

# Meyers Home Aglow

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Her sewing and quilting projects are visible throughout the house. But she also sells quilts, wall hangings, and stuffed animals. She takes her projects to one craft sale a year and from that gets enough orders to keep her busy all year.

She also paints wooden items, crochets, knits, needlepoints, and does scherenschnitte.

"I like new challenges. I'll try anything — it's the only way to learn," Lois said of her multi-abilities. "When I was growing up at home, we didn't have a lot. So I learned to do with what we had."

Lois saves everything. "I don't throw anything away," she said of her perchance to find a new use for an item.

One of these uses was building a creche from wooden fruit boxes.

Although she likes to do new things, Lois also finds nostalgia in bygone days.

"When we were growing up, the only drinking glasses we ever had were the ones we got free with peanut butter," she said.

Lois has purchased a set of peanut butter glasses for each of the children.

"I want them to remember some of the past, not that they have to live it, but I want them to remember it," said Lois, who believes that much can be gained through generational relationships.

She grew up in a home where both grandparents and a great aunt lived with the family. She recalls many happy hours learning to quilt and crochet when she was in second grade.

For a few years, a grandparent also lived with the Meyers. "He and Holly were inseparable," Lois said.

"When he died, I cried for days," Holly said. But she considers that the happy memories with a grandparent outweighs the eventual sorrow felt at death.

Appreciation is also learned through helping others. Last summer, Stephanie spent several weeks in Kentucky helping her church group shingle roofs in Appalachia.

"I came home appreciating mother's cooking even more," she said.

That appreciation was extended to almost every area of life. "It's hard to believe people living in the

U.S. are so poor," she said.

After Brian received the FFA American Degree, he spent several weeks in Japan as an exchange student. In Japan, everything is scaled for shorter people and Brian's head touched the ceilings inside the home and the beds weren't long enough for his lanky frame.

Farming operations are much smaller in Japan and usually are used to grow eggplants and other vegetables. Brian could barely tolerate the thick milk that was served and was never able to figure out exactly why it was thick.

The family reciprocated the Japan exchange while hosting a student last year. The family enjoyed the exchange although they said sign language was used almost extensively since the student understood very little English.

Although working on the farm sometimes means foregoing activities with their friends, the siblings say that they believe farm work has taught them responsibility.

"As soon as I could hold a pitch fork, I was working," Kevin said.

"But he sure liked being able to buy a new truck," his dad said.

The money the siblings earned from 4-H projects is always saved and given to the child at high school graduation.

"Sometimes we complained about not being able to spend any of it at the time, but now we're glad," said Stephanie, who is already trying to decide which car to buy with her earnings.

During the holiday season, Lois and her daughters enjoy making gingerbread houses. Every year they make a different style. This year, they made a house and barn. According to Lois, the secret to successful gingerbread houses is letting the gingerbread harden for several days before assembling the pieces.

Her pointers helped Stephanie's FHA group win four ribbons in a gingerbread competition held in November.

Over the years, each ornament the children made at school, 4-H, church, or home has been kept and attached to one of the two trees the family erects. Lois also either makes or buys a new ornament each year. Four wooden bears carrying the name of each of the Meyers' children are climbing the lad-



The Meyer family live on a farm that has been in the Meyer family at least since 1857, when the barn in the background was built.

der propped against the tree. Lois stitched and applied a Noah's Ark pattern for the tree skirt.

"When the children leave home, their ornaments will go with them," Lois said.

Cookies are never made by a single batch in the Meyer household. "I always double or triple batches to make at least 10 to 12 varieties," Lois said.

Cookies do not last long around the household, and it is reported that neither does cookie dough. More than once, Lois went to the refrigerator to retrieve some previously mixed cookie dough only to find some family members prefer to eat dough rather than wait for the baked product.

"We are just a typical family. We have our squabbles just like normal families," Lois maintains.

"But we talk things out. And, we do everything together," Stephanie said.

Doing things together includes active participation in church activities.

"Church is a major part of our

lives," Lois said. "I can't imagine family life without that."

Lois considers it worthwhile that she was home full-time when the children were younger. She continues to devote most of her time to the home. She is president of Lebanon Farm Women Society 13.

"I don't get involved in too much else other than the missionary society at church and Farm Women," she said.

As if December isn't busy enough with Christmas celebrations, three family members also have birthdays. The family sometimes celebrates the December birthdays in July so that the birthday celebration isn't lumped together with Christmas.

Stephanie is a member of Future Business Leaders of America and

is president of the Future Homemakers of America at school. She was a teen leader for 4-H cake decorating. She is on the church volleyball team, attends a weekly Bible study, and youth group. She is undecided what she will do when she graduates in the spring. It's a toss-up between studying childcare or preparing to be a medical transcriptionist at the local vocational technical school.

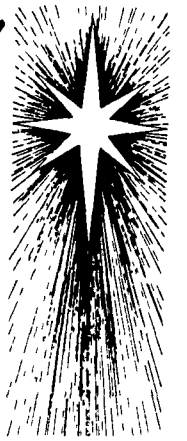
Kevin has farmed full-time in the family partnership since he was graduated from high school. Rodney, who loves farming, works for Wenger's Farm Machinery but helps out with some of the farming responsibilities.

"We lead a hectic time schedule. This is the longest I've ever sat down," Meyer said of the interviewing process for this article.

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