



"Step right up and swing her around; get right back to the middle of the floor," says Ken Saul, caller, as the Blue Marsh Ramblers make music for dancers at the Berks County 4-H Jamboree recently in the 4-H Community Center.

Jamboree Nudges Berks 4-H Toward Dream Of New Pole Barn

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Berks Co. Correspondent
LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — To observers, hoe downing is not just mindless dancing by yourself. To do it successfully, you have to think in order to get feet and hands to mesh with the brain signals. More than 200 people at the second Berks County 4-H Jamboree here recently in the 4-H Community Center were obviously trying their hardest to perform dances such as the Grand Square and the Four-Leaf Clover. "It looks confusing until you do it two or three times, then it's easy," said Ruth Kershner as the caller, Ken Saul, explained the Four-Leaf Clover while the Blue Marsh Ramblers provided the

music. Lila and Ronald Newhard of Leesport had no problems catching on to the dance steps. "I've been hoe downing since I was 14," Lila said between twirls. Hoe downing also makes the participants interact with others, not just their partners. "It's a way you can be very informal with other people," said Gary Rothermel during a break in the dancing. "It's fun to make mistakes." Oralee Folk echoed Rothermel's remark. "It's good fellowship," she said. "I can be a kid again." Her friend, Chris Avery, noted that kids, too, can attend a hoe-down, which makes the evening a family event. Catching their breath between

dances, their cheeks flushed from the exercise, were Folk's two children, Richard, 15, and Oralyn, 12. "We watch the grown-ups, then we know what we're doing," Oralyn said. Hoedowning was only a part of the activities during the jamboree, which also featured a beef barbecue catered by Big John's in Reading, and a benefit auction.

Mike Firestine, a loan officer with Lebanon Valley National Bank who coordinated the efforts to obtain items for the auction, was pleased with the auction. With a goal of \$2,000, the auction netted \$2,065, he said.

Firestine also praised the cooperation of many businesses in Berks, Lebanon, and Lancaster counties that donated items. "We couldn't have done it without them," he said.

For sale were some Winross trucks, gift certificates to several area restaurants, feeds and fertilizers, and a multitude of farm equipment. Ken Leiby, a professional auctioneer, was the volunteer auctioneer.

All proceeds will go toward a capital fund to erect a pole barn outside the center.

Rick Kauffman, county 4-H extension agent, said about \$200,000 is needed to build the barn and that already the 4-H has about \$35,000. That's not including all of the volunteer work done to prepare the site.



Ken Leiby, left, auctioneer, and Mike Firestine conduct the benefit auction for the 4-H Jamboree.



Celebrity auctioneer Sheila Miller, state representative for the 129th district, which encompasses western Berks County, urges the bidding up to \$100 for a framed print of a covered bridge, donated by Good's Furniture. Ken Leiby and Mike Firestine assist.

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