

# ***Jewel of the Alpenfest — pageant grows, changes in quarter century***

**T**he 25th jewel in the Alpenfest crown will be named Friday evening, July 21 when the 1989 Alpenfest Queen is coronated.

The new queen will take her place in the annals of the history of Alpenfest, which celebrates its silver anniversary during the July 18-22 event.

Since the first Alpine Festival in 1965, there has been a queen's pageant or competition.

According to Deni Malhmeister, current queen's competition chairman and 1977 Alpenfest Queen, the event has evolved from a full pageant with talent, evening gown and swimsuit competition, to a competition that emphasizes interaction with the public, and talent.

Alpenfest Queen contestants were rarely involved in the festival they sought to represent prior to the change in the competition three years ago.

"The girls are so much more involved in Alpenfest," said Lynn Van Putten, secretary of Alpenfest Inc. and former competition chairperson.

Longtime pageant worker Norma Elgas recalled the years when, under the direction of Bill Merrill, the event resembled a miniature Miss America pageant.

In those days, the queen mothers and the committee chairwoman moved the piano and put up the backdrops for the elaborated production numbers.

One year, Elgas recalled, the candidates popped out of wrap-



1978 Queen Marlene Polus crowns 1979 Queen Cheryl Nephew

ped packages on the stage when they were introduced.

She said the candidates were involved in other pre-pageant activities to call attention to the fledgling festival.

"Back then we tried extra hard for the exposure," she said.

"I have always admired all of the queen's candidates," added Elgas, who had two daughters among the many contestants. "The girls have been great ambassadors for Gaylord."

Nine young women are competing for 1989 crown during four days of competition on the

Alpenstrasse.

The secret judging will begin Wednesday, July 19 when the candidates introduce themselves. They will be judged on personality, speech, appearance and poise.

Thursday night, talent competition will be held in which the judges will look for originality, technical skill, appearance and stage presentation.

Street participation will also count in the judging. Judges will be on the Alpenstrasse as the contestants participate in events and man the Alpenfest booth.

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