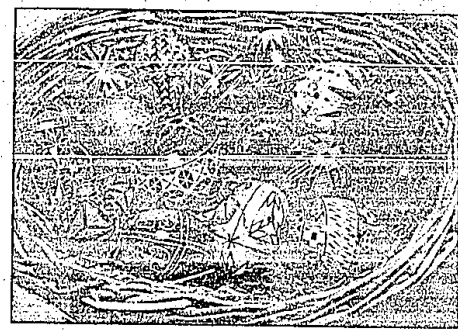
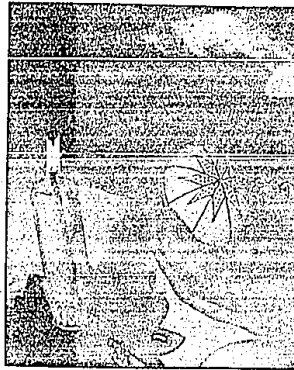


Fedorovici first makes designs on the egg in pencil. Then, using a beeswax-filled stylus heated by candle, she paints on the decoration in colored beeswax. The finished product, far right, are beauties which will keep for years.

Lillian Federovici works at decorating her eggs. She learned the ancient art from her mother when she was a 7-year-old girl in Romania. She now teaches egg decorating. The most important skill is a steady hand, she said.



Beauty in eggs

Decorating is exacting work

By Marie McGee
staff writer

AROUND THE kitchen stove in the county kitchen of their home in Fagaras, Romania, Lillian Federovici learned the ancient art of egg decorating from her mother.

She was about seven years old and it was a lot of fun with her cousins joining in pre-Easter holiday merriment that included singing songs and listening to stories as they learned how to handle the fragile eggs and apply the intricate designs.

In those days, the designs were applied with a stylus formed by attaching the metal tip of a shoelace to a wooden stick, using borsehair.

SHE STILL HAS SEVERAL of those old-fashioned tools and shows them to students in the egg decorating classes she holds in the weeks preceding Easter.

The message she gives is that while the tools may have become more sophisticated, the success and beauty of the finished product still depend on the person handling the tool.

The Byzantine-style egg decorating art is simple, she maintains. Having a steady hand is probably the most important attribute. The rest is just following basic instructions that are available by taking a class or by consulting a craft book on the subject.

Start with good quality raw, clean, smooth eggs (she prefers brown). If washing is necessary, do it gently (do not rub) in a solution of one quart warm water to one tablespoon of white vinegar. Never

use soap or detergent. Put eggs out to dry on a clean cloth to air dry or gently wipe with a clean cloth or tissue.

A GOOD WAY to keep the eggs steady while writing is to hold the egg on the table with one hand and write with the other. Rotate the egg as you work.

Draw the basic design lightly on the egg with a pencil before applying the wax lines. The pencil lines are used as guide lines and will not show on the completed egg. It is better to make long, smooth lines, rather than short sketchy lines.

The wax lines will be made by using a stylus which will be heated in the flame of a candle. When the head of the stylus becomes hot, a little beeswax is scooped into the funnel of the stylus. As you work with the stylus, the beeswax will blacken. This is beneficial, Federovici noted.

BUT OVERHEATING the stylus and too much wax could both the job, she cautioned. And mistakes are not correctible.

Once you have achieved the design you want, the eggs are ready for dyeing.

See how simple that was? Actually, the process is a little more involved than as outlined here. A list of dos and don'ts is available by writing to the Suburban Life section of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 39251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Fedorovici will teach the ancient craft at the Farmington Community Center on April 11.

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