

Berks Honors

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the weather was stormy. Also, perhaps providentially, the family had departed from its usual routine where Barry and the two youngsters, then Dwight, 4, and Sherry, 2, would go to bed before 11 p.m. and Karen would

stay up.

"But we were all in the living room watching a movie," she said.

As the weather outside grew stormier, Karen began closing windows, but found the wind a mighty combatant.

"I went to the kitchen door and

threw all my weight against it to try to close it, when, pow! The door flew off and threw me on the floor," she said.

In the living room she could see glass popping out of the windows and the furniture moving across the room.

Instinctively, she protected her young son while Barry protected

their daughter as the storm raged around them.

"Then, snap, just like that, it was over," Karen said.

It happened to be a tornado. When Barry gathered himself together enough to go upstairs, he saw that the entire roof had been ripped off as well as the attic floor. In her daughter's bedroom, the crib had been crushed against a wall and was filled with bricks. Dwight's room had a huge hole in the wall, which would have sucked the boy out, had he been in the bed, now also covered with bricks.

"To think what would've hap-

pened if we had gone to bed earlier," she said with a shudder. "It hit at seven minutes to eleven."

Wedding presents that had been stored in the couples' attic were later found almost a half a mile away. Clothes from the upstairs closets were discovered hanging from nearby trees.

"I don't even know if I ever found my shoes," she said, adding that she had been barefoot that night.

A new roof on the barn was ripped off and the pickup truck had smashed into the family's car.

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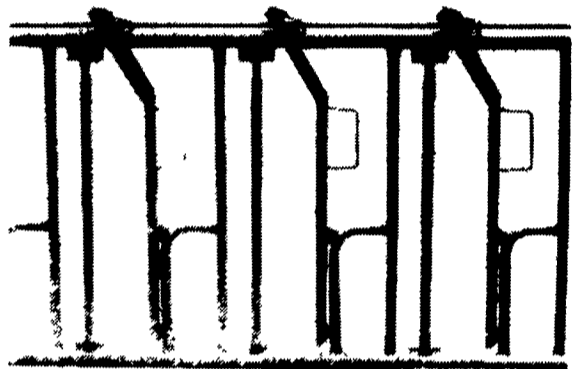


The Reading Fair's 1993 Outstanding Farm Family is Karen and Barry E. Hoffman of 448 Old State Rd., Oley, and their three children, Dwight, 18, Sherry, 16 and Kris, 11. They were one of four families competing for the honor, selected by the Berks County Pomona Grange.



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