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Augusta Country

October 1994
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P.O. Box 51 Middlebrook, Va. 24459

Bill Edwards moves on down the road

By NANCY SORRELLS

Bill Edwards and his wife, Reba, are sitting in their remodeled family room, reminiscing about the last 25 years or so. After a moment's thought, Bill leans forward in his chair and speaks slowly but with conviction: "Anyone who has a dream can fulfill it...if they work at it."

Bill should know. His dream was always to drive trucks. That dream was easily filled while he was still in his early 20s but then he put that dream on hold for a bigger dream of raising a family. But still he kept dreaming and working at it and today he not only drives trucks, he is the CEO of Edwards Trucking, a firm he started from scratch more than 20 years ago.

"When I got out of the service, I knew I either wanted to farm or to drive, but I was too young to drive (24 in those days) so I got a job on the dock at Smith's Transfer. Pretty soon I got a job jockeying, or putting the trucks in and out of the dock. Finally I turned 23 and they were really needing drivers, so they put me on probation until I turned 24," he explained.

It takes a special person to get behind the wheel of a truck and drive for long hours all over the country, but Bill must have it in his blood. "I just love to drive. I've always been on the go. I seem to relax more in a truck than I can sitting here in this front room," he says. Even today, as CEO of his own company, Bill would rather get behind the wheel and head down the road. "To me it's the best job in the company, and I've had them all, but I'd rather drive. I still try to drive a run once a week if I can."

See COVER STORY, Page 3

Bill Edwards, of Rt. 1, Staunton, prepares to hit the road in one of his company's trucks.
Photo by Danielle McMillion

Augusta Country publisher and editor Betty Jo Hamilton shows off a giant watermelon weighing 75 pounds and measuring 54 inches in circumference. The melon was grown by Bob Root and his family, Ruth Ann, Afton, Megan, and Aaron, of Mt. Sidney. The melon was eaten by the Joel Hamilton family of Middlebrook.
Photo by Lee Ann Heizer

Have Pierce Arrow, will travel

By NANCY SORRELLS

Over the years, Bill Edwards has hauled just about anything imaginable in his trailers, but the most unique cargo probably has to be President Woodrow Wilson's Pierce Arrow.

The restored car, which Wilson used during his term as the nation's 28th president, is displayed at the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace and Museum in Staunton. Every once in a while the car gets a chance to travel and Edwards Trucking has become the unspoken designated carrier for the priceless vehicle.

Bill's relationship with the Pierce Arrow began several years ago when the national Pierce Arrow Association requested the loan of Wilson's car for its annual show in Asheville, N.C. Bill and one of his trucks was recommended as the best way for the car to travel from Staunton to Asheville where it became the drawing card for the show. Now the car travels to the annual show nearly every year whether it be in Michigan or California, and Bill is the car's personal escort.

"I guess the highlight was when I took the Pierce Arrow to Pebble Beach, Calif. I was a week going out and I only drove in the daylight because I wanted to see the country. It was a trip I will never forget," Bill remembers.

Because he had to have papers describing his cargo as he crossed state lines, he encountered plenty of amazement whenever he entered a weighing station and showed his papers describing the cargo.

"They couldn't believe I had what the papers said I had, so I had to go out and throw the doors open for them. In New Mexico everybody left the scale house to look!" he says.

Even when he's not hauling the Pierce Arrow, Bill promotes the Wilson Birthplace. He is in the process of mounting 24- by-30-inch signs on the rear door of his company's trailers inviting the public to come and visit the Birthplace. --

Welcome to Augusta Country!

Greetings and welcome to **Augusta Country**!

As you hold this in your hands, you may be asking yourself, "What is **Augusta Country**?"

Let's see now. It looks like a newspaper. It feels like a newspaper. And it smells like a newspaper. (OK, OK, maybe it doesn't smell like some newspapers.) So if it looks like a newspaper, feels like one, and smells like one, then it must be a newspaper. Right?

Well, **Augusta Country** *IS* new and it *IS* printed on paper so - at the very least - that makes it a "newpaper," which is just one letter shy of being an actual newspaper. Since we don't feel exactly right calling it a newspaper, we'll just say that **Augusta Country** is a new monthly publication for Augusta County and surrounding areas.

To name this new publication, we went back to the year 1738 which is when the county known as "Augusta" was mapped. Then the General Assembly of Virginia marked Augusta County as extending from the Blue Ridge Mountains on the east to the Mississippi River on the west and from Virginia's southern boundary north to the vicinity of the Great Lakes. Back then, almost anywhere settlers traveled, they were in Augusta country.

Even though the county's boundaries have since reduced its area to about 1,000 square miles, we still like to think of Augusta County as taking in much more than geographic boundaries and hence the name "**Augusta Country**." Also, just as early settlers traveled through uncharted territories of the newly named county, we at **Augusta Country** feel there is still much to be learned about Augusta County and neighboring areas. It is our intent to explore today's Augusta country and bring a report to you each month of what we find.

And when we say "Augusta County" we acknowledge that there's a lot of city life in Augusta country, too. If you happen to live in one of Augusta's cities - Staunton or Waynesboro - you're still in Augusta country and we'll be visiting with both city and county folks in upcoming issues of Au-

See WELCOME, page 2

We'd like you to meet...

We didn't have to look much further than our back door to find talented individuals (if we do say so ourselves) to help pull together **Augusta Country's** premiere issue. It's our pleasure to introduce ourselves to you.

Betty Jo Hamilton, publisher and editor

Betty Jo, an Augusta County native, is no stranger to many of you who have become acquainted with her through the column "Down on the farm." This previously appeared in a local newspaper and served as the springboard for Betty Jo to create **Augusta Country**. A product of Augusta County's educational system, Betty Jo graduated from Riverheads High School and earned her bachelor's degree in mass communications from Mary Baldwin College. She has worked in public relations at the former King's Daughters' Hospital and most recently was employed by The Daily News Leader in Staunton as a news editor. Betty Jo lives near Middlebrook at "Brookside," her family's farm, and shares her "personal space" with seven cats, four dogs, and any number of other creatures which happen to wander through.

Roberta H. Hamlin, Washington correspondent

Augusta Country is the only local newspaper to offer exclusive coverage of what really goes on in the Nation's capital. Roberta pens "Reflecting Pool reflections" which is found in **Augusta Country's** Country Crossroads section and is a self-described "weaver, spinner, gardener, craftsperson, and sometime writer." A native of North Carolina, Roberta was educated in Reidsville, N.C. public schools. She holds a bachelor's degree in design from Texas Women's University and a master's degree in art history from Johns Hopkins University. For 10 years she worked as an assistant to a Washington consultant and since 1986 has been the executive director of Krewe of Louisianians, a non-profit Louisiana organization with offices in Washington, D.C. After over 25 years in the Washington, D.C. area doing - Roberta says - "whatever it is people do there," she now considers her home to be among her looms and spinning wheels at the Middlebrook Inn in Middlebrook.

Lee Ann Heizer, staff writer

Combining her talents of writing and artistry, Lee Ann has worked to create and prepare the Country Kid Stuff section of **Augusta Country**. An Augusta County native and also a product of its public schools, Lee Ann is a graduate of Riverheads High School. She holds a bachelor's degree in biology with an emphasis in education from Mary Baldwin College. She is currently enrolled in the Master of Arts in Teaching program at Mary Baldwin. Perhaps that which is Lee Ann's greatest accomplishment - and challenge - are her two children, Sarah, 7, and Andrew, 5. Lee Ann and her husband, Tom, work diligently each day to outwit these two fireballs. Lee Ann also happens to be the sister of **Augusta Country's** publisher and editor. You know what they say, "It pays to know people in high places," but - in this case, as Lee Ann is finding out - it doesn't pay.

Roy Howard, staff minister

If any enterprise ever needed a connection to a higher power it's this one and that's why one of the first staff positions we filled was that of staff minister. You'll find Roy's contribution to **Augusta Country** in the Country Crossroads section. His column, "Saying Grace," offers some good old fashioned Presbyterian perspective to everyday life. Those of you who think Presbyterians are mostly a somber lot might be surprised to find that Roy's first offering is filled with biting satire. (Read his column on page 13 and you'll see what we mean!) Roy grew up on the Gulf Coast of North Florida. After graduating from Florida State University, he worked for several years as a social worker. He completed his seminary education at Candler School of Theology of Emory University and is an ordained Presbyterian minister. A year ago, he became pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church after serving Second Presbyterian Church in Lexington, Ky. Roy and his wife, Claudia, have two daughters, Rachel and Rebecca, a dog named Abby and two cats, Maxwell and Jasmine. They live in the Bethel manse on Bethel Green Road - that's road, Roy, not street - near Middlebrook.

Nancy Sorrells, staff writer

Another graduate of Riverheads High School - this is almost getting monotonous - Nancy holds a bachelor's degree in history from Bridgewater College. She works as a research historian at the Museum of American Frontier Culture and for herself as a free lance writer. She recently co-authored the book, "A Cyclist's Guide to the Shenandoah Valley." Nancy is currently pursuing her master's degree in state and local history at James Madison University. Nancy is not a native of Augusta County, but we won't hold that against her. She moved to the area from Manassas when she was 14 years old and has stayed put ever since. She and her husband, Randy, live near Lofton and share their home with two dogs and a cat. In addition to her responsibilities as staff writer, Nancy also has served as computer consultant and editorial assistant for Augusta Country's first issue. Also, on several occasions, it was necessary that she revive a publisher and editor who had lapsed into catatonia during marathon sessions at the computer composing this issue of **Augusta Country**. Thanks Nancy. A good, hard slap in the face never hurt anybody. Although you might have carried things a little too far when you dumped that pitcher of ice water over my head.

Staff photos by Danielle McMillion (Thanks, Dee, for making us all look so good!)

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Attention churches and civic groups:

If your organization is planning an event and would like it publicized in Augusta Country, let us know about it. Send information for Augusta Country's coming events column to Augusta Country, P.O. Box 51, Middlebrook, Va. 24459. Items must be received by the 15th of the month prior to the month of publication. Items will be published as space allows.

Subscribe now to Augusta Country!

Simply fill out the form below and mail it with your check for $12 for a one year's subscription to Augusta Country, P.O. Box 51, Middlebrook, Va. 24459. Subscribe now. You won't want to miss a single issue!

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Where or from whom did you get your first copy of Augusta Country? _____

Welcome

Continued from page 1

gusta Country.

What we'll primarily be bringing you will be human interest stories. You won't find much - what the news media establishment calls - "hard news" in **Augusta Country**. For example, if you've grown a giant vegetable or eaten a giant vegetable, we at **Augusta Country** want to know about it. But if you've crashed your car into a giant vegetable, we don't want to know about it.

To further explain what **Augusta Country** is, here are a few examples of what it isn't. It's not punk rock or heavy metal. It's not striking baseball players or Los Angeles murder trials. And it's not E-mail or Voice Mail or junk mail.

"So what, then, is **Augusta Country**?" you ask, taking us back to our original question. Well, it's really quite simple.

Augusta Country is homemade and home grown. It's rocking chairs on porches and a chat at the front gate with a neighbor. It's children on swings in backyards. It's a cool breeze in summer and a warm fire in winter. **Augusta Country** is about your friends, families, and neighbors. Simply put, **Augusta Country** is friendly news for friendly people.

Augusta Country will be a subscription-based publication (For subscription information, see form above.) Most newspapers rely on advertising revenues to foot the bill for publication. There are a couple of reasons we won't be using display advertising - other than our own - in issues of **Augusta Country**. First, we think it's a real pain to have to get out and sell advertising space and, second, we don't think readers should have to pay to look at advertisements. This is not to say we won't pursue some form of revenue generating ad mechanism in the future because we probably will. But we hope to be creative enough about this so that we will not inconvenience readers or ourselves with advertising.

With introductions out of the way then, let's get right to this, the premiere issue, of Augusta Country.

The theme word for this issue is "scratch." Since we're starting from scratch at **Augusta Country**, this month's cover story is about a Route 1, Staunton man who started from scratch and now owns and operates his own trucking firm. The story begins on page 1 and is continued on page 3.

For history buffs we present an **Augusta Country** exclusive, "Scratching in the dirt," - pages 4 and 5 - a look back at mining in southern Augusta County.

In the chicken scratch category, on pages 6-7, you'll read about an Augusta County farm family who raises chickens - among other critters - on their Little North Mountain farm.

For a tasty Halloween treat, check out the "Made from Scratch" cookie recipe on page 15 of the children's section

And last but not least, travel "Down on the farm" (pages 8 - 9) to meet some folks who are scratching out a living.

Once again, welcome to Augusta **Country**! Whether you live in the city or the country, we hope you'll enjoy your visit with us enough that you will subscribe to **Augusta Country**. Your response in this fashion will tell us if we've managed to hatch an idea or merely laid an egg.

Until next month,

Betty Jo Hamilton
Publisher and editor

Scratching in the dirt

Mining once important industry in southern Augusta County

By NANCY SORRELLS

GREENVILLE - Except for the oldtimers, few people realize the secrets the earth holds in southeastern Augusta County. Unless you know where to look, little evidence remains of the extensive mining which once went on south and east of Greenville in an area that extends just beyond the Rockbridge line.

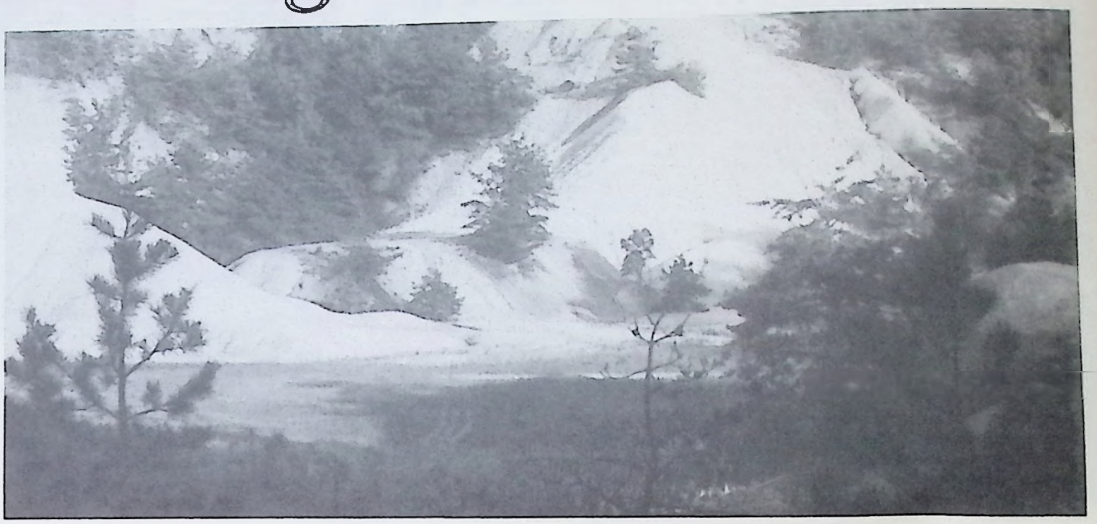
But the oldtimers remember. Some worked digging minerals from the earth, others helped in support industries that sprang up along the Norfolk and Western Railroad. For a little more than half a century from about 1900 to the 1950s there were more than 20 mines ripping up the earth here in search of wealth. The majority were related to manganese and iron or a mixture of the two. Other tracts were mined for gravel and sand, bauxite, unakite and cassiterite.

As early as 1879 a geologist named J.L. Campbell emphasized the economic mineral potential of the area which roughly included corners of Nelson, Amherst, Rockbridge, and Augusta and contained the villages of Greenville, Vesuvius, Steeles Tavern, Raphine, Spottswood, Montebello, and Massies Mill.

Perhaps the most memorable mining operation and the one that sticks in the minds of people who grew up on the outskirts of Greenville is the kaolin mine, known locally as the clay pits or the chalk mine.

The remains of the mining operation can still be seen today by travelers heading south on U.S.11. The ridge to the east marks the beginning of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and on a clear day the mounds of white and tan clay are clearly visible about a third of the way up the hillside.

Kaolin, or clay, actually has a number of uses. Good pure white clay can be used for porcelain and as paper filler, while impure colored clay can be used in oil paints, rubber, and even camouflage paint. The deposits of kaolin in the area were recognized in the 19th century.



More than 40 years after Cold Spring Mining Company closed down its operations very little grows on the mounds of kaolin left behind by the miners. The rugged dunes of white, tan, and pink clays stand in stark contrast to the vegetation that is slowly overtaking the remains of the industry which once was a beehive of activity on the side of the mountain.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

An 1866 letter from a geologist visiting Augusta County to a New York City man told of the potential of the "kaolin bed" which "lies some ten miles in a southerly direction from the flourishing town of Staunton." The letter continued: "I am certain it is the most valuable bed of kaolin ever discovered, not excepting the celebrated bed in France..."

The writer could have meant a kaolin deposit found near Sherando Station, a few miles from Greenville. A potteryworks was erected there, but eventually fire and the financial panic of 1873 ended that business venture. The letter could also have been referring to what became known as the Cold Spring mines near Greenville. No mining was done here, however, until 40 years after the letter was written.

In 1906 a pit was sunk on the mountain to mine iron ore. The pit was operated by the Bare Bank Mine for the Cotopaxi Furnace, but the ore bank was soon abandoned for the potential of higher profit to be obtained from kaolin.

Test pits for clay were opened in 1912 and developed until 1918 when the entire works was purchased by the Cold Spring Mining Company, a subsidiary of a New Jersey company. The Cold Spring company developed quite an extensive operation up on the mountainside at around 2,000 feet.

Gaping pits as much as 90 feet deep and 500 to 800 feet wide were opened up nearly three miles up the mountainside. Huge steam shovels loaded the clay onto a narrow gauge line where it was then put on cars and transported by an aerial cable 2.7 miles down a steep slope that approached grades of 17 degrees.

The destination of the aerial cars was a processing plant located at the Cold Spring railroad stop next to the post office of Elard. The post office is no longer in existence and the processing plant is gone but both were located about where Va. 662 crosses the railroad track, about 200 yards west of its intersection with Va. 608.

The drop in elevation from the pits to the plant at the railroad was 1,600 feet. Upon arrival, the cars would dump the clay at the plant and then head back up the mountain. At the plant, the clay was ground, dried, screened, packed in 50-pound bags, and loaded onto a railroad car. Forty tons of clay, or one train car load, were usually shipped out every day.

The heyday of the plant lasted until 1929 when the supply of pure white clay was exhausted. While it was being mined, the white clay was used primarily for paper filler and for years it went to make the pages of the "Saturday Evening Post."

An economic survey of Augusta County in 1928 lauded the mines and the accompanying processing plant. "Near Cold Spring Station, on the Norfolk and Western, there is a wealth of Cambrian Shales. A large and successful clay plant is located at this point. This plant takes local clays, treats them, and turns out products suitable for many uses. These are white clays."

Once the white clay was gone, however, the profits of the mine plummeted. Nonetheless, the less valuable yellow and tan clay was used for camouflage paint in World War II and for paint and fertilizer after the war.

Although the profits of the mine had spiraled downward for a number of years after the high quality clay was exhausted, the death blow for the mine came in the late summer of 1951 when the processing plant along the railroad burned to the ground. It was a tragic event that sticks in the mind's eye of many of the locals old enough to remember that fiery day.

Although there was only one chalk mine located in the area, manganese and iron mines were more numerous. Speculators all over the state wanted to have a hand in finding mineral wealth in this area of the Shenandoah Valley. A letter found in the wall

Continued on top of page 5

Elaine Moran, whose father once worked in the kaolin mines, stands atop one of the mountains of clay. Far below on the valley floor are Greenville and the railroad line which received the kaolin by means of aerial cable cars. A sharp eye and a clear day still reveals the path cut through the trees by the tramway line.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

Continued from page 4

of an area farmhouse, dated 1915, is from a man staying at a hotel in Roanoke who is interested in the mineral potential of the area.

"(I) would ask you as a favor to send me about 50 pounds of Manganese ore from this property...I will pay freight and pay you for the time and trouble if you will send me the bill. Also in confidence let me know of any mineralized tracts near you and the asking price as Farm Lands and I will let you know if anything can be done for with them."

Manganese is used in the manufacture of steel and there was a great demand for it during World War I and then again during World War II. Virginia has long been known for its manganese deposits and large amounts were mined from the Crimora Mines around Waynesboro. From 1867 to 1917, Virginia's manganese output exceeded all other states.

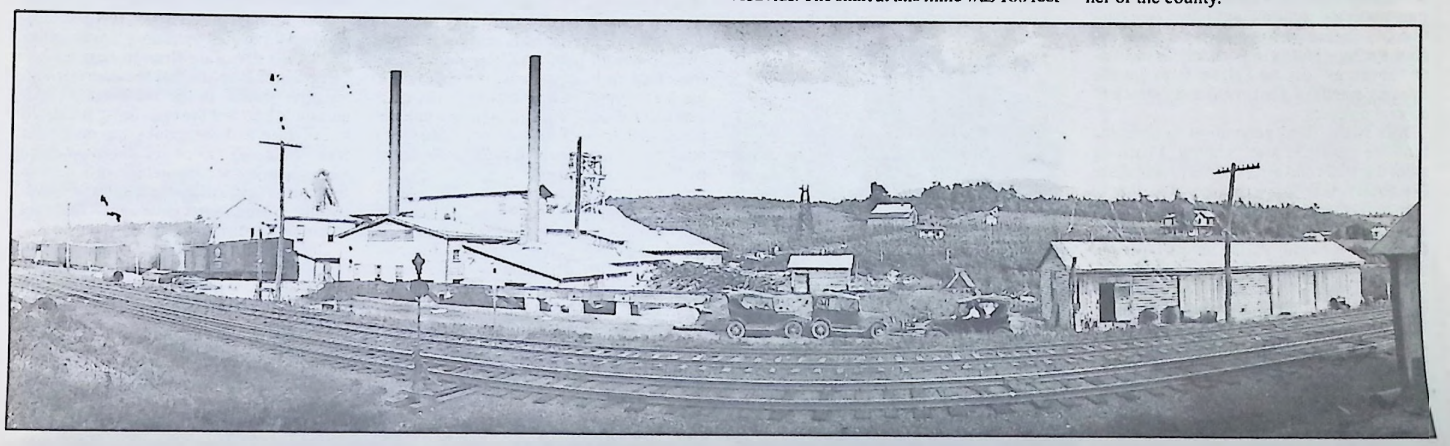
Although numerous, the mines in southeastern Augusta County never proved to contain particularly rich deposits either of iron or of manganese. The area which is now part of the St. Mary's Wilderness was the site of several large open pit mines as well as some underground mines. Mount Torry, Kennedy Mine, Red Mountain Mine, Minebank Mine and Vesuvius Mine all operated in the area or over the mountain in the Sherando and Lyndhurst area.

The latter two mines were the last to close but all have now faded from record. Blue Bank and Old Dixie Mines were older mines which had closed down operations well before 1920.

The Red Mountain Mine cut deep trenches up to 30 feet deep in the St. Mary's area around 1917. The manganese ore was loaded by steam shovel onto wagons and tram cars and then a narrow gauge railroad took it down the gorge to the Norfolk and Western siding at Pkin Station. Minebank, operated by the Pulaski Mine Company, extracted mostly iron ore from the mouth of the St. Mary's gorge. That ore was carried by a 2,200-foot flume to a washer and then by narrow gauge railroad to the Norfolk and Western.

Vesuvius Mine, also called Fauber Mine, and the Vesuvius Manganese Corporation was located about two miles northeast of Vesuvius. The shaft at this mine was 160 feet deep. Further up the mountain above the clay pits and visible from U.S. 11 are several other scars. Apparently some of these are man-made and attributable to the Bare Bank Mine and the Crozier Mine.

Today most of the mining is bat a memory. The minerals deposits in the area were not rich enough or deep enough to compete on a high technically, high-volume world market. A geological survey of the area in 1966 noted that the alluvial deposits of sand and gravel which are as much as 100 feet thick and three miles wide offer the "greatest economic potential of the area." Indeed, today there are two gravel producing operations in the area, the last remnants of what was once an important industry in this corner of the county. - -



The Cold Spring Mining Company's processing plant was located next to the Cold Spring Railroad stop just a few hundred yards from the Ellard Post Office. Kaolin was moved to this complex east of Greenville from the mountainside above via an aerial cable car system. From here the clay was sifted, baked, and packed in bags to be hauled to distant cities by railroad cars. This early 20th century photograph depicts a time when high quality white clay was still being brought from the mines. In 1951 this plant burned to the ground in a blazing inferno which is still recollected by many area residents. This photograph was taken a few hundred yards south of where present day Va. 662 crosses the railroad track near the road's intersection with Va. 608. The large frame house on the right side just above the single story processing plant building was the mining supervisor's house. It can still be seen today, as can the ruins of the processing plant once the vegetation has died down in winter.

Photo courtesy of Elaine Moran

The day the chalk plant burned

Fire was fatal blow to mining operation

By NANCY SORRELLS

Elaine Moran and her brother, Wayman Bradley, remember the late summer day in 1951 when the chalk plant burned near Greenville. For that matter, Elaine's husband, Carson, remembers that day as well. "I ought to, I helped put out the fire," he said.

Carson may have helped put it out, but it was Elaine, and her father, Roy Bradley, who discovered it.

"I remember being at Spottswood with my dad and we were in our 1948 Chevrolet. We came back down the road and we came around the curve we saw smoke. I remember my dad saying 'It's not time for a local,' which is what everybody called the trains coming through," Elaine said.

What Elaine's father first thought was smoke from a train turned out to be smoke from the kaolin processing plant located along the Norfolk and Western railroad at the Cold Spring stop. Her father sent the alarm that the plant was on fire, but the business was a complete loss. The plant and the accompanying kaolin mines 3 miles up the mountainside by tramline never operated again.

Everyone in the area old enough to remember knows where they were when the plant burned, just like people a decade or so later would remember where they were when they heard about Kennedy's assassination.

"Me and Billy Coyner came around that curve after getting off of work and we thought the world was on fire," remembered Wayman who is a few years older than his sister. "Yessir, we thought the world was on fire. It must have been about 5:30 in the evening when we saw it."

Many of the records to the plant and mines were lost in the fire, but a few remain to tell the story of an industry that was once part of the lifeblood of the community. Elaine still has a ledger from 1925. The oversized lined pages still stand as a record of the salaries for the area men and boys employed in the mines up on the mountainside.

As a 16-year-old, her father worked part-time in the mines - as a waterboy , he always told the family. Sure enough, his name is written in ink among several dozen other employees' names. For his services, young Roy made $1.50 a day for 10-hour days.

"My father always said that he was a waterboy and that he made less money than any of them!" Elaine recalled of her dad's stories. There were a few others drawing the huge sum of 15 cents an hour, but nobody made less than that. Some of the men, actual miners and equipment operators no doubt, made more, $2.50 per 10-hour day. Still others cashed in at $3 and $4 per day, while the highest paid employer and the one Roy Bradley always said was in charge of the operation, drew a whopping $6 per day.

Wayman remembers seeing the steam shovels operate up at the mines, tearing the clay up and preparing it to be shipped down the mountain on the tramway.

It was the aerial tramway that amazed other area youngsters like Elaine. "I remember years later taking my children to an amusement park and telling them that the rides there were just like the tramway we saw everyday as kids. That tramway up in the air fascinated us. The cable cars were like little box cars. They would dump the clay and then go back up the mountain."

Once the tramway cars arrived at the Cold Spring depot, the clay was piled in a shed. From there it was shoveled onto a conveyor belt which took it into a kiln to be dried. Once dried, it was bagged and loaded into a box car.

"I remember they stacked those rows of bags seven rows across and seven high," recalled Wayman. He has a special reason to remember this part of the process because during World War II he and some other area teenagers were hired to load the clay after all the area men went off to fight.

"They paid us in cash," he said. "The men who worked were pushing seven bags on a wheelbarrow at a time, but we pushed three one time and four the next," he explained. "There was a time when they operated round the clock and four or five boxcars went out a week," he added.

Of course everything stopped with the fire, but the mining in the area was beginning to grind to a halt anyway. At the kaolin mines, the purest minerals were gone and the others weren't running up much of a profit. Check the memories of the local residents, however. They remember when the chalk mines were part of the community's industry. - -

Farm thrives on 'salad greens, bugs'

Stories and photos by Nancy Sorrells

Salad greens and bugs. Readers may not find that diet too appetizing, but that's what the animals at the Salatin's Polyface farm thrive on. On 550 acres of pasture and woods near Swoope, Joel Salatin and family have taken a struggling dream created by his father, William, and turned it into a thriving family farm. A farm that Joel sees as the farming revolution of the 21st century.

At Polyface there is no tillage equipment, no pesticides and the animals "don't do drugs," Joel said emphatically. Instead there are relaxed animals munching on organic food under the sunshine and raised on a farm that pays attention to nature's seasonal cycles. Perhaps just as importantly as the other "absences" on the Salatin farm are the missing smells of a barnyard and the lack of animal diseases.

Joel is the third generation to combine land stewardship and farming. Learning from the trials and errors of his grandfather, Frederick - who was a charter subscriber to "Organic Gardening and Farming" magazine - and then his parents, William and Lucille, Joel has turned the family farm into the sole economic livelihood of five people.

Thousands of chickens are raised and sold for meat, high quality gourmet eggs leave the farm, grass fattened beef, rabbits and, now, pigs are all raised according to natural methods and then sold to local customers. Other spin-offs from the farm include the sale of firewood and of a book describing Joel's poultry raising techniques

"We really follow the cycles," Joel explained. "We try to take the cycles of nature and domesticate them."

At the heart of the operation is the *grass*, which is a pretty bland term for the calf-high field of diverse plant species that abound in Joel's "hay field." As he squatted down close to the ground and started plucking stalks and leaves from his "salad bar," the young farmer rattled on about the methods he has come to call perennial polyculture.

"Here is plantain and wild carrot and red clover...routinely I will find 20 different species like this. Each species occupies a different strata above and below the ground," he says.

As with the rest of his farming, he has turned to nature for his lessons here in these fields. "Think about the prairies out west that were grazed by the buffalo. The buffalo stayed in herds which created high impact grazing. The animals ate at one place and then moved on. This high impact grazing aerated the soil. The animals were kept in the herds by predators," Joel said as he walked across his rich, green fields.

At the far end of the hilltop is a herd of cows grazing contentedly and confined within an acre or so by an electric fence. The animals were expecting him, and as Joel opens up a new paddock within the pasture,

Lucille Salatin admires the plants in her granddaughter Rachel's garden. Lucille and her husband, William, were the founders of Polyface Farm more than 30 years ago. Although retired, Lucille still helps on the farm when needed and enjoys seeing her dreams and those of her husband come to fruition on the family farm.

the animals walk through the opening and quickly start munching on a new salad bar. The process takes just a few minutes a day and the fencing is more cost effective than permanent fencing.

"We haven't turned a morsel of sod in 34 years, since my dad came here in 1961. But we have recreated nature. We have high impact grazing, but here the electric fence is my predator," he explained.

By moving the animals daily across the electric-fenced paddocks, the animals get fresh feed each day without having to walk but a few yards. Each section of the field gets aerated and fertilized in turn, while the plants in the rest of the pasture have time to reach their fastest growth cycle undisturbed by the animals grazing.

Joel calls the peak point in the pasture grass growth cycle the "blaze of growth," and no paddock is opened to cattle until after the field has gone through its blaze of growth. "In Augusta County, the average cow days per acre of grazing is 70, but we have paddocks that routinely give us 400 days because of management. It's a matter of controlling the animals and cycles so that we're in sync. We manage it in a way that benefits the grass, the animals and the pocketbook," he said.

Tying up the loop in Joel's model of cycles is the egg mobile, a 12 foot by 20 foot mobile hen nesting house that is pulled into each field approximately four days after the cattle have passed through.

"The egg mobile follows within four days because that is the fly cycle. The chickens are our parasite control and they scratch up the cow pies and sanitize the pasture. One hundred birds will eat seven pounds of bugs and grass per day. If they never laid an egg, they would be worth having. The eggs are the cream," he explained.

However, the eggs are laid by the bucketful as the hens go into the mobile house each day to lay and then walk back down their ramp to scratch in the fields. In five minutes Joel had collected two buckets full as he circled the nesting house and opened the boxes from a convenient exterior hinged top.

"We are producing an egg that can't be got anywhere else in the world. They have a deep, almost orange yolk, are highly mineralized, lower in cholesterol and better tasting," he said as he held up a couple of oversized brown eggs.

This summer the Salatins have several hundred layers, but there are plans for quintupling the size of the flock by next season. The reason? It seems that the gourmet, upscale restaurants in the Washington, D.C. area have heard of the eggs being produced at Polyface and are paying top dollar for them. "One of the pastry chefs up there makes her own ice cream. She says it takes fewer of our eggs to get the texture and quality than it does with regular eggs," said Joel in explaining the demand.

Over on another hillside is the other part of the Salatin enterprise which has proved so profitable. Winding up along the rise of the hill are square pens covered with chicken wire. There are 30 pens and each pen houses about 90 birds happily chasing after bugs in the grass.

Pastured poultry is an almost unheard of concept in these days of big agribusiness where chickens and turkeys are marched through incredibly expensive, computer controlled houses. The Salatins have developed an alternative method of poultry production.

The chicks are raised inside until they are between two and four weeks old. Then they are moved to portable pens which are 10 feet by 20 feet and are two feet high. By using a dolly, Joel moves each pen each day so that the chickens have fresh grass to feed on. Because the pens have no bottoms, the chickens simply walk along as the dolly moves the pen.

The hardest part of the operation is when the chickens have reached butchering size

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Daniel Salatin tends to his rabbits. Young Daniel takes care of all aspects of the bunny business from keeping books to feeding and maintenance. These rabbits are in a mobile pen, similar to the chickens' pens, and feed mainly on grass.

For Salatins

Farming is 'all in the family'—

SWOOPE - The concept of a farm family is alive and well at Polyface, Inc., the "farm of many faces." Since September 24, 1982, the farm has supported the Salatin family. That was the day Joel left his job as a journalist to come home to the farm full time. His wife, Teresa, had already been on the farm full time for two years when the family took the financial plunge of not relying on anybody but themselves for income.

The gamble has paid off for the Salatins but as with any farm or business, everyone has a job to do and things run more smoothly when everybody pitches in. Here then is how the characters fit into the script of Polyface, a family farm near Swoope.

Gray haired and strong willed, Lucille is the matriarch of the family. She moved here with her husband, William, and their young family in 1961. Although Lucille and her husband never ran the family farm full time, she has always supported the concept and dream of Polyface. "I think this is wonderful," she said of her son's success. "He (William) would be very pleased to see how things are going. The way things are being preserved." William died a few years back and Lucille is now retired and living right next door to her son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. Her roles as farm tour-guide and chief errand runner into town make her indispensable.

Teresa, 36, and Joel, 37, were high school sweethearts at Buffalo Gap. They went to college together, married, and decided to become partners on the Salatin farm. In addition to keeping the account books, home schooling the children, cleaning the house, tending the garden and canning (Wheeew, stop for a breather here), she also drives the tractor during hay season. "I was raised on a farm, but had three brothers. I never drove a tractor until after I got married," she says with a laugh.

Daniel, a sturdy 13-year-old, is already comfortable discussing agricultural ideas and techniques with adults. He has five years of experience under his belt in his own business of raising rabbits and selling the meat. He takes care of all aspects of the rabbit management including caring for the animals, keeping his own books, making records of breeding schedules, etc. At the age of 8, he was looking for a small business to get into and so he decided to try rabbits.

"I got one and kinda' liked it and got three more," he explained. Today he has 14 does and sells 75 or 80 rabbits a year. As with everything at Polyface, the rabbit business runs in sync with nature. Daniel's butchered rabbits are grass fed and housed in mobile pens in the field. The breeders are kept inside in specially designed houses.

"The rabbits are Daniel's," Joel and Teresa explained. "When I was young it was important for me growing up to have something of my own independent of my parents," Joel added. "This is something he is the resident expert on. If he fails or succeeds, it's based on what he does."

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at eight weeks. Seven times a year, everyone in the family gets up well before dawn and starts the butchering process. The customers have been notified of the butchering dates and have placed orders in advance. They arrive and take their fresh meat home with them. No freezing, no preservatives, just range-raised high quality meat.

"We direct market to about 400 customers around the state. By and large they are not health food nuts, but they are interested in good quality food rather than cheap food. We give people better quality food than they get anyplace else," Joel explained.

Once again, the loop closes. "As we meet the nutritional needs of the people in the highest way, it forces us to farm land in the most healthful way. Our product is people friendly, plant friend and animal friendly," he added.

Many people have tried to tag a name to the Polyface enterprise and the type of family farm the Salatins promote. Some call it organic, others biological or natural. None seems to fit completely. When asked, however, Joel has a quick answer. "Well, I like to call it profitable," he says with a grin. --

Joel supplements his chickens' dinner of grass and bugs with some specially prepared feed. This pen is one of 30 fanning out across the farm's fields. The mobile pens are the result of years of trial and error during which time Joel has perfected a mothod of raising pastured poultry without the use of preservatives and chemicals.

☛ Continued from page 6

As for Daniel, no one makes him get up to do his chores. He is a fairly self-motivated young man. "I see no reason why I shouldn't stay here on the farm (when I grow up)," he said. "Nothing else gives you a better quality of life. We work hard, but not that hard."

The long, blonde pigtail on the farm belongs to Rachel, who just turned 8. Flowers and cats are her first loves, although she is reputed to have a specialty of breakfast biscuits as well. This year the shy, young horticulturist designed the flower bed out in front of the family's house. "I have foxglove, yarrow, carnations and poppies," she said of her garden. She and her brother are also exploring ways of tanning rabbit hides to make something soft and furry like bedroom slippers.

Whether it be feeding the cats, tending the garden or running errands, everyone at Polyface pitches in at his or her particular tasks. And, of course, on butchering days everyone contributes. As Daniel said, however, "we don't work that hard." The work ebbs and flows with nature's cycles and winter is a family time. "A normal winter day sees us reading aloud as a family three hours a day," Joel said, adding that the family did not seem to be any poorer for the lack of a television.

And there is room for expansion on the family farm. There is no reason, according to Joel, that Rachel and Daniel can't make their adult homes here as well. "The opportunity for warm bodies is incredible. We haven't even scratched the surface about what the family farm can do." --

In photo at right, Teresa Salatin and daughter Rachel look over the flower garden designed and cared for by Rachel. In addition to keeping the farm books, home schooling the children and tending to the house, Teresa helps out with other farm chores when needed.

Salatin pens poultry book

There are many angles to making money on the family farm, and Joel Salatin has hit upon yet one more in his book, "Pastured Poultry ProfitS: Net $25,000 in 6 months on 20 acres."

Published in 1993, the book - in which Joel reveals the secret of making money with pastured poultry - sold 1,000 copies in just seven months and is now in its second printing. It has been listed on four magazine bookshelf sections and is carried in one mail order catalog, Good Earth Publications. Copies have been sold in the United States and in other countries as well.

"Seldom has agriculture held out such a plum," writes the author in his introduction. "In a day when mainline farm experts predict the continued demise of the family farm, the pastured poultry opportunity shines like a beacon in the night, guiding the way to a brighter future."

Written in a down-to-earth, homey style, Joel takes readers through the poultry raising and butchering process at Polyface, Inc. He describes the rewards that can be reaped from success and warns of possible pitfalls. He includes detailed pictures describing each step of the operation.

The success of the book has allowed Joel to hit the lecture circuit for several speaking engagements a year. Often the *trip turns into a family vacation and educational experience as well.*

Many of the praises sung for the book have come from Allan Nation, editor of "The Stockman Grass Farmer," a monthly agricultural journal with a subscription of about 12,000. "All of us interested in seeing an American rural revival should thank Joel and Teresa Salatin for going to the effort and expense to share their experiences and recommendations for pastured poultry with you," writes Nation.

The Salatins have shared their farming wisdom in other ways as well. Joel writes a monthly column in Nation's periodical, and next year the family will host a National Field Day at their farm. Co-sponsored by The Stockman Grass Farmer, the event will be "a family fun field day to celebrate the whole notion of profitable agriculture which comes from doing things different than they've been done for a long time," explains Joel. Part of the time will be spent demonstrating new, innovative, ecologically sound machines.

"It will be a fellowship family day for networking, kind of like a grazers reunion for this 21st century agriculture," his wife, Teresa, adds. They note that the last national field day drew about 350 people, but they hope for 1,000 visitors to their farm this time.

Until August 5, 1995, however, the Salatins will continue living and learning on the family farm.

Joel's book, Pastured Poultry ProfitS, is available for $30 by writing to Rt. 1, Box 281, Swoope, Va. 24479. --

Scratching out a living

Down on the farm

By Betty Jo Hamilton

Down on the farm we're thinking about starting at the beginning.

It has occurred to us that we've spent much time visiting together but have never really taken the time to introduce ourselves to those of you who have chosen to come visit us down on the farm.

When we began this endeavor - that is, the presentation of life down on the farm - we began as if we were jumping on a train which was already moving swiftly down the tracks. You, the reader, did not know this train's point of origin. Even though you didn't know where the train began its journey or, perhaps more importantly, where the train was going, you chose to ride anyway, if for nothing else than to take in the scenery as it has blurred past your window. And certainly there have been some sights to see.

Early on in our journey we saw cows refusing to file into computer programs, we passed through the land of the USDA's farm census bureau, the train was nearly derailed by an exploding commode, and we had a stop over at a local animal hospital with some ill-mannered heifers. But of all the places we've taken you - and in this we have been right down inhospitable - we have never invited you to come to the farm for an actual look-see. It would be logistically impossible to bring all of you to the farm, so this trip down on the farm, we're going to take you on a tour around the farm, start where we should have started in the beginning and make all the formal introductions.

But first we have to get you to the farm, so sit back and relax - this is one of those deluxe passenger rail cars - and enjoy your trip down on the farm where you own personal tour guide will be showing you around.

"OK folks, we're now about 13 miles southwest of Staunton. As you look out your windows, you'll see we're traveling through some of the finest farmland in Augusta County - maybe the world.

"The village we're pulling into now is Middlebrook - look quick or you'll miss it - a few points of interest - on the right you'll see we're passing by the old tavern which was a stopover for the stagecoach when it used to travel this very road from Staunton to Lexington. Now we're in the heart of the village - the post office and hardware store are to the left, directly across the street is the garage/convenience store/video rental store and adjacent to that is the general store. We'll be stopping here for a few moments so you can stretch your legs and rest a spell. The train will be pulling out in about 15 minutes, so use your time wisely. And don't get lost."

15 minutes later the train has reboarded...

"I hope everyone enjoyed their visit in Middlebrook. A bit of trivia - Middlebrook is named for the brook which flows through the middle of the village and even though it may not appear so in this day and age, there was once quite a bit of hustle and bustle in Middlebrook. But in modern-day Middlebrook, there's more hustle than bustle...heh, heh, just a little tour guide humor there folks.

"We're traveling west out of Middlebrook now and in the distance you can see Little North Mountain which is part of the Allegheny Mountain range. In just a few moments we'll be arriving down on the farm, so you'll want to change into a pair of shoes that you don't particularly like and wouldn't mind ruining. Once at the farm, I'll be turning you over to Betty Jo Hamilton who is one member of this farm family operation.

"OK, folks, this is Brookside, owned and operated by the Joel W. Hamilton family. A bit of trivia, Brookside is named for the brook which runs along the property's north edge. Did someone have a question?"

"Yeah, I've got a question. Is that the same brook that runs through the middle of Middlebrook?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact, it is. Any more questions? OK, please wait until the train comes to a complete stop before you leave your seats and watch your step when you disembark. And after you disembark, you'll really need to watch your step.

"Gather 'round folks. Oh, here comes Betty Jo now. She'll be showing you the rest of the farm. Hello, Betty Jo."

"Hi, how are you all? I'm glad you could come for a visit down on the farm today.

"Before we go any further though, let me tell you that the farm here at Brookside consists of about 250 acres of pasture and cropland. My parents own two farms up on the other side of Middlebrook which combined make another 200 acres, then we rent a 100-acre farm from my father's sister which is just about a mile across the ridge from where we're standing.

"We call Brookside the homeplace because this is where my great grandparents started out farming. Since then our family has been scratching out a living on this particular patch of land which my great great grandfather deeded to my great grandmother for $1."

"Gosh, $1. Is that all? Things sure were cheap back then."

"Well, that type of family deal is still not too unusual today. My great great grandfather probably gave the land to my great grandmother as sort of a dowry for her and her husband to start out with. Farm families today use the ``dollar deal" when they give a parcel of land to a son or daughter for them to build a house on. Family farms can't stay in families unless children choose to stay on the farm and keep operating them. Most farm children grow up working on farms so sometimes property is given to them as payment-in-kind for their help on the farm. But that's enough of the socioeconomic conditions on the farm, ya'll aren't interested in that.

"There's not too much to show, really. That big building down there is the barn. These big grassy lots are the fields. That fuzzy four-legged critter over there is a sheep and that taller four-legged one is a cow. And I guess that just about does it for the farm tour."

"Uh, Betty Jo. I think the folks were expecting a little bit more than that."

"More?"

"Yes, they want to know about some of the things you do here on the farm."

"Oh, well, I suppose I could show them a few more things. Just follow me, I guess and we'll see what we can see. I'm sorry did someone there in back have a question."

"Yeah, I have a question. Are we gonna' get to see the exploding commode?" (Laughter ripples among the tour group.)

"Believe it or not I do still have the remains of the exploded commode. You'll have some free time later to look around on your own and you'll have a chance to see it then if you would like to. Any more questions? Let's start toward the barn then.

"Some of you will recall reading about my treks back and forth to the barn during snowstorms. You're now walking along the very path I take when I have to go back and forth to the barn and it has been along this path that I have struggled through many snowdrifts. It's pretty easy walking now, but when the snow is to the tops of these fence posts, it's a whole 'nother story. We'll stop just past the loading chute so if all of you will gather around me there, I'll describe some of the different farm buildings to you.

"Can everybody hear me? OK, if you'll look directly behind you, you will see the building which we call 'the shop.' As you can see there is a workbench there, with a vise, there's also an anvil there with a big hammer for hitting things, the emery, and any of a number of other tools which we use here on the farm.

"You'll also notice that there's not really room to move around in the shop because there's so much stuff piled around in there so you're probably wondering how we can get in there to do any work. Well, we manage somehow. The shop really is quite an amazing place. Almost everything we need to run the farm can be found in there, but we can't usually find anything in there when we need it.

"You're also probably wondering what all this stuff is piled up outside and around the shop. Well, what we have there is some of the finest junk money can't buy, but you never can tell when something like that might come in handy. That's one of my father's farm mottos. When I ask him if something can be thrown away he says, `No, might come in handy.' So that's how we end up with all this valuable junk laying around. There's also a refrigerator in the shop. This provides a convenient place for us to keep some of the vaccines we use which must be kept refrigerated. Every now and then I'll find a Milky Way bar tossed in there which tells me my father has been to town and bought himself a snack.

"The concrete block building directly behind me is the scalehouse. If you'll just step this way you can have a look inside.

"What we have here is actually a very large set of kitchen scales, so to speak. But instead of being able to weigh out just a few ounces, we can weigh anything up to 4,000 pounds on this set of scales. You'll also notice another difference in that these scales have a corral built around them so whatever we're weighing won't move off the scales while we're trying to weigh it. If you'll just go around to the other side of the building now, I'll show you how we get weights on animals.

"This balance works just like the one on the scale at your doctor's office. Of course, we're weighing animals and your doctor weighs patients, but the principle is still the same. I would ask someone to volunteer to be weighed, but I don't want to embarrass anyone. Even though the scales haven't been checked for correctness for some time, we have our own method of checking them.

"Before we weigh livestock, my father gets on the scales, I weigh him, and then tell him what the scales say he weighs. Then he says, "They must be weighing about 10 pounds heavy," and I say, "Bull." The scales are accurate, my father just thinks he weighs 10 pounds less than he really does."

"Do you have to weigh animals often?"

"Well, it's not something we do routinely, no. Some of the animals we raise are finished out to slaughter weights - lambs, for example - and when we want to pick out a load of lambs to go to market we have to weigh them to make sure we're picking out lambs big

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"See, it doesn't really hurt," says tour guide Betty Jo Hamilton of the head chute used to hold cattle for treatment.

Photo by Lee Ann Helzer

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enough for the slaughter market. We also finish out some steers and heifers to slaughter weights. We weigh each of these animals individually before they go on feed, then while they're on feed we weigh some of them about every 30 days which helps us to know what kind of weight gains we're getting. Then when these cattle get close to being finished, we need to keep an eye on their weights so we can move them to market when they've reached the right size.

"If you look out into the next lot, you'll see the automatic feeders where the slaughter cattle eat and then there's a similar one out in the meadow where the feeder lambs eat. Both the cattle and the lambs eat at these feeders on their own schedules and we think we get better weight gains on them than if we fed them each day ourselves."

"Don't they end up eating all the time?"

"No. We do have to be careful when we first put the animals on the automatic feeders and control their access to the feed in the early stages, if we didn't do that they would, quite literally, eat themselves to death. But once they get used to it, they eat until they get what they want, go away, and then when they get hungry again they come back for more."

"Where do you get the feed?"

"We raise quite a bit of small grains and corn...we use a mixture of oats, wheat and corn for the cattle and the sheep. Some of the corn comes from the feed mill in town. A truck brings it out here then we add some of our own grain to what we get from the mill.

"While we're here I'll also ask you to notice the several small pens around the scalehouse. These are the pens we use for sorting cattle and sheep. You'll see that in addition to the loading chute, we also have a place to load a gooseneck trailer. This narrow alley behind us is where we treat animals. The head catch gate at the end of the alley holds the animal while we treat it."

"What kind of stuff do you have to treat animals for?"

"Well, there are routine vaccinations we give animals when they're newborns. After the calves and lambs get older and are ready to be weaned, they're revaccinated and dewormed. By that time they're too big to handle unless we get them in the chute. The calves we catch in the head gate but the lambs we can just crowd in here, move among them, and give them shots or dose them.

"Calves are treated again before they're turned out to summer pasture and by that time they weigh anywhere from 500 to 700 pounds so, of course, then they have to be caught in the head gate. Other than routine stuff, if we have an animal that is sick, it will be brought in here, caught, and examined. Sometimes, if we have a cow that's having difficulty giving birth, we'll need to get her in here to assist in the birth."

"Does that gate catch the cattle automatically?"

"It's supposed to. Usually you have to have someone on the outside to swing it shut or the smaller calves can go right on through without it catching. Some of the bigger ones can be pretty contrary too, and it usually takes quite a bit of hollering and pushing and shoving to get them up the alley and into the chute."

"Does it hurt the animal to be caught in the head chute?"

"No. The gate just closes down on their necks right behind their ears. It doesn't squeeze too much on their necks. The purpose of the head catch gate is so that the animal can be treated properly without hurting it and so that the person doing the treatment doesn't get hurt in the process either.

"Isn't anyone going to ask if I get hurt when the animals stomp on my toes or kick me in the shin?

"Sure, sure. You'll worry about the animals getting hurt but never give a thought to whether us poor old farmers might get hurt. Any more questions?"

"When are we gonna' see the exploding commode?"

(There's one of these guys in every tour group, isn't there?)

"Not too much longer. Any more questions? We should probably be moving on now.

"The other buildings you see here are used mostly to store machinery and equipment. There's a shed with a square baler, and the round baler is over there, tractors, a dump truck...the large building there in the center is the grainery where we keep some feed and salt for the cattle..."

"Salt?"

"Yes, cattle need salt in order to digest their food. You have to give it to them on a regular basis. We use bulk salt or loose salt out of bags, some people just keep salt blocks out all the time, but we use the loose because if we keep it from them and we need to get the cattle in, they'll come to us for salt. It doesn't work all of the time, but it works most of the time. Sheep need salt too.

"We'll culminate this part of the tour at the barn, which some of you might think is the most important building on the farm and in many ways it is. Just follow me and we'll take a closer look. We'll go around to the back first.

"As you can see, this barn is built into the side of a hill. This is known as a bank barn which is, I believe, a construction style we inherited from our German ancestors. With the barn built into the bank, we can have access to the second story of the barn and are able to pull tractors or wagons or whatever into it. You'll notice that, this time of year anyway, the second story of the barn is virtually full. The mows were filled with hay through the summer and then there's also some oats and wheat piled there. Let's walk around down below, now.

"While we're heading down, I'll give you a little more information about the barn. The barn which originally stood on this site was struck by lightning and burnt to the ground in 1941. You might think that a barn built within the past 50 years or so would be of more modern construction than this one is. Notice, however, that the beams are hand hewn and the joints are held with large wooden pegs.

"Instead of building a new barn after the old one burnt, my grandfather disassembled a barn at another location, brought the pieces here and reassembled it. So the barn itself really is more than 50 years old, but that's all the longer it's been at the present site.

"You see now here on the ground floor of the barn where most of the livestock is kept when we need to keep it penned up. These are some Holstein calves which I'm raising. In the winter months, the ground floor of the barn is used for lambing and keeping the sheep. We have one group of ewes due to start lambing in November, another group due in January and then another group will be bred to start lambing the first of March. All total, we'll have 114 ewes that should lamb.

"Speaking of the sheep, are you all ready to take a look at the sheep which nearly became famous?"

"Are those the ones the film people came to look at and the one had that great big—"

"Yes, the very ones. If you all will just climb up into that cattle truck, we'll go have a look."

"We have to ride in the back of a cattle truck?"

"I'm afraid so. We don't have any other way to haul you around, so this will just have to do. I did clean it out a bit, though, so you won't have to worry about getting in too much mess."

A short ride out through the pasture we find some sheep lounging in the shade...

"OK folks, these are the nearly famous sheep. Let's see if we can get them to come visit. Usually they'll come up if I rattle some feed in this pan."

"What kind of feed is that?"

"Actually, it's dog food."

"Dog food?"

"Yeah, they love it. Oh, here they come. The one out in front is named 'Ringo,' she's the one with the brown circles around her eyes. She was raised on the bottle and is still right much of a pet."

"Why was she raised on a bottle?"

"The ewe had twins and very little milk so I ended up taking one of the lambs away from her and raising it myself. Ringo was raised in the yard with my dog, so she had sort of an identity crisis early in her life. I was finally able to convince her that she is a sheep.

"Because she's a pet though, she's usually the cause of some mishap. For instance, if we leave a gate standing open, she'll be the first one through it and take all the rest of the sheep with her. But if we're trying to get the sheep in, she'll be the last one coming and hold up the whole works."

"How come she has a tail? None of the rest of them do."

"Small rubber bands on put on the lambs' tails when they are about a week old then the tail falls off on its own a few weeks later. Ringo happened to be born in the summer so we didn't try to put a band on her tail and she ended up keeping her tail."

"Why don't you just leave their tails on?"

"They get very dirty and matted up with manure which can cause the sheep to get sores under the manure mats, then things really get messy if flies get into that. Also, if lambs still have their tails when they're taken to market, they usually knock some off the price we would get for them because the tail is just dead weight and the packers don't want to pay for that."

"I don't see any runny noses."

"Well, not today anyway. I told them they were going to be on display so maybe they cleaned up a little bit. If ya'll will get back on the truck now, we'll try to hunt up some cattle."

The cattle are found grazing on the side of the next hill over from the sheep.

"These are some of the 110 head of stock cows which we keep. The rest are on pasture at other farms. You'll notice that the calves are a variety of sizes and ages. That one over there is just a few days old while some of these might be as much as four months old. We keep bulls with the cows all year long which means we have calves coming almost anytime. But the majority come November through April."

"Hey, is that the blue cow over there?"

"Yes, it sure is. Let me pull over that way so you can get a closer look."

"Wow, she really is blue!"

"Sure is. Some of you will remember the lineage of the blue cow as being part Shorthorn and part Angus which ends up producing a blue cow. Ya'll may not have noticed it as you came out this way, but there's a farmer just outside of Middlebrook who has a whole bunch of blue roane cows. He even has a blue roane bull. Maybe as you head back into town you'll see them.

"That's pretty much rounds out what I have to show you all. We'll head back to the barn now unless there are some questions."

"What's that big thing sticking up over there in the field?"

"That's the silo. We keep corn insilage in that and then feed it to the cattle in the winter."

"How come it's just sitting out there in the middle of the field?"

"We just put it up a few years ago and we didn't want to put it at the barn because we didn't have space to feed cattle down there if we ever want to add a feeder to it. We didn't want to put it at either of the other farms because we really wanted to have it closer here so we decided to put it over there in the middle of nowhere."

"When are we gonna' see the exploding commode?"

"Right now. We'll head back to the house where we've got some refreshments for you before you head back to town. Thank all of you for coming and I hope you enjoyed your visit down on the farm."

A young tour participant has a chance to meet Ringo, one of the "nearly famous" sheep down on the farm at Brookside. Tour guide Betty Jo Hamilton lured Ringo in with a pan of dogfood.

Photo by Lea Ann Helzer

See related story pages 10-11

Who's who down on the farm

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

You've met most of the animals down on the farm and you've looked over the property, now it's time to meet the folks who live and work on this particular farm.

Serving as tour guide was yours truly, Betty Jo Hamilton. I live at Brookside in the house built by my great grandparents. I have lived here for about 10 years and for the past few years have been working to bring the house into the 20th century.

Old houses have rather unique characters. One particular eccentricity of old houses is that they don't like being refurbished. However, I am trying to convince this one of the necessity for change and see some progress from time to time.

I was fortunate to be able to grow up on this farm which, I suppose, is one reason why I've chosen to stay here and keep farming. I attended Bridgewater College for two years where I majored in chemistry. Big mistake! Then - after destroying about a third of the organic chemistry laboratory at Bridgewater - I transferred to Mary Baldwin College where I majored in mass communications which is where I learned the generalities of news writing and editing.

After graduation from college, I was employed as a public relations specialist for a local hospital then worked at a local newspaper for some time. Even though I have had occupational pursuits, I always seem to have been drawn back to the farm probably because it's just where I'm meant to be. But enough about me.

The other people you have met or will be meeting down on the farm, are mostly family members who either live or work on the farm. Many of you who read this may know my family personally and therefore know who I am talking about when I refer to someone simply as "my father" or "my mother." I prefer to mention them in this manner rather than by name. This permits the people, other than myself, about whom I write to retain some sense of anonymity.

My parents live on the farm in a house which they built in 1956 on one corner of the property. Their house is about a half-mile across the field - within hollerin' distance, we say - from the house at the homeplace where I live. This is convenient when there's trouble at either place. Some of us can come to the assistance of the others pretty quickly, in most instances.

This is usually the case unless you count the time the rabid raccoon was prowling around my yard. On that occasion - when I really needed help pretty quick - I called my mother for assistance and, for some reason or other, it took her most of a half-hour to come with her shotgun to my aid. Then she was was in such a flutter to kill the sick animal that she nearly blasted a hole through the lattice work on the front porch. But she did save me from the rabid raccoon and all turned out well in the end.

My father is the person to whom I refer most often in the "Down on the farm" column because he is usually the one who is around when some ridiculous thing happens. Sometimes he's the cause of the ridiculous thing that happens.

My father was born at Brookside and worked with his father, my grandfather, on the farm. Only once, when he was young, did my father consider leaving the farm for other employment but his family convinced him to stay put. He also had some ridiculous notion of joining the Marines when World War II began but his father and uncle talked him out of it and he was given a deferment to stay home and work on the farm.

The most notable characteristic of my father's personality is that he never has very much to say. As a matter of fact, he is known for not saying much. When something incredible has happened on the farm and people ask me what my father had to say about it, I say, "Oh, he didn't say much," and they say, "That's just like Joe." People who know him know he doesn't say much, has never had much to say, and probably will never have much to say.

One day when I was mowing with the haybine and broke five guards and two mower sections on a big rock, my father said, "Great day'n a morning," when he saw what I'd done but he just barely opened his mouth to say it and you had to be listening pretty hard to hear it. He just doesn't say much.

We sometimes go for days without actually talking. Oh, we have a few hand signs and if I really need to get his attention, I'll whistle and he'll come look to see what I need. You don't always need to communicate on the farm though. For instance, if I've dropped some very heavy object on my foot, can't get it off, and whistle for my father's help, once he sees what the circumstance is he doesn't have to ask how he can be of assistance.

Another notable characteristic of my father's is that he has one speed only - the speed he operates at all the time regardless of the circumstance. For instance, if I'm having a drink of water and offer one to him he would move to get it with his one speed. If I've just been knocked unconscious by a charging bull, he would come to my assistance with the same speed as he went for the glass of water. One speed, that's all he has. As I can testify, the words "hurry up" have no meaning to my father.

Operating at only one speed has it advantages though. Just as any long distance runner will tell you, setting a steady pace and sticking with it makes the runner capable of lasting the whole race. If the runner goes too fast early on in the race, he'll burn out before he finishes. If the runner goes too slow, he'll never finish either.

Sometimes though, a slower speed is necessary. Take the field work, for instance. If the terrain is rough, you should probably slow down to avoid tearing up machinery but my father usually maintains his one speed in doing the field work regardless of the terrain. As my brother-in-law will testify - and much to his dismay on many occasions - the words "slow down" have no meaning to my father.

"My mother," Nellie Hamilton gets rid of some pesky weeds in one of her flower beds. My mother puts her farming know-how to use in her flower and vegetable gardens.
Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

My mother is another individual to whom I often refer when I take you down on the farm. She is responsible for manning the fort at - what I call - Command Central, which is my parents' house. For a number of years my mother worked as a substitute mail carrier out of the Middlebrook Post Office and, later, the Staunton Post Office. She retired recently after working as a regular carrier for about a year and now she spends most her time engineering the domestics of home life.

In her position at Command Central, my mother serves as receptionist, office manager, clerk, messenger, errand runner, cook, bottle washer, and is called on to fill any of a number of spur of the moment jobs.

Since my father and I are out on the farm most of the day, she takes messages which come in by phone or people stopping by. If it's an urgent message, she has to come looking for us to deliver it. Most of the time she knows where she can find us but sometimes we can't be found so she has to look and look and look until she does find us. She has an uncanny ability for this. Almost as if navigating with a highly sophisticated tracking system - rivaled only by that of the Stealth bomber's - my mother always seems to be able to seek us out and deliver her message.

My mother also keeps us well fed. One of her most notable characteristics is that of being a good cook and is known for being able to cook up anything in a most delightful and delicious manner. Of her cooking skills, she says, she just "got at it and learned." She has tried to pass on her proficiency in the culinary arts to her two daughters and, for the most part, she has been able to do this. But I never have been able to master pie crust preparation or bread baking with my mother's proficiency.

Farming also runs on my mother's side of the family. Her father was a farmer and also operated a sawmill. My mother uses her farm know-how in her flower beds and vegetable garden where, for the past few years, she has been attempting to raise watermelons like her father did when the family lived in Eastern Virginia. She's pretty particular about her gardens. Sometimes my father tries to assist her in the vegetable garden but may be dismissed rather abruptly from this task when my mother notes, "Joe, you're stepping all over my watermelon vines."

Since my mother has not only watermelons but also cantaloupes and cucumbers in the garden, there are vines running all over the place. I just stay out of there because I sure don't want to step on anybody's vines.

Between the two of them - my mother and father - there is a striking contrast. While my father

Continued on page 11

Some of the people from "Down on the farm" are found hard at work here during a manure spreading operation. (Count your blessings this is not a scratch-and-sniff page.) On the tractor at right is "my uncle," Jack Root, on the tractor in the background is "my father," Joel Hamilton, and neighbor Robbie Cline is operating the skid loader.
Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

Continued from page 10

doesn't have very much to say, my mother is a self-admitted "talker." I guess since my father doesn't talk much, my mother has to fill in the gaps. But, as she often acknowledges, she sometimes goes a little overboard. She recently expressed to me her concern of "talking too much" during a visit to her home by the minister.

"I just know I talked too much," she said. "I was just talking and talking and talking and I didn't give him a chance to get a word in edgeways. And here he had been on vacation and I didn't even think to ask him how his vacation was. I just kept on talking and talking. I've got to call him and apologize. I know he thinks I'm terrible. I'll just have to call him and try to explain."

I don't suppose I had ever considered it might be possible for someone to talk too much about talking too much.

Other family members who might be found around the farm include my sister, brother-in-law, niece, and nephew.

My sister is two years older than me, I just want to make that perfectly clear. My sister is older than me. Sometimes people get confused about this and for some reason think that she is younger than me. One time I even had a man ask me, "Don't you have a daughter who married one of those Heizer boys?" Let me say, very firmly, that I do not look old enough to be my sister's mother and I can assure you that my sister does not look young enough to be my daughter.

My brother-in-law helps out on the farm from time to time. Of course, you know the difference between in-laws and outlaws? Outlaws are wanted. (Just kidding, Thomas.)

Having grown up on a dairy farm, my brother-in-law is accustomed to hard work and is always a great help whenever we call on him. He is proficient enough at farm labor that once my father said of his son-in-law, "He's good help." That may not sound like much of a compliment but coming from a man who never says much, it's about the equivalent of being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

No matter what the task, my brother-in-law goes at it full force and rarely complains. I say "rarely," because there is one part of our operation which he doesn't like at all - this being the sheep.

Two years ago he had his first experience of helping us get the sheep sheared. He was assigned the task of catching the ewes and throwing them down for the shearers. By the end of the day, and after wrestling numerous ewes into position for the shearers, he said if he never saw another sheep as long as he lived it wouldn't be too soon.

Unfortunately for him, he still has to help us with the sheep occasionally. He says he doesn't understand why sheep act the way they do. The most valuable advice I can give him about sheep is that it's just best not to try to understand them.

Since my brother-in-law has been helping us with some of the farm work, he has been trying to teach my father and me the value of "slowing down" when we're operating machinery in the fields. I've already noted that my father doesn't slow down when running machinery over rough ground, like when he knows the hay wagon is going to hit a ditch or a groundhog hole which usually results in throwing at least half a load of hay bales onto the ground.

Of course, I learned to operate the machinery by seeing the way my father operates it so I have the same bad driving record as he does. My brother-in-law has said that he has noted some improvement in my machinery operation, however, my father is still getting bad marks on his performance.

My brother-in-law's family went out of the dairy business not too long ago so now he has taken a job at a local shipping and distribution center for a retail electronics company. My sister and brother-in-law have some farmland and beef cows of their own but, as most farmers know, it's difficult to provide for a family unless there's some off-farm income.

My niece and nephew, 7 and 5 years old, are still a bit young to be helping a lot on the farm but they do keep us entertained. My niece has just recently reported to me that she is learning to drive her daddy's pickup truck. She and her brother very often go out to help their father feed or count cattle so they are - as do most farm children - learning about farming at an early age.

One other family member who helps us on the farm quite frequently is my mother's brother. He is retired from the postal service and now farms on his property near Middlebrook. Between our farm and my uncle's, we share labor to help each other get work done. We might roll some round bales for my uncle then when we need help putting up square bales, he helps us. Or we might haul some of my uncle's cattle then if we're working cattle and need help, he pitches in.

The characteristic for which my uncle is most notable is his ability to do almost any farm chore very well. No matter what task we're trying to accomplish - if my uncle is part of the effort - he goes right at it and knows exactly what to do. Whether it's operating machinery - anything from a chain saw to a post driver - as my father says (that is, when he finally decides to actually speak) of my uncle, "It's hard to get him hitched wrong." This is another way to say someone is a good worker.

You've now met most of the individuals who contribute to the overall effort down on the farm. From time to time you may be meeting some of our friends and neighbors who have some connection to the farm, but I'll be introducing them on a case-by-case basis. Very often some of these friends and neighbors may pitch in with the family members you've met to help keep the family farm operation going.

What goes on at the farm is important but it can't continue to be viable unless family members are willing to work together. Usually, just as you can tell by what you read about down on the farm, only family members would be willing to put up with the farm and all of its peculiarities.

Not only does it take families dedicated to farming to keep one going but, as most farm families will tell you, family farms rely heavily on prayers being answered.--

In the photo at left, a new arrival is checked out by (from left) "my niece," Sarah, her father and "my brother-in-law," Tom, and "my nephew," Andrew. Although only 7- and 5-years-old, respectively, Sarah and Andrew work hard to keep up with everything that goes on "Down on the farm".

Photo by Lee Ann Heizer

Making it look easy **- The Mish Brothers, F.P. - in loader bucket - and Gary - on tractor, make painting a barn look easy using the frontend loader on a tractor and a gasoline-powered paint sprayer with an extra long handle. The barn is located on Va. 701 near Bethel Presbyterian Church.**

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

Cole's country cow

We spotted this drawing of a Holstein cow on a grandmother's refrigerator. This country cow was drawn by Cole Heizer, 9, of Middlebrook.

Cole has been drawing, he says, "since I was two or three years old," and is a past winner of the Augusta County Farm Bureau Federation poster contest for his age group. He often chooses the activities of the farm for his illustrations but is also interested in depicting soldiers and the military.

A student at Riverheads Elementary School, Cole's favorite subject is reading - particularly books about the seventh Cavalry. "That's the unit that Custer commanded," he explained.

When asked about plans for his future, Cole said he wasn't sure. "But," he added, "I'd like to be president of the United States. I have a friend who wants to be vice president, so we could work together."

Cole is a fourth grade student and a son of Mr. and Mrs. William Heizer.

Attention young artists and young artists' grandmothers: If you have a special drawing which you think we would like, send it to us at Augusta Country, P.O. Box 51, Middlebrook, Va. 24459. Black and white drawings will reproduce best for publication and should be no larger than 8 1/2 x 11 inches.

Country Crossroads

At the crossroads

Take a ride through Augusta country and you won't travel far without coming to crossroads. Once there, you're faced with a decision, which way should I turn or should I just keep going straight?

Often at crossroads, there may be a village. Perhaps there you'll find a general store or post office and more than likely there might be a crowd gathered in one or both of these places. (In the country we define "crowd" as being two or more people.)

Among this crowd of people the discussion may vary from what's going on in the community to what's going on around the world. At some point in the discussion someone's probably going to express his or her thoughts regarding a particular point of debate. Even if the discussion becomes heated, everybody at the crossroads remains amicable and then goes on his or her separate way.

Augusta Country's Country Crossroads section is a little bit like that. At this crossroads we'll be bringing you a variety of topics which we'll attempt to show in a different light than they might ordinarily be shown.

Country Crossroads will also give us the opportunity to hear from some of you. If you see something in Augusta Country on which you'd like to comment, just give us a holler or write us a line. We can't promise that we'll publish all letters we receive, but we'll do the best we can with the space available.

Send your letters to the editor to Augusta Country, P.O. Box 51, Middlebrook, Va. 24459. We're looking forward to meeting you at the crossroads! - -

Hank and Irma

"Try to be home on time for supper"

By LEE ANN HEIZER

If we believe what we read and see in the media, there is something called "division of household labor" which abounds and thrives in the U.S. You know what I'm talking about — Susan provides chauffeur service for the children while Brad does the family grocery shopping. But believe it or not, the division of household duties between husband and wife has not become a reality in farm households.

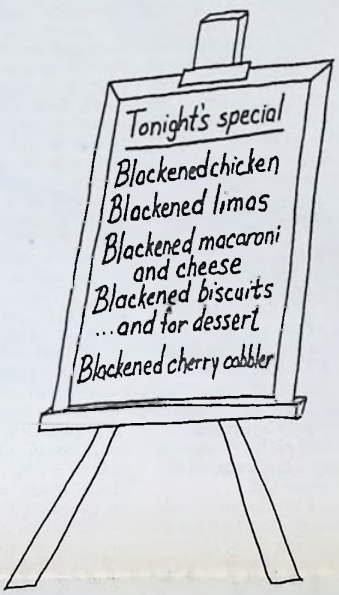
Meet Hank and Irma, Mr. and Mrs. Middle America. Farming the heartland takes so much of their attention that they have forgotten to keep up with national trends. In many farm families, the division of labor in the '90s is much the same as it was in the '30s. For every farm man sweating over his work in the fields, there is a farm woman sweating over her work at the kitchen range.

This particular division of labor can create fireworks for Hank and Irma. Take supper time, for instance.

It is 6:30 p.m. Hank — after spending the entire day chopping silage, hauling it from the field to the barn, and filling the silo — still has three full wagons which need to be unloaded. This will bring closure — a '90s word meaning "finish up" — to his tasks of the day. It will only take an hour or so.

Meanwhile, Irma — who has been hard at work shelling and freezing the last of the October beans, laundering greasy work clothes only a farm wife could love, and chasing cows out of the yard through a hole in the fence which Hank has been promising to fix for the last three months — has spent considerable time and effort preparing a delectable meal for hard-working Hank. A meal which Irma had planned to be done to perfection at exactly 6:30 p.m. Irma, too, is anticipating closure.

Hank gets the silage unloaded and arrives home tired, but satisfied that his day has been productive. It is now 8 p.m. As Hank walks up the back path he notices a peculiar smell



of something burning coming from the house. Should he call 911? Or is it just Irma again? She often gets a little "fired up" when he's late for supper. Once she actually took his dinner and dumped it in the feed bunk.

"If you want to stay out all night with the cows, you might as well eat with them too," she had said. What a joker that Irma is!

Hank brushes silage chaff off his work pants, hangs up his cap, and cautiously enters the threateningly quiet house. Alone in the kitchen he gingerly opens the oven door and peers in at a plate of blackened lumps which might have been food in a previous century.

Moving quickly now to avoid any cast iron frying pans which may be hurtling toward him, Hank makes it safely to the family den. He barely recognizes Irma when he finds her sitting in an easy chair, feet propped up, and reading The Wall Street Journal.

"Hi Honey," says Hank, and then quickly — under his breath — mutters, "Sorry, I'm late." He shoots a big, naughty puppy grin at Irma.

"What time is it?" she replies. "I had your dinner ready a little early so I put it on a plate in the oven to keep it warm for you. Since I had a few spare minutes I thought I'd read the paper and try to catch up on current events. I'm glad you're home though because the news is really frightening these days."

"Oh?" says Hank, unnerved by her apparent calm and checking to see if his Lazy Boy is booby-trapped before he drops into it. "Crime and violence, huh?"

"No. Division of labor," responds Irma. "Do you know that in some families the husband actually does half of the household chores?"

"No kidding," says Hank. "Do you remember when you were in the hospital having little Elmer and I did the laundry?"

"How could I forget?" Irma replies. "The pink underwear we all wore for the next six months reminded me."

"Yeah, and what about that time you were late getting home from the dentist and I cooked supper?" continues Hank.

"Oh, I remember it well. A root canal and a kitchen disaster rivaling Love Canal all in one day," groans Irma. "It's hard for me to believe that today's women are subjecting themselves to that kind of torture voluntarily."

"So you're not mad at me for being late for supper?" ventures Hank still thinking of those carbon heaps awaiting him in the oven.

"Of course not, dear," smiles Irma. "Not when I think of what some wives have to put up with these days." - -

Coming in October

October 1-2, 7-9

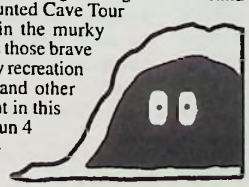
Virginia Fall Foliage Festival '94 - When the leaves begin to change color in the Shenandoah Valley and its surrounding mountains, the scenery is so spectacular it's cause for celebration. The 22nd annual Fall Foliage Festival is just that - a celebration of autumn's glory in the mountains and valleys of Virginia. The first weekend of festivities includes a car show, theater performance, craft show, and gem and mineral show. In the festival's second weekend, a quilt show and sale and art show top the slate of events. All events are held in Waynesboro. Celebrate fall at this year's Fall Foliage Festival. For information call the Waynesboro-East Augusta Chamber of Commerce at 949-8203.

October 16

World Food Day - This special day, sponsored by Church World Service, marks the founding date of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and provides an opportunity for people to become aware of the world's hunger problem. Churches and civic groups might use this opportunity to learn how their organizations can help provide hunger relief. Individuals may wish to participate in the "Hunters for the Hungry" program. In 1993, over 70,000 pounds of venison was distributed statewide to those in need through this program. "Hunters for the Hungry" accepts donations of money and game. A $150 contribution covers the cost of processing and distributing five deer to hungry people. For information about "Hunters for the Hungry," call 1-800-352-4868 (HUNT). To find out about the "Hands Against Hunger" program, call the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank at 248-3663.

October 28-29

Haunted Cave Tour - BOO! It's that scary time of year again - no, it's not income tax time, silly - it's HALLOWEEN! There'll be ghosts and goblins galore at Grand Caverns Regional Park Haunted Cave Tour where an evening of fun in the murky depths of the caverns awaits those brave enough to venture in. County recreation departments provide skits and other spine-tingling entertainment in this subterranean event. Tours run 4 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on October 28 and 3 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on October 29 at the caverns in Grottoes. The number of people who can be accommodated on each tour, which lasts about 30 minutes, is limited and participants are taken on a first-come-first-served basis. Cost for admission if $5 for adults and $3.50 for children 3-12. The Haunted Cave Tour is not recommended for children under 3 years of age. For information, call 703/249-5705.



October 30

Sacred Music Festival - Choristers from Presbyterian churches throughout Augusta County will raise their voices in song at the Sacred Music Festival to be held 7:30 p.m., October 30 at Second Presbyterian Church in Staunton. Second's music director, Ted Grudzinski, says the event will commemorate Reformation Sunday which, Mr. Grudzinski says, "celebrates the idea of working and worshipping together." About 100 singers have committed to the performance which will feature antiphonal music wherein a double chorus is used, with one chorus echoing the other. The evening will include a short cantata based on "A Mighty Fortress is our God," as well as Brahms' "How Lovely is Thy

See MUSIC, page 13

Saying Grace

Making friends in THE VALLEY

By ROY HOWARD

You never know when you'll meet new friends and neighbors, so you had best be on the look out at all times.

I learned this lesson a year ago, shortly after arriving in our new home in the country. A stranger, coming out of the post office, hinted at the possibility when he asked "Do you know anything about **THE VALLEY**?" "No," I said, "but it's the most beautiful place I've ever lived." "You'll learn", he said with a sly grin and a knowing look in his eye. He walked away before I had a chance to tell him about the vegetables and other goodies piled high in our kitchen—gifts from church members. One year later, I'm still figuring out the depth of his comment.

Another hint came when I asked a friend the name of the street I lived on. The young woman, a farmer, said "Rev. Howard, in the city they have streets out here we have roads. You live on a road." Clearly, I had a lot to learn. Eagerly I pushed on. "Is it all right if I run out here?" (As in jogging, that weird habit of city folks.) "Sure, nobody minds if you jog around here, they'll just think you're stupid. Why would anyone put on a pair of skimpy nylon shorts to run around just for exercise? We have enough work to do." Oh, well. Therein lies the beginning of how I met new friends and neighbors.

Unconverted, I began jogging daily down my country road. (I stick mostly to the back roads, so fewer people will see me and thus be inclined to call the new minister stupid. A remark some may actually regret during prayer on Sunday morning.) It was on my afternoon jog that I met Rambo. Actually I heard Rambo before I met him. As I approached his house, he gave a ferocious greeting (warning?) from the front porch. I was grateful for this greeting; it gave me a burst of energy to make it up the hill past his house.

The new minister makes a new friend - Roy Howard, pastor or Bethel Presbyterian Church, found there were some changes he would need to get used to after he came to serve as Bethel's minister just over a year ago.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamliton

Without it I might have been tempted to walk, losing any benefit of this running thing.

Rambo greeted me again when I returned only this time he was running wildly toward me. Alongside him was his friend, Poochie; both dogs wagging their tails and howling every step of the way. I was not prepared for such a rousing reception by these furry neighbors. Seeing that they had no intention of stopping, I did a little skip step (or was it a jump?). At that point Rambo, carried away with his enthusiasm, affectionately took a piece of flesh from my thigh. When I screamed louder than they could both growl, he and Poochie sauntered back to the friendly confines of their porch.

"Help," I yelled, running all the way home and up the driveway. My wife, of course, assumed I was having a heart attack from this running thing. Quickly she figured this wasn't the case and began her tender assistance. We called the vet who explained in a calm, compassionate voice everything I didn't want to know about rabies. "You may have to destroy the dog." he said sternly.

Oh great, this is a good way to make friends: destroy their pet. Then I called my doctor who had a pleasant conversation with his pastor as I lay spread eagle on the living room floor getting stitches in my leg. (Well, how's this for a good pastoral opening.) The doctor assures me that it'll be all right as long as the dog has had all his shots and is confined for a couple of weeks. And what if they don't want to confine their dog?

When my neighbor heard what their beloved dog had done, she went running across the road screaming: "Rambo bit the preacher! Rambo bit the preacher!" All of this, of course, caused quite a stir on our road. As it turned out Rambo had all his shots so his life was spared. We all became friends. Rambo and I have even become closer. I still run by the house and he still gives a ferocious greeting. Only now I give him an equally ferocious growl while waving a stick at him. He seems to understand this greeting very well. Now I am working on his friend, Poochie. It's true: you never know when you will meet new friends and neighbors, so you had best be on the look out at all times. --

Reflecting Pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin

Washington, D.C.
September, 1994

Dear Cousin Maude,

Well, greetings again from our Nation's Capitol. It was good to get your last letter with all of the news from home and I would have written sooner, but there is just nothing to tell. Washington is such a dull place in August! It is so quiet here now that there is no one around. As soon as Congress goes into recess, anybody who is anybody also goes out of town. Dylan and I *had* to go somewhere so we decided to pay a visit to his mother in Georgia — we could not have afforded to be seen in town for the entire month! Our reputations would have been ruined.

We would have liked to stop by Middlebrook on our way back, but we spent more time in Georgia than we had planned and dashed straight home. We will come down for a visit some time this month. It would be nice to see the autumn leaves but we will have to visit before hunting season starts. You know how Dylan and I feel about guns and how dangerous they are, especially when there are hunters out there. We wouldn't feel safe there for a minute. Surely you can't feel safe with all those gun-toting hunters wandering around so near your home.

The only real excitement to report from here happened a few weeks ago. (I actually did not witness it personally, since I was busy working on my resume, but my friend Sara told me all about it.) She had gone outside for a little walk and to pick up something for her lunch when at the end of our block this crazy guy came along and held up an armored truck - bullets flying all over everywhere! She had to duck into a leather shop for safety. The poor guy who got shot dropped dead in the middle of the street. I'll tell you, you just never know what will happen next! And there I was inside, and missed it all! Then one of my friends had her purse snatched as she walked across the park in front of the building, but she only had about three of her credit cards with her, and not much money. It is such a nuisance to have to call and cancel the cards, etc., but that is the price one has to pay to live in such an exciting city.

About the only good thing about this time of year is that all the merchants have such wonderful sales. Saks had a glorious discount on their best shoes — only $160 a pair. I was so excited I bought three pairs. Dylan says I've spent too much money, but I don't pay any attention to him. (I make more money than he does anyway!) I also need a few new dresses and suits for work. My skirts from last fall are all an inch too short or else the wrong color, and I certainly could never be seen in them!!

Congress did not come back on the 7th of this month as they had originally planned. Now they expect to return by the 26th, if not sooner. You can't imagine how dull things are around here just now.

As for that health care bill you have been asking about, my friend Sara tells me that it appears as if it has died in committee which is just as well as the members of Congress certainly will find it much easier not to have to answer questions from their constituents about how they voted. There probably will not be much legislation of any kind passed from now until they adjourn, which could be any time. Sara seems to be quite concerned that nothing much was accomplished but then she has always been a little too serious about things.

Everyone I know seems to be busy writing a speech or press release for their bosses. Even though nobody's really doing anything, they've got to at least act like they're doing something. Because so much time was spent on that crime bill and numerous other minor bills, they did not get quite as much time off in August as they would have liked. They are taking time off now for that all-important, last-minute campaigning.

When folks return, the parties will begin again. Social life is really quiet when the lobbyists are not here. I only got one invitation for lunch during the last four weeks. How dull that makes things!! It is also hard on one's budget having to pay for lunch every day. (I might have to take back one pair of those shoes!) All of us on the various staffs are hoping that they do not pass any silly legislation limiting gifts to those who work in the government (which would include lunches, parties and such.)

Next week I hope to get invited to the annual Louisiana seafood party. I think I will wear that new designer outfit I just bought, for people always like to see an attractive woman well dressed. There will be quite a few people who come up from New Orleans for the party and lots of wonderful music and food as well. Last year I ate so much that I did not want anything more for two days. I will have to be more careful this year or I will not be able to wear any of those great new dressy clothes I just bought and there are at least three more parties to which I expect invitations.

I know that you wrote of your concern about the bills that are now before Congress which will affect you and many others there at home and I promise next month to fill you in on the details and status of each one. With everyone gone it is such a chore to find out what is happening with a bill that one does not work with directly.

I must sign off for now since I have to go have my hair done. Tomorrow I have an appointment with one of the congressmen who is cosponsor of a bill to which my boss would like an amendment. He is sending me to make the first contact and I must look my best for this meeting! Maybe I'll wear a pair of those new shoes.

Give the little ones a hug for me. I'll write again soon with more news of my adventures in Washington.

Love,
Your cousin LuLu

•Music

Continued from page 12

Dwelling Place" and Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." Seating capacity at Second Church is about 450, according to Mr. Grudzinski and he encourages those wishing to attend to arrive early in order to obtain seating. Although there is no admission fee, an offering will be received. The public is also invited to a reception at the church following the performance. --

Country Kid Stuff

Are goblins gonna' getcha' if you don't watch out?

By LEE ANN HEIZER

Why do we wear costumes at Halloween? Why do we say "Trick or Treat?" Many of the capricious customs we observe in 1994 actually have their roots in serious practices which earlier people took very seriously.

The Celts were a group of people who occupied and settled much of central and western Europe from 2000 to 100 B.C. The last day of the Celtic calendar was October 31 and this was a day to honor the dead. It was thought that on the last day of the year spirits of the dead visited their former homes. In addition to kindly spirits, demons were abroad and looking for mischief. Huge bonfires were lit to keep these ghouls and goblins away.

November 1 marks the Christian observance of All Saint's Day, a time to honor all known and unknown saints. During the Middle Ages All Saint's Day was also called All Hallow's Day. Consequently October 31 came to be known as All Hallow's Eve and eventually Halloween.

In the 19th century children playing practical jokes replaced the pre-Christian "demons" who were abroad on the evening of October 31. A "treat" would be offered to the prankster in order to avoid a "trick." Hence the expression, "Trick or treat!" In more recent times dressing up in costumes has added to the fun of Halloween.

Other October occurrences

So what if you're allergic to black cats, think dressing up as a ghost is silly, and know that candy just gives you cavities. What else of importance happens in October (besides your first report card for the year)?

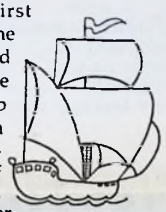
Sputnik I

A Soviet rocket was used to launch this first artificial satellite into orbit around the Earth on October 4, 1957.

Statue of Liberty Day

The Statue of Liberty was unveiled in New York harbor on October 26, 1886. The statue was a gift from the people of France to the United States in honor of its 1876 centennial celebration. The internal support skeleton of the Statue of Liberty was crafted of wrought-iron. The exterior shell was made of copper.

Columbus Day



On his first voyage to the new world under the sponsorship of Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain, Christopher Columbus landed in the Bahamas on October 12, 1492. Columbus named the island San Salvador. The journey had taken 70 days.

Big Catfish

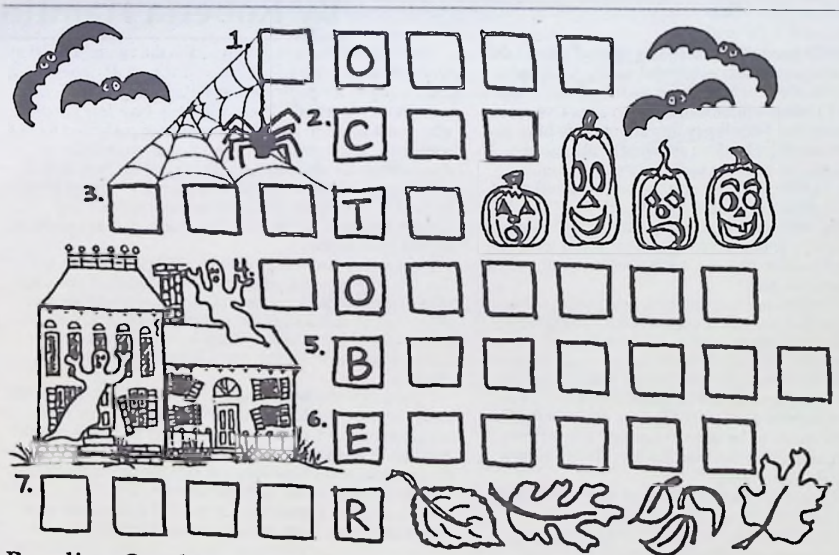
The largest recorded channel catfish caught in Virginia was on October 2, 1992. It was hooked in the Rappahannock River and weighed 31 lbs., 8 oz.

National Fire Prevention Week

(October 2-8) October 8 and 9 marks the anniversary of the great Chicago Fire in 1871. Fire swept through the city which was of mostly wooden construction and left over 100,000 people homeless. The city rebuilt with an emphasis on fire resistant materials and soon boasted one of the first modern fire departments in the U.S. National Fire Prevention Week stresses education in fire safety.

End of the Line

In October 1861, after eighteen months of operation, the Pony Express Service ended. The horse and rider relay system promised to deliver a letter from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California in ten days. It was made obsolete by the completion of the overland telegraph service. - -



Puzzling October

Using the clues and information from the article above complete the puzzle:

1. In Autumn, the leaves of some trees change _ _ _ _ _.
2. A black, furry, four-footed animal superstitiously thought to be a sign of bad luck.
3. Halloween beliefs can be traced to the _ _ _ _ _.
4. Typical Halloween apparel.
5. This was lit in pre-Christian times to ward off evil spirits.
6. Halloween traditions originated on the continent of _ _ _ _ _.
7. A fruit beverage popular in the Fall.

KEY

1. color 2. cat 3. Celts 4. costume 5. bonfire 6. Europe 7. cider

Create-a-costume

By LEE ANN HEIZER

The greatest Halloween fun may be the time before the spooky evening. That is, the time you spend imagining and creating the character you wish to portray. Traditionally, the costumes are scary— things that make you shiver and quiver. However, there are other options if you would like to use your encyclopedia and powers of creativity.

Characters from history

Perhaps you have a notion to dress as a native American. With a little research you can portray a specific individual like Squanto or Sacajawea. When you visit from house to house tell where and when your character lived, and to what tribe he or she belonged. Let your friends guess not only what you are but who you are. You'll be a walking history lesson!

Literary characters

Think of the best book you have read in the past year. Who was your favorite character? Dress like the character and take the book along. It would be lots of fun to be Huck Finn or Laura Ingalls for the evening. How would you like a Halloween visit from Pippi Longstocking or The Cat in The Hat?

Household objects

Design a label, dress yourself in red, wear a white cap on your head and be a bottle of ketchup. A sheet folded and stapled at the shoulders with a string and label attached and you are a tea bag. Cut arm holes in a box large enough for your body, wrap it in holiday paper, attach a bow to your head and you can be an early Christmas gift.

Have someone take your picture

Write down your research in report form and give it and the photo to your teacher. Maybe he or she will be impressed enough with your work to give you an extra credit grade. Perhaps your "character" will be invited to school. - -

Made from scratch
Grain Goblins

Treat your Halloween visitors to these easy-to-make cookies which feature oats and wheat.

A source of vitamins thiamine, riboflavin and niacin, grains add texture plus nutritional value to foods.

In a large mixing bowl with a sturdy spoon stir together thoroughly:
1/2 cup shortening
1/3 cup sugar
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1 egg
1 tsp. grated orange rind, or 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 1/2 Tablespoons molasses
1 teaspoon vanilla

Sift together and add to mixture in bowl:
1/2 cup all purpose flour
1/2 cup whole wheat flour
1/4 tsp.salt
1/2 tsp. soda

After stirring well add:
1 1/3 cups oats, old fashioned or quick
1/3 cup wheat germ

Using hands, mix all ingredients until well blended. Shape the dough into a roll about 1 1/2 inches in diameter and 18 inches long. Wrap the roll of dough in waxed paper and chill in refrigerator for at least three hours. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut dough in 1/4-inch thick slices and place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 8-10 minutes. Be careful not to over bake. Cookies will still appear slightly moist when ready to remove from oven. Yield: approximately 4 doz. Calories: 50 per cookie.- -

Be scary, but be safe

As you design your costume and plan your Halloween outing remember the following safety tips:

Do not cover your face or head so that your vision is obstructed. Face painting is preferable to a mask .

Wear comfortable walking shoes and avoid dangling or dragging costume parts which may cause you to trip.

Get an early start so that you finish your visits before dark.

Limit your visits to the homes of friends and people your family knows.

Have a safe and fun Halloween! - -

Alvin Mace, fire engineer, Augusta County Fire Department

Photo by Lee Ann Heizer

Career chat

By LEE ANN HEIZER

Name: Alvin Mace

Occupation: Fire Engineer, Augusta County Fire Department

Educational requirements: A fire fighter is a high school graduate who has worked through three levels of fire-fighting skills as a volunteer. Also necessary to the job is training as an emergency medical technician. Fire personnel are required to continue their education through seminars which reinforce skills and keep them up-to-date on new techniques and procedures.

Job benefits: Mace indicated that helping people is one of the positive aspects of his profession. "If we save life or property, that's the pay-off," he commented. "To help out the person who's down — that's what it's all about."

Job drawbacks: A work schedule which keeps him away from home for long hours is one drawback. "We work a 24-hour shift," said Mace. "Augusta County firefighters are on duty for 24 hours and off for 48 hours." Fire fighting also has the potential to be a dangerous occupation.

Most rewarding on-the-job experience: "There are so many it's hard to think of just one," reflected Mace. He went on to recount an incident where a friend's wife and six-year-old son were badly injured in an automobile accident. In his capacity as fire engineer he responded to the call to find both pinned in their car. "It was a tough situation they were in," he remembered, "but being there to help and eventually see them recover from their injuries was very rewarding." - -

Looking ahead

November 14-20 is National Children's Book Week and Augusta Country wants to publish your book review! Have you read an interesting book lately? Would you like to let others know about it? This is your chance to share your reaction to an author's ideas. And we promise you won't be graded on your work! One review will be selected to be published in Augusta Country!

Please include book title, author's name, and why the book appealed to you. Address your book report to Augusta Country, P.O. Box 51, Middlebrook, Va. 24459. Be sure to include your name, age and telephone number. Cut-off date to receive book reviews is Oct. 15. - -

What do you think?

In the months to come **Augusta Country** would like to share the thoughts of youth with our readers. This page would like to hear from you. Each month we will offer a question for your consideration. Let us know your opinion. Your responses will be selected at random for inclusion in the next month's issue.

This month **Augusta Country** polled area youth on the topic of Halloween customs. Participating in the survey were Rachel Howard, Byron Phillips and Daniel Salatin.

Rachel, 12, is a resident of rural Staunton and is a student at Beverley Manor Middle School. Byron, an 11-year-old, lives on a dairy farm near Waynesboro. Daniel, age 13, is a home school student who lives near Swoope. Here are some of their thoughts:

Augusta Country: "What is your favorite Halloween custom and why?"

Rachel: My favorite Halloween custom is carving pumpkins into jack-o-lanterns. This is something that my whole family does.

Byron: My favorite custom is scaring people. It's funny to see their scared faces.

Augusta Country: "What has been your most memorable Halloween experience?"

Byron: The Halloween parties at New Hope Elementary School. They have games and candy and lots of fun!

Augusta Country: "Is trick or treating a good idea? Why or why not?"

Daniel: No. Trick or treating is not a good concept. It's not right to threaten someone with a trick if you don't get a treat. Halloween is a pagan holiday and not worth celebrating.

Rachel: I think trick or treating is a wonderful idea because it's a great time for young kids to have fun, to meet new people, and to get lots of goodies.

The question for November is: "If you had 15 minutes to talk to President Bill Clinton what would you tell him?"

If you would like for **Augusta Country** to know your message for President Clinton please write it down for us in three paragraphs or less. Mail your response to: Augusta Country, P.O. Box 51, Middlebrook Va., 24459. Please include your name, parents' names and telephone number. The deadline for your submission is October 15. - -

MATH-THINK

By LEE ANN HEIZER

Have you thought about other words that have something in common with October? Words like octopus, octagon, and octave share a similar root which means *eight*. An octopus has *eight* arms, an octagon is *eight*-sided, an octave is an *eight*-note musical interval and October is the *tenth* month. If we understand root words and their meanings something here doesn't add up to *eight*!

Our current calendar is based on many early calendars and is especially linked to the calendar of the Romans. The names of the months are based on Latin words—July in honor of Julius Caesar, August in honor of Augustus Caesar, September, for the Latin word for seven, and October for the Latin word for *eight*. So here we are again with octo equal to *eight*, but October being the *tenth* month of the year. Still, things don't seem to add up.

The equation is simple however when we realize that the ancient Roman year began in March coinciding with Spring. That makes sense - to start the year when new things begin to grow. If we start counting with March as the first month, April as the second month, May as the third month, and so on we come to the *eighth* month—October. Eureka! Octo equals *eight*.

In 153 B.C. Roman government officials began taking office on January 1. This resulted in January becoming the beginning of the civil year. As with many traditions, the names of the months were well-established and no changes were made to correctly reflect the numerical meanings.

And that is why, based on the modern calendar, *octo* equals *eight* except for October.

With this understanding and your dictionary discover the meaning of these words: octet, octillion, octogenarian. - -

Va. ag commissioner to address Farm Bureau

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON - Virginia's commissioner of agriculture will address the Augusta County Farm Bureau Federation when the group holds its annual meeting 6:30 p.m., Monday, October 3 at Fort Defiance High School.

J. Carlton Courter III, who was appointed Virginia's commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services by Gov. George Allen on April 1, will deliver the keynote address at Farm Bureau's 44th annual meeting. Also speaking at the event will be Maxine Arey of Mt. Solon, who is currently serving in an office on Farm Bureau's national level. Mrs. Arey is chairman of the American Young Farmers' Committee and will be speaking about her work in that position.

Farm Bureau will be honoring one of its own at the annual meeting. Hershel Gardner of Moscow, is retiring from his post as state director after 14 years of service in that capacity. Mr. Gardner has formerly served on the local board and as its president.

Nancy Wheeler, Augusta Farm Bureau office manager, says producers and associates are invited to the meeting. Farm Bureau operates on three fronts - legislation, education, and insurance, according to Ms. Wheeler.

"We promote farmers' interests," Ms. Wheeler said, explaining the basic legislative purpose of Farm Bureau. "We do whatever it takes to help the farmers."

Through policy development on the local, state, and national level, Farm Bureau strives to meet the needs of farmers, according to the Augusta County office manager.

"We have Ag in the Classroom to teach children where food comes from," Ms. Wheeler stated. She also noted that the group supports 4-H and FFA activities for youth.

The insurance segment of Farm Bureau is designed to "cover the kinds of liability that farmers incur," Ms. Wheeler said. Providing a broad range of insurance coverage including home, health, life, automobile, and farm liability, Farm Bureau offers competitive insurance prices for rural people, Ms. Wheeler explained.

Some 200 to 300 people are expected to attend this year's annual meeting. These individuals represent the more than 2,000 people who are members of the local Farm Bureau Federation. The meeting will update the membership on the group's activities during the past year.

"We'll tell about what we did in the previous year, what our goals are for the future, introduce people up for election and thank those going off the board for their service," Ms. Wheeler said. Members attending the dinner meeting will have a chance to enjoy fellowship with one another and hear reports from chairmen of the various Farm Bureau committees.

The group also will be voting to elect a slate of officers and board members. Standing for election as officers will be Harold Armstrong of Churchville, president; Richard Shiflet of Swoope, vice president; and Sharon Phillips of Hermitage, women's chairman. Directors nominated to serve two-year terms are Brian Plemmons of Goshen, Pastures' District representative; and at-large directors Betty Hawpe of Fort Defiance; Daniel M. Flora of New Hope; Robbie Brown of Swoope; Betty Jo Hamilton of Middlebrook; and Forrest Ashby of Rt. 1, Churchville.

Farm Bureau's board consists of 20 voting members including one for each of the county's magisterial districts for a total of seven, seven at-large members, president, president-elect, immediate past president, vice president, women's chairman, Young Farmer chairman, and secretary-treasurer. There is also one emeritus board member.

A slate of resolutions will be presented to the Farm Bureau membership at the annual meeting. These resolutions reflect the group's work on policy development during the past year and cover issues on the local, state, and national level.

Although the group will have a full plate of business before it at the dinner meeting, the event won't be all work and no play. Winners of a poster contest will be announced and Farm Bureau will be making its annual awards presentations. Prizes, as well as surprises, await those who will attend the meeting, said Ms. Wheeler. - -

J. CARLTON COURTER III

Farm Bureau is priority for Moscow dairyman

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

MOSCOW - Priorities, Hershel Gardner says, have to be set. For him, a dairyman, this has included not only operation of a 700-acre dairy farm but something else which he considers to be almost as important.

Since the late '50s, Mr. Gardner has been involved with the Farm Bureau Federation. He has served as membership chairman of the Augusta County Farm Bureau Federation, served on its board of directors, was elected vice president, and then president. For the past 14 years, Mr. Gardner has been a member of Virginia Farm Bureau's board of directors.

"Mr. Gardner has always been a very dedicated man," says Nancy Wheeler, office manager of the Augusta County Farm Bureau Federation. "He has tried to pay attention to all sides of issues" in his work as a state director.

"I feel that I have received more than I have contributed," Mr. Gardner says. "It's been my intent to do what is best for the people I represent."

Issues which are important to all farmers are those which Mr. Gardner has worked to promote.

"Legislative matters are always important. That's what Farm Bureau was created for - to promote legislation particularly in the interest of agriculture," he says.

Involvement in Farm Bureau can make a difference, according to Mr. Gardner.

"You have to convince people its worth their while to be involved in public affairs," he says.

As a state director, Mr. Gardner travels throughout his district. Eleven meetings a year keep him on the road a lot.

"I keep his suitcase packed and keep him fed," says Mr. Gardner's wife, Alice.

Mr. Gardner, who turned 75 in March, admits he's not doing as much as he used to on the farm.

HERSHEL GARDNER

"I do whatever is suitable for me to do," he explained, "but I'm not lifting 200-pound bags of fertilizer anymore."

Mr. Gardner will also be cutting back on some of his Farm Bureau responsibilities in December. He will complete his current term as a state director then and will not be seeking re-election.

Mr. Gardner owns a 300-cow Holstein dairy herd in partnership with his son, Everett, and daughter-in-law, Barbara, who have nine children between the ages of 8 months and 19 years.

"They're hard workers and don't know when to quit," Mr. Gardner says of his partners. For the Gardners, Farm Bureau has been like another member of their family, Mr. Gardner noted.

"Farm Bureau has been an organization for families in agriculture from the beginning," he says. "Today's society can benefit and needs what Farm Bureau has to offer."

Respect for country, home, family, and agriculture is the base from which Farm Bureau operates, according to Mr. Gardner.

"Farm Bureau has grown and is strong because its plugged in at the right place," he explained.

Mr. and Mrs. Gardner also have two daughters who live with their families in Maryland. - -

National post keeps Mt. Solon woman busy

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

MT. SOLON - Maxine Arey surprised a fellow airplane passenger when she told him she was a farmer.

"I don't want to insult you, but you don't look like a farmer," the man said to the thirtysomething woman whom he had just met. This, Maxine, says, represents one of the common misconceptions many people have about farmers.

"It's almost like you don't need a brain to do it," she says.

"People don't realize there is a professional side," adds Maxine's husband, Carl.

The couple is working together to promote the image and interests of farmers through their work on the American Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee of the American Farm Bureau Federation. They are currently in their final year of a two-year term on the committee to which they were appointed by the AFBF president.

In January 1994 at the AFBF annual meeting in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Maxine was elected chair of the committee.

The Areys have, for many years, been active with Farm Bureau.

"Maxine is a driving force," says local Farm Bureau office manager Nancy Wheeler. "She is a dynamic leader in our area and the state and now on the national level. Whatever she puts her mind to, Maxine sees it through."

Of the programs which Maxine has worked on with Farm Bureau, she says she feels promoting agriculture among young people is very important.

"I feel the Ag in the Classroom program is one of the most important things we can keep going," she noted. "We have got to do anything we can to promote the positive aspects of farming."

As an American committee chairman, Maxine has traveled as far as Anchorage, Alaska. She also has made two trips to Chicago. Oct. 19-20 will find her in Colorado Springs, Colo., where she will be attending a meeting with the European counterpart of the American Young Farmers.

MAXINE AREY

Maxine and Carl will also be attending the AFBF annual meeting in January in St. Louis. Their committee responsibilities have taken them from their children - Matthew, 11; Jeremy, 9; and Polly, 8 - on numerous occasions during the past year. In some instances, only Maxine has been the one to travel. Even though she misses being at home, Maxine says there has been a positive side to her occasional absences.

"Actually it's been good. If anything it's helped them (the children) and helped Carl. He realizes it would be pretty expensive to replace me," Maxine says. "The children appreciate a little bit more what it means to have a mom who's always here."

When traveling, Carl's parents look after the family dairy operation - Ore Banks Farm - and Maxine's parents move in with the children.

Once their term on the American committee expires in January, the Areys say they'll be ready to return to activities on the local level.

"We're planning on sticking pretty close to home for the next 10 to 20 years," Maxine says. - -