

# Incredible eggs make way to Governor's Mansion

HARRISBURG — In honor of April Egg Month, Vicki Wass, Pennsylvania Egg Promotion Specialist, presented Ginny Thornburgh, the Commonwealth's First Lady, with a special egg. The egg was a beautifully decorated Ukrainian egg created by Ron Markvan.

According to Markvan, it took him about six hours to complete the intricate task. This is his eighth season for making the colorful eggs, an art he said he was taught by his roommate while a student at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Markvan recently taught a course in Ukrainian egg-painting, or as he corrected, egg-dyeing. His class consisted of folks ranging in age from 11 years old to 81. "When they came into the course, they thought they could never do it, but by the fourth week they were creating beautiful eggs," he said.

The egg-artist said that he is not in the least bit artistically talented and claims to have an unartistic background. But he turns out egg shells with traditional Ukrainian designs that would rival the canvas of many famous painters.

Instead of a paint brush, Markvan uses a tool called a kistka to create his masterpieces. The wooden tool is used to apply beeswax to the shell of a fresh egg.

The art of egg-dyeing, or pysanky, begins with sketching a design on the egg shell with a pencil, said Markvan. Using the lead markings as a guide, all areas to remain white are covered with beeswax, using the kistka.



Ukrainian pysanky add another dimension to the versatile egg.

Then the egg is dipped in dyes, beginning with the lighter colors and ending with dark blue or black for the background. Markvan said he starts with yellow, and after that color dries, he adds orange and red, covering the areas not to be colored with wax every stage of the way.

After the last color is added to the egg, the beeswax is melted off. To do this, Markvan carefully holds the egg beside the flame of a candle. He stressed the egg should not be held too close, otherwise the eggshell would be scorched by the flame.

One the wax is melted off, the egg is completed. But, said Markvan, a layer of

varnish painted over the egg gives it a gloss and will keep the colors bright for years.

Why go to all the trouble of dyeing the eggs? Markvan says it is customary for Ukrainians to present them as gifts to friends and relatives. He said he finds it a relaxing hobby after he returns from a day of work at the Beaver County Mental Health and Retardation Office.

What happens to the inside of the fresh egg? They dry up after a while, Markvan said. He pointed out he does not try to blow the insides of the egg out because he's afraid he'll crush the egg. "After doing all that work, I wouldn't want to take that chance," he said.

Markvan, who lives in



Ron Markvan, Ambridge, visited the Governor's Mansion on Wednesday, in honor of April Pa. Egg Month, bringing with him his collection of decorated eggs.

Ambridge, near Pittsburgh, said he uses commercial dyes when creating this pysanky. Originally in Europe, he explained, the dyes were made from berries, grasses, roots, and onion skins. "Red onion skins would make red dye and yellow onions would be used for yellow colors. Of course they weren't strong colors."

The talented egg decorator has a personal collection of over thirty of his best creations. When asked which was his favorite, he said the goose egg because it took him the longest time — 13 hours — to complete.

To use a phrase adopted by the American Egg Board, Markvan's eggs are truly "incredible", but as he points out, not too edible.—SM

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## Lancaster Swine Producers to hold show/sale

NEW HOLLAND — The Lancaster County Swine Producers Association will be holding their annual feeder pig show and sale on April 8th, announced Gary Dean, president.

The event will be held at the New Holland Sales

Stables, with the judging beginning at 4 p.m. followed by the sale at 6:30 p.m.

According to Dean, pigs will be in pens of six according to their weight. There will be three weight classes, ranging from 30 pounds to 75 pounds.

The county president said there will be five placings in each class. He pointed out that exhibitors are limited to two winners per weight class.

"There will be many high quality pigs at the sale for 4-H and FFA summer projects," Dean concluded.

## Beef drop temporary

UNIVERSITY PARK — Although the beef prices have dropped in the past two weeks, Penn State economist Louis Moore says that this is only a temporary trend.

He predicts the price per pound will go up for feeder cattle because the numbers of animals will remain low for the next four to five years.

The 1980 figures on cattle numbers are 16 percent lower than 1976, which has caused the depletion of beef in the meat industry, said Moore.

The amount of beef eaten per person in the U.S. has dropped as a result to 100 pounds in 1979. This is considerably lower than the 1976 per capita consumption which was 129 pounds.

"Beef supply has been rationed by its high prices," said Moore.

The drop in fat cattle prices temporarily reflects the total economy and its runaway gas prices, Moore concluded.

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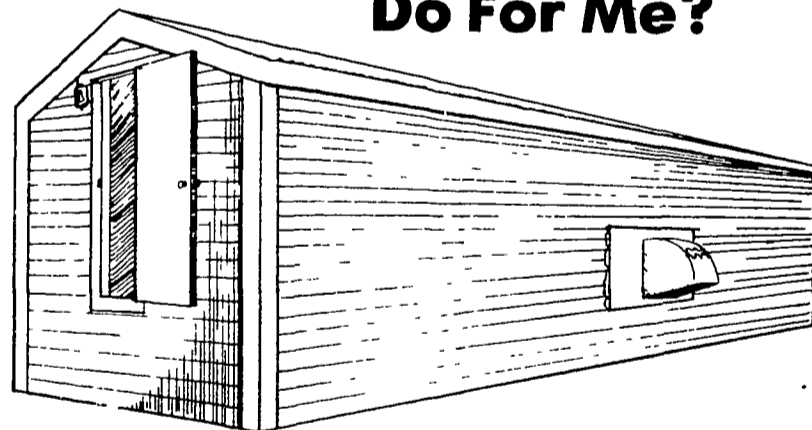
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