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Community Corner

Family gatherings

By PATRICIA M. BRAMAN
Extension Agent

The dining room table may seat only six or eight, but somehow, families find ways to stretch the food and the table space at Thanksgiving. That's part of the tradition.

Entertaining a large family gathering is fun, but it needs to be done safely. Roast turkey — the favorite Thanksgiving entree — is a perishable food. Always thaw the turkey in the refrigerator for two to four days. If you must thaw it more quickly, put it in a waterproof plastic bag, seal tightly, and defrost in cool water. Thawing frozen poultry at room temperature gives bacteria a chance to grow. This is especially true with large frozen turkeys because of the time it takes them to thaw completely.

Turkey should be cooked thoroughly to an internal temperature of 180-190 degrees F. Never partially cook it and finish cooking later. Bacteria can survive in partially cooked poultry. To test for doneness without a thermometer, press the thick part of the drumstick between your fingers. Protect with paper towel or clean cloth. Meat should be soft. Move drumstick up and down, it should move easily or twist out of joint.

Stuffing can present a food safety problem if not handled properly. It should be completely

cooked. It's safest to cook stuffing separately from the turkey, because stuffing inside a warm turkey is a breeding place for bacteria. It's also easier to serve a crowd when the stuffing is cooked separately. Never stuff turkey the night before cooking as bacteria can grow.

Scalloped oysters — another holiday favorite in some households — are also highly perishable. Keep them refrigerated or frozen until just before cooking. In serving, keep them hot and refrigerate leftovers immediately.

Holiday meals are fun but need careful planning. How many people can you safely serve? How much time will it take to prepare the food? Don't try to feed more people than you can handle. Consider the size and quantity of the cooking equipment you have, your supply of eating utensils and dishes, and the amount of refrigerator space you'll need to store foods. Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving Day.

Leesburg Homemakers celebrate anniversary

Members of the Leesburg Homemakers Club met Wednesday evening, Nov. 15, in a Goshen restaurant for a 6:30 dinner. The club was celebrating its 42nd anniversary.

Hostesses for the evening were Mrs. Max Anglin and Mrs. Leo Anglin. Mrs. Leo Anglin gave several readings and conducted a game on what the 25 members

present wanted Santa to bring for Christmas.

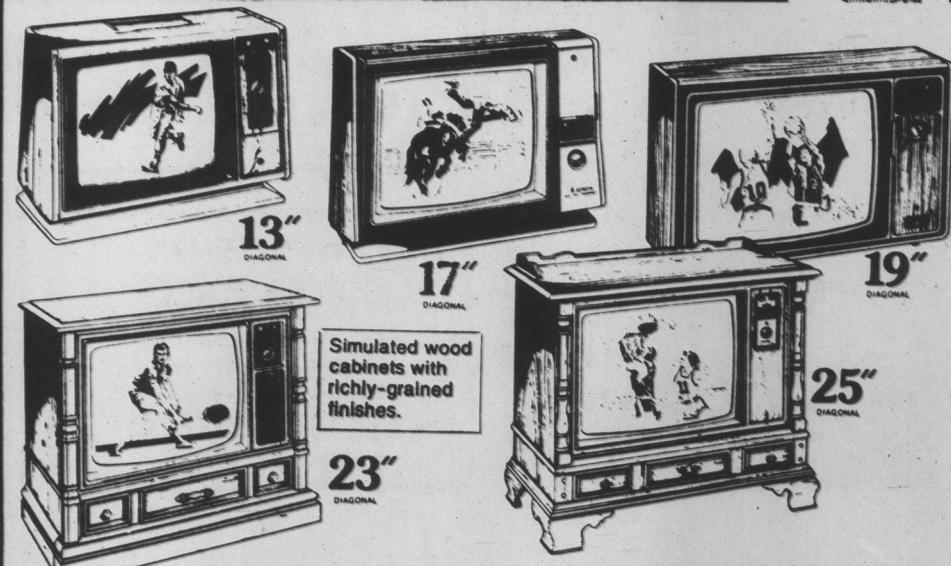
Door prizes were won by Mrs. Jack Smith, Mrs. Charles Smoker, Mrs. John Lursen and Mrs. Dale Morehouse.

The Christmas meeting will be a carry-in dinner at 6:30 p.m. on December 19 in the home of Mrs. Kenneth Miller, east of Leesburg.

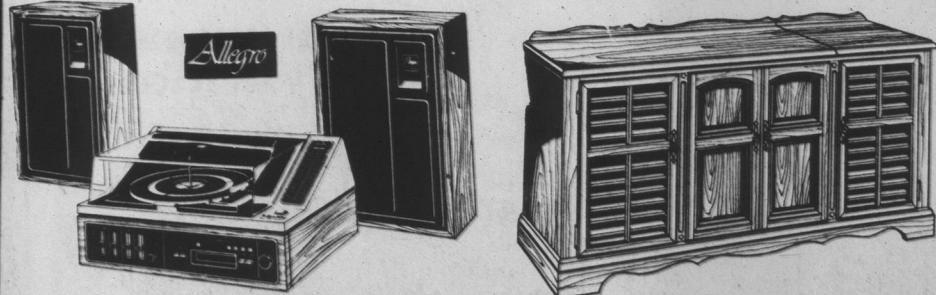
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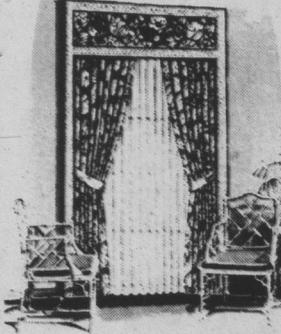
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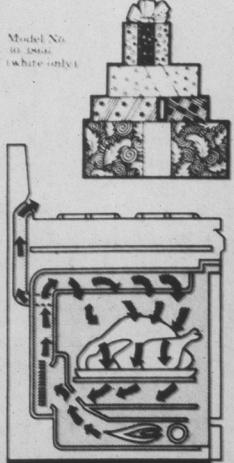
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