



Paul Hostetter concentrates on filling out some paperwork at his desk in the Mt. Joy Farmers' Cooperative.



Paul Hostetter smiles while he talks to someone on the telephone. Being with people and talking to people make him happy, he said.

## Hostetter Retires After 62 Years With Mt. Joy Co-op

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.  
Lancaster Farming Staff

MT. JOY (Lancaster Co.) — Paul Hostetter was born and grew up within a short bike ride of the place he worked for 62 years.

An employee of the Mt. Joy Farmers Cooperative, actually before it was Mt. Joy Farmers Cooperative, he recently announced his retirement.

The board of directors and membership of the cooperative presented Hostetter with a rocking chair after the announcement of his retirement. But Hostetter said he isn't quite ready to use it.

From behind his metal desk, with stacks of milk test tubes, Hostetter said he would like to continue working for several hours each week.

Because of arthritis, Paul Hostetter has had an artificial hip for 10 years. He said it does him well, but that his knees are fairly well worn out and slow him down.

He said the doctor told him that, as long as he wants to keep riding a bicycle to work, that knee replacement surgery is probably best put off.

So Paul, who is to celebrate his 80th birthday on July 12, uses a cane on occasion to help get around.

To his friends and members of the cooperative, Paul represents the cooperative. He is the personality of it, the historian, the joker, the merryman, and the business person upon whom they've come to depend.

At annual banquets of the cooperative, he was usually more entertaining than the scheduled entertainment: he told farcical stories and used gag evidence, such as "Holstein eggs," and presented gifts, and always gave kisses to the dairy princesses.

For those who have known of him, even if only briefly, there is an expression of sadness in recognition of Hostetter's retirement.

As always, change comes and those things and people who have been dependable and constant are not.

But Hostetter is different, it seems. The cooperative wasn't just his job, it was an integral segment of his life.

He started working early in life,

he said, about when he was 9 years old. He worked for his grandfather, Sam Greider, who rented two dairy farms.

Paul's father ran a creamery in Mt. Joy and Paul worked there. His father took milk, loaded it on a small truck and shipped it to the Lancaster Sanitary Dairy (which later became Penn Supreme). Paul washed 50 pound cans by hand.

His first "real" job however was as a soda jerk and clerk at a drug store in town, next to Newcomer's Hardware Store.

According to Hostetter, the actual originators of what became the Mt. Joy Farmers Cooperative were four men: Henry Eby, Harry Newcomer, Allen Risser and Calvin Cooley.

Paul said that about 1928, the four men started the venture of buying local farmers' milk and bottling it.

Which they did, only they hadn't set up a market for the product, so when the milk started coming in, the men had no place to go with it. For weeks, the men merely separated the cream, saved it, and gave the skim milk away to hog farmers.

Eventually, the cream went bad.

However, a market was found in New York, where Gimble Farms, a dairy, would buy it. It was iced and rail-car shipped.

But back to Hostetter's start, while working in the drug store, selling store-made ice cream with real, store-made cones, Harry Newcomer, owner of the the hardware store, came into the drug store and told 18-year-old Hostetter about the job opening at the creamery.

They told Hostetter they were looking for someone with a high school education who would not mind working his way up from the bottom.

Hostetter got the job in post-Depression Mt. Joy, earning \$15 per week, with no benefits, of course. His first duties were to run a soft coal furnace, without shaker grates.

"When we got the oil burner, I thought I was in heaven then," Hostetter said, laughing at himself. He said before that, hot summer days were a lot hotter in the bowels of a furnace, moving around red hot coals.

He washed 85-pound cans, loaded truck, unloaded truck, chipped ice from 300-pound blocks, etc.

Unloading the transport trucks was a two-man operation, Hostetter said. When a truck would bring milk to the plant, one man would knock off the lids of the milk cans and smell the milk to make sure it was good and that there were no obvious foreign materials, such as a wayward corn cob.

Back then, most dairy farmers had few cows and milked by hand.

They kept their milk cool using nature — natural springs or ice, Hostetter said.

The other man helping to unload cans would dump the milk and put the can in the washer.

Back then,

Hostetter's wife died 11 years ago and now he lives in a home adjacent to the one he built for himself and his wife. That house, a brick facade that took him a year and a half to construct, and cost him \$4,000, he sold to his daughter. It was appraised at more than

\$100,000.

The father of three children, including two sons, he said he now spends time with his grandchildren.

But after a life of watching a town change and helping it change, he is an unofficial historian whose credentials include marrying his school sweetheart, and working at the same place for 62 years.

He said he likes to talk about the past and reminisce. After all, that is who he is.

# Homestead Notes

## African Violet Is Most Popular Flowering House Plant

HUNTERDON, N.J. — The most popular flowering house plant in the United States is the African violet. It is easy to grow and propagate, attractive, and will bloom throughout the year — if the light is right. That is the secret to success according to Cornell floriculturist Charles Fischer. African violets won't bloom as they should if there is too little or too much light.

High light intensity is needed for bud development but too much intensity will damage leaves and decrease flowering. Too little light reduces the overall vigor of the plant, and flowers will be sparse or nonexistent.

Some window light varies through the year, African violets need different locations in different seasons to keep blooming. From November through February they may need the direct the sun in south or west windows. But from March through October, east or north windows are ideal. Or the plants can be placed adjacent to south and west windows where light is bright but the plants will not be in direct sun.

African violets are not finicky in their other needs. They do not require special fertilizers, special planting mix or special watering. The same good cultural practices important for other house plants

go for African violets too: well-drained containers and planting mix, regular fertilizing (use a low nitrogen fertilizer) and careful watering (from bottom or top).

Two cautions should be noted for African violets: avoid wetting the leaves and crown and avoid temperatures below 60°F.

The popularity of these reliable bloomers must also be due to the seemingly infinite variety of the plant and flower form, color and pattern. There are even miniature and semi-miniature forms, some of which are trailers for hanging baskets. These small forms, grown in 3" pots, can provide plenty of interest where space is limited.