

International title goes to local Flying Farmer Queen

BY JOYCE BUPP
Staff Correspondent

On the evening of July 29, Wilbur Marstellar received a telephone call from Calgary, Alberta province, Canada.

On the line was a representative of the judges of the International Flying Farmer queen competition, being held in Calgary as part of the organization's 36th annual convention.

Nancy Marstellar, Wilbur's talented wife and the Pennsylvania Flying Farmers' queen, would be crowned the international queen the next night. Could he come?

In spite of the tip-off by the judges, the New Park R1 grain and livestock farmer was unable to make the reservations to fly two thousand miles to the coronation.

"But he sent me red roses," fondly remembers Nancy, surprised for the second time that memorable night when she was told that her family back home already had heard the stunning news.

Nancy won her title over 31 other contestants from across North America. As the new reigning lady of the International Flying Farmers Association, she'll be a spokesman for the family-oriented programs of rural enthusiasts, with several thousand members from Canada, Mexico and the United States.

"It looks like we're going to have a 'Hi' and 'Goodbye' year," says the new queen, after reviewing a jammed schedule lined up for her over the next several months.

Beginning with a "fly-in" to Pittsburgh and an appearance at Ag Progress Days this past week, Nancy is scheduled to promote the Flying Farmers during at least 16 state conventions.

The Delmarva meeting, scheduled at Ocean City, Maryland, in September, will be the first on the circuit. Later, her travels, will take the flying farm wife from Saskatchewan, Canada, to Mexico, from a workshop at Nashville, Tennessee to Pennsylvania's own convention at Bird-in-Hand, and possibly even to an appearance at the Tri-State session held by the Flying Farmer members of Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

The Marstellars have been members of the Flying Farmers organization for nearly five years, although Wilbur began piloting a private plane in 1953. A Piper

Cherokee 160 is hangared in one of the Marstellar Brothers' farm sheds, adjacent to the trimmed-grass landing strip bordering tall, lush, ripening corn fields.

"We don't fly as much as we'd like," admits Nancy. Although she's not a licensed private pilot, Nancy has earned "land it" status. "Land it" qualifiers take a course that includes a required number of hours of air and ground school time, radio and map studies, emergency landing procedure knowledge and time at the controls.

"I'd like to continue studying to get my own license," Nancy hopes, "But not this year." Although she has spent many hours learning basics of flying under Wilbur's instruction, only air time spent under a qualified, licensed instructor counts toward passing the state's private pilot exams.

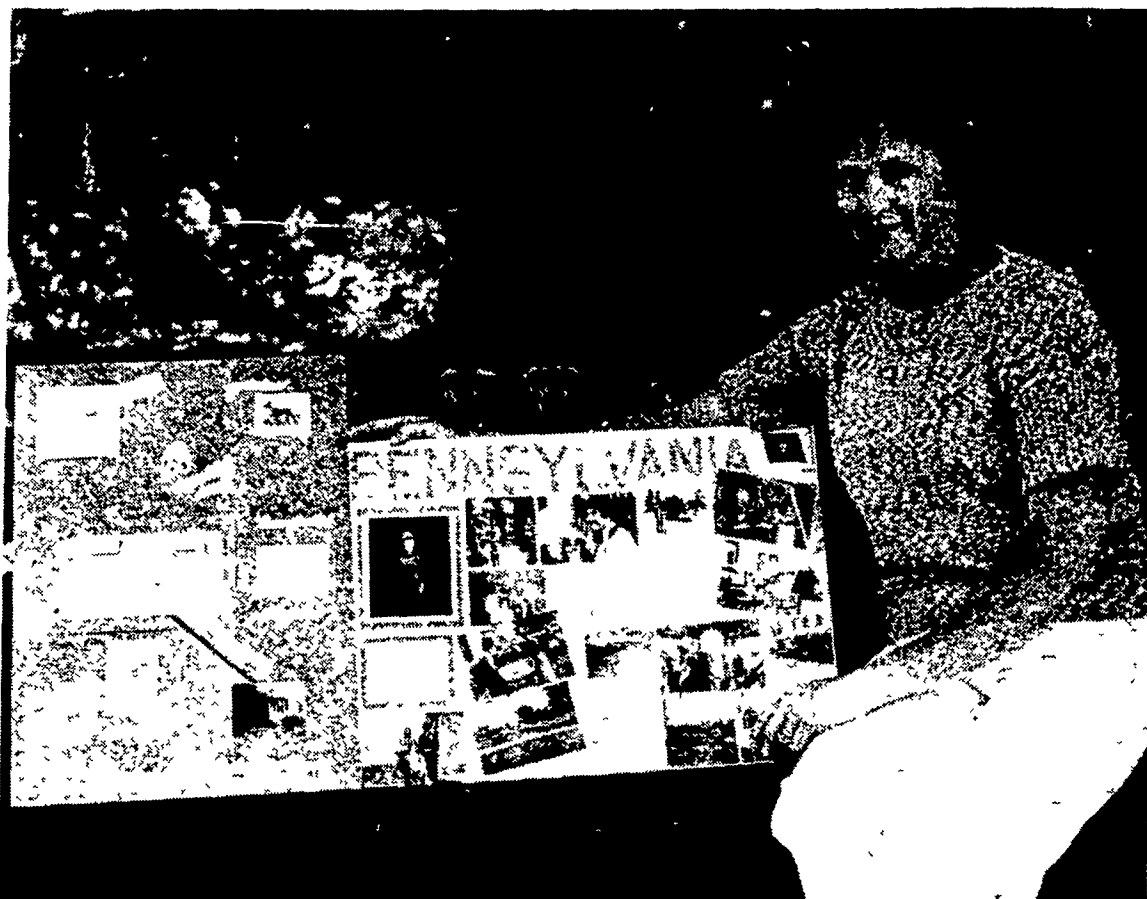
Nancy is quick to emphasize that the Flying Farmers is a family organization, with programs geared to all ages and special encouragement lent to the numerous youth members taking up flying. Both the Marstellar children, Darren, who's 10, and 8-year-old Laura, share their parents' love of travel in the family's Cherokee and first became airborne when they were mere weeks old.

Most meetings of the chapters are held as "fly-ins," and are a mixture of education and fellowship, usually hosted by member families and often featuring flown-in covered dish dinners. If the weather is favorable, most members arrive by air; but if even a chance of a storm threatens, these safety-first farm fliers are quick to trade the rudder for a ground-level steering-wheeled vehicle.

About 80 members flew to York County for a recent meeting hosted at the Marstellar's farm, and during another session this spring the group toured the helicopter landing and weather facilities at Indiantown Gap military base.

Named the Pennsylvania Flying Farmer Queen at the March convention in Reading, Nancy has already represented the Keystone agriculture pilots at both the New York state and South Carolina confabs.

As part of the week-long judging for the international crown, each contestant was required to share something of her life and



A montage of family history was created by Queen pageant. Going one step further, she Nancy Marstellar for use in her presentation to included a poster depicting the Keystone the judges of the International Flying Farmer state.

background by speaking to the judging group about a family poster she had designed. Nancy also added a visual of Pennsylvania for further information on her heritage.

Nancy especially remembers one "breakfast" held during the judging sessions. It began at 7 a.m., and continued on through two o'clock in the afternoon. Each of the 32 state or regional queens was given five minutes to share with the group information about themselves and their farm families.

Another requirement was that each contestant bring along some small gift to share with the other entrants. Nancy chose a "love light," a handcrafted pottery candle holder, about four inches high and designed to hold a small votive candle. Around the top of the holder are many small holes, allowing the candle's glow to send tiny shafts of light out through the pottery.

Since much of the judging emphasis was on the contestant's accomplishments and talents, Nancy's musical background and numerous community activities compiled an impressive resume.

A Lebanon Valley college graduate, with a B.S. degree in music, majoring in voice and piano, Nancy also earned her elementary teaching certificate. For 11 years, she taught music in two of Southeastern School District's elementary schools.

Now an elementary and music substitut for the district, she says that's "almost a full-time job," for which she'll likely be less available during the upcoming school session.

Nancy also sees education from the parent point of view, serving as president of the Fawn Area Elementary parent-teacher organization. Her enthusiasm overflows into the Music Boosters club and she's served as a director for the Southern Community Concert organization.

The bulk of Nancy's abundant musical abilities goes to serve Centre Presbyterian Church, just a few hundred yards from the front door of the gracious farm home.

An accomplished player of the organ, piano and guitar, Nancy directs Centre's children's choir of about 18 members and a 20-voice youth choir, and sings with the adult choir as well. She heads the church's annual Bible School and

leads a weekly Sunday School hymn sing.

As do many teachers, Nancy continues studying in her field of education.

"I still take lessons on the guitar, and wish I'd learned how to play that a lot sooner," she reflects. "It's much easier to carry a guitar from classroom to classroom than it is to move a piano."

While Nancy's favorite age group to work with in teaching is children, she prefers not to give private music instruction to her own two youngsters. Instead, Darren and Laura take their lessons elsewhere.

"I think you tend to expect too much from your own children, and become impatient with them too easily," she philosophizes.

With family roots deep in the rich heritage of southern York County, Nancy grew up just a

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Homestead Notes



The family that plays together...Margaret has passed on her love and talent for music to Laura and Darren, joining their mother in an informal jam session.



"It gets washed a lot more often than the family car," quips Nancy of the spotless white-trimmed-in-red Piper Cherokee that carries these Flying Farmers over the Pennsylvania farmlands. Wilbur and Nancy took both Darren and Laura on their first flights when the youngsters were just weeks old.