

York County Society Celebrates Farm Women's Day

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GLEN ROCK (York Co.)—

What do you give 40 Farm Women for breakfast?

Several platters-worth of pancakes, six dozen doughnuts, three dozen bagels, three gallons of orange juice, a couple trays rounded with assorted fresh fruits, and more cups of coffee than anyone bothered to count.

That was the menu for the York County Society of Farm Women's breakfast, held Friday, October 14, at the home of former county and state president, Naomi Bupp. Following breakfast, the Society members toured the noted Red Lion area weaving firm operated by the David Kline family, which specialized in reproductions of historic coverlets and floor coverings woven on antique jacquard weaving mills.

The breakfast was the county Society's way of celebrating State Farm Women's Day, first established by proclamation of the governor in 1984. Eighty years ago, on, October 14, 1914, Somerset County farm wife Flora Black founded the first Farm Women Society, as a way for often isolated rural women to fellowship and educate themselves.

Fellowship and friendship remain at the top of the list of

reasons why members join the Society of Farm Women, according to both long-time and recently-joined members who enjoyed the sociable event.

"You meet so many great people," says Carolyn Neal, Group 1, the York County Society president. A dairy farm woman from Dillsburg, Carolyn joined her local society in 1977 after attending meetings as a guest of her mother.

"I just stayed with the group. They're neighbors, they're friends, they're my adopted mothers," she adds with a wide smile. "One of the worst things I ever had to do was first stand up in front of the Farm Women group and talk. Now it doesn't bother me a bit."

Those leadership skills are also valued by county secretary, Trudy Reichard, Group 18, of Seven Valleys. A member since 1961, Trudy joined farm Women in part because, with four small children, she felt a "need to talk to some other adults."

"We were new to the area then, and when the group formed I hoped they would invite me to take part. It has been a real joy to make new friends and to learn skills like being able to speak to a group," adds Trudy.

Treva Stiles, Glen Rock, the

county treasurer, is another member of Group 18. With a mother and several older sisters active in various Farm Women groups, it was just natural for her to join.

"Mother's Group 11 always had so much fun at the things they did. But when I was ready to join, their membership was full, so Group 18 became a sort of 'splinter' society," she recalled.

"Farm Women is like an extended family. You have so many new experiences—like serving 40 people breakfast," Treva laughed, busy pouring pancake batter onto a sizzling grill.

One of the newest members enjoying the breakfast was Gladys Bankert, who joined Group 18 less than a year ago on an invitation from a friend.

"I enjoy it, and I've met a lot of new people," says Gladys, whose family produces turkeys for Longacre poultry firm. Her new Farm Women sisters quickly identified her organizational skills and have put her in charge of arranging bus tours.

"It was an opportunity to do things I never expected to do and to meet and make friends with women from all over the county" related Pat Palmer, Shrewsbury, president of Group 20 and a former county secretary. "And I was a timid child; Farm Women really

brought me 'out' personally."

Like many members, she was introduced to Farm Women by a friend. Then, and still the youngest in her group, Pat treasures the craft skills she has learned through her group, including quilting.

County second-vice-president-elect Lois Manifold left her Farm Women membership lapse several years ago, due to responsibilities with the family's dairy and crops farm. No longer actively farming and with her children grown, Lois rejoined because of "the friendship of everyone."

"We're interested in many of the same things," she says of the Aireville-area members of her group 21. "Our group does food stands and some farm sales as fundraisers to support the Delta Food Bank. We learn crafts and have speakers. And I do enjoy attending the conventions in different counties."

After more than 40 years of membership in Group 11, Glen Rock Farm Woman Crystal Brenneman remains enthusiastic about being part of the sisterhood of the Society.

"It's a good time: fellowship, sharing, giving."



A hostess gift to Naomi Bupp from Leslie Baker, president of Group 31, was a miniature, carved, and painted replica of the Pennsylvania Society of Farm Women Cookbook. The cookbook was Naomi's project during her two-year term as state president. More than 18,500 cookbooks have been sold to benefit the Society's scholarship fund.



Former county and state president Naomi Bupp, standing, hosted the Farm Women breakfast. She chats with Group 25 members, from left, Betty Abel, Mary Lou Stein, Ruth Mellinger, Dorothy Abel and Ruth Ann Storey.



Good food, fellowship and conversation kept breakfast lively for, from left, Miriam Hull and Florence Sprenkle, Group 5, Mildred Ferree, Emma Hutcheson and Miriam Young, Group 34. Bringing second helpings was Lois Manifold, a vice-president-elect of the county group.



Treva Stiles, York County Farm Women president, prepares pancakes for members Mildred Bupp, right, and Crystal Brenneman, among the 40 members who enjoyed the state Farm Women's Day Breakfast.

Farm Women Propose By-Laws Change

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GLEN ROCK (York Co.)— while political entities at various state and national levels debate the merits of term limitations, the Pennsylvania Society of Farm women is considering eliminating elected-office restrictions.

"The present by-laws state that you cannot succeed yourself in an office, at any level," explains past state president Naomi Bupp, host for the county Society's October 14 State Farm Women's Day celebration breakfast. "Adopting the proposed by-law changes will allow an officer to continue in a position."

Another of the several proposed by-laws changes would recognize the changing face of the state's rural society by stating that Farm Women members should have an "interest in agriculture," but not specifically involved in production farming.

Several members of the York County Society gathered informally for the breakfast social agreed that Farm Women membership is falling due to changes in society. Rural women are no longer isolated in their homes, as they often were in 1914, when founder Flora

Black organized the first Society of Farm Women group in Somerset County.

"Young people have other interests and many of the women work over the day. We're getting older and don't want to go out to meetings at night," expressed on long-time member of Group 25, from the Wrightsville area.

Farm Women Society membership numbers in many counties have been slowly decreasing as farms go out of business and young women pursue outside careers. Most local societies once limited membership to 20 or 25, because of holding meetings in homes, and many had waiting lists to become part of the organization.

"When I joined, you had to come to a meeting, then miss the next one while your membership acceptance was voted on," says Trudy Reichard, county secretary. "Today, you can join most groups right away."

One member reflection on the the generational changes that have altered not only Farm Women membership but also society as a whole, pretty much summed it all up: "We're just too busy."