

What's Flying, What's Blooming? Hazel Shares Her Backyard Beauty

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PERRY HALL, Md. — For readers who clip recipes from *Lancaster Farming*, the name Hazel Spamer is a familiar one.

But Hazel does much more than submit recipes of what she calls "plain, simple stuff."

At 71 years of age, she has been named a field editor for *Birds and Blooms*, a national magazine that celebrates bird feeding and backyard living.

Hazel serves as one of the magazine's local lookouts, a volunteer field staff that keeps readers abreast on what's blooming, what's flying, and what's happening outdoors in their respective communities.

"When I was a teenager, my sister, brother, mother and I often roamed the woodlands that border Little Gunpowder River, now gone back to nature as a part of the Gunpowder State Park," Hazel said of the reason for her great affinity with nature.

"As a married lady and the mother of two children, I carried on the wonderful experience of roaming our woods, which borders the Big Gunpowder Falls about 12 miles from my father's farm."

The Spamers live in the farmhouse where Will was born. The farmhouse lintel inscription reads "1827." Elmer Spamer, who purchased the farm in 1881, added a left wing. His brother Jasper, added the right wing.

When the Spamers first married, Will was a truck farmer.

"Later, he got into corn, wheat, and hay and did custom harvesting, traveling all up and down Baltimore County," Hazel said.

In 1950, Will learned to fly and persuaded his father to allow him to bring the plane home and fly from the farm. Will and many other pilots enjoyed the private landing strip. Sometimes parachute jumpers practiced at their farm.

"Will enjoyed flying after the farmwork was finished and spent all his spare time in rebuilding and in building several single engine planes," Hazel said.

Traditionally, the Spamer farm was passed down through the family. Will always farmed with his father who owned the farm with the understanding that the farm was to be passed on to him. When his father died, some of Will's siblings wanted their share of the inheritance money and the Spamers were forced to sell most of the 200 acres for development. With his share of the inheritance, Will purchased the house and 15 acres.

The Spamer home is in a wooded area filled with wildlife.

Hazel is no longer able to roam the fields that she once loved because a calcium depletion condition resulted in osteoarthritis in her knees. But that doesn't keep her from birdwatching and container gardening.

Flowering trees, bushes, and colorful flowers can be admired from her windows and in backyard leisure. Her prolific daffodil beds have been expanded many times.

"Daffodil bulbs may be had for the digging," Hazel said.

"I don't know that I can say that I have a favorite flower. I love them all, but the tiny wishbone torenia and pansies are lovely."

When the children outgrew the swing set, Will fastened four bird-

houses across it. Now squirrels and birds chase each other up and down the framework. It's this view that offers much insight into the appearance of rare birds.

"But I'd have to say that my favorite bird is the robin — with his busy scratching and going on," Hazel said.

From her observations, Hazel will report anything of value to other people.

Terns in the area are building nests on the flat roofs of large buildings because the tern's natural habitat is endangered. She plans to report on the terns for the magazine.

Will has a large garden, which he needs to enclose with a 6-foot high fence to keep out deer and foxes.

The garden produce supplies four families. Hazel continues to preserve much of the produce. During a severe illness, Hazel said, "I got up off my sick bed to can three baskets of tomatoes because I could not bear to see beautiful tomatoes go to waste."

She still has three tomatoes from her garden sitting on her windowsill.

Hazel said that she learned to cook from her mother. She looks forward to making mincemeat and fruitcake this season.

"Because Will does not like to mix his food — he wants his broccoli and cheese served separately, not together — I make just plain, simple food," she said.

"I love to make a turkey. I just canned 12 quarts of broth and meat to have for future meals from two turkey carcasses left over from Thanksgiving."

Hazel doesn't allow her two walking canes to prevent her from leading a normal life. She often babysits and said, "My two canes are much enjoyed by my 2-year-old great grandson."

The Spamers have three grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Hazel enjoys making ceramics and uses her son's kiln and many molds. She also enjoys plastic canvas stitchery. She writes some poetry and is dabbling in creative



Hazel and Will Spamer celebrate 52 years of marriage. Both share a love for wildlife, although Will is perfectly content to stay at home while Hazel likes to keep active in the community.



As a lookout for "Birds & Blooms," Hazel Spamer will keep readers abreast on what's blooming and what's flying in her community.

writing. Naturally, her poetry is about nature.

Development in the area brought an onslaught of problems for the Spamers. Motorcycle and snowmobile riders cut fences in order to have a throughway. Even though the horses escaped, the culprits couldn't seem to comprehend why they shouldn't have free run of the land.

"People roaming through on motorcycles think they have all the right in the world. We asked them, 'How about we come and play in your yard?' Of course, they said, 'Oh no. You can't do that.'"

"Except for my daughter's horses, we finally just gave up boarding horses," Hazel said of the frustration of dealing with broken fences.

In her lifetime, Hazel has worked as a plant nursery seasonal worker, a rural mail carrier, and as an aide for aged persons.

Hazel is active with the local chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons, where she will take over responsibility for the newsletter in January.

She is a former secretary-treasurer for Baltimore County Farm Bureau.

She is incoming secretary for the Baltimore County Family Community Education (formerly

Extension Homemakers) and works with the Christian Women's Fellowship and senior's group at the Fork Christian Church, where she has been a member for 50 years.

The challenge to keep active in the community and do for others motivates Hazel. One of her delights is growing amaryllis to give for gifts.

"I love to watch them grow and figure other people do too."

To sum up her life, Hazel said, "I lean on the Lord for all my direction."

Jeff Nowak of *Birds and Blooms*, said that Hazel was selected from a pool of almost 300 applicants nationwide because of her knowledge of backyard birding and gardening.

The magazine is geared to "regular folks" who love to spend time in their backyard and turn it into their personal paradise. It's about "beauty in your own backyard" and reflects readers' interests with relaxed, conversational writing and top-quality photographs of birds, blooms, and other backyard scenes.

For more information about *Birds and Blooms*, which is part of Reiman Publications, write to its headquarters at 5925 Country Lane, Greendale, WI 53129.

Christmas Caroling

LANDIS VALLEY (Lancaster Co.)—Christmas caroling at Landis Valley will be held Tuesday, December 19, 6-8:30 p.m. Enjoy a free program of touring decorated buildings, 7 p.m. carolling around a bonfire accompanied by the Lititz Moravian Trombone

Choir, and cookies and hot cider. Outstanding museum store. Donations of canned food, etc. requested for Lancaster Food Bank. Landis Valley Museum is located 2.5 miles NE of Lancaster on Rt. 272/Oregon Pike. Call (717) 569-0401.



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The Spamers home located on 15 acres of mostly woodland offers is a nature lover's paradise. Elmer Spamer purchased the home and 200 acres in 1881. Elmer added the left part of the house and his son Jasper added the right side to accommodate several single sisters.