

INTERIOR MOTIVES

It's time to decorate home for the holidays



NAOMI STONE LEVY

Counting down the days to Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah, we note they are closer than we care to admit. Therefore, let's tackle the problems that face us. Decorating your premises in a festive mode requires time, thought, energy and some little expense.

A dining area can be informal or elegant, depending on how you want to expand on accomplishing your aim. Begin with the number of guests you expect. Do you plan to serve food as buffet service? Or will it be table service?

Logically, if it is to be table service you are limited with room in the center of the table. I recommend a tall, thin arrangement of flowers or greens, towering high and above the conversational area. There are glass vases that are handsome and festive and compliment your need. Perhaps you can top the vase with bitterweet and ivy. Or the chandelier might be draped and also not interfere with conversation.

Buffet service can be expansive, the decorating of the server open to a g-

gantle wicker cornucopia filled with edible dried and fresh fruits, nuts and candies, and even candied apples on sticks. The children will love you; so will the adults. You still maintain space for trays, platters, casseroles and bowls brimming with all the other goodies commensurate with this holiday.

If your server surface won't accommodate as much as you would like, try making an "L" of two aluminum tables, covering them with handsome one-color or patterned sheets. Buying said sheets won't be wasteful if you also buy matching pillowcases, reserving all for future use in your bedroom. Search out colors and patterns that denote the holidays. Fabric stores now feature tasteful yardage in gay holiday designs in colors you will love.

Number, please

Another unparalleled esthetic component would be three extraordinarily large glass hurricanes filled with holly berries and greens. Or fill them with fruit or vegetables.

Holiday wreaths are traditional, but one wreath may seem insignificant. Three or five will make a statement not to be ignored, the center one much the largest in scale. The ribbons could vary

in color, size and style. The normal side-by-side display over a sofa or sideboard would be aided and abetted by temporarily removing your present pictures.

The above wreaths might give way to an up-and-down, ceiling-to-floor arrangement, to fill in an undecorated corner.

Mantels are natural focal points. I love candlesticks, unlimited in quantity. If you wish to use colored candles do keep them all one color. Black candles are handsome with brass sticks, and appropriate for Thanksgiving, Hanukkah or the New Year, switching to red or green for Christmas.

Buy a pair of potted tall, very narrow evergreen trees and place them at each side of the hearth, replacing the overdone ropes of greens. These trees can be planted in your garden next spring. Never wasteful.

Use your very largest round tray decked with eight very large candles spaced around the perimeter, plus the Shamas in the center. Raise this high on a cake stand. Lo — a significant centerpiece!

Visit a shop that specializes in Judaica. Whatever is significant to you looks great if you group a bunch of them together. One dreidel means nothing, but 20 of them on a handsome server is delightful. Aside from the look, it will encourage the children and adults to sit on the floor and put them to use all at one time. Your evening is more fun.

How do you handle the gifts? They needn't be extravaganzas, but even the wrappings should denote fun, and add to the decor. If the children are young try tying gifts with long streamers of narrow ribbon and pipe cleaners. If they are teenagers, CDs and video games are ever welcome, and can be further fun if wrapped in blue felt. Best of all gifts are colored "green." Roll a dollar bill around a stack of coins; tie with an oversized velvet bow.

Plant life

Most everyone has indoor plants in their home. Scattering them is ineffectual. Here I am again, suggesting you gather all of them into one larger group.

Buy a square of vacuine, cutting it as large as need be to fill a corner, or in a bay, or across the windows. Also buy small-size pebbles to scatter among the pots you have grouped together, always keeping the tallest plants at the rear. In the holiday spirit add a generous number of shiny Christmas tree ornaments. Suddenly a dull area sparkles.

The sparkle of sequins will resonate the New Year. Head for a fabric outlet and a hardware store. In plastic foam are countless forms that will accept glue and glitter, and generous doses of sequins. These also are available by the yard. You can create a multitude of appropriate items.

Naomi Stone Levy, a Franklin resident, is an interior designer and a former secretary of the American Society of Interior Designers. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1897. Her fax number is (810) 614-1314.

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