

Meet Lancaster County's new Farm Women president

Fran Sauder shares love of work, cooking

BY SALLY BAIR
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"After four years of training, you know it's coming and it's time to step in."

Those were the thoughts of Fran Sauder, Mount Joy R3, a few days before she assumed the presidency of Lancaster County's Society of Farm Women. She had served two-year terms as both second vice president and first vice president.

Fran said she felt the time was right and she was ready to accept her responsibility but she expressed awe that the organization has been going for 64 years. "We've been going for that long. In my term I want to keep everything going as it has been," she said.

About her role, she says, "Being president is a way of serving. You learn to know so many different ladies and you can pick out outstanding ladies as you visit different societies. There are lovely ladies and you can build up a friendship in this capacity as a county officer."

Fran has been a member of a Farm Women Society since 1967 when she became a charter member of #27. "It sounded interesting and I just wanted to get involved," she recalls as her reason for joining.

She sees one of the most important aspects of the Societies as "fellowship," adding, "We wouldn't want to give up the fun and the fellowship. In our busy lives we need to take time off. In my society I feel at home, and when I am there I relax and enjoy it."

As first vice president she had

the opportunity to go through each society's activity and make a summary for the annual convention held Saturday.

She says, "The women are very involved in their Societies. One Society did 10 different things. I am impressed with where the Societies give their money." All the women go out and help others and give money to the needy. But I am really thrilled that they also give of themselves. They go and visit and often take meals to the less fortunate."

Fran expressed pleasure that the Societies keep themselves up to date on many issues, mentioning speakers on topics like wood-burning stoves, silo gas and gas in manure pits. "They keep themselves up to date. This year Hospice has been used quite a lot at meetings, and there have been programs on health problems," she stated. While many programs are enjoyable and fun, most are of educational value.

"Doing and helping in their communities," is an important part of Farm Women, and Fran adds, "Just by living our lives and letting it shine out and showing what a farmer is we are serving. A word of cheer or a friendly smile is what goes furthest in our busy world. It is the small things that add up." There are so many ladies who think they can't do anything, but it is the small, simple things that count."

Fran sees Farm Women Societies as being different from other women's groups because, "Their interests are geared to sharing and doing for others. We

do a lot of that. We share a common bond. We are all worthy to share of ourselves in small ways."

Fran herself is a perfect example of someone who is doing and sharing for others in a humble, unassuming way.

A long-time 4-H leader, Fran is very well known for her cake decorating abilities which she shares with 4-H'ers through the Mount Joy Community Club. This brings Fran rewards long after the project is finished when former 4-H'ers call for advice as they branch out into making cakes for others. "Many are making wedding cakes and call for advice in how to assemble them, or want to know something they forgot," she says.

Now Fran's talents have stretched far beyond just decorating cakes. An excellent cook, Fran is now in the catering business with her husband Roy, something that began when a friend asked her to serve a wedding reception. "There was no planning, it just happened one step at a time," Fran relates.

That was four years ago, and now Fran may go out as many as four times a week. While the preparation is done in her farm home kitchen - large, but not out of the ordinary, Fran does all the cooking at other facilities, such as churches or fire halls. She likes to cook at the place where the food is being served to avoid a leftover flavor.

"I just think I'm using God's talent to go out and serve. It spread by word of mouth. I never did any advertising, and that is satisfying," she says.

Fran also likes her catering work because she and her husband share. He helps prepare the meat and potatoes at home, and does a lot of the carting in and out. But he really comes into his own when he takes over the stoves in the facilities they are using and supervises the cooking while Fran goes over the details of serving.

She also credits the help of her sister Mary Lou Sauder and two couples who are friends, Wilmer and Ruth Nissley and Raymond and Ruth Brubaker, with helping her catering be a success. She says



This lovely arrangement of vegetables greets visitors at the Sauder home. Featuring seasonal items from the garden, it has an old school desk as the base. Fran adds some fresh flowers to the picture.

she plans to rely heavily on them during her term as Farm Women president when she will have other obligations to fulfill.

An original idea with Fran is a pie bar, which allows diners to cut their own slice of pie and dip their own ice cream. "It works out really nice," Fran says, "I usually make five or six kinds of pie, and sometimes I'll make a cake." Her next step is a cake bar, which she is trying soon.

Fran will not cater an event for less than 30 people and has cooked for over 400. She also has no desire to begin hosting such events in her home, although it has frequently been suggested.

How did she develop this ability? Fran laughs and says, "My mother and mother-in-law were good cooks and we always had a hired

man so we had two full meals a day." It has given her pleasure to have the brides of her hired men call and ask for recipes. "They enjoyed my cooking, and when they visit they'll often visit at meal time. I like that feeling. They are always welcome and they know it."

Fran is also the mother of four children so has had lots of experience preparing food for them. Her children are Nancy, 27; Roy, Jr., 25; Jim, 21 and Glenn, 18, who is still living at home.

She says, "It was exciting for me to figure out 10 or 15 times a recipe and figure out the cost. I learned a lot by trial and error and when we were finished we often asked how we could improve something." She says she keeps very good records to help her.

Isn't all this cooking a lot of work? Fran says, "I take one day at a time. I have always enjoyed cooking and it's fun to be cooking again for more people." She admits she missed the large amount of cooking with just one child at home.

She makes all her own rolls and pies, but doesn't like to freeze things ahead. Therefore, she has been known to get up at three in the morning to begin her homemade rolls which take four hours of rising time. She added, "I plan ahead and make my pie crumbs in advance. I roll out my pie crusts a day or two ahead."

Fran will cook whatever people ask for it is something she can handle, but she said she gets a lot of compliments on her "good old-fashioned cooking."

About the catering business she says, "It has added a new dimension to our lives. We have met lots of new people."

While cooking is a big interest at the moment, Fran is very good with her hands in other ways, and likes to do crewel and needlepoint in her free time. She says with a laugh, "I have a whole drawerful of things to do. I'll never grow old and not have anything to do."

She says, "We love to travel and we want to do more of that."

In the travel department they had their dream come true last summer when they traveled to Germany and met a friend of Roy's

Homestead Notes



Posing in front of a shelf unit she designed to hold her hobby, Fran can explain the significance of the fifty varied tea

cups found there.

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