



At the Somerset County Fair, Secretary of Agriculture Samuel E. Hayes Jr., center, talks with a visitor while Byron Glessinger, fair board president, watches.

## Somerset Fair Keeps Growing

GAY BROWNLEE

**Somerset Co. Correspondent**  
MEYERSDALE (Somerset Co.) — "When I am in Somerset County I feel like I'm at home." Samuel E. Hayes Jr., the state secretary of agriculture told the crowd during an intermission of the Crystal Marie show.

The secretary was in town to be the grand marshal of the annual Farmers and Merchants Parade at the Somerset County Fair and to help dedicate two new buildings, the pavilion and the exhibit hall, invested in by the fair board of directors.

The skies overhead dumped more moisture than the planned activities could absorb on Monday evening. The parade was scratched, but the benefits of the new, bleacher-filled pavilion, were shown to tremendous advantage.

Crystal Marie's show could go on as usual and Hayes who was accompanied by Kenneth Mowry, regional director stood inside, just beyond the dripping eaves, and enjoyed the 12-year-old singer as did everybody else.

"I always say a county fair that is standing still is not standing still," Hayes added when on the platform, "it is falling behind," he emphasized to the audience.

"This is as good a fair as you will find in Pennsylvania or anywhere else," the well-traveled Hayes observed.

It's obvious that Crystal Marie knows how to woo new fans with an amazing stage presence for one so young. She often was moving through the crowd, shaking hands while continuing to sing.

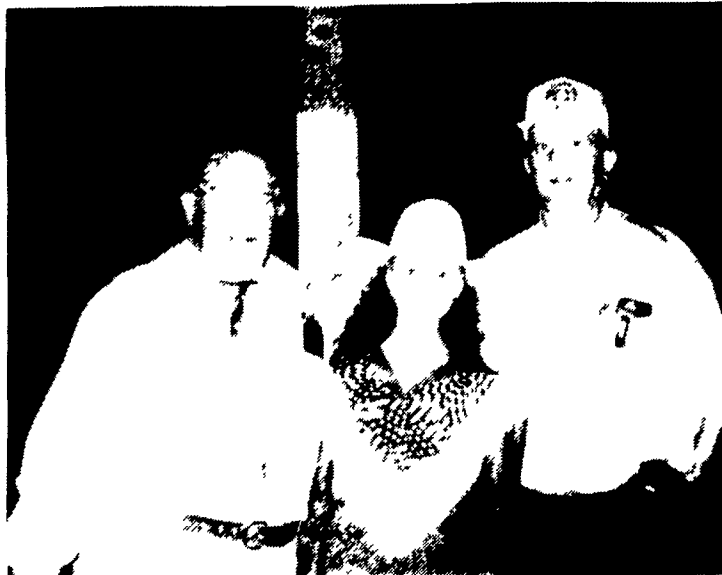
No seasoned politician running for office could have outshone the beguiling young lady in her nifty red, white and blue spangled costume, made by her grandmother Linda, who hand-makes all the costumes, and acts as her agent.

Crystal's folks at all times are with Crystal Marie during the family-oriented shows.

Fran, Crystal Marie's mother, helps her daughter with choreography and writes songs. Dave, her dad, and Denny, her grandfather, manage the sound system.

David, her brother, manages the computer side and Adam, age 4, keeps everybody happy and down to earth.

"He is my cheerer upper," Crystal says. "He runs up on stage and hugs me."



Performer Crystal Marie, 12, poses with Somerset County commissioner David Mankamy and sheriff Carl Brown at the Somerset County Fair.

At age 7 she entered Crazy Fest, a talent show for amateurs held in Altoona. Two years ago she entered the county fair circuit starting in Lycoming County.

"It was really neat," she recalled. "I had never signed so many autographs."

The funniest part was the things that were presented for her signature — horse brushes, swimsuits, hats, books.

In 1977, because she showcased at the Hershey Convention Center where the

county fair associations book talents for their various fairs, a whirlwind schedule was soon in the works for 1998. From June through October Crystal will appear on numerous stages across the state.

She hopes country-western singing is becoming a career where ballet, jazz and tap dancing she learned earlier will be a bonus. In fact, her on-stage poise and obvious ease with people already testifies that it is.

## Julie Sechler Is Somerset Fair Queen

GAY BROWNLEE

**Somerset Co. Correspondent**  
MEYERSDALE (Somerset Co.) — After her coronation following the Sunday night Vesper Service, 18-year-old Julie Sechler became highly visible to

visitors coming to the Somerset County Fair, which was blessed with lots of great weather.

After all, she was the new fair queen, so to exhibit friendliness to everyone she met was a

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Somerset County Fair Queen Julie Sechler passes coloring books to children who are awaiting the start of children's pedal power competition on the midway.

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