

Horticulture Blooms Lifetime Interest

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LOGANVILLE (York Co.) —

Though she grew up helping to clear orchard brush and pack apples, Patti Levis never dreamed she would make a career in the horticulture industry.

Patti Goodling Levis is the daughter of the late orchardist and Congressman George Goodling, who served the 19th Congressional District for several terms. During an interim in his Washington service, he took on the responsibility of the executive secretary position overseeing the Pennsylvania State Horticultural Association (PSHA).

When re-elected to a second round at the congressional seat in the late 1950s, Goodling retained the executive secretary title and continued to edit the PSHA's monthly newsletter, "Fruit News." But it was Patti who picked up the myriad of details involved in the job, from maintaining membership files to organizing the annual convention and trade show. In 1982, after her father's death, Patti was officially named the executive secretary. During the tenure of the father-daughter leadership, PSHA's working office remained the modest one in the basement of the Goodling family home.

"My father would come down here on Sunday afternoons to work on the "Fruit News." The phones didn't ring all the time here," smiles Patti Levis from her office chair, surrounded by photos and memorabilia of his congressional career. Today, her youngest brother, William "Bill" Goodling, follows in his dad's footsteps representing the 19th Congressional District in Washington.

"This was to be a part-time job but it's almost a full-time one," she explains. "I've spent many hours down here. But it was nice to work here, because I didn't have to dress up to go to the office."

Now, at 78, Patti Levis has stepped down as the PSHA's executive secretary. Named the new PSHA executive secretary is Maureen Ivin, a grower from Ortanna, Adams County. Handling the "Fruit News" editorship is Rob Crassweller, Penn State.

With more than 600 members across Pennsylvania, the Horticultural Association represents primarily fruit growers. As a trade organization, the PSHA keeps its members informed of changes in the industry, monitors related legislative and regulatory issues and organizes educational meetings and events. A major activity of the association is the raising of tens of thousands of dollars annually to help support horticultural research, primarily through Penn State. A large portion of those funds is generated through the association's food booth at the Farm Show, selling fruit products like apple cider and 23,000 apple dumpings consumed by the 1997 crowd of attendees.

Though the Goodling family had lived in Loganville for much of her childhood, Patti was 16



Patti Levis was honored by the Pennsylvania State Horticultural Association and the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association during the groups' joint annual meeting in February.

when they moved to the orchard site at the south end of the small town. Her great grandmother, Robert Goodling, was a grocer and originally started the 40-acre orchard that the family grew up helping to tend.

"We has to work while we were growing up," she relates. "And, when we had any extra land available, we planted vegetables. We used to stick thousands of onions in the spring. When they pruned the orchards, we helped pile the brush on pieces of wire that were pulled through the orchards with a tractor, so the piles could be hauled away for disposal."

After graduation from York High School, Patti got her nursing degree at York Hospital. She joined the Army in 1942, and after six months, was sent overseas with the 30th General Hospital Unit. Army nursing took her to England and Wales, then close to the front lines in France after the D-Day invasion, helping care for the troops in field hospital tents.

Returning home after her tour of duty, Patti studied at business school, and served two years as a corporate nurse for New York Wire Cloth. She married Tom Levis, a career military engineer, whom she met overseas during her military nursing tour. Following another military tour overseas, and his subsequent retirement from the military at age 39, the couple and their two children returned to the York area, when Patti "began fiddling with this."

During her more than 30 years of administration work for the state's horticultural growers, Patti has seen some dramatic changes in fruit production, from regulatory issues to equipment technology developments.

"In the early years when we moved here, we ring-faced apples for storage. It was a way of storing apples in round, heavy paper bags. Then the industry moved on to cardboard boxes and now a lot of the fruit is handled in bulk, in large crates, moved with forklift equipment," she relates.

"We used to store our apples at the York Ice and Milk Company, before we built our own storage. They would hold until about March or April," adds Patti. "Now, with controlled-atmosphere storage, you can store apples year-round. But you also have your investment tied up all that time, too."

Along with technology, the trees have also been modernized and changed.

"Orchards take a long time to develop," she reflects, noting that there is no return on investment on the years from planting to production. "A lot of orchards are now going to dwarf trees, which come into production several years sooner than the 8 or 10 years necessary for a standard time to mature. Dwarf trees also cut labor costs, because they are easier to harvest."

Patti feels that horticulture is a more difficult business today than in past years, due to a proliferation of rules and regulations, especially those governing the use of chemicals. Those rules, she notes, "have become unreal" and make orchard production more costly for growers.

"We do have better equipment and a lot of new varieties of apples and peaches," she explains, of Pennsylvania's two largest fruit crops. "But sometimes it takes a while for the public to accept new varieties. The Golden Delicious

apple was a hard sell at first, because people thought an apple should be red. People usually like the new varieties, if you can get them to taste them."

Of great concern to Patti Levis has been the declining number of horticulturates in the industry, statistics she monitored as PSHA's executive secretary.

"Year after year, we have lost numbers," she laments, adding a hopeful note: "Now some younger people are starting to come into the business."

In 1996, Patti was honored by the PSHA as its Grower of the Year. She was again honored on her official retirement at the group's February annual meeting at Hershey, the final meeting for which she had organizational responsibility. She has traditional-

ly handled all details, from meals and room reservations to coordinating a popular industry trade show with 170 exhibitor booths. Patti also received special recognition from the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers, which holds its annual meeting in conjunction with the PSHA.

After condensing and turning over the PSHA's records, Patti Levis plans to spend a little more time on the golf courses of the area. As a retirement thank-you, the PSDA gifted her with a golfing vacation at the Boar's Head Inn, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Patti and Tom are also looking forward to more free time to share with their four grandchildren, ranging in age from 19 to one-year-old.

You Ask, You Answer

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ANSWER—A Danville reader wanted a simple recipe for homemade soap. Sarah Algoe of Mount Joy supplied this one: in a large porcelain or stainless steel canner, combine 1 qt. cold water and 1 can Red Devil lye. To this add 1/2 cup Borax, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 cup ammonia. Step 3: Melt 5 lbs. fat and let cool to same temperature as lye mixture. Pour into 5 gal. bucket. Add lye mixture and mix with old broom handle. Essential oil may be added at this point for fragrance. Step 4: Stir until it cools enough and traces (starts to set-up). Pour into wax paper lined boxes glass dishes or plastic dishes (not metal). Cool 24 hours and after the first 8 hours cut with knife into desired size bars. **DO NOT TOUCH WITH HANDS/HANDLE WITH GLOVES.** After 24 hours remove from pans with gloves. Let open to air for 6 weeks to cure. Sarah says this recipe works well but if made in the summer it may take longer to trace, but you can always set your container in cool water and it will trace more quickly. Adding the oils, too, will make it more user friendly.

ANSWER — Marie Mulford wanted the name and address of a person who crochets old-fashioned, but not braided, rugs. Deb Kirkland, 1937 Baltimore Pike, East Berlin, PA, phone 717-292-2950, crochets rugs and says they look old-fashioned. Mrs. Isaac Burkholder, 630 Tipton Road, Kutztown, PA 19530, phone 610-683-5204, also crochets rugs and has some on hand. Another reader suggests trying a Mennonite-owned shop at Route 54 and Bowman Road, near Elysburg.

ANSWER — Two responses to H. Donald Brior of Rock Glen, who was looking for a sauerkraut stomper. One was from T. C. Wills, PO Box 248, Frederick, PA 19435, phone 610-754-7541, fax 610-754-6716, who makes them and has one in stock. Dimensions are as follows: 16" long, 1 1/4" diameter handle, 6" stomper, 4" diameter. It's hard maple and costs \$25.

ANSWER — Joe Jedju of Pemberton, N.J., was looking for a butcher who slaughters, dresses, and packages chicken and goats for personal use. A reader supplied this source: Brighthurst Meats, 38 W. Taunton Road, Berlin, NJ, phone 609-767-0110.

ANSWER — Charlene Bennett was looking for an old-fashioned potato ricer. Louise Graybeal says that one can be ordered from Lehman's Non-electric Catalog, 1 Lehman Circle, PO Box 321, Kidron, Ohio 44636.

ANSWER — Mrs. Bennie Stoltzfus of Quarryville was looking for used zig zag scissors that cut designs. Wayne Grube of Barnesville doesn't have a source for used ones but says that they can be purchased from Paper Direct, 100 Plaza Drive, Secaucus, N.J. 07094-3606 or by calling 1-800-272-7377 for a catalog.

ANSWER — A Danville reader was looking for a source of bulk foods. Rebecca King of Quarryville suggests E & S. Sales, 1235 North Street RD5, Shipshewana, Indiana 46565.

ANSWER — Robert Lusnia of Toms River, N.J., and others were looking for candle molds and other supplies. M. Bishop suggests Craft King, PO Box 90637, Lakeland, FL 33804, orders only 800-769-9494 or fax 813-648-2972. Bishop also suggests J. W. Jung Seed Co., 335 High St., Randolph, WI 53957-0001 as a source for gourd seeds. Another reader gave Gurney's Seed and Nursery Co., 110 Capital Street, Yankton, South Dakota, 57079.

ANSWER — Another answer to Marie Mulford's question about old-fashioned crocheted rugs. A Zion Grove reader suggests contacting John Mumaw, RR1 Box 1018, Sugar Loaf, PA 18249.

Kutztown To Hold Quilt Show And Sale

KUTZTOWN (Berks Co.) — The Kutztown Area Historical Society will hold its 12th annual Quilt Show and Sale featuring Pennsylvania Dutch and Amish quilts at Normal Ave. and Whiteoak Street in Kutztown on April 25-27, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Admis-

sion is \$2.50 for adults and children are free.

Special feature includes a quilt challenge contest. For more information write to Martha Deturk, 615 Dunkels Church Rd., Kutztown, PA 19530 or call (610) 683-8168.