

Doris Bushong shares talents

By SALLY BAIR
Feature Writer

Doris Bushong thinks teaching high school students the intricacies of floriculture is a joy, and the perfect way to share the creative talents with which she was born.

For the past year, Mrs. Bushong, an East Petersburg resident, has held a unique position — she is the only teacher's aide in the vocational - technical schools. She works with Jim Kerr, the full-time teacher in the floriculture - horticulture class at Willow Street Vo-Tech School, and she is unable to hide her enthusiasm for the program.

She was hired because there were too many students for Kerr to have as one class, but not enough to justify a full-time teacher. But she took on almost all the responsibilities of the floriculture side of the department.

Her background is in the practical work experience of floriculture and not in teaching, but she has already begun taking the steps necessary to get certification for vo-tech teaching.

When Mrs. Bushong heard about the opening she applied because "I like kids. If I can be of any help to them I'm happy. Also I love to teach people the things I can do." She also liked the idea of having her summers free for her eleven-year-old son Andrew and her husband J. Donald.

Mrs. Bushong went on to say, "Many people are selfish with their skills, but I feel my skills are God-given and I am happy to share them."

She spent a lot of time sharing these skills even before she began teaching at Willow Street. For five years she worked in a florists' shop and for two years she worked for Stauffer's of Kissel Hill in their design room. She taught courses for them in sandpouring, Williamsburg bouquets, and pressed flowers.

In floriculture she teaches the "basics of design and color harmony.

"We prepare them for working in greenhouses or having a small business at home," she says.

She is also involved in greenhouse work, since this is the first year for a greenhouse at Willow Street. She said, "We



Doris Bushong shows the proper way of putting together a corsage.

grew bedding plants and house plants, and are basically setting up the greenhouse from scratch."

She added, "You have to remember, floriculture is not all glory, and not all fun things. Many people forget there is dirty work."

She said the majority of her students are city kids "who elect to come to the vo-tech school." She said they are helped at their home school by their guidance counselor.

"Floriculture has always been popular," she said, "but students must have a desire to learn."

She also cautioned that it is sometimes difficult to get placed in the floriculture industry because in this area many florists are family owned, with little need for outside labor. The scene is changing, however, and students who have learned their skills well will be in a good position to get a job.

"Even if they don't get placed," Mrs. Bushong said, "it's not a loss. Creative things can always be used."

Mrs. Bushong's enthusiasm extends to the whole vocational - technical curriculum, because "it gives students who want to work with their hands something to do. It helps keep them interested. It is definitely valuable." She recalls her own unhappy days at school and said she wishes she had had something like vo-tech schools to help her along.

The vo-tech program is a half-day program for students who attend their home school for the other half of the day. The variety of work experience in the floriculture department includes all the things related to growing plants, including lectures, exams, and dirty work along with the more glamorous flower arranging and corsage-making.

Mrs. Bushong also explained that there is a co-op program for students in the last half of their senior year. It offers work experience "for anyone who can get jobs." She said people who need employees are "happy to get someone with experience - I don't sense any reluctance to hiring these young people." Many of the part-time co-op jobs turn into fulltime jobs, she said, for the student involved.

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Homestead Notes



Randy McCauley, Penn Manor senior and Doris Bushong look over a wandering jew in the greenhouse.



Dale Herr, Lampeter-Strasburg senior, and Lauren Martin (center) Lancaster Mennonite junior, talk with Mrs. Bushong about some greenhouse plants.

My Thoughts and Welcome to Them

(With apologies to James Thurber)

Hate to hoe tobacco? You're not alone.

By JOANNE SPAHR

I saw Dad come around the barn with the tobacco hoer on the back of the tractor. In a flash I was in the house screaming, "No, have mercy on me, please. I don't want to die. I'll do anything, but don't take me on the hoer, please!"

When that plea didn't work, I begged out of work by saying I had to write my column. So, here I am, giving my nondescript two-cents while the family sweats and gruels out in the field. I feel terrible (but not that terrible).

I hate hoeing. It feels like I'm being tortured to death. When I was young, Grandpa said that I was just a weakling, and that all I needed to do was keep practicing and my muscles would develop. Then, it wouldn't hurt anymore. But, what young girl wants to look like Mr. America at the tender age of

13, let me ask you that? I know I didn't. So, I spent more time making up excuses than practicing the hoeing.

From what little I have done, it seems to me that the ground hates being hoed as much as you hate doing it. It seems to fight back as you push your handles out and pull them in to go around each plant.

And, I'm notorious for taking out half the row of plants as I go. When my hoers should be out, they're in, and when they should be in, they're out. The family rarely puts itself through the agony of looking back over a row I've just finished because it hurts them to their cores to see those little uprooted tobacco plants littered all along the row.

When I drive while my brother and father hoe, it's the same story. For hours they take turns

yelling, "Darn you, Jo, you're taking out my row! Get over to the other side a little further."

Well, of course, you know what happens when I start heading the tractor in the opposite direction - I run over the other guy's plants, and the whole process starts again.

When I was young, I was mortified when they would holler at me: it seemed that they yelled loud enough so all the neighbors could hear what a lousy job I was doing. But, now, I just figure yelling at me is their way of keeping themselves entertained.

Anyway, until the money starts rolling in somewhere in mid-winter, my heart goes out to all the dedicated, hard working tobacco farmers out there who still have hand hoeing, topping, spraying, and harvesting to go through.