

Wilkes Barre Times Leader

Times Leader, The (Wilkes Barre, PA)

April 12, 2010

Teaching tea time

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SHICKSHINNY - Dressed in their Easter best, young girls attended a traditional English afternoon tea ceremony held in the Town Hill United Methodist Church in Shickshinny on Sunday afternoon.

Hosted by Girl Scout Service Unit 305, covering the areas of Hunlock Creek, Shickshinny, Huntington Mills and Mocanaqua, girls ranging in ages from 5 to 18 spent the afternoon with their mothers, aunts or grandmothers learning proper etiquette for English tea.

The idea for the event came from Heather Dehnel, Daisy Troop Leader. Dehnel said last year she held a smaller tea for about 20 people. This year 123 Scouts and guests were in attendance, she said.

"It started as a way to meet the mothers," she said. "We have so many scouts who are very active. This gives the mothers a chance to be involved."

Dehnel said the Scouts will receive a "fun patch" for participating.

Jill Evans Kryston, director of Defining Manners: A School of Contemporary Protocol, based in Shavertown, gave a brief history of tea time and proper etiquette. She said her goal is to build confidence in social situations.

"Everything about tea time is small and delicate," She said.

Lesson one was napkin etiquette. She instructed the young ladies to place their napkins on their laps and then place it in their seat when they leave the table.

Evans Kryston said she has noticed the most overlooked manners are napkin etiquette and once a utensil is used, it should be placed on the rim of the plate and not on the table top.

"People do not seem to teach manners anymore," she said. "It has become society's standard."

Young ladies, wearing pastel colored dresses and matching Easter bonnets, eagerly tried one of 20 different kinds of teas and tasted cheese or cucumber finger sandwiches, scones and brightly colored pastries. Dehnel offered an ice tea fountain for those who did not like hot tea.

Scout leaders Tammy Hooper, Valerie Lancenese, Shannon Belles, Heather Snyder, along with

Scouts Courtney, Chloe and Chelsea Swope volunteered to make traditional tea time finger foods.

Aleigha Parnell, 7, of Hunlock Creek, remembered to place her napkin in her seat as she went to get a second cup of green tea. She said she enjoys tea time once a week with her grandmother and was happy to share her tea set with friends.

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Record Number: 1004125637414