

Rural Scenes From Elva's Art Shanty

(Continued from Page B2)

Elva quit school to work on her parents' dairy farm. In her spare time, she and an older sister continue to draw pictures. They saved their pennies to purchase a book on landscape drawing. Then they met an artist, Arlene Stauffer, who lived nearby and who painted scenes on milk cans.

"I adored her work and spent hours watching her paint," Elva said.

Elva was told, "There are three things an artist needs to do. Number one — practice. Number two — practice. And, number three — practice."

Elva took the advice seriously. "I made myself practice everyday," she said.

She practiced on glass milk jugs, stones, and wherever she could find materials.

Neighbors who saw her work asked her for gift items.

Her parents began to see that their daughter's artistic talents were more than mere entertainment or a passing phase.

"My father took an interest in my work and encouraged me to try drawing cows in the meadow," Elva said.

At first, Elva was hesitant. Drawing landscapes was easier for her than drawing animals. But with her father's critiquing, Elva perfected her animal drawing skills.

When people asked where Elva got her talent for drawing, her father replied, "Not from me. I still have mine."

When she was 15 years old, Elva's father drove her to gift shops to offer her work for sale.

"I discovered all I had to do was put a horse and buggy on a scene and tourists would buy it," Elva said.

The family had neither television nor radio to entertain Elva, who

spend long hours painting. Instead her mother read books aloud to Elva as she painted.

"I really missed that after I married," Elva said.

She and Ray married 10 years ago and have a 3-year-old son Josiah and a 3-month-old daughter Bethany.

Elva has long since stopped selling her work at gift shops and tourists shops. She has more work than she can handle painting special orders. In fact, she has trained a niece to help with the special orders.

Elva said, "A lot of farm owners bring me pictures of their farms and ask me to paint them."

She mostly paints farm scenes on saw blades, slate, and on milk cans. Her father goes to a lot of public sales to find milk cans and saw blades.

In recent years, another form of painting has become her primary focus: chalk talks.

Before crowds of people, Elva uses chalk to draw a large picture illustrating a story that is presented with prerecorded music and narration.

"I like the chalk talks, because they allow my husband and I to work together. He does the narration while I draw," Elva said.

"I'm amazed at the amount of invitations," Elva said of bookings she receives from churches, senior citizen center, campgrounds, banquets, and outdoor community celebrations. During the recent Memorial Day month, she had more than two dozen invitations. She has developed programs on history, patriotic, holiday, and

Christian themes.

Elva said that her interest in chalk drawings developed when she and her husband Ray moved to Tulsa, Okla. to attend Bible School for two years. During that time, she was mentored by a chalk artist from Pittsburgh and began using that technique in Sunday school teaching. Word of her work spread and she was soon asked to perform chalk talks for other gatherings.

When people express amazement that an untrained artist has had full-time work for more than 15 years, Elva responds, "I give all the credit to God. He opens doors and things keep expanding. I am really blessed."

In fulfillment of their dreams, the Hursts bought a 20-acre farm about two years ago.

"It was really a rundown farm that my husband and I are having fun in the process of getting it in working order," Elva said.

Ray farms the land in addition to working as a flight instructor at Lancaster Airport.

"Ray loves coming home and climbing on a tractor," Elva said of his diverse careers. The Hursts have some goats and chickens. In the barn, they house ostriches for Hammercreek Exotic, which is located nearby.

A little shed connected to the house is the ideal spot to hang the shingle for Elva's Art Shanty. Inside the building she stores milk cans, saw blades, and slates.

While the secluded fields and woodland surrounding the farm provides inspiration, Elva mostly paints at her kitchen table where she can care for the children and

fulfill household duties.

Elva has painted Erb's Bridge at Mill Way on a milk can. This will be auctioned off at 12:30 p.m. at the Lititz Area Mennonite School benefit auction on June 27.

Lititz Area Mennonite School's 21st annual benefit auction and chicken barbecue will be held Friday, June 26, and Saturday, June 27.

Friday's activities begin with a chicken barbecue dinner, with drive-thru and eat-in services, available from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Winross trucks and collectibles will be sold at the Friday evening auction between 6 p.m.-8 p.m. A special program for children will be held from 7:15 p.m. with Ryan Bombgardner, a ventriloquist. Quilts, artwork, and many other items will be display Friday evening.

Saturday begins with an "all you can eat" country buffet breakfast, served from 6:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m. Enjoy eggs, pancakes, sausage, tater tots, fresh fruit, muffins, and juice for \$4. Children 6-10 years are \$2, and 5 and under are free.

The auction begins at 9 a.m. with a wide variety of items, including crafts, baskets, pottery, American Doll clothes, Lissi Doll, Beanie Babies, Wooden items, sports cards, lawn and garden items, plants, and flowers.

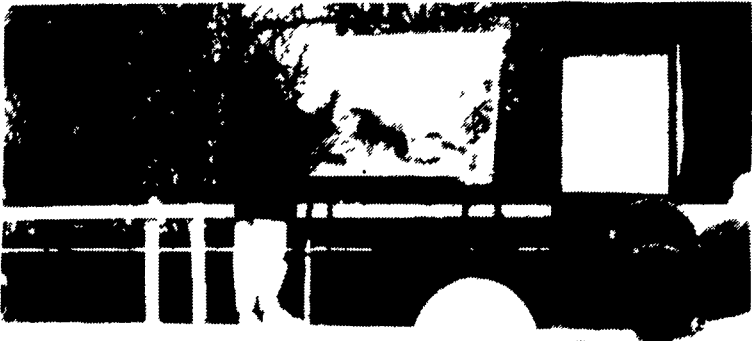
At noon a large and diverse grouping of artwork will be sold. Special features such as a 3-D handcrafted painting by Lorraine Reiff, a Sam Martin wooden cattle truck, and a handpainted milk can by Elva Hurst will be sold at 12:30 p.m. Quilts and wall hangings will be auctioned at 1 p.m.

Children's activities begin a 10 a.m. with pony rides, train rides, crafts, fish toss, moonwalk, face painting, and other games.

A large selection of food will be available throughout the day.

The school is located at 1050 East Newport Rd., Lititz. For more information about the benefit sale, call the school at (717) 626-9551.

For more information about chalk talks or Elva's paintings, call the Hursts at (717) 626-6582.



Before crowds of people, Elva uses chalk to draw a large picture illustrating a story that is presented with prerecorded music and narration. She receives as many as 24 bookings a month to give chalk talks at churches, senior citizen center, campgrounds, banquets, and outdoor community celebrations. She has developed a selection of chalk talks related to history, patriotic, holiday, and Christian themes.

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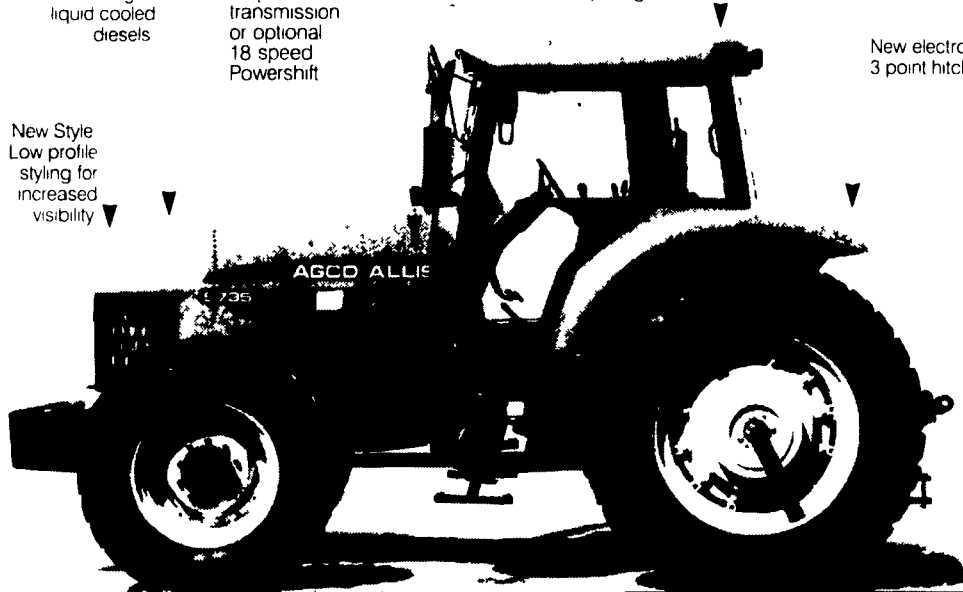
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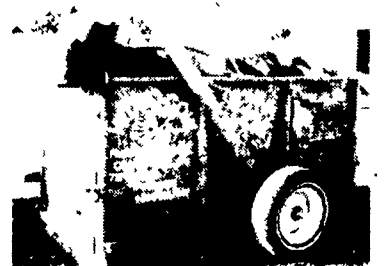
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