

Unique Pumpkins Sold At Manheim Farm Those Pumpkin-Faced People

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MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) —
Fall's glorious display of pumpkins, gourds, and cornstalks sprout throughout the county. But tucked away on a back winding road of Manheim is a fall display you won't find any other place.

It's pumpkin-faced people and gourds. Whimsical faces, complete with either freckles or long-lashed eyes, reveal the artistic talents of Yvonne Geib. A few one-eyed pirates appear among the rows of these pumpkin-face characters, but, for the most part, they are smiling. You won't find a sad or wicked face among this fall collection because the creator prefers happy faces.

Both toothy and toothless grins, charming smiles, mischievous grimaces, and goofy expressions appear on these delightful little characters of all sizes that each seems to exert a novel personality.

Other years, the pumpkins were sold from a tractor and wagon parked on the farm. But this year, Yvonne and her husband Larry set up their pumpkin display in a garage on their farm. In addition to the painted pumpkins and gourds, they offer plenty of natural pumpkins, cornstalks, and Indian corn.

Pumpkin varieties include neck,

green-striped, Jack-O-Lanterns, Little Dippers, Spooky Nooks, and Jack B Littles.

This pumpkin fantasy land had its beginnings six years ago. That was the year that Yvonne painted a pumpkin and set it at the end of their farm lane. A neighbor spotted it and asked Yvonne to paint one for her.

Since then, the news of the whimsical pumpkins spread and people come from afar to purchase them. They range in price from \$5 to \$8.

Last year, Yvonne sold about 200 pumpkins. She couldn't keep up with the demand, so she solicited her mother-in-law, Anna Marie Geib, to help.

Each artist has a distinct style. Customers can identify the artist because Yvonne always sprinkles a few freckles on her work and her mother-in-law adds a few long lashes as her trademark.

Both paint the faces freehand with acrylic paints. Mistakes can be washed off with water and a new look applied. No two pumpkins are ever alike since the duo are always on the lookout for different expressions.

Pumpkins that are smoother on the surface are easier to paint, according to Yvonne. When the face is completed, the pumpkins



Larry, Yvonne, and son Ron arrange the pumpkin display in the garage. A mini-farm zoo with pigmy goats, rabbits, and kittens is enjoyed by the children who visit the farm.

are sprayed with a clear gloss.

Last year, Yvonne set three of her painted pumpkins at the end of the farm lane. But someone stole the pumpkins.

"It gets a bit time-consuming to

replace stolen pumpkins," Yvonne said. Now a wagon-load of the pumpkins set at the end of the lane, but not the painted ones. Visitors must come in the long farm lane to see the painted pumpkins.

The Geibs plant one and a half acres of pumpkins. This year, like other area growers, the Geibs are finding pumpkins are not as plentiful as last year. Growers say that many pumpkins rot or that it was

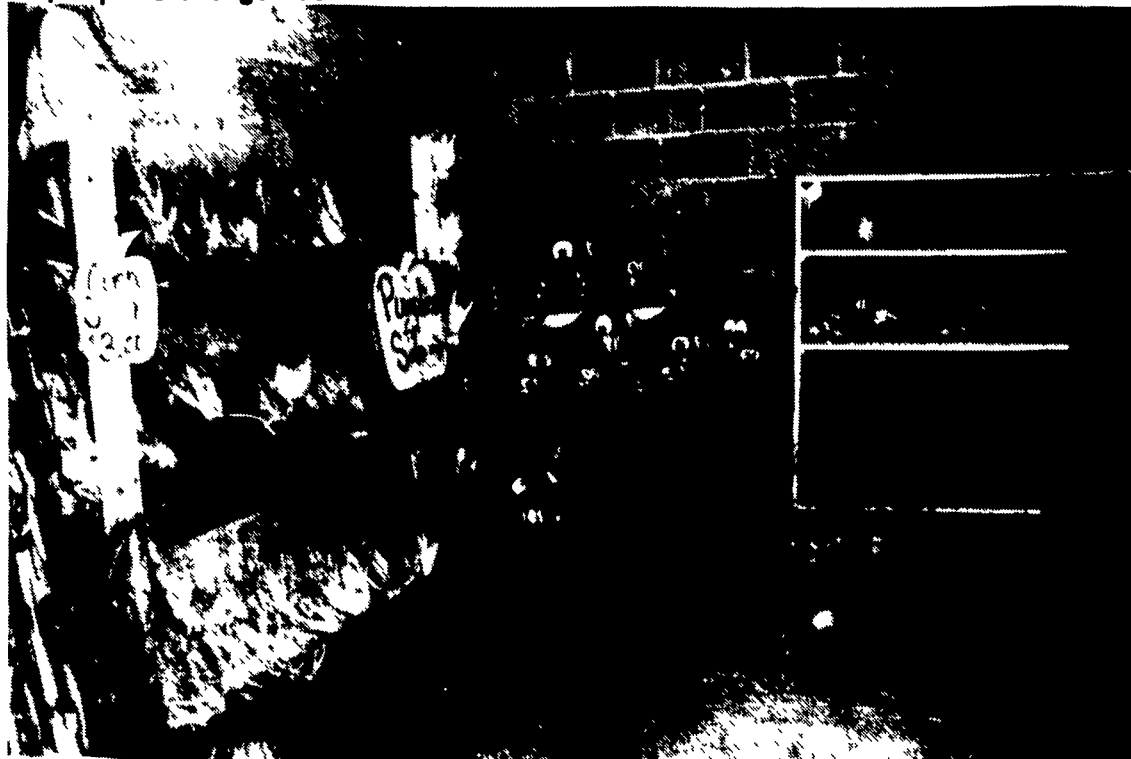
too rainy when the blossoms pollinated. Whatever the reason, pumpkin fields are not as profuse as in recent years.

On the Geib farm, customers can browse among the display to find that perfect face or the multi-colored Indian corn. It's a self-service stop that includes a mini-petting zoo.

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No two pumpkins are alike for these two free-hand artists. Yvonne and her mother-in-law, Anna Marie Geib, spend many hours painting whimsical expressions on pumpkins and gourds.



You won't find a wicked sneer or a sad face among this collection of painted pumpkins. These happy faces delight folks of all ages.

Homestead Notes



Yvonne Geib holds one of the painted pumpkins in front of the garage where she also sells Indian gourds, cornstalks, and numerous varieties of pumpkins.