

Augusta Country

June 1995
Vol. 2, Issue 6

P.O. Box 51

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winners and results
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Middlebrook, Va. 24459

Hello, Mr. Chips



Raymond Curry turns spuds into snackers' delight

Stories by Sue Simmons
Photos by Claude Simmons

STAUNTON — If the aroma of frying potato chips tempts you long before Curry's Kitch'n Cook'd Potato Chip plant on West Beverley Street comes into sight, an hour inside is positively irresistible.

"Chipper" Raymond Curry takes a lot of pride in the quality of the Shenandoah Valley's own potato chips.

Kitch'n Cook'd Potato Chips actually start in the potato fields of Florida. Potato broker E.W. Bare keeps Curry's company supplied with potatoes fit for chips.

"Not every potato makes a good chip," Curry says. "Superior" and "557" are among the three or four varieties that do.

"We start buying potatoes in Florida in the spring," he explains, speaking for all the chippers in the United States. "After that crop is depleted, we move to Georgia, then South Carolina. (Then we) keep moving north until the winter when we buy potatoes kept in

storage in New England."

A load of potatoes is brought to the plant in Staunton each week where they are stored for a short period of time. Sticks and rocks are discarded and the potatoes are washed before being taken upstairs to be turned into chips.

"The potatoes aren't peeled like you would peel them in your kitchen," Curry explains that a machine knocks off the skins. "These machines are almost 30 years old," Curry says as he shows the frying line and the packaging line. "But it's the people that maintain the quality of the chips."

After peeling, a grader then inspects the potatoes and cuts out dark spots.

They are then washed a second time before being put in the slicer where they are instantly reduced to wafer-thin slices ready to fry. On their way from the slicer to the fryer, the potato slices are rinsed a third and final time.

"You know how potatoes pop back up when you put them in hot

oil," Curry states more than asks as he explains the paddles in the middle of the fryer. "That paddle forces the potatoes back into the oil each time they pop up," he said. It takes three-and-a-half minutes to fry the chips.

Three hundred pounds of potatoes are fried each hour between 4:30 a.m. and about 3 p.m. All do not end up in a bag of Kitch'n Cook'd, however. A plant employee stands at the end of the line and separates the light "done just right" chips from the dark, slightly burned chips. Cool storage temperatures convert the starch in the potato to sugar. Higher sugar content causes chips to burn.

Chips that pass inspection must cool for 30 minutes before they are packaged. A new and expensive piece of computerized equipment guarantees the consumer gets the exact net weight printed on the bag.

"That scale is accurate to one-half a chip," Curry laughs.

The chips climb to the scale on something like a small elevator. A computer scans and measures the needed amount of potato chips to 100,000th of an ounce.

While this is happening, foil paper is folded and sealed into bags underneath the scale. When the bag is ready, the exact amount of chips falls into the bag. A small, protective cushion of air is pumped into the bag just before it is sealed.

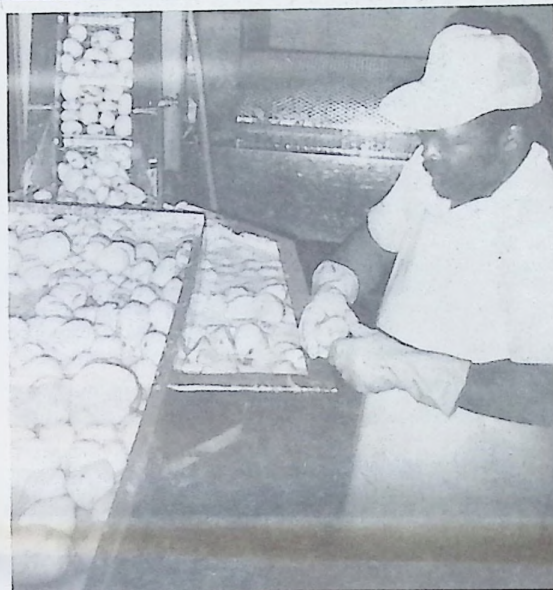
"Some people accuse us of cheating them. They wonder why the bag isn't full," Curry remarks.

The air protects the chips from being crushed. "This bag is handled twenty-two times before you ever buy it. If there wasn't any air in the bag the chips would be crumbs by the time they reached home."

Seventeen people help manufacture Kitch'n Cook'd Potato Chips. In addition, Kitch'n Cook'd distributes Martin's Chips and a line of snack food. Curry's philosophy is that bigger isn't always better.

"We produce a quality product," Curry says with the authority of a potato chip connoisseur. "We're small design. We serve five to six counties and that is enough. That allows me to be the boss."

See COVER STORY, page 4



James Crawford, Kitch'n Cook'd employee, sorts potatoes which have been peeled and washed. Dark spots are removed before potatoes go to the slicer.

Curry: Local Kitch'n Cook'd are best of the lot

Raymond Curry pulls out an empty bag of Maui Kitch'n Cook'd Potato Chips from a drawer. He also has a bag of Kitch'n Cook'd from Kuana, Hawaii.

"Look, same Logo, same words, same colors," he points out similarities in the packaging. "There's a Kitch'n Cook'd in Ohio and another one in Indiana." Yet none of the chippers are related or connected to each other.

Curry theorizes that many years ago potato chip business kits were sold — fryers and bags — door to door or through catalogues. Possibly the two brothers who started Kitch'n Cook'd on their Waynesboro porch purchased one of these kits and set up shop. Possibly that explains Kitch'n Cook'd plants across the country. Possibly.

Raymond Curry is sure that Staunton's Kitch'n Cook'd makes the best light potato chip of them all.

"The secret is in the spud and in the peanut oil," he says. —



COOKED
IN PEANUT
OIL

Congratulations, Nancy!

Congratulations this month go out to Augusta Country staff writer Nancy Sorrells who was awarded a master's degree in state and local history from James Madison University on May 6.

Nancy's thesis work involved long-term study of Francis McFarland, a former pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church. McFarland served the pastorate over a 50-year period of time

from 1823 to 1871. McFarland left Bethel in 1836 and returned in 1841. He is the only pastor in the church's history to have been called twice to fill the Bethel pulpit. McFarland kept a daily diary, and it was this record of early church, farm, and community life in Augusta County which Nancy studied and researched.

With work on her degree finished, Nancy says she's glad to have plenty of guilt-free time to devote to writing for Augusta Country. But knowing Nancy, it won't be long before she and Francis are off on some other historical adventure. —



Augusta Country announces summer schedule

Recently staff members have been threatening us with plans for summer vacations. Rather than make them work twice as hard before they leave or after they return, Augusta Country has opted to combine the August and September editions into one issue.

With this decision made, AC will publish on the following

dates: June 27 for the July issue and August 1 for the combined August-September issue.

Due to this change in the publishing pattern, subscribers will be credited for an additional month. Those who subscribed in September or October of 1994 will be credited for their year's worth of AC through the October 1995 issue. —

Letters to the editor

Dear Betty Jo,

I do not see a section in your Augusta Country paper for letters to the editor, but I must let you know the pride the McCune family feels from the 4-H—FFA article. You did an excellent job.

We continue to enjoy your friendly newspaper, reading each and every article.

Again, thanks for the article. We made apologies to Tish, David, Adam, and Whitney who showed and continue the family tradition of showing cattle, although their names were not mentioned in the article.

Please find enclosed a check for our subscription.

Sincerely,
Freda Gray McCune
Fishersville

We, too, extend our apologies to members of the McCune family who were not included in the article which appeared in the May 1995 issue about the 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show. And thank you for your subscription, Mrs. McCune!

Dear Ms. Hamilton:
On behalf of the Augusta County

Board of Supervisors and myself, I would like to thank you for your continued effort in assisting with the Augusta County Spring Clean Up. The help of the media is essential in having a successful clean up, and as we have proven for a second year, your efforts have been superb.

As an intern, one of my major projects was to make sure that the media covered the event as much as possible. Your eagerness to help me was much appreciated, and it made my job easier. I hope that in the following years the new interns for Augusta County get as much respect from you as I have. Your help in the clean up continues to prove to our county that the local media in our area are here to really make a difference for their readers (our citizens).

Again, thank you for the time and effort you have spent with my internship, and more importantly, helping the Augusta citizens. I wish you much success in your future.

Sincerely,
Stacy Horton
Augusta County
administrative intern

Free copies of newspaper soon to be part of AC's past

AC staff report

Augusta Country publisher Betty Jo Hamilton announced recently that Augusta County's newest newspaper will be taking a step forward in its overall operation.

"We will discontinue the distribution of free copies of the newspaper by fall of this year," she said. "A limited number of papers will continue to be provided to businesses which advertise, however, Ms. Hamilton said these numbers will be greatly reduced from those previously available at businesses."

According to AC's publisher, the newspaper will be making the transition to area news stands during the next four months.

"Through an agreement with Anderson News Co. of Roanoke, Augusta Country will be available

through retail outlets in Augusta County and surrounding areas," Ms. Hamilton said. "Individuals who want to continue to receive the paper will need to subscribe or buy it at news stands."

The \$12 annual subscription rate will continue to be effective for new subscriptions until Sept. 30, 1995 according to Ms. Hamilton. After that date, the subscription rate will increase to \$16 annually. Renewals from current subscribers will remain at the \$12 rate regardless of when they subscribed during the past year, she said. The news stand price will be \$2 per copy.

"We appreciate folks helping us out during our first year of operation. Even though we continued to distribute free copies longer than we had anticipated we would,

people have been paying for subscriptions to Augusta Country. These individuals will be able to renew their subscriptions to the newspaper for the coming year at the \$12 annual rate even after the October 1 increase," she said.

Moving solely to retail sales and subscriptions will strengthen Augusta Country's financial base, according to the publisher.

"In the beginning we set out to demonstrate the type of product we wanted to deliver," Ms. Hamilton said. "We have proven that there is a place for 'friendly news' in Augusta County, and have been encouraged by the response the newspaper has received. This has prompted us to move ahead with our plans to firmly establish Augusta Country as an alternative and independent news source for Augusta County and surrounding areas." —

Wool to be collected June 13 and 14

VERONA — The Augusta County Wool Pool will hold its annual collection of wool June 13 and 14 at the Augusta County Government Center.

Producers who have already consigned their wool to the pool may deliver the wool from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on June 13 and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 14. The wool pool will close for lunch from noon to 1 p.m. on Wednesday.

The wool pool will be set up in

the northern end of the metal building used to house the ASCS office at the government center. Signs will be posted inside the government center complex to direct wool pool deliveries to the appropriate place.

In preparing for the wool collection, producers are asked to separate each kind of wool. White wool; white lambs' wool; regular clear medium wool; clear lamb and light burry wool; black, heavy burry, dead and reject wool; and tags should be bagged individually.

Prices are as follows — white wool, 95 cents/lb.; white lambs' wool, 79.2 cents/lb.; regular, clear wool, 83 cents/lb.; lamb and light burry, 69 cents/lb.; black and heavy burry, 60.3 cents/lb.; and tags, 12.4 cents/lb. An additional 1 cent/lb. will be added to the price of white

wool and clear wool packed in sacks weighing at least 150 pounds. Wool delivered in feed sacks or as single fleeces will be discounted 5 cents/lb.

White wool consignments are those from white faced sheep breeds only and should not contain any brown or black fibers.

The Augusta Wool Pool sold its wool to Prouvost, USA of Jamestown, S.C. Augusta County's white wool topped the wool pool sale by bringing 99 cents/lb.

David Fiske, Augusta County Extension agent, says wool prices this year are slightly higher than last year's prices.

For answers to questions about the wool pool or to consign 1995 wool, call the Augusta County Extension Office at 245-5750. —

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Andy Rhodes, teen cyclist, setting Olympic-size goals

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON -- Eighteen-year-old Andy Rhodes has a resting pulse rate in the upper 30s or low 40s. He routinely rides his bicycle 400 miles a week battling the headwinds and steep terrain that mark the Shenandoah Valley and the mountain ranges on either side.

A typical training run, on days when he is putting in distance rather than working on speed, could be a 95-mile ride to Monterey, in Highland County. The route, which includes eight mountain climbs in the rugged Alleghenies (four each way) takes him about five hours.

Most high school seniors barely have a clue about their future goals, but the 5-foot-10-inch, 150-pound cyclist, who lives just outside of Staunton, has his future in sight as clearly as the finish line at a race looms on the horizon. In many ways he is more focused and mature than people twice his age.

Oh, and by the way -- and perhaps even more importantly -- his goals which include becoming a professional cyclist, are not unrealistic. Make no mistake -- Andy Rhodes is GOOD.

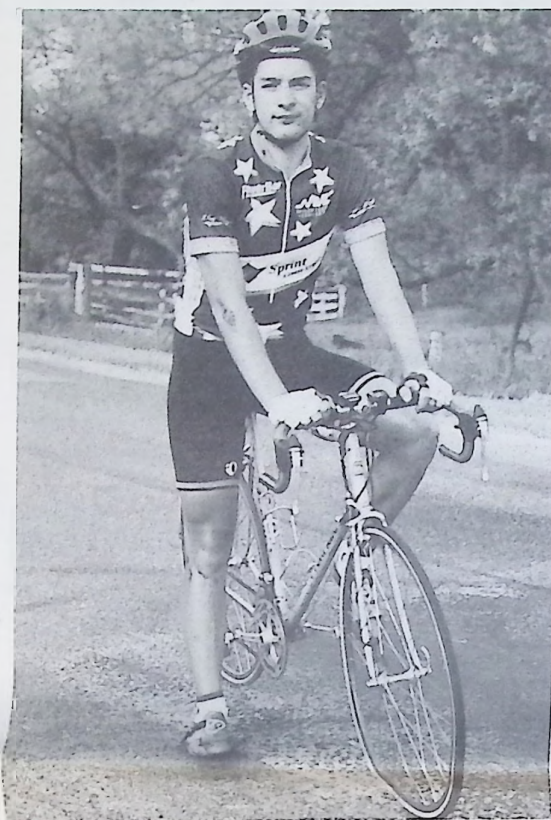
Although he has only been racing seriously for three years, and he began as a mountain biker, he is currently the top ranked BAR (Best All-around Rider) junior in the region. He has spent much of the early spring surprising junior and senior riders all along the East Coast.

"People can't believe he's so young and works so hard," says his mother, Janet Rhodes, who together with her husband David, provide much of their son's support. "People are surprised and say 'where did he come from?'" she adds of the youthful rider who has burst full force on the road cycling scene.

Rhodes' mother, however, knows better than most that her son is not an "overnight" sensation. His cycling began, she says with a laugh, before his birth, since she went cycling while she was pregnant! Andy took to the sport naturally and mastered two wheelers by the age of 4.

But cycling for fun and cycling in races represent two different worlds, and it was a little more than three years ago when the youngster was pulled into the competitive end of the sport. Interested in mountain biking, the teen penned a letter to Fat City Cycles asking for financial support in the grassroots mountain bike movement that was making its way across the country.

Fat City encouraged Andy, sending him a jersey and selling him a bicycle for a reduced price. That first year he rode 35 mountain bike races, and did well enough to compete again the next year when Fat City upped its sponsorship. In 1993 he won all but three of his



Andy Rhodes, 18, of Staunton has his sights set on becoming a professional cyclist. His immediate goal is to earn a spot on the junior regional team which would give him a chance to go to the Olympic Festival in Colorado Springs in July.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

junior races and routinely did well against the older experts.

As much as he enjoyed competing on the mountain bike courses, however, the youthful cyclist found himself drawn more to the tradition and skill of road racing. Last year Andy started seriously competing in road races and reserved his mountain biking for fun and relaxation.

"Mountain biking is hard, all-out effort. Now it is just something different to do for a change of scenery," Rhodes said. "I like road racing better. It is more fitness oriented and has a lot of tradition," he explained of his move from the mud to the pavement.

In 1994 he rode 35 races including the Killington Stage Race in early September. Andy ranks that race, which consisted of an uphill time trial, three road races and a criterion, as one of the most important races he competed in last year. He also did exceptionally well at one of his "getaway" mountain bike races, placing fourth in the pro class at the Gnarly North Fork in Pendleton, W.Va.

Shortly after those two successful races, though, Andy's racing

career suffered a serious setback. On September 12 he was struck from behind by a drunk driver in a pickup truck. "He knocked me out of my shoes and my socks," said Andy who recalled that he was hurtled through the air for many yards. Luckily he suffered nothing more than a very deep leg bruise, but the incident delayed his winter training.

In order to beef up his training in the winter, the high school senior decided to apply for special dispensation from the public school system. The work-study program in which the system has allowed him to participate throughout this year is an unusual move by the administration, but one that has paid off for all parties involved.

Almost without fail, Andy's routine during his senior year has started well before dawn. From 5:30 a.m. until 8 he works at a local athletic club. Then he hustles to Riverheads High School and arrives in time for morning classes. At noon his school day is finished, but his "workday" swings into high gear.

To earn the classroom credit for

"Kids my age don't have a clue about what I'm doing, and just don't understand about what I want to do."

Andy Rhodes
Cyclist

his "work" experience, Andy is required to log 15 hours a week on the job -- something that he easily surpasses. In a normal week, his "job" of cycling requires 20 to 25 hours and that doesn't include stretching, traveling to races, and bicycle maintenance.

Under the direction of coach Ruth Stormeta, he divides his training sessions to focus on certain aspects of his riding. "Monday and Friday are just spinning in easy gears. Tuesday is speed work with lots of sprints and bursts. Wednesday is a long, hard ride, like to Monterey and back," Andy said.

The youthful rider added that the Shenandoah Valley makes a good home base for training because of the terrain. "I ride all sorts of different courses. A lot of times I'll ride up on the Blue Ridge Parkway. This is definitely one of the best areas for riding. There is not too much traffic. There are also lots of hills which help make you powerful in your fitness, and it is always windy which helps," he said.

"I use a heart monitor to base my training on," Andy explains of his work approach. "I don't care what anybody says, cycling is the hardest sport in the world. In one day of spinning, I spend more time with my heart rate above 175 heartbeats than the average person might in a lifetime. You have got to learn how to suffer."

True to his need for suffering, Andy enjoys the uphill portion of racing, and that is where he is strongest. "I like the climbs, that's where I can beat anybody," he exclaimed.

Andy meticulously records the results of his work, including his heart rate, training mileage, and race results, in a log book. Although he is not carrying a heavy-duty academic load in the classroom, he has still kept abreast of his schoolwork, and maintains a straight-A record at Riverheads where he is a member of the National Honor Society.

As the days have warmed and Andy nears his mid-June graduation, the results of the winter's work are appearing in columns of race results all along the East Coast. He rides with a club out of Charlottesville, the Monticello Velo Club, and competes on the club's racing team, Sprint/Power Bar. He often travels a thousand miles in a weekend in order to race. On a typical weekend he might compete in two junior races and two senior races.

"To get good at racing, you have to race," he explained of a pace

that many might find murderous. "I use a lot of the races as training. It is too tough to win all of the time."

Midway through April he had already competed in 16 races in about six weeks and had won four junior races and taken second in a senior (category 2-3) race. During one weekend in March he took second in the pro class of the Greenbrier (mountain bike) Race in Frederick, Md., and then traveled to Charlottesville the next day where he won the junior road race and then placed seventh in the Jefferson Cup race against 80 to 100 seasoned racers.

The points he has accumulated in this spring's racing have vaulted him to the top of the BAR rankings and helped him focus in on several cycling goals.

His immediate goal, to earn a spot on the junior regional team which would give him a chance to go to the Olympic Festival in Colorado Springs in July, was partially met early in May. To qualify for the team's selection camp where eight riders are then topped for the regional team, Andy had to finish in the top three in any one of six certified races. To that end he is now the proud owner of a bronze medal handed to him by the Tour DuPont winner, Lance Armstrong. Andy captured third place at a Winston-Salem qualifying race held in conjunction with the Tour DuPont.

A little further along in his future are plans to go to Europe and race professionally.

"It is a totally different style of racing there. They race really hard and really fast and really often. In America in the big races, there might be five or 10 people who can win. In Europe there might be 50 or 100. There is so much more competition. I'm looking forward to it," he said.

"Racing takes a lot of practice. That's why I want to go to Europe to learn how to race. The main thing to learn in Europe is how to suffer. It takes everything you have to make it as a pro," he explained.

At an age when most kids are unsure of their future, Andy Rhodes has a focus and a mindset that is a rarity. It is obvious from the results in the racing columns that his work is paying off in a big way. "Kids my age don't have a clue about what I'm doing, and just don't understand about what I want to do," Andy says.

His classmates might not understand, but the cycling world is ready and waiting. ---



COVER STORY

Continued from page 1

Unlike nationally known companies, Kitch'n Cook'd is sold in a five to six county region — as far north as Mt. Jackson, as far south as Lexington and Buena Vista and as far west as Clifton Forge and Covington.

"We have just started a Charlottesville route that is doing well," Curry added.

Six salesmen and a route supervisor keep store shelves stocked with potato chips. Potato chips are not sold directly to the stores, rather Kitch'n Cook'd rents store shelves and vends the product.

"My paper keeps the chips fresh for eight weeks. But the chips move in three weeks," he said.

Many shoppers are very loyal to the local brand but Curry admits he is always looking for new accounts.

"Areas near colleges and along the interstate are the toughest areas to sell," Curry commented. "People stick with more familiar brands."

Half of all the potato chips sold in the United States are produced and sold by Frito-Lay and Eagle. Small chippers such as Kitch'n Cook'd produce the rest. Curry's brand is the number one selling chip in this area.

Curry admits that he makes his biggest sales at Christmas and

New Year's Day. "You would think the busiest time would be on the Fourth of July. But many people entertain, even on a small scale, during the winter holidays, and chips are part of what they serve."

There once were three potato chip companies in Staunton: Whittson's, Einstein's, and Kitch'n Cook'd. Kitch'n Cook'd started in Waynesboro in the 1940's when two brothers began making chips on their back porch.

"Jim Coffey bought the company from them in the 50s and moved it to Staunton. It moved to Fishersville once and then returned to Staunton when Russell Glover bought it in 1963," the current owner says.

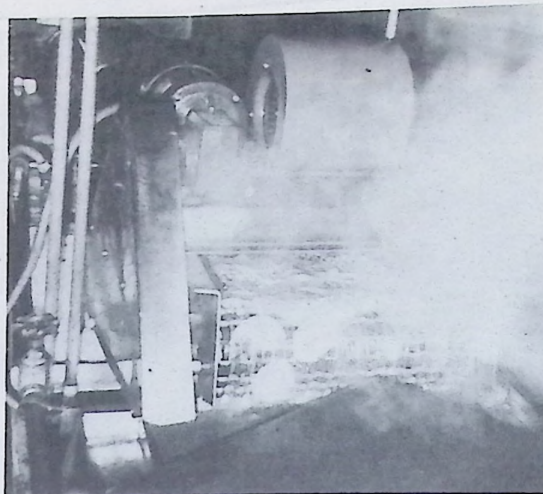
Curry went to work for Glover in 1965, first as route salesman, then the route supervisor, and finally as plant manager.

"It was the mom-and-pop stores that put Kitch'n Cook'd on the map," Curry commented on the early success of the company. "Leo's, Beardsly's, Houff's market are gone now, but Kitch'n Cook'd is still here because they gave us a market."

Glover promised to sell the company to Curry when he decided to retire. "He was as good as his word," Curry declared. "I bought the company from him in 1980."

Under Curry's watchful eye and hard work, Kitch'n Cook'd expanded. "When I took over, we had two sales routes and two trucks. Now we have six."

Curry credits faithful and hardworking employees for his success. "I like to think I'm in control, but you're only as good as the people you're surrounded with. I have good key people." —



Wafer-thin sliced potatoes drop into hot peanut oil as the frying process begins.



Kitch'n Cook'd employee Edie Simmons picks dark chips out from those leaving the fryer. Sugar in the potatoes causes some of them to fry unevenly.

Potato: Voted least likely to succeed

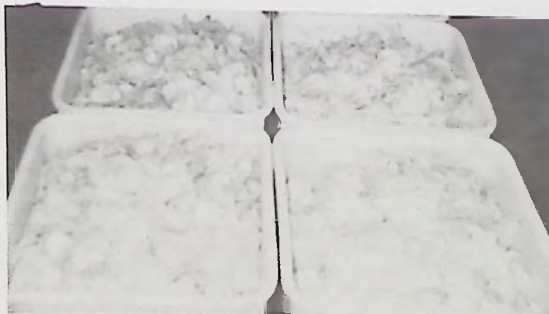
The white potato is a starchy tuber of the nightshade family.

Indigenous to Peru and Ecuador, it was once thought suitable only for chickens and pigs. It has been said that the potato had to cross the Atlantic Ocean seven times before it became popular in the American colonies, long after it had gained acceptance in Europe.

Each nation in the Western world has contributed a special method of cooking and serving potatoes to the world's cuisine.

The potato chip was discovered by accident in the United States. A chef in Saratoga cut his potatoes too thin for ordinary frying. He deep fried and lightly salted them.

Thus the potato chip was born. The accident-prone Saratoga chef ultimately made his and other people's fortunes in deep frying paper-thin slices of potatoes. —



In photo at left, chips progress toward the scales where they are weighed and then drop into bags below.

Raymond Curry

This man is no couch potato

Those who know Raymond Curry have an abiding memory of him racing his soapbox down Augusta Street to win the local 1958 Soapbox Derby.

Born and raised in Staunton, Curry's hustle and entrepreneurial spirit emerged at a very early age.

"I shoveled snow, mowed grass, and sold papers when I was just a little kid," Curry recalled.

His brother, Leon, also recalled that at age five or six Raymond would pick his neighbor's flowers, bundle them into small bouquets, and sell them back to the neighbors for a quarter. That was only the beginning of his career as a small businessman.

"Brian Quick had a paper route. He would carry the papers as far as Thomas Jefferson School," Curry explained how he got his start as a paperboy. "Once he got to TJ, he would want to play basketball. So he'd pay me a quarter to finish his route for him."

After he finished his friend's route, Curry would take his quarter, go buy more papers at the Leader for three cents, run to Vames and sell them for a nickel.

"At the end of the week, I had three or four dollars," Curry laughed. "And Brian Quick is the athlete he is today because of me. Brian owes me."

Curry claims his parents neither encouraged nor discouraged his desire to work.

"There were five of us and if I wanted anything — and there were plenty of things I wanted — I knew I had to get them for myself," he recalls.

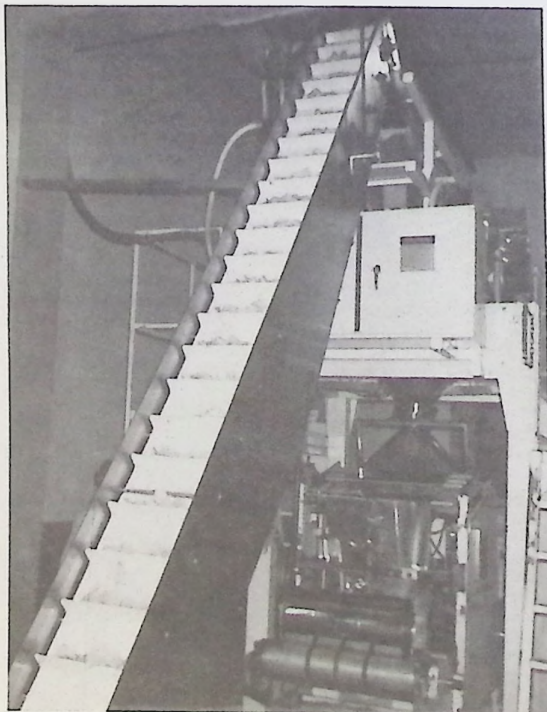
In high school, Curry had a paper route in the morning and two in the evening.

He won the Staunton Leader's Most Outstanding Paperboy award in 1960. "I had to get the most new accounts, deliver all my papers on time, and go for one year without any complaints." The prize was a trip to South America.

In addition to newspaper delivery, Curry played football and worked in a service station. At one point he earned \$78 a week, more than his father made at Du Pont.

After high school, Curry worked briefly for Coca-Cola before going to Kitch'n Cook'd, never dreaming he would one day own the company.

"I like being my own boss. My success is based on my own effort," he says. —



Grandma Moses put chips first, art last

Say Grandma Moses' name today and people think of fine American art. If you said her name in Augusta County in 1905, people would have thought of fine, home-made potato chips.

That's right. Grandma Moses, American primitive artist, was one of Augusta County's original "chippers."

The Moses family lived in Au-

gusta County near Fort Defiance for 10 years, between 1896 and 1906. Mr. Moses first worked on the Bell and Dudley farms and later owned a small farm of his own. Mrs. Moses hated the idea that her husband doled out all the money. Anxious to earn some money of her own, she decided to make and sell potato chips.

One night while her children

were busy with their school work she pared three large potatoes, and put them in soaking water. She sliced them fine the next morning, and fried them in lard while her children were in school, "so they wouldn't know anything about it."

She fried the chips until she had a pound, lightly salted them, and

put them in a paper "poke."

When the children arrived home, she sent them with the chips to the market to see how much the grocer would give her in kind. The pound of chips earned her twenty-five cents and an order for two more pounds.

The grocer continued to increase his order and offered 30 cents a pound. Before long, Mrs.

Moses had a standing order for 10 pounds of potato chips a week.

Her husband made her a slicer to reduce the amount of work she had to do by hand.

Soon Mrs. Moses was producing chips by the barrel and selling them in White Sulphur Spring and Charlottesville.

"Always wanted to be independent," said Grandma Moses of her potato chip venture. —



Curry's Kitch'n Cook'd Potato Chips, boxed and ready for shipment, are the most popular brand of potato chips among area residents. The secret is in the peanut oil, says owner Raymond Curry.



Sporting the familiar red elliptical logo, Kitch'n Cook'd trucks are loaded at the company's West Beverley Street plant and depart for destinations throughout the Shenandoah Valley.

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Proof is in the yogurt

Staunton couple says yogurt promotes good health

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON -- Once when Paul and Christine Knopp took their nine sons to the dentist, the surprised man told them that if there were many more families like the Knopps, dentistry would be a dying art. The reason? None of the boys had as much as a single cavity.

"We told the dentist that they have always had whole milk and whole grain and we have tried to eat as healthful as we can," explained the Staunton couple who has stuck to their nutritional values for years.

For the Knopps and their nine sons (ranging in age from 46 to 34 and including two sets of twins), yogurt has always been an important part of their nutritional scheme.

"The farmer we bought eggs from (in the 1950s) told us about this nutritionist who had written a book. We bought the book, tried it and liked it," the Staunton couple said of their introduction to yogurt through the book "Let's Cook it Right" by Adelle Davis.

Yogurt, which is fermented, semisolid milk, has long been a food source in certain cultures from Europe and Asia Minor. It is created by adding a bacteria culture to whole milk, skim milk or evaporated milk and letting the mixture "work" for several hours until it reaches the right consistency.

Although yogurt is available commercially, the Knopps have always made their own product using evaporated milk. When all nine sons and other guests and family members were home, Mrs. Knopp would make a batch of yogurt every week, often mixing up 9 quarts of milk at a time.

"Making our own certainly didn't hurt us. It's much cheaper and we knew it wouldn't have any additives," Mrs. Knopp said.

"The temperature of your body doesn't kill the culture either," Mr. Knopp added, explaining some of the healthy benefits of regularly including yogurt in one's diet.

To make yogurt in Knopp fashion, Mrs. Knopp heats water to 135 degrees (it helps to have a candy thermometer she notes) and then adds one cup of powdered milk for each quart of water, although a little more powdered milk can be added if a more solid yogurt is desired. The mixture is then cooled slightly to 120 degrees and yogurt culture is added. The culture is a few teaspoons of yogurt saved from the last batch. Plain yogurt from the grocery store can be used as starter also.

"You have to make sure that the milk is not too hot when you put the culture in. Not over 120 degrees or you will kill the culture. Also, if the temperature falls below 90 degrees then your mixture will be like buttermilk instead of yogurt," Mrs. Knopp noted.



Christine and Paul Knopp enjoy yogurt cake topped with yogurt. The Staunton couple make their own yogurt and credit their good health to a healthy diet which includes homemade yogurt and whole-grain breads and cakes.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

Yogurt making is as simple as that, the Knopps explained. After the culture has been added, Mrs. Knopp pours her soon-to-be yogurt into glass jars and places it in a warm oven (between 90 and 120 degrees) to "let it do its business." If you don't want to put the jars in an oven, a cooler with a jar of hot water in it will be fine. The cooler retains the heat provided by the jar of hot water. The jars of yogurt should be placed next to the hot water jars.

The amount of time it takes for the yogurt to form depends upon the amount of

culture put into the mixture. As an experiment, Mrs. Knopp made three batches of yogurt adding a quarter cup of culture to a quart of milk, and then an eighth of a cup to another quart, and a teaspoon to yet another quart. The quarter-cup mixture set up in 3 hours, while the other two took between 4 and 6 hours.

To determine when the mixture has become yogurt, the Knopps say "you just have to kind of notice to see when it has solidified." Mrs. Knopp stressed the need for using plain yogurt as the culture and added

that "if you have plenty of time, then just a teaspoon of it will do."

The fun begins once the yogurt is ready. "We like it with granola or blackstrap molasses," the Knopps explained. "You can also whip it up and drink it."

"You can eat it as a dessert, midday meal or an evening snack. We have used it as a substitute for salad dressing," Mr. Knopp said.

"I have used it to replace sour cream in recipes," his wife added. Even as they were describing the variety of yogurt uses, the oven buzzer sounded and two yogurt cakes were pulled from the oven and allowed to cool for a very short time. One of the cakes was quickly cut, slathered with yogurt and eaten to resounding approval from all tasters.

The yogurt and other healthy foods spread out in the Knopp kitchen are indicative of the energy spent paying attention to the physical and spiritual well-being of the many children, and friends who have flowed through the household over the years. When the couple -- he's 81 and she's 76 -- were first married, they purchased a hand mill and ground their own grain. Later they upgraded with a motor and they still have a stone burr grinder. Mrs. Knopp has always baked her own whole wheat bread for the family. At one time the Knopps raised goats and drank the milk.

These days the family includes 24 grandchildren. "The Lord has also given us eight wonderful daughter-in-laws," they said. "A lot of people call us Papa and Mama now. Some people don't even know our real names!"

Part of the reason for the flow of humanity through the household goes back to 1971 when Community Fellowship Church began meeting in the Knopp home. Mr. Knopp remains an elder in the church which continued to meet in the family home for 11 years.

The Knopps also founded Grace Christian School and still take an active interest in the school where 17 of their grandchildren now receive an education. Since 1971, the Knopps have maintained a guest book at their house to record the names of people who have passed through. They are currently on guest book number 12. "We figure that somewhere between 8,000 and 9,000 people have been in our home since 1971," Mr. Knopp said.

What it all boils down to is that the yogurt making and the whole wheat bread are just indicators of a lifestyle and an atmosphere that have been created in the Knopp home. Married for 47 years with nine sons, eight daughters-in-law and 24 grandchildren, the walls full of family pictures tell the real story.

"We've been blessed," the couple says with content smiles. ---

HOMEMADE YOGURT

1 quart of milk heated to 100 degrees
1 tablespoon plain yogurt.

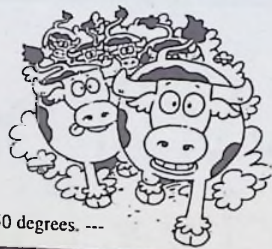
Stir well, put in glass bowl or four 8-ounce jars. Cover with cloth or lids and put into oven which has been preheated to 200 degrees F.

Immediately turn the oven off and leave the mixture in the oven overnight or about 10 hours. Remove, place in the refrigerator and use as needed. ---

YOGURT CAKE

1 cup of yogurt
2 cups of sugar
3 cups of flour
1 cup of oil
2 eggs
1 teaspoon baking powder
a pinch of salt
a little vanilla

Mix everything and bake until done at 350 degrees. ---



June is Dairy Month — Help yourself to a glass of milk

By THE NATIONAL DAIRY COUNCIL

This year marks the 58th celebration of June as Dairy Month. It started in 1937 by grocer organizations sponsoring "National Milk Month." By 1939, it became "Dairy Month," saluting America's dairy farmers and promoting the use of all dairy foods.

Milk continues to play a vital role in the health of the American public. Last year, the government's National Institutes of Health met to review current recommendations for

calcium intake. After analyzing the latest research, a panel of experts concluded that Americans need even more calcium in their diets.

The main reason is that osteoporosis, the "brittle bone disease," continues to be a major public health problem, and increasing calcium in the diet throughout life can help prevent it. Consider these facts from the National Osteoporosis Foundation:

Osteoporosis affects more than 25 mil-

lion people in the U.S., mostly women.

Economically, health care costs related to osteoporosis are estimated to increase from \$10 billion to \$60 billion by the year 2000.

Osteoporosis leads to more than 1.5 million bone fractures a year; of those with hip fractures, 20 percent will die within a year, and half of the survivors will never walk independently again.

The National Institutes of Health experts

recommended even more calcium than the current recommendations for all age groups, and noted, "the preferred source of calcium is through calcium-rich foods such as dairy products."

During this annual celebration of June as Dairy Month, everyone can be assured of the benefits of drinking milk and eating other calcium-rich dairy products. Help yourself to a glass of ice cold milk for good health's sake! ---

Virginia dairy facts

Virginia's dairy industry generated an estimated \$1.52 billion in economic activity last year.

There are 3,455 Virginians employed by milk product processors and by firms which retail and wholesale dairy products.

Total milk produced in the state last year amounted to 166 million gallons.

There are 795 commercial dairy farms in Virginia.

Last year there were 130,000 milk cows in the state.

Each dairy cow in the state of Virginia produced an average of 14,800 pounds or 6,884 quarts of milk last year.

How high is your dairy IQ?

1. How many gallons of milk does the average American drink in a year?
2. True or false: Butter has more fat than margarine.
3. Milk and milk products contribute how much calcium to the diet?
4. What was the first cheese made in America?
5. How many quarts of milk does the average cow produce in a year?
6. What is the most popular flavor of ice cream in the United States?
7. True or false: People with kidney stones should avoid dairy products.
8. True or false: People who have lactose intolerance cannot enjoy milk and milk products.
9. True or false: Skim milk has less calcium than whole milk.
10. How many food groups are there?
11. How much broccoli do you have to eat to get the same amount of calcium found in one glass of milk?
12. How many pounds of milk does it take to make one pound of whole milk cheese?
13. True or false: A cup of chocolate milk has about the same amount of sugar as a cup of orange juice.
14. What percentage of women actually meet their Recommended Dietary Allowance for calcium?
15. How many servings of milk and milk products should teenagers have every day?

ANSWERS: 1. 19 gallons. 2. Both have the same amount, about 4 grams per teaspoon. 3. 75 cups. 4. Cottage cheese was made in the valley of the Mayflower. Dairy plants began making it commercially in 1916. 5. 6,600 quarts. 6. Vanilla. 7. False. 8. False. Most people with lactose intolerance can still eat hard cheeses, yogurt, and lactose-reduced milk. 9. False. 10. Five. 11. 11. 12. 10 pounds. 13. True. 14. 15 percent. 15. 4 servings.

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Extension Service offers Alternative Agriculture options

By JEFF ISHEE

VERONA -- Virginia Cooperative Extension Office held a seminar April 8 at the Augusta County Government Center on four specific varieties of livestock that fall within the genre of "exotics."

Over 40 people came to the four-hour session that included topics on raising ostriches, emus, meat goats, and rabbits.

Inspection requirements

The first presentation of the day was given by Dr. Don Butts, Virginia Department of Agriculture. Dr. Butts covered the meat and poultry inspection requirements for all four of the species covered in the seminar. He told the audience, "The law addresses separate species specifically. Meat goats fall in the 'red meat' category, and must be inspected, unless it is classified as NOT FOR SALE, which means that it is for consumption by the live animals' owner, the owner's family, and invited guests."

He proceeded to advise the audience: "If the meat is for sale, inspection is required in either your own inspectable facility, or the animal must be taken for processing to an approved facility."

Rabbits, ostrich, and emu are not specifically covered by the law; hence they do not have to be inspected unless they are to be exported. In this case, the importing country will set the standards for inspection. This means that any farmer in Augusta County can legally raise rabbits, emu, and ostrich and sell them to the consumer directly or indirectly with no mandatory inspection required from the Department of Agriculture.

The only exception is that in some cases the Health Department may require that the uninspected meat be physically separated from the inspected meat.

Big bird -- big potential

The speaker for the session on emu raising was Cindy Hitchcock,

who owns the "Lord Willing Emu Farm" in Culpepper.

Cindy provided a wealth of information to the audience of amateur and prospective farmers of this exotic bird. Emus are the second largest birds in the world, and are known for their hardiness. She told the gathering: "The emu is a prehistoric animal, and if it can make it through the ice age, they can certainly withstand a few mistakes by an amateur emu rancher. Their toughness is well known. I've seen an emu kill a German shepherd, so predators are rarely a problem after the birds reach maturity."

Cindy started with eight birds (four yearling pairs) in December 1992. Now she has over 70 birds on one and a half acres. She advised the audience: "Presently, the market is a breeder's market, but we anticipate a slaughter market developing two to four years down the road. Emu meat is red meat, and looks like beef, tastes like beef, and cooks like beef. It is 97 percent fat free and has less cholesterol than chicken."

Currently, emu meat is retailing for \$18-\$23 per pound, and the demand far exceeds the supply. A bird is ready for slaughter in 12-14 months at 80 lbs., and dresses at about 50 percent. Valuable by-products from the animal include the hide and oil.

With any exotic livestock, the purchaser should always be cautious. "There have been investment scams, so farmers need to do their research. Emus are not a gamble if you know what you are doing. The demand is high, and should improve each year. France alone consumed over 50 tons of emu last year. In the 1920s breeder turkeys cost \$1,800-\$2,000 per pair. Now, turkey is a staple of the American diet. We want to take emus to the same level of production."

If you are interested in finding out more about emu farming, contact the Virginia Emu Association at 16643 Bleak Hill Rd., Culpeper, Va. 22701; or call 1-800-295-EMUS.

Goat meat popular ethnic fare

After a lunch break, the seminar continued with a session on meat goat production. Dr. Terry Gipson from Virginia State Uni-

versity gave an excellent presentation to the enthusiastic audience, which included folks from all around Augusta County.

Dr. Gipson informed the gathering: "In the U.S., over 300,000 head (of meat goats) were slaughtered in 1994. The trend is a rapidly building market, particularly in the Northeast ethnic areas. One surprising fact is that the U.S. imports goat meat from Australia and New Zealand. Last year, we imported over \$4.2 million of goat meat."

There are two slaughter plants for meat goats in Virginia at present; one in Front Royal and the other in Harrisonburg. Between 15,000-26,000 goats are slaughtered in Virginia annually. Dr. Gipson reported that "meat goats can be integrated easily into existing livestock enterprises. Cattle and goats go well together because of their mutually beneficial feeding habits."

Some of the greatest profits from selling goat meat come from direct marketing to the consumer. Enterprising farmers have sold goat sausage for up to \$12 per pound; however, Dr. Gipson advised "the repeat business for a product such as this is very poor. Our best market is the ethnic Middle Eastern, Hispanic, and Jamaican population. They demand fresh goat, and will pay well for it."

There are many popular meat goat breeds. "Actually," remarked Dr. Gipson, "all goats are meat goats. The current rage in the meat goat industry is the Boer goat, which sold a few years ago for \$6,000 each for breeder stock. Two months later it went up to \$35,000 each, and one buck sold for the unheard of price of \$95,000. Right now, a goat is a goat; and Boer goats are not worth the price."

Other, more practical, breeds for meat goat production include Spanish, myotonic, nubian bucks, brush, and even pygmy goats. Dr. Gipson recommended private breeders as a good source for acquiring meat goats. Prices fluctuate from \$18 for a yearling doe to \$175 for a Spanish buck.

As always, the best source for further information is the Extension Office. In Augusta County, call Rick Heidel at 245-5750. ---

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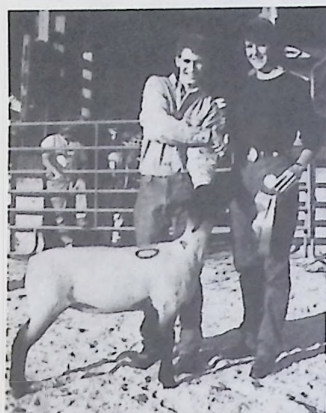
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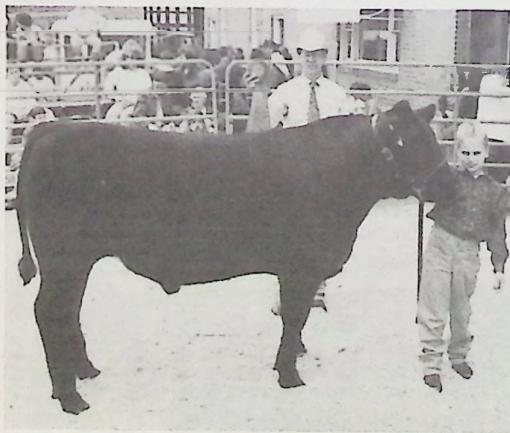
Lamb show judge Ruth McCall Boden congratulates Jason Michael of Mt. Solon on his Grand Champion single lamb.



Amy Trout of the Buffalo Gap High School FFA chapter with her Grand Champion pair of lambs



In photo above, Chris Curry shows the Grand Champion pair of hogs. In photo at left, Jason Michael shows the Grand Champion single hog.



In the photo at left, Judge Gary Minish congratulates Jillian Begoon of the Willing Workers 4-H Club for showing the Grand Champion steer which was also Champion of the show's heavy-middleweight division.

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON — The 50th annual 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show upheld the tradition of the previous 49 shows — each one is better than the one of the year before.

Judges of the lamb, hog, and steer exhibitions praised exhibitors for the quality livestock brought to the show, and, because of this, the judges had their work cut out for them in selecting the show's top animals.

In the lamb show held May 3, 126 single lambs and 57 pairs were exhibited. On May 4, 36 single hogs and 17 pairs were exhibited. The hog show was followed by the steer show with 109 steers competing for the Grand Champion purple ribbon. All events were held at Staunton Union Stockyard on New Hope Road.

Jason Michael of Mt. Solon took top honors in the lamb and market hog shows exhibiting the Grand Champion single lamb and both the Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion single market hogs. The son of Don and Frances Michael, Jason is a member of the Buffalo Gap High School FFA.

Another Buffalo Gap FFA member, Amy Trout, also carried away top honors. The daughter of James and Susan Trout of Swoope exhibited the Grand Champion pair of lambs and Reserve Grand Champion pair of hogs.

Buffalo Gap FFA continued to be the big winner of the morning's events with Chris Curry exhibiting the Grand Champion pair of hogs. Chris is the son of Charles and Betsy Curry of Mt. Solon.

A member of the R.L. Coffey 4-H Club gathered other top honors in the lamb exhibition. Amanda Hemp of Middlebrook, daughter of Michael and Katrina Hemp, exhibited the Reserve Grand Champion single lamb and the Reserve Grand Champion pair of lambs.

In the livestock show's finale event — the steer show — youths from opposite ends of the county collected top honors.

Jillian Begoon of Grottoes exhibited the Grand Champion steer and Carrie Heizer of Arbor Hill won honors for the Reserve Grand Champion steer. Jillian is a member of the Willing Workers 4-H Club and is the daughter of Tommy and Shelly Begoon. Carrie is an FFA member at Beverley Manor Middle School and is the daughter of R.G. and Nancy Heizer.

Ruth McCall Boden of Clearbrook judged the show's lamb exhibition and Cary Minish of Virginia Tech judged the hog and steer exhibitions. Both judges credited exhibitors with excellent preparation of their animals for the show.

"It makes it nice to judge a show with such high quality animals," said Mrs. Boden in selecting the Grand Champion lamb from the eight top placing lambs in the sheep exhibition.

"These are some of the better hogs I've seen in the state of Virginia," said Minish during a break in the judging of the market hogs. "You've always been strong in cattle. I'm glad to see they're picking it up in hogs, too."

"There are a lot of really good steers here today," he said before selecting the top animals in the steer show. "I compliment everyone involved in selecting these calves."

Head of the animal and poultry science department at Tech, Minish judged the hog and steer exhibition for the second consecutive year.

Mrs. Boden, who was making her first judging appearance at the event, holds a degree in animal science from Virginia Tech and was a member of the university's 1989 champion livestock judging team. A native of Clark County, she showed both steers and lambs in her county's annual livestock shows. Mrs. Boden is currently employed by Valley Farm Credit in Winchester, and her family is a noted sheep breeder in the northern part of the state.

The field of 139 lambs was one of the largest groups ever brought before judges in the history of the Market Animal Show. 4-H and FFA members are permitted to register three lambs for the event, and may exhibit two single lambs and one pair of lambs. It took almost five hours for the judge to work her way through the singles and pairs classes of lambs to find the top entries.

Amanda Hemp's lambs surfaced early in the event by winning Champion honors in two of the show's four divisions. Lambs exhibited by the Middlebrook youth took champion honors in both the lightweight division and heavy-middleweight division. It was Amanda's heavy-middleweight Champion lamb weighing 110 pounds which went on to claim the show's Reserve Grand Champion ribbon. The Dorset lambs were bred by Billy Wade of Greenville.

Jason Michael's Grand Champion entry won its way to the top by taking Champion honors in the show's heavyweight division. Another lamb exhibited by Jason claimed Reserve Champion honors in the light-middleweight division. The Suffolk lambs were raised by an Ohio breeder.

Champion lamb of the light-middleweight division was exhibited by Sheila Nycum of the Buffalo Gap FFA. Sheila is the daughter of James and Brenda Nycum of Swoope.

Reserve Champion of the lightweight division was exhibited by Scott Hickey, also an FFA member at Buffalo Gap. Scott is the son of David and Linda Hickey of Rt. 1, Staunton.

Michele Huffer, a lone 4-H member, exhibited the Reserve Champion lamb in the heavy-middleweight division. She is the daughter of Oakley and Diane Huffer of Swoope.

A member of the Springhill 4-H Club, Kim Brinkley, showed the Reserve Champion in the heavyweight division. Kim is the daughter of George and Debbie Brinkley of Churchville.

In selecting Jason's 120-pound Suffolk lamb as Grand Champion, Judge Boden noted that it was an "extremely firm handling" lamb which would "hang up a high quality carcass." The Reserve Grand Champion was "just the same," she said, noting that both lambs were trim enough to meet current market specifications for carcass quality.

Continued on page 9

Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton



Amanda Hemp, Reserve Grand Champion single lamb



Amanda Hemp, Reserve Grand Champion pair of lambs



In photo above at left, Jason Michael shows the Reserve Grand Champion single hog. In photo above at right, Amy Trout shows the Reserve Grand Champion pair of hogs.



Judge Minish holds up the Reserve Grand Champion ribbon for Carrie Heizer's 1,280-pound Angus-cross steer. Carrie's steer was also Champion of the show's heavy-weight division.



Rosalea Riley was a double-Champion winner at the Market Animal Show. She showed the lightweight division Champion, pictured here, and the light-middle-weight division champion.



Continued from page 8

Uniformity was the name of the game in the pair of lambs exhibition. The judge said she looked for all of the same qualities in the pairs of lambs as she did in the single lambs, but that lambs in pairs must be close to identical in their characteristics. She said lambs should be heavy muscled and long bodied. Because cuts of meat which come from the loin are the highest quality, Judge Boden said she looked for lambs with "long and deep loins." The judge placed a great deal of emphasis on trimness noting that lambs should be "trim but not bony." Neither should they be "spongy," a characteristic which she said was representative of too much fat.

The top pair of lambs in the show was selected by Mrs. Boden as being "two excellent market lambs." She said the pair of lambs exhibited by Amy Trout fit the bill of uniformity to take Grand Champion honors. The 115- and 120-pound Dorset lambs were bred by Eric Stogdale of Greenville.

"They match up very well," Mrs. Boden said. "They are good individually and twice as good as a pair."

In the show's hog exhibition, 4-H and FFA members competed in four classes of single hogs and two classes of pairs. Jason Michael's Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion hogs topped out of the middleweight classes.

Judge Minish said he was looking for the perfect combination of muscle and leanness in evaluating market hogs for the top prizes. He said he was looking for "good doing kind of hogs" which would yield the most total pounds of product.

The Grand Champion hog had a "lot of muscle," according to Minish, and was "expressively muscled." It was the hog which Minish said was the "most 12 o'clock" in its finish. He granted that the winner of the lightweight class of hogs was "super competition" for the Grand Champion. The heavy-middleweight hog was at about "12:15 on finish," according to Minish. He granted that the winner of the heavyweight class had the most "shapely ham" of the group, but the overall quality of the light-middleweight hog, which weighed 230 pounds, gave it the judge's nod for Grand Champion of the show.

In the pair of hogs competition, Minish was looking for more of what he saw in the singles' category.

"I'm trying to look for uniformity," he said before beginning the pairs judging. "I want the best combination and the most uniform muscle and trimness."

Judge Minish found what he was looking for in Chris Curry's pair of market hogs. He noted that the show's top two pairs of hogs were "really close" in his estimation, but that the Grand Champion pair, weighing 230 and 240 pounds, was "fresher and a tad bit leaner" than the Reserve Grand Champion pair.

Although Judge Minish complimented the Augusta County market hog exhibitors for bringing forth some of the best hogs he had seen "in Virginia," what he didn't know was that many of the hogs had been bought out-of-state. All of the show's top hogs were purchased from a Maryland breeder.

But in the steer show, it was Augusta County from start to finish. Both of the top steers were born and bred on Augusta County farms. When Jillian Begoan was

asked where she got her steer, she gave the obvious response: "Out of the field."

It took Judge Minish about 4 1/2 hours to make his way through four weight divisions of steers to find the Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion steers.

The Grand Champion, a 1,135-pound Chiangus-Maine cross steer, was raised on the Begoan family farm near Grottoes. Likewise was the case of Carrie Heizer's Reserve Grand Champion 1,280-pound 3/4 Angus, 1/4 Hereford steer which was raised on her family's farm at Arbor Hill.

Jillian's steer was the Champion of the show's heavy-middleweight division and Carrie's topped out the show's heavyweight division.

Judge Minish said the Grand Champion was the "thickest quartered" and the "freshest in his finish" of the show's top two steers.

"It's the right frame size and is very ideal in fat cover," he said.

He noted that the Reserve Grand Champion was "very similar in size and kind" and that the show's top two steers "fit well together."

Another steer exhibited by Carrie also excelled in competition. It took Reserve Champion honors in the lightweight division.

Rosalea Riley of Hebron was a double winner exhibiting Champion steers in both the lightweight and light-middleweight divisions. Rosalea is the daughter of Doug and Donna Riley of Rt. 1, Staunton. She is a member of the Livestock Judging 4-H Club.

Reserve Champion honors in the light-middleweight division went to a steer exhibited by Scott Buchanan, a member of the Riverheads FFA. He is the son of Eddie and Dreama Buchanan of Middlebrook.

Joining Jillian's steer in the heavy-middleweight winner's circle was a steer exhibited by her brother, Westley, which was the division's Reserve Champion. Westley is also a member of the Willing Workers 4-H Club.

Following Carrie Heizer's Champion entry in the heavyweight division was another Arbor Hill resident, Jonathan Coleman, who exhibited the Reserve Champion in that class. He is a member of the Beverley Manor 4-H Club and is the son of J.R. and Betty Lou Coleman of HCR 32, Staunton.

The Augusta County 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show is the largest of its kind held east of the Mississippi River. Sponsors of the annual two-day event are the Staunton-Augusta Chamber of Commerce and area Ruritan Clubs.

Serving as Master of Ceremonies for the show was June Cohron, a veterinarian and former show participant. Ringmaster for the lamb show was Mason Ware, a retired Augusta County agriculture instructor. Ribbon presentations for the lamb show were made by Sandra Stanwitz, executive director of the Staunton-Augusta Chamber of Commerce, and Russell Straub, Woodrow Wilson Ruritan District Governor.

Ringmaster for the hog and steer shows was Earl Reeves, a retired Augusta County agriculture instructor. Ribbon presentations to winners of the swine show were made by Roy T. Stephenson, Staunton City Councilman. Nick Collins, a member of the Churchville Ruritan Club presented ribbons to steer show exhibitors. —

See additional stories, photos, and results, pages 10-11

Exhibitors win \$100 showmanship awards

AC Staff Report

STAUNTON — Six Augusta County youth were presented \$100 U.S. Savings Bonds for being the top showmen at the 50th annual 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show held May 3 and 4 at Staunton Union Stockyard.

Brothers Matthew and Scott Hickey, of Rt. 1 Staunton, Emily Curry and Jason Michael, both of Mt. Solon, Jonathan Coleman of HCR 32, Staunton, and Craig Brown of 605 Loch Drive, Staunton, won the awards for the presentation of their animals in the lamb, hogs, and steer shows. It was the first year in which both junior and senior exhibitors of each species' show were recognized for the achievement. The savings bonds were sponsored by the Augusta Country newspaper.

"It was our intent to recognize 4-H and FFA members for their accomplishments in exhibiting their animals in the show ring," said Betty Jo Hamilton, publisher and editor of Augusta Country. "We wanted to challenge them to do their best in the ring in showing their livestock, and hope these awards will encourage the youngsters to spend sufficient time preparing their animals for the show in the years to come."

Judging for the showmanship awards was based on the manner in which livestock was prepared for showing and how the exhibitors performed in the show ring before the judges.

Ruth McCall Boden, judge of the lamb show, gave exhibitors some pointers on exhibiting lambs for a judge.

"Relax. Don't forget to look at your lamb," she said. "Set up the feet square, and keep an eye on the judge. Lambs should be clean and dry."

Many exhibitors use halters when showing lambs, and Mrs. Boden suggested that the halter be used to lead the animal around the ring. She noted that exhibitors should handle the lamb under the jaw at the neck when setting it up and holding it for the judge to examine.

"This gives you more control over your lamb," she said. The judge noted that exhibitors should pay as much attention to their appearance in the ring as their animals' appearances.

"You should be dressed neatly and wear some type of leather shoes, but definitely not sneakers or tennis shoes," she explained.

She selected Matthew Hickey as the champion junior showman and Scott Hickey as the champion senior showman in the lamb show. Matthew and Scott are the sons of David and Linda Hickey.

In Thursday morning's market hog show, it was under the scrutiny of Judge Gary Minish that exhibitors competed for the hog showmanship awards.

"I'm looking for who does the



MATTHEW HICKEY



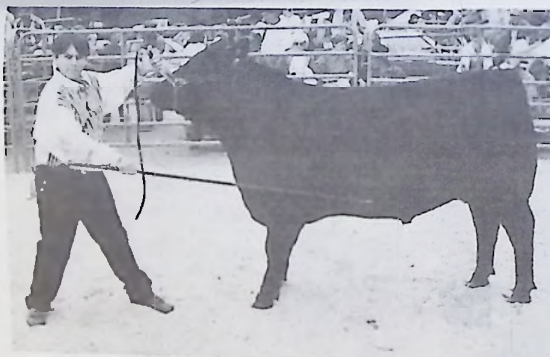
SCOTT HICKEY



EMILY CURRY



JASON MICHAEL



JONATHAN COLEMAN

best job of handling their hogs and does it in an easy, professional way," he said. Minish was looking for exhibitors who had "the most control" on their animals in the show ring.

"You can tell who's spent the most time with their pigs," he said as he prepared to name the showmanship winners.

Emily Curry was the champion junior showman, and Jason Michael was the champion senior showman in the market hog show. Emily is the daughter of Charles and Betsy Curry, and Jason is the son of Don and Frances Michael.

Minish again had his work cut out for him in selecting the showmanship winners in the steer show. His final decision went to Jonathan Coleman in the junior

division and Craig Brown in the senior division.

Steer exhibitors were faced with the task of leading their animals around the ring on command of the judge. When stopped they were required to use a show stick to set up the animals' feet squarely. Minish said that Jonathan and Craig did the



CRAIG BROWN

best job of leading and setting up their steers, keeping one eye on their steer and one eye on the judge at all times. He complimented the two exhibitors on their "easy manner" with the steers.

Jonathan is the son of J.R. and Betty Lou Coleman, and Craig is the son of Arnold and Susan Brown.

In addition to the \$100 savings bonds, exhibitors also received other awards for their showmanship efforts. The senior champion showman in the lamb show received a plaque donated by Mr. and Mrs. B.H. Wade Jr. of Greenville, and the junior lamb showman received a plaque donated by the Spotswood-Raphine Ruritan Club in memory of William H. McClure.

Senior champion showman in the market hog and steer shows received plaques from the show's sponsors, Augusta County Ruritan and the Staunton-Augusta Chamber of Commerce.

Placing second and third in showmanship for the junior division of the lamb show were Nick Nycum and Rosalea Riley. Second- and third-place winners in the senior division were Ashley Craun and Jason Michael.

Placing second and third in showmanship of the market hog show were Chris Curry and Amy Trout. In the steer show, Carrie Heizer and Jonathan Coleman took second- and third-place honors in overall showmanship competition. Neither the hog nor steer shows included separate showmanship contests for

junior competitors. Second- and third-place winners in the other shows received ribbons and \$10- and \$5-cash awards from the show's sponsors.

Junior competitors were age 13 and under. Senior competitors were age 14-19. —

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Show animals bring top dollar at sale

AC staff report

STAUNTON — Exhibitors of the 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show were rewarded for their efforts in raising their livestock by receiving top dollars from buyers at the sale held May 4 at the Staunton Union Stockyard.

The show's 120-pound Grand Champion lamb shown by Jason Michael was bought for \$5.25/lb. by Charlie Obaugh of Obaugh Pontiac-Buick-GMC-International of Staunton. The 110-pound Reserve Grand Champion lamb shown by Amanda Hemp was purchased by the Bank of Rockbridge at Greenville for \$4.25/lb. Jason's lamb netted \$630 and Amanda's brought \$467.50.

The Grand Champion pair of lambs shown by Amy Trout was purchased for \$2/lb. by Donald Cromer of Westwood Animal Hospital. The 235-pound pair of lambs netted \$470. Amanda Hemp's Reserve Grand Champion pair of lambs was split with one of them being sold as the Reserve Grand Champion single. The other 95-pound lamb of the pair brought \$2.90/lb. and was purchased by The Pink Cadillac Diner of Greenville for \$275.50.

Other lambs sold individually ranged in price from \$1.50 to \$3.70/lb. with most falling in the \$1.80-\$2.50 range. Floor price on the lambs, all Blue-Os, was 93 cents/lb.

In sales for the top market hogs, Jason Michael's Grand and Reserve Grand Champion single hogs brought \$2/lb. and \$1.20/lb., respectively. The 230-pound Grand Champion was purchased for \$460

by Allen Cattle Co., and the 235-pound Reserve Grand Champion brought \$282 and went to Transit Mixed Concrete of Staunton.

Chris Curry's Grand Champion pair of hogs weighing 470 pounds was purchased for 90 cents/lb. by H&R Custodial Services of Staunton. The pair of hogs sold for \$423. The Reserve Grand Champion pair of hogs shown by Amy Trout weighed 500 pounds and sold for 70 cents/lb. to Virginia Power employees of Augusta County. The pair of hogs brought a total of \$350.

Other hogs sold individually brought between \$1.25 and 80 cents/lb., with most falling in the 90-cent range. Floor price on the market hogs was 36.2 cents/lb. for those weighing 220-250 pounds and 33 cents/lb. for 200-215-pound hogs.

The Grand Champion steer shown by Jillian Begoon was purchased by Churchville IGA. The 1,135-pound Chiangus-Maine steer brought \$1.60/lb. for a total of \$1,816. Carrie Heizer's Reserve Grand Champion steer brought \$1.20/lb. and was purchased by H&R Custodial Services of Staunton. The 1,280-pound Angus cross went for a total of \$1,536.

The remainder of the steers ranged in price from \$1.27 to 75 cents/lb. with the majority falling in the 80- to 95-cent range. Floor price on the steers was 62.3 cents/lb. for those grading Choice and 58.1 cents/lb. for Select grades.

Total receipts for the sale amounted to \$139,493. Auctioneers were Robbie Reeves of Mt. Solon and Doug Moore of Dublin. —

Market Animal Show results

LAMB SHOW

SINGLES

DIVISION I, 95-105 LBS.

Class 1: 1. Amanda Hemp, RLC 4-H; 2. Jack Hinton, RLC 4-H; 3. Carrie Brown, AB 4-H; 4. Dayna Shiflett, BG FFA; 5. Josh Smith, RLC 4-H

Class 2: 1. Scott Hickey, BG FFA; 2. Jack Hinton, RLC 4-H; 3. Chris Curry, BG FFA; 4. Laura Grimm, RLC 4-H; 5. Victor McManaway, BG FFA

Class 3: 1. Jennifer Smith, RHS FFA; 2. Rosalea Riley, LJ 4-H; 3. G.G. Brinkley, SH 4-H; 4. Kelly Roller, WW 4-H; 5. Becky Napier, RLC 4-H

CHAMPION

Amanda Hemp

RESERVE CHAMPION

Scott Hickey

DIVISION II, 105-110 LBS.

Class 1: 1. Jason Michael, BG FFA; 2. Elizabeth Napier, RLC 4-H; 3. Laura Grimm, RLC 4-H; 4. Bryan Glass, WW 4-H; 5. Brandon Shreckhise, WW 4-H

Class 2: 1. Jonathan Coleman, AB 4-H; 2. Tonya Grimm, RLC 4-H; 3. Jason Via, WW 4-H; 4. Tommy Ullrich, SH 4-H; 5. Michele Huffer, Lone 4-H

Class 3: 1. Sheila Nycum, BG FFA; 2. Jonathan Riley, LJ 4-H; 3. Chad Blackwell, RHS FFA; 4. Brandon Shreckhise, WW 4-H; 5. Rosalea Riley, LJ 4-H

CHAMPION

Sheila Nycum

RESERVE CHAMPION

Jason Michael

DIVISION III, 110-120 LBS.

Class 1: 1. Amanda Hemp, RLC 4-H; 2. Jonathan Coleman, AB 4-H; 3. Nick Nycum, BG FFA; 4. Kim Brinkley, SH 4-H; 5. Tonya Grimm, RLC 4-H

Class 2: 1. Sheila Nycum, BG FFA; 2. Jonathan Riley, LJ 4-H; 3. Chris Pultz, RHS FFA; 4. Jason Shiflett, FD FFA; 5. Jason Roller, FD FFA

Class 3: 1. Michele Huffer, Lone 4-H; 2. Chris Pultz, RHS FFA; 3. Amy Trout, BG FFA; 4. Jason Shiflett, FD FFA; 5. Nick Nycum, BG FFA

CHAMPION

Amanda Hemp

RESERVE CHAMPION

Michele Huffer

DIVISION IV, 120-130 LBS.

Class 1: 1. Jason Michael, BG FFA; 2. Amy Trout, BG FFA; 3. Helen Griffin, SH 4-H; 4. Brian Vess, BMMS FFA; 5. Darby Hewitt, BG FFA

Class 2: 1. Matthew Hickey, BMMS FFA; 2. Morgan Croft, SMS FFA; 3. Helen Griffin, SH 4-H; 4. Julie Grimm, RLC 4-H; 5. Jon Roller, WW 4-H

Class 3: 1. Kim Brinkley, SH 4-H; 2. Morgan Croft, SMS FFA; 3. Jason Grimm, RHS FFA; 4. Jason Grimm, RHS FFA; 5. Jon Roller, WW 4-H

CHAMPION

Jason Michael

RESERVE CHAMPION

Kim Brinkley

GRAND CHAMPION

Jason Michael, Division IV Champion

RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION

Amanda Hemp, Division III Champion

PAIRS

CLASS 1, 190-205 LBS.

1. Amanda Hemp, RLC 4-H; 2. Laura Grimm, RLC 4-H; 3. Becky Napier, RLC 4-H; 4. Jack Hinton, RLC 4-H; 5. Chris Curry, BG FFA

CLASS 2, 205-210 LBS.

1. Bryan Glass, WW 4-H; 2. Tonya Grimm, RLC 4-H; 3. Doug Grimm, RLC 4-H; 4. Carrie Brown, AB 4-H; 5. Tom Ullrich, SH 4-H

CLASS 3, 210-220 LBS.

1. G.G. Brinkley, SH 4-H; 2. Rosalea Riley, LJ 4-H; 3. Brandon Shreckhise, WW 4-H; 4. Darby Hewitt, BG FFA; 5. Chad Blackwell, RHS FFA

CLASS 4, 220-230 LBS.

1. Jason Michael, BG FFA; 2. Sheila Nycum, BG FFA; 3. Jonathan Coleman, AB 4-H; 4. Monika Huffer, Lone 4-H; 5. Jonathan Riley, LJ 4-H

CLASS 5, 230-245 LBS.

1. Amy Trout, BG FFA; 2. Chris Pultz, RHS FFA; 3. Helen Griffin, SH 4-H; 4. Matthew Hickey, BMMS FFA; 5. Kim Brinkley, SH 4-H

CLASS 6, 240-260 LBS.

1. Morgan Croft, SMS FFA; 2. Jason Grimm, RHS FFA; 3. Jon Roller, WW 4-H; 4. Julie Grimm, RLC 4-H; 5. Scott Buchanan, RHS FFA

GRAND CHAMPION

Amy Trout, Class 5 winner

RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION

Amanda Hemp, Class 1 winner

Junior Showmanship: 1. Matthew

Hickey, BMMS FFA; 2. Nick Nycum, BG FFA; 3. Rosalea Riley, LJ 4-H

Senior Showmanship: 1. Scott

Hickey, BG FFA; 2. Ashley Craun, FD FFA; 3. Jason Michael, BG FFA

HOG SHOW

SINGLES

CLASS 1, 200-220 LBS.

1. Chris Curry, BG FFA; 2. Emily Curry, NR 4-H; 3. Troy Lawson, BG FFA; 4. Jonathan Riley, LJ 4-H; 5. Nick Nycum, BG FFA

CLASS 2, 225-230 LBS.

1. Jason Michael, BG FFA; 2. Emily Curry, NR 4-H; 3. Jonathan Riley, LJ 4-H; 4. Scott Hickey, BG FFA; 5. Victor McManaway, BG FFA

CLASS 3, 230-245 LBS.

1. Jason Michael, BG FFA; 2. Chris Curry, BG FFA; 3. Jillian Begoon, WW 4-H; 4. Rosalea Riley, LJ 4-H; 5. J.T. Begoon, WW 4-H

CLASS 4, 250 LBS.

1. Troy Lawson, BG FFA; 2. Amy Trout, BG FFA; 3. Wes Begoon, WW 4-H; 4. Amy Trout, BG FFA; 5. Wes Begoon, WW 4-H

GRAND CHAMPION

Jason Michael, Class 2 winner

RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION

Jason Michael, Class 3 winner

PAIRS

CLASS 1, 425-470 LBS.

1. Jason Michael, BG FFA; 2. Jillian Begoon, WW 4-H; 3. Emily Curry, NR 4-H; 4. Victor McManaway, BG FFA; 5. Jonathan Riley, LJ 4-H

CLASS 2, 470-500 LBS.

1. Chris Curry, BG FFA; 2. Amy Trout, BG FFA; 3. Troy Lawson, BG FFA; 4. Wes Begoon, WW 4-H; 5. J.T. Begoon, WW 4-H

GRAND CHAMPION

Chris Curry

RESERVE CHAMPION

Amy Trout

Junior Showmanship — Emily

Trout, NR 4-H; Senior Showmanship — Jason Michael, BG FFA

STEER SHOW

DIVISION I, 945-1,075 LBS.

Class 1: 1. William Sheets, Lone 4-H; 2. Arbra Armstrong, RLC 4-H; 3. Josh Burner, BG FFA; 4. Eric Montgomery, RHS FFA; 5. Jared Heip, RHS FFA

CLASS 2: 1. Ryan Miller, BMMS FFA;

2. Nick Hildebrand, BMMS FFA; 3. Amy Trout, BG FFA; 4. Jeff Michael, FD FFA; 5. Philip Myrtle, BMMS FFA

CLASS 3: 1. Rosalea Riley, LJ 4-H; 2.

Carrie Heizer, BMMS FFA; 3. Josh Henderson, SDM FFA; 4. Darren Howdyshe, NR 4-H; 5. Josh Burtner, BG FFA

CHAMPION

Rosalea Riley

RESERVE CHAMPION

Carrie Heizer

DIVISION II, 1,080-1,130 LBS.

Class 1: 1. Rosalea Riley, LJ 4-H; 2. Amy Trout, BG FFA; 3. Chris Curry, BG FFA; 4. Neal Buchanan, RLC 4-H; 5. Jonathan Riley, LJ 4-H

CLASS 2: 1. Wes Rumsel, FD FFA;

2. Emily Curry, NR 4-H; 3. Andrew Tutwiler, FD FFA; 4. Austin Johnston, RLC 4-H; 5. James East, RLC 4-H

CLASS 3: 1. Scott Buchanan, RHS FFA;

2. Lindsey McCune, SDM FFA; 3. Byron Phillips, Dairy 4-H; 4. Ryan Miller, BMMS FFA; 5. Phillip Howell, RHS FFA

CHAMPION

Rosalea Riley

RESERVE CHAMPION

Scott Buchanan

DIVISION III, 1,135-1,225 LBS.

Class 1: 1. Jillian Begoon, WW 4-H; 2. Wes Begoon, WW 4-H; 3. Jeremy Hunter, BMMS FFA; 4. Scott Buchanan, RHS FFA; 5. Bryan Shomo, BMMS FFA

CLASS 2: 1. Todd Moss, FD FFA; 2.

Scott Morris, BG FFA; 3. Devin Michael, Lone 4-H; 4. Dixie Stoutamyer, BMMS FFA; 5. Tommy Thornton, FD FFA

CLASS 3: 1. Wes Marshall, WW 4-H;

2. Bryan Shomo, BMMS FFA; 3. Ashley Kiracofe, NR 4-H; 4. Craig Brown, RHS FFA; 5. Jennifer Smith, RHS FFA

CHAMPION

Jillian Begoon

RESERVE CHAMPION

Wes Begoon

DIVISION IV, 1,230-1,495 LBS.

Class 1: 1. Chris Wonderley, WW 4-H; 2. Scott Hickey, BG FFA; 3. Chad Teeter, BG FFA; 4. John Dean, SDM FFA; 5. Greg Buchanan, RHS FFA

CLASS 2: 1. Carrie Heizer, BMMS FFA;

2. Jonathan Coleman, BM 4-H; 3. Morgan Croft, SMS FFA; 4. Chris Pultz, RHS FFA; 5. Ashley Craun, FD FFA

CLASS 3: 1. Jonathan Coleman, BM 4-H;

2. Troy Lawson, BG FFA; 3. Lindsey McCune, SDM FFA; 4. William Woods Jr., BMMS FFA; 5. Chad Blackwell, RHS FFA

CHAMPION

Carrie Heizer

RESERVE CHAMPION

Jonathan Coleman

GRAND CHAMPION

Jillian Begoon, Division III Champion

RESERVE CHAMPION

Carrie Heizer, Division IV Champion

Junior Showmanship: 1. Jonathan

Coleman, BM 4-H; 2. Carrie Heizer, BMMS FFA; 3. Chris Wonderley, WW 4-H

Overall Showmanship: 1. Craig

Brown, RHS FFA; 2. Carrie Heizer, BMMS FFA; 3. Jonathan Coleman, BM 4-H ---

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A doo-wah-diddy-diddy-doo-doo job

Down on the farm we're thinking about jobs we never seem to get finished — one such job being the repair and maintenance of fences.

Fence building and fence repair are annual spring chores. These are tasks which normally go ignored during winter months primarily because the weather is not conducive to spending a lot of time stretching wire and nailing staples. There's also not much time during the winter months to devote to fence repairs. Most of the time in these months is spent feeding livestock.

Neither is there the need in winter for concern about keeping livestock out of crop fields. So, for the most part, fences go ignored by two-legged creatures down on the farm during the winter months.

However, four-legged creatures do not ignore fences during the winter months. If they're allowed to graze over crop fields — hay or corn — in the fall and winter, they consider them fair game any time they get hungry. And if they can find a short cut into one of these fields by pushing through a sagging fence, they'll surely do it to avoid taking the long way around and through a gate.

Another factor which affects the durability of fences occurs in the late winter and early spring. This is when cattle start shedding their heavy winter coats.

Almost any day in March you're likely to see "Old Bossy" out there giving herself a good neck rub or side rub or back end rub up against some fence. And once a



Once the wire was stretched, steel posts were driven into place.

Down on the farm

By Betty Jo Hamilton



Using my trusty Red-D-Rod fence stretcher, I spliced pieces of barbed wire together. You'll notice I'm wearing gloves when handling the stretcher connected to the barbed wire. The barbs are razor sharp and even cut through the heavy cowhide gloves I was wearing.

Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton

1,000-pound cow starts rubbing, even the best fence is going to give way under the pressure.

There are, too, other factors in winter which affect the condition of fences. Like if someone rolls a big bale of hay down a hill backwards so it doesn't unroll at all and then comes to rest at the bottom of the hill against a fence. Fifty hungry cows attacking a roll of hay against a fence will almost always result in the fence being torn down by the cattle in their efforts to get to the hay.

How could someone let a bale of hay roll backwards down a hill? Why wouldn't that person move the unrolled bale away from the fence so the cattle wouldn't tear it down? Well, these are good questions, but we won't put anyone on the spot by making them respond. (O.K., O.K., so the bale was all mashed down and I couldn't tell which way it was supposed to roll, and it was really freezing cold and I didn't feel like taking the time to go get the tractor to move the bale. Are you satisfied now?)

At any rate, through the winter fences have practically fallen down or, in some cases, are non-existent. Of primary concern are fences around fields which will be planted in corn.

As far as the production of corn is concerned, there are very few certainties. You're never sure what kind of kill you'll get on the weeds and grass. You're never sure when it's the best time to apply the fer-

tilizer. You're never sure if it's best to plant right after rain or right before rain. You're never sure if the soil is quite the right temperature to make the seed germinate. But with all these uncertainties, there is one certainty. Corn won't grow if cows can get in the field.

With all these factors taken into account, corn planting time approached this year with my father worried — with good reason — about fences around the corn fields.

"We've got to get those fences fixed before we can do anything in those fields," he kept alerting me.

My brother-in-law had already repaired that annoying spot where the cattle had torn down the fence while eating the bale of hay. I figured with that spot fixed, the rest of the fence probably needed mostly a staple here and there to make it cow-proof — if there is such a thing.

Finally the weather began to cooperate, giving me some days which were moderate enough to be outside the majority of the day. As grass began growing in the pastures, the chore of daily feeding was reduced to less than an hour in the morning. Evening feeding was eliminated entirely. (HOO-RAY!)

Early on a Saturday morning I finished what minor feeding there was to be done, and then set my mind to the fence repair. I loaded up the truck with the supplies I would need — steel posts, post driver, fence stretcher, digging irons, a bale of barbed wire, wire pliers, hatchet, staples, staple puller, straight wire — let's see now, what am I forgetting, oh yes, — a logging chain, a come-along, and some post clips. I was ready. So I set out for a day of repairing the fence.

Optimistically I was intent on devoting that entire day to the repair of fences around two corn fields.

"I'll just get up there and get to it and get this fence fixing problem out of the way once and for all," I told myself.

Optimism faded into grim realism when I drove along a section of fence on the first of the two fields. There was my brother-in-law's fine work — three steel posts driven solidly into the ground with four strands of barbed wire stretched tightly against them. It was a great patch job. Unfortunately, 15 yards in either direction of this superb patch were holes big enough to drive a tractor trailer through. In fact, it looked as if someone HAD driven a tractor trailer through the fence.

"Well, I might as well start at the beginning," I told myself and drove to the field's southeastern corner to start with my fence repairing chore.

I suppose I might note that we don't build fence but about every 50 years — less frequently if we can avoid it. And when I say, "build fence," I mean completely tear out the old fence, set new posts, and stretch new woven wire. This is

here, a steel post there. As the years progress, we might occasionally set a new post or two in problem areas, and then continue the practice of stretching more barbed wire to discourage the cows from putting too much pressure on the fence. The fence I was repairing — if we did carbon dating on some of the wooden posts — would certainly date back to the turn of the century... I won't say which century. My task, as I evaluated it early on, would be one of connecting spots which had been patched so that the fence might endure perhaps a few more years.

At first glance, I thought I would be stretching a lot of new barbed wire. On closer investigation, however, I saw that existing barbed wire patches were fairly recent and needed mostly to be restretched. A lot of the wooden posts had rotted off at the ground. Some of these I removed and replaced with steel posts. I had worked for a couple hours that Saturday morning when my father came along to provide some supervisory and advisory guidance.

"This fence is real good on this side," I was told as I spliced barbed wire across a six-foot hole. "The other side is where it's bad."

"Well, I'm just going to keep working around it. It all looks pretty bad to me," I said.

Through the morning I worked and worked. Since I had started on the side of the field where my brother-in-law had made his repair, I kept expecting to make my way to that spot. I would work along a 10-yard section of the fence and then move on a little further. Back and forth, pulling

staples, driving steel posts, restretching barbed wire, splicing in new wire, moving old wire, adjusting the spacing between wires, pushing over old rotten posts — I kept working.

Some of the patch work which had been done in advance of my effort seemed very erratic. A wire would run along the bottom of the fence then start sloping up until it became the top of the fence and vice versa. I eventually decided that whoever had engineered the patch jobs had wasted their talents in

this fashion. So twisted and convoluted was the pattern of fence repair that it occurred to me the individual who had created this mayhem might be more suited to writing a movie script for the umpteenth sequel to "Friday the 13th." But then, absolute order does not predetermine the adequacy of a fence.

In order to stop cattle from going through a fence, it's not al-

Using pliers and wire clips, the barbed wire is fastened to steel posts.



when we have some stalwart chaps with large necks come in to do the job. They must be stalwart and they must have large necks, because fence building is incredibly hard work.

In the 50-year interval between these fence buildings, we maintain fences with a strand of barbed wire

Continued on page 13

— Continued from page 12 —

ways necessary to have a perfect wall of wire to restrain them. Sometimes if they are presented with a tangle of wires which they can't figure out, they won't attempt to go through the fence. Occasionally I would come upon sections of fence which were so confusing I couldn't figure out how to fix them. These areas were confusing enough to the cattle that they hadn't been able to figure out how to break through them. I decided if I couldn't figure out how to fix a section of fence, the cattle probably couldn't figure out how to get through the fence.

By noon on that Saturday, I still had not reached my brother-in-law's patch. In fact, it was not even yet in sight. Late that afternoon, I finally made it to that point — keep in mind that I'm still working on the first side of fence along one of two fields. Obviously, this chore was taking more time than I had anticipated.

"How much did you get done?" my father asked when I dragged in the house late that evening.

"I got down to the corner on the first side," I said wearily.

"Well, you did real good if you got that much done," he said.

That Saturday's worth of work gave me an indication of the time I would need to devote to the fence repair chore in order to complete it. I realized that a day or two of intensive work was not going to do it, and that I would need to keep up with other farm chores as time moved on.

As hours turned into days, the need to work the fields and prepare them for corn planting became more pressing. I enlisted the help of my brother-in-law for this chore. His time on the tractor working up the fields gave him the opportunity to evaluate my fence repair efforts.

"I can't believe how many iron posts you're using," he said after seeing some of my work. "Does your daddy know how many posts you've used?"

His concern for the monetary expense involved in the fence repair was a concern of mine also. But my fervor in repairing the fence was fueled by other considerations. As I worked, and seeing the serious state of disrepair of the fence, I recalled the number of times the cattle had gotten into the corn...and no wonder. And they always get in it at the most inconvenient times. How many times have we been called at 7 a.m. on a Sun-

day morning to get cows out of the corn field? And how many times have we been called late in the evening — just after I've loosened the dirt of a day's work from my skin — to chase cows out of a corn field? My silent vow was that this would not be the case this year.

Too, I recalled the damage cattle had wreaked on a perfectly good field of corn. It costs more than \$100 an acre to plant corn. Losing the potential yield of any corn eaten by cattle knocks a big hole in production capabilities. Wouldn't it be better to spend the money to repair the fence before the cattle have the opportunity to destroy the corn?

And so my fence repair work went on. Day after day I returned to work on the fence. Some days I would set aside entirely to devote to this effort. But even on these days, I was often thwarted.

One morning I arose early to get a good start. Before I could get past my front gate, however, I saw we had a cow in the neighbor's meadow, sheep in his pasture, a cow in our hayfield, and a calf out in the road. Chasing all these creatures back to their respective fields and "patching" fences to keep these critters from roaming again delayed my "real fence repairing" to well past midmorning on that day.

A few days later I was still working on the fence when my brother-in-law came to start planting corn.

By this time I was working toward the northwestern corner of the first field. Again he gave me a cautionary word.

"I can't believe how many of those steel posts you're using," he said, covering his ears with his hands as if to shield his eardrums



Some existing wooden posts were still good enough to hold staples. This one had been set fairly recently, unlike others of this variety which I think may pre-date the Civil War.

from the screams of the fiscally wary farmer. "It looks good, but I can't believe how many of those posts you're using."

A few days later he asked again about the steel posts.

"What does your daddy say about using all those steel posts?" my brother-in-law asked.

"He said, 'Looks like that oughta hold 'em,'" I reported of my father's evaluation that day of my fence repair efforts.

The use of the steel posts to repair the fence also drew comment from a neighbor.

"I wished I'd bought stock in steel posts," he said, when he saw the pile I had on the back of the pick-up.

Critics' comments aside, I was undaunted. By this time I had also used up one bale of barbed wire and opened the second. It could be said, I suppose, that I had become possessed — and perhaps obsessed — with the repair of the fence.

My brother-in-law also criticized me for playing the truck radio while I worked.

"We were never allowed to do that," he said. "It'll run the battery down."

But I determined if I was sentenced to countless days of hard labor in fence repair at least I might be able to listen to the radio.

In fact I worked on the fence long enough to realize that the "Golden Oldies" station to which I was listening uses a tape loop of about 100 songs. After a number of days working on the fence and with little else than the fence and the radio to keep me in touch with reality, I was soon considering some of life's cold, hard questions.

I found myself wondering what it would be like to catch the last train to Clarksville. And why Clarksville? Why not Paducah or

Wyalusing or Dubuque? And has anybody ever caught the last train to Staunton?

And what about Leroy Brown? What was it that made him bad? And why was Johnny B. so good? If we know what happens when there's a bad moon rising, what happens when there's a good moon rising? If you went to the doctor complaining of a fever and he prescribed good lovin' as the cure, wouldn't you raise an eyebrow?

And what did the doo-wah-diddy-diddy-dum-diddy-doo-doo do to make my baby fall in love with me? And when I woke up this morning, why were you on my mind? And what was it about the Tallahatchee Bridge that made Billy Joe McCallister jump? If E-mail existed 30 years ago, would the recording "P.S. I Love You" ever have been made?

Just as it seemed I would go up in smoke with a hunk-a hunk-a bum-in' love, I fastened the last clip onto the last steel post around the last strand of barbed wire. Thirteen days, 115 steel posts, and 3,400 feet of barbed wire later, I was ready to call my work on the fence repair project complete. I felt ready to skip the light fandango and turn cartwheels 'cross the floor. By then I had become one with Diana Ross and the Supremes as we sang: "Let me be! Set me free!"

"How much did you get done today?" my father asked me that evening.

"I finished," I said triumphantly, although a little weakly.

"You finished?" he asked doubtfully.

"I'm finished," I said and added: "At least until one of those cows pushes her big 'ol head through and starts stretching and rubbing."

Yes, I was finished. Having worked my way along some 6,300 feet of fence — that's 21 football fields placed end to end — I certainly felt finished. I had bought even more steel posts than my father had stocked up with in the beginning. I had bought and opened a third bale of barbed wire. I had stapled and clipped wire to posts. I had stretched wire to wire, wire to posts, wire to nothing (in some places).

So the fence repair job is finished. Still I know that one day this summer some cow will stick her head through the fence to get hold of a long blade of grass. Then she'll start rubbing her neck against the wire to give herself a good scratch.

That's when some of that old brittle barbed wire I restretched will break — ka-SNIP, ka-SNAP — and some of those staples I pounded into rotted posts will pull out — ka-PING, ka-PONG — and with just a little more effort "Old Bossy" will be eating the top out of a waist-high corn plant.

Although we say we're finished repairing fence down on the farm, we two-legged creatures know it won't be long before the four-legged creatures have us out stretching barbed wire again. —



All done...but will it stop the cows?

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NCA president: Consumer reaping benefits of cattle surpluses

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON — Consumers will reap the benefits of existing surpluses in the beef cattle industry, according to the president of the National Cattlemen's Association.

NCA President Bob Drake of Davis, Okla., attended the Region I NCA meeting held recently in Staunton and said the cattle industry is currently on the down side of a traditional supply and demand cycle. It is a time which has cattle producers seeing bare bones while consumers are enjoying a beef bonanza.

"We have a lot of cattle coming to market now," Drake said. He noted that the build up of the nation's cattle herd began in 1990, and that the bubble of production burst in 1995. The oversupply of cattle will continue into 1997, according to Drake.

"This is a great opportunity for consumers," he said, noting that an oversupply of beef will cause prices to drop at the meat case. "This translates into prices that are favorable for the consumer, and I hope that the consumer will take advantage of this."

The cattle industry has always been cyclical, according to Drake.

"We have yet to be able to break the cycle," he said. The economics of supply and demand dictate prices in the sale ring. Although cattle producers are turning out more beef than existing markets can move, Drake said there are areas of expansion opening up for the beef industry.

"The most promising area is the export market," Drake noted. "There have been dramatic increases in the market to Japan and there is the possibility of double digit increases in Korea this year." Although the market in Mexico has collapsed due to economic conditions there, Drake said he is hopeful the European market will open up for the beef industry.

Drake, who owns a 1,000-cow Angus seedstock operation, said cattle producers must deliver a product which has "more taste and less waste." He said genetics may be the most important issue facing cattle producers today.

"We must change the genetic makeup of animals," he said, to achieve the "more taste, less waste" product. "We've got to be able to serve what the consumer wants."

Industry shines at Virginia Beef Expo

By NANCY SORRELLS

HARRISONBURG -- It was a weekend when show sticks replaced walking sticks, rope belts and western shirts were the attire of choice, and the rural traditions of farm families were passed on to another generation.

For three days in April, the 21st through the 23rd, farmers from all along the East Coast gathered at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds just south of Harrisonburg in a bovine celebration at the 1995 Virginia Beef Expo.

Inside the pavilions and barns and outside on the grounds, cattle dealers and farmers met and talked and traded and bargained. All the while, youngsters soaked in the weekend's events as they prepared to take the beef industry into the 21st century.

The trade show in the exhibit hall was a prime example of the industries related to and affected by the beef industry. Feed companies, veterinary suppliers, fencing manufacturers and finance companies were all represented among the 50 booths. In addition, clothing business people, signmakers and agriculture-related journalists met and talked to the visitors who walked through the hall.

The grounds surrounding the exhibit hall were reserved for the equipment salesmen who touted the newest marvels in chutes, automatic waterers, trailers, tractors and pens.

But the real action for the weekend took place in the barns, in the fields, and under the tents. There a Riverheads group won a haystacking contest on Friday, and a Rockbridge 4-H team of teenagers took home top honors in the cattle working contest on Saturday.

The Riverheads team of Greg Buchanan, Phillip Howell, and Jennifer Smith won first place in

Beef cattle production:

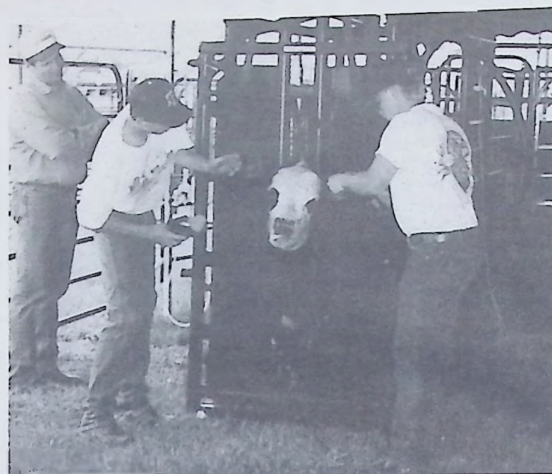
The finished product comes first

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON — What comes last should come first.

Cattle producers attending the Region I National Cattlemen's Association meeting held April 19 and 20 at Holiday Inn learned their first concern in producing beef should be their finished product.

"The days are gone when we can raise anything we please," said Fred Williams, a livestock specialist with the United States Department of Agriculture. Williams, along with Tom Taylor of Taylor Packing Co. in Wyalusing, Pa., and Dallas Horton of Horton Cattle Co. in Fort Collins, Colo., formed a panel at the Region I meeting. "What's Ahead for the Cattle Business in the Year 2000?" was the question addressed by panel participants. As Williams, Taylor, and Horton



Bill McKinnon, Virginia Tech livestock specialist, looks on as Nathan Deacon, left, and Travis Black of the Rockbridge junior cattle working team apply repellant ear tags to a heifer. The Rockbridge team, which also included Susanne Potter, won the competition which was part of the Virginia Beef Expo. See related photo, page 19.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

the haystacking contest. Second place was won by the team of Brian Garber, Vanessa Lam, and Andrew Tutwiler of Fort Defiance.

In the forage knowledge contest, adult winners were Darrell Short of Stanley, first; Waldo Whistelman of Greenville, second; and Steve Nuss of Greenville, third.

The youth cattle working contest featured eight teams of junior farmers (three on each team) each of which pitted its skills against three heifers and the clock in the competition.

Each group of teens had to move the cattle one-by-one through the chute while properly performing five procedures: administering two vaccines, injecting a growth im-

plant, placing fly-repellant tags in the ears, and dosing the animals with dewormer.

Although time was important, the team of veterinary judges placed more emphasis on the way each group worked with the cattle in a safe and efficient manner. Prior to entering the ring, each team had to complete a worksheet which showed an understanding of the proper procedures necessary for administering the medicines.

The contest also served as important experience in their future lives as farmers, and at the conclusion of the contest, the teams were critiqued on their performance with the animals. When all was said and done, the Rockbridge team of Susanne Potter,

Nathan Deacon, and Travis Black were the winners.

When the draw from contests and demonstrations was through, the hustle and bustle of activity shifted to the interiors of the huge showbarns where approximately 800 cattle were on the grounds for sales, shows, and displays. Throughout the weekend, cattle were shampooed, blow-dried, coifed and groomed in preparation for the expo's numerous shows. In between, a row of booths offered literature on such breeds as the shaggy-haired highland cattle, the white Charolais, and the tried-and-true shorthorn.

At noon on Saturday, some of the best bovines in the East were offered for sale at the sixth annual Commonwealth Sales Review. In a fast-paced twang, the auctioneer lauded the merits of each of the animals and incited the weathered farmers to improve their herds with the likes of the animals offered on the auction block.

"This one's as hard as a new red apple," the auctioneer sang as he described a red Angus bull who weighed 78 pounds at birth and now, at 11 months of age, tipped the scales at 1,475 pounds. In eight sales of purebred cattle, the seedstock for tomorrow's herds, 333 head were sold, grossing \$498,245 or \$1,496 a head. The commercial replacement heifer sale was a success as 197 head grossed \$118,870 to average \$603.

Between the auctions, junior shows and three-days worth of demonstrations on farm safety and forage knowledge, the beef industry insured itself a place in the farming of tomorrow. ---

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head of cattle and Taylor buys 350,000 cattle annually. He explained that the red meat market is divided into two segments, domestic and international.

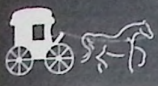
The domestic meat market to which Taylor sells includes supermarkets, restaurants, and institutions. He noted that beef sold to these entities is normally Choice grade from 550- to 700-pound carcasses. Primary characteristics considered by these consumers are taste, tenderness, and value.

A growth area in the domestic market can be found in restaurants across the nation, according to Taylor.

"Eating out is becoming more popular," he said. "Forty-seven percent of beef consumed in the United States is consumed outside the home."

The international market for beef has increased dramatically in recent years, according to Taylor.

See BEEF, page 24



Yesterday once more



'Neither rain nor sleet nor dark of night...'

Mail carrier made rounds with horse and buggy

By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK — There was a time in the memory of a few residents of southern Augusta County when the mail and the newspapers were delivered with a horse and buggy and a whiff of tobacco smoke.

For almost 30 years — despite rain and sleet and blizzards — John E. Holtz delivered the mail to folks around Middlebrook. From February 16, 1907 until February 27, 1937 Holtz logged about 200,000 miles delivering the mail along the Middlebrook route. Many letters and newspapers were brought to rural mailboxes during those days by horse and wagon.

"My father started delivering the mail in 1907 and I was born in 1908, so I don't remember him ever having any other job," Holtz' daughter, Madeline Hanger of Staunton, remembers. "I remember he got up early in the morning and started on his mail route. He was always the first one up and made the fires. He got home around four in the evening when he delivered with a horse and around 2 when he switched to a car," she added.

According to the family story, two

young men took the postal examination in 1907, and the one with the highest score earned the right to deliver the mail on the Middlebrook route. "My daddy made the highest grade," Madeline proudly noted of the outcome that turned her father into a mail carrier.

Becoming the Middlebrook mail carrier meant earning \$60 a month, delivering mail along a 22-mile round-trip route, and paying your own expenses which included supplying the horse and wagon to deliver the mail. Always one to tinker and build things, Holtz designed a horse-drawn spring wagon that looked "like a big box," according to Dick Cason, a resident of the area who is now deceased.

Cason's recollections a few years ago of the Holtz mail wagon described a vehicle stripped down to the running gears with a glass-fronted box in which the driver sat. "He had a slot under the glass that the lines came through so he could drive the horse. (He) had a sliding door in the glass door to put the papers and mail in the boxes," Cason remembered.

Back in 1918, another of the Middlebrook mail carrier's six children, Gertrude, pulled out her new Kodak



In this 1918 photograph, John E. Holtz stands next to his mail wagon. In the hitch is Prince, the blind horse which pulled Holtz' rig for many years along the Middlebrook rural route.

Photo courtesy Gertrude Hawkins

camera and snapped a picture of Poppa Holtz standing up straight and proud next to his horse and mail wagon. The mustached man was a familiar sight six days a week along the back roads of the area.

As Holtz drove along, he puffed on his pipe, something he was rarely without according to Madeline. Cason recalled that many residents along the route knew Holtz was coming because they got a whiff of tobacco smoke.

Although people were not supposed to ride with Holtz on his route, Madeline recalls that her brother Oscar sometimes accompanied their father and helped deliver the mail.

The biggest helper Holtz had, however, was Prince, a blind white horse who was as gentle as a lamb and knew the mail route as well as his driver, according to Holtz' daughters. "Prince was just an awful nice horse even though he was blind," remembers 93-year-old Gertrude Hawkins of Staunton who is the daughter who snapped the photo of her father and Prince years ago.

"He learned where to stop and when Poppa would get close, Prince would slow down and get right over," she says. Gertrude also remembered how Prince could find his way from his stable in Middlebrook down the back alley to the creek for water.

Prince was occasionally joined by another horse on the mail route when Holtz would hitch up other people's horses to tame them down, according to

Gertrude. When her father switched over to an automobile to carry his mail he "sold Prince, the wagon, and harness to a bunch of children above Greenville to use to go to school," she added.

Back in the days when Holtz carried the mail by buggy, the winters were often filled with snow and the highway crews were slow to clear the roads. "He'd go around for weeks at a time in a sleigh," Madeline recalls of her father's work. "The snow would be as high as the fences at times above Middlebrook."

During his 30-year stint with the postal service, Holtz also spent four years delivering the mail at Mint Spring. He was transferred there, delivered that route for four years, and was then transferred back to Middlebrook where he finished out his career.

Holtz, an Augusta County native, did not get a raise for five years, until 1912, but his pay was increased gradually over the years until he was bringing home a whopping \$200 a month when he retired in 1937. That sum, however, included all reimbursement for mileage. At his retirement he traveled a 33-mile route by car and served 300 patrons.

Poppa Holtz, the Middlebrook mail carrier, passed away in 1944, but even before his death, times were changing. There are very few people these days who remember a time when mail was delivered by a mustached, pipe-smoking man holding the reins of a blind horse named Prince. —

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Schoolhouse News

Buffalo Gap senior receives SVEC award

MT. CRAWFORD — Amanda Simmons, a senior at Buffalo Gap High School, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship by Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative. Amanda is the daughter of Claude and Susanne Simmons of Churchville.



SIMMONS

Scholarship recipients were selected from applications received from schools in all four counties served by the cooperative including Augusta, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Hardy County, W.Va. The SVEC Scholarship Program awarded one \$1,000 scholarship and two \$500 scholarships. Winners of the other two awards were Melissa D. Heatwole and Rebecca L. Liddle, both of Spotswood High School. Melissa is the daughter of Gerald and Anita Heatwole of McGaheysville, and Rebecca is the daughter of William and Louise Liddle of Port Republic.

Amanda is interested in studying nursing and plans to attend Eastern Mennonite University. Melissa plans to attend Virginia Tech to study dairy science, and Rebecca will be attending West Virginia University in the fall to study sports medicine.

Chairman of the SVEC Scholarship Committee was C. Steven Smith of Bridgewater College.

"The candidates were exceptional individuals, with excellent writing skills and showed they were extremely concerned about what was going on in the immediate community," Smith said. He indicated the selection process was very difficult with a number of excellent applications having been received.

SVEC is a consumer-owned electric utility serving the central Shenandoah Valley and the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia. —

Biology class learns about watersheds

SHERANDO -- The RHS Biology II class joined the Chesapeake Bay Foundation on April 27 at Sherando Lake to learn how to protect local watersheds.

The students were shown how to canoe across the lake and back. They ended their visit with a simple message in the form of a bumper sticker, "Save The Bay." —



Tammi Hinton of the Riverheads girls' track team edges past Wilson Memorial High School runner Bethany Kirby in a recent meet.

RHS staff photo

Fort FFA honors members

AC staff report

FORT DEFIANCE — The FFA chapter at Fort Defiance High School honored its members at a banquet and awards ceremony held recently at the school.

Brian Garber and Andrew Tutwiler shared one of the chapter's top honors in being named co-winners of the Star Chapter Farmer award.

Also earning superior recognition was the chapter's president, Ashley Craun. Craun was named the Star Chapter Agribusinessman and also was awarded the Chris Huffman Scholarship and the chapter's Leadership award.

Receiving the chapter's award for the Outstanding Non-Officer Member was Kim Powell.

The chapter presented Proficiency Awards to the following individuals:

Poultry production — Jason Shiflett; Sheep production — Willie Morris; Beef production — Andrew Tutwiler; Horse production — Kristi Avoli; Swine production — Scott Buchanan; Soil and water management, Forage production, Diversified crop production, and Feed grain production — Brian Garber; Outdoor recreation — Kim Moats; Turf & landscape — Timmy Strickler; Agriculture electrification — Weldon Rankin; Diversified livestock production — Ashley Craun; Home & farm improvement — Kim Powell; Placement in ag production — John Lang; Agriculture sales and service — Mary Ann Berry; Dairy production — Melvin Heatwole; Forest management — Jeremy Spiggle; Ag pro-



GARBER



TUTWILER



POWELL



CRAUN

cessing — Scott Buchanan; Agriculture mechanics — Daniel Cook; Senior arc welding — Sam Burns; Junior arc welding — Jason Massie; Small engines — Israel Stickley; and Tractor operator — Kevin Shull.

Public speaking awards were presented to Ashley Craun, prepared; Willie Morris, extemporaneous; and Kara Michael, junior prepared.

Recognized for having the highest overall grade point average among FFA members in their classes were Ashley Craun, senior; Evan Garber, junior; Jason Roller, sophomore; and Derek Mangun, freshman.

Recordbook winners were Menieka Kline, junior, and Steve Craig, senior. —

RHS girls' track team maintains perfect record

By LISA SENSABAUGH

GREENVILLE -- Some were born to play softball, some were born to play tennis, and some were born to run. With a nine-year undefeated streak as its record, the Riverheads girls' track team has proven it can outrun any team around.

The team has been blessed for years with a talent to run. There has always been at least one person in each event who racks up the points. One such senior standout is Tammi Hinton.

This veteran placed first in the long jump, high jump, 200-meter, and also ran the last leg of the winning 1600-meter relay consisting of Lori Bosserman, Laura Wilkerson, and Emily Gallegly. The freshmen on the team made a big difference in the scores.

Standout Emily Gallegly was undefeated in both hurdle events, breaking the 300-meter hurdle record for the freshmen. Senior Cathy Wright pulled her last year through with a bang by placing second in the two-mile at districts.

The 400-meter relay for the team always drew a crowd. The

team consisted of Teresa Fornadel, Lisa Sensabaugh, Michelle Hanger, Lori Bosserman, and Karmen Hemp. The team came closer and closer to the record as each meet ran on.

The mile was led by newcomer Emily Hewitt, as she broke the tenth-grade record with ease. Each event was packed with power. The team has had an outstanding record of being undefeated for nine years, with a bright future ahead.

Local media caught on to the amazing talent present as "the streak" appeared on television and at news stands. Much credit goes to the team's coaches who helped keep the streak alive. The dedication and love for a team showed as each meet went by.

As each year passes, new friends are made, and new records are broken. The bonds among this team's members are so strong, seeing it in action is believing why it has been so successful. The plaques and pictures in our trophy case are all due to hard work and dedication. The Riverheads girls' track team is built on pride -- pride for a school and pride for a team. ---

Students make Prom Promise

By WENDY NELSON

A Prom Promise is a contract that states a person will not drink and drive on Prom night. Mary Kessler said, "I feel it will help to make the decision for some people, at least the ones who keep their word."

What are the benefits? You can take the signed contract to a local bridal shop and get a free Prom

garter belt. Take it to a local photo processor and get a free roll of 12-exposure film. Sign it, keep your word, and it could save a life.

David McLaughlin said: "It'll take more than a piece of paper with someone's signature." Perhaps it will, but maybe these incentives will help the Prom Promise in promoting a safe Prom night for everyone. ---

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BMMS takes hands-on approach to conservation

By LOIS SKEEN

SWOOP — It's doubtful if any of the seventh grade students at Beverley Manor Middle School had ever heard of "fascine" (fa-SHEEN) until just recently. On May 3, they not only learned that fascine is plant material that is bundled and placed in an eroded creek-bank to stabilize it and prevent erosion, but they found themselves wading in a creek, digging in the dirt and planting fascine, topping it with straw mulch and erosion-control netting.

Stabilizing the creek bank was one of the hands-on activities that the students took part in during a field trip to a nearby farm owned by Rick Shifflett, which offered a convenient stream, wooded area, and sink hole to study. The students were divided into five groups, each with a project to complete. Group leaders were experts in their respective fields from various conservation groups who volunteered to work with the students and teach them conservation skills.

Bobby Whitescarver, district conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, led the students in the creek bank stabilization project where they planted the fascine to stop the ero-

sion process.

Charlie Wade, field operations manager for the division of Soil and Water Conservation, showed the students how underground affects the topography above it, first by using a model for demonstration, then at the sinkhole found in the field.

Those who wanted to avoid getting into the water headed for higher ground with Mark Holberg from the U.S. Department of Forestry. He showed the students proper techniques to use when cutting trees from a mountainside to minimize erosion.

The group led by Paul Bugas of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries could be overheard saying, "That's another shiner, and here is a bluntnose minnow."

This group caught fish from the stream in nets and dumped them into large washtubs to get a closer look. The students learned how to identify the fish — which were male and which were female — and learned the effects that water quality, sediment, and water temperature may have on what fish are living in the stream.

A group further downstream monitored the quality of the water by taking samples from the creek bed and collecting micro-

invertebrates from each sample. The types and numbers of these "creek critters" present in the sample are a good indication of the quality of the water. This group

was led by Sheila Litsinger, a director with the Headwaters Soil and Conservation District, and Betty Gatewood, the students' science teacher. These two were re-

sponsible for planning the conservation education project.

Ms. Gatewood was very pleased with the cooperation of so many different conservation groups in the project, saying: "This has been in the planning stages a long time, and to have all these professionals here at one time for this project is great!"

After returning to school, the students must do a lab report and a presentation demonstrating what they learned during their group exercise. According to their teacher, the most important lesson is not just the skills they acquired and the facts they learned, but the importance of conserving our natural resources.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to take the stewardship approach with the students. They are the decision-makers of tomorrow, and what they learn here is going to affect not only their own lives and farms, but Augusta County, the watershed, and the Chesapeake Bay. Here they can learn some indicators of pollution and erosion, and if something needs help, they learn what they can do to help or prevent further problems," explained Ms. Gatewood.

"And it's a great day to get them outside doing something!" she added. —



A group of Beverley Manor Middle School students work to stabilize a creek bank on Rick Shifflett's farm near Swoope. The hands-on exercise was part of a conservation field day in which the students participated.

Photo by Lois Skeen

Middle School students hear 'Return to Nature' message

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON — It wouldn't seem likely that there's much about nature in the Naval Nuclear Fuel Division of Babcock & Wilcox' Lynchburg operation. But with Mike Roberts as its drafting manager, there's more nature there than meets the eye.

When he's not at the drafting table, Roberts might very well be up a tree observing a nest of baby owls or hiking in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Or he might even be in a school's auditorium talking to students about nature as he was recently at Beverley Manor Middle School.

During his recent appearance at BMMS, Roberts urged students to "Return to Nature." This is the message which Roberts is bringing to classrooms across the state through the program, "Return to Nature, Inc.," a nonprofit outdoor education program which has just recently gotten off the ground.

Promoting "respect and appreciation of the natural environment from a conservation perspective" is the intent of Roberts' talk with students. During the program at BMMS, seventh-grade students had the opportunity to talk with Roberts and view some of his stunning nature photography.

Sally Weaver, agriculture in-

structor at BMMS, said the study of conservation is part of the seventh-grade curriculum. It is for this reason that Roberts was invited to speak to students.

Roberts told the students there are two opposing views about how the natural environment should be used. He said there are some people who want to "use it all," a mind set which Roberts referred to as "utilization without consideration." The exact opposite of this philosophy, Roberts said, is the belief that none of the earth's natural resources should be used.

"The middle is where we have to live," Roberts told the students. According to the conservationist, this means "preserving where necessary and conserving where necessary."

"We have to be smarter than our ancestors. We need to educate people about proper utilization methods," he said. Because of recent conservation efforts, Roberts noted that "water and air quality is improving."

To illustrate to students that conservation is necessary, Roberts noted a number of species of wildlife which had declined in numbers, but whose numbers have increased through proper wildlife management. He said that when the country was first settled, there were as many as 25 million White-tail deer in Virginia. By 1900, that number had diminished to fewer

than 500,000. Loss of wildlife habitat and overhunting created the crisis in the state's deer population, according to Roberts. However, through conservation practices, Virginia's deer herd exceeds some one million animals today.

Roberts called the American Bald Eagle the "newest symbol for

conservation success." Once on the verge of extinction, the eagle is off the endangered list now. "This proves that we are learning," Roberts said.

"It's our right to go out into the natural environment and enjoy it," Roberts said. "I want you to appreciate everything that's out there, both plants and animals."

The "Return to Nature" program has a two-year goal to initiate a full-time conservation education program in Virginia schools, according to Roberts. His traveling show is an "outreach and exposure program" which brings nature indoors at no cost to schools. The program's intent is to educate students about their natural environment.

"We want to help them understand that they have roles of stewardship with the environment," Roberts said. "We focus on appreciation and respect for nature."

Because people have different beliefs about nature, Roberts said there are those who do "not have a good understanding of what makes the earth click."

Conservation, Roberts said, is the end result of combining the preservationist philosophy with the utilization philosophy.

"We have to generate interest in order to promote their appreciation," said Roberts. "They need to understand the importance of us (people) being a part of the natural chain." —



Mike Roberts, left, of Return to Nature, talks with Jack Hinton, a seventh-grade student at Beverley Manor Middle School. Roberts made a presentation about conservation at the school.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

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Girl Scouts earn Gold Awards for Abuse Shelter project

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

BETHEL GREEN — Four Augusta County Senior Girl Scouts have been awarded scouting's highest honor for renovations they made to the Children's Facility at the local Alternatives for Abused Adults shelter.

Krista Valz, Corbin Ailer, and Mary and Sara Chiamonte developed and carried out the project which they selected to complete in order to earn their Gold Awards.

"The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award earned by girls in Girl Scouting," said Kate Genaitis, chief executive officer of the Virginia Skyline Girl Scout Council, during an awards ceremony held recently at Bethel Presbyterian Church. "It symbolizes commitment to the beliefs and principles of Girl Scouting as stated in the Promise and Law. Senior Scouts like Corbin, Krista, Mary, and Sara who earn the Girl Scout Gold Award are active young

one child who made her feel especially determined to help the youngsters at the shelter.

"The first time I was (at the shelter) was Christmas," she said. "I remember there was this one little boy — he must have been about 1 1/2 — and you could tell his shoes were several sizes too small for him. His feet were just crammed into them. But that was all he had. We wanted to do something because we felt like we could."

In addition to serving adults, the Abuse Shelter provides services to children of adults who come to the shelter. The Children's Facility at the shelter is equipped for those just beginning to walk as well as teens.

"When we came (to the shelter) before, a lot of stuff was getting pretty old and dog-eared," said Krista. "Things needed refurbishing. They were getting pretty old."

The Girl Scouts began their project by cleaning and organizing the Children's Facility. They made

"They've done a marvelous job," said Alice Mohler, outreach coordinator at the Abuse Shelter, in surveying the Girl Scouts' refurbishing efforts. She noted that the Children's Facility is used for playtimes and meetings of the Children's Support Group which was recently organized at the shelter.

"What people don't realize is that they walk away from everything," Ms. Mohler said describing victims of domestic abuse who arrive at the shelter, some with children. For youngsters caught up in the fallout of domestic violence, departure from the home environment — no matter how threatening the situation — can be very traumatic, according to Ms. Mohler. She said the shelter staff makes every effort to address the needs of children staying at there. Providing a homelike environment — including the amenities of a recreation room — helps children to feel comfortable, and affords them the security of a child's normal routine, which includes playtime. Through the work of the four Girl Scouts, children who arrive at the Abuse Shelter have access to a facility which is equipped as a typical family recreation room might be.

Pursuit of the Girl Scout Gold Award requires a 3- to 4-year commitment from those hoping to achieve the honor. Girl Scouts must earn Interest Project Patches, carry out career exploration, devote 30 hours to developing and practicing leadership skills, and complete the Senior Girl Scout Challenge which involves examining one's actions and beliefs as they relate to Girl Scouting. Once these preliminary requirements are completed, the Girl Scout then chooses a Gold Award community service project, and develops a plan of action which must be submitted for review and approval by the Council Gold Award Committee. Successful completion of the project brings the honor of the Gold Award presentation.

In carrying out the project at the Abuse Shelter, Krista, Corbin, Mary, and Sara divided responsibilities among themselves. Corbin was the scheduling coordinator, Mary was the renovation coordinator, Sara was the contact coordinator, and Krista served as recording secretary for the project.

Krista, 17, is the daughter of Darwin and Denise Valz of Greenville. Corbin, 18, is the daughter of Nelson and Cheryl Ailer of 67 Greenview Drive, Staunton. Mary and Sara, both 15, are the daughters of Joe and Susan Chiamonte of Rt. 1, Stuarts Draft. The four Senior Girl Scouts are affiliated with troops at Bethel Presbyterian Church near Middlebrook. —



Senior Girl Scouts, from left, Krista Valz, Corbin Ailer, and Sara and Mary Chiamonte are congratulated for receiving their Gold Awards by Virginia Skyline Girl Scout Council Chief Executive Officer Kate Genaitis. Award presentations were made during a ceremony held recently at Bethel Presbyterian Church.

AC staff photo



Alice Mohler, outreach coordinator of Alternatives for Abused Adults, visits with Krista Valz and Corbin Ailer in the shelter's basement recreation room Children's Facility.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

women committed to making their community the best place it can be, because they are willing to share their time and skills to make it so."

The Girl Scouts had their first exposure to services provided by the Abuse Shelter when a speaker of that agency gave a presentation at Riverheads High School where Krista and Corbin are seniors and the Chiamonte sisters are sophomores. The decision to refurbish the Abuse Shelter's Children's Facility came after the four Girl Scouts had visited the shelter for Christmas and Valentine's Day parties.

"The need was there," Corbin said of the Girl Scouts' impression of the basement recreation room set aside at the shelter for children's activities. She recalled

a list of things which were needed in the room, and the shelter's staff provided a list of things which they determined were needed. The Girls Scouts then set about soliciting items to be donated, collected them, and took them to the shelter. Churches, local businesses, civic groups, and area residents contributed to the project.

"What we got was wonderful," Krista said.

Items collected included art supplies, books, a computer, easels, stuffed animals, dolls, and miscellaneous toys. The Girl Scouts said they were especially pleased to have obtained a Nintendo set and some bean bag chairs. In addition to providing these items to the shelter, the Girl Scouts also painted a portion of the room.

Local shelter offers 'alternatives' to victims of domestic violence

AC staff report

The right of each person to live free of domestic violence is what Alternatives for Abused Adults wants to protect.

"We feel that everybody has the right to live free of domestic violence," said Alice Mohler, outreach coordinator.

Instances of domestic violence are "rampant" according to Ms. Mohler.

"It happens more often than people realize," she said. Nation-wide, statistics prove Ms. Mohler's point.

•Over four million women are physically and/or emotionally abused each year.

•Every 15 seconds a woman is abused.

•A buse claims 4,000 lives each year.

•Fifty percent of all women in relationships will be abused.

Statistics at the local shelter, which provides services to men, women, and children fleeing abusive situations, also validate Ms. Mohler's assertion. In January 1994, the Staunton shelter provided services to 32 adults. Within a year, that number tripled. In January 1995, 108 adults and 200 children came to the shelter for assistance.

"Our caseload has tripled in the last few months," Ms. Mohler noted. She pointed out that instances of abuse have not necessarily increased, however she said as people learn about the shelter's services more abuse victims are

coming forward for help.

Alternatives for Abused Adults is a private, non-profit organization which began offering services to Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County in 1978. It is a United Way agency and receives financial support from the three localities it serves as well as from area churches, the Department of Social Services, and Housing and Urban Development.

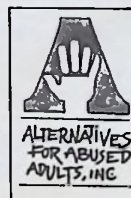
The shelter -- its location remains undisclosed to protect its clients -- is staffed 24 hours a day by eight staff members. According to Ms. Mohler, the number of people who seek help is far fewer than those needing help.

"For every one person who knocks on our door, there are nine who don't," she said.

Types of abuse fall into three categories. Physical abuse is any act or behavior which inflicts or is intended to inflict bodily harm. Emotional abuse is any systematic attempt to destroy a person's sense of self-worth. Sexual abuse is any sexual activity forced on a person without his or her consent, whether by a stranger, date, or spouse.

Domestic violence has "no respect for education level, economic conditions or gender," Ms. Mohler said. "It's merely a tool that works. Once it starts it's almost a guarantee it won't stop. It only increases in frequency and gravity. It's always astonishing to see what we human beings do to one another. Just when we think we've seen everything, we see something else that's more horrendous."

See SHELTER, page 21



Mt. Solon youth carries away three Show Awards

AC staff report

SANGERVILLE — Jason Michael of Mt. Solon carried away an armload of awards at the 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show Banquet held May 18 at the Sangerville-Towers Ruritan Hall.

Michael was awarded the R.L. Coffey Junior Achievement Award, the George A. Beam Memorial Award, the Carl Grove Memorial Award, and the Pork Sweepstakes award.

Jason's Grand Champion single hog, Reserve Grand Champion single hog, Grand Champion single lamb, and Senior Showmanship award in the hog show earned the Buffalo Gap High School FFA member the points he needed to win the honors. Jason is the son of Don and Frances Michael.

Jonathan Riley of Rt. 1, Staunton and a member of the Livestock Judging 4-H Club was awarded the Alton Lewis Award. Each year the Sherando-Lyndhurst Ruritan Club presents a show box to the first-year exhibitor who accumulates the most points based on placings in show classes. Jonathan is the son of Doug and Donna Riley.

Doug Ramsey of the Augusta County Feeder Calf Association presented awards to 4-H and FFA members who had the show's top performing steers based on average daily rate of weight gained.

The top steer in this year's show, which was held May 3 and 4 at Staunton Union Stockyard on New Hope Road in Staunton, was exhibited by William A. Woods Jr., a member of the Beverley Manor Middle School FFA chapter. William's steer had an average daily gain of 4.19 pounds and graded Choice.

Others recognized for the performance of their steers were Chad Blackwell, Riverheads FFA, 4.13 ADG; Beth Howell, Riverheads FFA, 3.83 ADG; Troy Lawson, Buffalo Gap FFA, 3.74 ADG; and Kylene Phillips, New Hope Elementary 4-H Club, 3.72 ADG.

More than 400 people attended the 32nd annual banquet which celebrated the show's 50th anniversary. Betty Barger, Augusta County Extension agent, said attendance for the 1995 banquet was the largest ever in the event's history. She noted that attendance for the banquet usually averages about 280. Among the special guests in attendance were Sen. Frank Nolen, Del. Vance Wilkins, Del. Creigh Deeds, and Phoebe Orebaugh who represented Congressman Bob Goodlatte.

The 50th annual show also set records for livestock exhibited, according to David Shiflett, Fort Defiance High School agriculture instructor. He said the 109 steers, 42 market hogs, and 139 lambs exhibited at the show represented the largest combined number of livestock in the show's history.

Another history-making event for this year's show was the presentation for the first time of \$100 U.S. Savings Bonds to the event's top six showmen. The bonds were sponsored by the Augusta Country newspaper. Shiflett recognized AC publisher Betty Jo Hamilton who presented savings bonds to Matthew Hickey, Scott Hickey, Emily Curry, Jason Michael, Jonathan Coleman, and Craig Brown. Each of the juniors and seniors were selected as Champion showman in either the lamb, hog, or steer shows.

For recordbook achievement, the following 4-H and FFA members were recognized:

Junior, blue awards: Shelly Buchanan, Emily Curry, Carrie Heizer, Angela Hinton, Jack Hinton, Austin Johnston, Lindsey McCune, Jonathan Roller, Kelly Roller, and Brandon Shreckhise.

Junior, red awards: Wes Begoon, G.G. Brinkley, Carrie Brown, Emily Curry, Amanda Rexrode, Laura Rexrode, Bryan Shomo, Bill Skelton, and Casey Wilcher.

Senior, blue awards: Kim Brinkley, Ashley Craun, Chris Curry, Mike Lam, Clint Lyle, Todd Moss, Jason Roller, and Jennifer Smith.

Senior, red awards: Scott Buchanan, Jamie Caricofe, Morgan Croft, Chris Curry, Troy Lawson, Becky Napier, Elizabeth Napier, and Amy Trout. —



MICHAEL



RILEY

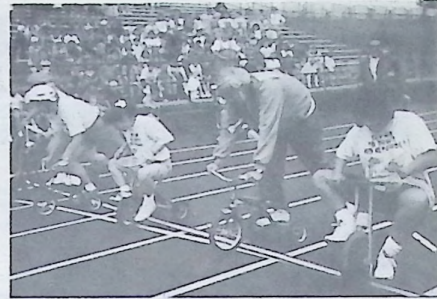


WOODS



Demonstrating the style which won them top honors in the Virginia Beef Expo haystacking contest are Riverheads students Jennifer Smith, Phillip Howell, center, and Greg Buchanan.

RHS staff photo



Riverheads Elementary School fifth grade teachers, Linda Glenn, Margaret Kyle, Christine Lyle, Chip Shelnutt, and Christi Law line up for their heat in "The Great Tricycle Race" held recently at the school. The event was held to celebrate a year-long effort to increase students' interest in reading.

Photo by Lee Ann Heizer

Country Kid Stuff

The arrival of spring also means the arrival of baby animals in Augusta Country. Beginning with the top left photo and moving clockwise, AC staff photographers found baby llamas at Sam and Beth Rowe's at Rt. 1, Staunton; Jack Russell Terrier puppies at the home of Mary Williams, (pictured) daughter of James and Cynthia Williams of Rt. 1, Greenville; a baby miniature donkey at John and Dale Weatherholtz' Deer Valley Farm near Broadway; and a baby calf at Windmeade Farm on Rt. 1, Staunton.



Photo courtesy Beth Rowe



Country Crossroads

What's science got to do with it?

Every year Hank and Irma have a garden. Not just an ordinary garden, mind you, but a scientific garden. The science, according to Irma, is in the planning. "Careful, advance planning makes for a productive scientific garden," says Irma as she buries her nose in the newly arrived seed catalog in early January. Because winter has barely started, but already he is sick of it, Hank gratefully joins in as Irma makes plans for the garden crops to be "put in" when Spring arrives.

"Let's plant beans and potatoes," suggests Hank, "and maybe a few tomato plants. That sounds like the ideal garden."

"Is that all?" laughs Irma. "In a really scientific approach you have to grow more than three types of vegetables. At the USDA agricultural research station in Beltsville, Maryland they are very scientific and they always grow more than three different types of vegetables," admonishes Irma.

Not wanting to be left behind in the dark ages of pre-science gardening, Hank quickly agrees to a multitude of vegetable entries for spring planting.

"Beets," says Irma, "because they are so pretty when they come up in the spring. And spinach" she continues, "I like spinach. Also we'll need some onions..."

"Wait just a doggone minute," interrupts Hank. "I hate beets, onions and spinach. What's the use of planting a garden full of things I won't eat?"

In open-mouthed amazement Irma considers her unscientific husband who might as well be planting seeds in the light of a medieval full moon.

"Don't you realize," she says slowly giving each word emphasis, "that we are entering the 21st century? We have the greatest agricultural technology the world has ever known right at our fingertips, and you don't want to plant beets, onions, and spinach just because you don't like them? I don't think that's an attitude that will get you very far in the next millennium!"

Still shivering from the thoughts of planting beets, on-

**Hank
and
Irma**

By
Lee Ann Heizer



The middle of May is fast approaching and the only thing in Hank and Irma's garden is dirt. What they failed to calculate in their grand plan was the procrastination factor.

ions, and spinach, and the certainty that they will be whipped up into a quiche or a salad or a mystery delight and presented at the dinner table Hank counters, "The only reason you want to plant them is because you like them and you think they're pretty. What's that got to do with science?"

"Calcium and iron is what science has to do with it Mr. Smarty," snaps Irma testily. "A variety of vegetables in the diet ensures balanced nutrition. You do want our children to be balanced, don't you?"

"It's a little late to worry about that," Hank mutters under his breath eyeing Irma suspiciously as she continues to peruse the seed catalog for the rest of the evening.

Winter creaks slowly by, but as the days begin to lengthen near the end of February, Hank's mind returns to potatoes.

"A lot of people plant potatoes on St. Patrick's Day, and that's only a couple of weeks off," says Hank excitedly. "Don't you think I ought to go down to the Feed and Seed and buy some seed potatoes, Irma?"

"Fine," says Irma sarcastically. "Just trot right on down there and get an earful of that planting by the sign, and when the moon is on the increase or the decrease mumbo-jumbo. But before you go I would like to remind you that St. Patrick was not a scientist."

Hank, in the interest of preserving the family peace, decides to delay his visit to the seed store.

March blows in and out quickly. April buzzes by and Hank and Irma begin to notice something. Tiny green shoots are appearing in long carefully laid out garden rows. Onions are sending up slender green fingers of growth. Spinach is bushing out in lush green clumps, and the maroon and chartreuse appearance of beets is also noted. The only problem is that this is happening in the gardens of their neighbors — many of whom planted by the St. Patrick's Day method — not by science.

The middle of May is fast approaching and the only thing in Hank and Irma's garden is dirt. Fence repair, planting corn, school field trips, mowing the first rye, spring window washing, and countless other tasks of the season have pushed scientific gardening into dusty corners of Hank's and Irma's minds. What they failed to calculate in their grand plan was the procrastination factor.

Every year Hank and Irma have a garden. Not just an ordinary garden — mind you, but a very late scientific garden. And while their unscientific neighbors are enjoying tomatoes on the Fourth of July, Hank and Irma wait and watch for their mostly beans, potatoes, and tomatoes garden to flourish and congratulate themselves on incorporating technology in their horticultural approach.

Just think, in only six more months it will be time to start planning next year's garden. ---

Habitat breaks ground on Waynesboro project

AC staff report

WAYNESBORO — The local chapter of Habitat for Humanity held groundbreaking ceremonies May 6 at its new project on Western Avenue.

With the foundation already in place, volunteers went right to work on the project which is the second Habitat home to be built in Waynesboro.

According to Habitat organizers, the following groups have volunteered or have signed up to volunteer: Mary Baldwin College, 10 local churches, Waynesboro Board of Realtors, and CFW Telephone. Joe Riley will be serving as project manager.

Habitat for Humanity homes are of basic design but are built using quality materials with the help of professional volunteers. Each adult member of the prospective homeowner family has to put in at least 200 sweat equity hours on

the house. Homeowners pay off the loan on the house, but are not charged interest on money borrowed.

Donna Panko of Staunton, a Habitat volunteer, said help is still needed in the following areas on the following dates: June 17 through July 8 — dry wall; August 19 — installing cabinets, countertops, and vanities; August 26 — door hardware, paint touch ups, and final preparations.

She also stated that "there tends to be a misconception among people about volunteering, and that is that once someone volunteers for Habitat they feel obligated to keep participating. We want people to volunteer, and we need help in all areas of Habitat even if it's only for one day. But we don't pressure anyone, and we don't want anyone to feel obligated for long periods of time."

What is so remarkable about the

Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Habitat chapter is its success rate. In the last three years, the group has built four homes in Staunton in addition to the one in Waynesboro.

During International Habitat Blitz Week, the chapter plans to build a home in Staunton on Ashby Street the week of the September 9-16. Volunteers, financial support, and prayers are welcomed. For further information about Habitat or if you are interested in volunteering, call the Habitat office at 886-1944.

Habitat is also looking for building sites, and needs an experienced plumber to volunteer for the International Habitat Blitz project. Corporations and businesses are invited to participate in the home-building project by joining the Habitat effort either through monetary donations or volunteering time. —



Habitat for Humanity volunteers, from left, Rosa Lee Billingmeier, Habitat board member; Rebecca Fifield, next year's co-chairperson for Mary Baldwin College; Anna Pullin, Habitat fundraising chairperson; Jim Gilman, MBC chapter faculty sponsor; and Lucian Petras, Habitat project manager, board member, and building committee co-chairperson, gathered recently at 901 Western Road in Waynesboro for groundbreaking at the newest Habitat building site.

Photo by Terry Terrell

Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin
May, 1995



Dear Maude,
Thanks for the letter and pictures from home. The old photo you sent of Grampa in his uniform reminded me of a veteran I met recently.

A few weeks back, Annalee called to say that the circus was in Washington for two weeks. She was taking the boys, and asked if I would go with them. I told her that I could show those boys much more of a circus any day of the week, but she insisted it would not be the same. So, in spite of all the work I should have been doing, I went along.

On the way, she told me about a friend of hers who ran away and joined the circus -- I thought she must be kidding, but several years ago when she was working for the Social Security Administration in Baltimore one of her co-workers, Dennis, introduced her to Carl Ritter, who is a friend of his. And, Carl actually did run away and join the circus!

After the show, we found Carl so I could meet him. What a treat! Talk about a hunk! He's a tall, good looking fellow who made me forget all about poor Dylan. Carl was born in Maine, and when he was in his teens, the family moved to Syracuse, N.Y. You can tell by talking to him that he is really smart. Because of Viet Nam, he was recruited right out of high school and went into the Navy Seals. Like so many veterans of that war, he did not seem inclined to talk too much about his experiences. He was in Viet Nam for quite a long time, but I could not get him to tell me much about what he actually did. (I have since learned that the Seals are a very specialized unit and no member would talk much about their duties.)

When he finally did return home he found both America and Syracuse different from what he had left. He worked for a while at a local industry, married, and started a family before he realized he needed to do something different, and joined the Clyde Beaty/Cole Brothers Circus for a brief time. But he did not stay long and soon took a job with the TVA in Knoxville. However, soon the call of the circus came again and this time he joined Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey where he has worked since, except for a brief time when he was doing electrical work for contractors in the Washington area (which is when Dennis and Annalee both met him). Carl is responsible for keeping all of the electrical equipment owned by the circus in good working order and the job is a demanding one. But he says it keeps him in good physical shape (and I'll tell you he looks good with all of those muscles!) Those who work with the circus all live like a big family in the circus train cars as they travel from place to place. He says his room is small, but he gets everything he needs into it.

After such a wonderful visit with Carl, it made me think of other veterans who have made unorthodox changes in their careers or lifestyles after being in the war in Southeast Asia. It must have been such a different experience from what Grampa had, coming back a hero and going off to college on the GI Bill. When Carl came home, the mood in America was not the kind to welcome the veterans as heroes, and that is a shame for they gave as much to their country as any other returning soldier. But whatever the experiences he had, Carl has adjusted wonderfully and enjoys life. He says that he plans to stay with the circus for about a year more and then wants to return to the Washington area and start his own business. I hope he does, for perhaps then we will get to see him again.

My lunch hour is over and the other circus of Washington is calling for my time...give everyone my love,

LuLu

Living gracefully

A wise writer named Frederick Buechner once said that "All moments are key moments and life itself is grace." When Buechner uses the word grace, I take it to mean gift. And a gift by its nature is unearned. It comes not as a reward but from an act of generosity. All the recipient of a gift can do is receive it with joy and gratitude.

Life itself is grace; a generous gift to enjoy each moment that we are given to live. Buechner's words affirm that life is whole; undivided in its graciousness. Nothing is discarded or discounted; all of it grace.

It's common practice to divide our experiences up into the good and the bad, the ordinary and the extraordinary, the joyful and sorrowful. Once all the cards are laid on the table, grace is assigned to the best parts. That leaves the other parts literally grace-less. An ordinary day means nothing special happens.

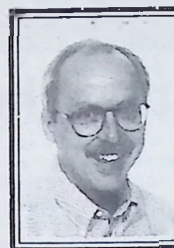
At the end of the day you give yourself over to the mercy of sleep and your whole life for the past twenty-four hours is tucked neatly into that phrase nothing special. Nothing special? Think about that for a moment.

If you are fortunate, as I am, to be able-bodied, you rise up from your bed to greet each day. You wash yourself, dress yourself and eat breakfast that you prepare or someone else kindly prepares for you. You engage in work somewhere -- the fields, the home, the office, the school, etc. -- and probably not alone. You sit at dinner with plenty to eat and more to spare. Maybe your evening is graced with children, your own or someone else's, at play on some ballfield. And when the day is over, you are still breathing, still walking, still able to rest your weary body into the mercy of God. *Nothing special?*

Recently I read Reynolds Price's memoir, *A Whole New Life*, in which he describes his battle against a cancerous tumor eating away his spine. When the tumor was discovered Price, at age 50, was widely recognized and highly distinguished as a writer and teacher of great skill. Ten years later, he is miraculously (Price's phrase) alive, although the surgery, radiation and tumor have left him confined permanently to a wheel chair with constant pain. The memoir is an unflinching and wholly inspiring description of the power of cancer to strip your life bare, and the capacity of faith to construct a whole new life on the slim foundation of authentic hope.

Reading his efforts to survive, I came away knowing that everything in life is precious. Nothing is to be taken for granted. For instance, Price describes what it is like to learn to use the toilet.

"As a brief introduction to the problems of the lame, if you're an able-bodied man or woman in trousers, attempt the chore. Sit parallel to a standard toilet, fully dressed in a narrow chair. Deny yourself the power to rise by even an



Saying grace

By
Roy Howard

inch. Now work your pants and underwear to below your knees. Now using only your hands and arms -- *don't cheat with your legs; they're mere dead wood; don't try to press your weight on your feet* -- slide or hop somehow from your chair to the toilet, complete your business without mishap, reverse the motion and redress. All but impossible, if you're not a professional acrobat."

Reading that, how can I at the end of my ordinary work day, filled as it is with walking, talking, listening, reading, playing, and taking care of my own bodily needs, ever again sum it up with the phrase "*nothing special?*" All moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.

I was thinking of this the other day when I finally began planting a few things in the garden. The lettuce seeds seemed so extraordinarily tiny going under the soil. Down the rows I went thinking this whole process is a crazy miracle. How in the world is this tiny seed ever going to rise up from the ground? I panicked, went looney, acting like I'd never before planted anything. I was stuck somewhere between disbelief and the sheer wonder at it all.

Looking around I noticed again life emerging around me: flowers purple, yellow, pink, and white; trees budding, grass and weeds growing; birds singing, mating, preparing nests for the young. The beauty of the earth springing forth everywhere. My younger daughter and the children at the nursery school all gladly declared it quite miraculous, too. Abraham Heshel says "awe enables us to perceive in the world intimations of the divine, to sense in small things the beginning of infinite significance, to sense the ultimate in the common and the simple."

Nothing special? *This whole process is a crazy miracle.* Reminds me of another miracle. Divine life pierced to a tree and hung out to die, thrown in the grave like a seed tossed in the ground, raised up and bursting with life, abundant life, endless life. Standing before it -- empty tomb, garden row -- I'm stuck in the sheer wonder of it all. One thing is certain though: each ordinary day is grace enough for the soul that dares to perceive it. ---

Shelter

Continued from page 18

One thing which makes the local shelter unique among similar facilities is that services there are offered to both victims of abuse and their offenders.

"You have to attack it where it starts," Ms. Mohler said, noting that the shelter has support groups for offenders, many of whom participate in the program by way of court mandate.

"Abuse is all about control where one person exercises mental or physical abuse over another," Ms. Mohler explained. "Physical violence is the quickest way to end an argument. The only way to get a handle on it is to teach abusers to control their anger and walk away instead of lashing out."

Counselors at the shelter work with abuse victims, their children, and offenders. Ms. Mohler said it is through the co-operation of local law enforcement agencies and the court system that the shelter is able to provide effective assistance in instances of domestic violence.

While the shelter's staff is busy pro-

viding emotional support to clients, Ms. Mohler said these people have other needs which must be addressed.

"Most come in with absolutely nothing," she said. "We provide clothing, food, and transportation." The shelter also provides day care for children of working parents, and assists clients through a court advocacy program.

"They have to start working to get their legs back under them," Ms. Mohler said of clients who walk away from abusive spouses and their homes. "We help them find a place to live, and help them get their utilities turned on. We do all this through donations."

The greatest needs of shelter clients are clothes and food, according to Ms. Mohler. The shelter accepts donations of clothing (especially underwear), food, and household furnishings. Often there is the need for trucks to move furniture. The shelter is currently seeking transport of 10 donated sofas from Arlington, and has a sofa bed in the Staunton area which has been donated to the shelter and needs to be moved. Abuse victims who come to the shel-

ter for help are taking the first step toward "putting their lives back together," Ms. Mohler said. She noted that the shelter is proud to be a part of successfully rebuilding lives for victims of domestic violence and offenders. She noted that the shelter is currently working with five couples who have "rehabilitated" their relationships through services offered by Alternatives.

Ms. Mohler said the shelter operates like a "revolving door." As some clients are leaving to make a fresh start, others are just arriving for help. But even once clients venture out on their own, the shelter maintains contact with them.

"We keep up with them once they leave and keep track of them," said Ms. Mohler. "Everybody needs support, and most of the time you don't have it."

Services of Alternatives for Abused Adults includes a 24-hour crisis hotline. For assistance call 886-6800 or 1-800-56-HAVEN(4-2836).

Anyone who has items to donate or wishes to offer assistance to the shelter may call 886-6800. ---

Here, there, everywhere

Sweet potatoes, hollyhocks: When and where to plant

Spring weather brings out the gardener in most folks, and Augusta Country readers are among those who have taken to the outdoors to start their gardens. Sweet potatoes and hollyhocks have been on the minds of two readers who sent in questions for AC's gardening authority, Ben Critzer.

QUESTION: I tried to raise sweet potatoes last year but didn't have much success. What are some tips for getting these Thanksgiving treats to grow?

PERPLEXED IN PARNASSUS

ANSWER: Although sweet potato sets have been in garden supply stores for a few weeks now, most experts recommend waiting until one month after the last average frost date before planting sweet potatoes. Depending on who you talk to, the Valley's last frost date is between the middle of April and the middle of May. That's quite a range, but I think the May date is better. A frost can do great damage to sweet potato vines if the plants are set out too early so mid-June seems just about right for planting.

Planting and cultivation of sweet potatoes has not changed much since their taming and use in tropical regions of the world. Although they prefer a sandy soil, you will have equal success on heavier clay soils if the soil is worked five or six inches deep. A raised bed or ridging will greatly improve size and quality.



Make a furrow along the bed or ridge up soil that is long enough to accommodate your plants using 12- to 18-inch spacing between plants. Work about two inches of compost or manure into the furrows.

Your ridges should end up about 10 inches higher than your garden walkways to prevent the roots and tubers from growing too deep for easy harvesting.

If you have purchased bare root plants instead of using



Questions, answers, and free advice for gardeners

tubers, put the roots as deep as you can in the ridge with only the leaves above the soil. Then trim back to the two strongest leaves and water, but don't get the leaves wet as they will fall onto the soil and possibly rot instead of grow.

When you plant the sets, use a broom handle or any round stick to push the roots of the plants at least five inches deep. Be sure to water well to settle the roots. Cultivate around the plants until the vines really get going. After that, the vines will shade out most weeds. Oh, and if the Valley's summer drought trend continues this year, don't worry because sweet potatoes like hot, dry weather.

Recently I came across some information that suggested sweet potato leaves are tasty in salads. I haven't tried munching on a leaf, but anything that is capable of producing 10-foot vines probably could spare a few leaves for a culinary experiment.

QUESTION: A friend has given me some hollyhock seeds. How and where should I plant them?

WONDERING WHERE

ANSWER: Ah, hollyhocks. There seems to be some dispute about whether hollyhocks, *Alcea*, are a biennial or perennial species. How yours grow may depend on just which species you have. However, I will figure you are talking about

the common garden variety which grows 5 to 9 feet tall and falls over on your other plants if you don't stake them up.

Hollyhocks like full sun and well-drained sites. If treated properly, they will bloom from midsummer to early fall. Because the garden variety are biennial, you won't get any blooms the first year you plant them. However, if you start seeds in a greenhouse during the winter, the plants will probably bloom that summer.

Watch out for rust on the leaves which can be treated with a fungicide spray program. Also watch for spider mites and Japanese beetles as potential problems. Otherwise, your hollyhocks should give you years of delightful, long-lasting blooms.

There is a problem, however. Hollyhocks grow very tall and the bottoms of the plants can get truly ugly looking. You might consider planting something of medium height in front of them to hide their knobby knees.

Apparently taking the advice of a noted English horticulturist, Thomas Jefferson naturalized hollyhocks in what he considered his wilderness areas around Monticello. According to Edwin Betts and H.B. Perkins in their book *Thomas Jefferson's Flower Garden at Monticello*, Jefferson planted the hollyhock variety, *Alcea rosea*.

An interesting footnote to the hollyhock is the mystery surrounding it. Some plant experts casually mention it was introduced into cultivation from its native China over 400 years ago. But, that's not the whole story.

The hollyhock, sometimes called the holyoke (that is best pronounced with a British accent) has been in cultivation for so long that according to *Plants from the Past* by David Stuart and James Sutherland: "They have lost any connection with any known wild species. Even the name is mysterious, appearing more or less in its present form in the early Middle Ages." Stuart and Sutherland note that although the hollyhock is an ancient plant, no one knows how it got its common name.

If you want to see a nice patch of hollyhock in a public place, wait until middle and late July and stroll through the upper English kitchen garden at the Museum of American Frontier Culture. By then they should be in bloom. Just ask one of the costumed interpreters to point them out to you, although the tall, blooming hollyhocks should be hard to miss by that time. ---

Mailbox of the month

This month's mailbox was found in the Lofton area at the home of Charles and Deborah Hodge. Charlie, who says he likes to tinker with metal work, created this schoolhouse mailbox and its decorative signpost.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells



Augusta 4-H'ers honored for achievement

VERONA — Augusta County 4-H'ers recently participated in county contests, and have been recognized for their achievement by the local 4-H organization.

In the county's 4-H Fashion Revue held March 15, four members qualified for competition in the Planning District 6 contest. PD 6 includes the counties of Augusta, Rockingham, Rockbridge, Bath and Highland.

Representing Augusta at the PD 6 Fashion Revue will be Crystal Caricofe of New Hope, Emily Curry of Mt. Solon, Amy Swope of New Hope, and Jennifer Young of Fort Defiance. Each of these 4-H'ers received blue awards in county competition. Crystal, Emily, and Amy are junior division winners, and Jennifer is an intermediate division winner.

In the county's March 15 Share the Fun contest, 10 4-H'ers qualified for district competition. Receiving blue awards in the junior division were Mary Pat Alexander

of Staunton, Courtney Andes of Fort Defiance, Abby Boxler of Fishersville, Melissa Cobb of Staunton, Lauren Floyd of Staunton, Ashley Holcomb of Fort Defiance, and Adam Proctor of Staunton. Receiving a red award in the junior division was Emily Painter of Staunton.

In the intermediate division, two juniors received red awards and were selected to represent the county on the district level. They are Amy Swope of New Hope and Jennifer Young of Fort Defiance.

In the county's presentation contest

held April 4, seven 4-H'ers were recognized for their work.

Senior Kara Michaels won a blue award for her presentation in the horse category.

Intermediate winners were Justin Via, consumer education, blue; Willie Woods, tractor safety, red; and Daniel Salatin, small animals, blue.

Junior division winners were Aaron Shiflett, dairy, blue, and Amanda and Laura Rexrode, livestock, red.

Judges for the presentation contest were Phylliss Layman and Kaye Brunk. ---

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Animal Industry Day is July 7

BLACKSBURG — The 32nd annual Animal Industry Day will be held July 7 at Virginia Tech. Highlights of research and education programs for the livestock, poultry, and horse industries are planned for this day-long event.

Two locations will be used for this year's Animal Industry Day program. In the morning, participants will have the opportunity to view the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' new resources for livestock and forage research on Kentland Farm which is about 10 miles west of the Tech campus.

At noon, the Animal Science Livestock Center will be the site

for a complimentary chicken and pork barbecue lunch which will be served until 1 p.m. During the lunch hour, demonstrations will be conducted on horse vaulting and an equine musical quadrill.

Keynote speaker for this year's program will be Bill Mies, a faculty member in the Beef Cattle Science Section of the Department of Animal Science at Texas A&M University. Dr. Mies will speak on the topic of "Value-Added Strategies: From the Ranch to the Rail." He is recognized throughout the beef industry for his work in designing total quality management programs for com-

mercial beef feedyards.

Other topics to be presented include warm season perennial grasses, low input sustainable agriculture, nutrient waste management for poultry and swine, deworming and vaccination of beef cattle, and Virginia Tech's sheep program.

For information about Animal Industry Day call the Augusta County Extension Office at 245-5750 or write to Dr. Steve Umberger, Department of Animal & Poultry Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va. 24061-0306 or call 703/231-5253. —

4-H camp set for June 26-30

VERONA — Augusta County 4-H'ers will be heading to camp at the Smith Mountain Lake 4-H Center in Wirtz on June 26.

The week-long session will include a variety of activities such as swimming, horseback riding, canoeing, archery, arts and crafts, and much more.

Jennifer Mercer, Augusta County 4-H Extension agent says there are numerous reasons why 4-H'ers might want to consider attending camp.

"In addition to the obvious skills acquired through the various classes offered, youth develop interpersonal and life skills such as getting along with others and developing a sense of responsibility and independence," she said. "They also enhance their self confidence and self esteem by being accepted and supported by their camp peers."

Augusta County 4-H'ers camp with Botetourt and Rockingham youth.

Cost for the camp is \$120. This fee includes transportation to and from camp, all meals, lodging and a souvenir camp T-shirt. Some classes require additional fees ranging from \$2 to \$6.

To sign up for camp, youngsters should contact Ms. Mercer at 245-5750 and request a camper pre-registration form. Final registration forms are due at the Extension Office by May 31. ---

SHERANDO ROSES

"Roses like Grandma used to grow."

Old timey, own-root
Organically grown here
in the Valley.
See the Rose Gardens
in bloom.

Hours: Mon., Fri., Sat. —
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Members of the Bell Atlantic Telephone Pioneers, phone company retirees who undertake community service projects, paint a map of the United States on the playground at Churchville Elementary School. The map painting project is part of a nationwide effort by the service organization, and is the 20th such map to be painted in the state of Virginia. It is the first to be done by the group in Augusta County. The project was completed in about four hours. The Staunton Telephone Pioneers hope to carry out similar projects at other elementary schools in the area.

Photo by Lee Ann Helzer

Middlebrook Ruritan's hear Senator Nolen

AC staff report

MIDDLEBROOK — State Senator Frank W. Nolen, D-New Hope, met May 10 with 23 of his constituents at the firehouse in Middlebrook. After the Ruritan's enjoyed a fine meal and conducted a regular business meeting, Nolen spoke to the group about current matters before the State Senate.

Representing the 24th Senatorial District, he immediately caught everyone's attention as he described the past session of the State Senate as "cantankerous." He went on to say, "We killed more bills than we passed; nonetheless, some of the things we did in this past session included:

1. Making liquor into wine;
2. Turning fish into livestock;
3. Killing the state rattlesnake;
4. Made it legal to chase hot air balloons;

5. Sank riverboat gambling;
 6. Put candid cameras on traffic lights;
 7. Beat Newt to the draw on welfare reform;
 8. Addressed the use of lottery funds;
 9. Taxes did not increase;
 10. We did balance the budget."
- Nolen went on to discuss each of these issues in depth, and opened up the floor for a question and answer period. Local issues such as road improvement, bridges, and business licenses, also were discussed.

Constituents of Sen. Nolen may contact him for further information on issues by calling him at his New Hope Office (248-2481), Richmond office (804/786-6068), or by writing to: Senator Frank W. Nolen, P.O. Box 13, New Hope, Va. 24469. ---

FARM FINANCES

Don't bank on the farm for retirement

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles concerning farm finances. The information in this series was provided by a local investment firm.

Considering all the time, effort, and expense it takes to run a successful farming operation, how can you assure that your retirement years really will be your golden years?

The answer is simpler than you think. Thanks to business retirement plans, you may not need to sell off sections of farmland to fund your retirement.

Many business retirement plans are easy to understand and require very little time to establish and maintain. You may establish and maintain these plans in addition to any Individual Retirement Account (IRA) in existence, although they may affect the deductibility of IRA contributions. If you employ family members, there is comfort in knowing you are helping them prepare for retirement as well.

Although the goal of a retirement plan is to enable you to be financially independent when you retire, it can also provide advantages before you retire. Specifically, you will receive tax deductions for contributions made on your behalf and on behalf of your employees. In addition, the contributions will grow tax deferred, which can have a dramatic impact on the dollars available at retirement.

The types of retirement plans vary widely. However, four plans most frequently fit the needs of farm owners. They include Simplified Employee Pension Plans (SEPs/IRAs), profit sharing plans and money purchase pension plans, and defined benefit plans.

Each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

The simplest business retirement plan, a SEP/IRA, is basically a super IRA that allows contributions larger than the \$2,000 annual contribution for an individual IRA. SEP contributions reduce your taxable income, and the contributions made for your employees are deducted on your Schedule F before you calculate your contribution and take the deduction on your personal 1040. In addition, SEP contributions are flexible, meaning that you don't have to contribute in years when profits are low.

A Salary Reduction Simplified Employee Pension (SARSEP) is a type of SEP/IRA that allows for salary deferral. The farm owner and employee can defer 15 percent of their own salaries up to \$9,420 annually (1995). Only farm operators with fewer than 25 employees can utilize SARSEP. In general, SEP/IRAs and SARSEPs are ideal for farm owners who have few full-time employees and who are interested in providing retirement benefits at very low cost.

Many taxpayers saving for retirement have a great deal of interest in 401(k)s, another type of salary deferral plan. In most cases, 401(k)s are too expensive for the average farm owner to administer.

Farm owners who want to be more selective in who participates in their retirement plan may find a profit sharing plan or a money purchase pension plan appropriate. These allow for the exclusion of employees under 21 who have not worked on your farm two years; therefore, part-time employees may be excluded.

A defined benefit plan allows See FINNNES, page 24

BENEFIT EVENTS

Middlebrook Firemen's Carnival, June 8-10

MIDDLEBROOK — The Middlebrook Volunteer Firemen's Carnival will be held June 8-10 at the Community Center recreational complex.

The event will feature rides and games on the carnival grounds. Thursday night will be family night with all rides half-price. The parade will be Friday at 7 p.m.

Dinners will be served Friday and Saturday nights with barbecue beef on Friday and barbecue chicken on Saturday. —

Raphine Firemen's Carnival, June 14-17

RAPHINE — The Raphine Volunteer Firemen's Carnival will be held June 14-17 on the carnival grounds across from the fire company building.

Wednesday's events include a race car parade, and Thursday will bring unlimited rides for \$7 per person. Cole Shows Amusement will be on the midway.

On Friday a parade will be held beginning at 7 p.m. Chicken barbecue will be available both Friday and Saturday. —

Redeemer Lutheran chicken barbecue, June 17

MCKINLEY — Redeemer Lutheran Church will hold its annual chicken barbecue June 17.

Dinner will be served beginning at 4 p.m. and will include potato salad and cole slaw. Homemade ice cream and desserts will also be on sale. —

Church auction, June 9

STAUNTON — The First Church of God on Shutterlee Mill Road will hold an auction at 6 p.m. June 9. Proceeds from the event will benefit the church building fund. Food will be served by the church youth. ---

Thank you, Ruritans, for helping to clean up Augusta County



Middlebrook Ruritans, above, assisted by the Middlebrook Volunteer Fire Co., and Mint Spring Ruritans, below, helped clean up illegal dump sites along Augusta County roads during the county's annual spring clean-up effort in April.



Photos by Dotty Jo Hamilton

•Beef

Continued from page 14

Since 1987, export sales of beef have increased by 230 percent, the packer noted. He explained that the largest area of expansion is in the Pacific Rim, specifically Japan.

"There is a strong market in Japan," Taylor said. "There's definite potential for expansion in this market."

Beef sold for export is normally high Choice or Prime and comes from carcasses weighing 700 to 900 pounds.

On the whole, Taylor said the outlook for beef in the global marketplace is favorable.

"I'm very positive about the meat industry and the cattle industry. The demand is good and it's going to be good," he said. "Red meat demand is on the increase." He noted that the nation's cattle producers may benefit from this trend.

"Basically the supply of red meat is going to come from right here in the United States," he said.

Taylor credited the poultry and pork industries with their efforts in standardizing their products.

"They've gotten the losers out of their industries," he said. Taylor said the beef cattle industry will need to do the same to be competitive with other meat products in the marketplace.

The competition from poultry and pork in grocery store meat cases was of obvious concern to Williams.

"Our share of the meat business is shrinking," he said. "We've lost our share of the market to a meat substitute — chicken." Williams said the beef industry must be able

to deliver a uniform product to meet consumer demand.

"A drumstick is a drumstick is a drumstick," he said. "We cannot say that in the beef industry. We have tremendous differences in cow herds."

Williams said the growing numbers of breeds of cattle used for production has created a dramatic change in the cattle industry. Prior to 1960, cattle production in the United States was based on three primary breeds — Angus, Hereford, and Short-horn. According to Williams, the introduction of exotic and foreign breeds has increased that number to more than 80.

"Our breed base has changed over the past 20 years," Williams said. The use of exotic breeds has both helped and hurt the U.S. cattle industry, according to Williams.

"We've made some very poor decisions about how to use them," he said. "We make bad decisions when we decide to put the wrong bull on the wrong cow."

The livestock specialist urged cattle producers to use caution when choosing their breeding programs.

"We cannot change genetics after birth," he said. Williams told producers there is no place in the beef industry for cattle which are "part giraffe." The livestock specialist said the primary concern of cattle producers needs to be meeting consumers' demands.

"One of the first things we have to do in this industry — whether you're the packer, the feeder, the grazer, or the cow-calf operator — we have to know and recognize who the boss is — the consumer," he said.

Williams said that health and nutrition are important to consumers, but their primary qualifier is taste.

"Health and nutrition is a concern, but the most important thing that has to be there is taste," he said.

In order to deliver the product consumers want, Williams said producers must "walk a tight rope" of taste versus waste.

"We need to get excess fat off of beef," he said. However, Williams noted that beef void of fat is not palatable.

"Totally defatted muscle has virtually no flavor," he said. Williams explained that fat within the muscle, or marbling, must be present to make beef flavorful. He said cattle producers must breed animals which will yield carcasses with adequate marbling and minimal external fat. Cattle producers will have the greatest success in marketing their product at the meat case when they deliver a product which is uniform, high quality, and flavorful, according to Williams.

In Horton's opinion, there was yet one more point which should be of concern to cattle producers.

"Price is the Number One enemy," Horton said. Horton Cattle Co. operates a testing facility for pharmaceutical companies in addition to a custom feedlot and a restaurant. He said consumers consider the price of the product as much as anything when making a choice at the meat case or in a restaurant.

Horton noted that when the price of beef comes down, consumers buy more beef. Consumers also are more likely to buy meat of a comparatively lower price — chicken or pork — when the price of beef increases, according to Horton. He said beef producers must operate on a volume which will make beef affordable for consumers. —

•Finances

Continued from page 23

you to predetermine the annual income each participant will receive upon retirement. An actuary then determines the amount that must be contributed annually to achieve that goal. Contributions are mandatory and go toward funding the plan so that you may receive the maximum benefit upon retirement, as long as you meet certain requirements.

While we're on the subject, the most common objection to establishing a retirement plan is potential cost. The costs, which are affected by the type of plan selected, whether additional IRS filings are required, and who handles the necessary tax reporting, can vary from \$10 per year per employee to more than \$1,500 annually. Still, in most instances, the benefits received by the farm owner and employee more than offset the costs.

Before deciding on any one plan, you should ask yourself six simple questions:

- How many employees do I have?
 - Are they full time or part time?
 - Do I have any part-time employees who I want to exclude?
 - What is my pattern of profits?
 - Do I want to make flexible or mandatory contributions?
 - How many years do I have until I retire?
- One important factor to be aware of is that the longer you have until retirement, the longer your retirement money has to grow. It's never too early to start a retirement plan. —

Information about the retirement plans mentioned in this article may be obtained from any local investment firm.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Bethel Jubilee Community Picnic
Saturday, July 1

Beginning at 3 p.m.

Music: Stonewall Brigade Band
Games: Volleyball, croquet, face-painting for the kids

Dinner: BBQ by

Larry and Anita Edwards

Bethel Presbyterian Church
Va. 701, one mile east of Va. 252

Call 886-6041 for information

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