

Phyllis Paine works behind the scene to make Lebanon Fair barbeques a success

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LEBANON — When you hear the words "Chicken Barbeque" does your mouth begin to water? If not, you have probably never tasted the product of the Lebanon Fair 4-H Barbeques.

The woman behind the barbeques that have become known throughout the Lebanon Valley is Phyllis Paine of Horseshoe Pike in Lebanon. Initiator and driving force behind their continuation, Phyllis devotes many volunteer hours to improving the barbeques every year.

The idea of a barbeque came about when the Lebanon 4-H Fair was moved to the newly purchased Expo grounds at its current location on Cornwall Road. The South Mountain 4-H Club wanted to do something to help with the new fairgrounds. The results of this desire was a chicken barbeque that Phyllis organized.

That first experience resulted in many memories. They sold 1,500 halves. However, everyone wanted the breast half. The chicken supplier told them to have two men to handle the actual barbequing. He meant two men per pit—but the two willing workers somehow managed all of that chicken.

Take-out orders were made available from the beginning. The first year, not having any idea how many take-outs there would be, they folded 50 boxes before serving. Due to a large demand, customers stood in line folding their own boxes.

Relish trays were also available that first year. Members, leaders, and parents gathered in Phyllis' back yard to prepare carrot and celery sticks.

The proceeds went to pay for the macadam under the 4-H refreshment stand.

The barbeque progressed to a high sale of 4,000 halves of chicken in 1972.

In 1975 a ham barbeque was added, selling 542 ham dinners. The current sales have been averaging 3,000 chicken dinners and 2,000 ham dinners per year.

Several changes have been made over the years. The relish trays have been replaced with pepper cabbage and desserts have been added. In 1975 4-H members baked cakes that served as dessert. The next step was pies and now cantalopes and cream-filled donuts are offered.

Of course, prices have increased. But, an increase from \$1.50 the first year to \$4 in 1984 is certainly reasonable when the contents of the dinner are tasted. Imagine a chicken half roasted until the meat nearly falls off the bones or a large thick slice of barbequed ham, applesauce, pepper cabbage, steaming hot baked potato, roll and butter, beverage, and a large slice of cantalope or a donut. Enough to make you hungry? Certainly a bargain at \$4.

Over the years the "system" has become more sophisticated. Nearly all of the equipment needed is stored on the fairgrounds. Tables, coolers, utensils, and even personalized aprons are included in the inventory.

Along with an inventory of supplies and equipment is the roof over the barbeque pits. The labor and materials were donated to provide the roof in case of rain. 1983 was the first year it rained for the chicken barbeque.

Phyllis is very determined about several aspects of the barbeques. She insists that no one will purchase a ticket and not have a dinner available to them. Although there were nearly 100 "no-shows" at the 1984 ham barbeque, Phyllis insists on not selling more tickets than they have meat. She had experienced this herself in the past.

Much planning is needed considering that more than 1,000 tickets were sold the day of the chicken barbeque this year. Also a "buffer zone" must be provided for.

Phyllis chuckles as she remembers how this need developed. In the early years of the chicken barbeque, one man showed up to help every year. He



In addition to her 4-H activities, Phyllis assists her husband in growing plants in their greenhouse. One of her jobs at this time of year is to water the mums being prepared for the fall season.



Phyllis is kept busy stocking their self-service produce stand which offers a variety of vegetables in season. Their location along busy 322, just outside of Fontana, seems ideal.

was one of the best helpers on the crew. However, he would "gnaw" on a bone while he helped. In fact, it seemed as though he could "finish off a half in two bites". The funny part was that no one knew who the man was. Everyone assumed someone else knew him. So, there is a need to provide a "buffer zone" in case someone

gets hungry.

The barbeque now has its own tent for the week of the Lebanon Area Fair. The first year it was scheduled to use the same tent that was used for the cattle show. Of course, the cow show did not end until after the barbeque was scheduled to begin.

The proceeds from the barbeques are donated to the fair to help pay for premiums and on the debt owed on the property. In 1983 \$8,000 was donated.

After years of planning and organizing the barbeque, Phyllis has become a "pro." She is recognized by Lebanon Valley residents as the "barbeque lady." However, Phyllis is quick to acknowledge that she has had good crews to assist her every year.

The barbeque requires many hours but is only a small portion of what Phyllis is involved in. A 4-H leader of the South Mountain Club for eighteen years, Phyllis

organized the club along with Harold Sellers. She has led flower and gardening projects, livestock and many other projects as needed.

A long time 4-H'er herself, Phyllis showed capons, steers, and hogs. She exhibited the champion of the Lancaster and York County hog show for two years. She also showed the champion pen of ten pigs one time.

"I can relate to 4-H'ers", says Phyllis. One year she rubbed grease on her capon's comb and got it shiny red. She was so proud until the judge told her she would have won first prize, except that her capon's comb was bright red instead of the pale color it should have been. 4-H — you learn by doing!

A woman of many hats, Phyllis is also a Registered Nurse. She worked in the operating room and did private duty before intensive

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Long lines of people that seems to never end wait patiently for their portion of the delicious chicken barbeque.

Homestead Notes