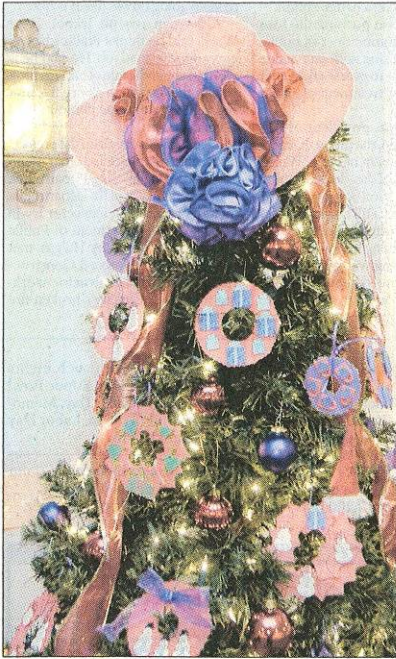


GAZETTE PHOTOS BY MARC SCHULTZ



This colorfully decorated tree appears to be something you can hang your hat on.

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Kim Mabée decorates a tree with Delft Blue ornaments at the Festival of Trees in the Schenectady County Historical Society on Washington Avenue in Schenectady. The festival opens Friday.

O come let us **adorn** them

Trees get dressed for holiday festivals at Historical Society,
YWCA and other sites throughout the area

BY JEFF WILKIN
Gazette Reporter

Barb Wengrovius played snow queen at the Schenectady County Historical Society last week.

The Scotia resident hung huge snowflakes — some covered with glitter and spangles, others made from twisted, multicolored pipe cleaners — on a Christmas tree.

"They were all made by people at St. George's Church," said Wengrovius, who lives in Scotia. "We had fun sitting together and decorating. There are no two snowflakes alike, so I think that was perfect for a community. We had 4-year-olds and people in their 80s doing this."

The St. George's snow tree will be among 50 on display at the third annual "Festival of Trees" co-sponsored by the society and its Washington Avenue neighbor, the YWCA. The show opens Friday and runs through next week.

Decorated trees will sparkle and shine throughout the Capital Region and

BRANCHING OUT

ROUNDUP OF tree festivals — from Amsterdam and Schoharie east to Bennington and Pittsfield. B5

beyond. Festivals are also scheduled to open in Albany; Amsterdam; Ballston; Glens Falls; Schoharie; Saratoga Springs; Glens Falls; Bennington, Vt.; and Pittsfield, Mass.

Kathryn Weller, curator at the historical society, promises color and variety inside the museum.

"We have Robert Haley's tree, which is all antique Christmas ornaments dating back to the late 19th century and early 20th century that will be in our study," Weller said. "We also have a tree on historic postcards and various historic scenes. We have one tree from a local legal firm that's pink for breast cancer and another one which is beating the drums for nutcrackers. So there's a whole spectrum."

Wengrovius was happy to cover her tree with snow, and glad for all the glitter and bright trim on the flakes. "I'm not sure if it was the 4-year-olds who put the most on or the older members," she said.

Others have also shown off creative spirits. Women from Schenectady's Red Hat Society have dressed their evergreen in red and purple, with small red wreaths decorated with snowmen, bells and gifts. The topper is a natural — a crimson-colored hat.

The "pink" tree is elegant with purple and white lights, pink and silver ornaments and topped by a smiling lady angel.

MORE TREES AT YWCA

At the YWCA's Kathan Hall, one tree is cool with polar bears, igloos and penguins. Another, from the Clermont State Historic Site in Red Hook, is full of nautical items. "For us, it's a way to get people into our building," said JoAnne Rafalik, development and communications director for the YWCA. "We have a good historic building here and we like to share

that with the community."

Weller said popular festival features will expand this year. Dutch-made Delft ornaments will still be for sale — all under \$10 and many \$5 and under — and will be joined by reproductions of sun-catchers for sale. A new partner, Umbrella of the Capital District, will sell edible holiday houses.

More than 1,000 attended last year's festival.

"It's just a great way to get into the holiday spirit," Weller said. "It's one of the wonderful things about our program, right after Thanksgiving it's something to get away from the shopping craziness that oftentimes Christmas turns into. It's a great thing to do with the whole family. We have visitors from infants to elderly residents who come in from various nursing homes. It's something that all generations can enjoy. Anyone who celebrates Christmas, it really helps them into the spirit of the season."

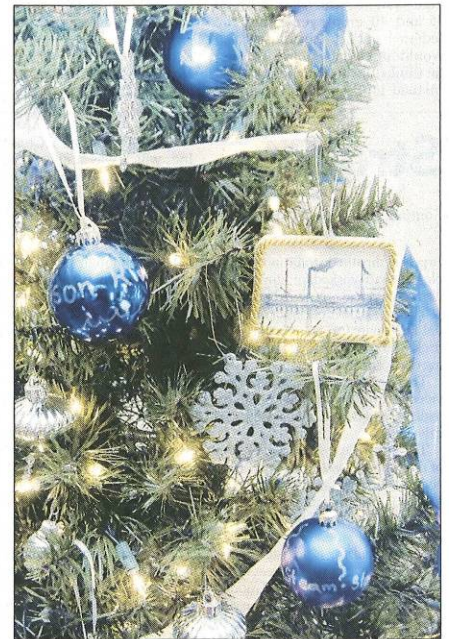
Reach Gazette reporter Jeff Wilkin at 395-3124 or at wilkin@dailygazette.com.



The antiques around this tree decorated by Robert Haley give it an old-fashioned Christmas feel.



Above: The Breast Cancer Awareness Tree at the Historical Society. The portrait is Elizabeth DeLancey Yates, third wife of Gov. Yates. **Below:** Snowflakes grace the tree from the St. George's congregation.



This tree with a nautical theme is at the YWCA.