



Liz Moleski of Art Knapp's shows large ornaments can add flair to your tree. ROB BIRON/FREE PRESS

Trees with all the trimmings

Festival will raise money for local charities

The Hospital Foundation is bringing the Festival of Trees to Prince George this year for the first time. One of the main events features fifty contestants competing for the season's loftiest Christmas tree.

"The purpose of the event is to begin the festive season with a major family gathering, which is the Festival of Trees," says Dave Wharrie, communications and development officer with the Prince George Regional Hospital Foundation.

All proceeds will go to the Hospital Foundation, Children's Wish Foundation and the Mardi Gras Society.

As well, Prince George is ensuring its most precious resource, trees, will not be wasted - even if it means dipping them in chocolate.

"At one of the competitions someone even dipped their tree in white chocolate and decorated it with dark chocolate ornaments," says Mr. Wharrie.

The executive director of the Hospital Foundation, Tom Shand, says it will be a breathtaking event. "On December 6, 50 designers will all be looking over

each other's shoulders to see what the other person is doing," says Mr. Shand. Other demonstrations, and events, include a wreath contest for adults and children, entertainment, craft sale, Wee Elves Gift shop for children only, gingerbread village and Frosty's food bar.

The tree decorating competitors will meet on the evening of December 6 to begin decorating. Once fully festooned, the trees will be auctioned the next night, but they will be left at the Civic Centre over the weekend for everyone to enjoy. "Once the festival is over the trees will then be delivered to their purchasers. The people keep what's on the trees and under them, which often includes gifts," explains Mr. Shand.

The Festival of Trees is part of an long-time international group. The Prince George Festival is locally organized by the Hospital Foundation, the Children's Wish Foundation and the Mardis Gras Society.

"We've made it non-denomina-

tional so that all members of the community can become involved. This really is the event to kick off the festive season. We're trying to tie in as many community elements as we can," says Mr. Wharrie.

The festivities will be held at the Prince George Civic Centre from December 8 to 10.



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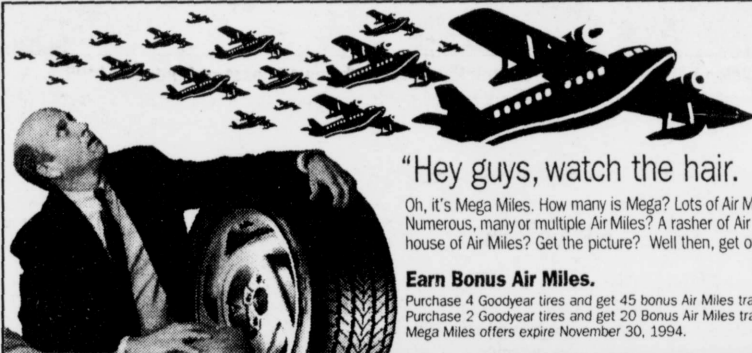
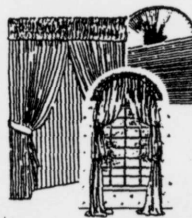
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