

# 4-H'ers clown around

BY DEBBIE KOONTZ

LANCASTER — Lancaster 4-H'ers are often called dedicated, creative, enthusiastic and ambitious, but in the future they may be called a bunch of clowns. That is, if Nancy Myers, 4-H agent, gets her say in the matter.

Known across the county for initiating numerous new projects for Lancaster 4-H, Myers has decided to make her newest project opportunity for 4-H'ers, clowning.

After a county workshop Tuesday night, a regional workshop in York County and much studying on the subject, Myers has found clowning to be much more than having fun at a circus.

Though it may be a far cry from the normal 4-H project of dairy, swine, cooking and sewing, clowning is a growing project in Pennsylvania and one which demands serious attention.

At a regional 4-H spring fling workshop in York County, recently, members of Lebanon County's clowning 4-H presented their side of the clowning trade. Tuesday night, Mial Hillhouse, a member of the Professional Clown's Club of America, spoke to interested 4-H'ers on his art.

"Milo," as Hillhouse is known professionally, began by telling the history of clowning and worked his way up to costumes and makeup for the modern clown.

All 4-H'ers interested in clowning should know that clowning is recognized as a profession and an art today and that years of clowning have led to this status.

The earliest recognized clowns were court jesters of the Middle Ages. They performed tricks and told stories while entertaining royalty. Their costumes were usually trimmed with noisy bells.

Harlequin clowns appeared in the Italian theatre of the 16th century. Their faces were covered with black half-masks and tights covered their legs.

The first clown to wear white face makeup was the Pierrot. This clown had big pompoms like huge buttons on their loose fitting white tops. Also, their hats usually came to a point.

Today, the modern clowns fall into three categories:

The white face clown makes his

face with white grease paint as a base and then adds other bright colors according to his chosen character.

The second type of clown is known as the Auguste. He is usually a clumsy individual who trips over everything. Charlie Chaplin is the most famous Auguste clown. He wears little makeup.

The third, and perhaps most famous, is the hobo or tramp. This character is usually sad and lonely and usually works in audiences alone. This is the only type of clown which can appear untidy and still be a hit with the audience.

All clowns in the circus are called Joey, after Joseph Grimaldi, the first of the great



Andrew Leader speaks to 4-H'ers at their regional 4-H spring fling in York County. Being a clown is more than just a funny face to this dedicated clown.



"Let's see, there was a reason I'm at the 4-H workshop. Was it to talk about swine or capons maybe?"

modern clowns. Grimaldi first appeared in the early 1800's in London, England.

To be a successful clown, Milo advised carrying a good supply of makeup, baby powder and mirrors. The faces and costumes a clown can wear are ended only by the imagination according to Milo.

But being a clown is more than painting on a face and wearing a funny costume according to Barbara O'Neill, Somerset County 4-H agent. Professional clowns have a strict code of ethics and a great variety of opportunities to perform.

Though Milo works for the Shriner's Circus in Harrisburg, he also has performed in hospitals, at small parties and even at adult gatherings for just 5 or 6 people.

Farm banquets, 4-H meetings, and society gatherings could be just a few of the events any clown could add to his list.

And if you think clowning involves just walking around looking funny, think back to your last circus. Those clowns didn't just stand there did they? Clowning in 4-H also involves learning to write skits, making balloon animals, learning to act, and working with other clowns.

As a 4-H clown you'll finally have the chance to act foolish in front of people and make them happy without them knowing who you are. If you are interested in clowning for Lancaster County, call Nancy Myers at 394-6851, or call the 4-H agent in your county and get a clown project started.



Mial Hillhouse discusses the art of clowning to interested 4-H'ers in Lancaster County.



"I wonder why everyone is pointing at us," these characters seem to be saying, for to them clowning is a serious 4-H project with

many side benefits. One of which is making people laugh.



Just another face in the crowd