

Mrs. Lloyd Gerhart

Behind-the-Scenes Worker at the Ephrata Fair

By Mrs. Charles McSparran
Farm Feature Writer

The 54th annual Ephrata Fair will get under way Tuesday, September 26 and will run through Saturday, September 30. It is the oldest and largest street fair in Pennsylvania. It is estimated to have an attendance of more than 200,000 persons. A fair of this magnitude requires much planning by a number of people. It also requires many hours of labor behind the scenes.

One who has the title of Financial Secretary, but who does many other jobs, is Mrs. Lloyd S. (Miriam) Gerhart of 139 W. King St., Ephrata. She is exhibits general chairman and concessions chairman. She handles the correspondence, gets out news releases, does all the financial work which includes making financial statements, writing premium checks which amounts to about a thousand for each fair, pays the judges and employees, keeps the records to receive state aid, and orders the tents. She has been financial secretary since 1960.

Mrs. Gerhart also does much of her husband's work as president and parade chairman of the fair. He has been parade chairman since 1945 and president since 1949. He is also a director and a former treasurer.

Mrs. Gerhart gets seven judges for the fair parade and as a follow-up writes thank-you letters to them. She sends out invitations to bands, majorettes, marching groups and about 260 invitations for floats. She then writes letters of acceptance to all the parade groups. She types the parade lineup. The fair pays all the bands who participate and buys trophies for winners in the bands and drum and bugle corps divisions.

Mrs. Gerhart has three working for her in the office during the fair. They have all the premium checks ready to hand out by Saturday noon. They do not use the card system so must make out checks for every premium.

Ephrata Fair had a unique beginning. It was a welcome home for the returning veterans of World War I and was held in November, 1918. The Ephrata Band furnished music, there were food stands and games. Patriotic bunting and Japanese lanterns gave a gala effect.

It had been the custom of the farmers and their wives in nearby outlying sections to exhibit their prize products of fields, gardens, orchards and kitchens in store windows in Ephrata. So by the next October the ideas were combined and a fair was born.

Today's fair is a far cry from its humble beginning. With at-

tractions such as their colorful street parade scheduled to be held Wednesday at 7 p.m. (rain date—Thursday) which attracts some 65,000 viewers. It features about 20 floats (commercial and noncommercial), 35 bands, drum and bugle corps, best appearing unit and outstanding organizations. The contestants for Miss Lancaster County and Mrs. Lancaster County Fire Chief will also ride in the parade.

The fair offers entertainment for all ages, starting with the adult tractor driving contest for the members of the Young Farmers Association at 6 p.m. Tuesday followed by a pig chase at 8 p.m. Judging begins Wednesday morning and at 11 a.m. all the baked goods is sold. The baked goods sale is conducted by the Ephrata Hospital Auxiliary and all the proceeds go to them. The Junior Market Lamb Show is held at 4:30 p.m.

Thursday is Kiddies Day. From 1 to 5 p.m. the local businesses and industries provide free rides for children up to 12 years of age. The Mrs. Lancaster County Fire Chief contest is held Thursday night. Thursday also affords all-day entertainment in the line of an FFA judging contest, swine and sheep judging, 4-H and FFA baby beef judging.

Friday evening features midway entertainment, cow milking contest and Junior Dairy Cattle Show judging.

Saturday the annual Miss Lancaster County Scholarship Pageant will be held in the Ephrata High School. This is the official regional finals for the 1973 Miss Pennsylvania contest. Evelyn Ay Sempier was the first girl crowned Miss Lancaster County in the 1950 pageant and went on to become Miss America. About 16 girls are expected to compete this year.

Saturday night will also feature midway attractions at the same time and there will be entertainment all day starting with a hog sale at 9 a.m. This will be followed by an FFA Tractor Driving contest. Then at 2 p.m. the 16th annual baby parade will be held, with thousands on hand to see the costumes and the beautifully designed floats as the youngsters parade through downtown Ephrata.

This fair uses downtown store windows and a tent on the borough lot to display vegetables, fruits, nuts, eggs, honey, arts, crafts, baked and canned goods, models, clothing, needlework and commercial exhibits. Four tents make up Tent City in the Community Park and house cattle, baby beef, swine, sheep, poultry, tobacco, grain, seed, forage and commercial exhibits. Commercial exhibits feature a full line of farm machinery, autos,

trailers, campers, trucks and appliances.

The midway has rides, eating stands, all kinds of amusements and free entertainment.

The Ephrata Farmers Day Association, who manages Ephrata Fair, has been a profitable organization helping charitable organizations through the years. They have pledged \$50,000 to the Ephrata Community Hospital, giving \$25,000 now and \$25,000 within the next five years. They also furnish and maintain a station wagon for the hospital. They have given over \$85,000 to the hospital, including the station wagon, since 1945. They have also given over \$11,000 which includes a car, to the Pioneer Fire Company, and furnish a station wagon for the Recreation Center.

Besides Lloyd's fair responsibilities he is Mayor of Ephrata, a post he held from 1954 to 1962 and his present term from 1966 to 1974. He is a partner in "Gerhart Brothers" coal, lumber and building supplies business in Ephrata. He is a past president of the Ephrata Lions Club and of the Chamber of Commerce, a past treasurer of the War Memorial Association and is ring master at horse shows. He bowls in two leagues at Dutch Lanes and with the Lancaster County League. He also enjoys fishing, hunting and swimming.

Gerharts have one son, Lloyd Jr. He resides at home but has a farm in Ephrata Township, near Murrell. He is an animal lover. He raises and sells animals to pet shops in the local area as well as ships them far and near. He raises hamsters, guinea pigs, rabbits, gerbils, sheep, goats, dogs, six-toed cats and he has a coyote, a snake collection and goes on snake hunts. He is a falconer and goes to Maryland, South Dakota and all around hunting.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerhart are members of the United Methodist Church of Ephrata.

They travel quite a bit. They vacation in Florida two weeks every winter. They took a trip to Europe several years ago. They have traveled as far west in the United States as Minnesota and Missouri.

Mrs. Gerhart belongs to two bridge clubs in Ephrata which meet every two weeks. She is a member of the Ephrata Woman's Club which has a membership of 168. She served as its president in 1952 and 1953. She is also a member of the Cloister Chapter 406 Order Of The Eastern Star and has served in various offices. Miriam knits and crochets gloves, afghans and ponchos. She says "I like to do crafts. I'm always on some decorating committee, usually for the Woman's Club Charity Ball."

In June she entertained at a personal party at Quentin Riding Club. Her decorating theme was butterflies. She used them as centerpieces and had them on curtains and on the score pads and tallies she made. She made 60 favors which were decorated



Mrs. Miriam Gerhart, relaxing on her patio surrounded by her beautiful flowers, checks over details for this year's fair.

books with guest-size cakes of soap as a base.

the lid off, add a bit of water. x x x

Her main hobby is flowers. She says "Flowers are work and I don't enjoy working with them but it's the only way I can have them." She has many flowers in her yard and it isn't hard to tell her favorite color is salmon because her patio is banked with impatiens, geraniums and petunias in that color. She also has a beautiful coleus bed and several other kinds of flowers such as roses and daisies.

Pecan Pie Dessert
(Serves 4)

18 Ritz Crackers (crushed)
1 cup sugar
Mix well. Then add:
1 cup chopped pecans
4 egg whites (stiffly beaten)
Small amount of vanilla
Fills 1 pan - 8 inches square.
Pour into well greased pan and bake at 350 degrees 30 to 40 minutes. Will be puffed up - gently press down when hot. Cool.
Top with whipped cream or ice cream.

x x x

Hors D'Oeuvres
Cheese Dreams

2 cups grated cheese (medium sharp)
1 egg
½ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon butter
Bit of salt
Paprika
½ teaspoon chopped onion
1 tablespoon cream
Place generously on small rounds of frankfurter roll, sprinkle the paprika on top. Broil until nicely browned and melted.

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Mrs. Lloyd S. Gerhart, Financial Secretary of Ephrata Fair, spends many hours with her typewriter and accounts before and after as well as during the fair.

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