

## Apple blossom season is busy time for Pa. Apple Queen

BY SHEILA MILLER

**ORTANNA** — According to the old saying, 'April showers bring May flowers', folks in Pennsylvania are in for a beautiful, colorful time of year.

Adding to the splendor of Spring will be the apple trees stretching their blossoms toward the sunshine. Their fragrance, floating on the air, will bring honey bees from far and wide to drink the sweet nectar.

It's a busy time of year for bees, and it's a busy time of year for Kris Shutt, the Pennsylvania Apple Queen.

Kris will begin the month of May in the traditional way for all apple queens, in festivals set aside for celebrating the apple blossom season.

In an exclusive interview with Lancaster Farming, Kris highlighted her first weekend of the month.

Kris said she will be attending the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival in Winchester, West Virginia from May 1-3. She explained that representatives from four states, from all segments of the apple industry, will be attending.

And, she said with a note of excitement in her voice, Michael Landon's daughter will be the queen of the festival. Kris added she will be one of 33 princesses in the famous television actor's daughter's court.

"We're each having a special gown made for us," said Kris. "We sent our measurements down to the festival committee and I guess we'll hope the gowns fit when we get there."

After the Shenandoah Festival, Kris said she'll be making a speedy trip back home to Ortanna, Adams County, to get ready for the Apple Blossom Festival, taking place at the South Mountain Fair Grounds on May 3-4.

The local festival, Kris explained, is more like a crafts festival, similar to the one held at apple harvest time. But, she said, the highlight of the festival is when the new Adams County Apple Queen is crowned.

She explained that the queen will be selected on April 26. "But," Kris said, "I won't be turning over my County crown until the festival."

Kris was selected by Adams County fruitgrowers to represent them as their queen last year. In competition this past February, Kris became the Pennsylvania Apple Queen for 1980.

Since she received the state title, Kris said she has made four or five appearances at supermarkets and shopping malls around the state. She added she will be attending the grocer's convention to be held in Hershey on June 1-2.

Smiling, Kris said what she likes best about her new responsibilities is the chance it gives her to talk to consumers about her favorite fruit, the apple.

"I'm not trying to stuff information about apples down their throats. I like to have them ask me questions—getting their responses helps me answer



Adams County's Kris Shutt is getting ready for one of her busiest times of the year — apple blossom season.

questions I would never have thought of talking about."

She recalled the time a man asked her why the Golden Delicious apples from Pennsylvania had funny spots all over them where the same type of apples from Washington didn't. Kris explained that the Pennsylvania apples were perfectly healthy—they were blemished with rust because of the humidity and richer soils.

In the few short months that have passed since her reign began, Kris said she has been busy learning about Pennsylvania—seeing parts of the state she has never seen before. Because of her hectic schedule, Kris said she sometimes has to miss classes at Gettysburg High School.

How did her fellow students react when they found out about the Apple Queen title? Kris said she was amazed that one guy in her class said he expected her to have gotten a "big head" over the whole thing, and expected her to walk around with her nose in the air.

Kris chuckled and popped her knuckles. "I just told him I don't feel any different... why should I act different?" Actually, she added, her fellow students are proud of her in a teasing way. "It makes me happy to know I have their support."

A senior at Gettysburg High School, Kris is the editor of the school newspaper. But, after graduation this June, Kris is not planning to continue in the writing field.

She said she would like to pursue an education in social work. Although she had been scheduled to begin her schooling at Bluffton College, Ohio, this Fall, Kris said she has delayed it until January. This will give her more time, she said, to fulfill her responsibilities as Apple Queen.

Why social work? Kris explained that she has gotten

her interest in the field after helping at the migrant day care centers during the summer.

She recounted the history of the centers in Adams County, saying the first one was started in 1970 at Bendersville. Kris worked at a more recently organized center located in Fairfield, that is strictly for children between the ages of one and three.

"While the kids are at the center, we're their 'parents,'" Kris said. "We give them the affection, care, and comfort they need. I feel a deep compassion for these kids because they don't see their parents all day."

At the center, Kris said she was in charge of 3-4 kids. She said she was their 'mother image'. She pointed out there were a few men who helped at the center, but the staff was made up of mostly women.

While at the center, the migrant children are taught to count, play, and learn coordination games. This is not an easy task when most of the children speak Spanish, said Kris.

"Some of the kids learn to walk at the center," she said. "At the end of the summer, it's hard to leave because I get so attached to them."

Kris recalled a little two-year-old called Shucky. "He was a little sweetheart and flirt—I still miss him. I speak only a little Spanish, so communicating was frustrating. The kids talk so fast and with dialects, and it is terrible when I can't say what I want to because of a language barrier."

But where language becomes a hindrance, the love and affection displayed by the children and staff do not need an interpreter. "There was one migrant child that came back for the second year. Even though he didn't remember me, there was still a bond," Kris recalled.

After she completes her education at Bluffton, Kris stated she hopes to return to Adams County and work with the migrants. "They're a group of people who are used to being shuffled around. They try to take the best of what an area has to offer them while they're there," she said.

The Apple Queen said she'd like to come back to her family's orchard. If a social work job is not available, her years on the

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Kris learns how to 'put on her best face' with make-up advice from Joyce Taljan, a professional model and cosmetologist. This was part of a queen workshop put on by the Pa. Department of Agriculture's Betty Rode.

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