# Farm-City Banquet Provides People Sense Of Community

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and commercial and other organizational exhibitions.

The floor was filled with white round tables and chairs to seat banquet participants. The wall behind the main stage and podium was decorated with quilts, and the rest of the walls were lined with exhibits booths.

At one end of the large hall stood a 20-foot tall, decorated Christmas tree. In the lobby area, there were also various displays and a number of Christmas trees, and a hat and coat check area with donations to be used to start a new 4-H camping program in memory of Theresa Lopinto.

Other donations were being accepted to help victims of Hurricane Mitch.

Opposite the stage were three long buffet tables.

With all that in one large hall, there was still at least 10 feet of aisle between tables and displays.

The Lebanon Farm-City Program, a program conducted through the Lebanon Area Chamber of Commerce headed by Stephan Vegoe, has changed over the years, with some variety in the amount of actual open house activity at farms.

This year, during October, there were three farms opened up to tours, though this was just a mention during the banquet.

Kenneth Winebark, former county livestock agent for Penn State Extension, who has been involved in helping children with problems find self-confidence, direction, fulfillment and a sense of love through religion and self-help, provided the invocation.

Toward the end of the banquet meal, the Lebanon High School Chamber Singers, in their long school colored gowns entertained from a four-tiered riser adjacent to the main stage. Unamplified, they sang a mix of holiday and classic songs with piano accompianment.

The Lebanon Farm-City Program includes a poster contest for youth, and this year's winner was 9-year-old Schane Clark, son of Gail Clark of Annville. Schane said it was the second time he won a poster contest; the first time he won a contest was when he was 4-years-old and entered and won a local framing-store competition.

Dennis Grumbine of Myerstown, director of the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex, represented the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and explained that state Secretary of Agriculture Samuel Hayes Jr. would have enjoyed being present, but was instead in Mexico on a goodwill mission to help with the grand opening of the nation's largest livestock show.

He explained that Secretary Hayes would also be inviting a contingent from Mexico to attend the state Farm Show, to be held Jan. 9-14 at the Complex in Harrisburg.

A traditional part of the Lebanon Farm-City Program is the presentation of a century farm award and a century business award.

1998 Lebanon Farm-City exchange participants are, from the left, Bruce Boltz and Andy Mick, Dawn Richard and Karen Nolt.

Jeff Werner, co-chairman of the Lebanon Farm-City Banquet, presents a century business award to David Harpel, representing Harpel's Inc., a Lebanon family owned business that reached the century mark this year.

(Lebanon County actually has two century farm award winners this year, although the first one was uncharacteristically presented during the county Extension annual meeting in November.)

Grumbine presented the award to Frank Reist, who accepted on behalf of his family.

The Reist family farm began in 1851 with 41 acres and a herd of purebred Holstein-Friesan dairy cattle. The farm has continuously maintained Holstein dairy cattle on the farm ever since, and the acreage has grown to 300.

Up until 1939, the farm bottled and sold milk.

Frank Reist represents the seventh generation to farm that land. He recognized his family, wife Cindy and daughter Michelle; his mother Eunice Reist; older brother Carl and his wife Linda; brother Donald, who works with him at the farm full time, and Donald's wife Cathy; and brother Gary and his wife Valerie.

Grumbine told the group that the farm started under the Fernsler name and in 1938 Frank Fernsler became a master farmer.

Farm-City Banquet Committee co-chairs, Carol Howard and Jeff Werner (who also is the county Farm Bureau president), presented the century business award.

The recipient of that award was Harpel's Inc., currently celebrating its 100th anniversary as a family owned concern.

It began as a photography business with Luther Harpel, whose many and early photographs have served as rich historic documents for the community. Many are in possession by the county historic association.

His son Donald continued the business, and then passed it on to his son David, whose son Rick Harpel now serves as president of the operation.

Over the years it became an office and photography supply store, and while photography work dropped off during interim generations, the current generation has successfully restarted that aspect with Rick and his wife Mary Lee opening up a studie and doing event photography, as well as framing and photo processing.

Furthermore it also has a franchise copy center, called Copies Now.

David Harpel accepted the award and thanked the community for its patronage over the years, allowing the family business to serve them, and for continuing to do so.

He also recognized his wife Anne and his aunt Lucille, daughter of Luther.

Henry Homan mentioned that as a youth in the community, he even

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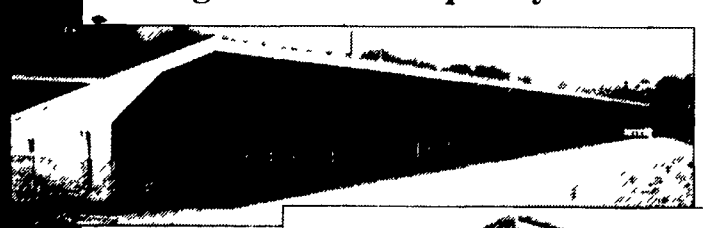

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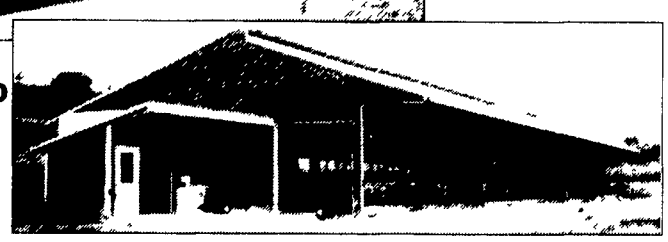

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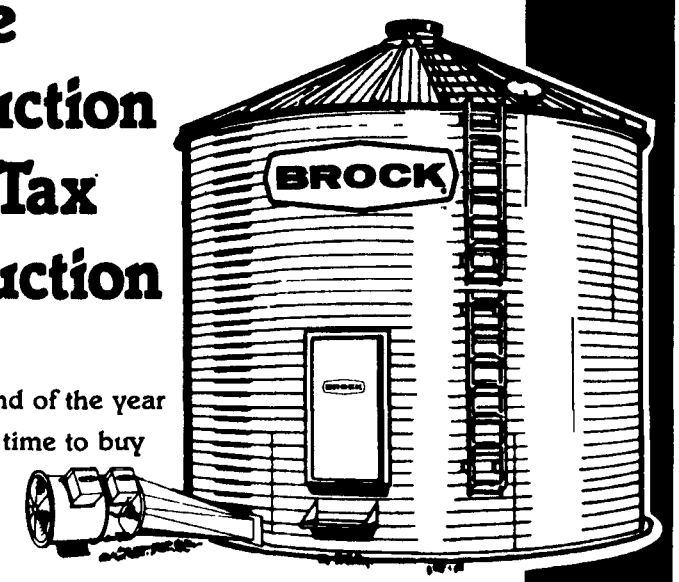


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