

Collects flowers, weeds

# Talented Carroll Kopfer enjoys crafts, needlework

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**FLEETWOOD** — Being a professional hairdresser, craftsman, active farm wife, and mother is all in a day's work for Carroll Kopfer, R1 Fleetwood.

This busy farm wife, with her husband Robert and two children, operate a farm consisting of 450 acres of crops, a beef feedlot housing between 100 and 120 steers and a dairy string of 40 milk cows.

Robert and Carroll are known in many circles because of their active participation in organizations such as the Berks County Farmers' Association, Fleetwood Grange, and 4-H. Carroll also operates her own beauty shop six days a week and is a recognized craftsman in areas such as flower arranging, quilting and making of corn husk dolls.

Neither of these people were reared on a farm but both grew up in rural Fleetwood. Carroll had aspirations of becoming an artist from as far back as she can remember. She learned different crafts from her mother, picking up other ideas from books and a few classes that she attended.

Robert started his farming career as a hired hand on a local operation but went on to rent land of his own a year before his marriage to Carroll.

Over the years the Kopfers have tried many different farming enterprises including sheep, hogs, and chickens before settling with their present beef feedlot and dairy.

The dairy operation is Kopfers' newest enterprise. They've been in milk production about three years with the acquisition of their second farm.

Hairdressing, which is Carroll's main profession has been a part of her life since high school. She taught hairdressing for six years at the Bryland Institute, Reading, and worked part time as a hairdresser as well when she and Robert began farming.

Presently she is still on call for teaching as a substitute at the area Vo-tech School in Beauty Culture.

But even though hairdressing is her profession, crafts are her delight.

"I could spend all day doing crafts," Carroll told Lancaster Farming with a gleam in her eye.

Being talented, especially with her hands, Carroll can do anything she sets her mind on. She made her own lamps from ceramics, has sown her own curtains and clothing, and refinished a large part of the furniture in her home.

Being so close to nature, Carroll especially enjoys drying her own flowers and weeds from their farm to make beautiful arrangements and collecting corn husks, wheat and straw for making many of the other delicate creations displayed throughout her home.

Carroll has entered straw wreaths, and dolls in area fairs and has been relatively pleased with her accomplishments.

She designs and makes her own quilts starting from scraps of leftover material to imprinted fabrics which she has to embroider before hand.

To date Carroll has designed three quilts for the Berks County Farmers' Association. They were usually sewn by members of the Women's Committee during agricultural expositions held at the Berkshire Mall, Wyomissing. To help with her quilting this farm wife has two large quilting frames which she uses. So far all of the quilts she has made have been given away.

When asked how much time is involved in making a quilt, Carroll could only reply that each quilt takes its own time — but, she said, "It's a long time."

As mentioned earlier, this talented farm wife has also mastered a number of other crafts. These include wheat weaving, natural arrangements, sewing, embroidering, knitting, crocheting, and any number of child crafts which she enjoys teaching. Carroll is proud to be a member of the Berks County Guild of Craftsmen.

Carroll tries to make her creations from all things available on the farm. She air dries many flowers and



Carroll Kopfer likes to collect and dry her own weeds and flowers to use in making imaginative

arrangements and creations found in her farm home at Fleetwood R1.

Working with dried wheat, Carroll Kopfer ties a plaid ribbon for the final touch in an arrangement which she has created. Carroll is a member of the Berks County Guild of Craftsmen, reflecting her interest and talent in working with her hands.



weeds by hanging them upside down in an airy place and treats them as necessary.

"This is especially important with pine cones," Carroll explained. To make sure they are insect free, she puts them in a plastic bag and sprays them with an insecticide.

In some cases however, such as when pressing flowers, this craftsman will use a commercial silica gel and will purchase things she needs for her arrangements that can't be found on the farm.

Having such a strong desire to keep her things "earthy" she even uses corn silk for the hair on her dolls, many of which she has also designed herself.

Some of Carroll's crafts are so delicate and small she has mounted them in tin cookie cutters, often employing tweezers to make them and mount them.

Carroll teaches crafts for many organizations and also gives lectures when asked. She teaches for 4-H, Campfire Girls, the YWCA, and at various women's gatherings.

She is also president of District Campfire Girls, encompassing 14 different chapters, and is an organizational leader for the Fleetwood area 4-H Community Clubs which has about 30 members.

Carroll has been a 4-H leader for three years, helping 4-Her's learn sewing and cooking, but she has also taught them how to do several of her crafts and involved the members in a potato project on her farm.

This farm woman got involved with 4-H when her daughter, Ann who is now twelve became involved. Ann is also active in many other organizations too.

Besides the Fleetwood 4-H Community Club she also belongs to the Eastern Berks Dairy Club and shows dairy cows. Ann collects stamps, butterflies, coins, and dolls, and plays flute in the school band. Ann is in seventh grade at the Fleetwood School District. Even with her many activities she continues to do well with her studies.

Ann also has a brother, six year old David who is now in first grade. This young farm lad is already showing the typical qualities of the rest of his family with special interests in showing cattle.

"David is just waiting for his chance to come," his mother remarked. "He has haltered a calf at the dairy barn and calls it his own."

Carroll is not a stranger to the barns either. Even though she only helps milk when Robert is pressed for time she helps out feeding calves and doing other chores when ever she can and as most farm wives do, runs for parts, medicine and other farm necessities.

Carroll also finds time for gardening, lawn care, marketing, and of course, cooking. She freezes and jars

fruits and vegetables too. The Kopfers have found doing these "books" together, works best for them. "There is so much you need to know in farming, today," she commented, "and paper work is getting more and more involved."

The crops raised by the Kopfers include 300 acres of corn with the rest planted in soybeans or small grains. They employ one full time hired hand and have a parttime helper as well. They participate in an advisory council of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association and both have or are serving as chairman of a county committee of the associations.

Presently Robert is chairman of the livestock committee and Carroll has served as chairman of the Women's Committee. She has also served two years as Chairman of the Berks County Expo Committee and served on the Dairy Princess Committee as well.

Carroll has recently been involved with the National Jamboree for Campfire Girls this summer. Over 700 girls from as far away as Maine and Virginia attended this jamboree held for the first time at the Daniel Boone Homestead, in Southern Berks County.

"It was very interesting working on the national level of something," Carroll explained, "instead of always being on the local level." To better prepare herself and be of more service Carroll has also taken several courses in camping.

She has also had training in CPR and first aid and has served as a homeroom mother for the past seven years, baking cupcakes and as Carroll put it, "what have you."

Carroll is also a collector, which is probably what got her daughter interested in such hobbies. Carroll's collections include cookie cutters, antique measuring cups, and some spoons, all of which are carefully decorated with some of her craft creations or hung carefully and displayed throughout her home.

The Kopfers are also members of St. Mary's Catholic Church, Kutztown. Carroll is active there, too. They have spent 9 years with the Fleetwood Grange and also belong to a fire company — Carroll to the auxiliary, of course.

Being such a dedicated farm wife takes a great deal of Carroll's time, but she finds it very rewarding.

"The farm is the best place I can think of for raising children," she thoughtfully commented. "There is so much diversity and just so much to offer."

It seems only natural that two such dedicated people as Carroll and Robert Kopfer became farmers. Each can probably appreciate how lucky they are to be able to farm since neither was born into it.

**Homestead  
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