



BACK HOME

By Michelle S. Rodgers

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Home Economist

Family Reunions

On a recent tour of historical Tulpehocken Manor in Lebanon County I was reminded of the importance of family reunions. Tulpehocken Manor has been the site of many happy family reunions all year round. And as I travel this summer I've seen many signs at community centers, fire halls and churches, welcome the joining of family members.

There's nothing like getting the whole clan together to rekindle

family ties. It's a special opportunity to catch up on everyone's life, marvel at the children, share fond memories and simply enjoy your family's company. For people intrigued by their origins and the mystery of the past, there's also no better reason than a reunion to explore your family history. Doing so is likely to stir warm feelings. And, in the end, the ties that bind you together may very well be strengthened.

I must admit at this point that

family reunions were not always my favorite Saturday or Sunday past time as a child. It is only more recently, as I age, that I have come to appreciate the family reunion idea. I do recall large family reunions where we ate and then the adults wanted to sit around and talk. "Us kids" were supposed to automatically socialize with that cousin twice removed that we haven't seen since last reunion. Eventually we would warm up, renew acquaintances and be having a great time by the hour we needed to leave for home.

A recent publication entitled "Gathering Generations" by Better Homes and Gardens Family Network has provoked my thinking on making those family reunions more enjoyable for the young and old. Here are some of the highlights of ways to enjoy yourself.

Because it is only natural for people to feel a bit reserved when they first arrive, consider ways to create some camaraderie. How about a family treasure hunt to get people relaxed. Send attendees off to find the oldest family member, the parents of triplets, the relative

who traveled the farthest or the newest baby. If you're not into writing games, how about a game of tug-of-war or a sack race to loosen people up. Possibly required table-hopping after each course would also give everyone a chance to say hello.

By all means, schedule some activities for your reunion. That's part of what makes a reunion such fun. Think about activities that would appeal to everyone and include a variety of options. Here are a few suggestions.

Take into account that both kids and parents will appreciate a chance to socialize on their own. Teens, for example, could engage in a break-dance competition or volleyball tournament. Tots could have a coloring contest.

Encourage people to interview each other and preserve what they're saying on audio or video tape. Also, no family reunion would be complete without a family portrait to mark the occasion. To be sure that everyone is in the picture, ask a friend or neighbor or even a professional photographer to do the snapping. Or if someone

has a video camera, consider taping the day's activities. Everyone can get together in the evening to watch the "instant replay".

Another exciting idea is a family treasure trove. Set aside one table in a central location and ask family members to bring an heirloom or memorabilia object. Or try a bulletin board display of baby pictures of as many family members as possible. Ask people to guess who is who. Also, you might want to ask the family historian to talk about the recent changes in the family tree.

Remember too as the festivities draw to a close that you should take advantage of everyone's enthusiasm and warm feelings to set the wheels in motion for the next reunion. You might want to institute a family newsletter to keep everyone up-to-date.

It does take some planning to make the reunion enjoyable for all ages. But it is the enjoyment that will keep your family coming back year after year. The special qualities that make your family unique will also make your reunion a one-of-a-kind celebration.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday - August 11

- 4:30-7:00 P.M. Farm Fest Meal- Chicken Bar-B-Q \$5.00
- 5:00 P.M. Blacksmith Demonstration
- 6:00 P.M. Little Miss Carlisle Fair Contest
- 7:00 P.M. Opening Ceremony, Baked Goods Auction & Old Fashioned Square Dance
- 7:30 P.M. Sheep Dog Demonstration
- 8:00 P.M. Pretty Animal Contests
- 8:15 P.M. Good Shepherd Singers

Friday - August 12

- 9:00 A.M. Junior Sheep Show
- 9:30 A.M. Junior Dairy Show
- 1:00 P.M. Dairy Showmanship Contest
- 5:00 P.M. Junior Beef Breeding Show
- 6:45 P.M. Pedal Pull Contest
- 7:00 P.M. Adult Tractor Driving Contest
- 8:00 P.M. Barnyard Olympics

Saturday - August 13

- 9:00 A.M. Junior Swine Show
- 9:00 A.M. Volleyball and Horseshoe Tournaments
- 10:00 A.M. Horse Show
- 10:00-12:00 Dog Show
- 10:00-3:00 Farm Toy Show
- 11:00 A.M. Goat Show
- 12:00 P.M. Fire Fighter Contest
- 4:30 P.M. Farm Toy Auction
- 7:00 P.M. Awards Program & Evening Entertainment

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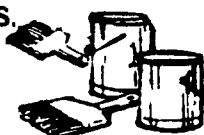
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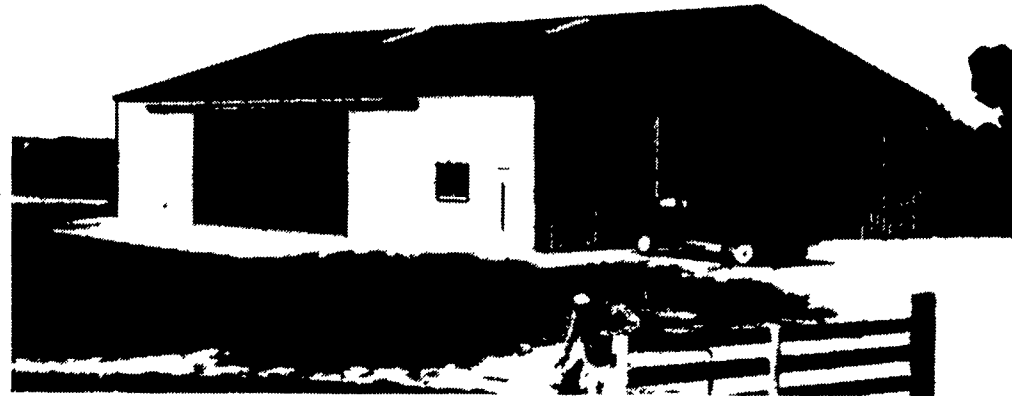
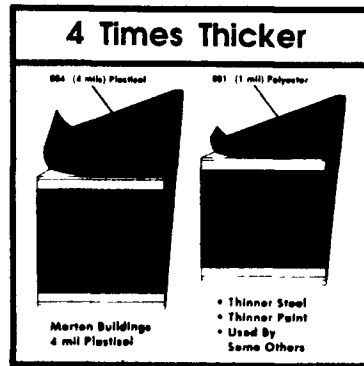
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