

Second in a series on state Farm Women officers

# Marie Baughman serves Farm Women as 1st vice-president

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SHIPPENSBURG

Although local members of the Society of Farm Women in Franklin County had invited her several times to join, Marie Baughman had never been able to find time during those early years of marriage. Today she's second in leadership command as first vice-president of the Society's several thousand member women.

Like most young farm wives, Marie was busy with her four small children and helping with farm chores on the Shippensburg R3 dairy operation of her husband Merle and his father. But after being dairy operators for 17 years, the Baughman's faced some tough decisions that had to be made. New dairy regulations demanded modernizing or getting out of the milk shipping business. Eventually, the farm went up for sale, but Marie and Merle kept an acre off the corner where they would build a new home for the family.

Not long after the cows left, the Baughman's youngest child also departed, for his first day in elementary school. With the children all in school, Marie's household schedule eased a bit and she felt free to find some outside interests.

While working at a nearby orchard packing house, Marie responded to the enthusiasm of the orchard owner's wife, who had just been installed as president of the Franklin County Farm Women. At her urging, Marie agreed to host a meeting of potential members and by the end of the session found herself as the charter president of Franklin County's Group 7.

Before long, Marie had been elected the county treasurer and later held the office of county president. When she passed the gavel to the succeeding president, another job beckoned; and Marie found herself heading up the sole fund-raising

activity of the county group, a booming french-fry stand at the Shippensburg Area Fair.

"We sell huge amounts of french fries," she relates. "Working with the ladies, you get to know them better than meeting with them in a social setting." The project began many years ago from a temporary stand, later graduating to a sturdy portable booth designed and built by the carpenter-husband of a former chairman.

Marie's leadership in such county activities soon spilled over onto the state level. Next came an invitation to serve in the capacity of treasurer. "When I looked at those books, I wondered why in the world I had let them talk me into it. But it really wasn't as bad as I first thought, and it gives a new perspective on the Society along with the chance to get to know many more people."

A major task assigned to Marie was the chairmanship of the group's annual Spring Rally, hosted by Franklin County and held at the Gettysburg Sheridan Inn during the 1976 national bicentennial celebration. She remembers that it was "an ideal time to chair a program since the television premiere of the single show Roots had just interested everyone in searching more for their own roots."

The idea that farm women could be proud of their roots both in America and in agriculture came to form the theme for that program. Under Marie's planning, the program included a local author as speaker on the life of the colonial woman and theme entertainment by a red-white-and-blue-garbed choral group.

When she was invited to speak on the Farm Women's history to the Washington County convention, Marie did some more "roots" sleuthing. Her presentation was so successful that she was asked to share it with her home Franklin County members and the special



Marie Baughman has served her way through various responsibilities in the Farm Women. Among them are: county treasurer, county president, state treasurer and chairmanship of the Spring Rally.

events of several local groups.

"From that research I really learned to appreciate the Farm Women," Marie recalls. "We too, were searching for roots. When Flora Black founded the Society, women were wives and mothers; children were to be seen and not heard, and I guess women were probably in about the same position. Mrs. Black was very interested in seeing farm children have a better education and perhaps she saw their potential. Perhaps that's why she chose as the farm women's theme the song 'Brighten The Corner Where You Are.'"

"It's a little hard to tell where farm women might go from here," she predicts. "More and more of them consider themselves as full partners with their husbands, who consult them more today on farm decisions. And farm women

and were sometimes asked to write to legislators on various issues. Also, the feeling might be that local groups can be more effective working on a local level. A lot of it all comes back to those individual issues."

Marie has remained active in her local Group 7 and is helping them prepare their fair exhibit for summer. Part of that display will show some quilting samples, a hobby she's learned just during the past few months. It's a group interest, shared with a few other members of her Sunday School class.

"We really didn't know much about it - except that you ended up with a beautiful quilt when you were finished," confides Marie. So the ladies formed an every-Wednesday quilting session, fitting their fan-design creation into a frame that had once belonged to Marie's grandmother-in-law.

"I often sat by that frame and thought about the ladies who sat beside it before us. With a life filled with so many things to do and places to go, I really wondered if I'd like just sitting there doing that tiny, slow stitching, but it's very relaxing. I wonder if those earlier quilters found it just as relaxing, with all the hard work they had to do."

Using her stitching talents, Marie created a very special dress during her busy bicentennial year,

supporting the state farm women's project of sewing a special commemorative dress. Created in the Dolly Madison style, with full ruffled sleeves and an overskirt, she's worn it many times, but remembers best the July 4 parade in Chambersburg, "when it almost seemed as if time had been turned back."

For many years, Marie has also been actively associated with Church Women United of the Shippensburg area, serving for a period as their president and heading up World Activities Day. On that special set-aside day, garments are collected and sent for distribution to needy around the globe through the Brethren Volunteer Center at New Windsor, Maryland.

The life of a state Farm Women officer can be hectic and time-consuming. Marie is quick to credit her husband for his undivided support of her state duties. Marie is now Franklin County's executive director of the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service and often crosses paths with the same ag-industry people his wife meets through the Farm Women.

"When we moved off the farm, we had four small children, so we put in a large garden and a small lawn to keep them busy. Each year

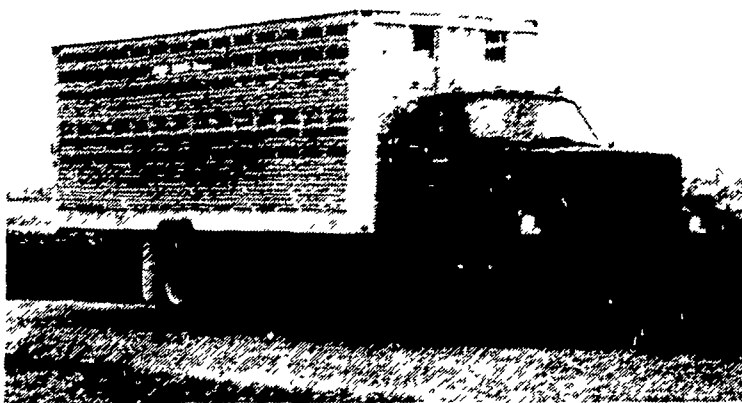
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