# The Lady of the Lake

***By F. Charles Petrillo***

**Contest winners in 1958 (left-to-right): Judith Price, 3rd Place; Connie S. Artuso, Lady of the Lake; Mary Ann Strilka, 1957 winner; Barbara Vitale, Runner-Up. Far-left is Judy Williams, the 1958 "Little Lady of the Lake."**

From 1950 to 1964 the Harvey's Lake Lions Club sponsored an annual Lady of the Lake beauty contest. In its first year the local contest was created to choose a Miss Harvey's Lake to in turn compete in a statewide "Queen of Pennsylvania Lions Clubs" and as a possible entrant to a Lions International competition with entrants from 27 countries.

The 1950 contest was held at Sandy Beach on Labor Day with 5,000 visitors. On the same day another 8,000 to 10,000 persons attended the 26th annual picnic and family reunion associated with the councils of the Jr. OUAM of Luzerne, Lackawanna and Wyoming Counties. Renee Janoski of Nanticoke was crowned Miss Harvey's Lake from among 34 young women and 12 finalists. Beverly May Strunk placed second and Ruth

**The Lady of the Lake contest was held at Sunset from 1951 to 1964. (August 1958)**

Ann Drexinger of Exeter placed third. Winners received certificates for wardrobe purchases.

In 1951 Patty Roberts, the 18 year old daughter of Rev. and Mrs. George A. Roberts, of Wyoming Methodist Church, was awarded the crown from among 45 entrants. The contest was now held at Sunset where it remained until the contests closed.

In 1952 the contest title was renamed Lady of the Lake with Agnes McGlynn of Avoca as the winner. The contest had to be delayed to Sunday, September 7, due to unfavorable weather conditions on Labor Day.

With temperatures in the low 50's on Labor Day 1953, only 3,500 spectators attended the contest at Sunset Park when Jean Lynn, of Wilkes-Barre, won the contest. With the 1953 weather experience the contest moved to August dates in future years. With better weather in late August 1954, 10,000 spectators saw Karen Jenkins of Lee Park crowned Lady of the Lake.

The 1954 season also saw the first Little Lady of the Lake contest which was won by 6 year old Marsha Williams, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Williams.

The Lady of the Lake contests, in these years were the only significant fund-raising event for the Lions Club which relied on the proceeds for its charitable and service work. Usually the semi-finals for the Labor Day contest were held the previous week-end and they drew large crowds. The Lions Club also treated the semi-finalists and their families to a dinner-dance, at times at O'Connell's Twin Lakes. At times the Labor Day events coincided with Harvey's Lake Boat Club speed boat races.

**Little Lady of the Lake contest, August 1958**

The 1962 winner, Rosemary Stella, was the second-place winner in 1961. In 1962 the third-place winner was Johanna Siscavage, Exeter, who had earlier won the title of Miss Sandy Beach. By the early 1960's, however, interest in the contests declined. There were only 18 contestants in 1963.

There were 19 contestants in 1964, the final year of the contest. The winner, Bonnie Gennetts, 18, was a graduate of Lake-Lehman High School and was planning to pursue studies in Washington D.C. In this final year Gloria Wright, Pittston, who was Miss Northeastern Pennsylvania in the Miss Universe contest, took first runner-up, and Alana Matter, a Bloomsburg College student from Lake-Lehman, was second runner-up.

In later years the Lion's Club offered other fund-raising events at the Lake and it still continues its tradition of service to the Lake Community.

## The winners of the Lady of the Lake contest were:

| Year | Lady | Little Lady |
|---|---|---|
| 1950 | Renee Janoski | n/a |
| 1951 | Patty Roberts | n/a |
| 1952 | Agnes McGlynn | n/a |
| 1953 | Jean Lynn | n/a |
| 1954 | Karen Jenkins | Marsha Williams |
| 1955 | Jacqueline Wargo | n/a |
| 1956 | Virginia Lee Hardy | Myrna Rae Lisses |
| 1957 | Mary Ann Strilka | Sharon Lynn Leinthall |
| 1958 | Connie Smith Artuso | Judy Williams |
| 1959 | Irene Hasey | Georgine Petroskas |
| 1960 | Gladys Dailey | Christine Garrity |
| 1961 | Georgeen Kingster | Andrea Lavax |
| 1962 | Rosemary Stella | Carol Pilger |
| 1963 | Marianne Grohowski | Ann Kitchen |
| 1964 | Bonnie Gennetts | Ann Doris |