



Leading the Society of Farm Women of Pennsylvania with its 2,772 membership are, from left, Lois Hughes, president; Catherine Schott, first vice president; Becky Swallow, second vice president; Dorothy Caskey, secretary; and Barbara Nissley, treasurer.



Celebrating the installation of 99 new members, second vice-president Becky Swallow, right, congratulates Farm Women Society presidents for the largest increase in county memberships: Nancy Jackson, Somerset County; Sharon Strite, Dauphin County; and Emma Spencer, Huntingdon County.

Farm Women 'Mooove' Ahead With Acts Of Kindness

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)

— A farm woman's life has changed dramatically since the founding of the Society of Farm Women of Pennsylvania in 1914. Then many farm women had no income, no social life, and little education.

Today's farm wife is often educated, has her own income, and is swamped by social activities and family responsibilities.

The state organization has attempted to adapt to the time constraints upon its 2,772 members by reducing the two-day annual convention to a one-day affair, held the first Monday of Farm Show week. Instead of gowns (once the required dress for the evening banquet) comfortable shoes and slacks are acceptable mode. The by-laws have been slightly modified, and members are no longer required to live on the farm, although they must agree to uphold the dignity of farming.

But some things never change. The organization continues to work tirelessly to make their communities a better place to live and to contribute to those in need.

"Acts of Kindness," is the project implemented by state president Lois Hughes from Cambria County to be the focus of her three-year term.

The 79th annual state convention was a time to recount and encourage each other in the thousands of ways to carry out acts of kindness.

The state society is composed of individual societies, which raise

thousands of dollars for charity by holding food, garage, craft sales and other fundraisers.

Project chairman and state director Janet Schlegel from Berks County handed out certificates to the counties participating in the project.

In keeping with tradition, morning and afternoon sessions are held in the auditorium of the state Forum and culminates with a banquet at the Penn Harris Hotel in the evening.

Evidence that the society upholds the sanctity of God, country and family prevails throughout the three sessions, which opens with devotions, pledge of allegiance to the flag, and singing songs such as "Pennsylvania" and the theme song "Brighten the Corner."

In a world that seems largely preoccupied with "getting ahead" and "watching out for oneself," the Farm Women's Collect seemed refreshingly jolting as they recited "Keep us, O Lord, from pettiness. . . and let us not forget to be kind."

It hardly seems possible that kindness could be omitted in an organization that is so committed to providing needs for the homeless, victims of fire, of illness, and other disasters. Members continually lend support to such organizations as the Salvation Army, Red Cross, Mom's House, Meals on Wheels, Make-A-Wish, community libraries, fire and ambulance services, and numerous other service organization.

Another predominate effort of Farm Women is to provide scho-

larships to students pursuing agricultural- and home economical-related careers. Recipients must be the child or grandchild of a living or deceased member. The 1997 scholarship winners who received \$1,000 each included Jere Wingert, Franklin County; Amanda Wingert, Franklin County; Janice Youse, Berks County; and Cory Meyers, Franklin County.

Five students received \$500 scholarships: Elizabeth Harmon, Dauphin County; Michael Miduri, Dauphin County; Daniel Heller, Lancaster County, and Bryan Pearson, Cambria County.

The Flora Black Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1960, but the fund was given a financial boost when former state president Naomi Bupp oversaw the printing of the organization's cookbook in 1991. The cookbook is expected to go into its tenth printing this year. In addition to about \$22,000 designated to scholarships, another \$10,000 was placed in special trust fund with the shares reinvested. The fund has now grown to \$43,978.

In addition, treasurer Barbara Nissley also reported that the balance in the checking account is

(Turn to Page B16)



Patti Sheffey and Judy Allwein share highlights from their involvement in the Appalachia Service Project, which works to improve existing housing.



From left, Janine Cesare, president of Pennsylvania Special Olympics, and Beth Greenawalt, special olympian, inspire the group with stories of how the organization makes a difference in participants' lives.



Former state presidents attending the 79th convention, from left, are Dorothy Strickler, Naomi Bupp, Marie Baughman, Edith Diehl, and Arlene Witman.