

## Interpretive Christmas Program At Ephrata Cloister

EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — Clear cold moonlight glistens from the steeply gabled wooden rooftops. Darkened dormer windows stare vacantly on the tranquil scene of crooked limbs grasping upward toward the darkened sky. The antique style of the buildings and the serenity of the scene is evocative of the wild landscape of medieval Germany. The events about to be witnessed, however, will recreate the experiences of German-speaking pioneers who traveled to this very spot on the banks of the Cocalico Creek in what was then Pennsylvania's Conestoga wilderness more than a quarter of a millenium ago.

Using a technique called first-person interpretation, which combines history with theater, visitors to the Ephrata Cloister on the evenings of December 27, 28, 29, and 30 will find themselves transported more than two centuries into the past where they will be greeted by Catharina Mellinger on the evening of December 26, 1784. Just two days before, Sister Maria Eicher has passed to her eternal rest in her room at the cloister. Sister Maria had lived at Ephrata for more than 51 years, first settling in a small cabin on the east side of the Cocalico Creek with her sister Anna in 1733, and later serving many years as prioress of the community. Following up two seasons of award-winning interpretive Christmas programs, the Ephrata Cloister Chapter of the Student Historians of Pennsylvania will portray Maria's contemporaries who reflect upon

the character and struggles of this remarkable colonial woman.

The site of one of America's earliest communal societies, the Ephrata Cloister was founded in 1732 by Conrad Beissel, a German pietist mystic. It is best known for its fine examples of calligraphic writing known as Frakturschriften, its impressive body of choral

music, its vast output as a colonial printing center and the survival of fine Germanic medieval style log and half-timber buildings. The Student Historian Chapter is an educational program of the Ephrata Cloister Associates, the non-profit volunteer organization which helps support the educational mission of the Pennsylvania

Historical and Museum Commission.

Owned and administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Ephrata Cloister is located at the junction of Routes 322 and 272 in Ephrata. The Christmas Candlelight Tours will depart from the visitors Center on the evenings December 27, 28, 29, 30 on the half hour from

6:30 to 9 p.m., Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors, and \$4 for youth (6-17). Reservations are required. For reservations call 717-733-4811 on weekdays or 717-733-6600 on weekends. Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or accommodation should call ahead to discuss their needs.

## Get The Most From Holiday Food Shopping

UNIVERSITY PARK, (Centre Co.) — If you plan to entertain or prepare large family meals during the holidays, don't let the seasonal hustle and bustle keep you from making wise food purchases, said a family resource specialist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"If you tack grocery shopping to the end of an exhausting gift shopping trip, you may be tempted to rush through the supermarket as quickly as possible," said Dr. Marilyn Furry, associate professor of extension education. "Under those circumstances, you may buy food more impulsively and spend more money than you planned."

Furry said to get the most from your food dollar, look for advertised specials on items you need. "If items are advertised, see that you get them at the price in the ad," she said.

Looking at unit pricing, or the cost per unit of measurement, also can stretch your holiday food budget. "Use unit pricing to compare the price per quart of soft drinks in

various size bottles and cans," Furry said. "Which size gives you the most beverage at the least cost?"

Furry said unit pricing also can help you choose the best values in other foods. Compare the price per pound of fast cooking or seasoned rice versus plain rice; seasoned vegetables versus plain frozen vegetables; and prepared stuffings versus bread crumbs and your own ingredients.

"Read the labels on cans for net weight and content," said Furry. "Is it cheaper to prepare glazed yams or jellied cranberries yourself, or to buy them in cans?"

Be on the lookout for special holiday packaging that drives up the cost of some foods. "Watch out for plum pudding in a Christmas box that cost more than the same product in a plain box," Furry said.

In addition to price, you should pay attention to ingredients, according to Furry. "For instance, self-basting turkeys may contain water, flavor enhancers, colors and other ingredients," she said.

"You pay more for less meat when a turkey is self-basting. Also, an item may not be kosher, even if it's found in a kosher-style display. You have to read the label to be sure."

To ensure freshness, check the "sell by" date on the label. "The dates on packages will give you a clue about how long perishable foods such as milk, cream or cottage cheese and eggs will stay

fresh in your refrigerator," said Furry.

To save money and preparation time, Furry recommends alternatives to the rich desserts often served during the holidays. "Pies, cakes and other high-fat desserts aren't necessarily the best or most healthful way to finish a heavy meal," she said. "Why not consider seasonal fresh fruit with shredded coconut instead?"

## Feed The Hungry

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — From now through December 31, grocery shoppers have a chance to feed and shelter the homeless and needy countians.

Participating grocery stores in the Feed the Hungry campaign, will display coupons worth \$1.44 at the cash registers. Customers who wish to contribute that amount, which is the average cost of a meal at Water Street Rescue Mission, can tear off the coupon and hand it to the cashier.

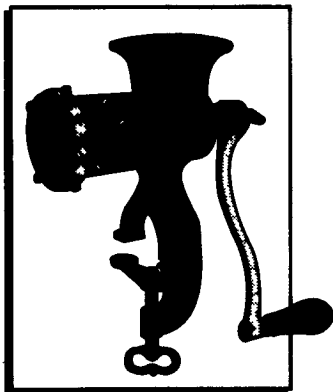
The cashier will then scan the amount into the cash register like other grocery items, adding \$1.44 to the customer's bill.

The stores will forward the collected funds to the Mission.

Participating stores include Darrenkamp's Country Market, Ferguson and Hassler, Fox's Markets, Jay's Supermarkets, John Herr's Village Market, Musser's Market, Oregon Dairy, Shady Maple Farm Market, Willow Valley Market, and Yoder's Country Market.

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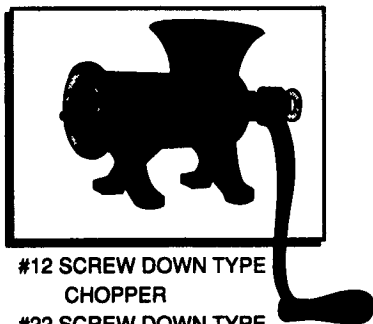
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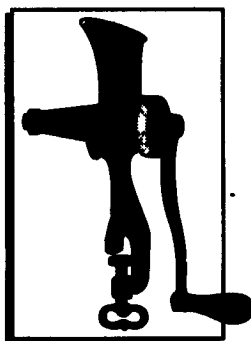
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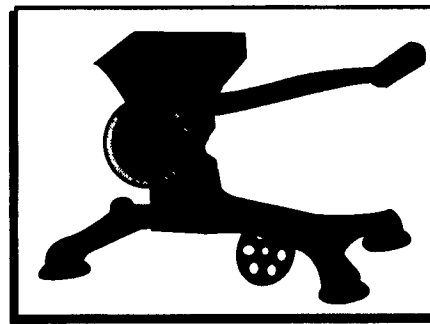
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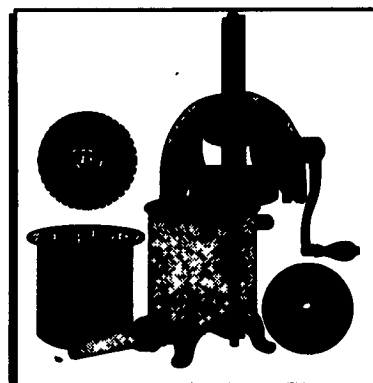
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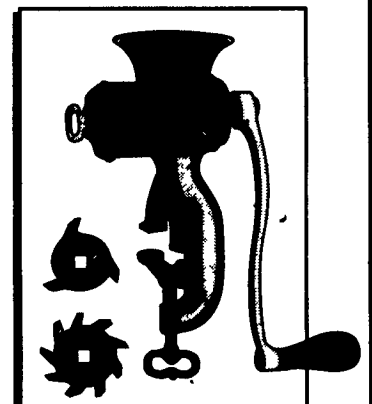
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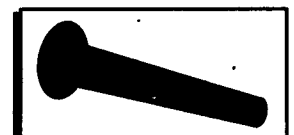
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