

Christmas Is For Giving

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Of the day-long shopping trip, Earl said, "She loves it and I've got to admit that I even enjoy it. But she doesn't ask me to go shopping with her any other time for the whole year."

Even during the shopping trip, the Geibs think of ways to benefit others. They always take their gifts to the United Cerebral Palsy gift wrapping stand in Park City to be wrapped.

The couple also participates in the Angel Tree Program, which provides gifts for families of prisoners.

Sandy is a prolific cookie baker. Her mother, Amelia Erb, goes to each of her three daughters' homes and spends the whole day baking cookies. Sandy packs up many of the 10 to 12 varieties and gives them to the mailman, garbage man, and other people with whom their lives interact.

The Geibs send about 110 Christmas greeting cards annually. Not all of the cards are sent through the mail. As a fundraiser, their church youth group charges 15 cents a card to sort and deliver cards to members of the church during a Christmas tea and cookie party.

Christmas wouldn't be complete without caroling. In fact, the Geibs accompany three or four different caroling groups every year.

Both Sandy and Earl said that they come from close-knit families and find it imperative to celebrate Christmas with their extended families during two different celebrations.

Before opening the gifts, they always read the Bible story in Luke 2. Every year a different family member reads it.

The Geibs live on the 50-acre farm in Manheim where Earl grew up.

"We are fortunate to have an unique family operation here," Earl said of the family farm. His father, Clarence, and brother, Barry, each have homes bordering the farmland. All three have full-time jobs off the farm and then share the farm chores on the family farm and an additional 50-acre farm they rent. Earl is a layer flock service technician for Wenger's Feed Mill.

In addition to steers, the children's 4-H projects are raised on the home farm and a sow and finishing unit on the other farm. The brothers and their dad raise corn, soybeans, and small grains on the land.

"It takes three to make it happen," Earl said of combining full-time jobs with farming.

"Whoever is available does the work. We don't keep track of our hours to make sure that each one puts in the same amount of hours. That isn't an issue with us."

Earl attributes the family's ability to work so well together to his father.

"Dad always trained us to work hard, but he never asked us to do anything that he wouldn't do. He led by example. On a hot day, he'd be up there stacking hay bales before he'd asked us to help."

Earl has been on the Manheim Community Farm Show board of directors for 19 years, seven years in his current position as president.

Sandy is the secretary.

The Geibs' commitment to the Farm Show is "for all the children of the community," Earl said. "We pride ourselves that Manheim is truly a farm show. There is no midway. It is family oriented with all profits going to the community."

The soft-spoken Sandy confided, "I was always quiet and shy until I met Earl."

Earl volunteered his wife's services for such things as secretary of the Farm Show. It was an adjustment for her to switch from being a behind-the-scenes person to a more upfront person that she acquired by marrying Earl, who is known and involved in numerous church and community activities.

Earl jokes that he knew Sandy could handle being his wife when, on their second date, he promised to take her out for dinner. On the way, he stopped off to see how the FFA softball team, which he was coaching, was doing in a tournament. It was after 10 p.m. until

they left the game.

"I was the only one dressed up in heels and a corsage at the game," Sandy recalled. "By the time we left the game, the restaurant was closed and I never did get to eat dinner."

That was only the beginning of life with Earl, which means their door is opened to anyone no matter what the time.

It is not unusual for kids to drop by their home at all hours of the day and night.

"Kids go through a lot at this age and we want to be there for them," Earl said of their commitment as junior high youth advisers.

Sandy and Earl also serve as deacons at their church and are Family Life representatives.

The Geibs' generosity appears to be passing on to the next generation. At the Manheim Community Farm Show Livestock Sale in October, Brian donated the profits of the first pig he ever sold to the Manheim FFA's greenhouse building project. Although Brian is too young to be a member of FFA, he already has his sights on joining it.

And, he knows from his parents' example that every day is a time for giving.



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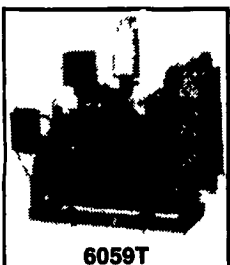
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