



Prince is popular with children who come to Tracey's Orchard. His favorite snack is apples, of course, said Franklin County Apple Queen Heidi Martin.

Heidi Martin Reigns As Franklin County Apple Queen

BONNIE BRECHBILL

Franklin Co. Correspondent GREENCASTLE (Franklin Co.) — Franklin County's Apple Queen finds fruit-growing to be a family affair. A fifth-generation member of the family who operates Tracey's Orchard, Heidi Martin, 18, has been involved with fruit all her life. She is the daughter of Randy and Sandi Martin.

Her grandparents, Ralph and Connie Tracey and their two sons, Edwin and Denny, run the orchard. Heidi's mother, who is the Traceys' daughter, helps with the bookkeeping. The daughters-in-law and grandchildren help as needed. The orchard was originally purchased by I.C. Barr, Connie Tracey's grandfather, in the 1930s.

Apples, peaches, pears, cherries, plums and nectarines grow on 86 acres. Some of the apples are wholesaled to Knouse Foods; everything else is sold retail at the sales shed from June through Christmas. The operation includes a 2,000-bushel cold storage building.

Heidi has helped to sell the fruit ever since she was a child. She now also works at Klein's Grocery Store in nearby Shady Grove, and enjoys waiting on many of the same customers at both places.

A senior at Greencastle-Antrim High School in the business curriculum, Heidi is as yet undecided about her future plans. She would like to either go on to school or enter the secretarial field. She is taking a class on Lotus computer program basics because "the business field is changing fast, and if you don't know what you're doing, you're ancient," she said.

No matter what she does after high school, she plans to continue her involvement at the orchard. "This is my second home here," she said. "They always find some-

thing for you to do."

"We always enjoy having an extra hand," her grandmother added. The grandparents lived in the farmhouse across from the sales shed until last January, when they switched houses with Edwin and his family.

Heidi is not the first in her family to wear the crown of apple royalty. Her cousin Brandi served as 1992 Apple Princess. The girls had agreed years ago not to run against each other in the pageant. Brandi is older, so she ran last year. Now both girls are encouraging Brandi's younger sister Lori to enter. Another cousin, Edwin's daughter Megan, 7, is already talking about entering, according to the family. Both Brandi and Heidi were sponsored by their grandparents in the apple queen competition.

Heidi had been looking forward to competing in an Apple Queen pageant for several years.

"Ever since I was little, we always got dressed up and went to the Queen banquet — it was *the* thing to do," she related. "The contestants were always asked the question, 'What is your favorite apple?' and I would sit and think, 'What will I say?'"

In preparing for the 1993 pageant, Heidi did more than decide upon her favorite apple; she read up on the latest technology in the industry, such as new spray materials and storage techniques. She has heard her grandfather and uncles talking about the new technique of taking oxygen out of the apples to stop the ripening process, and decided to become informed about it. She visited the Penn State Fruit Research facility in Biglerville to learn about it. After the removal of the oxygen, the apples are stored in a carefully

controlled environment. Later, oxygen is pumped back in to re-start the ripening process.

She also read up on Johnny Appleseed, and will use some of what she learned about him when speaking to children. Johnny Appleseed went west ahead of the settlers planting apple trees so that the fruit would be ready for the immigrants to eat. A very religious, simple man, he was also a missionary to the Indians. "Almost everyone had heard of him," Heidi said, "and there was never a bad word said about him."

Heidi will be speaking to a Brownie troop later this month. She will tell them about the many different varieties of apples and impress upon them that it is "fun and interesting to have an apple as a snack," she said.

Heidi's favorite apple recipe is Fresh Apple Cake. "This is very moist; the butterscotch and the apples enhance each other," she said. Although Heidi makes this recipe often, she asked her grandmother to make it for her birthday. "Grandma makes it the best," she explained.

FRESH APPLE CAKE

2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 cup cooking oil
2½ cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon baking soda
3 cups finely chopped apples
1 cup chopped nuts
1 package butterscotch chips
Beat sugar and eggs together; add oil. Sift dry ingredients. Add apples and nuts. Mix all together. Pour batter into greased and floured 9" x 13" pan. Sprinkle butterscotch chips over batter and bake at 350° for 45 - 50 minutes. Can also be made as muffins.

Growers Approve Referendum

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Pennsylvania vegetable producers approved the referendum to continue the Vegetable Marketing and Research Program by a vote of 374 to 246. The approval ensures the continuation of the program for the next five years.

An impartial teller committee counted the ballots in Harrisburg recently. A simple majority among the state's vegetable producers who use one or more acres of farmland or 1,000 square feet or

more of greenhouse area to grow vegetables for sale in Pennsylvania was needed for approval.

State Agriculture Secretary Boyd E. Wolff accepted the results of the Teller Committee's ballot count. "Research to improve productivity and promotions to increase market share will continue under this program," Wolff said. "Our producers still have a powerful tool in their corner."

Since its creation in 1988 under

the Pennsylvania Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act (PACMA), the program has provided more than \$70,000 to support 36 research projects. The program has also reached more than 7 million people through its news releases and has created point-of-purchase kits and materials, the "Know Your Vegetables" consumer brochure, and the "Pick 5, Get 10%" vegetable sale promotion at 100 farm markets across the state.

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