

# Allegra Leininger Heads Lancaster County's Society Of Farm Women's 650 Members



A gracious hostess, Allegra serves Thanksgiving Pumpkin Pie. It is not unusual for her to serve 35 guests for dinner.



Allegra Leininger, who heads the Lancaster Society of Farm Women composed of 28 societies with 650 members, stands in front of the home that she and her husband built on their farm. During the growing season, Allegra mows several acres of grass and cares for the extensive landscaping surrounding the home.

## LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff  
REINHOLDS (Lancaster Co.)

— Allegra Leininger has long been known for her musical ability in playing the marimba and for her extensive doll collection. Recently she became president of the Lancaster County Society of Farm Women, which has about 650 members.

After moving up through the ranks of county leadership, Allegra assumed the presidential gravel during the county's annual convention held last month. Although this is the first time she has headed the county society, she has been the first and second vice president for the past four years and has at one time or the other held all the leadership positions in Society 3, which is one of the 28 societies that make up the county organization.

Allegra and her husband, Vernon, farm about 500 acres in Reinholds. He recently harvested 37,000 bushels of corn in 22 days, so the couple is well-acquainted with the long hours, hard work, and equipment expense that farming entails.

While farming, music, doll making, and Farm Women membership seems like a diverse combination of interests, each adds an aspect to Allegra's life that helps her exemplify the purpose of the organization. Since the Society of Farm Women was founded by Mrs. Frank Black in 1914, it has sought to foster love for the farm and rural life, to uphold the dignity of farming, to teach the responsibility that lies in working the soil; and to enhance the charm of a real country home.

Allegra's love for farm and home shines forth in her conversation and in their home. Hospitality seems to be a trademark of most Farm Women members and Allegra shines in graciousness. She loves to cook and bake, and it is not unusual for the Leiningers to entertain groups as large as 30 for meals.

Several years ago, the couple moved off the farmstead and built a house on the land. Allegra made sure it was large enough to easily

entertain large groups of people, her ever-expanding doll family, and a music room for her marimba.

As far as her doll collection, Allegra has made everyone of the 130 dolls in her collection. She enjoys dressing and naming the dolls. Her dolls line the winding staircase in the foyer and the room at the top of the staircase.

In addition to sewing dolls, Allegra always has a crewel embroidery or needlepoint project to pick up. The walls of their spacious home are decorated with the finely detailed stitches of her needlework projects.

Allegra and Vernon celebrated their 49th anniversary in October. They have three living adult children and seven grandchildren.

The Leiningers enjoy traveling, and this past summer spent five and a half weeks on a trip to the West Coast.

"I knew we had to take this trip this summer or I couldn't do it for two years," Allegra said of her commitment to the Farm Women presidency.

She and her husband also enjoy riding on their Honda Gold Wing motorcycle and ride with a group of friends for occasional overnight trips.

"I love the fresh air, and feeling a cool breeze on my face during summer evenings," Allegra said. "I've always been an outside person."

The Leiningers are active at Mohler's Church of the Brethren where Allegra sings in the choir, plays her marimba, and periodically teaches the adult Sunday School class.

Sitting idle doesn't seem to be in her vocabulary. Three mornings a week are spent at the fitness club. In addition she enjoys caring for the extensive lawn and landscaping around the house.

Allegra's goal as president of the Lancaster County Society of Farm Women is to do the best job she possibly can. Times have brought changes to the Farm Women Society, she said. Although it was common to limit membership in earlier years, now many societies are scrambling for

members. Although state membership lists 2,768 members, the majority of members range between the ages of 60 to 90 years of age. Society 3 of which Allegra is a member has 32 members, but at one time had as many as 45. Membership was limited because it became to large a group to meet in individual homes.

As the members grow older it is more difficult to remain active in the organization. To accomodate older members who do like to drive at night, many societies now hold breakfast meetings.

"The women seem to like that best and we have better response," Allegra said.

She would like to see more younger women join the organization, but at the same time she is realistic and acknowledges that fewer women now live on the farm and those who do are often employed outside the home. Many more options are available to women in this generation than to their mothers and grandmothers, when church was usually the only activity outside the home.

For Allegra and most of the other members, the Society of Farm Women has provided close friendships and helped them develop talents and broaden their horizons through the many educational programs it provides. In addition, they have worked together to raise thousands of dollars for community causes. For these reasons, Allegra intends to do every thing within her power to continue to keep the organization a viable part of the community.

It is her responsibility to plan the agenda for the bimonthly board meetings and to appoint committees to oversee the fundraising, community service, and society functions. In addition, she will attend the state association board meetings and will be assigned to a state committee.

"It's amazing how involved the duties are," Allegra said as she paged through stacks of notes outlining responsibilities. "There's a lot more to do than it first appears to be."

Board meetings are attended by county officers and the president of each of the 28 societies. In the upcoming December board meeting, outgoing president Kathryn

Fry will furnish a luncheon for the county committee, and Allegra will officially take over.

"The luncheon is traditionally furnished by the outgoing president and she goes all out in providing a great luncheon," Allegra said.

It will be two years before Allegra will serve the final luncheon that marks the end of her leadership of the county organization. In the meantime, Allegra is

busy cooking for their many guests.

Here are two recipes from her. It's too late to serve this scrumptious pie at your Thanksgiving dinner this year, but make sure you clip this recipe from Allegra so you have it on hand for upcoming holiday dinners. Also, the cookie recipe is one that Allegra said every one raves about and is just in time for your holiday baking.

(Turn to Page B17)

## HOMESTEAD NOTES



Music plays a large role in Allegra's life. Even the name of this accomplished marimba player sounds musical.