

# Augusta Country

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'Booker T.' re-born

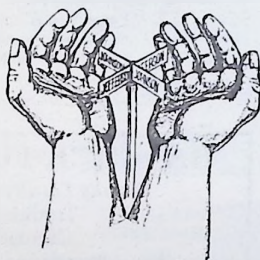
## Former school comes to life for new generation

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON — It could be located in any community anywhere.

The building — once a school then, later, a police department — appears abandoned. Sheets of plywood cover windows and doors on the building's ground level. The parking area, once crowded with vehicles, seems to be no more than a vacant lot. Driving by, one might think the building represents what must be the center of a dying neighborhood.

Look a little closer, however. Look beyond the plywood sheeting and the building's lackluster exterior. Look closely and you'll see the building has, in fact, become the hub of a vibrant community. A community which is working to maintain unity among its residents. A community which is encouraging its youth to excel academically and personally.



The neighborhood is the Johnson-Jefferson Street area on Staunton's southwest side. The building is the former Booker T. Washington High School/former Staunton Police Department and now a building simply called "The Resource Center."

When the police department moved to its new headquarters in the new city hall, the two-story building — commonly referred to as "Booker T." — was left vacant.

The city had no plans for the structure other than to put it on the auction block. Overlooking the Johnson-Jefferson Street neighborhood, Booker T. is the alma mater of many residents of the neighborhood. When they learned of the city's intention to sell the former school building, residents joined forces and pooled their resources to establish Booker T. as their community center. Now, once again, Booker T. is playing an important role in the education of a new generation of the Johnson-Jefferson Street area.

A visitor to The Resource Center on any Monday through Thursday afternoon will find elementary-age children hard at work and play. In one room, youngsters concentrate on homework guided by the assistance of tutors. In another room, a group of children watches a video. One room of the school

See COVER STORY, page 4

Special pull-out section!

50 years of 4-H & FFA  
Market Animal Shows

Pages 13-16  
Subscription form, page 27!



Children must read 15 to 20 minutes a day in order to participate in activities at The Resource Center. Yamon Crawford, director of the center, reads to (from left) Christina Anderson, Elzena Anderson, Tasia Taylor, and Mia Hart in the library at The Resource Center.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

## 'Outpouring of support' makes Center a success

By LEE ANN HEIZER

With the support of almost every sector of the community, The Resource Center is functioning as a vital part of the Johnson-Jefferson Street neighborhood.

Yamon Crawford who serves as director of The Resource Center says, "We've had a great outpouring of support from the community — from florists to the city to the schools — each and every principal," she said.

Ms. Crawford noted that if volunteer help is short on a given day a call to any of the schools will ensure afterschool help from teachers or principals.

Additionally, Parents and Children Together (PACT), a community board with representatives from agencies in the city which work with children, plays an important role in the center's operation. Although The Resource Center does not have a formal board of directors, PACT plays the vital advisory role of an organized board. Ms. Crawford indicated that this group has been helpful in seeing that the needs of youth are addressed as a whole rather than in a piecemeal fashion.

"It's a community effort," she said of PACT's focus on addressing a child's health, social, and educational needs.

As the center's director, Ms. Crawford has had the opportunity to see The Resource Center progress from dream to reality.

"I've been there (the center) since the inception of the program," stated Ms. Crawford. "I was with Ms. (Rita) Wilson when she canvassed the neighborhood to see how to service them."

As children have become aware of Resource Center services available at both Booker T. and Farrier Court, they have been anxious to be part of the afterschool program. In addition to assisting students with schoolwork, being a part of the program also develops characteristics of leadership. The students are given responsibilities suitable for their age from refereeing a basketball scrimmage to serving snacks. Older students often listen to younger children practice their reading skills.

"We empower the children," Ms. Crawford said. "They have certain responsibilities. We stress that a lot — that they are responsible."

See CENTER, page 5



A typical afternoon at The Resource Center on Johnson Street includes time spent on homework. Christina Jones, 9, left, and Ebony Yancey, 11, work with Ashton Jennette, a Mary Baldwin Col-

lege student who helps tutor students in the afterschool program. Theo Wells watches as Christina and Ebony work on a math assignment.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton



## Take heart; the sap is rising

It was hanging at my head just outside my front gate. A rather large icicle was bobbing at the end of a branch. I was immediately confused because it had been so warm those first few days in a lamb-like March and there had been no precipitation for some time.

It had turned suddenly cold the night before and the morning air was chilly, verging on nippy. That liquid might freeze was not a surprise, but the puzzle was in where the liquid had come from to form as ice and dangle from the tree limb.

On closer inspection I noticed the tree limb was broken at the end, exposing the internal workings of the tree. Finally putting two and two together, I realized that what I was looking at was, in fact, a sapcicle. Sap was running out of the sugar maple's broken branch, and, as it dripped during the night, had frozen into a sapcicle.

"The sap is rising!" I exclaimed gleefully. "The sap is rising!"

So take heart, the sap is rising, the peepers are peeping, the birds are singing, and you're holding another issue of Augusta Country in your hands! And what a dandy it is.

We begin this month with a visit to the former Booker T. Washington High School in Staunton where we meet some youngsters making the most of their time in an afterschool program. Our cover story tells about the effort behind the organization of Staunton's Resource Center and the services it offers the Johnson-Jefferson street neighborhood.

"Down on the Farm" goes on hiatus this month to make room for a special pull-out section on the history of the Augusta County 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show. Our special section includes pho-

tos of past year's show and a look back at the show's growth. You'll find this retrospective on pages 13-16.

We're pleased to bring you information about a number of youth activities this month. Among those we've included this month is an article on page 17 about a church's youth group whose members went without food for 30 hours to raise funds to benefit hunger relief projects.

In addition to the group from Bethel Presbyterian Church which we profile in this issue, youth groups at Greenville United Methodist Church and Church with a Vision -- Four Square Gospel also staged food fasts. Nine youth at Greenville U.M. raised \$807 and 17 youth at Four Square raised \$1,540. Combined with the funds raised by the Bethel group -- \$1,410 -- the fast fundraising is



SAPCICLE

sufficient to feed 250 children for 30 days. We commend these young people for their efforts with this project.

And since we didn't have/haven't yet had that big snowstorm we were looking for this winter (knock wood), we're spending some time this month basking in the glory of snowstorms past.

You'll find this look back at some of the century's legendary winter storms on page 20.

So what more could you ask for? The sap is rising and you're looking at the newest edition of Augusta Country. You can take heart because Spring is close at hand and you've got some good reading ahead of you.

Until next month,

*Betty Jo Hamilton*

Betty Jo Hamilton  
Publisher and editor

## Fort FFA teams win senior, junior contests

**FAUQUIER** — The FFA chapter parliamentary procedure teams at Fort Defiance High School carried away the state parliamentary procedure contest held recently.

Fort's team placed first in both the senior and junior competitions. It was the first time that two teams from the same school have won both contests. The contest was held at Fauquier County High School.

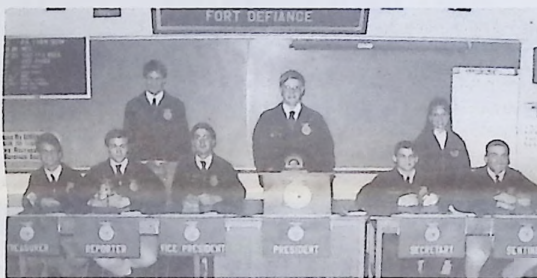
In the senior contest, finishing behind Fort was Pulaski in second, Park View, third, and Lancaster, fourth. The teams were judged on how well they solved the parliamentary problem while conducting a businesslike meeting, and using the opening and closing ceremonies. The senior teams were also judged on how well they scored on a written test about parliamentary procedure.

The team consisted of Ashley Craun, president; Jason Shiflett, vice president; Willie Morris, secretary; Brian Garber, sentinel; Evan Garber, reporter; and Melvin Heatwole, treasurer; Jeff Michael and Kristi Avoli, alternates. They will be going to compete in the national contest in Kansas City in November.

In the junior contest Fort's team led the field with Drewry Mason Intermediate placing second, and Arcadia, third. The junior contest is the same as the senior contest except there is no written test.

Junior members were Kara Michael, president; Adam King, vice president; Ashley Hess, secretary; Derek Mangun, reporter; Josh

Puffenbarger, treasurer; Ben Miller, sentinel; and Jason Hatton and Jason Massie, committeemen. Alternates were Patricia Hawk and Andrew Wimer. The members from Fort Defiance that made the All-State team were Kara Michael, Ashley Hess, Josh Puffenbarger, Derek Mangun, and Jason Hatton. —



Members of the state-winning Fort Defiance FFA parliamentary procedure team are, from left, Melvin Heatwole, Evan Garber, Jeff Michael, Jason Shiflett, Ashley Craun, Willie Morris, Kristi Avoli, and Brian Garber. The team will represent Virginia in the national FFA contest.

AC staff photo

### Holy Week services

**April 13, Maundy Thursday** -- 7:30 p.m., Bethel Presbyterian Church, Sacrament of Holy Communion

**April 14, Good Friday** -- 7:30 p.m. -- Community Worship Service, Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church

**April 16, Easter** -- 6:30 a.m. -- Community Sunrise Service, Greenville United Methodist Church ---

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# Waynesboro man turns wrecks into relics

By TERRY TERRELL

WAYNESBORO -- You could say that Jefferson Davis Diffie's life is a wreck. In fact, the 90-year-old Waynesboro resident has spent a major portion of his life turning wrecks into relics.

"They would bring practically a wreck in here and it would go out a winner, so that makes you feel good. I've restored lots of cars from zero to good," explained Mr. Diffie about his years as a restorer and dealer of antique cars.

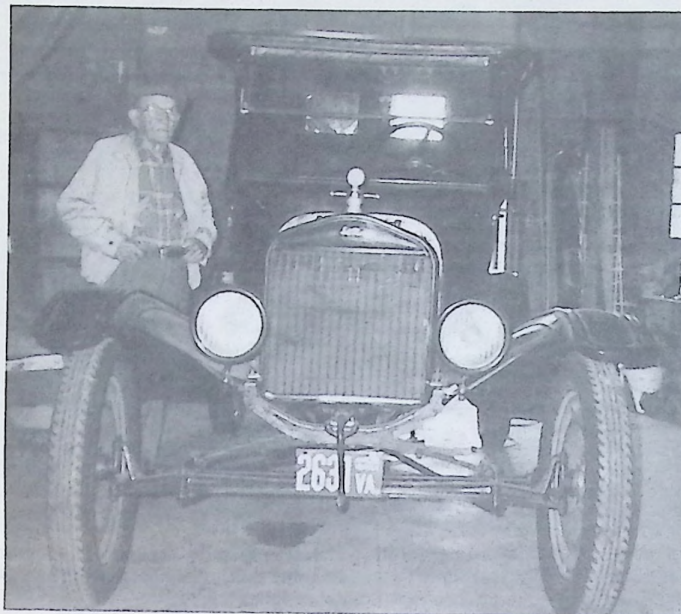
Born April 20, 1904 in Faulkner County, Ark., Mr. Diffie grew up on a farm where he remained until he was 18. From there he moved to Little Rock, worked construction for a while, and in 1925 moved to Mobile, Ala., where he worked in his brother's orange and pecan groves.

In 1928, he bought a bakery truck route, a common practice in those days, selling cookies and cakes until the Great Depression hit the south. His sister was dating a sailor at the time who was from Waynesboro. She married, moved to Virginia, and convinced her brother to move to Waynesboro in 1929. Mr. Diffie found work at the Du Pont plant, and it was while working there that his interest in antique cars was sparked.

Mr. Diffie's entry into the antique car realm was purely coincidental. When the AACA (American Automobile Club of America, founded in Hershey Pennsylvania in 1935) made a run in 1949 from Hershey to Luray, Va., John Brown -- a man from Staunton -- happened to be in Luray when the antique cars arrived. After talking with the group of antique car owners, they asked Mr. Brown to form a club in Virginia which he did.

In 1950, Mr. Brown contacted Mr. Diffie and wanted him to help form an automobile club. As a result of the contact, they formed the first charter branch of the AACA south of the Mason Dixon Line, the Waynesboro/Staunton Antique Automobile Club.

Asked why he was contacted, Mr. Diffie said, "John was looking for people who had old cars and that might be interested in form-



Jefferson Davis Diffie of Waynesboro with one of his classic automotive re-creations, a 1923 Ford Roadster.

Photo by Terry Terrell

ing a club. I had a 1928 Auburn which at that time was quite an old automobile. They were expensive automobiles and that's why people didn't hear much about them." But, according to Mr. Diffie, the Auburn wasn't quite old enough to qualify as an antique.

"Now that we had a local club, I realized that I had to have an antique automobile, so I found one north of Waynesboro, a 1920 Dodge Sedan. The man was reluctant to sell but the rats were taking his place over, so I loaned him a .22 caliber Winchester repeating rifle to shoot the rats," Mr. Diffie explained. "I finally talked him into selling me the car for \$50

for giving him the rifle. That was my first antique."

In looking for parts for his old cars, Mr. Diffie would buy surplus stock from dealers. He eventually built up quite an inventory and started a retail business in 1950. By 1954, with an extensive inventory of parts and several years of experience restoring or repairing his and other people's cars, Mr. Diffie went into the flea market vending business in his spare time.

That same year at Hershey, Pa., when the AACA had their first antique car meet, Mr. Diffie was one of only three flea market vendors. In 1955, there were seven vendors and from that point the vending business exploded. Now there are thousands of vendors at Hershey every year. In 1966, when he retired from Du Pont at the age of 62, what started out as a hobby turned into a full-time business for Mr. Diffie.

Shortly before his retirement, Mr. Diffie had gotten a business and a used car dealer's

license. With a 1965 Dodge truck, he set up his inventory at flea markets from Maine to Texas. As time went on, he kept adding larger and larger camper tops onto the '65 Dodge.

The 70s and 80s were prosperous years in the flea market business. So prosperous was it, that in 1977 Jeff traded in the Dodge for a mini-home camper. All this traveling, especially along the east coast, and years of experience with antique cars brought Mr. Diffie some notoriety.

One day a group from North Carolina which wanted to form their own antique car club, visited Mr. Diffie. He was willing to oblige and helped the group get started. He is now a lifetime member of the North Carolina region of the AACA as well as a lifetime member of several other antique automobile clubs. Around 1959, Mr. Diffie and his wife, Mildred, helped found the Skyline Chapter of the Model A Club of America. They also belong to the Old Dominion Packard Club and the North Carolina chapter of the Horseless Carriage Club of America.

But the constant traveling and incessant demands on his time took its toll. In 1992, after 38 years of playing the flea market circuit, Mr. Diffie retired. Soon to turn 91, he still attends regional meetings of the local AACA -- the group he helped form -- which are held once a month. In the winter, the club meets at a different restaurant each month and in the summer -- in what are called runs -- club members drive their automotive classics somewhere and have a picnic.

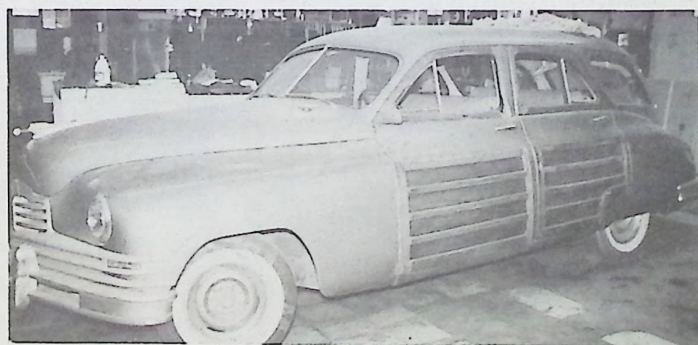
When asked what his favorite car is and what part of the car he liked to work on, Mr. Diffie said, "I don't have a favorite car, although Model As are my specialty. I do upholstery and mechanical work. Now over the years I don't know how many old cars I've bought, sold, and worked on. As a matter of fact I still have some on hand. But I can tell you I've worked on Model Ts and As, Packards, Mercedes, Dodge, Gramms, Auburns, Pierce-Arrows, Cadillacs, Rolls Royces, and whatever came through my shop."

Although he's retired, Mr. Diffie gets calls for assistance from time to time but has to turn people down because he doesn't have the time to do the work anymore. But for his own recreation he still works sometimes up to four or five hours a day in his shop. "I like taking a car that's not performing right and make it right," Mr. Diffie said. "There's a certain satisfaction in that."



Members of the Waynesboro/Staunton Antique Automobile Club met recently at the Pink Cadillac in Greenville. Club members attending included, from left, Jim Gregory of Waynesboro with his 1922 Packard; Walter Hetman of Waynesboro with his 1950 Pontiac Silver Streak; Gail and Donald Halterman of Waynesboro with their 1931 Model A Ford Coupe; and Judy and Sidney Cross of Grottoes with their 1956 Chevrolet BelAir.

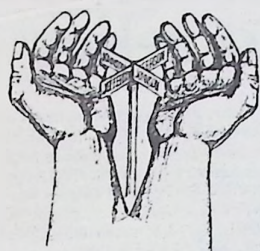
AC staff photo



Among automobiles in Jeff Diffie's classic car collection is this 1950 Packard station sedan. It is rumored to have belonged to the wife of gangster "Bugs" Moran.

Photo courtesy of Jefferson Davis Diffie





## COVER STORY

Continued from page 1

building has been set up as a library from which children may borrow books to take home and read.

Further up the hallway is a room for dance and piano lessons. A teen volunteer from Robert E. Lee High School teaches ballet once a week at The Resource Center. A piano in the dance room allows two children who do not have pianos at home to practice for their weekly lessons. Across the hall from the dance and music room, a refurbished gymnasium accommodates an afternoon basketball game or gymnastics classes.

Rita Wilson, a member of Staunton City Council and a resident of Jackson Street — just a block away from The Resource Center — explained how the facility operates.

"Everything that's done up here is done with a little bit of creativity," she says. Another primary ingredient of the center's success and that which makes it its name so appropriate, is the resourcefulness which neighborhood residents used to get the center up and running.

In March 1992 a group formed in the Johnson-Jefferson Street area to promote community unity. Community Involvement Awareness — or CIA as it is most often called — petitioned Staunton City Council for use of the former Booker T. Washington School as a community center. They were given a year to demonstrate the intent of their efforts.

As Ms. Wilson tells the story, the conversion of Booker T. into The Resource Center was one of a community of people pooling their resources and efforts to accomplish the task. In addition, they



Young ballerinas stretch out during their Thursday afternoon dance class at The Resource Center. Summer Gibbs, center, a student at Robert E. Lee High School, teaches the weekly class to about 15 students. (See related story, page

23.) Some of the youngsters will be attending the Richmond Ballet performance April 3 at John Lewis Auditorium.

Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton

went outside the community to solicit businesses and civic groups for donations of materials and funds. Adding in large amounts of elbow grease and determination, community residents began cleaning the building, painting, and renovating it in August of 1992. By September of the following year, The Resource Center was ready to begin providing services in its afterschool program. But a key ingredient was still missing, according to Ms. Wilson.

Despite efforts to promote the new program, no students came to The Resource Center when it first opened. Again, Ms. Wilson and other volunteers set out with determination to get the community's children involved with the afterschool program. When none came to the center, Ms. Wilson and other volunteers went looking for them. They literally pulled children off the street and into The Resource Center to introduce them to its services.

"We met the school buses when they stopped in the afternoons," Ms. Wilson said. "As the kids got off the bus we'd say, 'Come on into The Resource Center.' I called Mr. Kivlighan (principal of Bessie Weller Elementary School) and told him if he heard about some people pulling the kids off the school buses it wasn't some crazy people, it was just us."

Walking down the second floor hall of The Resource Center, Ms. Wilson gestures from room to room telling about renovations made by community residents and CIA members. The city funded renovation of the gymnasium and NationsBank refurbished a classroom, converting it into a conference room. City Council members, the city manager, and the police chief have been among those who have joined forces with community residents in the rebirth of the once abandoned school building.

Escorting a visitor through the

building, Ms. Wilson's voice echoes along its corridor and mingles with sounds filtering out of the gymnasium and classrooms. The sounds become almost musical — a bouncing basketball is like a thumping bass, tones of a beeping computer throw in an offbeat syncopation, and the laughter and voices of children are the chordal tones which brings the melody to life. Two young boys leave the gymnasium and rush toward Ms. Wilson. They drop to their knees and slide past her on the slick linoleum floor.

"Hello Miss Rita," each says as he glides past. "Hello baby," she responds.

About 25 children participate in the afterschool program at The Resource Center. A satellite program operates across town at the Farrier Court apartment complex where another 25 students gather four days a week.

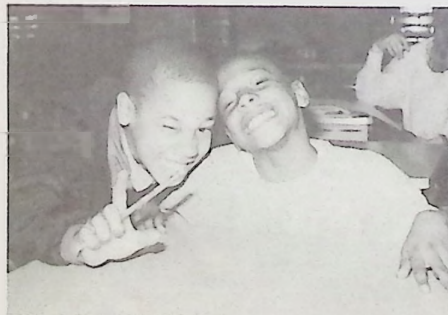
"They would come up here and stay all evening if they could,"

says Hattie Crawford, assistant director of the program who oversees to the day-to-day operation of the Farrier Court project. "They come up here and they don't want to go home. Sometimes in the winter time I have hot meals for them. One little boy asked me the other day when I was going to make soup again."

The Resource Center is operated by three paid part-time employees. A director, assistant director, and building superintendent each works 15 hours per week. The city's recreation department and school board fund the salaries of the director and assistant and the city foots the bill for the building superintendent.

But the bulk of the work carried out at The Resource Center is accomplished through the efforts of volunteers. These individuals have joined in the cause at The Resource Center which is

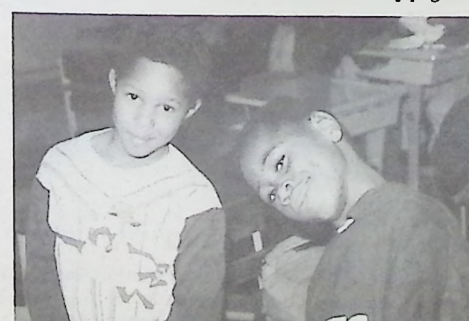
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Darnell Reynolds, 10, and his brother, Shaun, 9, are two of the students who participate in the afterschool program at the Resource Center.



Antonio Lee Brown, 6, works on a puzzle with Vashti Colson, a Mary Baldwin College student who helps with the afterschool program. See related story, page 23.



Theo Wells, left, and Dominique Scott take a break from their studies in the afterschool program held at the former Booker T. Washington School on Johnson Street.



# Center a success with help of volunteers

Continued from page 1

Use of The Resource Center is not free to children. In order to participate in the center's programs, students must pay the price of reading on a daily basis.

"They must read 15 to 20 minutes a day to come to The Resource Center," said Ms. Crawford.

The center's library is one area in particular which needs the attention of a volunteer. Books need to be catalogued and arranged so students may find those which are of interest to them. Ms. Crawford noted that the center's library is important to students because some do not have books to read at home.

Much of what The Resource Center needs to operate is in place, according to its director. However, Ms. Crawford said there are still some areas which are lacking.

"If I had a wish, I'd wish I had two computers," she said, then, after a bit of a pause, "...and a printer."

Ms. Crawford noted that the center's existing computer is frequently used by students who are eager to learn how to operate it and use its software. Although the computer's capacity does not make it adaptable to some types of new software, the staff uses it with children to teach keyboarding skills and reinforce spelling instruction.

"They can use it to become computer literate," said Ms. Crawford, noting that knowledge of computers will "be in the future" for all the students. Two sets of current encyclopedias are also on The Resource Center's wish list.

A mother of five children, Ms.

Crawford indicates that a loving environment is a basic ingredient in The Resource Center's recipe.

"We do a lot of nurturing," she said noting one of the strengths which volunteers bring to the program. "We have retired teachers, mothers, anybody who wants to work" to provide an atmosphere of concern and caring, commented the center's director.

Volunteers are always needed she indicated. "If you can give out snacks, or listen to children read, or just talk," there's a place for involvement at The Resource Center. "It's kind of like being mom to everybody," she concluded.

According to Ms. Crawford, the center is fast becoming an important part of the lives of children who use its services.

"It's their place, their haven; they're safe," she said. "We've taught them that from the beginning." ---

Betty Jo Hamilton contributed to this article.



Hattie Crawford, center, assistant director, supervises the afterschool program at Farrier Court, an apartment complex on the northwest side of Staunton.

## Miss Blondena is 'Grandma' at Resource Center

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON — Everyone in the room is getting or giving a hug.

The occasion is the celebration of Blondena Harden's 82nd birthday. A volunteer at The Resource Center on Johnson Street, Miss Blondena — as friends call her — rarely misses an afternoon of her volunteer activity.

"She's been so faithful," says Staunton City Councilwoman Rita Wilson. "Even when I tell her not to come, she comes anyway and the kids miss her when she doesn't come."

Among those celebrating Miss Blondena's birthday are the 25 children who participate in the afterschool program at The Resource Center.

"Why is it a special day?"

Center Director Yamon Crawford asks the children.

"Because it's Grandma's birthday," they answer.

After a chorus of "Happy Birthday," children gather around Miss Blondena and throw their arms around her waist.

"Happy Birthday Grandma," they say, congratulating the woman who drives herself almost daily from her home near Hebron to assist with the afterschool program.

"The children read to me and I help them to read," Miss Blondena says of her responsibilities at the center. "They say they need help and I help with lessons and things. Sometimes I'm just fixing refreshments."

During the time she has been volunteering at the center, Miss

Blondena says she has seen improvement among the youngsters with whom she works.

"Some have really improved with their manners," she says.

"They seem to appreciate what you're doing for them."

The assistance with school-work which children receive at the center is making a difference too, according to Miss Blondena.

"It helps the kids a lot. It shows on the report cards. Some of them are improving. If we just get two or three it means a lot," she said.

Miss Blondena says she has no children or grandchildren of her own but "you'd think if you look at the pictures on the wall that I have a thousand."

Add in the children at The Resource Center, and you can

make that number 1,025.

Having Miss Blondena at the center is making a difference for the children, according to Ms. Crawford.

"We have aunts and grandmas," she says. "A lot of these children don't have grandmothers or their grandmothers are very young. Having Miss Blondena here is part of the nurturing we do." —



Blondena Harden, center, is surrounded by some of her "grandchildren" who come to The Resource Center. "Grandma" to the children and "Miss Blondena" to others, Mrs.

Harden works as a volunteer weekday afternoons at the center and recently was honored with a party celebrating her 82nd birthday.

Continued from page 4

helping to achieve one of the main objectives of CIA.

"We're trying to bring the community together and promote family ties," explains Ms. Wilson. Although many people are contributing their time and effort to the afterschool program, the city councilwoman says there's room for more who want to help.

"We just need bodies," she says. "We could do a whole lot more if we just had some bodies. Plenty of people are willing to write a check, but we need some bodies."

It could be any building anywhere. But the former Booker T. Washington School isn't just any building. It is fast becoming the centerpiece of a community which — through determination and hard work — has found strength in unity. —



# Friends collaborate on literary hip-hopping garden adventure

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON -- A decade and a half ago in a Connecticut suburb, a little girl named Charlotte was worried about a rabbit stealing greens from her parents' garden. She decided the best way to reason with "Mr. Rabbit" was to leave him a nice note saying "Please Do Not Eat the Lettuce." The next morning an excited Charlotte found a very crumpled, dirty, and smudged reply: "Sorry, I can't read, (signed) Mr. R."

"Well that note certainly gave Charlotte something to think about," recalled Charlotte's mother Elisabeth Dyjak, with a laugh. Mr. Rabbit also gave Elisabeth and her next door neighbor, Janet Wilkins, something to think about.

The two neighbors, one a budding writer and the other a budding artist, were close friends. They shared dreams and schemes together in that neighborhood 15 years ago. "Remember we were once going to be milkmen together," they recall with a laugh.

As a result of Charlotte's encounter with Mr. Rabbit, Elisabeth sat down and wrote the story of *Bertha's garden*, a short nibbling, munching, hopping tale of Mr. Rabbit's excursion into Bertha's garden, an area he was certain had been planted just for him. Janet sketched out some ideas for illustrating the story and the two submitted the work to several publishers. The result? Nothing.

As the years went by, the world changed. Janet moved, raised a family in San Francisco, and then went back to school at the Rhode Island School of Design to earn a degree in fine arts. She wound up in Deerfield, Va., earning her way, by hook and by crook, as a professional artist and graphics designer.

Elisabeth taught first grade for a while and then stayed home to raise her two girls. During the last 10 years she has worked as a legal assistant at a nonprofit agency. Her daughters are now 19 and 22, and Charlotte, one of those little girls and long since wise to Mr. Rabbit, is now in college.



Still living with a desire to write, Elisabeth continued pounding out pieces and submitting them to publishers over the years. Finally, after accumulating over 100 rejection slips, she became a published author. Her juvenile novel, "I should have listened to Moon," was published by Houghton Mifflin.

"It takes so much to believe in yourself," Elisabeth said of the years of frustration before her eventual success.

Armed with the knowledge that good things can happen to those who persevere, Elisabeth resubmitted *Bertha's Garden* as well as Janet's 14-year-old drawings, some new drawings by Janet and Janet's phone number.

Within a month, an excited editor at Houghton Mifflin was on the phone with a very surprised Janet asking her why she hadn't seen her work before. "It's because I haven't been published before," Janet remembers saying.

Immediately impressed, the editors at Houghton Mifflin decided to take the women's work as a package deal, a rarity in the publishing world. "It is very rare for a publisher to accept both," Elisabeth explained. "I really attribute it to our having been friends for so long. We share a vision and in a picture book like this there has to be a careful balance between text and art."

Another rarity in the children's book world is being accepted by such a big publisher. Houghton Mifflin receives literally hundreds of submissions a week and publishes just 40 children's books a year. "I had the chance to see their office and they have shelves filled with manila envelopes of submissions," Elisabeth noted.

With the acceptance of the book, Elisabeth's job was almost over, but Janet's was just beginning as demanding editors made her draw Mr. Rabbit and Bertha over and over again.

"I loved it. It was a really interesting process, but so labor intensive. I was surprised. It takes a lot of effort to combine words with art. The art is planted with the words and there is a rhythm of sequencing that follows the language. I majored in art and I was not prepared! It was like going through two graduate courses," recalls Janet of the work that took 18 months.

"Elisabeth's work was done immediately. I think they changed four words of her story. A year and a half later I was still drawing this rabbit..." Janet explains of the effort that went into getting every detail in the full-color book just so.

"I was really anxious," Elisabeth



Janet Wilkins, left, of Deerfield illustrated the children's book "Bertha's Garden" which was authored by Elisabeth Dyjak, right, and published by Houghton Mifflin. Janet and Elisabeth will be at The Bookstack in downtown Staunton, April 8 from 1 to 3 p.m. for a book signing.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells



said of the long wait and the time spent looking at version after version of Mr. Rabbit and Bertha. "But there was a real evolution taking place and it was very exciting."

Although she has always been one to work spontaneously, Janet declares that her characters kept getting better under the leadership of a good editor who goaded her into continued reworking of the drawings.

The result is a slender, long-limbed acrobatic Mr. Rabbit -- based on dancer Rudolph Nuryev, according to Janet -- who joyously spins, leaps, and springs across the book's pages... and through Bertha's garden. The true character of Bertha, on the other hand, hides in the shadows, not to be revealed until the story's climax.

Many Mr. Rabbits and Berthas later, Janet has a storage box full of drawings which she can barely lift -- drawings that were never used in the book. "We both are very fond of Mr. Rabbit," Elisabeth said. "Janet gave him as much personality, if not more, than I did."

As they examined a box of newly arrived books in the Dyjak's



## What's next for Mr. Rabbit?

Spurred by the success of their recently published children's book, "Bertha's Garden," Janet Wilkins and Elisabeth Dyjak are not ready to walk away from the lop-eared, lupine adventurer which they brought to life.

"We're going to do a Mr. Rabbit in the winter," Elisabeth said of the pair's next project together. "The story will be that Mr. Rabbit wakes up in the winter to discover that he is white, an Arctic rabbit. Drawing a white Mr. Rabbit in a white world will be an interesting challenge for the illustrator," she added with a look at her partner.

"It should be interesting," Janet laughs. "I feel I really know Mr. Rabbit. Bertha is a bit harder because she's not around as much."

This time they are prepared for the hard work and waiting. "Bertha's Garden" was two years from first-acceptance to publication. "It was two years, April to April. I never felt depressed, but it just surprised me that it took all this effort," Janet explained.

"We both are very fond of Mr. Rabbit," said Elisabeth in expressing their desire that the bunny's stories continue.

"He's got potential," Janet added. ---

## A seven-year-old reviews Bertha's Garden, page 27

part-time Staunton house, the two old friends were visibly excited at their new publication.

The intimate little book is designed for children 4 to 8 according to Houghton Mifflin's publicity department, but will certainly appeal to youngsters "of all ages."

Done in pink, white and green, the dust cover of the book features Mr. Rabbit up on his toes engaged in a ballet with a pawful of carrots. The first page of the book confronts young readers with a rather

bored, drop-eared Mr. Rabbit who will soon set off on an adventure: "Sunday morning. Mr. Rabbit in his thicket. Munch munch. 'Ho-hum, dandelions...' begins the adventure."

Fifteen years after Mr. Rabbit's adventure began in a Connecticut garden, fueled by the imaginations of two old, close friends, the tale is ready to be spread. Through the pages of Elisabeth's and Janet's new book, Mr. Rabbit's joyous dance through Bertha's garden will be a delight to children. ---



Bertha's Garden

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# Olive Sheffey brings life out of stories

By SUE SIMMONS

STAUNTON -- A spectrum of emotion dances across Olive Sheffey's face as she tells the story of a raucous funeral.

Joy is clearly the greatest emotion Olive displays as she practices the ancient art of storytelling.

Born in Monroe in northeast Louisiana, on the banks of the Ouchita (pronounced wash-i-taw) River, Olive was part of an extended family whose members dominate her stories today.

"I was born with asthma," she explains, adding that the Catholic nuns at the hospital where she was born were so sure she wouldn't survive that they baptized her.

But survive she did. Her parents, Kathryn and Willie Stroud, took her home to a small farm and house that adjoined the land of many relatives. Grandmother Sybil Duncan (whom she called Aunt Sybil), Aunt Pinky, and Grandma Leah Simms were among her next-door-neighbors.

"Grandma Leah was Sybil's grandmother. That made her my great-great-grandmother," Olive explained.

Grandma Leah soon became Olive's primary caretaker. It should be no surprise that she is also the primary character in Olive's original, contemporary stories.

"Grandma Leah was born in 1857 on the Ouchita River," Olive relates, smiling at the woman's memory. "She was a Ouchita Indian. Her family had land that was stolen by pecan and cotton growers."

"Leah married a man of mixed race,

African-American and Indian. Their son Thomas was Sybil's father." Olive's artful storytelling technique quickly draws the listener into the warp and weft of Grandma Leah's life.

"I was not a healthy child. But on the days I felt good, I would run all day long over fields and across ditches," Olive laughed. Grandma Leah was often heard to say, "Olive wants to have life at one time."

When Leah finally realized the limitations of a 97-year-old woman trying to keep up with a three-year-old, the family decided to send Olive to school.

"I was only three years old but they took me down to the local Catholic school and enrolled me," Olive related, adding: "Grandma Leah felt that since they baptized me and since I was potty trained, the nuns could chase after me."

Starting school at such a tender age did not phase the young Olive. She sailed through school without missing a beat, graduating at the age of 16. Education was a goal her father held out for her, as well.

Olive related that among her father's many jobs was one as an elevator operator in a leading Monroe bank.

"He was better at leveling the elevator than anyone else," Olive recalled. "I



Storyteller Olive Sheffey practicing her craft

would go to work with him on Saturdays and he would let me operate the lever that started and stopped the elevator." Enchanted by the apparent fun of her father's job, she once confided to him that she wanted to operate an elevator "just like him when she grew up."

"My father blew up at me. He told me in no uncertain terms that I was to do better things with my life, or at least try. He wanted me to go to college, be a teacher," Olive said.

After graduating from high school, Olive attended Grambling University where she majored in speech and drama.

"I have always loved 'I Love Lucy'—I could see myself doing that," Olive explained her initial attraction to drama, adding that she still watches the old Lucy shows. After graduation from Grambling, at the tender age of 20, Olive began graduate school at the University of Indiana Bloomington. It was there that she rediscovered the art of storytelling.

"Grandma Leah and Aunt Sybil were both storytellers. Aesop's Fables were favorites and my grandmother particularly liked the story about the boy who cried wolf," Olive recalled. "My mother is a storyteller without equal, however. You haven't heard Bre'r Rabbit until you have heard her tell it."

Mrs. Stroud did not live in a time or place where she had the opportunity to practice her craft professionally. When Olive's mother later became a school teacher, she used storytelling as a teaching method for everything from history to math.

"She could make children understand the most abstract math concepts by telling a story," Olive said. "My mother will tell a story to anyone who will listen. She can take any situation and create a story out of it. She is a great singer and dancer and her

stories are a total kinetic experience."

Olive also credits her mentor Dr. Winona Fletcher, a professor at Indiana, with her creative and dramatic development.

"She gave me 'permission' to engage in the creative process and she encouraged me to explore every area of the theater. She is still a big influence in my life."

With 72 graduate hours, Olive earned the equivalent of three master's degrees from the University of Indiana. She has a Master of Arts in speech, dramatic literature, and African-American literature. After completing her master's degree, Olive fulfilled a childhood wish to see more of the world by teaching in colleges and universities in Virginia, Massachusetts, Colorado, California and Kentucky.

It was at Kentucky State University that she met a graduate student who would become her husband, Thomas Sheffey of Staunton. The couple eventually settled in Augusta County where they live with their four children, Thomas, Lorin, Sybil, and Olivia.

Olive taught at Blue Ridge Community College and at the University of Virginia. She has been, and remains, active in local theater, served as Chairman of the Board for ShenanArts, performed in various productions, notably "God's Trombone," and is currently the costumer for the children's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

But Olive has never abandoned her storytelling.

"Storytelling is an old art form, but I try to put a spin on each story to make it mine — something that makes it unique," Olive said.

For that, she has a recipe. "Take a little bit of fact and add some fiction and embellish all of it."

She is currently putting together an anthology of Grandma Leah stories about growing up in Louisiana. Grandma Leah is the only character who keeps her real name in the stories. Young Olive Stroud becomes "Bobby Lee," interacting with and learning from Grandma Leah, who spends a great deal of time in a rocking chair on her porch.

The collection spans Leah's lifetime of 98 years, from 1857 to 1955. "Each story stands alone but they flow together," Olive commented. "They can be read or be told." The stories are evocative of life's wide range of emotions.

"Life was not easy for blacks at the time. There was cruelty and tragedy, yet life could be funny and pleasurable," Olive said. "These stories are about standing on shoulders — a line from a Langston Hughes poem. The people in my family relied on each other to survive and grow. The family succeeded because we worked together, we stood on each other's shoulders. And Grandma Leah's shoulders were the strongest of all. That's family values."

Olive laughed, saying, "I think Newt Gingrich would love these stories."

And so would Grandma Leah. Of that Olive is sure. "She would be proud that the strength of her family was remembered through a story." ---

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# Bride, wedding gown torn asunder

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

GREENVILLE — Somewhere in some bride's Keepsake Box there is a wedding gown. Twenty years from now the proud mother of a bride-to-be will take that Keepsake Box from its storage space in the top of some closet.

In those two decades, the box will have become yellowed with age, but, because it was taped shut to prevent light and air from reaching its contents, the gown inside — carefully wrapped in acid-free tissue paper — will be in the like-new condition it was when worn by this woman when she was a smiling, blushing bride.

With the lid of the box open, the bride's mother begins pulling the tissue paper aside, thinking about the joy she'll feel when she sees her "little girl" walk down the aisle in her mother's gown.

The last piece of tissue paper pulled back, would-be joy becomes instant shock and confusion as the bride's mother says, "This is not my dress."

Sally Williams of Greenville is looking for her wedding gown. She knew where it was, or, at least, she thought she did. As it has turned out, the box which Sally thought contained her gown actually did not. It's one of those stories that takes some telling.

Sally Moore and Joe Williams were married June 15, 1985. It was



Upon opening the Keepsake Box which was supposed to have contained her wedding gown, Sally Williams was surprised to find a gown she did not recognize. The Greenville woman is trying to locate her gown which had been passed on to her by her mother.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

a perfect day with family and friends gathered at the church. The couple smiled for the photographer and then headed off on their honeymoon.

After the wedding, Sally hung her gown in the closet intending to have it cleaned and placed in a Keepsake Box. It was a detail in the aftermath of a wedding which got put off. In March 1989, Sally and Joe became the proud parents of a daughter.

"I had just had Sarah," Sally recalls, "and I started thinking I've got my little girl to wear my wedding dress."

In fact, the gown Sally wore at her wedding had been passed on to her from her mother, Eloise Moore, who wore it on her wedding day. The dress had been purchased in 1956 at Chevy Chase in Staunton. Sally says she can remember, as a child, playing "dress up" with her mother's wedding gown.

"I can remember as a young child getting that dress out and thinking 'Some day I'm going to wear that' — you know how little

girls are," she said.

And, indeed, the time came when the little girl grew into a young woman preparing for her wedding. The condition of her mother's gown had deteriorated over the years, so some rehabilitation was necessary. The gown's Italian satin was intact but the lace had to be replaced. Pieces of the new lace were appliquéd onto the gown's skirt and train. Seed beads were sewn on the bodice, skirt, and train.

"It was a community effort," Sally said, recalling that her grandmother and neighbors worked the night before her wedding to sew beads on the dress. Her parents and a sister had traveled to Maryland to purchase the lace for the gown.

"Basically we used the satin underneath for the foundation," Sally said of remaking the dress. "It wasn't Mom's wedding dress but in a sense it was."

Having a daughter of her own, Sally began to think about her family's next generation of brides. "I had hoped it would be passed

down to the grandchildren to use," she said.

The wedding gown was taken, in July 1990, to Shipplett's Cleaners in Staunton to be cleaned and stored in a Keepsake Box. Sally picked up the box — sealed from light and air, protecting the gown but also concealing it from view — and packed it away to await the day when one of her children would ask to use the wedding gown.

That day came within five years of the gown's cleaning, however, when Sally's sister began planning her wedding.

"We were sitting here that evening talking. I asked her if she wanted to try on my dress to see if it fit," Sally said.

The Keepsake Box was taken from its storage space and opened leaving the sisters stunned at its contents.

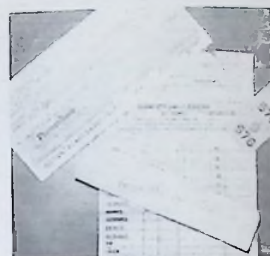
"That's not my dress!" Sally said she exclaimed. Seeing the women look at the gown, Sally recalled her husband's comment of that evening. "Joe said, 'It was the two saddest faces I've ever seen.'"

And so, the hunt was on.

Sally returned with the dress to the dry cleaners to begin trying to trace her gown's whereabouts. Speculating that Keepsake Boxes were mislabeled, Sally thought it likely that someone else may have unknowingly picked up a box containing the gown which actually belongs to her.

However, the cleaners have no records with names of gown's cleaned and stored from five years ago. Shipplett's has advertised in a local newspaper and on radio stations to attempt to locate Sally's gown. Flyers have been posted in the cleaner's three locations notifying customers of the misplaced wedding gown. Sally has even spent some time looking at microfilm of back issues of the local newspaper to see if she can find the photo of a bride wearing the dress which Sally now has. She could find no one who might have her dress.

The gown Sally is looking for has a satin bodice with lace over-



A cancelled check, a cleaner's invoice and stub, and a Keepsake Box label are the only clues to the whereabouts of the missing wedding gown.

lay and a scalloped neckline. The lace sleeves are cuffed at the elbow. Lace is appliquéd on the gown's skirt and train. Seed pearls are scattered over the gown which has a chapel length lace trimmed train.

The gown Sally has is one with a stand-up lace collar, and a satin bodice and train. It has elbow-length sleeves. The gown's regular length train has a ruffle at the bottom and is trimmed with lace. A label in the size 13/14 garment reveals that it is a JC Penney gown.

"I understand that mistakes happen," Sally says of what she believes may have been a mix up at the cleaner's. "But when I took that dress in to be put in that Keepsake Box, I expected it to be my dress. This was something that shouldn't have happened."

Sally explained that her mother's wedding gown which became hers is "something that carries memories with it and you pass it from generation to generation."

Having already spent considerable time and energy attempting to find the gown, Sally says, "I'm not ready to quit (looking). I wasn't taught to give up and I'm not giving up now." —

Anyone who might have information regarding the whereabouts of Sally Williams' wedding gown may contact her at 337-2499.



Sally Williams of Greenville is trying to locate her wedding gown which may have been switched with another bride's gown when it was cleaned and packed for storage. Sally is shown here wearing the gown on her wedding day in 1985.

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# Augusta Feeder Calf Association honors two Mt. Solon youth

## AC staff report

STAUNTON — The Augusta County Feeder Calf Association honored two Mt. Solon youth at its annual meeting held March 9.

Honored with the Outstanding FFA Beef Award was Chris Curry, a junior at Buffalo Gap High School and son of Charles and Betsy Curry. Honored with the Outstanding 4-H Beef Award was Josh Burtner, a freshman at Gap and son of Scott and Padi Burtner.

Chris' accomplishments include receiving FFA's Star Chapter Farmer award, the Beef Showmanship Award, and the Beef Production Proficiency Award. He has participated in livestock and forestry judging, public speaking, and parliamentary procedure. He represented Gap at the National FFA Convention in Kansas City, Mo.

Josh has made his mark in livestock judging, having competed for three years. In state competi-

tion last year he was the eighth high individual in beef judging, third in swine, and fourth overall. Josh is an officer on the Augusta County 4-H Council and has exhibited steers as well as sheep and hogs at the Market Animal Show.

Keynote speaker for the annual meeting was State Sen. Frank Nolen, D-New Hope. Nolen spoke about the Right to Farm bill which remained intact through the recent session of the General Assembly. It will go into effect April 1, 1995.

Marty Lohrey, association president, noted in his annual report to the group that the calf association last year increased the number of sales it held. For the coming year, the association is sponsoring four sales. He noted that these sales have been scheduled to hit peak market times and encouraged producers to use the sales to their advantage. Lohrey said he felt the association sales bring fairness to the sale ring. —



Sen. Frank Nolen, D-New Hope, right, congratulates Chris Curry, left, and Josh Burtner for their achievements in beef production. The Augusta County Feeder Calf Association recently honored the two Buffalo Gap High School students at the association's annual meeting.

AC staff photo

## Augusta Co-op holds pre-spring information meetings

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

MIDDLEBROOK — Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau held meetings throughout the county during February and early March to help farmers prepare for the spring planting season ahead.

Pasture management, worker safety requirements, and the use of herbicides and pesticides were topics of a meeting held March 2 at the Middlebrook

### Community Center.

Jerry McCoy of Rockbridge County told the farmers gathered at the meeting that pasture management is one of the most important parts of any farm operation.

"We're in prime territory to raise cattle," he said. "We need to do a better job with pasture management."

McCoy suggested that pastures should be treated like a crop. Weeds should be controlled with herbicides

and thin spots should be seeded and fertilized. He urged farmers to consider the use of rotational grazing to manage their pastures.

"Start out simple," he said. "There are so many easy ways to do it."

McCoy noted that with an investment of about \$250 farmers can purchase plastic posts and polywire to fence off sections of pasture with electric wire. The posts and wire can be moved easily to change the grazing pattern

of cattle thereby utilizing all of the plant species in specific areas. This system enables farmers to get more out of their pastures, according to McCoy.

"Eighty percent of the cost of producing a calf is tied up in maintaining the cow," he said. Electric fence can be used to allow calves to creep feed into areas where adult cattle are not grazing. This system permits calves to have access to the best forage before

adult cattle are turned in to clean up lower quality growth.

Because most farms in the area have an abundance of fescue, McCoy explained that farmers can "make better use of fescue with rotational grazing." By forcing cattle to keep fescue short, the plant will remain vegetative.

"We need to be more innovative with our way of handling forage."

See CO-OP, page 11

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# Southern States sponsors horse feed seminar

By DEBORAH SENSABAUGH

**BUENA VISTA** -- Thanks to Southern States Cooperative, Rockbridge area horsepersons were treated to dinner, numerous free door prizes and best of all, a presentation on the latest in equine nutrition developments.

The seminar, held in February, filled SVCW's Chandler Hall auditorium full to bursting. Everyone from professional horsepersons to school-age and 4-H students were present.

Carolyn Hedrick-Williams, equine feed sales representative, welcomed those present after the heavy hors d'oeuvres dinner, and introduced Bill Vandergrift, equine nutritional consultant.

Vandergrift used a slide presentation, along with technical information presented in an easy-to-comprehend format for the wide age group.

He first gave his audience an understanding in a nutshell of how the horse's digestive system functions. "There are billions of bacteria, protozoa, yeast cells, etc., and they do the digesting and fermenting," he explained. "You're



Dr. Bill Vandergrift, left, an equine nutritional consultant, spoke at a seminar recently held in Buena Vista and sponsored by Southern States.

Photo by Deborah Sensabaugh

really feeding the bugs when you feed your horse. It is a symbiotic relationship, and when the bugs are happy, the horse is happy," he said.

He cautioned his listeners to observe the "little things" in their horses' eating habits to recognize

unhappy bugs. Examples were inconsistent appetites, diarrhea, lack of weight gain or chewing on wood.

He told horse owners feeding habits for their horses should remain constant in food sources, food volume, bacterial population, liquid environment, temperature, removal of waste and exercise.

"For example, if a horse undergoes heat stress, the body temperature in-

creases and the bugs get slow cooked. If the fermentation goes down, the horse can colic," he said.

He also said that research shows if a horse stands in a stall for more than 18 hours, the chances of colic increase greatly.

Forage and water are the two most important components of a horse's diet, he told those present. "Start with the best quality forage you can get and feed as much of it as you can. Then, if you need additional protein, supplement with grain," he said. Vandergrift advocated forage low in lignum, or fiber, with hay that is cut pre-bloom and is high in fermentable structure. He also said that hay less than 7 percent protein should be fed to cattle, not to horses.

Vandergrift said that additional minerals were needed by horses in the local area. He also talked about additional supplemental feeds such as sugar beet pulp and alfalfa hay.

Vandergrift also cleared up the mystery of what happens when a horse overdoses on grain and founders, or develops chronic laminitis. When a horse eats too much grain, the fermentation process steps up and overproduces lactic acid. The acid causes a drop in the pH balance of the gut, causing great amounts of the bacteria to die. As the bacteria die in large numbers, their corpses decompose and release endotoxins. The toxins overload the circulatory system with resulting founder in the horses' hooves.

"Don't feed any more than five pounds of grain at one time; rather, feed more times a day and not more than 15 pounds per day. If you need more energy for your horse, use better hay or supplement with beet pulp as a fat source," Vandergrift recommended.

He also told those present how to get their horses to drink more water, such as keeping the water easily accessible, and keeping the water temperature between four and 60 degrees.

Vandergrift also advised that keeping weanlings and yearlings on the thin side will keep them from developing joint problems from consuming too much protein. Too much grain affects the young horses' production of growth hormones, which can affect the cartilage in the horse's legs.

He also talked about Southern States' new line of Triple Crown feeds which has added bacteria cultures to aid digestion.

Dr. Jon Rosenberg, a Perdue University graduate and representative of Franklin Laboratories, talked about herd health for horses.

He stressed three management areas to promote good horse health, including nutrition, vaccination, and sanitation. He also talked about the life cycles of parasites, first aid, disinfectants and disease control. "If you want increased immunity, keep your horse healthy," he added.

Rosenberg talked about the various vaccines available, such as encephalomyelitis, rhinopneumonitis, influenza, tetanus, and others.

He said that only one in every 350,000 horses experienced allergic reactions to vaccinations.

The equine seminar was sponsored jointly by Southern States, Rockbridge Farmers' Co-op, and Franklin Laboratories. ---

## Farm Bureau membership drive under way

AC staff report

The Augusta Federation of the Virginia Farm Bureau is conducting its annual membership drive.

"Every farmer needs to be a member of Farm Bureau," said Carl Arey, the group's membership chairman.

Arey noted that the American Farm Bureau Federation is the nation's largest farm lobby. It takes with it to the nation's Capitol and statehouses the unified voice of farmers.

"Now, more than ever, farmers need a voice in Washington and Richmond," Arey said. "Farm Bureau is the organization which can lobby for legislation that is favorable to all aspects of agriculture."

Membership in Farm Bureau has other benefits, in addition to the group's lobbying power, according to Arey. Members may purchase discounted farm supplies, such as tires and batteries, and may take advantage of special

group health insurance rates. Benefits also include discounted airfares and rebates on the purchase price of vehicles. Farm Bureau's annual membership fee is \$40.

Arey encourages everyone with agribusiness interests to consider membership in Farm Bureau.

"Until you really get involved

you don't realize how much Farm Bureau does, especially with legislative issues," Arey said. "Protecting farmers' interests helps keep agriculture strong."

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# Forage seminar leader entertains, educates

By LOIS SKEEN

VERONA -- On St. Patrick's Day, about 40 soil conservationists and livestock producers from around the state gathered at a forage seminar at the government center in Verona hoping to learn more about grass and crop management. They did learn about those things -- and a lot more.

Participants were greeted by the speaker himself, an energetic man with a very broad grin wearing a bright blue blazer and colorful bow tie with a large sprig of alfalfa decorating his lapel. As people signed in at the registration desk, he invited them to untangle some brain-teaser puzzles, or to find the hidden picture in a 3-D image postcard. He handed out lollipops and some neon markers, and, almost as an afterthought, a few handouts about his lecture.

He began his presentation by handing a participant a plastic bottle partially filled with colored liquid which bubbled quickly up into the neck as it was warmed by the person's hand. He then set one of those infamous drinking birds

by a glass of water and challenged everyone to think of how the bird might change if the water was replaced with alcohol. "I want my students to be creative, innovative, and to challenge their minds as to how things work!" he explained. "It's no good to be an A student with no ability to apply the information."

Who IS this guy? And isn't he supposed to be talking about plants?!

Dale, as he prefers to be called, is not a salesman or an entertainer, but Dr. Dale Wolf, who for the last 20 years has been doing research and teaching graduate level courses on plant physiology and forage crop production at Virginia Tech. He grew up on a diverse farm in Nebraska that included 750 acres of pasture on which he says his father would "turn out 80 head of cattle when he first saw signs of green in the spring, and when they came back to the barn in the fall bawling he put them in the lot and started feeding corn."

This is obviously not Dale's idea of pasture management. He left the farm to go to college, then taught vocational agriculture for a while. He returned to graduate school, where he began his research on grazing cool and warm season grasses, and forage crop production. After his retirement at the end of this year, he plans to return to that family farm where he promises to "double the productivity and quality of the 750 acres of pasture in one year using the principles of controlled grazing."

Wolf's seminar dealt with the

differences between cool season plants and warm season plants and their application in Virginia. Warm season grasses, such as switchgrass and Caucasian bluestem have a much higher growth rate than the cool season grasses when temperatures exceed 80 degrees. Cool season grasses, such as alfalfa, orchard grass, bluegrass, and small grains are productive over a much wider temperature range, and maximize their growth at temperatures between 60 and 80 degrees.

Dale proceeded to explain some reasons why this is the case. He presented differences in plant physiology between the two types of grasses along with a review of those things taught in science class, like xylem and phloem, photosynthesis and plant respiration, and the effects of light, temperature, oxygen and carbon dioxide on plant growth. During his discussion about sunlight and energy, Dale told the group that 10 million billion light waves from the sun strike the leaf at 186,000 miles per second to provide the energy for photosynthesis. To illustrate just how large that number is, he pointed out that it would take 80 years counting at 100 counts per minute, 24 hours a day to count to one billion.

Dale also related some other fun facts, such as why the frost is heavier on the windshield of the car than on the side windows after a cold, clear night, how X-rays work, how to determine the position of your particular location within your time zone by watching the sun, and that the reason

plants are green is that they absorb all the other light waves and reflect the ones we see as green.

Back to the grasses. One reason cool season grasses do not grow well in high temperatures is because they must begin respiration to cool themselves, which uses energy that would otherwise be used for growth. Because of structural differences, warm season grasses do not begin respiration under conditions of high temperature or low carbon dioxide as the cool grasses do, therefore they make more efficient use of their energy sources for growth.

Dale pointed out other ways that warm season grasses are more efficient. At the normal levels of oxygen found in our atmosphere (21 percent), warm season grasses produce more nutrients from photosynthesis than do cool season grasses. Cool season grasses maximize their photosynthesis rate when the plants are getting about one-third full sun, whereas warm season grasses will continue to increase their photosynthesis rate as sunlight increases up to 100 percent full sun. The rate of photosynthesis is reduced in cool season grasses when the lower part of the plant is shaded by the canopy of the upper part of the plant, but in warm season grasses this is not the case.

Could Virginia producers benefit by using more warm season grasses in pastures? Augusta

County Extension Agent David Fiske says that although they are not used much at the present time, warm season grasses are gaining in popularity because they are more drought tolerant. They do require different management practices.

Warm season grasses work best in a pure stand, rather than mixing two or more grasses in one field. They should not be grazed or mowed closely. When mowed for hay, Fiske recommends leaving an eight-inch stubble in order to facilitate regrowth. Because most varieties are relatively lower in protein, warm season grasses would not be ideal forage for a milking dairy herd, but would work well for growing dairy heifer replacements or beef cattle.

Sheep cannot utilize this system because the plant should be about 24 inches tall before grazing, and should not be grazed closely. Warm season grasses "work just great in a rotational grazing system", according to Fiske.

For more information about warm season grasses and their potential use in your operation, contact your local extension office. For more information about warm season grasses, plant physiology, light waves, the greenhouse effect, what temperature to store potatoes, the size of the sun, and how to stimulate your audience to think, contact Dr. Dale Wolf at Virginia Tech. ---

## Co-op

Continued from page 9

McCoy said and urged farmers to spend time planning their strategies for pasture and crop management. "We're all CEOs of our farms and we've got to keep up with change," he said.

McCoy also addressed the topic of using soil insecticides with corn.

"You're taking a big risk if you don't use it (soil insecticide)," he said. "If you're going to plant corn, you've got to consider using a soil insecticide."

Once again, McCoy told farmers to make a plan of action to control insect damage to both the corn seed and plant.

"Before you decide what you're going to use, decide what you're going to do," he said. "You need to decide where you want to deliver the punch."

Dale Smith, Co-op general manager, talked to the group about new regulations governing the use of farm chemicals. These regulations went into effect Jan. 1, 1995 as part of the Worker Protection Standards.

Smith noted that the law was designed primarily for the protection of migratory workers, however, all farm employees are subject to the measures. The standards call for precautionary labeling of chemicals and the use of

protective clothing when chemicals are being applied. Record-keeping is also required by the standards set forth in the law.

Aside from the rules mandated by the government regulations, Smith urged farmers to use caution in working with herbicides and pesticides. "Use good common sense in handling any pesticide," he said. "Don't take chances in handling any chemical."

Also speaking at the Co-op's Middlebrook meeting was Skip Greg of Zeneca Ag Products. Greg spoke to the farmers about the use of pesticides and herbicides to promote high yielding corn crops.

Greg promoted the use of Force, a soil corn insecticide to control rootworm and cutworm. Force is applied in the furrow as the corn seed is planted. Greg said the granular product is "user friendly and is the least toxic of soil insecticides." In addition to having low toxicity, Greg pointed out that Force is the least soluble of soil insecticides, has very little odor, and presents no hazards to environmental species. Use of the product, according to Greg, can increase corn yields by 2.59 tons per acre.

"It would be worth your while to control soil insects," he said. ---

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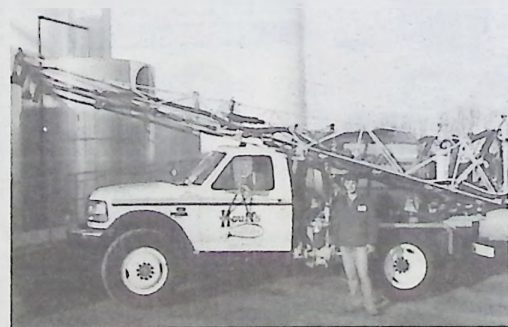
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# Spring market preview: Cattle down, sheep up

## AC staff report

Cattle numbers are up forcing the price down. Sheep numbers are down forcing the price up. The simple economics of supply and demand will have a strong impact on spring livestock markets, according to those keeping watch over the markets' movements.

"How low will they go?" is the question uppermost in cattle producers' minds. Prices have been depressed for a number of months but the end of this cycle is still some months away, according to Mike Carpenter, livestock grading specialist with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

"We're predicting lower prices into 1997," Carpenter said. "We haven't seen the low yet."

Cow numbers are up 6 percent in Virginia, according to the VDACS official. "That's going to translate into more calves available," he said.

Spring stock sales will have an increased number of yearling cattle, Carpenter said. Producers who normally sell calves in the fall held them over this past winter hoping for better prices. These 8- and 9-weight cattle will be headed to feedlots this spring.

Prices on 5-weight cattle are in the 80s now, Carpenter said, with 6-weights in the 70s. Prices have fluctuated over a "pretty wide range depending on what sales you're at," noted Carpenter. Five-weight cattle may eventually peak in the 90s but, the VDACS grader said, "that will be all of it."

"Heavier cattle could get cheaper," said Elton M. Hewitt Jr. of the Staunton Union Stockyard. He predicted that prices for 7-weight cattle may move into the mid 60s. Calves weighing 500 pounds are averaging about 80 cents now, he noted, and may move up some as buyers begin filling orders for cattle to be put on pasture this summer.

Although current prices are creating a buyers' market, Hewitt said these cattle will be coming back through the sale ring in the fall

**The simple economics of supply and demand will have a strong impact on spring livestock markets, according to those keeping watch over the markets' movements.**

when prices are expected to be lower than they are now.

"It doesn't look very good for fall," Hewitt said predicting market conditions later in 1995.

"Buy them so you can sell them cheap," he said, is the only advice he can offer cattle producers. Hewitt noted some pasture used to graze spring-bought cattle may get pretty tall this summer.

"A lot of them (cattle producers) say they're not even going to put any (cattle) out. They say they're just going to let the grass grow," he said.

Now is the time for cow-calf operators to take a close look at their production units, according to Hewitt.

"Cull out all older cows — any that aren't real good and productive," he said. "You've got to get expenses cut some way." Cutting back on cow numbers will drop the number of calves available, Hewitt explained. As the supply drops, demand should rise and so should the price.

Another factor which may affect cattle prices are the number of cattle being put in western feedlots. According to the Staunton stockyard operator, fewer cattle are being started on feed. This will eventually reduce the number of cattle going to slaughter which should make the price come back up. Even still, Hewitt cautioned that it will be some time before the cattle market shows much improvement. With slaughter cattle futures for August '95 at 62 cents, there is not much hope for better cattle prices anytime soon, according to Hewitt.

Carpenter said the western fed cattle market topped out at 75-76, noting that by the third quarter of this year the market will be at least 10 cents under that. This price drop is about the seasonal average; however, Carpenter noted there

are several factors which will influence the slaughter cattle market.

"Numbers are up. If corn gets high, there will be less inclination to feed cattle," he said. An increase in the number of cattle coming out of feedlots will depress the price, however, if fewer cattle are put on feed due to rising costs, the market may swing up.

According to a report published in the April issue of Virginia Cattleman, cattle prices will be adversely affected as some producers begin to cut their herd numbers. Heifers which normally would be kept for replacement will be sent to slaughter, creating even more of a glut on the market. Cattlemen will be culling their herds more closely, another move which will send more animals to slaughter. Even with a decrease in the number of cattle in production, the report noted, cattle numbers will not begin moving into a downturn for at least another 18 months.

According to Carpenter, red meat exports during the past year have helped stabilize the cattle market.

"If it weren't for increased exports, prices could have been worse than they were last year," he said.

The best advice Carpenter has for cattle producers is to "hedge their bets."

"Sell some and keep some," he said, adding: "When the market is

in a down type of cycle sometimes it pays to sell (cattle) lighter than you normally do."

While cattle producers are grinning and bearing the current market downturn, sheep producers — for the first time in a long time — have something to smile about. "It's looking real promising," Carpenter said of the market for lambs in the months ahead. "The last couple of years it's been liquidation. Now it's turning around."

Hewitt noted that the upswing in the lamb market is good news — the first in a long time — for sheep producers.

"There are not many (sheep) around," he said. "It's that old supply and demand thing that's going to determine it (the price)."

The number of sheep in Virginia dropped for the fifth consecutive year in 1994, according to a report issued by the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. Based on a Jan. 1 survey, sheep were estimated at 95,000 head, down from last year's record low of 99,000 head.

Virginia's sheep industry all but came to a standstill three years ago when slaughter lamb prices dropped into the 40-cent range. A depressed wool market further influenced producers to rethink their stocking patterns and predation by coyotes forced some producers to liquidate flocks. Those who went out of production are not likely to return, according to Carpenter.

"Once they go out very few will go back in," he said.

Hewitt said the reason for this is simple. "You've got to like them (sheep) to be in it," he noted.

For those who resisted the temptation to abandon their sheep operations, the coming months may bring some pay offs.

"We're probably going to see

some 80s hold through Easter," said Carpenter, "then we'll go into the seasonal drop off." However he cautioned producers not to put all their lambs into the Easter market basket.

"One thing that's happened the past few years is that people gear up for the Easter market and prices have been down," he said. Carpenter noted that producers might consider selling 70- to 80-pound lambs now and "try to get them out ahead of Easter."

The ethnic trade may also bring some bonuses to sheep producers. Slaughterhouses in the northeast buy 50- to 60-pound lambs to meet the demand of ethnic groups which prefer lighter weight slaughter lambs for holiday celebrations.

Prices for 100-pound plus new crop lambs will be in the 80s with 70- to 80-pound lambs falling in the 90-cent range. Later in the year, according to Carpenter, prices for slaughter lambs will fall into the 60s, "but not for as prolonged a time" as in previous years.

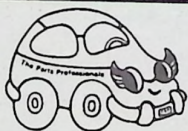
Old crop blue O lambs brought as much as 81.25 a pound in recent weeks, according to Hewitt. He said the Easter market may push the price into the 85- to 90-cent range. Lighter weight lambs moving on the ethnic market may bring \$1 a pound.

A mirror's reflection of the cattle industry, sheep production may be headed toward an upswing, according to Hewitt.

"There is some demand for good ewes," he said. "Sheep are a better investment than cattle right now." —

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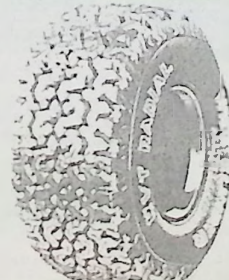

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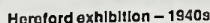
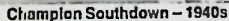
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# Bill Simmons recalls growth, success of Market Animal Show

**SANGERVILLE** — It was 1945. The end of World War II was still some months away. Communities everywhere were staging rallies for the war effort and war bonds were the investment opportunity of the day.

The presence of the German Reich in the European Theater and the Japanese threat in the Pacific Theater were on the minds of almost every U.S. citizen. Newspapers of the day told of battles fought and lives lost. In the Staunton News Leader, word of local servicemen killed in action made headlines almost daily.

But for all the news being reported from the war's two fronts, the remainder of what appeared in the local newspaper seemed pretty ordinary.

A five-pound bag of sugar cost 34 cents, a pound of coffee 23 cents and a 25-pound bag of flour was \$1.22. At the meat case, steaks were 78 cents a pound and pork chops were 55 cents a pound. A campaign was being mounted to build a new hospital. A 200-acre farm for sale (with 7-room house, barn, electricity, and telephone) was priced at \$10,500. Choice fed steers weighing 1,075 pounds were bringing 17.35 cents a pound. And Mae Weaver of the New Hope 4-H Club exhibited the "Supreme Champion" at the Fat Cattle Show held at the Staunton Union Stockyard.

**Continued on page 14**

Beef Show FFA Fat Stock Show 4-H Market Animal Show FFA Fat Cattle Show 4-H Baby Beef Show FFA Fat Stock Show 4-H Market





Glen and Carolyn Grove of Waynesboro



Elizabeth Forrer of Wilson Memorial, Champion Shorthorn



Judging -- 1940s



George Beam, left, makes an award presentation

# Continued from page 13

"The better the cattle — the better the price. This is the suggestion Staunton Union Stock Yard Inc. offered producers for next year's Fat Cattle Show," the news item — which appeared in the May 18, 1945 edition of the Staunton News Leader — reported. "Get an earlier start and make the animals bigger and better for the coming year," they urge," the story noted. And from that show — which this year will celebrate it's 50th anniversary as the Augusta County 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show — "bigger and better" is what each year's animals and the show in which they are exhibited have become.

Bill Simmons of Sangerville was a student at North River High School in 1944. He recalls hearing about the show from an Augusta County 4-H Extension agent.

"The first thing I remember was Mr. (R.L.) Coffey talking about it — raising baby beeves for the show," he said. "The first year I showed was 1945 or '46 and I showed three different years."

There is, however, some debate on the year when the show was first held. Some say the first show was held in the early years of World War II but was suspended due to wartime shortages.

"It seems that I remember there was a year we didn't have the show," Simmons said. He noted that he could recall hearing about preparations for the show in 1942 when he was enrolled in 4-H under Mr. Coffey's direction.

"He wanted us to get baby beeves," Simmons recalls but suggested that perhaps these projects may have been for county fair exhibitions. There are no records which indicate that the show was held anytime earlier than 1945.

The history of the show's early years is mostly held in the minds of those who were involved in the event's organization or prepared animals for it. Simmons is not unlike many of the 4-H and FFA members who exhibited in the early days of the livestock show. However his association with the show spans three generations of exhibitors.

As an agriculture student he participated in the show. Following high school and college graduation, he worked as an agriculture instructor at North River and assisted in organizing the annual event. Although he retired from teaching in 1988, Simmons has maintained his support of the Market Animal Show as a Ruritan volunteer. Other individuals, like Simmons, have been among the many people who have supported the show and seen it grow through the years.

In its infancy, organizers called the event the "Fat Cattle Show" because only cattle were exhibited. The event began as agriculture was entering a new age. More than anything, perhaps, it heralded the advent of modern beef cattle production which marked the decline of grass-fed slaughter cattle.

In 1947, the event was called the 4-H and FFA Baby Beef Show, reflecting the move to feeding out young animals with grain to slaughter weights. Grass-fed cattle would have required as much as three years or more from birth to reach slaughter weights. Research at land grant universities was proving the value of fattening cattle on grain for a concentrated period of time. This method of finishing cattle enabled producers to have beef ready for market in less than two years from birth. Researchers proved that cattle fed in this manner yielded higher quality meat with improved palatability. Having 4-H and FFA members feeding calves for exhibition was one way of demonstrating to farmers the value of modern beef cattle production.

The structure of feeding animals for the show has changed dramatically through the years, according to Simmons. "All we had to do was list them (exhibitors who planned to show)," Simmons said. "We'd just turn in the list of names. Then you didn't do it (feed cattle) but just a month or so before the show. It wasn't long before we had to start getting them on feed for 90 days. We learned how to select an animal that would feed out for the show."

The evolution of what began as a cattle show was rapid. Organizers changed the event's name to the Fat Stock Show, reflecting the inclusion of sheep, hog, and purebred heifer exhibitions. Although it is a two-day event now, the earliest shows covered only one day. Animals were weighed in at Staunton

Union Stockyard on New Hope Road — the site of the show since it's inception — the morning of the show. Entries were exhibited during the afternoon and then sold at auction that same night. With the strength of agriculture, and the 4-H and FFA programs in Augusta County, it's not surprising that the show realized success and growth early on in its existence.

"All the way the show was a success," E.B. Morse, Augusta County Extension agent reported to the Chamber of Commerce as is noted in the May 6, 1949 edition of the Staunton News Leader. Another news story reported that Larry Arehart of Greenville exhibited the champion single lamb and Ernest Riley of Wilson Memorial exhibited the champion pen of three lambs in that year's show.

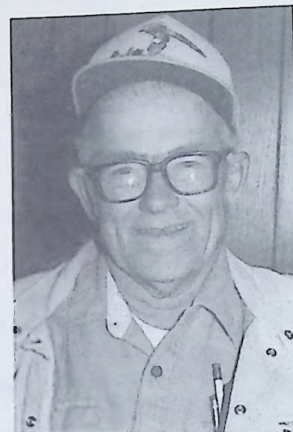
The Staunton-Augusta Chamber of Commerce has been involved with the Market Animal Show from those early years. The organization has been instrumental in rallying local businesses to support efforts of area youth who compete with their animals. By 1952, according to another newspaper account, the show was reaping the benefits of support by the community as a whole.

"More than 100 entries from county youth" were weighed in at the stockyard at the event which, by that year, had expanded to a two-day affair. According to the May 1, 1952 story, animals were weighed in on the Wednesday night before the show. Lambs and hogs were shown the next morning, the calf show occurred in the afternoon, and, that night, was followed by the sale.

As the show was making strides of its own in becoming a one-of-a-kind event, young exhibitors were also learning about the showmanship of exhibiting livestock.

"We didn't know much about showing," Simmons says of his and his contemporaries' competition in the Fat Stock Show. "The first steer I showed I didn't even have a show halter. I showed that first year with a rope halter."

Continued on page 15



BILL SIMMONS



Bill Thompson of Swoope, second from left, Charlie Harris of Waynesboro, third from left, showing in 1950s pen of three sheep exhibition.



Larry Cohron of Stuarts Draft In — What year, Larry? Something happened through the years, either the calves got bigger or... (to bottom of 15)



Continued from page 14

But 4-H and FFA members have never been ones to be left behind by progress.

"The second year, Mr. (E.B.) Craun said, 'We're going to have show halters,' and he bought a beef hide and we used leather knives and cut strips and got rings and made our own," Simmons said regarding the project directed by a former North River High School agriculture instructor. "We made eight or 10 (halters) that second year at North River."

According to Simmons, showmanship — as it is with present day shows — has always been emphasized to exhibitors.

"They began to teach us how to show after the second or third year," he said. "We had some people with experience show us how to fit an animal. We would have a showing and fitting program at the school before the show. That really made an improvement in the show." But animals weren't the only ones which were groomed for the show. Simmons recalled that Mr. Craun required his students to wear their "FFA jackets and white pants" when showing animals.

Exhibitions of the early shows were divided into classes by breeds. In addition to lambs, hogs, and calves, purebred heifers were also shown in classes by breed.

"We were showing by breeds then," Simmons said. "Some classes were small. Shorthorns only had three or four in a class but the Angus sometimes had 20 in a class. It was always a big show. There were 70-80 steers, even back then. Calves came from the local herds. Most all of them just picked them out of their herds. I think there may have been a few that were bought, but most came from farms here in the county."

The show, as its organizers intended it, was always more than a show. The 1952 newspaper account noted that the objective of the show was twofold: "1) To demonstrate that it is practical to produce cattle, sheep, and hogs on adapted farms of this area and to show the advantages of good

breeding and the use of a balanced ration in feeding livestock. 2) To train boys and girls in the proper handling, fitting, and showing of livestock."

Learning by doing was part of what the show was meant to be for its competitors. At least one of them was excelling at the task as the newspaper in 1952 reported that Billy Custard of the Wilson 4-H club showed both the Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion steers. The top calf

was a 980-pound Aberdeen-Angus and the runner up, also an Angus, weighed 805 pounds. That year the champion lamb was exhibited by Rudolph Shiflett of Wilson Memorial and the champion hog was shown by Carolyn Grove of the Fishersville 4-H Club. The newspaper account also made reference to awards given for "swine litter entries," but failed to explain what this was.

As many of the show's early exhibitors did, Simmons continued with his interest in agriculture. He attended Bridgewater College and Virginia Tech, where

he earned a teacher's degree, then returned to the Augusta County area. He taught agriculture at North River High School then later moved to Fort Defiance High School when it opened in 1968. As an agriculture instructor, Simmons' role with the Fat Stock Show changed. Instead of learning to show animals, he was teaching youngsters how to show animals.

"Mr. (O.B.) Roller and I were teaching together. I can remember during Christmas vacation we would visit every student who had a steer," he said. The show became an important part of Augusta County students' agriculture education.

"I always tried to use it as a motivation for the students to do better," Simmons said. "When we would talk about the Market Animal Show, I would use it to get their attention. It was a good teaching thing as far as motivating students and showing them how to feed steers and mix rations."

As technological advances propelled agriculture into a new age, exhibitors in

the Fat Stock Show kept pace with the rapidly changing industry. It was in the early 70s that the show made what perhaps could be the biggest change in its 50-year history. The show's name was changed to the Market Animal Show and the practice of exhibiting animals by breed was replaced with animals classified according to weight.

By this time, the show had expanded to two full days with animals weighed in on a Wednesday morning with the lamb exhibition held that afternoon. The hog show was held early Thursday morning followed by the steer show by about mid-morning. As in past years, the sale continued to be held on Thursday night. Reflecting the cattle industry's trend toward crossbred stock, the purebred heifer show was discontinued.

"The numbers dropped down and we didn't have registered (purebred) animals on near as many farms," Simmons said. "We just didn't have the heifers to show."

The most recent change in the evolution of the show took place only a few years ago when the pen of three competition in the hog and lamb shows was changed to judging of pairs of animals. The number of animals in the sheep show began to escalate requiring the change. Also, the initial outlay of funds for as many as four animals per 4-H or FFA member became cost prohibitive for some exhibitors.

Changes through the years have brought the Market Animal Show to its present-day format; animals are weighed in on Wednesday morning; the sheep show is held that afternoon with judging of singles and pairs; Thursday morning hogs are judged in singles and pairs; the steer show follows the swine exhibition with classes of steers shown according to weight; sale of animals on Thursday night is preceded by the Parade of Champions. Traditionally, the show has been held on the first Wednesday and Thursday in May each year.

As the Fat Stock Show took its big step

Continued on page 16



A class of Hereford heifers, 1940s



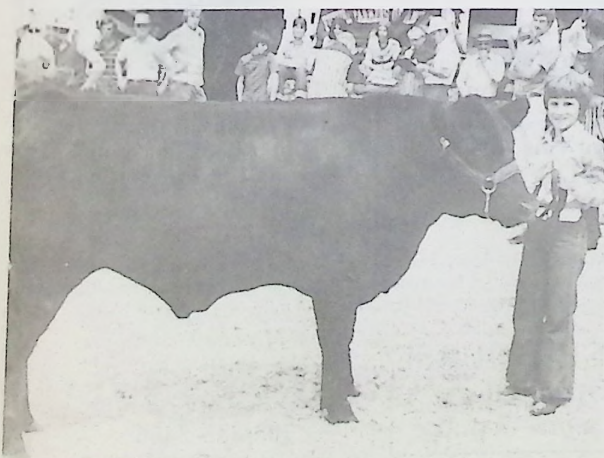
Sandra Gum of Churchville, exhibiting a champion Hereford.



Charlie Lawson, right, local livestock dealer, congratulates a champion Southdown exhibitor.



1980s—Billy Wade of Greenville, center, exhibited champion pen of three lambs. Rhonda Eavers, right, and Matthew Fredrickson assist.



(from 14)...the kids got smaller. June Cohron, Larry's daughter, shows a champion steer in a 1970s Market Animal Show.



Judge Ike Eller, left, and Les Hershey, center, Staunton businessman, congratulate Gail Grove of Stuarts Draft on her champion steer from the late 70s.





Mark Patterson of Spottswood, and Diane Gaddy, of Rt. 1, Staunton, exhibited champion steers in the mid 70s.



Champion Angus steer -- 1950s

Photographs on pages 13-16 were provided by the Augusta County Extension Office.



Diane Harlow of Spottswood, right, showed champion lambs in the mid 70s. Helpers are Betty Jo Hamilton, left, of Middlebrook, and Karen Earhart of Spottswood.



Champion lamb -- 1950s



Ernest Ambler of Stuarts Draft, and Eric Earhart of Spottswood, prepare a lamb to show.

## Show dedications

In recent years, organizers of the Market Animal Show have recognized individuals for their support of the event by dedicating shows to them. The individuals and the years they were honored are as follows:

- 1978: Dick Coffey, Extension agent
- 1982: E.B. Morse, Extension agent
- 1985: E.M. Hewitt Sr. and Claude S. Switzer, Staunton Union Stockyard
- 1987: O. Beverley Roller, agriculture instructor
- 1986: Frank Clements, Extension agent
- 1988: George Beam, local businessman
- 1989: Bill Simmons, agriculture instructor
- 1990: Kenneth C. LaPorte, Ruritan
- 1991: Bill McClure, Ruritan
- 1992: Vaughn A. Ashby, Ruritan
- 1993: J.W. Riley, local agribusinessman
- 1994: Jim Coffey, Ruritan

Continued from page 15

to the present-day event which is the Market Animal Show, Simmons was preparing to take his big step into retirement. But he didn't walk away from the show. It was that year -- 1989 -- that show organizers honored Simmons by dedicating the show to him. Although retired from teaching, the former high school ag instructor wanted to continue working with the show. A Ruritan club member through many of his years as a teacher, Simmons has continued his involvement with the Market Animal Show on a volunteer basis. As do many of his Ruritan counterparts and as they have done for many years, Simmons assists with the organization of each year's show.

"The main thing I've been doing is help set up the ring, put the bleachers up, clean up afterwards, and haul the litter away," Simmons said, describing some of the jobs which Ruritans perform at the show. As a Ruritan, though, there is one primary advantage. "The main thing now is I get to watch more," he said. Simmons also works on the show's Buyers' Committee which solicits support from the business community to purchase show animals at the sale. He said the financial support of businesses in the area has been a major factor in the show's success.

Augusta County's Market Animal Show -- once the largest event of its kind east of the Mississippi River, now the only event of its kind east of the Mississippi -- has become a measure of excellence for 4-H and FFA members who participate in it. Many former exhibitors have gone on to pursue careers in agriculture and many still return to see new generations of club mem-

bers exhibit in the show.

"I remember a lot of students showed animals and are still interested and now they have children that show," Simmons said. "I think I can notice those people that showed. I can see the difference. They have more interest in agriculture, support the show, provide animals or finance animals. I think it's amazing that there has been so much interest in the show and that it has continued to grow over the years. It's also amazing how many people it affected and how many people talk about the show."

The reputation of the Market Animal Show stands out above the crowd of activities in which youth of today participate.

"It's really created a lot of interest," Simmons said. "It's been a good program." Through participation in the show, 4-H and FFA members have "developed an interest in feeding cattle," Simmons said. "The show really boosted their effort."

Having formed during an era of uncertainty -- during a time when the world was at war -- the Fat Cattle Show evolved into what would become a sure and certain part of the 4-H and FFA programs in Augusta County. For individuals who have participated in it, according to Simmons, the Market Animal Show has created a lasting effect.

"It's an impression you never forget -- the satisfaction in your accomplishment," he said. "It was something you had to work for. You had to work to win."

The 50th annual 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show will be held May 3 and 4 at Staunton Union Stockyard on New Hope Road.

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# Bethel Youth fast for funds to feed hungry

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

**BETHEL GREEN** — Starving to death is not something that concerns many Americans. In fact, most don't even consider going more than three or four hours without having something to eat.

But in Third World and developing countries, starvation is a fact of life or — in the majority of cases — a fact of death. Assaulted almost daily by information coming out of countries where a mouthful of food is a precious commodity, Americans may find it difficult to sympathize with starving masses. Some find it even more difficult to know where to begin to see that aid is provided to those dying from lack of nourishment.

Senior and Junior High Youth at Bethel Presbyterian Church spent a weekend in February learning about starvation. And they did it the hard way. For 30 hours — from 1 p.m. on a Friday to 7 p.m. Saturday evening — some 20 individuals, both youth and adults, confined themselves to the church's social hall in a self-imposed food fast.

Allowing themselves only water and clear juices, the young people and their adult leaders participated in 30 Hour Famine Fast which is a project sponsored by World Vision, a global effort to provide aid to those enduring the hardships of starvation.

Having sought sponsors for their efforts, the young people were fasting not only so they might understand the suffering of those who starve, but they also used the opportunity to raise funds to assist in nutrition projects in underdeveloped countries. Pledges made toward the effort resulted in \$1,410.50 being raised for hunger relief, an amount which, through World Vision, will feed 94 children for 30 days.

The 30 hours of fasting were not idled away. It was a time during which the young people and their leaders immersed themselves in education about starvation and its causes.

Hour 7 of the fast found the group gathered for a presentation by Leland Brenneman, director of regional programs for World Vision. The Stuarts Draft resident works to provide aid and relief in countries where mass starvation has been created by famine, drought, and war.

Brenneman told the Bethel group about World Vision's project in Mozambique — a country located along the southeastern coast of Africa — an effort with which he has worked for a number of years.

"Mozambique is cited as a success story," Brenneman said. "Things are dramatically improved."

The picture in Mozambique to-



**Leland Brenneman of World Vision holds two of the items which he displayed when he spoke to the Bethel Presbyterian Church youth group.**

AC staff photo

day is quite different than it was when Brenneman visited the country as one of the first aid workers to arrive there following its liberation from a Marxist government.

"What I saw was horrific," he said. "It was one of these scenes from hell that are occurring right now."

After working in South America for a number of years, Brenneman had moved with his family to Africa.

"We were thrown into a world that had really been torn apart by acts of man," he said.

As was the case in Mozambique, a change in the government had created serious problems for the country's inhabitants. Mozambique was liberated from Portugal in the mid 70s which, as Brenneman explained, left it in the position of being a "pawn" of the Cold War. The country became Marxist then began to swing back toward the West, according to Brenneman.

Infighting between different factions in the country resulted in conditions which quickly gave rise to mass starvation. As the World Vision spokesman noted, rival factions would sweep into villages taking all the food and supplies they could find. This left the countryside stripped of everything including the means to produce food.

What was left behind, Brenneman said, were "innocent victims caught in the middle of conflict" giving rise to "complex humanitarian emergencies." The loss of food and the ability to produce it left many people "teetering on the knife's edge of survival," according to a Cable News Network video which Brenneman showed to the Bethel group.

The video presented graphic images of starving men, women, and children — some swollen and bloated from a lack of protein, a condition known as kwashiorkor. Others were no

more than skin stretched over bones, a condition resulting from a carbohydrate deficiency.

"These images are not easy to look at," Brenneman said, but noted that "it is surprising how quickly communities snap back."

Through the efforts of World Vision, 100 tons of food were distributed in Mozambique last year. But the food aid represents only one part of a three-pronged effort to assist countries, according to the World Vision project leader.

"Number one is that we get food in immediately," Brenneman told the Bethel group. Through its food aid programs, World Vision sets up nutrition centers, in countries like Mozambique, where people can obtain food. The second part of the effort is to immunize against disease to prevent epidemics. The third part of World Vision's effort is that which creates a lasting effect.

"We saturate communities with the appropriate seeds and tools," Brenneman said. "You can return in a couple of months and these places are literally transformed. The transformation is very gratifying. It reminds you how normal human beings are."

The seeds and tools — or Ag Paks — distributed by World Vision, are the means by which villages may return to self-sufficiency, according to Brenneman. "We're monitoring it pretty close. It's not as simple as giving some guy a sack of seeds," he said of the effort to help villages return to the practice of growing their own food supply.

Brenneman has worked with World Vision for six years. During that time he has seen the organization's efforts in Mozambique balloon. In 1989 \$10 million to \$15 million in aid was sent there. This figure rose to \$70 million in 1994. As director of regional programs for World Vision, Brenneman negotiates funding for large scale projects and oversees the management of those projects. World Vision is an international agency with offices in the United States, Canada, and Australia.

Following Brenneman's presentation, the Bethel youth had some time to reflect on what they had heard and the task of their fast.

"It's sad that other people are feeling the way that I am right now and they probably have it worse than me," said Cassie Tucker, 12.

"I think I can survive 30 hours if all those kids survive without food," said Kori Valz, 12.

"I didn't think I could do it," said 12-year-old Kim Wiseman. "We only have to go for 30 hours but those kids have to go all the time."

"I'll be hungry probably, but it's a good thing to realize there are

people out in the world who aren't eating for a much longer time than we are," said 16-year-old Ian Dubinski.

The youth and their leaders "locked in" at the church Friday night. They awakened Saturday morning not to the sound of bacon sizzling in a frying pan but to the sounds of growling stomachs, empty for almost 18 hours.

Hour 20 of the fast found the youth group touring the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank in Verona. There they learned about local efforts to fight hunger. Hour 25 of the fast came and the youth were back at Bethel listening to Denbele Dula, a young woman from Ethiopia who is enrolled in the nursing program at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg. Also speaking to the group was Robson Gomes from Brazil and a student at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. Denbele and Robson

meaningful, "I'm thankful for being as well off as we are," "I'm thankful for the abundance that we have," were among the comments made by those as the candle passed from one to another. And not surprisingly, "I'm thankful for the food we're about to get," was another sentiment expressed.

Reading from 1 John 3:16-18 Howard said, "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth."

As the moment of the 30th hour passed, fast participants heaved a sigh of relief and prepared to eat their first meal in a day-and-a-half. Having gone without food for that amount of time, some of the fasters



**Denbele Dula, far left, of Ethiopia, and Robson Gomes of Brazil, review World Vision literature with Cassie Tucker and Kori Valz, members of the youth group at Bethel Presbyterian Church. Denbele and Robson spoke to the group during its 30 Hour Famine Fast in February.**

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

spoke about life in their countries and some of the apparent needs in those two places.

The Bethel youth group and their leaders also attended the Saturday afternoon session of the Mission Festival held at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Waynesboro. They learned more about life in other developing countries where the Presbyterian Church sponsors mission projects. The group returned to Bethel for the culmination of their fast.

As the final hour of the fast slowly ticked past, the Bethel group sat on the floor in a circle talking about their experiences of the preceding 29 1/2 hours. Roy Howard, pastor at Bethel and who was among the food fast participants, talked to the group about their participation in the World Vision project.

"What you're doing is a tiny piece of a long, long process of being a Christian," he said. A candle was passed among the fast participants and each was given an opportunity to give thanks.

"I'm thankful to do something

that physically they were feeling "pretty bad."

"My stomach hurts," one said. "I feel weak," "I feel hungry," "I have a headache," were others' comments on their physical well being.

"You realize how lucky you really are to have everything that you have," said adult leader Scott Hughes.

"Even though we feel like we're starving we still can't relate to how these people feel," said Debbie Hughes, also a Bethel youth group adult leader.

"We did it!" exclaimed Howard. "And nobody went berserk!"

The effort of the Bethel group to raise funds represents a small part of the global effort being waged by World Vision to fight hunger. It is a fight to fill a staggering number of empty stomachs with even the most basic nutrients necessary to sustain life. Although the job is a big one, the task was put into perspective by World Vision's Brenneman who said, "The reason we exist is to make a difference, and that's the hope." —



# Club offers members instruction in gun safety, handling

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

VERONA — Guns are serious business. It is with this attitude that a group of Augusta County youth are learning about firearms.

The Augusta County Outdoor Sporting Club formed late in 1994 and began holding its first organized meetings in January. The purpose of the 4-H club is to introduce youngsters to outdoor sports including those which involve the use of firearms.

Lewis Wood of Waynesboro, a former gun store owner and operator who helped get the club off the ground, says activities planned for club members will acquaint them with gun safety and the use of firearms.

"This is a hands-on type of program," Wood said during a recent club meeting. In addition to the time club members spend learning about firearms, field trips planned by the group will complement their outdoor education. Included on the club's agenda are visits to a local archery club, the Wildlife Center of Virginia, and a demonstration by a local gun club. Wood also will take the club on a field trip to the mountains where members will learn to identify game trails, and feeding and bedding areas.

Club members spent most of their time during twice monthly meetings January through March concentrating on gun safety and learning how to handle guns. Don



Augusta County Outdoor Sporting Club members recently had their first experience shooting live ammunition — .17 caliber lead pellets — with the club's 977 Daisy Air Rifles. AC staff photos

Studer of Waynesboro, rifle team coach at the former Augusta Military Academy, serves as range officer for the outdoor sporting club. A retired Army veteran with 20 years of service, Studer runs the 4-H club range with almost as much regimentation as a military unit.

"Basically we started out talking about firearms — naming the parts and what they do," Studer said. "Last week we were using that knowledge to dry fire — shooting a shot without bullets."

The guns club members are using are 977 Daisy air rifles which fire .17 caliber lead pellets. The air rifles were purchased by the club which solicited donations

from area businesses to fund the project. Wood says the club's first-year budget of \$3,000 includes the cost of the air rifles. Club members will be working to raise funds to meet that budget.

"We tried to make it very apparent that this program is not just put before us," Wood said. "The kids should know that it costs money and where that money is coming from." The 4-H club leader explained that the group hopes to hold "one large fundraiser per year" in order to generate the income it will need to support itself.

Before club members were permitted to handle the air rifles, each was required to complete a four-hour safety course. Upon successful completion of this course, members were presented a green badge.

"You cannot shoot without a green badge," Wood said to club members as he handed out badges to those who had completed the gun safety course. "Think of this as a driver's license. You cannot shoot without it."

Jennifer Mercer, the Augusta County 4-H Extension agent working with the club, said the adult leaders who formed the club anticipated the need for safety and strictness in allowing members to use firearms.

"There was some concern over how we were going to handle it," she said. "We stressed that we had to be strict with it. The kids signed a code of conduct. One warning and they're out. They show Don the utmost respect."

A big part of the club's success is due to involvement by adults. Each club meeting draws about 30 youngsters, ages 9-19, and about 20 adults.

"The adult participation has pleased me," Ms. Mercer said. "Most of the parents are part of the adult leadership team and help on the range. Some are learning along with the kids."

"We have 14 people on the adult leadership council," Wood noted. "I have been very gratified by the adult response."

"We're seeing a lot of good adults who are working hard with their kids," said Range Officer Studer.

As club members progress with their firearm education, they will be required to complete a 10-hour gun safety program. Their training on the range will continue during this time and is set up on the coach-shooter system. This requires that one person of a two-member team watch as the other shoots. This person — the coach — watches his or her partner and points out proper firearm use and safety measures. In turn, when the shooter has completed firing a certain number of rounds, the gun is handed over to the other team member. Coach and shooter switch roles then, each helping the other to learn about firearm use and safety.

"It teaches the youngsters to help each other," Studer says of the coach-shooter system. "They're learning on both ends." The respect which club members have for their range officer is demonstrated by their rapt attention to his instructions. Seated two-by-two behind tables at one end of the firing range, the youngsters are quiet and attentive as Studer goes over instructions for the group. They wait patiently and do not touch the air rifles until the range officer gives the command to commence firing. Each club member, as well as the adult volunteers standing nearby, wears safety glasses.

On this occasion, club members are having their first experience with live firing. Each shooter is given five pellets to load into a rifle. When Studer gives the command, rifles are fired at blank pieces of paper at the other end of the range, some 15 yards away.

The range used by the club is located in a vacant warehouse at the Augusta County Government Center. Wood said the club petitioned the Board of Supervisors



NEWILL

for use of the facility and appeared at a supervisors' meeting to demonstrate air rifles which club members would be using.

"The reason we chose air rifles was because it's simple to find a place to shoot," Wood said. "The supervisors were very receptive and the county has been very helpful in working with us and we really appreciate that."

Chris Everett, a 16-year-old outdoor sporting club member from Waynesboro, said joining the group appealed to him for two reasons.

"I enjoy shooting," he said. "I've always been interested in guns. We're learning gun safety, how to properly shoot, range commands, and how we should act on the range. It's been interesting so far."

Taylor Newill, 11, of Waynesboro, is the club's president.

"We're learning mostly about the safety of the gun and the parts of the gun," he noted. In explaining his reasons for joining the club Newill said, "I've just been interested in shooting all my life. My dad and I are thinking of getting some (guns) for personal safety at our house and for target shooting."

According to Ms. Mercer, the club offers youngsters something a bit out of the ordinary.

"It's something different than your typical sports that everybody is into," she said.

The club also provides club members with some valuable education in firearm safety.

"Kids have got to know how to handle guns," she said. "Hopefully they will be learning how to react from both ends of the gun. They need to be able to react, observe other people, and know what's right and wrong. They're doing an excellent job so far."

In addition to Newill, other club members serving as officers include Willie Woods, vice president; Chris Keagy, secretary; Megan Prater, treasurer; and Devin Michael, reporter.

For information about the Augusta County Outdoor Sporting Club, call the Augusta County Extension Office at 245-5750. —



Don Studer, standing, range officer for the Augusta County Outdoor Sporting Club, instructs Chris Everett, 16, of Waynesboro, in the proper use and handling of an air rifle.

## Extension Service to hold ATV safety training class

VERONA — An all-terrain vehicle safety training class will be held April 8 from 9 a.m. until noon at the Augusta County Government Center.

Local ATV dealers will be present with equipment and accessories. The program will focus on the safe use of ATV's for farming

and recreational activities.

The program is being offered to all youth and adults in Extension's Planning District 6 which includes the counties of Augusta, Rockingham, Rockbridge, Bath and Highland.

Call the Augusta County Extension Office at 245-5750 for registration information. —

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# Schoolhouse News

## Riverheads students successful at FHA/HERO competition

By MELISSA DOYLE

GREENVILLE -- The Riverheads High School FHA/HERO chapter recently traveled to Salem High School for the South Central Area STAR (Students Taking Action for Recognition) Events.

The students designed presentations to strengthen skills learned in Work and Family Studies classes, promote personal growth, increase FHA/HERO leadership skills, and provide skills for coping with competitive and cooperative environments.

For weeks, students prepared and presented to their own classes and other students. Students who won received gold, silver, and bronze medals. The top winners also received a trophy.

The representatives in various events were:

**Chapter Showcase** - Melissa Doyle, Arbra Armstrong, and Jackie Myrtle, who received a gold medal and a trophy.

**Chapter Service Project** - Tammy Hughes, Nedra Moomau, and Jennifer Smith, who received a gold medal.

**Focus On Children** - Angie Caricofe and Karen Jones, receiving a silver medal.

**Illustrated Talk** - Stephanie Harris (Junior Division) and Tracy Cox (Senior Division). They both received a gold medal and a trophy.

**Job Interview** - Julie Faught, who received a bronze medal.

**Skills For Life** - Stacey Adkins and Amy Badgley (Junior Division), receiving a gold medal and a trophy. Sandi Turner (Senior Division), receiving a gold medal.



Representing Riverheads Future Homemakers of America in state competition of STAR events are, from left, Melissa Doyle, Jackie Myrtle, and Arbra Armstrong.

vision), receiving a gold medal.

**Creative Storytelling** - Allison Tanksley, who received a Silver medal.

**Child Care Displays included:** Puppets, Megan Bottenfield, Gold medal; Games, Jennifer Bennett, gold medal; Snacks, Michelle Lawrence, gold medal; Arts and Crafts, Jenni Wiseman, silver medal; and Bulletin Board - Kelly Evans, gold medal and Best in Class certificate.

Other members attending included Carrie Root, Tammy Campbell, and the State Vice-President of the South Central Area, Kristine Buss. The students were assisted by the Chapter Advisors Kathleen Buchanan and Nancy Harris.

Each participant who received a trophy will advance to the State

Conference at Virginia Beach during the weekend of April 21-23. At this conference, the group will attend workshops and will learn from other FHA/HERO members. The conference is planned and conducted by state officers including Kristine Buss, a junior at Riverheads High School. The conference will conclude with a banquet highlighting the organization's 50th anniversary and installation of next year's officers.

Students are looking forward to attending the state conference. The state STAR events' winners advance to national competition in July. --

Melissa Doyle is a student at Riverheads High School.

## Soccer program draws crowd

By LISA SENSABAUGH

GREENVILLE -- The Riverheads Gladiators begin spring this year with a whole new look. For the first time, soccer will be a part of the school's athletic program.

The students at Riverheads took a chance for something new. Names filled up the sign up sheet one by one. There are currently about 40 students who have indicated their intent to try the sport. You can always tell soccer players by the smiles that appear as they strap on the shin guards and move toward the soccer field. We wish good luck to the Gladiators, and respect them for trying something new. --

Lisa Sensabaugh is a student at Riverheads High School.



## FFA observance

FFA members at Riverheads High School observed National FFA Week in February with a tractor drive-in. Members participating with their tractors included, from left, Robert Allen, Ford 600; Jammy Butler, Oliver 1850; Chad Blackwell, Case IH 2294; Greg Buchanan, John Deere 7400; Olen Swisher, International Hydro 100; Justin Shomo, John Deere 4440; Phillip Howell, AgCo Allis 7630; Jared Hemp, Allis Chalmers 7010; Darren Crosier, Belarus 825; Brandon Shultz, Farmall 340; and Joseph Williams, Ford 641.

AC staff photo

## Thespian endeavors produce *Hey, Teach!*

By DANIELLE RICHARDSON

GREENVILLE -- On March 3, the Riverheads Drama Club and International Thespians Society Troop 1986 presented *Hey, Teach!*, a comedy in two acts.

The setting of the play takes place in the Randall High School journalism meeting room over a period of about one week. The plot revolves around the adjustment of Audrey Douglas, a new journalism teacher, to her students and co-workers and their reactions to her.

One of the adversaries with whom Audrey must deal is the former journalism teacher, Miss Johnson. Miss Johnson is very set in her ways and has never required her students, especially athletes, to work on the school paper.

Audrey meets her first student, Jazz Martin, while walking her friend Susan Langden to her car. Jazz is a bright student, but tries to cover it up with a tough exterior. Jackie Harden is a star volleyball player who loves to joke around. Tina Farlow, June Jackson, and Norma Dolan are three cheerleaders who lighten things up with their funny observations. Tim Lombard, the class photographer, and Angel Thompson show the power of a true friendship by refusing to believe in rumors.

Love struck and smart, Thyra Walters is infatuated with Jazz Martin. Laurie Phillips is the student editor and is friends with Thyra. Completing the cast are Carrie Holloway, a quiet and shy girl; Gail Sanders, Carrie's friend and protector; and Phil Wallace, a

guidance counselor and assistant principal.

Audrey Douglas and Phil Wallace are love interests who get to know each other despite some sticky situations. When Audrey assigns Jazz Martin to report on the cafeteria, he enlists the help of Thyra Walters and Tim Lombard. They discover that the cooks are unqualified and the conditions are unsanitary. Tim's camera is almost confiscated. Audrey is hesitant about running the story, but decides she must. Many people are upset by what they read and Miss Johnson demands a retraction be written and published in the next edition. Audrey complies, but compromises her values in doing so.

The cast was composed of the following students: Stormy Koiner, Krista Valz, Elijah Ward, Corbin Ailer, Jeremy Garrett, Kevin Davenport, Christy Mizer, Elizabeth Napier, Christine Manley, Tom Taetzsch, Jess Rodzinka, Megan McIlwee, Danielle Richardson, Stephanie Cutlip, Lori Bosserman, Katie Manley, and Amy Bosserman. *Hey, Teach!* was directed by Bill Dillon. Danielle Richardson was the assistant to the director.

The entire cast and crew dedicated much time and effort to make *Hey, Teach!* the best play possible. We would like to thank the community for supporting Riverheads High School's Drama and Thespians Club. --

Danielle Richardson is a student at Riverheads High School.

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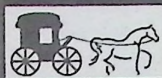
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# Yesterday once more



## Winter storms of which legends are made

By NANCY SORRELLS

The Staunton newspapers called it a "wild March storm" that "wrought desolation hereabout." The late winter storm struck the Valley on Sunday, March 6, 1932. By the time the newspapers could report on Mother Nature's wrath it was Tuesday, but the headlines blared the news: "Furious Seaboard Storm Disrupts Communication, Power, Lights and Travel."

Do our memories play tricks on us or was it really colder "back then" and were the snows deeper? A glance back through the newspapers of the area reveals that there were indeed some "big ones" but seemingly no bigger than those we have had in the last few years. Every few years, Old Man Winter will pay an extra special visit to the area, often just as we are hoping that spring is finally here. Let's take a stroll down an ice and snow covered memory lane.

In reality, only 12 inches of snow fell during that 1932 storm, but it was a very heavy snow mixed with freezing rain. The ice and the winds combined to turn the mess into a blizzard. Railways and highways were closed and communication came to a standstill as telegraph and electrical lines were ripped to the ground in "a fantastical confusion" of "twisted wires." A newspaper article called the resulting 1932 blizzard "one of the maddest tantrums ever witnessed locally."

Reporters who ventured outside the city limits counted 97 utility poles down in an eight-mile stretch north of Staunton and the only communication the area had with the outside world was through battery-operated power sets. Power was finally returned to the city of Staunton at 7:58 p.m. on Tuesday March 8.

Old-timers in that tantrum of 1932 recalled that Mother Nature was handing the region her worst winter punch since 1917. A check of the papers for that year reveals that, indeed, just as Staunton-born Woodrow Wilson was being inaugurated as President in Washington, D.C. on March 7, 1917, a "Blizzard of Ice and Snow" visited the area to "Work Havoc" on the Valley.

Included in the storm was 4 inches of solid ice which broke telegraph and telephone poles "throwing the city in darkness." According to reports "Stuarts



A winter storm on March 6, 1932 brought with it drifts to the tops of telephone poles. This photo was taken along Va. 252 just south of Middlebrook.

Photo by Gertrude Holtz Hawkins

Draft and Middlebrook suffered considerably" in the disaster.

One doesn't have to go back that far in the century, however, to remember winter's weapons of ice and snow. Many folks will recall the winter of 1966 with a chill just like it was yesterday. You might say winter "began" for the area on the morning of January 22, a Saturday, when heavy snow started falling. By noon, traffic in the city of Staunton was chaotic with "accordion style crashes" along the streets. City councilman March D. Finch, Jr. injured his back in a crash while he was returning from a funeral.

By Saturday evening almost a foot of snow had blanketed the area, but that was just the beginning. Four days later a second storm dropped eight more inches of snow on the area and on the following Saturday a third storm dumped 10 more inches leaving the area 30 inches of snow in just seven days.

Unable to dig out from one storm before another hit, the roads were drifted and impassable in many parts of Augusta County. As a rash of fires broke out, local firemen could only flounder helplessly in the drifts. "Middlebrook firemen weren't able to get within miles of a fire which destroyed a residence of Virginia 252," noted the newspaper, while a barn in Stuarts Draft, a trailer in Grottoes, a two-story house in Christian (near Buffalo Gap) and two more houses in

Bridgewater and Broadway all fell victim to the winter madness.

As if that wasn't enough, three more inches of the white stuff came from the skies on February 2 forcing the local Civil Air Patrol to don snowshoes and walk two miles through the drifts to deliver medicine near Buffalo Gap. Bulldozers were called in near Verona to break through the drifts so that a woman in labor could get to the hospital. In desperation, the area Red Cross sent a call in for helicopters to deliver food and supplies for people and livestock. The call was canceled the next day when it was

realized that with similar conditions all across the state, the aircraft would not be able to make it to the area.

When Old Man Winter and Mother Nature bowed out of their personal visit to the area, they left plenty of people who would remember the "big snows of 1966" when 37 inches of snow fell from January 22 to February 3. In just a few short days, the snowfall nearly equaled totals for entire winters before and after 1966. The winter of 1963-1964 had recorded 45 1/2 inches of total accumulation, but an 8-inch snow, drifting and single digit temperatures in January 1964 did create "near blizzard conditions in the Staunton-Augusta Area." The year had started out rather strangely, weather-wise, anyway, with thunder and "pink lightning" accompanying a 4-inch snow on January 1.

The 1962-1963 winter had seen just 37 1/2 inches, but the 1961-1962 season brought a whopping 65 inches of the white stuff. Included in that accumulation was probably what could really be termed "the storm of the century."

As with many of our blizzards "The Big Snow of '62" was a March message from Old Man Winter. On March 5 and 6 of that year the area was inundated with anywhere from 27 to 33 1/2 inches of snow, the most ever recorded at one time in the Valley according to the Harrisonburg newspapers. The

blizzard which struck in 1962 was pre-Interstate 81, and the snarled and stalled traffic on U.S. 11 was also one for the record books.

For two days traffic stopped along a stretch of the highway in northern Rockingham; 200 vehicles were stranded along a 5-mile stretch of U.S. 11. Army helicopters were called in for mercy missions to deliver medicine and supplies to stranded residents and the area was declared a disaster by the Red Cross.

The snowfall of 1962 shattered a number of records including the most accumulation of March snowfall, 30 inches, a record that had, ironically, been set in 1960 when 27 1/2 inches fell in March. The previous single storm record was also shattered, but it had been standing for the entire 20th century. On February 16, 1899, an accumulation of 26 inches was recorded, but the real old-timers remembered the 1880 snow. That snow arrived on Monday, Court

Day, December 20, 1880. A Rockingham man recorded in his diary that "As the day dawned, the snow seemed to descend at a furious rate, being driven before a stiff blast from the northeast." The end result was that 24 inches of snow fell in 24 hours!

Of course, Mother Nature does not always decide to issue ice and snow in the winter. Once in a while she'll toss a curve ball like she did on May 18, 1954 in

Mt. Sidney when hail fell so thick and fast that it covered the ground like snow and formed drifts up to three feet deep. The freak storm was limited to an area approximately six miles square but that area suffered considerable damage to crops.

"In Mt. Sidney, the flourishing garden of Miss Rosa Coffman and Miss Lucy Coffman was hit hard, with young tomato plants, snap beans, butterbeans, Swiss chard, sweet corn and spinach badly hurt," noted the Rockingham newspaper.

Do you remember a particular "big snow" for the area? Of course the Easter Ice Storm of 1978 also sticks in many people's minds. A glance through the old newspapers points to the fact that winters and precipitation are much on par with what we have been experiencing the past few winters, but it also reveals that the "Blizzards of the Century" occur with just a bit more frequency than every 100 years. ---



"I wonder why the mailman hasn't come yet?" might have been the question on Joel Hamilton's mind on this wintery March day in 1960. This photo was taken on Va. 712 about one mile west of Middlebrook.

Photo by Nellie Hamilton

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## Middlebrook:

## Where snow squalls become blizzards

By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK -- Many people, even lifelong residents of the Valley, are not aware of the existence of a polar cap in Augusta County. But, I can tell you, it's there...a small microcosm of weather centering around Middlebrook.

We were not aware of it either when a little more than a decade ago we moved into a 150-year-old log house tucked in an idyllic rural setting. Oh, we had hints of the frigid microcosmic meteorological underpinnings on which Middlebrook rested, but we chose to ignore them. Baldwin Rosen, owner and operator of the garage in the village at the time, tried to warn us in a conversation that went something like this:

Mr. Rosen: "Where are y'all living now?"

Us (novice Middlebrookites that we were): "We've just moved in to the old Wiseman Place up the road toward Greenville."

Mr. Rosen: "Yessiree, I know exactly where that is. I've seen the time when the snowdrifts completely filled your driveway (I might add that our driveway was an ancient roadbed at least 6-feet deep in places and several hundred yards long). If we get a nor'easter, y'all will never get out of there."

Us saying: "Nice talking to you Mr. Rosen, have a nice day." Us thinking: "Yeah, unuh-huh, we weren't born yesterday."

We never got the nor'easter that Mr. Rosen warned us about, but it wasn't necessary. We spent the first winter driving through the cornfield because it was impossible to negotiate the often-impassable driveway. And driving across frozen corn stubble in a frozen field is truly an eye-opening, tooth-rattling experience.

The next winter, things worsened. I might add, that in addition to unusually high amounts of precipitation and strong winds, it just seems colder in the polar cap region, and in fact, it is. For us, of course, things were further complicated by the fact that we were

living in an old, almost uninsulated house where the air circulated freely from inside to outside and back again. We probably could have handled our bread freezing in the cupboard and the cup of water on the night stand turning into a solid block of ice, but the crowning blow came just before Super Bowl Sunday.

In the days before the big game, which we had planned to watch on the TV perched approximately three feet from the red-hot woodstove, a few inches of snow fell. Not more than three inches for sure and in Staunton the grass could be seen peeping through the white stuff. But then the winds came, blowing in a northeasterly direction. If you are ever driving through Middlebrook (make sure you take a four-wheel drive in the winter), carefully observe the landscape around you. What you will see are large expanses of fields and meadows which sweep up to the base of the Allegheny Mountains. When winds blow off those slopes and scream unchecked through those wide-open fields, the flood gates are open. Particles of snow, and dirt if the snow has been swept clean, are hurled through the atmosphere until they are stopped by some depression in the landscape -- a driveway for instance.

I first had an inkling of the problem when I tried to head to work the evening after the three-inch snow. It was a struggle, but I was just able to get my front-wheel drive Ford Escort to the top of the lane. When I arrived at work and recounted my superhuman efforts at even making it to the workplace, my colleagues scoffed at me. When I left work late that night, I carried with me a roll of film and a determination to record what I had witnessed, and as I rattled through the cornfield in the final yards to the house, and heard the howling wind, I knew that I would certainly have a story to tell.

The next day dawned bright and clear...and windy and cold. Before the Super Bowl kickoff we had a task to perform. My husband, in

his four-wheel drive, had decided to take the driveway not the cornfield the evening before and now we set about the task of digging him out from the drifts. (Those trucks may climb rock piles on TV, but the Middlebrook drifts can be too much for even the best of them).

We went out and surveyed the scene: The fields in every direction were swept clean of snow from the howling winds, but there in our driveway was the result. Viewed merely from an artistic standpoint, it was magnificent. Huge Styrofoam-like blocks of snow that arched and twisted and curled at the mercy of the howling wind. On close examination, the frozen waves of snow across some of the drifts had a tannish cast, the result of the wind picking up bits of topsoil from the surrounding fields as well.

Making our task more daunting was the temperature. As the day and our digging progressed, the temperature dropped...and dropped...and dropped. As kick-off neared, it was 18 degrees BELOW ZERO and that was not calculating for the wind chill factor.

We have in the years since that winter paused to consider, why Middlebrook? Why the meteorological microcosm in such a place? After all, our experience was not atypical. Gertrude Hawkins recorded the legendary "big snow" in her diary and with her camera. It was a snow that old-timers recalled had drifts up to the tops of the telephone poles. March 6, 1932 was the entry in her diary that marked the beginnings of the legendary snow. The day was a Sunday: "Windy, snowed from 7:30 to 2:30, at church. 46 present. 19 eggs," she wrote. The blizzard continued the next day: "Windy, snow drifted. 21 eggs." When the community finally dug out, Gertrude took her camera along the only road that was open



On a whim, Old Man Winter can turn a harmless snow into what looks like the beginning of another Ice Age. Notice in the background the field is bare. On this occasion, the total volume of all the snow -- about two inches in depth (level) -- which fell on adjoining fields was dumped by wind into the driveway blocking it with four-foot drifts.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

and snapped a few shots with her Kodak. "12-foot drifts," she wrote on the black and whites.

Perhaps the elevation has a lot to do with it.

The highway department brought in heavy-duty graders to break through the drifts on the surrounding roads, but we went about the job armed with only hand shovels. The area to the east of Middlebrook (where we lived) is actually higher in elevation than Afton Mountain. At Rockfish Gap where I-64 cuts through the gap, the elevation is only 1,902 feet above sea level. Nearby Swannanoa is 2,158. Down below, Waynesboro hovers around 1,350 feet. At the polar cap, however, Middlebrook sits down in a hollow at 1,845 feet. The ridge to the east where we lived -- just over a mile from Middlebrook -- rises to 2,100 and there are a few peaks at 2,200. The Wiseman place, down in a "holler" in the shadow of the ridge sat at 2,000 feet, still higher than Rockfish Gap. Just to the west, the village of McKinley sits on dividing ridge at 2,073 feet, but

Little North Mountain juts up abruptly behind it at more than 2,800 feet.

The landscape also has a lot to do with the weather microcosm. The treeless fields provide an open invitation for the winds to sweep off flanks of the western ridges and create amazing drifts. The drifts always form at the same places and are living, moving entities. If it snows and the wind blows, it's a sure bet that the drifts will come. I have given them certain names, for they do take on a life of their own. There's Law's Drift, so named because it always forms across the road in front of Ben Law's house. There's also Callison's Drift which forms across a bump in the road which Jimmy Callison made famous. If the Middlebrook weather remained cold all year, the drifts would probably live and move across the Augusta County landscape like sand dunes do on North Carolina's Outer Banks.

As for living at the Wiseman Place in the polar cap region, we have long since reconsidered our place of habitation. After Super Bowl Sunday, we decided not to wait around for a real snow to hit the area, the three-inch "dusting" was quite enough for us. No, we have since moved to milder climes -- five miles east to Greenville. And during the last two recent March blizzards, we gave the state snow blowers and graders three or four days to reestablish communication with Middlebrook and then we drove our way back through the snow drifts that were higher than our truck and smiled at our wise decision. ---

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# Country Kid Stuff

## Volunteering:

### A desire to help

Americans have a reputation as a nation of joiners who work together through various organizations to improve social welfare. Welfare is a word which means health, happiness and well being. Many volunteer agencies sprang from the desire of early Americans to address health, justice and educational needs of fellow citizens.

During their ocean crossing to New England Puritan leader John Winthrop encouraged his fellow travelers to be charitable in the new world. Although the establishment of Harvard University (1638), Charity Hospital in New Orleans (1737), and an orphanage in Georgia (1740) were all the result of volunteer funding and action, the first recipients of volunteer service in the colonies were the colonists themselves.

Suffering from starvation during the winter of 1620-21 the Pilgrims' "health, happiness, and welfare" was in jeopardy. Governor William Bradford called the Native American Squanto "a special instrument sent of God" who helped the weakened, disoriented English settlers. He shared his knowledge of surviving in the New England wilderness with the pilgrims. Squanto is one of the first "volunteers" whose efforts are recorded in the history of the United States.

Today many people follow the counsel of John Winthrop and the example of Squanto in coming to the assistance of fellow citizens. The following stories are those of teenagers in the Staunton and Augusta County area who have found a place where their time and abilities can benefit others.

### Volunteer viewpoint

Jason Shiflett, a 4-H member and volunteer teen leader, says providing educational opportunities to others is meaningful for him. One such instructional activity was "when we had a petting zoo for inner-city children who didn't know the difference between a horse and a cow," said Jason. According to the Fort Defiance High School junior, providing the opportunity for urban youth to visit up close and personal with farm animals was exciting. "To see a sheep or rub a horse," he commented, created a new learning experience for the youngsters who were more accustomed to sidewalks and streetlights than barnyards and green pastures. ---

Jason, 17, is a son of David and Kitra Shiflett of New Hope.

## High School junior goes back to second grade

By LEE ANN HEIZER

STAUNTON -- Mark Rexrode is a 17-year old Lee High School student. He is in the eleventh grade at Lee, plays baseball on the school team, and in every way seems a typical high school student. His daily schedule however is slightly different from most of his peers.

Mark is a high school junior who spends the third period of each school day in the second grade. Although a student himself Mark is closer in height to the classroom teacher and the seven-year-olds, quite literally, have to look up to him. The elementary students have other reasons to look up to Mark who works as a volunteer peer tu-



MARK REXRODE

Photos by Lee Ann Heizer

tor at T.C. McSwain Elementary School.

Mark works one on one with students in a variety of instructional activities. One such project involved writing skills. Students wrote stories, edited them with Mark's help, revised, rewrote and published a book. The students even designed book jackets and illustrations. Said Mark of the learning activity, "You saw how creative a second-grader could be. I would never have thought of some of the stuff they thought of." Mark also works with students on different assignments designed to improve both verbal and written language skills.

Of his interest in the peer tutor program and his relationship to the younger students Mark said, "It's fun working with students." The job is full of surprises for the teen-ager such as the occasion when a second-grader acknowledged Mark's adult status in an unusual way. "One student asked me if I was married. That was weird," laughed the teen. This clarified for Mark the way the elementary students accepted his presence as that of another adult in the classroom. He commented, "I think they like it when I come. I try to be a good role model for them. I hope I am." Mark enjoys the interaction with the students who are eager to share their work with him and hear his approval of their efforts. "They show me everything," he remarked. "I can imagine what it's like to be a teacher. You come in here and they do something well and you see the smiles."

Helpful experience in deciding on a career is a byproduct of his volunteer work. "My dad's a principal and my mother's a teacher so education has always been part of my background," said Mark who indicated that teaching is a possible career option for him. "It's kind of a dream of mine to play baseball in college," he added, and the thought of combining his sports interest with a career in broadcasting is also appealing. "Realistically, teaching of some kind," might be the better occupational choice he noted. Whatever his career choice Mark observed that his daily work at T.C. McSwain will be of critical importance to his future.

"You can go to classes in college but until you get into a classroom and really teach you don't learn how to do it. Somebody can tell you how (to teach) but hands-on experience is what really prepares you," he said.

Mark will be able to present future employers with an impressive record of his community involvement along with valuable work experience.

Already impressed with Mark's responsibility in carrying out his daily volunteer work is T.C. McSwain principal Linda Lunsford. "Mark is extremely faithful," noted Mrs. Lunsford of the high school student's role as a member of the instructional team at the school. "The children love seeing him," she stated. In explanation of

See MARK, page 23

## 4-H club work offers volunteer opportunities

By LEE ANN HEIZER

STAUNTON -- Tiffany Zeiner, 16, stands on a stage alone at a microphone. Before a group of 75 people of all ages. Tiffany is emceeing the annual Augusta County 4-H Share-the-Fun Show. An off-shoot of her 4-H club work is the opportunity to volunteer her services at activities such as this one which presents the work of younger members.

Augusta County Extension Agent Jenni-



Tiffany Zeiner, left, works with Augusta County Extension Agent Jennifer Mercer during the recent 4-H Share-the-Fun Show.

fer Mercer indicated that "Tiffany is an up and coming member" who assisted the Extension staff in a variety of ways at the recently held talent event.

Said Tiffany of her Friday evening involvement, when some teens would rather be at the movies or out for a hamburger, "I like working with little kids. It's fun to see what they come up with."

Although her evening's work required poise and attention to detail Tiffany, was in for some fun as young members presented a variety of acts including baton twirling, electric guitar playing, patriotic singing and dinosaur dancing. As one participant, grateful for the curtain's close, left the stage mumbling, "I'm glad that's over," Tiffany saluted him with a thumbs up sign and an enthusiastic, "Good job!" She said she feels that the Share-the Fun program is a confidence builder for young 4-H members who are mostly under age 12.

"It'll give them confidence," she said. "It's great to see little kids doing this because it's hard to perform in front of people."

A Fort Defiance sophomore, Tiffany has been interested in 4-H activities for some time. "I joined 4-H three years ago," she

reported. "I became really active this year as president of the Spring Hill 4-H Club." Also a member of the Augusta County Honor Club, Tiffany says many of the club projects -- such as a tour of the county's 911 dispatch building -- provide education to 4-Hers about the community in which they live. Other areas of volunteer service are introduced through club presentations as in a visit by members of the Blue & Gray Canine Rescue Team.

4-H clubs often have the opportunity to serve the community in return. A petting zoo organized by 4-Hers brought farm animals to town so that city children would have an opportunity to learn more about agriculture. Zeiner says that these activities are meaningful to her because "It gives me a sense of helping out my community. I enjoy working with people and helping my club."

Tiffany, a history and science enthusiast, is thinking about a career in either interior design or architecture. Whatever her decision her experience as a volunteer in the 4-H program will be beneficial.

"It's easier to talk to people than I thought, and I'm able to do more things than I thought I could," she said. ---



# College student tutors others, learns through experiences

By LEE ANN HEIZER

STAUNTON — Perched on one of Staunton's steep western hillsides, the former Booker T. Washington High School is once more a center of learning for city youngsters.

The hollow thumping of basketball against hardwood, the grind of pencils sharpening, and laughing voices in the hallways enliven the building which once served as a secondary school for African-American students and most recently as the Staunton Police Department. Even on a gloomy rainy Wednesday afternoon activities abound within the walls to raise spirits, academic performance and self esteem.

On Monday through Thursday afternoons from 3 to 5 p.m. staff and volunteers provide a supervised afterschool program where community youth can spend their time in study and recreation. Mary Baldwin College sophomore Beth Whetstone spends each of these afternoons working with students who may be doing homework for the next day, practicing reading, or just enjoying a friendly chat.

Tarsha Crawford, a seven-year-old second grader, is going over her weekly spelling test from school and correcting her errors. Of her relationship with Beth Tarsha comments, "I say (to Beth) I need some help on my homework. She says, 'Okay, I'll help you.'"

Beth sits close beside Tarsha as the second-grader correctly prints each word three times. The Bessie Weller student's printing is beautifully neat and precise. Occasionally Tarsha pauses in her work possibly anticipating the playtime to follow in the school gymnasium or the Little Rascals video to be shown later in the afternoon. Her tutor interrupts her day-dreaming and gently prompts her to return to her task by pointing to the row of words. "Do you have a spelling test every Wednesday?" Beth questions Tarsha. Tarsha nods affirmatively and Beth continues, "I'm going to make sure somebody studies these words with you every Tuesday."

Beth serves as MBC program director and works to involve other Mary Baldwin students as volunteers in the afterschool program. Generally three or four college students are on hand to spend the after school hours with the 10 to 20 grade K-7 students who participate. Says Beth of her role as a tutor at the Booker T. Washington Community Resource Center, "It's not tedious and it's fun seeing a kid figure out a problem for themselves. There's never a dull moment here!"

Beth's future plans include a career as a physical therapist and insights from her work



Beth Whetstone, right, with Lyric Davenport, 10, at The Resource Center Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

with Staunton students will transfer to her chosen occupation. "Working with people gives you people skills," she commented. "I've dealt with kids who don't really want to do what they're supposed to be doing," she continued. Convincing reluctant or uncomfortable patients in physical therapy to work with her will utilize some of the same persuasive skills she uses daily as a volunteer. Beth will continue her volunteer work this summer serving an internship in a hospital physical therapy department.

Beth sees college students as role models for community youngsters. "I'd love to see all these students go on to college," she remarked. Many of the children admit to an interest in college but quickly continue that

funding a college education is impossible. Beth is quick to let her proteges know about financial aid programs. "There are ways around having enough money for college. Anybody can go to college if they really want to," she stated.

Beth credits the availability of financial aid as one factor allowing her to pursue a higher education. She is a recipient of work-study financial aid noting that this stipend in exchange for her tutoring allows her to have community involvement every day of the week, rather than only in her off hours from study or another job.

"By the time these students graduate from high school," observed Beth "a college education will probably be a necessity." As a volunteer Beth not only shares her time, but her experience as a student as well.

Tarsha completes her assignment, places her pencil on her desk and shyly says to Beth, "I'm done. Are you going to check it?" Beth picks up the product of Tarsha's efforts and comments as she goes over each row of words, "I think community involvement is important. People don't necessarily want to spend time helping others. Sometimes, though, it just takes a few minutes." —

## R.E. Lee student: Toe to toe with volunteering

By LEE ANN HEIZER

STAUNTON — A ballet student for a dozen or so of her 18 years, Summer Gibbs is now a teacher of ballet.

Volunteering each Thursday after school at The Booker T. Washington Resource Center, Summer has since September provided an instructional program to teach the fundamentals of ballet to elementary school-age students.

"It's an introductory ballet class for them," says Summer of her youthful, energetic ballerinas. "We read stories about ballet — overall exposure — not just dance steps," she continued.

According to Pamela McCray, director of the Staunton Academy of Ballet, Summer has been a student of hers "since she was six or seven." "Summer wanted to do a mentorship through Lee High," said McCray, which would grant her a high school credit in exchange for her community involvement through ballet instruction. Summer explained, "We talked to Yamon (Crawford) and thought it would be a good addition to the program" at The Resource Center. "We asked the Staunton Civic Dance Company to finance leotards, tights and ballet slippers for the children," indicated Ms. McCray. With the ballet gear, a group of curious girls and Summer as instructor, the invitation to the dance was set for Thursday afternoons.

Initially Summer was unsure of the

children's interest but her doubts were unfounded. "I didn't think so many kids would be excited, but they were," said the Lee senior. "Boys are always popping in to the class asking 'Is this ballet?'" laughed Summer. So far however the class is made up of girls only, as no boys have ventured into the stereotypically female realm of ballet.

Creating an atmosphere where students are free to try new things is one of the tasks of Summer's volunteer experience. "It's a challenge," she said, "to get them to try new things, but they are really pretty receptive to it." An hour with 12 to 15 would-be dancers is also a challenge to the teen-ager's poise and personality.

"I didn't know I could be so calm in the midst of chaos," she laughed. "I love the kids but it does get frustrating at times. The kids have so much creative energy its hard to channel it at times," Summer said. "I've learned a lot of patience," she continued. "Talking softly does a lot more good than shouting," she says she has learned.

Summer's future plans include study next year at The College of William and Mary possibly in the field of psychology. Her interest in volunteering springs from a desire to see that community needs are met. "It gives me a chance to share what I have," she commented, "I've been very lucky in my life. I've learned there are a lot of good kids out there who need a lot of love," said Summer. "They are good kids too, as long as they

get the love," she continued. The students seem to admire Summer and appreciate her involvement. As she told a student goodbye one afternoon the child turned to Summer and said, "You know I really love ballet. I wish this class would go on forever." Summer remarked that the student's enthusiasm and gratitude "just made my heart melt."

Summer has participated in a variety of volunteer endeavors in the Staunton community. She summarized her philosophy of neighborhood involvement, "Anything you do for the community is rewarding. Everyone says they want to change the world. Volunteering makes you feel like you really are." —



Summer Gibbs with Grace Anderson, 5, during a Thursday afternoon ballet class Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

### Volunteer briefs

...There are six million voluntary organizations in the United States utilizing the services of over 70 million volunteers.

...25 percent of all people in the U.S. over the age of 13 volunteer in their community.

...*"To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded."*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Mark

Continued from page 22

the cooperative venture between Staunton's secondary and elementary schools Mrs. Lunsford explained, "We looked at ways we could hook up high school students with elementary age children."

The ongoing relationship between high school tutors who are considering a career in education and younger students builds self-esteem, increases communication, and gives at-risk students greater learning opportunities. The Lee High students have the opportunity to observe veteran teachers and establish mentoring relationships with them, as well as gain valuable insights to the teaching profession.

Although Mark has spent more than his share of time in the second grade he finds it is time well spent. Of his seven-year-old friends he says, "They are carefree and have a lot of fun. They do something that makes you really glad you're here. I wouldn't pass this up for anything." —



# Country Crossroads

## Spring is in the air and mud is everywhere

Hank  
and  
Irma  
By  
Lee Ann Heizer



She got a whiff of it during the last week of February. When she opened the back door on her way to mail the farm income tax returns she smelled it. Irma the groundhog has emerged from her winter burrow to be greeted by the long absent aroma of mud in the air. Initially hunched over in a posture to shield herself from a winter blast, Irma begins to straighten up, lift her head and gladly face into the mud-scented, almost warm breeze. Can it be that winter has released its blustery stranglehold? Of course not, March has not even bleated or roared its way in. Besides, Irma believes in a lot of things but she does not believe in early Springs.

Suddenly it dawns on Irma that the sun has been starting the day before she does for the past week or so. The solar rays now plucking at her back even feel remotely kin to those which beat down on her in mid-summer. God has apparently decided it's time to get the old sun out and tune it up in readiness for the arrival of Spring. (God getting a jump on the season reminds Irma of the flat tire on the lawnmower in the barn. God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform and it will certainly take the mysterious hand of God to move Hank to get that flat tire fixed.)

Always looking to make the best of a bad situation, Irma decides to view her postal disposal of the income tax return as a sacrificial last rite of winter. Returning to the house by way of the cow pasture Irma hears a sound which has been missing for what seems like months. It is a bird singing. December, January and February have accustomed Irma to the busy bird chatter of winter as the winged ones scavenge for enough food to make it through another subfreezing night.

Today's vocalization though is anything but nervous twittering; it is head thrown back, full-throated warbling. Although Irma is reluctant to consider that for once Spring may actually be arriving early, the bird above her holds no such reservations. If Christmas melodies put some folks in a holiday mood, likewise, the carol of this bird almost pushes Irma over the brink of belief in the premature presence of Spring.

Her recent circuits of the dun colored pasture field have been difficult treks. Although her feet are fitted out in heavy work boots, sharp juttings of frozen ground have gouged her steps and checked her pace. In the space of 24 hours and the similar degree rise in temperature a new texture greets her feet. The re-

awakening sod welcomes her tread with a squishy resilience and the resulting spring in her step is a natural partner to the Spring in the air. There is also a quickening of animal life as frequent skittery-scuts into the fence row undergrowth reveal that field mice and ground squirrels are also enjoying this pseudo-Spring day.

The cow pasture is a temporary maternity ward as a group of heifers await the mid-month birth of their offspring. Uncomplaining, they have patiently endured what winter has served up moving sedately from feed trough to water keeping their backs to the wind when possible. Today, they appear to be anything but expectant mothers as they kick up their heels, shake their heads and bounce through the field in a great group romp.

If anything could make Irma believe in an early Spring it might be a sign that one of these cows has presented. For the first time in her memory a cow has defeated the best laid breeding and management schemes devised by Hank and delivered her strapping calf three weeks ahead of schedule. Could getting a jump on Spring mean a cow knows something that groundhogs and meteorologists don't?

Believing in the common sense of most cows Irma is willing, for once in her life, to just go ahead and agree

gleefully that Spring is here!

As she continues her walk her mind races ahead to consider all the possibilities of Spring — that first tender greening of the weeping willow tree, long dormant daffodils thrusting their way through clods of earth, Spring cleaning. KA-BANG! Like a runner missing her stride Irma slams into the hurdles of window washing and closet clearing and falls flat unable to pick herself up.

A domestic underachiever at best, Irma's home economics escapades could be featured in a magazine like "Mediocre Housekeeping." For Irma, household spring cleaning closely resembles spring plowing; it's an earth-moving experience and you never know what might turn up. Her eye falls on the remains of last summer's garden — a chaotic mess of toppled tomato and bean vines — and is satisfied to find a task to keep her outdoors and suitably employed in something more enjoyable than spring cleaning.

Little Elmer is running across the pasture field to meet her and she notices how much taller he has gotten this winter. He stops long enough to tell her that he and some plastic pigs have been re-creating a scene from *Charlotte's Web* in a mudhole. He didn't have to mention that he has been wallowing in it as a layer of squishy aromatic organic matter has coated his trousers, oozed between his fingers, and smudged his face. Looking down she notices that she misjudged his growth spurt — an inch of muddy clay clotted to the sides and bottom of his boots is what has added to his height. Scrumptious, gooey mud to be tracked from barnyard to backdoor through kitchen to hearth. What better sign of Spring than the presence of all those muddy footprints?

Nearing the house now Irma feels a sudden chill and the light goes out of the day as a heavy cloud hides the sun. A minute passes and without the radiant heat on her back, Irma is forced back into her question mark posture as she shields herself from the suddenly chilly breeze. Icy flakes flutter onto her neck as a snow squall advances on Irma and Spring retreats in a skittery-scud of its own.

She knew it was too good to be true and the winter-disguised-as-Spring walk reminds her of another rural observer of Earth and its seasons. Robert Frost, the New England poet and sometimes farmer, had no doubt been tantalized by mock Springs when he wrote:

"The sun was warm but the wind was chill.

You know how it is with an April day

When the sun is out and the wind is still,

You're one month on in the middle of May.

But if you so much as dare to speak,

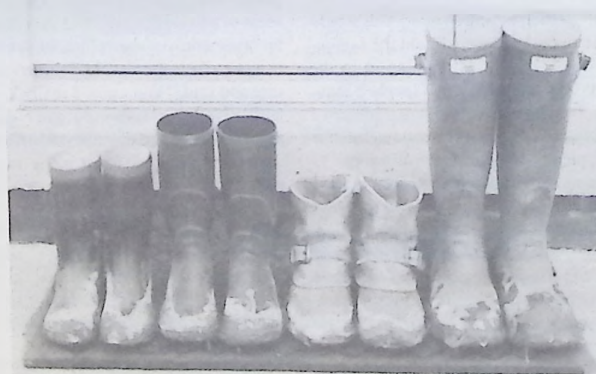
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,

A wind comes off a frozen peak,

And you're two months back in the middle of March."

from *Two Tramps in Mud Time* by Robert Frost

There's not a thing to do but bide her time and wait. Like the IRS, winter wants its full share, and might even skulk around until April 15th to collect its due. Irma, in the meantime, will continue to count the lengthening days and the muddy footprints. ---



Eight Boots in Mud Time. Caked with mud, the family footwear lines up in formation to welcome the arrival of Spring.

AC staff photo

## Battle of Piedmont focus of historical society meeting

In the annals of Civil War history, the Battle of Piedmont is just a footnote, but to the people of the Shenandoah Valley, it meant the beginning of the end. On June 5, 1864 at the village of Piedmont, just a short distance from New Hope in Augusta County, the Union forces turned back a hopelessly outnumbered Confederate army. The end result was the invasion of Staunton and Lexington and the plundering of the countryside between the two cities.

On Sunday, May 7 at 3 p.m. Col. Robert

J. Driver will discuss what happened on that summer day in 1864 when the bloody battles of the Civil War came to Augusta County's doorstep. Driver will talk on the Battle of Piedmont at the Augusta County Historical Society's Spring meeting. The program will be held at Mt. Horeb Presbyterian Church on Va. 865, just a few miles north of the Augusta County battlefield site.

The Battle of Piedmont represented only the second time in the Civil War that the military front touched Augusta County. A

Union victory in this clash went to the invaders and the Upper Valley fell into the hands of the Yankees.

Under Union General David Hunter, 12,000 Yankees marched toward Staunton, an important supply depot on the railroad. The South, with just 5,600 Rebels under General William E. "Grumble" Jones rallied in defense. The savage clash on June 5 left Jones dead and 1,600 of his men either dead or wounded. Union casualties stood at 875.

With the Confederate forces out of the

way, Staunton fell on June 6. On June 11, Hunter was in Lexington where he burned the Virginia Military Institute.

Driver, who will speak on the battle and its significance, is no stranger to Civil War history, having published several books on the subject. The program will be followed with refreshments provided by the Mt. Horeb congregation. The meeting is open to the public. For more information, call Sue Patterson at 703-363-5608 or Ann McCleary at 703-234-9569. ---



## Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin

March, 1995

Dear Maude:

It was good to get your letter last week. Here in Washington, also, there is a sense of awakening in the air and in the little gardens in front of the townhouses, but the greatest awakening is among the politicians and their staffs.

It is no longer "business as usual" in the Nation's Capitol! Right now, Washington is definitely a dreary and haggard place. There are many more frowns on people's faces than anyone cares to look at! Those Republicans are determined to try and do something on the Hill. The main problem they are having is that the passage of any legislation takes so much more time than they have given themselves. The lights are burning day and night in the Capitol and the offices. There is no time left for any of those nice little receptions and dinners that most of us have come to enjoy so much.

One day recently, one of the young men in our office had six different hearings relating to agriculture issues on which he had to check. He was out and on his way to the hill before I even finished my first cup of coffee and he did not return until well after six that evening. He was worn out from running from the House side of the Hill to the Senate side, trying to cover one committee meeting after the other. This is one time that I am glad I have never been promoted to a position like that where I would have to go out and do a lot of running around. A day like some we've been having lately here in Washington would ruin a good pair of shoes!!

Sara has been so busy that I have not seen her at all during the last month. She still has lots of friends on the Hill who can keep her informed as to what is happening, but those friends are so frazzled with everything that is being demanded of them, that it is almost impossible to find a time to talk to them for even a few minutes. As a result, she has had to cover a lot of the hearings herself. The only fortunate part of this hurry-up legislation, is that the committee meeting hearings, etc. do not last nearly as long as they have in the past.

When a committee considers any proposed legislation these days, the members are often so tired that they do not understand half of what is being proposed, and have not the energy to try and figure out what it is all about. One gets a lot of "I'm not

See REFLECTIONS, page 27

## Going to The Dump

I have just returned from the Augusta County Recycling and Solid Waste Center, more commonly known as "The Dump." Going there is one of my favorite household chores. That I enjoy it is good since no one else in my family derives any special joy from taking the garbage away, except the dog and she knows better.

All family members share the task, I just happen to enjoy it. In fact, after my first visit, I wrote about it to friends in other places.

"You won't believe the Dump here! It's one of the best anywhere."

Okay, so that's strange. Given all the beauty of the Shenandoah Valley, why tell friends about The Dump on Old Quarry Lane near Greenville in Augusta County. Well, actually I do tell them about the other places, but the reason I mention the Dump is because of the peculiar satisfaction it provides to anyone who cares about preserving those other, more beautiful places in Augusta County.

If my family and I don't share any special joy in taking out the garbage, which in our case means separating out the parts — plastic, glass, paper, cans, cardboard, trash — we do share the satisfaction of knowing that a great deal of it is being recycled rather than simply buried in a land fill.

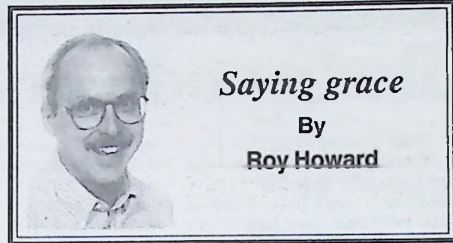
What makes Augusta County's recycling and solid waste collection sites particularly satisfying is the way they are designed to receive recyclable products. It gives justice to both parts of the name, recycling and solid waste center. It's true that the largest single bin reserved for solid waste is always full, usually with things that could be recycled, if the trash-owners cared enough to toss them in the specified receptacle.

Years ago, a man with a high regard for the persistence of human sin and a low belief in altruism, said that recycling would have to be made easy to ever catch on as common practice. Unfortunately, he argued, if it's not convenient most people won't make the effort to do it. Whether the argument is true or not, you can decide. I do know that Augusta County has done a good job in making recycling an easy and satisfying chore for everyone.

The receptacles for recyclable products are labeled clearly and arranged for easy access. All mixed paper goes here, says the sign with a big arrow pointing to the right bin. The same instruction is given for glass and cans and cardboard. (But, regrettably, not plastic!) All you have to do is separate your trash, which doesn't seem too much to ask. You can buy (or make) a separator for your home which makes the whole process even easier. (At our home, we have separate boxes and trash cans for each item. It's simple enough to load them up when it's time to carry them away.)

Of course, there is greater wisdom in living by the old maxim: Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without. Most of our ancestors lived this way; some of our more disciplined neighbors still do. The wise way is to consume less and save more. But the plain fact is that few of us live up to the standards of that maxim with any consistency, at least not to the level that makes recycling unnecessary.

Newspapers and computer paper; junk mail and old maga-



Saying grace

By

Roy Howard

zines; boxes, egg cartons, tin, steel and aluminum cans, glass bottles of every shape and color and just plain refuse: these are the things that mark our daily lives. Our trash need not mark the land or fill up earth's empty spaces. Much of our leftover food can return to the land in compost. A small can by the kitchen sink catches the day's coffee grounds, egg shells and vegetable peelings; to the compost pile or to the ground where it will nourish the earth.

What about the other things? There is satisfaction in putting them to use again and again. If nothing else, maybe you will sleep better knowing that you made a tiny effort to preserve God's creation. The alternative is morally unacceptable: our land filled with the leftovers of our consumption. That's enough to cause sleepless nights for those who take seriously their moral standing before the Creator of this good earth.

The dump is satisfying because it gives you an opportunity to do something good. It's a small thing, but nevertheless a good thing. Can you imagine the consequences of people simply doing the small, good things each day?

Going to the dump is satisfying for another unrelated reason. It requires a pleasant drive by very good looking farm land. This morning on my way there, I passed at least a dozen Bluebirds searching for the perfect box, two American Kestrels, an Eastern Meadowlark, Geese, Mallards, what appeared to be a hawk and the ever-present Turkey Vultures soaring overhead. Not only can you do the right thing but you can enjoy doing it.

There is another way that you can enjoy taking care of the land. The Augusta County Spring Clean-Up begins Saturday, April 22 and continues through April 29. The event, coordinated by the county, will focus on three areas: junk vehicles, illegal dumps, and roadside litter. Junk vehicles will be towed away at no expense to the owner during the month of April. An amnesty period at the county's landfill in Jollivue allows up to 25 tires per resident to be disposed of within specific guidelines at the landfill. White Goods — washing machines, dryers, refrigerators, stoves, etc. — can be recycled at the land fill for no fee. Volunteers with Virginia Adopt-A-Highway program will take to the roadside to clean up litter and spot illegal dumps. If you want to participate, contact the Department of Transportation. What a grand week it will be. I hope you will join this small, good effort to clean up God's good creation. —

## Augusta County planning Spring cleanup

By STACY HORTON

Have a little spare time in April? If so, help out Augusta County with Spring Clean-Up.

This year the event will be held from April 22nd — Earth Day — through April 29th. During this week your neighbors from around the county will be participating in the clean-up in many different ways.

Jim Fain, solid waste facility manager, will be keeping the landfill open for special hours during the spring clean-up week as follows: Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. until 7 p.m. During this period of April 22 through 29, up to 25 tires from Augusta County homes and farms can be brought to the landfill for disposal at NO CHARGE. Normally the county charges \$1.50 per tire,

which covers the disposal cost, but during this amnesty period, there is no charge. The landfill cannot accept tires that are mounted on split rims or that are from the construction industry.

Augusta County employees and volunteers will also be at six remote collection sites that have been established at six dumpsters around the county. So if your excuse is that the landfill is too far away, you better come up with a better excuse. At the following dumpster sites — Crimora, New Hope, Mt. Solon, Craigsville, Greenville, and Deerfield — citizens can also bring appliances (white goods) to be disposed of properly. White goods are large durable goods such as refrigerators, dishwashers, etc. We cannot accept any other bulky items at the dumpsters To get rid of

these items you need to go to the landfill.

Augusta County businesses will also be contributing to the spring clean-up. One major contribution is the ability of any county resident, at any time of the year, to call one of the participating scrap and junk dealers in the county to have junk vehicles disposed of at NO COST. So tell your neighbors as well, and try to persuade them to remove junk vehicles from their property. Junk vehicles are an eyesore to the community and we need everyone's help in trying to remove them.

Citizens and organizations from Augusta County will also be participating in the spring clean-up. Local organizations, schools, and churches from across the county will be participating in the event. If you, your family, or your organization wants

to help, give us a call and we will gladly "put you to work".

From simply cleaning your own front yard, to organizing an illegal dump site clean-up, ANYONE can help. Last year the citizens of Augusta, disposed of over 100,000 tires and 15,000 appliances. This year we hope to have an even more successful clean-up.

The outcome of the clean-up is up to you. Simply grab a friend or relative, go outside in the nice spring air and contribute to the beautification of Augusta County.

If you have any questions or comments about the clean-up please call Marilyn Reed at 245-5600. Your help is greatly appreciated. —

Stacy Horton is a James Madison University student working as an intern in the Augusta County administrator's office.



# Here, there, everywhere

## Boxwood care and other prickly problems

Dear Garden Path,  
Could you give me some tips on caring for boxwoods? I have boxwoods that I have set out in my yard and they just aren't doing a thing. Please help me.  
Signed, Boxed in  
Dear Boxed in:

Boxwoods, *Buxus* sp., are easier to care for than you might imagine. Boxwood fall into that category of broad-leaf evergreen care I like to think of as scary, but simple. There are a couple of things I would like to have known about your boxwoods before answering your question. How long ago were they planted? Did you purchase balled and burlapped (B&B) or container-grown plants? How have you taken care of them so far?

Let's assume you planted your boxwood last spring. If you purchased B&B plants, your boxes may have suffered a year of transplant shock caused by the loss of many feeder roots during the digging process. If you have taken care of them, they should be recovered by this spring and probably will look a lot better. If you purchased container-grown stock, all the roots are intact but they may have begun to encircle the container. Before you plant, sever these bound roots or they will continue to grow in a circle around the root ball instead of out and away from the plant. If you planted your boxes in this condition, dig them up, cut encircling roots and replant them.

Another common planting problem is planting boxwood too low in the ground and in too small of a hole. As with most broad-leaf evergreens, boxwood have feeder roots very close to the surface of the ground. When you plant, dig a hole at least twice the diameter of the root ball and maybe two-to-four inches more shallow than the ball. This will provide good, loose, backfilled soil at the surface for the feeder roots to move into and good drainage around the base of the plant. Boxwood like a lot of water, but do not like to be in soggy conditions.

That takes care of what you should have done, except for mulching, watering, fertilizing, pruning and insect control. Did I mention that taking care of boxwoods is easy? Fortunately, Spring is the best time to revive ailing shrubs.

Mulching is at the top of the list for boxwood care. Because of those shallow feeder roots, you want to provide a cool, moist environment for them. Use pine bark mulch to a depth of four to six inches out around the boxwoods. Don't put any mulch against the

trunk. This can promote diseases and insects. Because of those shallow roots, never, never cultivate around a boxwood. Hand-pick weeds and maintain adequate mulch to suppress weed development.

To say that boxwoods like water is an understatement. Unless we have a very rainy spring and summer, you will need to provide at least one inch of water every week until the middle of summer. After that, water the equivalent of about one inch every two weeks until things freeze over next winter. It's also o.k. to give your boxwoods a nice, gentle shower from time to time. They really seem to thrive with some simulated rainfall that wets down their branches and helps promote interior leaves.

Boxwoods are heavy nitrogen feeders. Apply recommended amounts of Espoma Holly-tone in early April and again by the end of June. If your boxwood leaves are yellow-looking, which I suspect they are, use a foliar spray of fish emulsion or Dragon Liquid Cleated Iron and Trace Mineral foliar spray to help green up the leaves. If you still don't see the leaves greening up, apply some dried blood as an extra nitrogen boost in the spring.

All boxwoods appreciate pruning. Although I see many boxwoods throughout the Valley that seem green, healthy and long-lived, I have seen many of them suddenly die from lack of care. Upon examination, I usually find that these boxes may be covered with leaves, but have little or no leaves along their branches back to the trunk. Both

The  
garden  
path  
By  
Ben Critzer



Questions, answers, and free advice for gardeners

newly-planted and older boxwoods need to be open and airy. Cut out all dead branches. Selectively trim back some of the crowded branches, either by snipping them back to a main branch or, if the branches are large and might spoil the overall shape of the boxwood, cutting them back about four inches.

This light pruning will open up the interior of the shrub so that new leaves can develop along the branches. It also helps improve air circulation to guard against fungus attacks. If you have planted balled and burlapped stock with the resulting loss of feeder roots pruning will help restore the balance between branches and roots.

Finally, there is the possibility of insect problems from last summer that may have sapped the strength of your boxwood. Fortunately, there are not very many insects that feed on boxwoods. Boxwood leaf miners and mites can be a problem, however. Leafminer damage is easy to spot. The creatures tunnel through the leaves, eating their way as they go. It will take a magnifying glass to really see their damage, but the leaves will have yellow spots that enlarge to blister-like brown patches. Pruning

out infected branches and leaves may halt their spread. Safer Bioneem is the recommended organic control. Consult with your nursery for other controls.

Mite damage appears as yellow or gray spots on the leaves. Weekly applications of rotenone/pyrethrin throughout the summer followed by a horticultural oil application the following spring to smother eggs should help eliminate mites. But, be advised, they are hard to control.

Dear Garden Path:  
How do I go about cleaning a Christmas cactus? I have one that has gotten quite dusty.  
Signed, Prickly Problem  
Dear Prickly:  
I would clean a Christmas cactus,

Schlumbergera bridgesii, the same way I would clean a porcupine — throw it in your bathtub, turn on the water and stand back.

Actually, a shower in your tub or sink is the very best way to clean almost all house plant. Use a soft toothbrush to clean those especially dirty or hard-to-reach places. About the only exceptions are fuzzy-leaf plants like African violets, Saintpaulia, which should be misted when in need of cleaning to avoid getting their leaves too wet.

Although Schlumbergera is a member of the cactus family it doesn't grow out in the desert. Instead it is native to moist tropical forests. Regular misting or the occasional bathtub romp will remind it of home and it will be happy for a very long time. By the way, how old is your plant? The Christmas cactus is a long-lived plant so consider naming its next caretaker in your last will and testament. —



### Mailbox of the month

This month's mailbox appropriately compliments the story on page 3 about 90-year-old Jefferson Davis Diffie and his craft of restoring antique automobiles. The "tin lizzie" mailbox belongs to Richard Killingsworth of Rt. 1 Verona and is located on Va. 612 near Laurel Hill. AC staff photo

### Spring is in the Air at Shenandoah Valley Garden Center

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• Crabapples • Hollies • Rhododendron  
• Nandina • Much More

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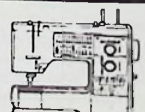
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## Reflections

Continued from page 25

familiar with that," answers to legislative questions.

It will be interesting to see just how much will be accomplished in the first "100 days." The members of the House of Representatives insist that they will introduce and act upon the proposed issues which were included in their "Contract with America" before the time is up. However, even though legislation gets acted upon on the House side, the tough road is ahead in the Senate and the Senators are not in quite so much of a hurry. There has been plenty of voting on various issues, but it has been scattered among both House and Senate floors and the committees.

When introduced, all bills go to the proper committee, and with some committees having as many as 10 or 20 bills to handle... hold hearings, mark up, and send to the floor... the days simply run out of hours. Even working until nine or 10 o'clock at night does not help.

Once a committee has moved the bill back to the House or Senate floor, it still must be discussed and voted on. Then the legislation has to go to the other body of Congress where it is discussed and voted on. More often than not, what is passed in the House is not exactly the same as what is passed

in the Senate, so then the bill has to go to a conference committee where the differences must be resolved.

One job that requires a great deal of time is the writing of the language for a final bill. The "intent" of Congress must be expressed in exact words, and that is something that cannot be hurried or what comes out may not be what the politicians expected.

Once out of conference, a bill must be voted on by both houses again before it can be sent to the President for signature. Just carrying the paperwork from one place to another takes up more time than seems to be available these days.

The intent of the members is good, but they seem to have taken upon themselves a task that is going to be very difficult to accomplish. Had they not boxed themselves into such a tight time schedule, they would have perhaps had better luck persuading the Congressmen and Senators of both parties toward a favorable vote.

Meanwhile the cutting of committee and congressional staffs, which was certainly needed but the timing was bad, has created a condition where there is not staff enough to do the work as fast as the new majority wants it done. They would have been better off

had they passed some of the legislation first and then eliminated the jobs. What they actually did was walk in and say, "Hey, there are too many of you working here... a third of you are fired. Go home."

Then they turned to those who were left and said, "We know that in the past only a certain number of bills were passed in this amount of time, but now we want less of you to do the work on three or four times as many pieces of legislation." Needless to say, the staff members, even those new ones -- or perhaps I should say, especially those new ones -- who did not know what they were in for when they took the job and in most cases did not have any prior experience -- are really beginning to complain. This is not exactly what that "glamorous" Capitol Hill job is supposed to be!

Poor Dylan still has not found a job. He worked for several weeks on a part-time basis for one of the local organizations, helping with a special project, but now that is finished and he is back home pouting, reading the Post, and grumbling. He signed up for some workshops and is thinking of ap-

plying at one of the government agencies. However, with all of the cutbacks, even though he has quite a few years of government service and therefore the seniority to bump someone, there are few people left to bump!! We are hoping that something will come along soon. I am running out of ways to cheer him. I need some cheering up myself, what with all this crazy working more hours than any civilized person should have to!

At least the spring weather is bringing a little brightness to an otherwise cheerless place. The park near our office building is full of people sitting and enjoying the warm sunshine. Many workers take their lunch out there and eat and feed the pigeons.

Of course, the store windows are filled with wonderful Spring outfits. Lots of pink and lots and lots of pale yellow. I have decided the best way for me to cheer myself up is to spend next weekend trying on all those great looking clothes. Besides, I am sure when I go through my last year's clothes that are packed away, I will need a few new things. (Especially one of

those wonderful yellow suits I've been seeing.) At least I can wear a new suit to work... the store windows also are filled with pale colored sports clothes and sweaters that make one want to dash off for a sunny weekend on the Eastern Shore. All these great new outfits to tempt us to go out and play and no time to do it. It's just not fair!

The experts tell us that the cherry blossoms around the Tidal Basin will be in full bloom just in time for the Cherry Blossom Festival. I hope that they are right, because regardless of what those crazy politicians do, the Cherry Blossom Festival will take place and I can look forward to one or two parties connected with it. And, it also looks as if Congress will have their Easter break as scheduled. That means three weeks when the social scene will be back to normal. Thank goodness all is not lost!

I hope that next month with the Easter holidays and Spring bursting forth there will be happier and more exciting things to write home about.

Give my love to all,  
LuLu

### BOOK REVIEW

## Bertha and Mr. Rabbit: A memorable pair

By SARAH HEIZER

*Bertha's Garden*, By Elisabeth Dyjak, Illustrated by Janet Wilkins. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1995. \$12.95

*Bertha's Garden* is a book about a scary wolf and a beautiful, skinny rabbit. The wolf, Bertha, tried to scare the rabbit away because Mr. Rabbit was trying to eat all the veg-

etables in her garden. Bertha tied up pink ribbons to scare the rabbit away, but Mr. Rabbit thought they were a little bow tie for him so he wore them! Then Bertha tied up pie pans to make noise to scare him away but Mr. Rabbit turned them into tambourines! Mr. Rabbit was showing off and he took everything.

Bertha made a scarecrow to scare him away but Mr. Rabbit thought it was a lady friend for him. Bertha put up signs for the rabbit to KEEP AWAY from her garden but Mr. Rabbit wrote a message on the sign that said, "Fear not, I will protect your garden." Mr. Rabbit wasn't scared of anything until...

Bertha was getting very, very mad and got ready to cook some rabbit soup. Who do you think she was going to put in the soup? Do you think this story is going to have a happy ending? Read *Bertha's Garden* and find out!

I liked the way Mr. Rabbit looks in the book. He is beautiful and skinny, skinny, skinny! I liked the way Mr. Rabbit dressed. My favorite suit was the one he wore on Moonlit Thursday—it was a moon and stars suit.

I loved the book and I think anyone in kindergarten, first, second, or third grade would like it too. —

Sarah Heizer is a first-grade student at Riverheads Elementary School.

The Staunton-Augusta Farmer's Market opens April 22. Call 332-3802 or 995-7593 for information.

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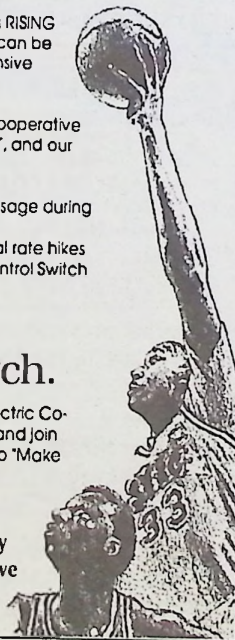
- \*Guarding Against electrical usage during peak times
- \*Holding Down future electrical rate hikes
- \*Installation of a Free Load Control Switch in your home

## Make the Switch.

If you're a Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative consumer, get off the bench and join the winning team. Call us today to 'Make the Switch' in your home court.



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Bertha hot on the trail of Mr. Rabbit

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# SVEC program yields 'powerful' savings

## AC staff report

MT. CRAWFORD — Sometimes saving a little can save a lot.

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative in Mt. Crawford offers its utility customers a special program which enables the company to save power and pass those savings on to its consumer/owners.

"This program saves us a whole lot of money," said Bill McNulty, SVEC spokesman. "And with a co-op, 'us' is the consumer."

SVEC's Load Management Program involves the consumer in the co-op's efforts to save money and conserve energy. Included in the program are radio controlled devices which are attached to residential customers' water heaters. During times of peak power usage, SVEC can control power going to water heaters, thereby reducing the power load which the co-op must generate to meet the demand.

"This is a program that allows Shenandoah Valley Electric to manage the electricity load created by water heaters during peak times of usage on the utility's part," McNulty said.

Cutting back on the amount of power which the co-op must generate reduces the amount of money it is billed for the power it uses, McNulty explained. SVEC buys electricity from a number of power companies and is billed for that power according to peak levels of power output. By using its Load Management Program, the co-op can reduce the level of power being purchased on the day of the month when usage peaks and then is billed according to the level of power it pulls on that day.

Since the Load Management Program was implemented in 1981, the co-op has realized \$13 million in savings by controlling water heaters throughout its coverage area. In 1994, the co-op's power bill was \$25 million with SVEC having saved \$1 million through load management. In 1995, \$222,000 has been saved with the co-op using load management on fewer than four occasions in a 60-day period.

According to McNulty, 6,876 of the co-op's 18,000 consumers participate in the Load Management Program. He says it is simple for customers to join the energy saving effort.

"The program is voluntary and is totally at the consumer's convenience. Customers can contact Shenandoah Valley and request information. We have our energy management technician schedule an appointment at their convenience to install the equipment," McNulty said.

In addition to installing the load management device, SVEC will provide customers with a water heater blanket — at no charge — which, when wrapped around the heater, prevents heat loss and promotes efficient energy use.

Of all the electrical devices in consumers' homes, McNulty said water heaters are the most practical for the co-op to control. Most heaters store between 50 to 100 gallons of hot water, an amount sufficient to last for some time even if the heater is not activated. When SVEC is using load management, McNulty said customers are not aware that their water heater is being controlled. In fact, when the co-op sends out the control signal, only one in four water heaters will be drawing power, McNulty said, leaving the remaining 75 percent unaffected.

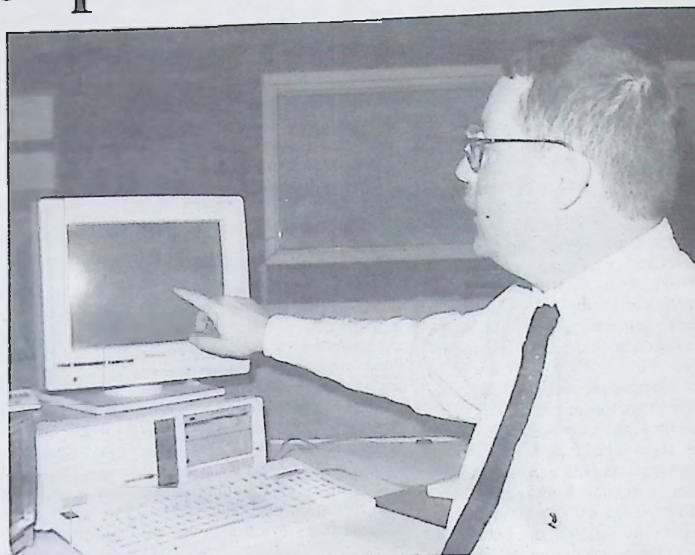
"Typically they won't know," the co-op spokesman said regarding customers' awareness that their water heater is being controlled. If there is some question regarding heaters on the system, SVEC provides support services to customers.

"If someone is having trouble with their heater — they don't seem to have enough hot water — we'll go out and check our equipment to make sure it's working properly," McNulty said. "Usually what we find is that an element has gone bad which is very common around here because of hard water. While we're there we'll check the water heater and tell them what's wrong with it. We do this at no charge to customers."

While the Load Management Program saves money, it also conserves energy. In Virginia, 11 electric cooperatives participate in load management providing access to 70,000 water heaters throughout the state. Total wattage saved during control periods is equivalent to six megawatts of power which is enough electricity to illuminate 60,000 100-watt light bulbs.

"That's six megawatts of power that somebody didn't have to generate," McNulty said. "Our cumulative efforts of controlling that load can be the equivalent of not bringing a small power plant on line."

The ability to manage the power load statewide can also prevent power outages. McNulty noted that on Jan. 19, 1994 — which stands out in most people's minds as being a day which was devastatingly cold — controlling the power load prevented mass outages. On that January day, load management and rolling blackouts were used to stabilize power usage.



Bill McNulty, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative's spokesperson, shows on the utility monitors levels of power usage.

AC staff photo

"Load management can make the difference in keeping the whole system from collapsing," McNulty said of efforts to control power use during severe weather.

McNulty encourages SVEC customers to join the Load Management Program.

"The more (water heaters) you have, the more you can save and the more flexibility

it can give the co-op in implementing the program," he said. "This electric cooperative is owned by our consumers. This is one way our consumers can have a direct impact on the cost of operating the co-op."

For information about the Load Management Program, SVEC customers may call 885-8971 or 1-800-234-7832. —

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