. She forms them together to create unique homes for under the Christmas tree with the Christmas villages so often put together by small children.

Cedar wood scraps are also made into seasonal ornaments by Charles and decoated by Betty to sell as tree ornaments or aromatic seasonal decorations for the home.

Betty states that she gets many

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Betty loves collecting recipes and stands with her large collection of "Home on the Range" recipes from Lancaster Farming. She stands in front of the china cabinet that her husband, Charles, made for her.

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