

Those in Need

(Continued from Page B2)

Attempting to join him, five times Lahn and her daughters tried to escape the Communist regime, and on the fourth try was imprisoned three months as punishment. Undaunted, she tried a fifth time and succeeded, fleeing to freedom through Thailand.

Lahn and her daughters, ages 4 and 5, arrived in Lebanon County just before Christmas, turning the holiday season into a truly memorable one for both Hai's family and their sponsors.

Although Lahn doesn't yet speak English, five-year-old Hoa has just started attending Kindergarten, and both she and her younger sister, Ha, are quickly picking up words in their new language.

One refugee sponsored by the Zieglers has been living in Myerstown for seven years, with his five children, while his wife remains in Vietnam. She has tried unsuccessfully to escape, and even though funds and letters are sent regularly to her, there is no way of knowing if they get through the mail censorship.

The head of still another of the Ziegler-sponsored families was a commander in the Vietnam navy. He, too, began work at the shoe manufacturer, and has since moved into computer work in a local bank. He affectionately refers to Grace as his "sister".

"I just love doing for others," is Grace's quiet reply when asked about her tireless devotion to helping those in need.

Grace finds that her own personal world has expanded with her exposure to others from around the world making her more open to people. Often she'll stop to chat with people of other nationalities, in the supermarket or other shopping areas, and ask if they are acquainted with some particular family that the Zieglers have sponsored.

But she's less than patient with people who might complain to her that they're bored.

"Get out and do something!" she emphatically advises.

Taking her own advice, when Grace saw still another need in the community, six years ago, again she put feet under her concern.

Through two of the foster children of the Ziegler family, she became acquainted with the teacher and work of the Educable Mentally Retarded class at nearby Eastern Lebanon County middle school. After six years of spending a half-day each week assisting the teacher, Grace laughingly claims she's still learning as much as she's teaching. Her presence in the classroom makes extra, personal attention available to any of the 21 students in the class, perhaps something as simple, yet encouraging, as a hug, or a few words of enthusiastic praise.

For Beth Grace and Victor, love

takes the form of just interested listening, since both often find themselves in the role of counselor, either through concern over friends and acquaintances, or through formal programs.

Victor is on the Lebanon County's prison ministry program, and frequently will bring boys from the institution home with the family for awhile. Grace periodically plays basketball with the female inmates, enjoying both the exercise from the sport and the chance of sharing time and friendly conversation with the women.

"We both have the same goals," she says of the couple's open-door approach to so many in need. They work closely with the Teen Challenge program, as well as a variety of church-related organizations.

Grace is the county's vice president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Lebanon Valley Brethren Home auxiliary, and is on the support group for the "Chemical People" drug and alcohol educational program. She also serves on the Church of the Brethren district board, heads the local stewardship commission and, with Victor, serves as advisor for the Richland Brethren Church's youth group of 15 members.

The Ziegler's understanding of the world political situation has been broadened through their extensive travels over the past several years. During their stay in the Soviet Union, Victor and a fellow traveler managed to slip away from their group and into the American Embassy, in Moscow, to visit with the "Siberian Seven."

This group of seven Pentecostal Christians sought haven in the embassy after years of Communist persecution for their faith. The seven members of the Vaschenko and Chmykhalov families spent five years in the embassy's cramped basement, trying to get visas to emigrate. After a worldwide outcry over their plight, eventually the seven were allowed to safely return to their villages, obtain \$1,000-apiece visas and leave the Soviet Union with their families.

A photograph of Victor with the Seven is one of Ziegler's prized mementoes of their travels, and they hope someday to host the two Russian families for a visit to their home.

Being available to their children, even now that they're all grown, remains important to Grace and Victor. Their three daughters and two sons all live nearby, allowing the couple to spend time often with their five grandchildren.

Through all her time shared with others, Grace still manages to find moments for gardening, painting, wallpapering and writing poetry. In fact, she figures that she really wouldn't be happy if she had to just sit still.

So long as there are folks in need - young or old, lonely or lost - it's not very likely that Grace Ziegler will ever have to worry about sitting still.

PAWS Dog 4-H Club

Millie Curtis will be the guest speaker at the PAWS 4-H Dog Club's March 8 meeting. Mrs. Curtis is the founder of the West Jersey Canine Search and Rescue Unit. Mrs. Ginny Gilbert, Club Leader, invites all county residents to attend this meeting.

The program will begin at 8 p.m. at the Extension Center, Route 31 in Flemington. Mrs. Curtis will give a report on the unit's objectives and activities. A couple of the actual team dogs will be brought to the meeting to illustrate her talk.

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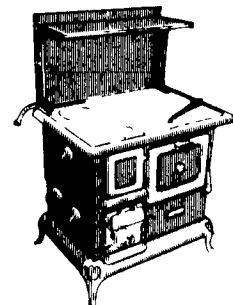
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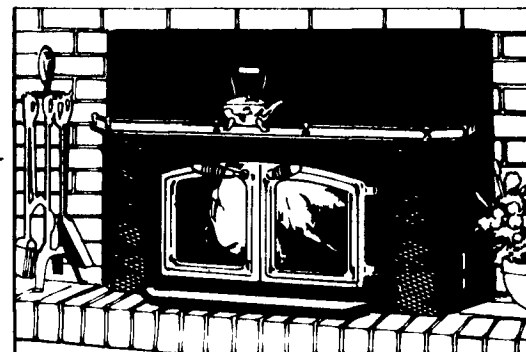


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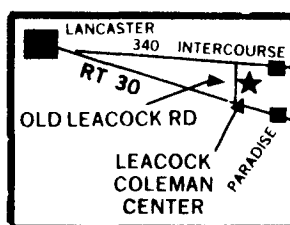
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