

Spotlight On Farm Women Around The State

Mother's Work Is Never Done

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff

HALIFAX (Dauphin Co.) —

Ruth Ann Miller is spending anxious hours around her two-year-old grandson's bed in Philadelphia Children's Hospital.

In August, the toddler started running a fever. At first, the doctors suspected appendicitis but some symptoms puzzled them. By the time the doctors did exploratory surgery, the toddler's stomach was so swollen they couldn't operate on the tumor they found attached to several vital organs.

"He was so swollen, he looked like a malnourished child from a third-world country," Ruth Ann said.

Since then, doctors have operated and started radiation treatment. A bone marrow transplant is scheduled, and the toddler will need to remain in hospital isolation for two months to rebuild good cells and to strengthen his immune system.

The prognosis is better than before, and the family is eagerly hoping for full recovery.

In the meantime, family members frequently travel the 2½ hours to the hospital and take turns staying overnight.

"He is never alone. A family member is with him at all times," Ruth Ann said.

"The ordeal drew our family closer together. We are all supportive of one another," Ruth Ann said.

It is not the first crisis the family faced.

Ruth Ann's husband died about 12 years ago.

"We lived on a farm. I wanted to keep it and I did for 1½ years after his death, but it was too expensive to pay help so I sold it," she said.

Ruth Ann misses the dairy farm.

"I miss being outside and working with the animals. It required long hours but it was very rewarding. I wish I could go back to that," she said.

Instead, Ruth Ann needs to be content with her cow collection, which includes ones made from

ceramic, cloth, wood, and even two from cement that she estimates weight 500 pounds and are kept in her yard.

Most of her cow collection are gifts from her five adult children and 10 grandchildren.

Soon after Ruth Ann moved off the farm, she began work at Polyclinic Medical Center as nursing assistant.

She is active in Society 10 of Dauphin County Farm Women and is now president of the county's 14 societies and its 256 members.

Ruth Ann first became a Farm Women member about 25 years ago, but dropped out for several years when the children were small. Ten years ago she rejoined with the encouragement of her mother Edna Snyder, who is a charter member and still active.

"Our Group 10 had 32 members and now it's 25. It's hard to recruit young people and I think that is

cause for concern. I've been a farm girl all my life and enjoy it and I think others should join to pass on the traits," she said.

She said her society helps those in need, provides fruit baskets, gives donations, and entertains the elderly.

"We are always looking for money making projects," she said. The group operates lunch stands at public sales, parties, and soup sales, and holds white elephant sales to raise funds.

Ruth Ann attends St. Paul's Lutheran Church where she is on the church council and is the Sunshine lady for her class. She especially likes to help with the Bethesda Mission, a home for the homeless. This past Christmas, her class supplied gifts for 60 men and 24 teen-agers.

Crafts, sewing, and baby sitting the grandkids are other favorite activities for Ruth Ann who said that she likes to keep busy.



Ruth A. Miller
Dauphin Co. Farm Women president



Carolyn Neal
York County Farm Women president

'Angels Watchin' Over You

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff

DILLSBURG (York Co.) —

Angels are watchin' over you when you visit Carolyn Neal on her Dillsburg farm.

Carolyn collects angels and displays them year around in a country setting. She admits to not being able to pass up a craft show in search of one more unique angel. She estimates that she attends at least one craft show a week.

Carolyn's angels are fashioned from paper, crochet thread, wood, and other materials. She even has a few cow angels with Holstein bodies and angel wings. Carolyn has one requirement for her angels: they must have either blond or red

hair, representative of her two daughters, one is 25 and the other 7 years old.

Carolyn's favorite angel is one given to her from her oldest daughter. The angel is made from mauve country rose paper twist. The angel holds tiny candles and wears a grapevine wreath for a halo.

For 28 years, Carolyn has worked full time for Mellon Bank where she is now an operations supervisor.

To help balance her personal and professional life, Carolyn finds stability in being a Farm Women member.

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Bashful Mary Isn't Shy

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff

EBENSBURG (Cambria Co.) —

When Mary Rossman was growing up, she adored her older brother who was bright, responsible, and perfect — at least from Mary's point of view.

"I was dyslexic and irresponsible. I needed to make a place for myself," Mary said.

So she developed a keen sense of humor that endeared her to her family and keeps people laughing until this day.

"Bashful Mary," as she is referred to by members of the state Farm Women's organization, is far from shy. Outgoing, witty, and imaginative, Mary bubbles with ideas to make people laugh instead of cry.

As a three-year-old, Mary was taught to recite poetry, songs, and stories by rote, and play accordian.

"My mother was determined to have me make public appearances," Mary said.

Mary became so adept at entertaining that she decided to study theater in college.

That idea appalled her parents, who threatened not to pay for her college education.

"My father was very strict, but I always knew I was loved," said Mary who discarded her theater studies to become a teacher and librarian. While in college, she participated in the forensic club, and placed second in western Pennsylvania in the oratory declamation contest. This victory was made more distinguished since Mary was the only female competing against the 12 male finalists.

Mary married Richard Rossman, a forester, and the couple has five adult children and four grandchildren.

Twenty years ago the Rossmans purchased a small farm in Ebensburg. Of that purchase, Mary said,

"We've been happy as clams ever since."

The Rossmans raise beef cattle, but "its mostly play," Mary said of her melange of chickens, geese, two sheep named Esperaldo and Rambo, and a goat.

"I can't get along without a lab retriever in the house," Mary said of her lab Katy.

Mary taught herself to dye, weave, spin, and card wool. After she accomplished those skills, she sold her wool producing sheep to concentrate on other activities.

After the Rossmans moved on the farm, Mary was invited to join the Farm Women organization.

"Farm women are special peo-

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Mary Rossman
Cambria Co. Farm Women president

Homestead Notes