



MINK COAT? . . . It takes a lot of little animals like the one held by Mrs. Betty Parsons of 1472 W. 178th St. to make milady's much-coveted mink coat, but that's all to the good of Betty and her husband, Vernon. The Parsons have filled their hours for the past six years raising the silky creatures on their ranch. (Herald photo).

LADIES' PARADISE

Backyard of Silky Minks Presided Over by Woman

By MARJIE MEYER

Mink is still a girl's best friend—particularly when he resides in her own back yard!

Betty Parsons of 1472 W. 178th St. has one on most other girls, too. Husband Vernon doesn't mind a bit, because the Parsons, up and coming mink ranchers, raise the silky creatures.

Vernon Parsons grew up in Edmonton, Alta. Canada, a provincial capitol nestled in abundant wheat fields. During the last depression he noticed that all the farmers were going broke—all, it is, except those who nursed minks, and they were making money.

Vernon decided that some day he would raise minks, but it wasn't until six years ago that he gave it a try.

Betty and Vernon were living in Los Angeles with none of the necessary facilities for mink-raising—they bought nine females from a large rancher and let him breed them. The next year they increased their stock and moved to their current abode, where 155 females and 45 males now provide them with full-time jobs.

Betty was raised in these parts, but didn't know what minks were until she and Vernon began to keep them. The animals, noted for their razor-sharp teeth and viciousness, all wanted to bite Betty the first year, and she was scared to death.

By trial and error she discovered they could be calmed with handling.

Genetics play a primary part in getting the different colors, though not many books have been written on the art of raising a mink. Ranchers must know about crosses and double-crosses before breeding season commences or they're liable to have some strange results.

Women whose pocketbooks allow mink coats are clamoring this year for sapphire mink—a soft grey both bluer and lighter than the long-famous platinum. While Betty and Vernon would like to comply with demand, they must breed their animals three years before a sapphire appears—and then it's only chance.

First a silver blue and a platinum are crossed. Their kits are all dark dithydris. The next year the dithydris are crossed, and by genetics percentages one out of 16 will be a sapphire (that's where the "chance" comes in). From then on sapphires mated with sapphires will produce sapphires.

Minks breed only once a year—during a three-week period in March. This is when silence descends on the Parsons household, for sudden noises cause the shy little animals to stop breeding, an expensive loss for their owners.

Forty-two to 48 days usually lapse between breeding and birth of the tiny kits who make their appearance between April 25 and May 15. Mama minks are most vicious after their offspring are born and the Parsons leave them strictly alone for two weeks.

Betty said maternal feeling runs strong in minks. If insufficient food is placed in their pens they'll starve themselves

to keep the kits alive. Rumor has it that mink scat their kits. This, says Mrs. Parsons, is incorrect, though they do kill the deformed or sick ones—a sort of selective natural breeding. Occasionally, if they're frightened, the mamas will accidentally kill a kit trying to move it out of harm's way.

Raising the small animals is a difficult and time-consuming business. After breeding and birth the babies must be cared for until November, when their "priming season" starts. Their coats thicken and become glossy, and the Parsons must decide which of their little pets will go to market.

Demand varies from year to year among furriers—a mink rancher must try to anticipate milady's desire. Even though a rancher may consider a certain fur one of the prettiest, it's always a moot question until auction time whether he'll get his money out of it.

Everyone at some time wonders at the cost of a mink coat, which has the social connotation of a Cadillac. The first minks purchased are part of the answer—a good live female costs \$75 and up. Feed averages \$10-\$12 a year per animal, and it takes many little minks to make one coat.

Betty and Vernon Parsons were instrumental in forming the Los Angeles Fur Farmers Cooperative two years ago, a group which has made things easier and cheaper for the small rancher. It is a clearinghouse for information, buys vaccines in wholesale lots, and provides feed.

Betty was secretary of the original group of eight farmers, each of whom put in \$200. The co-op now has over 40 members and is worth \$10-\$12,000.

Social life for Betty and Vernon Parsons is like that of any farmer—not very active. Something must always be done to or with the minks, and they hesitate to depart for far places unless their valuable animals are in good hands.

Betty hasn't acquired a mink coat yet, but says she'd hate to go out and feed the live ones with a pelt of their mother or father reposing on her back.

COFFEE HOUR GIVEN BY EL NIDO PARENTS
El Nido Parents Association sponsored a mid-morning snack of coffee and doughnuts recently at the homes of Mrs. W. J. Kerschner, 18520 Burn Ave. and Mrs. W. A. Wright, 18323 Roslin Ave.

Proceeds have been put into a general fund for an Easter party to be given for children at the school. Hostesses for the event included Meses. Kerschner, Wright, W. Pearl, G. Simonson, Glenn Runsted and Russell Edwards.

Amaranth's Slate Supper For March 19

A pot-luck dinner will precede the business meeting and election of officers of Redondo Court 44, Order of Amaranth, March 19 at 6 p.m.

Many members of the group attended the initiation and birthday meeting of the court Feb. 20, when courtesy night was celebrated. Acting courtesy officers included Eugene Spencer, Maybelle Spencer, Helen Wilson, Frank Schmidt, Halle Parbois, Ada Anderson and Mattie Meyer; all of Lomita Court 61, and officers of other courts in this area.

Co-chairmen of the refreshment hour were Mrs. Della Sauer and Mrs. Grace Alice Mort. They served a birthday cake decorated for the occasion by Hafner's of Torrance.

Mrs. Della Sauer, press chairman for the court, announced that the first March meeting will

Youngsters Give Program

Members of North Torrance Elementary PTA were treated to a program of dancing by pupils of the Fred Totten Studio at their recent meeting in the school.

Taking part in the program were Miss Doris Long, teacher of the youngsters; Bonnie Winick, Vickie Cumming, Mary L. Payne, Janet Leech, Karen

CLUB BEHAVIOUR

Good manners in clubs are the same as good manners elsewhere, only a little more so. There is no place where a person has greater need of restraint or consideration of others than in a club.

Thirteen members of the North Torrance PTA attended the recent open council meeting in the Woman's Club. Procees from the recent rummage sale sponsored by North Torrance Elementary PTA will go to the Dental Clinic Fund. Mrs. Joseph McBe, PTA president, extends her thanks to residents who helped with the sale.

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