

# A Stitch In Time

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**YORK (York County)** — "She can't sit idle," said Merle Smeltzer, describing his wife, Edith's, penchant for hard work.

A typical day for Edith, 80, begins at 4:00 a.m. when she rises to do the laundry, cook, or bake pies, cakes, or bread. She usually begins working on her current quilt project at 8:00 a.m. and will continue, off and on throughout the day, until 7:00 p.m. except on Sundays, however.

The log cabin quilt top, her current project, will take approximately four weeks to complete with Edith working six days a week. She remains busy despite two hip operations.

Besides quilting for friends and family, word-of-mouth advertising has brought Edith more business, including out-of-state requests, than she will be able to handle this winter, she said. Most of her quilting is accomplished in the winter months.

Although she doesn't have a favorite pattern to quilt, the double wedding ring seems to be a popular pattern, observed Edith. One of her favorite quilt tops was a stained-glass pattern which looked like a church window.

"I've done quite a few wall hangings also," she said. Curtains and mending for family which includes nine grandchildren and four grandchildren, and friends are also examples of Edith's work with the needle.

Besides needlework, however, Edith is busy canning and freezing. She estimates she put up 50 quarts of fruits, pickles, and corn this year. "We did all of our own butchering until last year," said Edith. The couple raised their own beef and years earlier had raised 3-4 hogs a year to butcher.

"She just picked peas three or four weeks ago," said Merle. "We put in a second planting," said Edith.

The couple has lived at the same home, which adjoins the Samuel Lewis State Park, since they were married. At their 30th anniversary Merle began the tradition of buying Edith a bouquet of roses, one rose for each year married. This past August, for their anniversary, he bought her 60 roses.

Merle, 81, has lived in the same farmhouse since he was born. Edith, 80, grew up in nearby East Prospect, the youngest of five girls and one boy. She learned quilting from her mother, who taught all of her girls to quilt. One of Edith's older sisters married Merle's brother.

Edith never worked away from home but "I worked out in the field just like a man," said Edith. Her love of farming enabled her to be a help to her father until she was married.

During her childhood years Edith also helped to take care of the family's cows. When she was married, she helped to take care of the couple's cows, which they had until 12 years ago. These cows provided the butter and cream cheese which Edith made and sold at the couple's roadside stand. Besides milk products, the couple also sold eggs from the family's chickens. At one time 1,000 chickens were housed on the farm, a number which has changed to the 100 chickens. A garden supplies the stand with turnips, potatoes, raspberries, strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, and cabbage.

The stand also has a steady supply of walnuts during the fall months. So far this fall Edith has collected several bushels from the tree in the backyard and has hulled and cracked the nuts to yield 10 pounds so far this fall, with more on the way. "My husband made the nutcracker," said Edith.

"I was always interested in



**Busy fingers:** Edith Smeltzer stitches over large stretches of this log cabin quilt almost every day. Her window view overlooks the Susquehanna River and, in the far distance, the Blue Ridge Mountains. This quilt top will take approximately four weeks of work to complete.

making things," said Merle. "We didn't buy much. If there was anything we needed we just fixed it up ourselves." Merle simply used an existing nutcracker as a pattern.

A nutcracker is really only the beginning of the workmanship Merle has invested into the farm. He not only added onto the farmhouse but also built the farm's outbuildings. "We're pretty self-sufficient," said Merle.

Merle, who has always been in farming, has combined agriculture with working off the farm over the years. He has seen many changes in agriculture, and remembers farming with mules and horses or seeing cattle being driven on foot from Lancaster to nearby Red Lion.

"I remember when my brother and I played in the dirt road. You didn't need to worry about cars," said Merle, who went to a one-room school. "I also remember that we used to use the reaper to cut wheat. I was 12 years old when my father died. We looked out for ourselves."

The Smeltzer's children, John, Eugene, Ray, and Mary Lou all live with their own families within four miles of the 6-acre home farm. Two sons have taken over farming the additional 150 rented acres that Merle had farmed.



**Merle Smeltzer demonstrates the nutcracker which the couple uses to crack bushels of walnuts from the tree in their backyard. This fall Edith has hulled and cracked 10 pounds of nuts for their roadside stand where they also sell produce from their garden.**



**Merle and Edith Smeltzer display two newly-finished quilts at their home in York. Mrs. Smeltzer stitched the tops of 14 quilts last year.**



## Handling And Processing Wild Game Safely

Small game hunters need to be cautious in how they handle, process, and prepare game birds properly to prevent contamination from field to table. Dr. Catherine Cutter, Penn State Cooperative Extension muscle meat specialist, offers the following suggestions for ensuring the safety of wild game.

### Fields Dressing

To reduce the risk of exposure to disease, wear disposable plastic gloves while handling birds.

Use clean water, premoistened wipes, or alcohol swabs to clean the knife frequently or between cuts to avoid dragging bacteria into the meat.

Dress the carcass as soon as possible.

To prevent bacterial growth, quickly cool the carcass to 35-40 degrees F.

After cleaning the cavity, place carcasses in plastic storage bags and pack on ice or snow, or refrigerate as soon as possible.

Keep carcasses out of direct sunlight and allow for adequate air circulation.

### Transporting And Processing

Keep carcasses cool during transport. Keep them out of sunlight. Do not put birds in a vehicle's trunk while still warm. Allow for adequate air circulation.

Hold the carcass at 40 degrees F. or less. Freezing the carcass before processing may toughen the meat.

If aging a carcass, do so at 40 degrees F. or less for two or three days.

### Kitchen Processing

Store any unfrozen meat in the refrigerator and use it within two to three days.

Keep raw meat separated to prevent cross-contamination in the refrigerator.

Thaw all frozen meats in the refrigerator or microwave and use immediately.

Heat all game meats to 155-160 degrees F. to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Use a calibrated meat thermometer to ensure proper cooking.

If you will be stuffing birds, use a calibrated meat thermometer to ensure an internal temperature of 165 degrees F. for stuffing and 180 degrees F. for the

bird. Remove stuffing from the bird before refrigerating it, because stuffing is a great place for bacteria to grow.

Use leftovers within one or two days, or freeze for later use.

### Freezing Tips

Freeze meat while it is still fresh.

Use heavily waxed paper, freezer wrap, heavy duty aluminum foil, or plastic freezer storage bags for meat storage. Wrap meat tightly, and remove all air from the bag before sealing. Label packages with contents and dates.

Space packages in freezer to allow proper air circulation for cooling and freezing. Once packages are solidly frozen (within 24 hours), you can re-stack them within the freezer.

Properly wrapped meat will store in the freezer for nine to 12 months.

For more information on handling game birds safely, call your county's Penn State Cooperative Extension office for a free brochure called Proper Care and Handling of Game Birds — From Field to Table.

## Healthy Holiday Foods

**SPRINGFIELD (Delaware Co.)** — Treat yourself to a class on Healthy Holiday Foods that include methods to lighten some calorie laden favorites while retaining that great taste, food preparation and taste testing on Dec. 6, 7-9 p.m. and repeated on Dec. 7 at 1-3 p.m.

The class will be held in Smedley Park, Springfield and presented by Fran Alloway, family

living agent, Delaware County Cooperative Extension.

To register, send a check for \$6 made out to Delaware County Cooperative Extension, 20 Paper Mill Road, Smedley Park, Springfield, Pa. 19064. Include time preferred, and a daytime phone number.

Additional information, call (610) 690-2655.