

Woman Flies Through Gender Barriers

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(Centre Co.)—Aileen Homan of Pennsylvania Furnace, Centre County, believes if you have something to offer, you should get involved. Because of her commitment, she serves in such diverse organizations as the Centre County Solid Waste Authority, the Land Preservation Board, Hospice and The International Flying Farmers (IFF).

Recently elected the first female officer in the 4,500-member International Flying Farmer organization, Homan accepted the position of secretary after holding every office in the Pennsylvania Flying Farmers chapter. She became Pennsylvania's first female president. She flies through gender barriers like she and her husband, Elwood, fly through invisible state lines. But to Aileen, serving in any organization is not a gender issue. She serves because she has something to contribute. If she breaks through equality barriers in the process, she said she's glad to have done it, but that it's not her main reason for getting involved.

By accepting the position of secretary of the international group, Aileen accepts the organizations' five-year "up through the ranks" policy—and the job of president in four years. Each person elected as secretary accepts a role change each year—from secretary to treasurer to vice president to president and, finally, to past president.

"I told my husband, 'Don't worry. I won't get it!'" Aileen says of her reaction when asked to run for secretary of the international organization. "But I look at the men who have been president, and their wives have done a lot. Anything I have ever done, Elwood has been supportive. I believe you should stand up for what you believe."

Retired dairy farmers, Elwood and Aileen joined IFF in 1952. A licensed pilot at that time, Elwood still flies over "Happy Valley" just

about every evening, taking off from their grass airstrip in the field just past the barn. Aileen soloed in 1955 and logged 40 hours of time towards her pilot's license. But being at home to raise their eight children took top priority over getting her license during the following years.

The Homan's own a J3 Cub airplane, an antique two-seater which was made in Lock Haven in 1946. Refurbished in 1988, Aileen says their cub doesn't take them too far too fast, but that Elwood keeps it in immaculate condition. In spite of that, a lightweight aircraft is no match for a strong headwind.

"A long time ago, we flew to Philadelphia for a meeting in June. Flying the Cub home, we flew and flew and flew. Elwood said the trucks and cars were going faster than we were! We were in a terrible headwind. We got as far as Big Valley (Miffling County) and just couldn't get over the mountain, so we landed in a field and tied the airplane to a hay rake!" Aileen says she's always looking for field in which to land as they fly. "We do have nice valleys to land in."

At least three family members have taken an interest in flying. One son crop farms the 200-tillable acre homestead, Nine Oaks, and has worked towards his license, including soloing. One daughter serves as treasurer for the state organization. Her husband is learning to fly. Their youngest daughter's husband is also learning to fly. Another daughter was a flight attendant for Pan Am.

Aileen says most members of the Flying Farmers are working farmers. Some use their planes in their business, such as in transporting embryos. Other fly transplant patients to hospitals. Overall, Aileen says they are a very congenial, nice, happy group.

As secretary, Aileen will correspond for the group. The treasurer, a man from Nebraska, takes charge of the finances. The vice president, from Saskatchewan, is in charge of the organization's yearly July or August convention.



The newly-elected International Flying Farmer secretary Aileen Homan stands in front of the many awards she and her husband, Elwood, have received over time.

The current president, from Indiana, plans their yearly January workshop.

Aileen spent three days recently getting acquainted with the main IFF office in Wichita, Kansas. One of her concerns is getting young agriculturally oriented people involved in IFF. "It's hard to get young people involved," she says. "They can't afford to get their license (a \$5,000 investment without the plane) or they are spending their time farming. We try to make our conventions affordable and timely."

The Pennsylvania organization, with a little more than 100 members, meets once a month of a business meeting, to tour local points of interest, and to visit with each other. Dues are \$50 per year with teens and juniors added for a minimal fee. Twenty teens participated in the convention last year, electing their own officers, and they use convention time to work towards their license. Aileen says the Junior division, up to 12 years old,

is a very active group with 25 members. The parent organizations provide several scholarships for youth pursuing their license.

But while Aileen concentrates on her new duties as secretary, her son at Nine Oaks has something else in mind—extending the length their 1,200-foot airstrip.

After all, he reasons, a secretary of an international organization should have a longer runway!

For more information about these organizations, contact Aileen Homan at 5190 West Whitehall Road, Pennsylvania Furnace, PA 16865.

Do Teen-agers Need Parents As Much As Children Need Them?

Do teens need parents as much as younger children do? One of the more alarming trends seen by professionals in the field of adolescent development is the number of teenagers who are left to their own devices to raise themselves, although they still live at home with their parents. We wouldn't purposely let our children become chronic underachievers in school or diet to the point of anorexia but in our hectic lives we sometimes forget: Teens need their parents every bit as much as younger children to. Teens can fool us sometimes by talking a good game, but they are neither emotionally nor physically mature enough to care for themselves.

The teen years are full of change and can be scary. During this time they need much nurturing and attention. Here are some ways to "be there" for your teens:

- Be available. Being just physically present isn't enough. Be a good listener, show interest in what's going on in their lives. Become an "askable parent" so your teens will be able to come to you when needed.

- Keep your problems to yourself. Don't put adult problems on adolescents. They have enough problems. Parents who use their children as confidants, rob children of their childhood.

- Be nurturing, both verbally and physically. Often we think our kids know we love them but the words "I love you" can't be spo-

ken too often. The same holds true for a hug or even a tuck-up in bed. "Have you hugged your child today" applies to teenagers, too.

- Be companionable—studies show that teens want to spend time together as a family even though they begin to spend more and more time away from home. Extend an invitation to your teen to do something together. Sometimes all a kid is waiting for is to be asked.

- Don't assume the other adults in your teenager's life will cue you in. Teens may confide in parents of their friends but don't assume these parents will give you the scoop. Too often parents fear losing their children's confidence so much that they won't pass information on to other parents.

- Be alert. Pay attention to any discrepancy between what a teen says and what they do or how they look. Changes in physical appearance can be early warning signs of disrupted sleep, unhealthy eating patterns or the use of alcohol and other drugs. Don't ignore what's right before your eyes.

- Intervene when necessary. If you suspect your child is making choices that are harmful to themselves, let them know you know and get help.

- Passivity (yours and theirs) can be the most damaging of all. Teenagers don't have the resources to help themselves. You may need to seek professional help.



The Homan's J3 Cub plane was built in Lock Haven in 1946.

HOMESTEAD NOTES