

# Lebanon Ladies Day Out features town and country home tour

BY SUZANNE KEENE

**LEBANON** — Members of the Lebanon County Farmer's Association Women's Committee were treated to a tour of town and country homes during their annual Ladies Day Out program Thursday.

Among the homes featured on the tour was the 125-acre dairy farm owned by Allen and Carol Nolt of 340 Royal Road, Lebanon. The Nolts recently remodeled the kitchen of their 13-room stone farmhouse, removing part of the ceiling to make a loft.

"I don't think there's any room we haven't done something to," Carol noted. The farm has been in Carol's family for 50 years and she and Allen have lived there for 15 years. The home was built in 1818 and the barn was constructed two years later, Allen said.

Allen does nearly all of the remodeling work during the winter months, but when summer comes he is busy with crops. And milking the family's 58 Holsteins keeps him busy year round.

"Since we can do it ourselves, it cut the cost quite a bit," Allen said.

The loft in the kitchen was Allen's idea, Carol said. And although she is quite happy with the final results, she admits she did

have some reservations about the project at the beginning.

One evening as she sat amid the partially completed project and the resulting dust, she relates, she was feeling especially apprehensive about the loft idea. So, she called her friend and business partner Pam Wentling, who came over to reassure Carol.

"I thought it was terrific when I came," Pam says. She did, however, suggest opening up a staircase to allow access to the loft, and the Nolts took her advice. The process involved tearing out a wall, but the completed project has justified the extra work.

The railing at the edge of the loft, which keeps the unwary visitor from falling, came from the corn crib, Allen notes. Throughout their restoration project, the Nolts have been careful to use original materials whenever possible.

Allen sandblasted the now-exposed beams and covered them with a sealer. Careful scrutiny of the loft ceiling will reveal the names of former residents who carved their identities there. "That's part of the oldness of the home," Carol remarks.

Carol has artistically arranged antique tools and country crafts in the loft, and dried plants hang from the exposed beams. A cen-



Carol Nolt, left, and business partner Pam Wentling recently opened Country Lane Gifts in what was once the summer kitchen on the Nolt farm. The gift shop was included on the Lebanon Ladies Day Out tour.

tery-old log doll house and barn that are an heirloom from Allen's family, are also displayed in the loft.

A newly-opened gift shop adjacent to the home is another of Allen's remodeling projects. What was once a summer kitchen has become Country Lane Gifts, a rustic, country gift shop filled with handmade crafts. Carol and her business partner Pam Wentling opened the shop March 29.

Renovations on the summer kitchen began in November (as soon as the corn was in) and continued throughout the winter, Allen said. Pam's husband, David, and Carol's father, Wilmer Ziegler, worked alongside Allen, removing walls, adding beams from the corn barn to the second-floor ceiling, papering, painting and drywalling.

Previously, the Nolts had sold apples from the summerhouse.

Now, Carol said, the apple business will be moved to the barn.

"Between milking cows and this, it was quite a chore," Allen said. But he is obviously not complaining as he surveys the tastefully decorated shop.

The idea for the shop came from Carol, who invited her faithful shopping buddy, Pam, to join her in developing the idea. "I think she's visited every gift shop in a 200-mile radius," Pam teases Carol. The two have toured many craft shops and craft fairs together, collecting business cards of talented craftsmen.

Through their visits, though, Carol and Pam found few country gift shops in Lebanon County and decided their shop would be meeting a need. Once the renovations were underway, they started using the business cards they had collected to contact

craftsmen to consign their wares to Country Lane Gifts.

The variety of handmade country crafts the shop offers is nearly endless and includes candles, potpourri, tin, Pennsylvania pottery, stuffed animals, hand-woven items, wreaths, and wall hangings.

"We're trying to feature the crafts of the local people, because they're very talented," Pam said.

In the few weeks the shop has been open, response has been quite good, Carol reports. They are planning a grand opening celebration May 1 through 3 and will offer door prizes, refreshments and a 20 percent discount off wire products.

The shop is open Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Fridays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. To reach the shop from

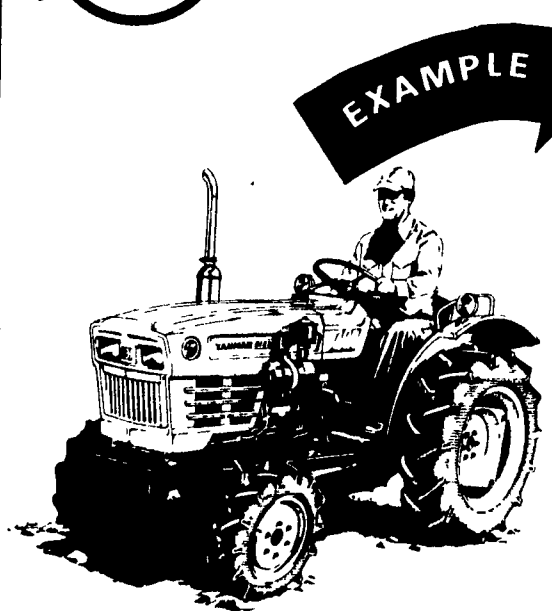
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This 100-year-old log doll house and barn are displayed in the loft of the Nolt's recently remodeled kitchen. The heirlooms have been in Allen Nolt's family for many years.



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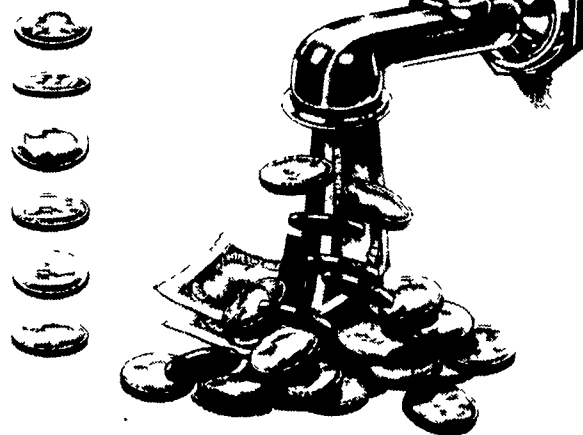
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