

A Behind The Scenes Look At An Old-Fashioned Dutch Country Auction

BY LOU ANN GOOD

MANHEIM — Old-fashioned country sales with auctioneers hawking their wares punctuate the season's air. The aroma of barbecue chicken and freshly-made french fries tempt eager bidders to nearby food stands layered with scrumptious goodies such as fresh strawberry pies topped with whipped cream.

Schools, churches, charities and other organizations have come to realize there's money to be made in these sales. And for many of them, sales have become an annual event.

One of these—Manheim Christian Day School Dutch Country Auction—debuts the last Saturday of every April. Each of its twelve years gathers more momentum and more profit. This year promises to be no exception. Their goal is

\$100,000. No easy feat for the school's patrons, but then they admit they couldn't do it alone, not if the community and other interested persons didn't pitch in with their donations and talents.

It's not surprising that many of those dedicated, behind-the-scenes volunteers happen to be farm wives. Their attitudes are typical of Marlene Martin's who says, "Somebody got to do it or it wouldn't get done."

Marlene, her husband Earl and their children, Jody, 11; Eric, 9; Brian, 5; and Audrey, 3; live on 104-acre Manheim farm. This year, Marlene is secretary for the sale. That means she needs to keep extensive records on the 270 businesses that donate things such as gift certificates, pottery, Manheim glass, wooden handicrafts, Winross trucks, hot air balloon

rides and more.

Marlene said she volunteered for the position because she loves to type.

For those who do not enjoy typing, plenty remains to be done. For some volunteers like Shirley Sauder, who with her husband Glenn and sons Duane, 13 and Jason, 9, lives on a 90-acre farm with a farrow to finish hog operation, the sale requires year-round work. Shirley helps head the quilt committee which contacts some well-known and not so well-known but capable seamstresses to piece quilts for the sale which has earned reputation for their unique top-quality quilts. Annually the sale draws people from many states, even from as far away as California.

Those who help make it a success include friends and relatives of school patrons. One is 99-year-old, Lizzie Longenecker who pieced a quilt for the auction because her grandchildren attend the school.

Shirley isn't overwhelmed by the many hours that she spends trying to make each year more successful. She said, "I like the idea of creating something and working out of my home." She finds it exciting to choose new quilt patterns and colors and see what the finished quilt looks like. She stresses that color can make or break the success of a quilt's sale. "There must be enough of contrast to have a pattern stand out. If colors are too much the same shade, it isn't nearly as striking."

Shirley with other committee members piece and mark the quilting designs on several of the quilts which they give to church sewing circles and interested individuals to quilt.

Although Shirley's tiny quilting stitches match the best of the best, she remarked that the average person looks more at the colors than the workmanship of the quilts.

The sale will feature 40 full-sized quilts, no two alike, but the one Shirley expects to bring top dollar was donated by an anonymous Amish lady. Shirley explained, "It's elegantly embroidered with 115 roses, all in antique white with more than 900 yards of quilting thread."

Other quilts to be auctioned



A giant Dahlia wallhanging will complement one of the quilts to be sold at the auction. Shirley likes to have items like these to work on during evening hours.



The 3-D handcrafted painting by Abner Zook features a 30x48-inch colonial mill scene with a stone arch bridge.



Manheim residents will take special interest in this picture of the Manheim square sketched by well-known artist Linn Longenecker.



Three-year-old Audrey Martin thinks of all the fun she could have with this wooden wagon that will be auctioned on April 30.



Shirley Sauder, left, and Marlene Martin admire one of the quilts that will be auctioned.

include a Rose of Sharon, Country Bride, Sampler, Pineapple and Lovebirds, Sunshine Diamond, Boston Commons, Philadelphia Pavement and Wheel of Fortune.

Like other sales, the items are not limited to quilts, pillows, and other needlecrafts. There's lawn and garden equipment, housewares, furniture, carpet and an Old John Deere pedal tractor that has been restored. A 3-D handcrafted painting by Abner Zook features a 30x48-inch colonial mill scene with a stone arch bridge. Of special interest to Manheim residents, is a painting by well-known artist Linn Longenecker who spent over 200 hours sketching and painting the Manheim Square. Artist Ned Foltz has donated several specially

crafted pottery pieces for the auction.

Like last year, the world's largest sausage pattie will be served. Interested bidders can top it off by eating a piece of a 100-pound intricately decorated cake by Willow Valley Bakery.

The auction actually begins on Friday evening with a sale preview, a chicken barbecue and an old-fashioned hymn sing by six local quartets. On April 30, a country breakfast of sausage, egg omelet and pancakes will be served from 6:30 to 9. The auction begins at 8 a.m. and the quilts will be sold at 1 p.m.

Mel Burkholder, chairman of the sale, stresses, "To make the

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Homestead Notes