

BRETHREN DISASTER RELIEF AUCTION

Where Talent, Hard Work, Generosity Helps The Needy

· LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff
PALMYRA (Lebanon Co.) —
Never underestimate the power of small things.

Take a kernel of popcorn. Give it to Ellen Young and her niece Janice Longenecker Holsinger, who add a few other ingredients

and they end up with more than \$2,000 to help the needy.

Ellen and Janice are among two women of many hundreds of volunteers who work together every year to make the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction a success.

The auction was started 17 years ago to raise funds to help meet the

needs of those facing disasters such as hurricanes and famine. The first year, the auction garnered \$11,714. Last year, \$340,000 was raised.

The auction will be held at the Lebanon Area Fairgrounds on Friday, September 24 starting at 4 p.m. and on Saturday, September 25, starting at 7 a.m. with break-



Janice Holsinger and her aunt Ellen Young gather supplies to make caramel corn for the upcoming auction where they love to serve because it helps those who are in need.



Ten years ago Ellen Young, seated, began the tradition of making caramel corn for the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction that her niece Janice Holsinger, continues today. The two-day project made a profit of \$2,400 last year.

fast.

The annual event is sponsored by the Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania districts. How do they raise so much money in two days? Through people like Ellen and Janice who donate their abilities to help those in need.

Ten years ago, Ellen Young, who has a reputation as a super cook, offered to make caramel corn at the auction. She used her mother's recipe, an old but large popper, and a copper kettle in which to coat the popcorn with caramel. Her husband, Bob, an administrative assistant with Elizabeth-town College, helped her.

The aroma of freshly popped corn and simmering caramel soon had buyers standing in line. The first year, Ellen made a \$180 profit. Each year, sales increase, more helpers are added, and more supplies are purchased. Last year, a \$2,400 profit was made at the caramel corn stand.

In the beginning years of the auction, Janice did not help her aunt at the caramel corn stand. Instead, as church youth advisors, she and her husband helped organize a white elephant sale. Then the Holsingers moved to New England for four years. When they moved

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Where People Can Buy A Little Bit Of History

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LANDISVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — A little bit of history can be purchased at the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction on September 25.

It's a model of an original Reber Wagon made by Ron Reber, who following in the footsteps of his great-great-grandfather, constructed the wagon on a one-third scale model.

The precisely-fashioned wagon mirrors those made more than 100 years ago when Jonathan Reber founded the Reber Wagon Works in 1892.

Just like his great-great grandfather, Ron uses poplar, oak, hickory, and white ash to make a strong wagon.

The details are the same right

down to the blacksmithing he does with a heated anvil, and the painted design in the original colors of Brewster green and Venetian red with scrolling and lettering in black, yellow, and red.

"I'm a real hound on detail. Authenticity is very important to me," Ron said. "I go to a lot of work just to make this wagon like the real McCoy."

That means two extra spokes on the wagon wheel and the brake has two extra detents on the rear brake handle catch. Detents are the slots between the teeth to engage or disengage the brake.

Ron, who describes himself as a person who likes tinkering around and then getting down to the nitty gritty, became fascinated with the Reber wagons when he was a boy.

At that time, the Wagon Works had ceased. All Ron had were bits and pieces of its history as recalled by relatives who also had a few original pieces.

This family heritage became more and more important to him as he grew older. In retrospect, Ron can see how events in his life prepared him for the job of wagon making.

He said, "My father was a real stickler for doing things right. If it wasn't done right, we did it again. And my father always said, 'If you have time to do it a second time, you have time to do it right the first time.'"

As an adult, this training to do things right was enforced by Ron's eight-year career in the Air Force.

"I worked with nuclear wea-



Auction goers will have a chance to purchase a bit of history at the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction where this Reber Wagon made by Ronnie Reber will go to the highest bidder.

pons. There was no room to make a mistake in that. Everything needed to be done literally perfect," he said.

That is Ron's aim — to do everything perfectly.

Although his wagons are two-thirds smaller than the original farm wagons, Ron said the detail and the strength is still there. To demonstrate the wagon's rugged construction, Ron jumped up and

down on the wagon bed.

"This will last 100 years," he said.

Although the wagons are made for working purposes, Ron said that so far, all those he made have been purchased by collectors and displayed.

But if a wagon would be used and break, Ron promises to repair free of charge anything that is not

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Ronnie Reber keeps wagon history rolling with these models built on a one-third scale of the original Reber Wagons.