

*"Friendly news for friendly people"*

# Augusta Country

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**WESTWARD, HO!**

Notes from the road, Pages 11-14

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## Where have all the chestnuts gone? Virginia's rural heritage built from American chestnut tree

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON — Wayne Hypes has an affinity for all trees, but American chestnut trees have a special place in his heart.

As the District Soil Conservationist for the area, Hypes spent most of his adult life in the woods and meadows of Virginia and North Carolina. He graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in agricultural engineering and started his soil conservation work in North Carolina in 1941. His job brought him to Virginia in 1947 to work in the Alleghany, Bath and Highland area. His final move was to Staunton where he headed the Staunton, Waynesboro and Augusta County area until his retirement in 1980.

But it was during his Craig County boyhood that Hypes first encountered the chestnut tree. "In the early

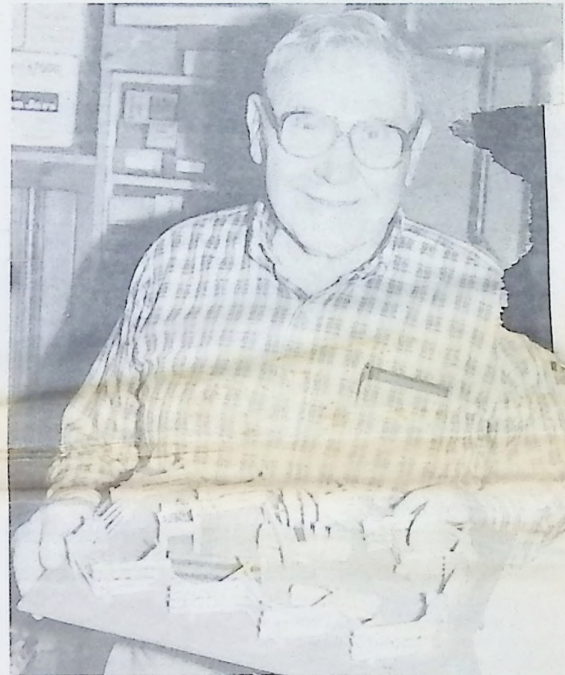
30s, my grandfather had a mountain farm in Craig County. He had a lot of big chestnut trees," Hypes recalled. "Now those trees had the blight, but they still had some green limbs growing. In the fall, we would get up real early and pick up the chestnuts before the wild turkeys ate them."

The Hypes family would roast chestnuts, and they would also play a children's game called Hullygull. "It's a guessing game where you put some chestnuts in your hand and shake them. Then the other players have to guess how many you have. If a person guesses wrong, he has to give you all of his, but if he guesses right then you have to give him yours. You keep

on until someone has all the chestnuts," Hypes said, adding that he has been trying to recall a number of games he played as a child and is writing them down for his grandchildren.

The next chestnut recollection that stands fresh in Hypes' mind is of building split rail fences from chestnut logs. The family was engaging in a rural activity that was soon to become just a memory. Most split rail fences were chestnut, a rot-resistant wood that became harder and harder to find as the blight took its toll throughout the Appalachian Mountains. In addition, wire fencing became a much easier, longer-lasting alternative to the split rail fence. Between the two factors of the blight and a more modern fence type, split rail fences became a thing of the past for Virginia farms.

Back in the 30s in Craig County, however, the Hypes were still holding onto a time-honored tradition. "My daddy had some big chestnut trees up on his farm. They got the blight and died, but they kept sprouting again all around the stumps," he said. "Those sprouts would grow up into trees about this big around," he said, holding his weathered hands in a circle with a circumference of about a foot. "When they got that big around, then they died, and we cut



Remembering his boyhood days of splitting chestnut fence rails, Wayne Hypes of Staunton took an old chestnut rail and whittled a scene depicting the tools and techniques used to build a zigzag rail fence of more than half a century ago.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

those down and made fence rails."

Remembering his boyhood days of splitting fence rails, Hypes recently took an old chestnut rail and whittled a scene depicting the tools and techniques used to build

a zigzag rail fence. On a board, in miniature, is a split rail fence surrounding a hay field. The entrance to the field is closed with a bar gate, created with miniature sliding

See COVER STORY, page 4

## An American Chestnut Carol

By BETTY JO HAMILTON\*

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire... Just hearing the opening line from Mel

Torme's 1946 yuletide melody is enough to start the holiday juices flowing. The song lyrics conjure up images of Christmases past — time spent with family and friends, caroling, drinking cold eggnog while seated next to a fireplace filled with glowing embers. And, ah, those chestnuts — roasting over an open fire... but wait. Perhaps visits from the ghosts of chestnuts past,

(with apologies to Charles Dickens)

present and future will reveal the true story of the savory and traditional nutmeat.

A rush of wind plunges you into total darkness. A pinhole glow grows to a brightness that floods a cozy livingroom. Family and friends are gathered for yet another holiday party. The tree is trimmed. Mistletoe dangles from a doorjamb. Stockings are hung by the chimney with care. A fire burns brightly on the hearth. Next to the fireplace and seated in a rocking chair is a fellow you don't recognize — a stranger invited as a guest you suspect. The fellow looks a bit left out of the festivities so you decide to engage him. But before you are even able to introduce yourself, he's off and running.

"Christmas just isn't the same anymore."

the fellow says. "Why just look at that fire. No chestnuts roasting there. And what about that turkey out in the oven? You got any chestnuts in that stuffing?"

Caught off guard, you attempt to compose a reply. You glance across the room toward the party's host hoping someone might introduce you to this fellow or rescue you from him. When you look back toward the fireplace the rocking chair is empty and swaying ever so gently. The fellow is nowhere to be seen. The fire begins to dim, and the surroundings of the party fade from your vision. In an instant you are transported to a sunny afternoon and find yourself standing on the slope of a heavily wooded mountain.

See CAROL, page 6



## Election officials commended for work

Although *Augusta Country* has a standing policy to keep its editorial content non-political, we thought the following submission from an Augusta County poll worker to be an appropriate salute to those who help carry out the election process locally. While Election Day is probably a long and nerve-racking wait for the voting public, it is also a very busy day for the staff polling places. *Augusta Country* expresses appreciation to each individual who takes part in the work at the polls on election day.

### keeper's ode

The polls will close in 15 minutes, it's been a very long day. Just your vote and hit the road we can hit the hay.

Thanks for coming out in the rain to vote for the candidate of your choice. Wonderful is this country's freedom that we can enjoy political voice.

"The polls will close in 15 minutes" are such pleasant words to our ears. It's been fun serving Augusta County. Will the pay increase in following years?

Oh hard-working team, it's five to seven. Just a short five minutes to go. Tally the count, secure the machine, this 24th precinct poll is closed.

--- Dennis Nelson and the Middlebrook team

## Made from scratch

Wherever we go in Augusta County, we're always sitting at tables spread with food to eat. The buffet at the Staunton Woodmen of the World awards ceremony (see page 3) was no exception. It was hard to resist sampling some of everything and, as usual, we crossed a dessert we just had to try. The recipe for Alice of Staunton brought an irresistible chocolate lover's dream for the dessert buffet. The best part is this cake's not only delicious, it's also easy. And moist... this cake simply melts in your mouth. We're not sure what Alice calls this sweet tooth delight so we're naming it German Chocolate Dream Cake. With the

holidays approaching, this is a recipe you'll definitely want to keep handy.

### German Chocolate Dream Cake

1 box German Chocolate Cake Mix — Mix and bake as directed in a 13 x 9-in. pan.

As soon as the cake is removed from the oven, punch holes in it with the end of a wooden spoon. Pour 1 can of sweetened condensed milk and 1 small jar of melted hot fudge sauce over the cake. Cover and chill for eight hours. Before serving, spread a half-inch layer of Cool Whip over cake. Grind up two Skor or Heath bars and sprinkle over Cool Whip. Slice and serve. —

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for a wonderful and newsworthy paper about where we live and who we are plus what we do. Keep up the good work.

Kathryn Fix  
Arbor Hill

Thank you for noticing Mrs. Fix. We at *Augusta Country* count

it as a great privilege to bring you these stories. We are blessed to live in an area with such a rich heritage and have as neighbors people who are very diverse in their backgrounds, talents, and interests. ---

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
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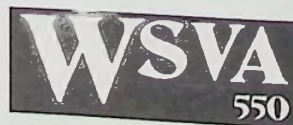
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# Family stirs up sixth generation apple butter

By NANCY SORRELLS

As brothers Jay and Jed Shaner and Jay's son Jason took turns stirring a bubbling kettle of apple butter recently, they were doing more than just making jars of preserves for good winter eating. They were stirring up family tradition and keeping alive a Shaner heritage that goes



Jason Shaner, a sixth-generation apple butter stirrer, keeps the mixture moving. Apple butter must be stirred continuously through the 12-hour process of making the seasonal favorite.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

back at least six generations.

"We know the kettle was around in 1864 when George Shaner died in Lexington, because it was in his inventory," said Jay Shaner, the current keeper of the kettle, owned by his great-great grandfather.

George passed the kettle on to Henry who passed it to Luther and then to Jay's father, Jacob. "When Dad died two years ago, he stated in his will that it was to stay in the family and for family use only," Jay explained.

The 40-gallon copper kettle, or "kittle" if you are inclined to use the old Valley pronunciation, is quite sound for its age. Even the iron stand is holding up well, although Jay added some authentic looking rivets recently to give it more strength.

Although the Shaners don't make applebutter every year, they gather with family and friends from church just often enough that the tradition of the kittle gets imprinted on the next generation.

This year's butter-making operation was a long-planned two-day event. On a recent Friday at 1 p.m., a group of nine gathered and began peeling, coring and slicing the apples — making the schnitz (sliced apples) as the Shaners say in recalling their Shenandoah Valley German heritage.

"I grew my own apples," Jay said in explaining why they chose Baldwins and Grimes Golden for the butter. Jay takes pride in growing several traditional varieties of apples, including two black twig trees, a good keeper variety that he grafted off his grandfather's tree.

The schnitzing group worked into the evening on Friday. After seven hours of work, what had started as 12 bushels of Baldwins and 2 bushels of Grimes became 7 bushels of schnitz and three wheelbarrow loads of peelings and cores.

The actual apple butter production began before dawn on Saturday. "We started putting the apples in the kettle at 4:30, along

with 3 gallons of apple cider to give some liquid to get it started," Jay said.

Slowly the apples were added to the kettle which was perched over top of a white oak fire. The oak was chosen because it was "what was dry," according to Jay, but the whole set-up was created out of family memory. "This is pretty much the way we always did it," Jay recalled.

As apples were slowly added to the mixture, one member after another pulled duty with the long wooden stirrer. "Twice around the side and once through the middle, that's the way you stir an apple butter kittle," is the way the old saying goes, but on this day each stirrer incorporated his or her own technique. Jay, for instance, preferred a style that mimicked a railroad engine.

The important thing, however, was that the mixture be stirred continuously so that it would not stick and burn on the bottom of the kettle. The last apple was added at 9:15, but the stirrers still had quite a stretch in front of them. "Generally you cook it for six hours after the last apple goes in," Jay said. "Then you add the sugar and cook it for three more hours. Then the spices go in. Basically, it's a 12-hour job. If you are lucky, you get somewhere between 21 and 23 gallons of apple butter!"

By the middle of the afternoon the mixture had reached the right consistency for the sugar to be added. "You put somewhere around 40 pounds of sugar depending on how sweet the apples are," Jay said. On this day, after adding and tasting, the group wound up putting the full 40 pounds in the kettle. Finally, right before the kettle was removed from the fire, cloves and cinnamon were added.

Near the end of the day, those with memories of apple butter boilings past were called upon for the final say on when to add ingredients and when to take the kettle off the fire. Jay took a wooden spoon and dipped it into the brownish-red bubbling mixture.

"See how it sets up so?" Jay said as he let the mixture drip back into the kettle.

Within a few minutes the group was busy filling canning jars full of the thick apple butter.

"I wouldn't turn down some biscuits with apple butter on it," Jay said. "But you aren't country unless you put it on cornbread." —



Jay Shaner tests a batch of apple butter to see if it's reached the proper thickness. The Shaners have been making apple butter in a copper "kittle" which has been passed down through six generations of their family.

## Staunton Woodmen make annual award presentations

### AC staff report

**LAUREL HILL** — An 8-year-old boy, a local farmer, and three school bus drivers might seem to have little in common. However, all were honored Oct. 28 by Staunton Woodmen of the World when the group made its annual award presentations.

Todd Reese of Buffalo Gap was presented with the Woodmen's

Life Saver Award. Young Reese rescued his 17-month-old sister from drowning on July 25 when the toddler fell into the family's swimming pool.

"This deserving individual recognized at an early age that all of us should render a service to whoever and whenever needed," Woodman Richard Crickenberger said in making the presentation to Todd. "He recognized the opportunity and his

responsibility to rescue a person in desperate need. He risked his own life to save his sister."

Todd, whose Life Saver certificate read: "In recognition and commendation for swift and courageous action to save a person's life," pulled his sister, Jacklyn Lamoy, from the family's inground swimming pool. The children's mother, Ginny Lamoy, had gone to answer the telephone when Jacklyn, who just moments before the incident had been playing on a swing set nearby, apparently got into the pool. Todd said Jacklyn fell in the pool and sank to the bottom. He managed to get her out of the water.

"There was no heart beat when the (rescue) squad got there," Tim Lamoy, the children's father said. "She had to be revived, and they flew her to U.Va. in Pegasus." The Lamoy's said Todd's quick response to his sister's peril saved her life.

Woodman Tim Ross presented the group's conservation award to Jim Harris of Senger's Lane. Harris won the award based on ef-



HARRIS



D. CARY



M. CARY



EAST

forts he has made to control erosion on his farm which is bisected by Christian's Creek. The award was made based on Harris' willingness to put forth effort to conserve soil, water, minerals and wildlife, according to Ross.

The project on Harris' farm involved stabilizing a creek bank from which 500 tons of soil was being lost per year. Soil conservationists worked with Harris to grade the bank and reinforce it to prevent it from sloughing off into the creek. The project drew statewide attention as Soil and Water Conservation officials from across Virginia came to Harris' farm to participate in the stream

bank stabilization work. The project afforded the opportunity for hands-on experience in methods used to prevent stream bank erosion. Additionally, Harris has fenced off the creek restricting livestock access to it.

Augusta County school bus drivers Mary and Don Cary and Catherine East were the recipients of the Woodmen's safe driving pins. The awards are made to bus drivers with safe driving records. Retired now, Cary drove a county school bus for 34 years. His wife Mary is in her 28th year behind an Augusta school bus wheel. Ms. East has been safely transporting children to and from school for 18 years. —

Todd Reese, right, 8-year-old son of Ginny and Tim Lamoy of Buffalo Gap, was honored recently by the Staunton Woodmen of the World with the group's annual Life Saver Award. Todd rescued his sister, Jacklyn Lamoy, left, from drowning in the family's swimming pool.

AC staff photo





## COVER STORY

Continued from page 1

ing rails, and inside the field is a wooden haystack, surrounded by split rails in order to keep the livestock out of the hay. Also in the field are several miniature chestnut logs, cut from chestnut sprouts that succumbed to the blight just last year. There is also a tiny stack of split rails and then, neatly arranged on a block of chestnut are the tiny tools representative of those used by the Hypes family more than half a century ago.

"We used an ax and a cross-cut saw and cut logs that were exactly 11 1/2 feet long. The wood was easy to split. We put an iron wedge in the end and then a couple of wooden gluts and hit them a couple of times with a hickory maul, and you had the log split in halves. Then you would split it again and have four rails from one log. Daddy would go up in the woods and pull a couple of trees down with the horses, then Daddy and I did the work together. It would take two to use the cross-cut saw," Hypes recalled.

Even the tools used by the Hypes family have been painstakingly recreated in miniature. He carved the tiny wooden gluts out of dogwood, always the wood of choice for such tools because of its strength, and the maul out of hickory, again the traditionally correct wood.

Hypes made a wooden sled like the ones he remembers loading up with split rails to be hauled to the fence site. "When we built the fences, we tried to set a rock or block of wood under each corner so the wood wouldn't rot. Chest-

nut won't rot in the air, but if it touches the ground it will rot."

Although his fence building days were over by the 1940s, Hypes bumped into the tree again right after World War II when he and his brother, then both recently discharged from the army, found a way to make some spending money. "Although the chestnuts were dead, they were still standing, sound as a dollar, up in the woods. My brother and I cut several car loads of the bark and sold it for extract which was used for tanning leather," he remembers.

The same thing was being done in Highland County even in the 1950s he remembers. "There was an extract plant near Vanderpool that extracted the tannic acid and used it to tan leather. You see, those dead trees were still standing up in the mountains even then," he said.

Even now, more than 60 years since his first introduction to the chestnut tree, the fascination continues for Hypes. Since his retirement, he has taken up woodworking and has started making things out of old chestnut boards. Napkin rings, picture frames, tabletops and candleboxes have found their way from his woodworking shop into the family rooms. "I spend a lot of my time woodworking and using old chestnut," he says. Light brown with the trademark worm holes dotting the surface, chestnut "is not as pretty as maple and walnut," according to Hypes. "And you get more splinters in your fingers! But it splits easily

and sands easily."

And just like he did as a boy, Hypes will still eat chestnuts, either roasted or raw. These days most of the chestnuts are Chinese chestnuts, a variety not as severely affected by the blight as the American chestnut. "The Chinese ones are good, but they don't taste quite the same, and they aren't quite as good as the American ones," he noted.

Although he has been saddened by the disappearance of the chestnut tree and the accompanying rural traditions that were linked to the tree, Hypes said he has been encouraged by what he has learned about research work being done to bring the American chestnut back to the Appalachian forests.

Until then, the tree lives on in his heart, a part of his childhood and memories of life on an early 20th century Virginia farm.

"It's what I did as a young boy. Eating chestnuts and picking chestnuts with my grandfather and father. Other than cutting firewood, chestnuts are the first trees I worked with in the woodland," he explained. —



A reproduction of a print taken from the 1885 Augusta County Historical Atlas shows a homestead in the Riverheads District with split rail fences.

## Chestnut rail fences vanished with stalwart tree

By NANCY SORRELLS

Once it zigged and zagged its way over hill and dale and wormed its way over the Shenandoah Valley's countryside, but today, the split rail fence is mostly a thing of the past.

At one time, in the 1700 and 1800s, the majority of fields in the eastern United States were enclosed by split rail fences, called variously by names like zigzag and Virginia worm fences. The reason for the fence's popularity was clear. It could be built quickly with only a few simple tools.

With no post holes to dig and no nails to drive, a fence could be put up completely around a field in a matter of hours. The only materials needed for the fence were rails, and a skilled splitter could make 100 of those in a day.

The rails -- usually made of chestnut, but also of locust -- were stacked alternately on top of one another with sections meeting at an angle so that the fence could withstand wind and animals. The angled area formed by the bottom two rails usually rested on a stone, or sometimes a piece of wood,

See FENCES, page 5

## 'Amazing' wood is passion for Staunton man

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON -- Some people collect coins, others go for rare gems or special commemorative plates. Wayne Hypes simply collects wood. That's right, the stuff from trees.

The hobby is an outgrowth of his woodworking talent, something he developed as a vo-agricultural student in high school. "Woodworking has been amazing to me. I used to make singletrees and double-trees and ax handles for the farm. I have taken it up again since I retired to stay busy," he explained of his lifelong passion for wood.

Hypes carries his love for wood a step further, however, with his collecting. In his woodworking shop are stacks of dozens of different woods, rough and unfinished, but labeled as to the variety. Around the corner, however, is the final result of his collecting passion. Perched on three wall shelves are row after row of wooden eggs. Each one different, each one unique. All are eggs he has turned on a lathe in his shop and then mounted on a shelf com-

plete with a label noting the tree's common name, botanical name, and the country where it is found.

The variety of the eggs is as end-

less as the trees from which they came. Some are yellow, some white. Others are deep brown and even black. There are red eggs,



A collector of wood, Wayne Hypes makes eggs from wood around the globe. Each one of the specimens is mounted on a shelf complete with a label noting the tree's common name, botanical name, and the country where the wood is found.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

striped eggs and even an egg from an olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane. Exactly 108 of the eggs were made by Hypes from wood he collected in Virginia, from trees and shrubs he found growing in his home state. There are several varieties of oak and maple and pines and, of course, an American chestnut. A little more unique is the poison ivy egg, and the egg made from a grapevine! In addition to the Virginia eggs, there are also 108 eggs that he terms "exotics" -- that is eggs made from wood found all over the world. The eggs represent everything from A to Z -- literally. There is an Apitong tree from the Philippines and Zebra Wood from West Africa. Woods from India, South America, Mexico, Canada and Europe are all represented as well.

On another wall, in what should be called Hypes' "wood room," is a United States map. Thirty-five of the states have wooden bells pinned on the map. These represent yet another aspect of Hypes' wood collecting hobby. He is trying to make a bell from the wood of each state

tree, and he has only 15 states to go. Already on the map are a dogwood bell on Virginia, an American elm bell on North Dakota, a shortleaf pine bell on Arkansas, a Douglas fir on Oregon and a redwood bell on California.

Because it would be impossible for him to travel all over the world just to find wood, Hypes has found another way to acquire his wood. He is a member of the International Wood Collectors Society, a worldwide organization which has somewhere between 6,000 and 7,000 members. Through this organization he trades wood and has wood "pen pals." "I traded 40 pieces of wood with one man," Hypes said.

As noted earlier, people collect everything imaginable -- bottles, thimbles, and matchbooks for instance. But Hypes will stick to wood, he says. He likes working with wood, unlocking the secrets of each type, learning what the tree looked like and how a particular piece will split or sand or hold finish. "Amazing," is how Wayne Hypes describes wood. "Just amazing." ---



## Our culinary heritage

## Chestnuts on the holiday table

By ROBERTA HAMLIN

When the first explorers came to the New World, they encountered many foods which were new to them. And, as the first settlements began, those who came found wild fowl, berries and vegetables in abundance. They also found forests full of magnificent chestnut trees, many of them 100 feet tall. The plentiful supply of nuts became a staple in their diet, just as they had been for years for Native Americans, who made bread from chestnut flour.

With today's availability of many kinds of foodstuffs from all over the world at local grocery stores, it's easy to forget those native foods that were here to greet our ancestors. But for me, when the evenings begin to come on quick and nippy, I get the urge to build a fire in one of my fireplaces, not so much for the warmth it will give as for the ritual of welcoming the upcoming winter. And as the flames begin to dance about over the logs, a tune dances in my head... a male voice (whose, I can no longer remember) is singing "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire...."

By the time I began housekeeping and learning to cook, our native chestnut was gone, but oriental chestnuts were available in the grocery stores. And my open fires and the holidays always stir up for me happy memories of my early experiments (some successful, some not) with the chestnut. Even though we never roasted chestnuts by the fire when I was a child, I am sure that in earlier times it was an activity looked forward to with joy by young and old alike and was the inspiration for many special memories.

For those of you who would still like to roast your chestnuts, I offer the following directions, along with a few other uses for what was one of our most plentiful nuts in this country's infancy.

## Roasted Chestnuts

Ingredients:  
Chestnuts

An open fire, or an oven preheated to 425 degrees

With the point of a small, sharp knife, prick the skins of your chestnuts, place in a flat pan and roast, either at the edge of the fire, or in the oven for 20 minutes or so, or until they pop.

The turkey, Ben Franklin's unsuccessful candidate for our national bird, also was a true native of North America, probably originating in what is now Mexico. It was taken back to Europe by the first explorers and was already familiar to the Pilgrims when they came to settle in New England. Today, the way we most often use chestnuts is as a stuffing for our holiday turkey. The following is an old German recipe.

## Chestnut Stuffing

Ingredients:  
1 1/2 lbs. chestnuts  
2 cups bread crumbs  
1/4 cup melted butter  
1/2 teaspoon each sage, thyme and rosemary  
3 tablespoons parsley, chopped  
1/2 cup finely chopped celery  
1 egg

To peel chestnuts: With the point of a sharp knife, cut a gash on the flat side of the chestnut. Cover nuts with boiling water and cook them over low heat for about 20 minutes. Drain, and you should be able to remove the shells and skins easily. The chestnuts need to be tender enough to be put through a ricer. If not, again cover the skinned chestnuts with boiling water and cook until tender.

After putting nuts through the ricer, add the remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly. The above recipe makes enough stuffing for a 10-pound turkey.

In her *Book of Household Management*, written in 1861, Isabella Becton gives a recipe for a chest-

nut sauce for fowls or turkey. The following is an adaptation of that recipe:

## Chestnut Sauce for Fowls or Turkey

Ingredients:  
1/2 lb. chestnuts  
1 cup stock from turkey or other fowl  
2 strips of lemon peel  
1/2 cup cream

Peel the chestnuts, put them in a saucepan with the stock and lemon peel and simmer until very tender — probably about an hour. Press the chestnuts through a sieve, add the cream and a little cayenne pepper. Let simmer (do not boil) stirring constantly, for just a few minutes. Serve very hot.

The versatile chestnut is not just limited to an accompaniment to our festive turkey. There are recipes for chestnut soup, soufflé, and puree. They can be found in beignets, casseroles, sauces, and stews. Chestnut desserts include a chocolate-chestnut "Swiss cake," mousse, ice cream, and the traditional candied "Marrons glacés."

There are recipes for chestnut soup that reflect many various cultures, since some variety of this nut has been found all over the world. Most popular is a basic creamed soup.

## Cream of Chestnut Soup

Ingredients:  
1 lb. chestnuts, shelled  
2 tsp. grated lemon rind  
2 tsp. sugar  
2 1/2 cups chicken broth  
1/2 cup milk  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
1 egg yolk  
1/4 cup sherry  
Nutmeg or ginger

Shell chestnuts as described in recipe for chestnut stuffing. Combine shelled chestnuts with lemon rind and sugar and cook in about one cup of lightly salted water until they are soft, about 20 minutes. Drain off liquid and puree the chestnuts. Combine

with the broth, milk and cream. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Beat the egg yolk well and gradually stir the soup into egg. Return soup to the pan, add the sherry and reheat. Be careful not to let the soup boil. Season to taste with a little salt and pepper, and a pinch of either freshly ground nutmeg or ginger.

Chestnuts also were often combined with cabbage or Brussels sprouts because their mild flavor helps take the sharp edge — almost a bitter taste — from these vegetables.

## Chestnuts with Brussels Sprouts

Ingredients:  
1 1/2 lbs. Brussels sprouts  
1 1/2 lbs. chestnuts, shelled and cooked until tender  
2 cups water  
6 slices bacon  
1 medium red onion  
1 cup white sauce  
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg  
Bring water to a boil, add 1 teaspoon salt and Brussels sprouts. Simmer, covered, over medium heat until the Brussels sprouts are tender, about 10 minutes. Drain.

Fry bacon until crisp and drain well on paper towels. Finely chop the red onion and sauté in 2 tablespoons of bacon fat until golden. Add onion and chestnuts, which you have cut into halves, to the Brussels sprouts and combine well. Stir in the white sauce and season with the nutmeg and salt and pepper to taste. Crumble bacon on top.

Probably the most decadent of chestnut desserts is this "Swiss Cake." It is a lot of work, but wonderful. Serve it with a strong coffee, and be sure not to think about calories.

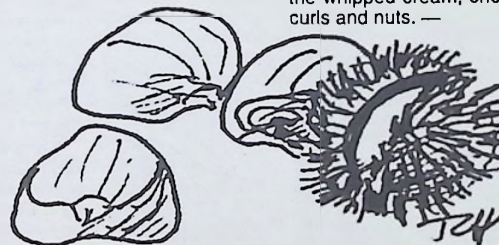
## Swiss Chocolate Chestnut Cake

Ingredients:  
2 lbs. chestnuts  
2 cups water  
1 cup milk  
1 cup butter, softened  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 tablespoon grated orange rind  
3 tablespoons dark rum  
5 oz. semisweet chocolate  
Whipped cream  
Chocolate curls  
Chopped walnuts

Boil the chestnuts in the water and milk until they are very tender, drain and puree through a sieve. Combine butter and sugar, work until soft and creamy and stir into puree. Divide mixture into two equal parts. Add orange rind and rum to half of the puree. Stir well and set aside.

Finely grate the chocolate and combine it thoroughly with the other half of the puree mixture.

Line an 8-inch cake or tart pan with wax paper and press into it a thin layer of half of the chocolate mixture. On top of this add the flavored chestnut mixture and then finish with the other half of the chocolate mixture. Chill for several hours. When ready to serve, unmold onto a serving plate and cut into very small slices. Decorate with the whipped cream, chocolate curls and nuts. —



## •Fences

Continued from page 4

called a rest stone. The lowest rail was usually no further off the ground than 9 inches and was often much closer. From there the rails were stacked alternately until the fence was 4 1/2 to 5 feet high which usually meant that anywhere from 5 to 7 rails were used in each section. To enclose a one acre field in this fashion would take about 800 rails.

Often worm fences were used to outline boundaries. Because the rails were a standard length and the fences zigged and zagged at a fairly consistent 3 1/2 feet on each side

of the boundary, farmers could easily count the number of fence sections and figure the acreage in a field.

Sometimes the fences had an added feature — more rails fixed diagonally in an "X" at the angles in the fence line. An additional rail was then laid horizontally in the "V" formed by the crossed rails. The fence was now called a stake and rider fence — the stakes being the two rails forming the "X" and the rider being the longer additional rail added to the top. The stakes were usually shorter than standard rails, between 6 and 7 feet. Adding stakes and riders

greatly increased the height of the fence, putting the top rail at almost 6 feet or sometimes even higher. Such an enclosure was said to be a sure way to keep animals either in a field or out, depending on the desires of a farmer. "Hog tight, bull strong and horse high," was how these fences were described.

As easy as they were to make and erect, there was one drawback to split rail fences. The angle formed at each section of the fence tended to be a place where weeds and briars grew, lending an unkempt appearance to zigzag fences. Once board fences be-

came relatively inexpensive (early 1800s), split rail fences were reserved for the field areas, while board fences were placed around the house and barn. Any farmer who was at all worried about his social status would never have placed something as rough and unsophisticated as a zigzag fence in his front yard! Such fences were reserved for his fields.

There were a number of factors which led to the demise of the split rail fence, but the two most important were probably the chestnut blight and wire fencing. Once wire fencing became relatively

inexpensive, it soon usurped split rails because of its durability and practicality. When the blight robbed farmers of an easily accessible supply for their rails, the fate of the Virginia worm fence was sealed.

Today such fences are no longer used as working field boundaries on Shenandoah Valley farms. Instead, ironically enough, people view such fences as "quaint" and "country" and rush to erect them in their yards as landscaping showpieces. Certainly something any self-respecting Shenandoah Valley farmer from the last century would be shocked to see! —



## •Carol

*Continued from page 1*

Lo and behold, standing next to you is that strange fellow from the Christmas party.

"Where are we?" you ask the stranger.

"This is the east side of Little North Mountain just after the turn of the century. This farm land belongs to Mr. Ott Sensabaugh of McKinley," the stranger says. "Ott doesn't know it, but he's going to have company this afternoon."

Indeed, at that moment several folks are seen approaching in the distance.

"They're the Rosens of McKinley," the stranger says. "Some of those young folks with them are teachers who board at the Rosens' house during the school year. They've come out this afternoon to gather chestnuts that have fallen from some of Mr. Ott's American chestnut trees."

You see a man approaching and start to worry.

"Who's that?" you ask.

"That's Mr. Ott," the stranger says.

"Won't he be mad that we're trespassing?" you wonder aloud.

"He and I are old buddies," the stranger says, "and he can't see you so just keep your yapper shut, and you might learn a thing or two."

Your stranger companion and Mr. Ott are standing side by side watching the group of folks from McKinley approach.

"Looks like you're getting some company, Ott," the stranger says.

"Yep," Ott replies. "They're comin' to gather chestnuts up on the mountain. I'm afraid they won't be finding many today though."

"Bad season?" the stranger says raising an eyebrow.

"Nup," Ott says. "I didn't know

anybody was coming to gather the chestnuts. I turned the hogs out into the mountain yesterday, and they've been having a ball up under those chestnut trees rootin' around and gobblin' up those nuts. They've been in hog heaven ever since they came across the first chestnut."

"I guess chestnuts make pretty cheap feed for the hogs," the stranger says.

"You bet. There's bushels and bushels of chestnuts, and acorns too, up there on the mountain. As a matter of fact, I can't buy feed that good. Those hogs will fatten up in no time. Should be ready for butcherin' right before Thanksgiving," Ott says. "Well, I guess I'll have to go tell these folks they'll have to find their chestnuts somewhere else."

The stranger waves to Mr. Ott as the man walks away.

"So people really did eat chestnuts way back when," you state more than ask.

The stranger nods. "Oh yes indeed. Ate them, baked with them, roasted them. Chestnuts are an authentic American food. Indians were cooking with chestnuts long before the first settlers arrived on the continent. American chestnut trees were massive and plentiful in the forests. The woods around these parts used to be full of them. What a sight that must have been — trees 100 feet high, trunks four to five feet across, the ground covered with chestnuts in the fall just waiting for someone to gather them. And the lumber from those trees was just about indestructible. Why there's still some old rail fences around made from American chestnut. Walk this way, and I'll show you what I mean."

Without moving you suddenly find yourself standing amid trees on a hillside. At your feet is the stump of a tree harvested long ago.

"This is the stump of an American chestnut tree," the stranger says. "The tree was cut down over a hundred years ago, and the stump still hasn't rotted. That's one reason the wood was used for fence rails. It's practically weather proof."

"So if the wood is so indestructible, what happened?" you ask.

"Ah," the stranger says. "That's another stop on our trip."

A rush of wind suddenly zips through the trees and is followed by a flash of light. You and the stranger are now standing on a hill watching as men saw lengths of timber and load it onto wagons.

"One of those fellows down there is Dave Weaver," the stranger says. "He bought the timber rights to this property so he could harvest the dead American chestnut trees." "Dead?" you query. "I thought chestnut trees were indestructible. What happened?"

"Blight. Some fungus brought into the country somehow from Asia completely wiped out the American chestnut tree. All that's left now are dead trees. Listen in an let Dave tell you what's going on."

A whistling whirring sound and blur of the scenery brings you face to face with

the man identified to you as Dave Weaver who's eager to explain his business.

"We're cutting down the dead chestnut trees and sawing them into five-foot lengths. Then we split the logs down to sizes we can handle and load them onto these wagons which are built specially to haul two ranks of wood. Then we'll hitch up the horses..."

"Horses?" you say, feeling somewhat puzzled. "You're still using horses to haul timber?"

Your stranger companion elbows you sharply in the ribs. "Of course they're using horses. What else would they be using in 1920?" he says matter of factly. "Please go on Dave."

"Like I was saying, we'll hitch up the horses and haul this timber over to the train depot in Swoope. That's a pretty hard pull on the horses — all of 14 miles — so we can't make but about two trips a week. The timber is being sent to the mill where they'll extract the tannic acid to be used in tanning leather," Dave concludes.

"We won't hold you up any longer," the stranger says and waves as Dave heads back to his work.

"I don't understand," you say. "I've eaten chestnuts. I see them in the grocery store. If the chestnut trees were all wiped out from the blight where do chestnuts come from?"

The stranger smiles at you and reaches up behind one ear. Pulling his hand away he magically reveals a large chestnut. "Oh, you've got a lot to learn yet," he says. Putting his arm around your shoulder, the stranger steers you away from the timber cutting.

After taking only a few steps you find yourself and the stranger walking along the state road that runs through McKinley. The two of you pause, and you look around to recognize familiar surroundings.

"I know this place," you say as you find yourself standing just across the road from McKinley United Methodist Church where there is some activity under way on the front lawn. Among those in the gathering is a man who folks in McKinley know on a first name basis and who, even for those outside of McKinley, is recognized for his woodcrafting knowledge and ability.

"So this must be the present? Shouldn't I have a different guide for this part of the journey?" you ask your companion.

"No, this is a bargain basement version of the Scrooge classic. You only get one ghost, and besides, I'm just trying to



**When the bur pops open chestnuts are exposed. The prickly exterior is actually a hull that encases the chestnuts which must be skinned before eating.**

educate you about chestnuts not change your life," the stranger explains. "Now pay attention. You're about to learn something."

The stranger motions toward the group of people on the church lawn.

"That fellow there in the middle is Irvin Rosen," the stranger says.

"Irvin Rosen the famous clockmaker?" you ask.

"Yep. He's an old friend of mine, so just come along with me, and we'll find out what's going on."

Indeed the stranger seems very familiar to Irvin who waves and smiles as the two of you approach.

"We're just setting up the Thanksgiving service sign," Irvin says.

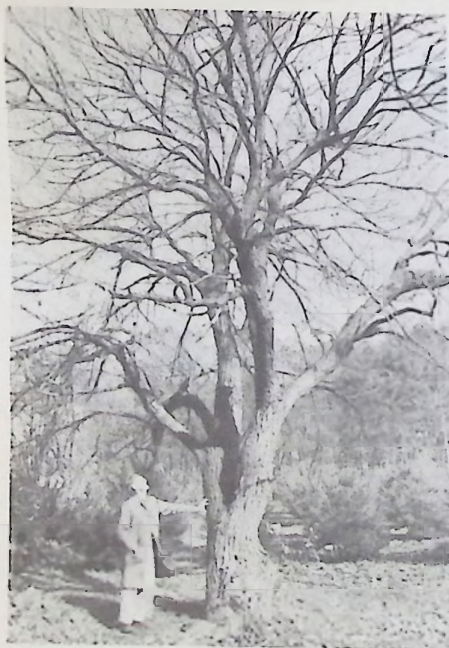
"I thought you were the Ghost of Chestnuts Present," you say sideways to your stranger companion. "What's a church's Thanksgiving service got to do with chestnuts?"

"Hush up," he says, "and just listen to Irvin."

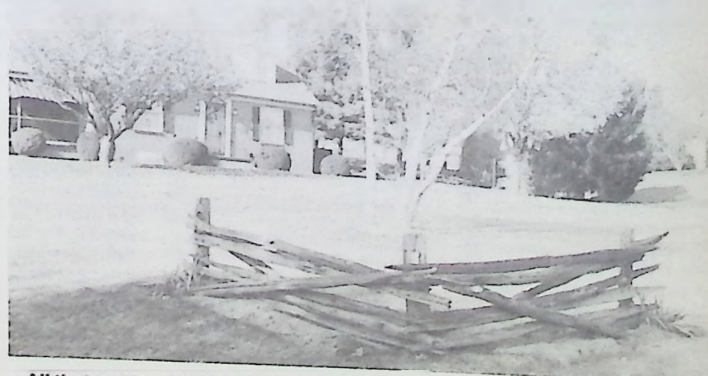
You're told that Irvin and his crew are assembling the decorations for what will be the sign announcing the church's annual Thanksgiving service. Rails, just like the ones you occasionally see at the ends of driveways, are lying on the ground nearby.

"I always wait until the last minute to put these up," Irvin says. "Then I take them down quick because I don't want

*Continued at top of page 7*



Irvin Rosen of McKinley stands in his backyard at the base of a 50-foot Chinese chestnut tree which he planted in the 1940s. American chestnut trees were killed out by a fungus which struck in the early 1900s.



All that remains of the mighty American chestnut trees which once flourished in states along the Eastern seaboard are a few split rails relegated to decorative lawn and garden accents. Oddly enough in their heyday, split rail fences were not seen as a sign of prosperity. Now they adorn properties with six-figure values.

Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton



Continued from page 6

them to rot."

"So, what's the deal? A fence rail is a fence rail," you say.

"These aren't just any ordinary fence rails," your stranger companion says. "These rails are from an American chestnut tree... one of the very trees killed by the blight. That's why Irvin is so careful to put these rails away out of the weather each year after they're used. There aren't any more American chestnut fence rails where these came from."

"Chestnut was a pretty good kind of wood," Irvin says. "I've made fence rails and shingles out of chestnut. My father built a washhouse and made the weatherboarding out of chestnut. A lot of folks will never know how valuable chestnut wood was to this country."

Your time traveling companion turns away from you and engages Irvin in conversation.

"Have many chestnuts this year Irvin?" he asks.

"The ground's covered with them. You know I used to gather 15 to 18 bushels a year, up until about eight years ago, and sell them. I gave it up though. The chestnuts got so wormy, and it's back-breaking work to pick them up."

"But I thought all the chestnut trees were killed by the blight," you say.

"This young fellow's never seen a chestnut tree," the stranger tells Irvin. "Do you mind if I show him yours?"

"Not at all. I need to finish putting up this sign," Irvin says. "But you know the way. You go right ahead, and look all you like."

You and the stranger walk away from Irvin and his companions.

"Where are we whizzing off to this time?" you ask.



Once a common sight on Shenandoah Valley farms, split rail fences made of American chestnut wood are seen only occasionally now. This fence is located at the entrance of a new subdivision in Fort Defiance.

"We're not whizzing anywhere, just walk."

About a hundred yards east of the church is Irvin's house. The stranger guides you into the backyard where a number of trees spread out up the hillside. Two bluejays flutter among the limbs and a red-tailed hawk circles above in a cold blue sky.

"These are Irvin's chestnut trees," the stranger says. "He planted these trees in the 1940s."

"I thought the blight wiped out the chestnut trees in the 20s," you say showing that you have learned something.

"The blight wiped out the American chestnut. These are blight resistant Chinese chestnut trees. Irvin planted four of these trees originally then used the seeds from those trees to start more. He even gave some of the seedlings away at Ruritan club meetings. There's probably a

lot of folks around here who have Chinese chestnut trees that Irvin started."

Scattered on the ground under the trees are some prickly looking things you don't recognize.

"What are those?" you ask.

"Those are chestnut burs. It's like a hull that holds the chestnuts. Once the nuts are mature the hull pops open, and you can get the chestnuts out. Burs on American chestnuts wouldn't open until the frost had hit them," the stranger explains.

"Jack Frost nipping at your nose... I guess that's where the line in the song comes from, the frost causing the chestnuts to pop open," you say.

"I doubt it," the stranger replies. "Try to stay with me on this. Chinese chestnut trees are barely half the size that American chestnuts were. These trees are about

45 feet high, and you can see the trunks are at most 18 inches across. Chinese chestnuts will bear fruit at about 4 years of age. American chestnuts didn't bear until about 10 to 12 years."

"So these Chinese chestnuts are what I see in grocery stores?" you ask.

"Now you're catching on," the stranger says smiling.

"But what about the future? Will we ever have any real American chestnuts to roast over an open fire?" you ask.

"Maybe. Botanists and geneticists are trying to develop American chestnut trees that are resistant to blight. The process involves crossing an American chestnut with a Chinese chestnut then back with an American chestnut," the stranger says.

"Whoa, slow down. You lost me," you say.

"Well, at any rate, they're working on it. Of course it takes years and years to breed trees. It may take two or three decades, but one day these hills might again be covered with American chestnuts."

The ground beneath Irvin's chestnut trees begins to tremble.

"What's going on?" you ask.

"Time for another change of scenery," the stranger says. "But I won't be making this trip with you. This time you're on your own, buddy. It's been nice knowin' you. See ya' later."

"Now just a Dickensian minute. You can't leave--" you protest. But with the wink of an eye the stranger has vanished, and you are plunged into darkness.

In a flash you find yourself back in the room where the party was going on and where you first encountered the strange man. That it is the same room where the journey began you are certain, but the decor is different and the Christmas

See GHOST, page 8



Zigzag split rail fences were one of the most common methods used to mark property boundaries. Now chestnut fence rails are used for mostly decorative purposes such as this one which was placed along a driveway on U.S. 11 north of Verona.

## Blight killed American chestnut; research offers glimmer of hope for trees' return

By NANCY SORRELLS

It crept into the country like a thief in the night -- a mysterious fungus that probably arrived from the Orient on a shipment of nursery trees. The deadly disease, known as the chestnut blight, was discovered on trees in New York City in 1904. Within a few decades, 9 million acres of the most majestic trees in the Eastern forest were dead.

The blight forever altered the forest and changed not only the landscape, but the folk ways of a people who lived upon the land.

When Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto explored the newly discovered North American continent in 1520, a member of his expedition noted that "Where there be mountains there be chestnuts." That observation held true for almost four centuries; until the deadly blight, the chestnut was truly the king of the forest. It ranged from Maine to Georgia and west to the prairies of Indiana and Illinois. In some areas a quarter of the forest was represented by chestnuts, while in the Appalachians, entire ridges were often pure chestnut. Mature trees could be as old as 600 years, as tall as 80 to 100 feet and not uncommonly had a diameter of 4 to 5 feet. There were instances of mature chestnuts which were 8 or even 10 feet in diameter.

"Chestnut vied as America's favorite hardwood," noted Fred Hebard, superintendent of the American Chestnut Foundation's research farm near Meadowview, Va. "It was

one of our best timber trees, because it was tall and straight and often branch-free for 50 feet. Loggers told of loading entire railroad cars with boards cut from a single tree. The straight grained, rot-resistant wood was easily worked. It was used for everything including rail fences, telegraph poles, railroad ties, shingles, paneling, furniture, musical instruments, even pulpwood, plywood and tanning," he said.

Not only was the lumber of prime importance

to Americans, but the fruit -- the chestnut -- figured prominently into the culture as well. Unlike other nut trees, chestnut trees produced abundant crops every year. Wildlife depended on the mast crop as did farmers who fed the nuts to their livestock. Chestnuts were also a major cash crop for people in the Appalachians who sold railroad cars of the nuts to the cities where chestnuts became an essential part of holiday stuffings for roast turkey and goose.

See RESEARCH, page 8



Large American chestnut trees are surrounded by rows of progeny at the American Chestnut Foundation's research farm near Meadowview in southwest Virginia.

Photo courtesy American Chestnut Foundation



# Lebanon Church helps Russian family settle in

By SUE SIMMONS

**FORT DEFIANCE** — Vera Sukov didn't think it would be as easy as it was to adjust to life in America.

Speaking through interpreter Ivan Susliaev, a distant cousin, the Sukovs spoke recently at Lebanon Church of the Brethren about their life in Kazikstan and their adjustment to America.

It has been a year since the Sukovs arrived in the United States from their home in Kazikstan. With the help of the Lebanon congregation, the Sukovs resettled in Rockingham County.

Don Link, a member of Lebanon Church of the Brethren, has played an active role in resettling refugees through the Virginia Council of Churches and Church World Service. In addition to the Sukovs, the Lebanon Church sponsored a Laotian family and a Polish man.

"They come with only a suitcase," Link explained. "The sponsoring church has to provide everything else they need — money, a place to live, furniture."

The Sukovs first stayed in

Bridgewater where the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren has two apartments that are rented exclusively to refugees.

"The Sukovs were easy," Link added. "Within six weeks they found jobs and their own apartment all on their own."

Valeriy Sukov works at Martin's Native Lumber in Dayton and Vera works at Perdue in Bridgewater. Sons Dimitri and Eugene attend Rockingham County Schools.

"We thought about coming to America many times," Vera explained, adding that life was not too difficult for Russians like themselves living in Kazikstan when the Soviet Union still wielded its influence.

"An Islamic Republic took over after the collapse of the Soviet Union and things got bad," she said.

Not only was unemployment high, but those who had jobs were paid very irregularly. In addition, there were few educational opportunities for the younger Sukovs.

"The ruling Moslems made it particularly difficult on Christians who attended church," Vera offered.

Valeriy added that 65 percent of Kazikstan is Moslem while only 10 percent is Christian.

The Sukovs belonged to small Baptist Church in Kazikstan. "Christian churches are losing membership now because so many Christians are leaving for Germany and America," Valeriy observed.

Life became so difficult that the family feared for their physical safety and welfare, especially as they began to plan their immigration to the United States. "The Republic made every step of our trip to America difficult," Vera commented quietly.

Expressing no desire to return to Kazikstan where both the Sukovs' parents, brothers and sisters live, the family has found America a welcoming place.

"People drive everywhere here," Valeriy noted, adding, "In Kazikstan you walk or take the bus."

"[Here] you can talk about the Bible anywhere and go to church and no one threatens you," Vera added with a smile.

Their meager command of English has not proved a detriment, especially for Vera.



From left, Ivan Susliaev, and the Sukov family — Eugene, Valeriy, Vera, and Dimitri — spoke recently at Lebanon Church of the Brethren in Fort Defiance. The Sukovs have lived in the United States for one year and were assisted in their resettlement by Lebanon members. Ivan has lived in the U.S. for about five years and serves as interpreter for the Sukovs.

AC staff photo

"At first I had a hard time understanding what I was supposed to do. Now I rely on the other Russians who work at Perdue to help me understand."

Dimitri, a 10th grader at Turner Ashby High School, and Eugene, an eighth grader at Wilbur Pence Middle School, have made an easy adjustment to school. "School is more interesting," Eugene said, "and we have more freedom here."

Dimitri concurred with a smile. "We don't have to study as hard."

Both boys agreed that making lots of new friends had made the adjustment to their new situation much easier.

Vera, who has a reputation among many at Lebanon Church as

being an excellent cook, thinks American food is too sweet or too salty. As a result she makes familiar Russian dishes for her family.

"I only made an American dish once," Vera explained, adding that she doesn't really understand the recipes.

Translator Ivan testified to her culinary skill. "She makes a pierogi with green onions and eggs that is very, very good."

Having just gotten their green cards, the Sukovs have not yet begun to contemplate becoming citizens. But they have thought about how thankful they are to Lebanon Church of the Brethren for its sponsorship and the help the church's congregation. —

## •Research

Continued from page 7

This all ended in the years after 1904. When the blight struck it was swift and deadly. Virtually no tree survived the disease which advanced at a rate of 20-50 miles a year. By 1950 the chestnut had disappeared from the American forest.

"The virus appears as an orange discoloration. It is a canker, and it attacks the bark," explained Hebard. "The cankers cut off the flow of sugar going down and the water going up by cutting off the tissue."

Because the canker does not affect the roots, dead trees often continue to valiantly put up new shoots, but the effort is useless. "These trees originate from the stumps of the old trees. The original trees grew very slowly, but these shoots come back very rapidly from a cut over area," Hebard said. But it is to no avail, he added. "Within 9 to 10 years they have the blight and are dead."

Today, however, there is a glimmer of hope for the future of the chestnut tree. The hope lies in the American Chestnut Foundation which was established in 1983. The organization has only one

goal: "To put the American Chestnut, king of the Eastern forests, back on its throne."

This single goal is slowly being reached through a multi-pronged attack that involves new developments in genetics and plant pathology.

As the disease swept through the United States, almost every chestnut tree in its path succumbed. But not all. Therein lies one of the keys. "Some of the trees resisted the blight. They got the disease and survived with cankers," Hebard said.

The largest surviving tree is just east of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Amherst County. The tree, which is about 4 feet in diameter, is the largest surviving American chestnut with a relatively intact crown.

Trees that survive the blight can be used in a gene pool to create a more blight resistant tree. So can Chinese chestnut trees which are highly blight resistant. Unlike the American chestnut, however, the Chinese variety is not a timber tree. It has a form more like an apple tree, and neither competes well in the forest nor produces good lumber.

Research to best utilize these genetic traits is currently under way at ACF's Meadowview research farm which now has thousands of chestnut trees in the ground.

"We back cross the blight resistance of the Chinese chestnut to the American. By the fifth generation, you have a 15/16ths American chestnut. At Meadowview we

See GENETICS, page 24

## •Ghost

Continued from page 7

celebrants have vanished. Something about the room is oddly familiar and unfamiliar. The furnishings seem a bit like those you once saw on an old Star Trek episode — the original television show from the 60s, not the movies. A video display terminal in one corner of the room flashes the date Dec. 24, 2025.

"Hey, this must be the future part of the dream. Cool!" you say to yourself. As modern as everything seems, a fireplace — or at least a 2025 version of one — is the room's focal point. You are reassured to see that stockings are still being hung with care and that embers glow as brightly as they did in 1995. And there, roasting at the hearth's edge are chestnuts.

"Honey, did you put the chestnuts on to roast?" a voice sounds from a distant corner of the house.

"Honey? Who's calling me 'Honey'?" you say under your breath. "Oh yeah, this is the future... a future which I guess comes complete with a significant other. Just play along. After all, it's only a dream."

"Yeah, I did," you yell back to your significant other. "They ought to be ready any minute."

"Are you sure you're doing it right? Did you read the instructions? These are the first American chestnuts we've had for Christmas since they reintroduced the tree to its native woodland," your significant other says. "By golly it must have worked. That old guy was right on target about the scientists trying to develop a disease

**"Chestnuts roasting on an open fire... whose bright idea was this anyway?"**

resistant American chestnut tree. I guess they must have figured it out after all."

"What are you talking about? Did you read the instructions or not?" the voice from somewhere in the distance breaks into your stream of consciousness.

"Directions? Oh, sure. Yeah, honey. Everything's fine," you say noticing a piece of paper lying on the coffee table.

Printed in bold type across the top of the page are the words:

"Chestnuts roasting on an open fire... READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS MAY RESULT IN BODILY INJURY."

Laughing, you pick up the paper. "What is this some kind of gag gift? There's no big secret to roasting chestnuts on an open fire. What's the big deal?" you mutter and begin to skim over the instructions. Your eyes stop under the instruction labeled "2."

"Be sure to slit the skin on the chestnuts before placing them near an open fire. As chestnuts heat, moisture inside the shell begins to expand. Chestnuts which have not been properly prepared by slitting the skin will explode when heated."

"Uh oh... uh, honey, we might have just a little problem in here," you call out just as the first chestnut explodes and ricochets across the hearth. You dive behind the nearest ergonomically-designed antigravitational recliner as a barrage of exploding chestnuts showers the room.

Safely sheltered from the blast you start singing, "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire... whose bright idea was this anyway?" —



# Augusta County government 250 years young

By SUE SIMMONS

This year marks Augusta County's 250th year of government. Throughout the past two-and-a-half centuries Virginia's Augusta has seen both continuity and change. Migration into and out of the county, wars, progress in technology, economic shifts, have brought great change to the county's families, communities, farms, businesses, schools, and religious institutions.

Augusta County, located west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Upper Shenandoah Valley, is a limestone-based tract of land that once stretched all the way to the Mississippi River. Carved out of Orange County in 1738, Augusta reached its present size of nearly 1,000 square miles after the formation of Rockbridge, Rockingham, and Bath counties.

Scotch-Irish settlers began to arrive in 1732; German and English settlers quickly followed. African Americans, both free and enslaved, also helped settle the backcountry. The area soon acquired cultural characteristics that would set it apart from the rest of Virginia.

Government became the vehicle by which Virginia's colonial authority stabilized the frontier and

guaranteed the spread of Virginia culture among the frontiersmen. Although Augusta County was formed in 1738, the sparse population did not warrant the establishment of a County Court until 1745.

The Court maintained social order, protected property, and developed the local economy. The success of this early government rested in the hands of the Clerk of the Court — today's Clerk of the Circuit Court.

The Anglican Church Vestry, Augusta's other ruling body, assumed responsibility for the moral behavior and welfare of the county's citizens. Drawn from the Vestry, ironically, made up of "dissenters" or Presbyterians, the Augusta County Court first met on Dec. 9, 1745 when "twelve of the most able Men in the Parish of Augusta" were sworn into service.

The cultural diversity of the court, however, at once created a climate of tolerance as it converted the frontiersmen into true Virginians.

Augusta County proved its worth to political powers in eastern Virginia when Augustan's joined in the War for Independence.

Following the Revolutionary War, the Virginia legislature dis-



solved the vestry and disestablished the church as the government. Authority for the welfare of the county thus transferred from churchwardens to the citizenry. The Clerk of the Court, however, retained administrative powers, carrying them into a new era.

County government changed again in 1868. Reconstruction's Underwood Constitution required that each county be divided into townships whose citizens would elect a board of supervisors.

Augusta County made inroads into progressive local government when a new state law permitted the county to follow Staunton's lead and appoint Fred T. Prufer as the first county manager in April, 1927. Today the county elects a Board of Super-

visors which legislates county ordinances and employs the county's administrator.

Augusta's early residents probably would not recognize Augusta

County today. They would, however, perhaps feel a kinship with its people, the land, and with the traditions that continue to be Augusta County's hallmark. ---

## Augusta County:

## Nursery of local governments

By SUE SIMMONS

The Clerk of the Court — today the Clerk of the Circuit Court — was the single constant figure in county government throughout Virginia, including Augusta County.

John Madison served as Augusta County's first Clerk of the Court from the county's first independent court session on 9 December 1745 until 17 November 1778.

A transplanted eastern Virginian, Madison spread Tidewater "ways" west of the Blue Ridge. Madison held multiple offices as a member of the House Burgesses, a vestryman, and as a coroner. He owned significant tracts of land and held slaves.

He established family ties to the Strother family in Fredericksburg through marriage. His five powerful sons held various offices, and his son Richard Madison suc-

ceeded his father as clerk of the court.

But it was Madison's long administration as Clerk of the Court that had the most profound implications, not only for Augusta County, but for all of the Virginia frontier.

Through Madison's hands passed all of Augusta County's paperwork. The Clerk set the court's agenda, recorded the court's actions as they unfolded, and kept court proceedings running in the Virginia style.

Madison educated several generations of county officials, many of whom went on to establish settlements in Tennessee and Kentucky. They in turn educated other future generations who settled even farther west.

Augusta County thus became the nursery of local governments for the upper South and other western states. —

## Exhibit highlights Augusta's 'continuity and change'

### AC staff report

Augusta County Government celebrates its 250th anniversary on Dec. 9, 1995.

An exhibit "Augusta County Celebrating 250 years of Continuity and Change" will be installed in the main corridor of the Government Center. It will officially open to the public on Dec. 13 prior to the Board of Supervisors' meeting.

The exhibit has been the project of the Augusta County Museum and Gallery Committee.

Organized several years ago to install rotating exhibits in the government center, the committee carefully studied the possibility of a local history museum.

"We made a number of inquir-

**"Augusta County: Celebrating 250 years of Continuity and Change" opens on Dec. 13. A ribbon cutting ceremony will take place at 6:30 P.M. The public is invited to attend. Contact Nancy Dunsmore at 245-5600 for more information. —**

ies and eventually visited the Loudoun County and Manassas Museum. Both are funded by their respective local governments," Susanne Simmons, committee

chairman, explained. "It didn't take us long to realize that an Augusta County museum was not feasible. Not only did we have no collection, there is no money to adequately fund a local history museum. We wanted to do something, however, to tell Augusta County's

story and maybe leave the door open to some future endeavor." Committee member Walter Heyer suggested a semi-permanent exhibit and the Board of Su-

pervisors agreed to fund it.

The committee convened a meeting of individuals knowledgeable of Augusta County history which steered ideas for the exhibit's theme and eventually provided research in members' particular areas of expertise.

Dana Thayer Industrial Design of Lynchburg won the bid to design the exhibit.

"Committee members collaborated on the exhibit script and found the necessary photographs and artifacts," Simmons commented. "Somehow among us, we knew enough people to call upon for help in a number of ways."

The exhibit will consist of nine panels, each featuring an aspect of Augusta County then and now — Government and Settlement, Edu-

cation, Religion, Home and Community, Transportation, Agriculture, Industry, and the Agents of Change.

"The exhibit's theme, 'Continuity and Change,' will show that, while Augusta County is different today, we share some common threads with our ancestors."

"Augusta County is one of last best places. That is their legacy to us and our legacy to future generations," Simmons continued. "This county faces significant change in the near future. It might help us if we remember where we've been as we figure out where we are going."

Some fascinating facts emerged as the committee researched the county's history.

"Augusta County had more paved roads in the 1920s than any other Virginia county. It also realized more personal property tax revenue from new cars than any other Virginia county," Simmons said.

She admitted it was difficult deciding what to include and what to ignore as the committee planned the exhibit. "We tried to be inclusive of not only each district in the County but of the various groups of people who lived here. We tried to at least give a nod to important major events. But there are some things that just didn't make the cut," she said. "Of course, if the supervisors like the exhibit, we can always add more panels." —

## AUGUSTA COUNTY

Celebrating 250 Years of Government: 1745 - 1995



Adapted: 1753

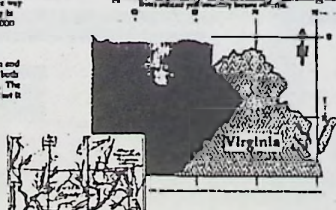
**"Let the ages return to the first golden period"**

Augusta County, located west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Upper Shenandoah Valley, was carved out of Orange County in 1738. The county reached its present size on nearly 1,000 square miles after the formation of Rockbridge and Rockingham Counties.

Scotch Irish settlers began to arrive in 1732. German and English settlers quickly followed. African Americans, both free and enslaved, also helped settle the backcountry. The area soon acquired cultural characteristics that would set it apart from the rest of Virginia.

In 1745 the County achieved its first government. There are many of continuity and change. Migration into and out of the county, wars, progress in technology, economic shifts, have brought great change to the county's families, communities, farms, businesses, schools, and religious institutions.

### Augusta County Boundary Changes





# Banquet honors conservationists

By JEFF ISHEE

VERONA — Area farmers, foresters, and a teacher were honored Oct. 31 by the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District for contributing to the preservation of natural resources in the Shenandoah Valley.

Recognized as Conservation Farmers of the Year were the Williams family farm operation at Greenville and the Brown family farm operation at Swoope.

Jim and Charlotte Williams and their sons James, Joe, and Mac, operate a 2,500-acre beef cattle, poultry, and general crop farm west of Greenville. The strip cropping method which the Williamses employ on their farm is used as a model by soil and water conservation officials to demonstrate

to other farmers how stripping crops controls erosion.

Bob and Nan Brown and their son Robbie run a beef cattle operation near Hebron. The Browns recently implemented a stream bank stabilization project on their farm which controls erosion yet allows cattle access to water.

Peg Davis of Middlebrook was recognized as Conservation Forester of the year. Receiving awards for the best maintained dams were Simon Kinsinger for the dam at Lake Wilda and Ralph Weaver for his work on the dam at Happy Hollow.

The Headwaters District named Lisa Whitescarver, a teacher at Clymore Elementary School in Fort Defiance, soil and conservation teacher of the year.

Charles E. Horn, chairman of the Headwaters district, gave a synopsis of many new areas of soil and water conservation utilized by area land owners, farmers and foresters during 1995.

Robert Whitescarver, district conservationist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation District, also spoke about "innovation, change, and perseverance" in the district. Using an explicit and colorful slide presentation, Whitescarver told of ingenious measures taken by area farmers in the realms of nutrient management, flooding and soil erosion control, dead fowl composting facilities, manure holding facilities, rotational systems and contour farming systems. The latter, said Whitescarver, "has reduced erosion in the district by at least 50 percent. Another measure that we are seeing great results with is using the no-till method of crop farming." Whitescarver also told about the area's Adopt-A-Stream Program, which is seeing increased interest.

"Our streams in Augusta County came out very good based on a recent survey. Lewis Creek, which runs right through Staunton, can support trout, and our recommendation will be to maintain the viability of this resource," he said.

Mark Hollberg, county forester, said, "Wa-



Robert Whitescarver, left, USDA district conservationist, presents a Virginia Clean Water Award to Bob and Nan Brown and their son Robbie at the annual Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation banquet held Oct. 31. The Browns operate a beef cattle farm near Swoope. Photo by Jeff Ishee

## Make new holiday traditions with native plant decorations

By JEFF ISHEE

BRIDGEWATER — If you really want to do something different and artistic this Christmas season, take the advice of Michael Hill, professor of biology at Bridgewater College. Hill, who is also a founder and principle organizer of the Shenandoah Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, spoke to the membership of the chapter in mid November. The topic of discussion was the utilization of natural and indigenous materials in decorating for the upcoming holidays.

With the help of a relative, Hill has traced his ancestry directly to the band of settlers who arrived at Jamestown in the 17th century. He has even been so lucky as to find the name of one of his progenitors on the actual roster of Jamestown settlers, one Robert Behethland, listed as "Gentleman." With this link to the Virginia peninsula, Hill has become enthralled with Colonial Williamsburg and its environment. An authority in the fields of biology and botany, he has traveled to the area many times. On a family trip to Williamsburg in 1994, he found numerous ideas for those wishing to break out of the mold of decorating with only pine cones, evergreens, and holly. Many plants are readily available to make beautiful and original decorations for the upcoming holiday season. Some suggestions include:

- An osage orange wreath with red apples and yellow onions;
- Frame a doorway with both vertical and horizontal rows of fresh red apples on a background of holly. Just above the door place a centerpiece of apples and pineapple;
- For an earthy looking holiday arrange-

ment, use rosemary, sage, golden onions, garlic, and pomegranate among boughs of evergreen:

- Use peacock feathers and yarrow in a cluster of pine cones to make a holiday bouquet;

- A wreath made of oranges spiked with cloves placed among branches of boxwood;

- Use pine boughs with an assortment of pineapple, pomegranate, apples, holly and magnolia for a stunning wreath display.

Creativity was manifest in the assortment of slides that Hill shared with society members. One could hear "ooooohs" and "ahhhs" from the group as they witnessed the use of unusual ingredients in Christmas ornaments including okra, red peppers and garlic, bittersweet, money plants, and cat tails. These decorative pieces seemed to be just whims of one's imagination; however, practicality and ease of locating the materials make these projects attainable by anyone with a sense of resourcefulness. ---

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# WESTWARD, HO!

## 'Big Sky' vacation close to nature

By NANCY SORRELLS

SOMEWHERE IN MONTANA — "There are only two seasons in Montana," said the employee at the Glacier National Park campground where we were staying. "Winter and August!"

"And this year," he added, "August has been cold and snowy, so I guess we will have to wait until next year."

This past August four hearty souls (me, my husband Randy, my brother Andrew, and his wife Lori) took off for a western adventure that had been in the planning stages for quite some time. The impetus for the trip was a wedding invitation. My nephew was to marry a young lady from Montana, and the matrimonial occasion was taking place on a ranch near Livingston, Mont.

Thus the reason we were wearing three layers of clothes, knit hats and gloves and speaking through chattering teeth in the middle of August.

We called some friends back in Virginia during our two-week adventure. For those in the Valley who drift back

in time to August, you will recall a heat wave and a drought all rolled up in one.

Our telephone conversation back home went something like this:

"What's the weather like in Virginia?"

"Hot as hell. Right now I'm sitting in my living room, and it's too hot to even put clothes on!"

"Oh really," we say through chattering teeth. "It's spitting snow here."

"Could you speak up," comes the reply from muggy Virginia. "It's hard to hear you."

"That's because the wind is blowing so hard," we say. "Well we have to go now. Tomorrow we are going to hike on a glacier."

Although the weather was less than ideal, our Montana adventure certainly lived up to our expectations. There is something a little wild and spectacular about the state that can't be described unless you actually visit. Montana is the Native American word for "Big Sky" and that certainly sums it up in a nutshell. Visiting this wild country on the border

See MONTANA, page 12



Grinnell Glacier is the most accessible glacier in Glacier National Park. However to access it, tourists must cross two lakes and hike four miles up the mountain. Once at the top, hikers look down on the glacier-fed lakes far below.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

## Making the long journey and remaining friends

By SUE SIMMONS

Our trip to Colorado actually started the summer before when the Fauerbachs, Sayers and Simmons families decided once again to risk their 18-year friendship and take one more trip together — that's six adults and six teenagers — across the country into the American West.

With their usual thoroughness and creativity, Johnny Sayers and Claude Simmons (A.K.A. Skippy, Skip, or the Skipster when he crosses the Mississippi River) began planning before Christmas.

By the end of January, the SkipTik

— as the plan has come to be called — was a go. Although all concerned are informed that the SkipTik is a fluid document, we knew what we would be doing every meal and mile between July 19 and Aug. 2.

It takes a mere three-and-a-half days to get to southwestern Colorado if you can psych yourself into driving 800 plus miles a day and convince yourself that Kansas is really beautiful, and plan some interesting stops along the way.

We did all three.

The first day is the easiest. We left Stanton at O dark hundred —

5 a.m. — and arrived in Charleston, Mo., at 6 p.m. On the way we stopped at Fort Defiance, Ill., at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. There we were sure to follow the advice of the locals and toss pennies into the water to insure our swift return. For good measure I threw out four quarters and a dime from the car window as we crossed the river.

The next day we traveled to Medicine Lodge Kansas, home of Carrie Nation the famous ax-wielding temperance activist. On the way we stopped at the home of Laura Ingalls Wilder, the Bass Pro Shop, and passed the ballfield in Baxter Springs where Mickey Mantle played three years of minor league baseball.

After the third night spent in Wallenburg, Colo., we set up camp at the Amphitheater Campground above Ouray, Colo.

Ouray is a little like the beach without the ocean. The pool, the shops, and good eats downtown can occupy much of your time. There is opportunity to four wheel if you are inclined. Magnificent hiking in the Uncompaggre National Forest abounds for the purist.

Telluride lies west of Ouray, 20

miles as the crow flies and 45 miles by road, providing a respite for those who sicken of natural beauty and need a materialism fix. We made a pilgrimage there, satisfied our curiosity and left. Oprah wasn't there. Christie wasn't there. Kevin wasn't there. We saw absolutely no one famous — although I may have seen Kato

Kaelin biking down the street.

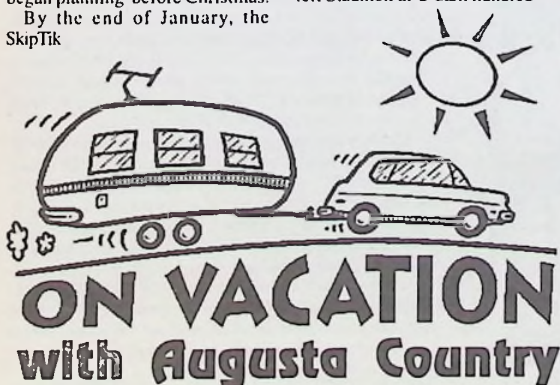
Give Colorado a try some day. It is a manageable trip and not expensive if you stay off the turf of the rich and famous.

And in case you're wondering, we are all still friends. As a matter of fact, a new SkipTik is in the offing for 1997. Should we go to Banff or Zion? ---



From left, Andy Sayers, Alex and Sarah Fauerbach, Amanda Simmons, Charlie Sayers, and Hannah Simmons take a break to enjoy the scenery at Colorado's "Bridge of Heaven."

Photo by Sue Simmons





## •Montana

*Continued from page 11*

of Canada is like walking through the middle of a panoramic photograph. Everywhere you turn, rugged scenery reaches to dizzying heights.

During our stay we rolled up 2,500 miles in a rented van and saw much of the countryside, but we were able to just scratch the surface of the Big Sky and what it has to offer. There was always the feeling of newness, youth, of a people still fresh from the frontier. And although the state certainly speaks of civilization, there is no doubt that it has not (and may never be) tamed by civilization.

You realize that more than miles separate you from the Atlantic Seaboard when the entrance sign at your campground reads: "Attention: Campers have been seriously injured and KILLED by bears in THIS campground!" Another campground warned of recent encounters with mountain lions. And yet there was something refreshing about being the only campers in a national forest campground except the visitors who stopped by early one morning — three mule deer.

The scenery reaches to dizzying heights; wildflowers sprinkle the ground at your feet and clouds zip across the horizon. Much of the wilderness is almost trackless, and the people are wary of anything that smells of bureaucracy and government intervention. Case in point: Although Montanans have bowed to a national speed limit, a person caught going less than 100 mph during the daytime is issued a \$5 warning ticket, payable on the spot, and no points go on the driving record.

Animal life, whether wild or domestic, is omnipresent, and it is not uncommon to see signs warning of cattle, sheep or horses which might be wandering across the road. Because wandering livestock on high-speed interstates can be a real problem, all of the entrance ramps to the interstates have cattleguards!

The adventure began with a plane flight into Billings, the biggest city in the state and about the size of Roanoke. Our safe arrival meant we had survived our first two trials: 1. How to pack two weeks worth of camping equipment for jet travel more adapted to regular luggage, and how to include two days worth of fancy wedding-type clothes amongst the camping gear. AND 2. How to sprint through the Denver, Colo., airport to make connection on a flight that was delayed for 90 minutes in Washington, D.C.

As we left Billings we drove up along the sandy-colored rimrocks and looked down upon the city whose landscape was carved by the Yellowstone River. With a full tank of gas — modern amenities like gas stations, hotels and restaurants are few and far between — we



Braving the gusting wind and spitting snow, vacationers, clockwise from top, Randy Sorrells, Lori Taylor, and Andrew Taylor pause on their hike around Gibson Reservoir in the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

headed west to the Rockies.

Our first stop, a lunch break in a mountain range called the Little Belts, gave us a real big hint that we were not in Virginia anymore. After sandwiches, we decided to take a quarter-mile hike up to a wa-

terfall. The trail was rocky and uphill, but not too strenuous. And yet after a hundred yards or so I began to wonder if I was, perhaps, having an asthma attack. "I have been preparing for this trip physically, I thought, I wonder what's

wrong." A glance at my companions revealed that everybody was having the same trouble breathing, and we realized that the elevation change was causing the problem. We had barely been in the state 15 hours and none of us had ever hiked at 8,000 feet before. Luckily, it was a change to which our bodies quickly adjusted, and we were no longer affected quite so harshly in the days to come.

Our trip was really divided into three different sections of the state, with two days of wedding activities thrown in the middle.

Our first adventure took us into the Lewis and Clark National Forest which is the doorway to the Bob Marshall Wilderness. After locating the tiny towns of Choteau and Augusta we took a gravel forest service road 25 miles into nowhere until we reached the Sun River Canyon. There we spent a couple of days hiking around Gibson Reservoir, a 1,300-acre lake which harnesses the Sun River and sends it on its way as a means of irrigating the region's ranches.

One day's hike took us around the reservoir and across the 200-foot dam, while the next took us on a 14-mile round trip hike in the opposite direction. The total number of people we met on the trail in two days of hiking was four. Total amount of

incredible scenery was infinite.

We also met some friendly locals including Pat and Kathy Hegland who run the family bar and grill — the only food and drink for 25 miles — and Gerald Bliss, a retired Air Force pilot busy building inaccessible cabins up in the wilderness.

When we left the Sun River Canyon and headed north to Glacier National Park, we knew we were trading the paucity of people for some of the most spectacular geologic sights on this continent. But the chance to hike up to a glacier and study the scenery of this truly unique environment was worth the trade.

As we learned from a naturalist who led our hike around cliffs and above jewel-like glacier lakes up to Grinnell Glacier at 6,500 feet, the park should actually be called GLACIATED NATIONAL PARK, because it is landscape that was carved out by giant glaciers 10,000 years ago. Today there are between 40 and 50 tiny glaciers remaining in the park, mostly in remote mountain valleys, and they are shrinking every year.

"There are three things to remember," noted the naturalist as he pointed to the cliff walls against which we were pressed: "Sedimentation, when the area was un-

See GLACIERS, page 13

### From Stuarts Draft to the western frontier

# John Colter: Mountain man

By NANCY SORRELLS

When our journey through Montana and Wyoming presented us with the chance to stay at the primitive National Forest campground called "Colter," I knew we had to pitch our tent for historical purposes.

It was a nice quiet campground located just outside of Cooke City, Mont., which marks the northeast entrance to Yellowstone National Park. Most of the campground forest was struggling to regrow in the wake of enormous forest fires which swept through the area several years ago. But the solitude and location were not the reasons I insisted we stay for a night at Colter. In this part of the West, John Colter is one of the most famous, mysterious and legendary mountain men around. He is proclaimed as the "Discoverer of Yellowstone," and the tall tales of his years exploring the region are still retold to wide-eyed Easterners, a process commonly referred to as "stuffing the dudes."

But, being from Augusta County, I had already heard of John Colter and had read the historical highway marker located near his birthplace in Stuarts Draft. Yes, indeed John Colter the mountain man was a Valley boy born and bred, and the name in its various spellings (Coalter, Coulter) still lingers in Augusta County.

There are few hard facts surrounding the action-packed life of Colter. Born between 1770 and 1775 in Augusta County, the first evidence of him is found in 1803 at Maysville, Ky., when he enlisted in the now-famous Lewis and Clark expedition sent by President Thomas Jefferson to explore the territory in the new Louisiana Purchase.

There is some evidence pointing to the fact that Colter had already moved to Kentucky when he enlisted, while other stories say that he traveled from Virginia to Kentucky to join the adventurers. At any rate, he apparently met the advertised requirement for "good hunters, stout, healthy, unmarried men, accustomed to the woods and capable of bearing bodily fatigue in a pretty considerable degree." As a newly enlisted private, Colter earned \$5 per month.

No pictures of Colter survive, but the one description of him conjures up the image of a mountain man about 5 feet 10

inches in height with "an open, ingenious, and pleasing countenance of the Daniel Boone stamp."

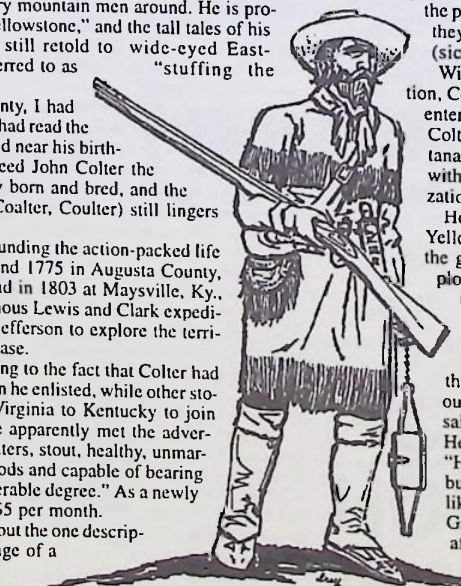
Colter became an important member of the Lewis and Clark party and received frequent mention for his hunting skills. At the conclusion of the three-year expedition, as the troupe headed back to St. Louis, Colter applied to the leaders to take leave of the party and turn west again to try his hand at trapping. Permission was granted and Clark recorded the separation in his journal: "Colter one of our men expressed a desire to join some trappers... as we are disposed to be of service to anyone of our party who had performed their duty as well as Colter had done, we agreed to allow him the privilege provided no one of the party would ask or expect a similar permission to which they all agreed that they wished Colter every success (sic)."

With the separation from the Lewis and Clark expedition, Colter soon left the domain of documented history and entered the realm of legend. For almost three more years, Colter wandered the territory which would become Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. He trapped, explored, tangled with the Blackfeet Indians, and made contact with civilization just often enough to circulate his name.

He certainly explored much of the territory that is Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Park and beheld the geothermal and geologic wonders there. He also explored an area near Cody, Wy., that is also full of geothermal wonders and which soon became known among trappers as "Colter's Hell" for the boiling waters and brimstone that abounded there.

The legends that grew around Colter bordered on the fantastic. Just as any good mountain man, he could outrun, outfight, outwit and outhunt anyone alive. It was said that in the winter he would make the trip to Colter's Hell alone with just a Hudson Bay blanket for warmth. "He'd get down in the hollow under a big pine tree and burrow into the snow and then just drop off to sleep like a baby," recollected one man. "As a matter of fact, Grandpa told me that Colter gave up usin' (the blanket) after that trip, 'cause he used to sweat somethin' awful blowin'."

See COLTER, page 14





## Notes from the road

## The Bridge of Heaven and beyond

By SUE SIMMONS

SOMEWHERE IN COLORADO -- It took seven days on the road and three days of hiking.

We had to negotiate a washed out bridge and rusty culvert, no fewer than 37 switchbacks, two slushy snow fields, and endure the hot rays of a much closer sun.

Finally, we arrived at the Bridge of Heaven and no one wanted to leave.

No, this was not the Pearly Gates. It was a Rocky Mountain High in Colorado.

We were standing on a 12,368-foot summit above the town of Ouray, Colo. Below and beyond us lay the majestic peaks of the San Juan Mountains, the Grand Mesa of Colorado, and the Lasalle Range in far off Utah.

This was the Quest. A must-see, must-do if you ever find yourself in Ouray

A town of 800 people, Ouray — elevation 7,700 feet — is nestled in the northern edge of the San Juan Mountains of Colorado's southwest quadrant in the shadow of snow-capped Mount Abrams. Once a thriving hardrock mining community, mine ruins and ghost towns dot the landscape. Today locals make their money catering to the town's growing tourist industry.

A municipal hot springs pool invites visitors to soak in its 106-degree waters. It's also the place that dusty campers such as ourselves can take a cheap shower and soothe tight muscles.

We stayed in the Amphitheater, a U.S. Forest Service campground of only 30 sites



Hannah Simmons, Sarah Fauerbach, and Charlie Sayers stand on top of the world at the Bridge of Heaven.

Photo by Claude Simmons located a half-mile out of and 700 feet above the town.

Ouray is a hiker's paradise and the best has to be Bridge of Heaven.

Accessed by Horse Thief trail that winds out of the Dexter Creek drainage northeast of town, the trail gains 3,700 feet elevation over five and a half miles. It runs through Aspen groves up through sub-Alpine fir and spruce forests to high treeless mountain meadows and tundra. The trail is carpeted with mountain lupine and wildflowers of every color.

The hike took five hours one way. The higher we climbed the more imperative it became for some of the less conditioned of us to still our beating hearts. It was disheartening to look up at

the summit and see our children running across the face of it. We knew we had miles to go and elevation to gain.

We kept at it slowly and eventually we reached the Bridge of Heaven. To the left was the peak and our destination. To the right was the trail to Desolation Creek — a place we sure didn't want to go.

The Bridge itself is a narrow bare ridge that connects two nameless peaks. As we approached it, hearts beating and breath shortened by the altitude, we were unprepared for the steep cliffs on the other side.

The tenderhearted among us gritted our teeth and slowly picked our way to the summit, careful not to look down.

Once off the bridge and on the peak, we firmly planted ourselves on the ground to enjoy a lunch of spam, deviled ham, crackers, apples and granola bars.

It really was hard to leave this place.

Being up high leaves you literally breathless. The thin air is clearer, cleaner, and crisper. The scale is indescribable, leaving you overwhelmed and philosophical. You feel immediately exhilarated.

Pride also keeps you on the top. Not everyone can make this hike. The accomplishment is hard to relinquish.

So you stay. You try to drink in every detail. You may need to conjure it up someday when you're back on flat ground, where the air isn't crisp, and the scale of things can be incredibly small.

Sometime when you need a Rocky Mountain High. —



Why travel through Kansas? To see the world's largest ball of barbed wire at the Barbed Wire Museum, of course. AC staff writer Sue Simmons came across this "must see" attraction during her family's summer vacation.

Photo by Claude Simmons

## Why Kansas?

By SUE SIMMONS

SOMEWHERE IN KANSAS -- Dorothy and Toto wanted to get back there. So how bad can it be? Kansas is a test. To get to Colorado you have to go through it.

For a real Kansas experience, you have to get off the interstate and onto a U.S. Highway. If you do this is a small sample of what you can see.

1. Fort Leavenworth
2. Amelia Earhart's Birthplace
3. The Greyhound Racing Hall of Fame
4. Eisenhower's boyhood home
5. The Barbed Wire Museum (and the world's largest ball of barbed wire)
6. The Stone Post Museum
7. Pony Express Home Station
8. The geographic center of the United States
9. The place where Home On the Range was written
10. George Washington Carver's homestead

11. The Coronado expedition's most northern terminus
12. The Flint Hills
13. The O'Henry Candy company
14. The Coleman Company
15. Cottonwood Falls Court-house

16. Oregon trail, Santa Fe trail, Pony Express ruts
17. Carrie Nation Home
18. Jacob's Well (the world's largest hand dug well)
19. Laura Ingalls Wilder's house on the Banks of Plum Creek
20. Dodge City
21. Dorothy, Toto, and the Yellow Brick Road.

When in Kansas you must eat Chicken Fried Steak. Served with mashed potatoes and green peas, you'll know you're in Kansas if there is white gravy on the top and the bottom. And don't be afraid to try the Rocky Mountain Oysters served as an appetizer.

And that goes for your little dog, Toto, too. —

## Glaciers

Continued from page 12

der an ocean; uplift, when the mountains were formed; and then glaciation, when giant moving mountains of ice scooped out the region."

As small as Grinnell Glacier is by prehistoric standards, we were still impressed, especially after scrambling up a steep, half mile final ascent to reach its brink. The glacier is more than a mile across and hundreds of feet deep. It moves forward about an inch a day. The turquoise lake at its edge had floating icebergs as portions of the glacier calved off in an ever-changing evolution. The icy waters of the lake are at least 150 deep.

With the naturalist in the lead, we hop-scotched across stones in the glacier's outlet creek, crossed a snowfield and then were upon the glacier. Deep crevices and glacier wells were among the formations we peered down into as we stepped gingerly along the icy slope.

Despite the fact that we had to take a boat to the end of one lake, portage to a second lake, take a boat to the end of that lake and then hike four miles straight up, Grinnell Glacier is one of the most accessible glaciers within the park. It is little wonder that such formations are still not fully understood or studied, and we felt privileged to have visited for a short while.

The second week of touring took us back and forth across the borders of Wyoming and Montana. Here in Yellowstone National Park the geologic wonders are just as spectacular, but unpleasantly aromatic.

Because of the area's proximity to the earth's core, the volcanic bowels of the earth provide plenty of nature's more bizarre displays. The geysers are interesting, but just as surreal are the bubbling pits of mud. The hot springs

See GEYSERS, page 14



At the brink of Grinnell Glacier, size and distance are deceiving. Randy Sorrells gazes up at Grinnell Glacier which measures one

mile across and 350 feet deep. The lake is more than 150 feet deep.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells



## •Colter

*Continued from page 12*

Colter was also a pretty fair shot with a rifle, the same storyteller recounted. Most trappers in those days refused to shoot beaver because the bullet holes ruined the pelt, but not Colter. He simply put the bullet through one eye so that it came out the other. "For a time they say Colter tried hittin' one eye so that the bullet came out the mouth, but he gave that up after a time when he found he was gettin' so many ricochets off the beavers' teeth."

The most legendary story of all involves Colter's naked footrace for his life. The story goes that in 1808 Colter and his trapping companion were along the Jefferson River in Montana when they were surprised by Blackfoot Indians. Colter's companion was killed and Colter himself was stripped and tortured. But the slick-talking Colter apparently convinced the Indians into giving him a 200-yard head start in a race for his life. The naked Colter raced six miles through prickly pear cactus and then dived into the Jefferson River and hid under a floating log jam until nightfall. Seven days later Colter showed up in his birthday suit at a nearby fort.

Today the legend lives on and runners wishing to relive Colter's sprint can do so at Headwaters State Park in Montana. Every September, the John Colter Run covers a seven-mile prickly pear laden course. Runners these days are allowed to wear clothes and shoes!

Colter finally made it back to the edges of civilization in 1810 when he settled down in Missouri. Sometime within the next year he married a woman named Sally, who may have been a Native American. Within three years, the legendary mountain man came to a rather inglorious end, dying of jaundice in November 1813. Although he lived only 40 years or so, John Colter packed enough into that lifetime to create a lasting name for himself. From Stuarts Draft to the wonders of Yellowstone, the Colter name has not been forgotten. —



**A 10-mile trek through the Rocky Mountains in Gallatin National Forest takes hikers to a mountain lake and cliffs**

**formed by an ancient volcanic explosion.**

Photo by Randy Sorrells



**The river gorge carved out by Yellowstone River and called the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone is found in Yellowstone National**

**Park. Established in 1872, it was the world's first national park.**

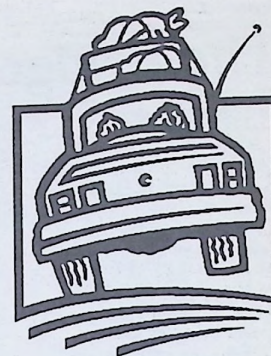
Photo by Nancy Sorrells



**Water falls 109 feet at the Lower Falls in The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. The can-**

**yon itself is 20 miles long and 800 to 1,200 feet deep.**

Photo by Nancy Sorrells



## •Geysers

*Continued from page 13*

are acidic enough to eat a person's boots right off his feet.

Yellowstone is just as important today for its ecological significance as it is as a wildlife preserve. It was here that wolves were released early this year in an attempt to maintain the environmental balance that once existed within the park. And although we did not see any wolves, mountain lions or bears within Yellowstone, we did see plenty of bison, elk, moose, a coyote, a ptarmigan and a red fox.

Our trip came to a close with a more somber visit to Earthquake Lake just west of Yellowstone. It was here that an 1959 earthquake, the largest magnitude of any quake in the Lower 48 at the time, caused a mountain to shear off. In the process more than 20 people at a campground were buried forever, and a lake was created out of the dammed Madison River. The Army Corps of Engineers had to be called in to get the river flowing again, but a lake and a memorial visitor center remain as visible reminders of that day. An eye-opening "gee-whiz" fact that we learned is that Montana is second only to California among the Lower 48 in numbers of temblors experienced annually — about 1,000 in this region which is the headwaters of the Missouri River.

The final days of our Big Sky experience were spent in the Gallatin National Forest, just north of Yellowstone and reachable only after receiving detailed instructions from those who have been there before. A nearly deserted campground and a 10-mile roundtrip hike in which we saw only two other hikers, reminded us that there are yet uncivilized paradises in this country.

All too soon, however, we had to make our way back to Billings for our flight home. As we took off from the airport perched on the rimrocks above the city, we suddenly had new respect for the Yellowstone River below and the geologic turmoil it must go through to make it this far east. We also left with a little bit of the Big Sky in our hearts and minds — a place filled with memories to which we could escape when the bustle of civilization in the east becomes unbearable. —



# Augusta County: Rich in forestry, wildlife resources

By JEFF ISHEE

It was a beautiful autumn day on which Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Tech College of Forestry and Wildlife Resources sponsored the 1995 Annual Fall Forestry and Wildlife Bus Tour.

Almost 60 people arrived at the Churchville IGA parking lot at 8 a.m. Oct. 19 to board the bus which would take participants on a scenic trip through the county.

At the first stop on the tour, Harry L. Hane Jr., a professor in the department of forestry at Virginia Tech, described the improvements made to Rogers Huff tract of timberland which lies west of Jennings Gap.

"Here," Hane said, "our good friend and steward of the forest Rogers Huff has established a private game reserve with primary emphasis on prevention of soil erosion, riparian area restoration, crop tree release, and providing habitat for wildlife." It was clearly visible to the gathered onlookers that Huff had devoted countless hours of devotion and hard work in establishing the numerous conservation features of this woodland of just under 200 acres. Wood duck boxes were located around small ponds, shrubs had been planted meticulously alongside a stream to prevent soil erosion and provide cover for quail, pheasant



Augusta's recent forestry and wildlife tour showcased the importance of properly managing natural resources. The photo at left shows two cross-sections taken from white ash trees, both 12 years old. The larger one is the result of proper forestry management. The smaller one is the result of no management.

Photo by Jeff Ishee

and chukker. White pine seedlings were cultivated along a steep hillside, and a grape arbor was established for grouse habitat.

Al Bourgeois, wildlife biologist supervisor for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries explained, "Ruffed grouse relish wild grapes, so on this tract, we developed a plan to drop about a half-acre of low value timber that had wild grapes in the upper canopy. Now, we have grapes at ground level, and sunlight is able to penetrate and help regrowth of the forest floor for habitat. Rogers Huff now has prime habitat for grouse with this establishment of both vertical and horizontal arbors."

To show how far the tract of land had come in conservation mea-

sures, Huff then provided a working demonstration of his bird dogs Brownie, Drifter, and Annie. Within minutes, and in plain view of the assembled crowd, the dogs located gamebirds in the brush, and stood in flawless pointing stances. It was a fitting finale to this stop on the tour, and clearly showed what an individual, with the advice of professionals, can do to restore forest land to an undeveloped environment for wildlife and timber.

Next on the excursion was a trip to the Marble Valley farm of 1992 Tree Farmer of the Year Bill Braunworth. Here is a tract of forest land which is an education in sustainable forestry. One of five tree farms that Braunworth and his wife Helen operate, this acreage is in pristine condition. A man clearly passionate about his trees, this steward of Valley forests has tagged for identification seemingly every tree on the side of this particular mountain.

"Every landowner must find a balance between wildlife, recreation, and silviculture," Braunworth told the gath-

ering assembled in his woods. "If you really want to grow good trees, you must clear cut the land, and regenerate the forest with new growth and proper management. We rely a lot on stump growth on our farms. A stump in the ground is a lot easier to grow than a new planting. Stumps continuously reproduce and grow," Braunworth reported.

Here on this minute percentage of Braunworth's vast acreage of Augusta County woodlands, the gathering saw not only excellent specimens of walnut, oak, hickory, ash, and other hardwoods, but viewed flawless sites of Norway Spruce, Colorado Blue Spruce, White and Serbian Spruce, and Douglas Fir. Braunworth has converted old cattle ponds into wildlife habitats by surrounding the sites with willow, walnut, dogwood, and autumn olive. Rob Nelson, CFM Forester for Westvaco, pointed out that Braunworth had provided an ideal environment for wildlife by planting cover right up to the waters edge. He also related, "If all tree farmers were like Bill Braunworth, Virginia would be a forest wonderland."

Braunworth concluded this stop on the tour by saying, "Diversity in tree stands is critical now with the gypsy moth infestation. Each tree farmer should micromanage based on stands and sites of woodland. Spend a lot of time with your trimming saw in the woods, and let us all improve Virginia's woodlands."

After a lunch stop the tour went on to the site of the old Augusta Springs Hotel which was known many years ago for its curative waters found on the grounds. Here

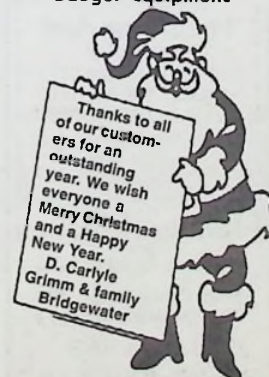
the U.S. Forest Service has created a "Wetlands Trail," one of Augusta County's best kept secrets. The only evidence you will see from the road indicating the trail's presence is a brown sign depicting a pair of binoculars.

David Rhodes, the District Ranger for the Deerfield District of the George Washington National Forest, led the tour group through this peaceful and undomesticated nature trail (accessible by wheelchair). Rhodes noted that "What started out as a swampy beaver pond has been saved as a unique habitat. This trail was built over a three-year period, and has about 127 different bird species in the area. The waterfowl include nesting wood duck pairs, mallards, and Canada geese. We have a prolific wood duck population, and every spring the site is full of wood ducklings scattering everywhere." Ranger Rhodes also said, "We have hopes to restore an old pond site (which used to be the Augusta Springs Hotel centerpiece during the last century) for trout fishing, with accessibility for the handicapped. It will be a long term project, but with volunteers, we can do it."

Entomologist Jeff Witcosky concluded the forestry and wildlife tour by reporting that "almost half of Augusta County woodland had serious defoliation this year due to the gypsy moth... There appears to be a reduction of damage due to a population collapse brought on by disease. Still, we had defoliation in 100,000 out of 180,000 acres in the Deerfield District this year."

As it stands, Augusta County claims about 13,000 acres of private forest, which is not very high when compared to other counties in the Commonwealth. However, the quality and value of the standing timber as well as the value added lumber is considerable. Augusta Extension agent Rick Heidel stated, "We have over \$65 million worth of value added lumber in the county which is clearly worth the management and protection that the tree farmers of our area provide." ---

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# Yesterday once more

## Workshop helps establish tradition of family historian

By NANCY SORRELLS

"How many of you have your family pictures stuck in a shoebox somewhere?" asked Janice Nisly recently at a Creative Memories workshop held in Staunton.

A few tentative hands in the group went up, and Janice nodded knowingly. She was conducting the workshop in order to help people find a better, safer and more organized way of preserving family pictures and other memorabilia. Every one in the group brought a handful of pictures, children's drawings or other souvenirs like ticket stubs or programs. At the end of the 2 1/2-hour workshop each person left with an attractive, creatively designed page ready to go into a family album.

Just as importantly, each person gained the knowledge of what materials to use and not to use when preserving a family's history. Many photo albums have harmful chemicals and acids that will actually destroy photos in just a few years. Magnetic albums are particularly bad as are regular scrapbooks with pages that are highly acidic.

Although more expensive than dimestore albums and scrapbooks, Creative Memories albums are acid free and PVC free, two agents which destroy photographs in regular albums. Considering the amount of money invested in film and developing, preserving the photographs makes sense finan-

cially as well as from an historical point of view.

"Pictures preserve the past, enrich the present and inspire hope for the future," Janice noted during her workshop. "Creative Memories albums are safe and meaningful," she added, noting that the albums come in several different sizes and styles. All of the albums can hold up to 45 pages (90 sides) and will lie flat when opened.

Having a safe album is not enough warned Janice, if inappropriate supplies are used. Some glues are very harmful to prints and paper items and cellophane tape should never be used. And, although it is important to always identify pictures, regular ink will often bleed through the back of a picture or fade away enough that it becomes illegible.

All of the supplies used in the workshop have passed a safety test. There are photosafe mounting supplies and acid-free, fade-proof, waterproof ink. Even the glues have passed a rigorous test.

"You need to make your albums meaningful," Janice explained. "They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but only if you write something down." She suggested four different ways in which album pages could come to life. The first way is to simply write the "who,

what, when and where" on each page. This easy labeling will give meaning to future generations who look at the album.

Another idea is to use colored pens to add comments and captions that provide further explanation to the pages. A third suggestion is to use bullet journaling; in other words add a few explanatory phrases on each page. The final way Janice suggested creating an album is by writing a story, an illustrated story with pictures and other items.

"The key is to make it meaningful," she said. "In an album you have the space to write and tell the story and then add the memorabilia."

The workshop also gave additional ideas for spicing up a memory book. Instead of page after page of rectangular pictures, Janice suggested creative cropping. Some of the pictures in her books are cut in the shapes of stars, hearts and diamonds. Others have rounded corners or have distracting backgrounds cut out. Pages are also enlivened with special acid-free colored paper as well as stickers.

"There are many different kinds of albums you can do. You can do family albums, albums on each person or theme albums like for a special trip or family vacation,"



Janice Nisly shows Clara Taylor of Staunton how to display family photos in an album. Photo by Nancy Sorrells

she said. Some people, she added, do holiday albums. A Christmas album, for instance, would have a few pages from each Christmas and be added to year after year.

For those who have boxes of pictures to go through, Janice offered this advice: "Start with your current pictures and get those up

to date and then work backwards."

Not only will you and your family be pleased with the results, she said, but you will be establishing a legacy for the family.

"We must establish a new tradition of a family photo historian!" she concluded. —

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# Preserving historic structures focus of seminar

By NANCY SORRELLS

Understanding old buildings of the area and helping the people who live in these historic structures was the purpose of a day-long workshop held recently in the Augusta County Courthouse and jointly sponsored by the Augusta County Historical Society, Historic Staunton Foundation and the Valley Conservation Council.

The day-long workshop opened with an illustrated talk by two members of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), Calder Loth, senior architectural historian, and historian John Salmon. They discussed the services offered by VDHR and explained what it means to place a structure on the Virginia and National Historic Registers.

"Listing in the registers is the state and federal way of applauding what the owner has done. There are no restrictions placed on the house," explained Salmon. He added that a building has to qualify to be on the register, meeting certain historic requirements. "We compare it to other similar buildings and determine its historic value," he said. He added that, although it is assumed buildings will be altered over time, the structure must still have "integrity." "It must still represent what it was."

The benefits of going through the process of listing your house include learning about the building you live in — its history and style. "If you think you have a worthy property, write or call VDHR and they will help you get started," Salmon said. Eventually an owner will want to send a good history of

the property, including photographs to a panel which will decide whether or not to recommend proceeding with the listing process.

The formal listing process is more complicated and Salmon indicated that there is a 60-page booklet available detailing how to fill out the 4-page nomination form. Although property owners can do the work themselves, many opt to hire a professional firm to do the work. VDHR can't write the form for potential nominations, but they can offer review and editing advice.

Part of the research process involves researching the history of the house using courthouse records. Salmon noted that the National Park Service has produced a book which serves as a guide for this part of the nomination.

Every year approximately 60 historic properties are added to the Virginia register, but the whole nomination and evaluation process can take a year or longer.

The second portion of the VDHR presentation, conducted by Loth, involved a discussion of the easement program directed by

VDHR. The program, launched in 1966, is a way of protecting vulnerable historic properties. "It is a way of keeping things in private ownership, on the tax rolls and preserved," Loth said.

Technically, a preservation easement is a legal agreement between the owner and the state of Virginia that the historic property will not be inappropriately changed so as to alter its historic significance. The agreement is in perpetuity. The properties placed under easement must already be on the Virginia register.

There are many reasons why a person would place an easement on property ranging from the more practical tax incentives to the more emotional reason of a sense of stewardship.

Virginia property owners interested in learning more about Virginia's historical registers and preservation easements should write: The Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 221 Governor Street, Richmond, Va. 23219 or call 804-786-3143. The free booklet "Virginia's Historical Registers:

**E**very year approximately 60 historic properties are added to the Virginia register, but the whole nomination and evaluation process can take a year or longer.

A Guide for Property Owners," can also be requested.

Following Loth and Salmon, the morning portion of the workshop concluded with a slide presentation by Augusta County Historical Society President Ann McCleary. She gave a brief overview of Augusta County architecture from the 18th century to the present, noting that local styles often followed the pattern books very loosely. Ells, or wings which jutted out at right angles from houses, were popular in the Valley in the 1830s, while Greek Revival influences appeared in the 1840s. Perhaps the most common style of house in the area was the I-house, which was one room deep

and two rooms wide. "This was very typical of Augusta County and continued well after the Civil War," Ms. McCleary said. "It was a very adaptable style."

She also added that Scots-Irish and German influences can be seen in Augusta County architecture. "Although I have seen only two houses with German floorplans, I have seen many others which had German elements like German-style doors or have paintings and wood cutouts of hearts and tulips."

As a final note, McCleary stressed that old paintings, stenciling or drawings on the walls of houses, mantels or woodwork should always be preserved. ---

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## Country Trader

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# Schoolhouse News

## Dance program brings cultures from around the world to BME

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

**CEDAR GREEN** — A cinnamon twist of world-record proportions was made Nov. 10 at Beverley Manor Elementary School. And BME students, teachers, and parents accomplished the task without ever turning on an electric mixer or measuring out a single cup of flour.

Although Guinness wasn't on hand to record the event, dance instructor Irene Sarnelle said the cinnamon twist formed by the more than 250 participants in the Appalachian Big Circle Mountain Dance was the largest she had ever seen.

"It's a world's record," proclaimed Mrs. Sarnelle as students, teachers, and parents swirled around the school's gymnasium floor in the traditional American folk dance.

The occasion for the record-setting formation was the culmination of a three-week dance program for kindergarten through second-grade students at BME. Funded through a grant by the school's parent-teacher association, Mrs. Sarnelle taught students dances from different cultures

around the world.

"They asked me to do harvest dances," Mrs. Sarnelle said. "I chose dances which are joyful and fun, dances which might have been used at harvest time."

Different grade levels chose the countries which they wanted to study. Kindergarten students studied Mexico and Africa. First-grade students explored the roots of American, Scottish, and Irish dance traditions. Second-graders adopted the German culture as their course of study.

Involvement by BME parents made the program possible, according to Al Costa, principal.

"Each year grants are harder and harder to get," he said. "We were turned down for an artist-in-residence grant because we don't have a staff art instructor. We have to more or less provide for ourselves."

With \$1,350 funded by the BME Parent Teacher Board, students are being treated to the instruction of Mrs. Sarnelle and were accompanied in their recent performance by accordionist Ron Tomocik of Colorado. The school's third, fourth, and fifth grade classes will be studying cultures and dances of other countries during January and February.

But it was grades K through 2 which dazzled their audience Nov. 10. The BME gym was packed with parents and grandparents who had come to the school for the morning performance by the students.

Setting the stage for the event were BME gifted and talented students who decorated the gymnasium walls with flags and other drawings from countries around the world. GAT students also served as MCs announcing each class' performance.

Second-grade students opened the show with "Ja mit den Fussen" and the Zigeuner Polka, two German dances.

The Cumberland Reel and the Appalachian Big Circle Mountain Dance, traditional American numbers, were performed by first-grade students. Kindergarten students wowed the crowd with Zaire, Africa's Wan Sabue dance, Mexico's Bird Dance and La Cucaracha, and South Africa's Pata

Pata. Brightly colored native costumes of the different countries lent authenticity to the event.

After the students' performances, it was time for everyone to get into the act. Students and teachers drew from members of the audience to help people learn some of the multicultural two-stepping. Soon everyone from baby brothers and sisters to grandparents were swirling and twirling around the gym. The room, most often used for physical education activities, took on the atmosphere of a dance hall at harvest time as the celebrants danced to the music.

It was during the audience participation part of the program that the group made the world record "cinnamon twist."

The Appalachian Big Circle Mountain Dance begins with everyone joining hands to make a big circle, in this case a circle which spanned the perimeter of the gymnasium floor. The dance opens with all the dancers moving in a counterclockwise direction. At one point a dancer breaks from the circle and leads dancers into what becomes a counterclockwise inward spiral. When the leader reaches the center he reverses direction. With some dancers moving counterclockwise and others moving clockwise, the "cinnamon twist" is formed. Watching the 250 BME dancers swirling around the gym floor was almost dizzying.

"It was wonderful," said Ms.



**Ben Condro and Autumn Crawford, kindergarten students at Beverley Manor Elementary, swirl during a performance of the Mexican Bird Dance.**

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

Sarnelle of the students' performances. "It was interesting because practice was practice, but once they put on something (costumes), it was real. It was a pleasure to work at the school because they have a lot of parent support. I've taught in a lot of schools, but I would have to say this school has more parent support than I've ever seen."

"We were looking for something different," Cathy Youell, a BME parent who helped organize the program said of the cultural and dance experience for the students. "I had worked with Irene before and knew how gifted she was. The teachers have practiced and practiced. They've been real sports."

The dance program was more than just fun for BME students.

"To me, music is my language," said accordionist Tomocik. "Music of another culture is almost like speaking another language. Dance and music are two ways you can make inroads to learning about a particular culture. Promoting an understanding among cultures is a

beneficial enterprise."

Ms. Sarnelle, who is an adjunct instructor of dance at Mary Baldwin College and holds a master's degree in kinesiology (the study of movement) from James Madison University, is originally from Athens, Greece and now lives in Craigsville. She noted that the cultural and dance study undertaken by the BME students has many benefits.

"It makes them more aware of other cultures, and it teaches them about working as a group," she said. "And then there are just some basic things they learn about taking up space. Children get along better in life if they're more aware of their space." Ms. Sarnelle said the BME dance program "all went together more smoothly" because of the teachers' efforts with their students.

"They did an excellent job," Principal Costa said of the BME students and teachers. "I'm surprised at how well they picked up on the music. The parent turnout was tremendous." —

## RHS Honor Society inducts new members

By HEATHER CALDWELL

**GREENVILLE** -- Seventeen members were recently inducted into the RHS National Honor Society. These members include Ryan Hunter Barnett, Jaime Leigh Brown, Heather Noel Caldwell, Samantha Dawn Campbell, Darlene Sue Ann Catanese, Sara June Chiaramonte, Allen James Drobinski, Jeri Rae Engleman, Cynthia Denise Ferguson, Michael Shane Finnegan, Adam Garrett Hill, Bethany Jo Oliver, Jonathan Ewing Pollock, Cynthia Love Seay, Hugh Olen Swisher, Walter Lowrie Tucker IV, and Elijah Mark Ward.

These students had to have a 3.5

or better grade-point average. They took part in a ceremony presented to the whole school with the inductees lighting individual candles from a unity candle. After hearing a speech about leadership, character, and service, all members, along with their parents proceeded to the school cafeteria

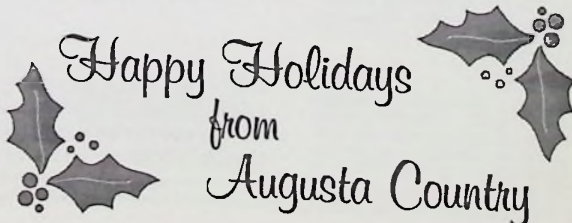
to feast on a lovely breakfast provided by honor society members and sponsors Nancy Brown and Rick Heatley.

For a special surprise, last year's sponsor, Julia Wilkerson, was presented with a handpainted lamp as a token of appreciation from the students. ---



**Irene Sarnelle, dance instructor, adjusts Michelle Jones' head dress prior to the start of the cultural dance performance held recently at Beverley Manor Elementary School.**

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton





# Clymore students explore Native American culture

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

FORT DEFIANCE — The Hopi, Native Americans who live on three mesas in the high plateau desert of northeast Arizona, have reached across some 3,000 miles to help students at Clymore Elementary School in Fort Defiance learn about Native American culture.

Schools in Augusta County observed November as Native American Month, and the occasion brought Peter Brobeil of Staunton, who for three years lived with the Hopi people, to Clymore Elementary Nov. 6-10 to teach students about Hopi customs and traditions. Through his connection with the Hopi, Brobeil was able to arrange for a very special exchange for Clymore students. At Brobeil's request, the Hopi sent activities, video tapes of dances, and an audio tape of a drum performance for Clymore students to use in their Native American studies. Brobeil called the Hopi's response to his request "highly unusual."

"The Hopi are the most traditional of all Native Americans in America today," he said. "Everything is based on their religion. They have reached across 3,000 miles to the Clymore Elementary students to say we're all brothers and sisters of the same Great Spirit."

An artist-in-residence funded by the Clymore Parent Teacher Organization and Augusta County's Gifted and Tal-



Clymore Elementary School students paint a Native American honor stick. The students studied the Hopi culture under the guidance of Staunton artist Peter Brobeil.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

ented Program, Brobeil used Native American art to introduce Clymore students to the Hopi culture.

"These children will never go to the Hopi, and hopefully I've brought a little bit of Hopi to them," Brobeil said.

To the Hopi, Brobeil is "Da Ha Pete," which translated means "Uncle Pete." During his time on the reservation he was employed as a teacher by the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Hopi have a bleak modern day existence, according to Brobeil, who says the Indians

live much as they did centuries ago. Hopi villages do not have plumbing, electricity, or sewage systems, and the Indians have no employment. They are primarily artists and craftspeople who earn a living through tourist trade. Although Brobeil, who is a native of Connecticut, holds a master's degree in science from Michigan State University and was once a professor there, he has chosen to pursue his own talent as an artist. His subjects are the Hopi people with whom he lived. Brobeil's watercolors and Number 2 pencil drawings show a people who re-

main proud despite the "hardship and suffering" of their everyday life.

"The Hopi culture is a highly religious society, and everything operates on respect," Brobeil explained.

Part of the Hopi tradition and a concept which Brobeil stressed to Clymore students is the Indians' respect for the earth.

"Everything is useful. Nothing is thrown away," he said. For Clymore students, this philosophy "carries over to environmental concerns," according to Brobeil.

Likewise in their art, the Hopi remain true to the basics.

"I want to give the students a sense that Hopi art, although very simple, is very elegant and utilizes what's available in the environment," Brobeil said.

One art project that Clymore students worked on under Brobeil's guidance was spirit stones. Students used stones which they gathered from school grounds in the project which required that each student paint a figure on a stone of their choice. Although the plain looking stones with stick-figure images of birds or deer painted on them in black may look simple, the concept behind is indicative of the Hopi mindset.

"The Hopi believe that this (spirit stone) is more than just a stone. They believe that all down through the ages that stone was put there and somehow it was meant to be picked up at a certain point

in time by a certain person," Brobeil said. "When that happens, it is a person's spirit stone. It's something they don't take lightly."

With his background in science, Brobeil noted that the "health of any ecosystem is dependent on its diversity." This applies to societies as well, he said.

"The more cultural diversity you have, the richer is the country. Everybody is giving something to the entire culture," he said.

The importance of a cultural exchange between the Hopi and the Clymore students is obvious, Brobeil said.

"It's very important to have people from different regions come in and share," he said. "It breaks down the potential for isolationism."

Also speaking to Clymore students was Mac Fulton of Weyers Cave. As a Native American reenactor, Fulton appeared before students dressed in Indian garb. He brought with him traditional Native American tools and clothes which he displayed for students to see. By all accounts, and as the student created Native American art exhibited in Clymore's hallways reflects, the students' study of Indian culture has been a valuable experience.

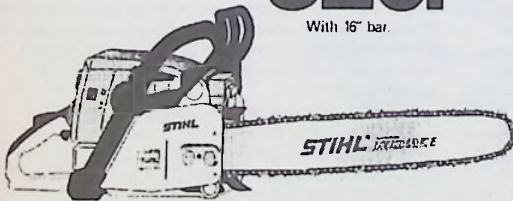
"Part of the success (of the program) is attributed to the participation of parent volunteers," said Sue Correll, assistant principal at Clymore. —

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## Top lady harrier runs for RHS

By MARY CHIARAMONTE

GREENVILLE -- A streak of light and a stream of smoke... that's our Emily Hewitt! Emily transferred to Riverheads High School last year and joined the cross country program. She is known as one of the greatest assets on the team and is also the captain.

Emily had been running junior varsity track in Montana in the 7th grade, participated in the hurdles, 200 meter relay, and the mile. Then she joined the Stuarts Draft High School program, running J.V.

track and cross country. She also participated in cross country and varsity track at Wilson Memorial High School. Now, she runs Varsity track and cross country at Riverheads. Compared to all of the schools in which she has participated, Emily says she enjoys Riverheads' running program the best because it's very strong. Emily has an outstanding top time of 20:26 where the average female runner gets about 25-26 minutes on a three-mile course.

Her motivation for running includes getting into college on schol-

arships for track. A secondary advantage of her participation in cross country is that Emily says it keeps her in good physical condition. When asked why she enjoys running, Emily replied: "It gives you energy and keeps you healthy."

Emily runs about 44 miles a week, reaching for 50 miles a week to keep herself in shape and for practice. The only advice she gives to her teammates is "that you need to have a strong mentality, because it's all mental, and that's all that needs to be said." ---

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# Country Crossroads

## Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin

November, 1995



Dear Maude:

With all of the crazy things happening here in Washington, I can hardly wait to get home for a visit. Needless to say, it is not "business as usual" up here!

The first day of the government shutdown had everyone rather grumpy — who wants to have to get up, get dressed, and get to work just to be told to get themselves back home? But that's the way the system works, so they all dragged themselves in and then dragged back home. The commuter lines to Maryland and Virginia added extra runs so people would not have to wait around and crowd the noon-time trains. Since the government allows its employees flexible hours, many waited until late to go in. (As long as they get to work by 10 a.m. they are not counted late.) Even so, the Red Line on the Subway, which is always crowded, even during off-peak hours, was not crowded during what should have been its busiest time.

By the second day a spirit of holiday prevailed. I had an appointment with my dentist on that Wednesday, so had taken the day off. The traffic in the 'burbs was almost like it is on a Saturday morning. Lots of folks were taking advantage of the time off to start their holiday shopping. I guess, because the streets and parking lots everywhere were jammed with cars. By the next day, however, the reality of the situation began to sink in, and many began to remember that since they were not working, they might not get paid the same way as if they were, so things began to settle down a bit. When something like this happens, those of us who work in the private sector still have to come to work, of course, but many of the people we deal with on a day-to-day basis are not there. The Hill staffers, however, had to be at their desks as usual. They were grumbling as much as the government workers. For them a little holiday from what they have to do would be a joy!

One thing which did not slow down at all, however, were the fundraisers. I've had to work on a few for my boss, but not nearly as many as Sara has had to deal with. Her boss gave her the job of keeping up with all the invitations and handling the regrets and acceptances. What a job! On an average, she will find 8 to 10 new invitations in her mail each day. One will be a list of congressmen inviting you to a breakfast honoring another congressman. Then there will be three or four invitations simply inviting you to a reception in honor of Congressman Somebody and usually sent by the congressman's campaign committee — "The Committee to Re-elect..." or "The Friends of..." Then, more than likely, there will be one or two from either or both the Republican or Democratic leadership for receptions in honor of a House or Senate member. It just never ends.

Most of the Senate receptions are for \$1,000, and the House ones are \$500 for PACS and \$100 for individuals, but often when a politician's campaign committee is sponsoring the event even House members will ask for \$1,000. There will often be an invitation for her boss, another one for his partner, one for Sara (since she has been going to some of the functions lately), then perhaps another one for another staffer who often goes, and after that there will be separate invitations for several of their clients. For one fundraiser last week she received seven invitations.

Sara says that the telephone calls are what really drive her crazy! If she does not accept right away, the phone starts ringing. "No, I have not received an answer from

## Prayers offered and prayers answered

George Herbert, the seventeenth century poet, once prayed:  
*Thou, who hast given so much to me,  
give one thing more -- a grateful heart.*

If I had only one request to make and only one prayer to teach my children, this would be it. The fact that I am not limited to one request or one prayer creates all kinds of complications. Undoubtedly, the heavens are filled with frivolous requests and silly prayers hardly worthy of the name. I am embarrassed by several of my own. A few examples I've heard include, "Lord, you know I don't have much time, and you know how much I need that parking place near the front. If you give it to me now, I'll serve you forever." Or "God, there's only 10 seconds to go; we can win this thing, if you give us the power. Please!" Everyone knows the old observation that more prayers are offered before math exams than at any other time.

Maybe I shouldn't be so critical of such silly prayers. After all, if somehow God is mysteriously present in all activities, (which I believe is true), then everything we do is worthy of prayer. Nothing is off limits. Even George Herbert, reflecting on the mental tasks of washing dishes, scrubbing floors and cleaning house, wrote:

*Teach me, my God and King  
In all things thee to see,  
And what I do in anything  
To do it as for thee.*

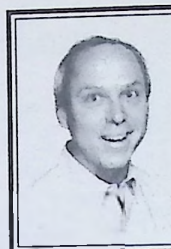
Still, I'm not convinced that finding parking places and winning games qualify as worthy subjects for fervent prayers. They are disqualified in part, because such prayers if answered according to the petitioners' request always create losers who wind up outside the divine blessing. This happens frequently.

I remember years ago when a young woman testified gladly that God had helped her find a parking place. She was gently confronted by an elderly woman on a cane. What if I needed that same parking space? Do you think God wants me to walk all the way, when you could do the same so much more easily? Then she unknowingly paraphrased Tina Turner saying, "What's God got to with it?" The embarrassed woman who was so glad that God had actually helped her shopping, knew the answer. Everyone else does too. The answer leads me to believe two things about prayer. If you dare to pray, choose carefully your requests, and it's best to eliminate all the petitions that, if answered, will result in winners and losers.

George Herbert's plain request for a grateful heart is the kind of prayer worthy to be offered day and night. Why? Because gratitude is the source of goodness. Goodness in human life leads to social well-being. Our country is in

my boss yet," she will reply. Ten minutes later there is a call for the partner, and she repeats the answer. Next comes one for one of the clients. By the time the same person has called four or five times in an hour, she is saying, less politely, "No, I just spoke with you and told you we had no answer yet." Then if they decide that no one from the office will attend, she has to go through the whole thing all over again. "I told you no one from our office will be coming." Every single day, there are at least 10 calls. Sara says it is about to drive her crazy!

Attending a fundraiser is no exciting social event either. In the first place, the breakfasts are always earlier than our work day starts. I have to get up a hour early, get dressed up, and parade myself off to the Hill to some fancy restaurant or club that is convenient for the congressman or senator, drink a cup of coffee with a bunch of people, most of whom I do not know and who are no more excited than I am about having had to get out of bed early. The receptions usually are after normal office hours, so I have to wear to work what I will wear to the reception, try to stay presentable all day long (no spaghetti or pizza for lunch!) and drag myself, tired and ready to go to home, to some different restaurant or club on the Hill and have a soda or glass of wine with more



## Saying grace

By

Roy Howard

short supply of gratitude and goodness. We are living through a long and dangerous season of self-indulgence. Actually when this season of indulgence began is anyone's guess. I suspect it's longer ago than anyone cares to admit. (It's easier to blame the most recent generations.) But no honest person disputes that the results are now beginning to multiply with disastrous consequences.

The root of our social disease is the loss of gratitude. I am talking about a shift in perception that has taken place in our understanding. The shift is a move away from receiving things we have as gifts toward deserving these things as rights. Things like good work, the land, the air and water, the community, the family; the whole social fabric that sustains a decent, caring society. These things are gifts; to be grateful for them sustains goodness within yourself and your community. If we perceive them merely as things deserved, earned or owed, then gratitude is missing, and the wellspring of goodness dries up. To be truly grateful is to recognize everything that comes my way is a gift. If I see myself as a recipient of gifts, then I am more likely to preserve these gifts so that others may share in my undeserving bounty.

In our local communities we can help one another cultivate a sense of gratitude for the gifts that strengthen personal and social well-being. What are these gifts? I'll name a few that I have witnessed and for which I am most grateful. Good land and clean water, well-loved and well-preserved by people who know the sacred dimension of both. Farmers who farm carefully, and teachers who teach skillfully, who treat their farms and their classrooms as holy ground. Neighbors who give generously, without bitterness, to those in need. People who kindly offer hospitality toward strangers searching for a homeplace. Compassion for the suffering, solace for the sick and support for the disabled among us. Synagogues, sanctuaries, open-air tents and cinder-block buildings wherever opportunities are offered for people to pray well and cultivate a good life that leads to common goodness.

These are gifts to be cultivated. They are local practices that will lead us from a simple prayer for gratitude, prayed daily, toward a good society. ---

people whom I do not know, but probably saw dimly at the morning breakfast, before I can finally go home at 8 p.m. The first time the boss sent me to one of these things I was excited. Now I see why he is not so crazy about attending himself.

As I said at the beginning of this letter, I am SO looking forward to getting home. I plan to leave first thing tomorrow and head for Mama's. I will call when I get there and plan to come over for a visit. I've lots of new things to show you (including those ugly shoes!!)

Love,  
LuLu

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## Quilt proceeds to benefit

### Food Bank

VERONA -- The Shenandoah Valley Quilters Guild 1996 quilt raffle will benefit the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Network.

"Shenandoah Valley Christmas" is the name that has been given to the 25 block, 90 x 90-inch quilt that took approximately 1,000 hours to complete. It is made in the Baltimore Album style in red and green by the hand-appliqued and hand-quilted methods. The appraised value of the quilt is expected to exceed \$5,000.

The Guild's last quilt, produced in 1994, benefited the Rockingham Hospital Hospice and the recently opened Virginia Quilt Museum.

Since its founding in 1987, the Guild, which now has 189 members, has sewn hundreds of quilts as service projects. Ronald McDonald House in Charlottesville, First Step, and the Free Clinic in Harrisonburg are among the many organizations which have benefited from the guild's generosity.

Tickets may be acquired, one for a \$1 or six for \$5, from guild members or by sending a donation to Quilt, 104 Clement Drive, Harrisonburg, Va. 22801. The drawing will be held July 20, 1996. ---

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# The Heart of Thanksgiving

By BETH GREENAWALT

Someone once read our son the book *Alexander's Bad Day*. For days he went around chanting about poor Alexander's horrible, awful, very bad day.

That's how I felt our first Thanksgiving Day overseas.

By that time we'd been living in Hungary as missionaries close to a year. Even though Hungarians don't celebrate our American Thanksgiving, our contract called for my husband Dave to be off that day. Our team planned a celebration in Budapest.

I was looking forward to this traditional holiday time, complete with cranberry sauce and real pumpkin pies (made from canned items our field director's wife had brought with her from the U.S. the summer before.)

I didn't realize how much I was counting on it until the night before when we realized that, due to our young son's sore throat, our family would need to be quarantined during the holiday celebrations. My expectations of a get-together reminiscent of all those family gatherings with Grandma were crushed. Instead I pictured us, prisoners in a bleak room, being handed plates of cold mashed potatoes stained red by melted cranberry sauce.

"Why even go?" I asked myself. "Why not just stay here?" But the plans had all been made, and Dave needed to take part in various committee meetings. Besides, it seemed like bad manners to just stay away altogether.

It was too late to make a traditional Thanksgiving feast for ourselves, anyway. Whole turkeys weren't to be found in the stores; special arrangements had to be made ahead of time. At this point, I didn't feel like making do with a substitute meal of chicken

*Somewhere across the ocean, our families were making dressing and Waldorf salad. The roast turkey's aroma filled the house and stirred appetites.*

legs and carrots.

Dave's determined cheerfulness didn't help. He urged, "Let's not worry about it; remember all our blessings. Be thankful!"

I felt more like throwing something.

Readying a family of three small children for a trip from Balatonalmadi to Budapest by bus and train takes an amazing amount of preparation and planning. Especially in cold weather. To get across town to the train station, we normally take the local bus, which makes the trip about once an hour. Everything our family needed for the weekend had to be fitted into backpacks and bags light enough to carry on the journey. Still torn by ambivalent feelings, my preparations were halfhearted. As the Thanksgiving meal wasn't scheduled until evening and Dave's school was short-staffed, he had volunteered to teach in the morning. We gave up on taking the 12:15 train at about 11:30 a.m., when we suddenly remembered that there wasn't a connecting bus that hour.

Instead we created Plan B — caught the 1:51 bus to make the 2:23 train. Yet somehow, getting the children into their coats at the last minute, we were still running late two hours later. Picking Rosemarie up willy-nilly, we dashed through the snow toward the bus stop, two blocks away. We were still halfway up a side street when we

saw the bus go by.

"Let's call for a taxi," I said, but we didn't have the phone number with us. Then we saw that the phone was out of order anyway.

"We'll walk," Dave barked. "If we go straight on, we can make it." He strode ahead, 17-month-old Rosemarie mounted on his shoulders. Matthew, just turned six, and three-year-old Jon Marc struggled in his wake.

"Let's try the bus stop on the main street — maybe some other bus will be coming by," I called to Dave's disappearing form. He didn't stop.

Sighing, I trudged on. Already our faces were red with the cold, and the boys began complaining that their toes were freezing. Wonderful for Jon's sore throat, I thought. When we reached the bus stop on the main road, I looked at the sign. No buses were scheduled to run any time soon.

Just then, though, a bus coming my way pulled over and opened its doors expectantly.

"Dave!" I called as I mounted the steps.

Unheeding, he turned the corner off the main road onto another side street, a short cut to the train station. The boys manfully marched behind him as he disappeared from sight.

With an apologetic gesture I retreated from the bus and followed. As I turned the corner, yet another bus stopped at the stand.

Finally Dave paused to set

Rosemarie down for a minute and wait for me. It was then that we noticed she had lost a boot.

Leaving his heavy backpack, Dave went back to look for it. The children and I sat, perched atop our bags, shivering. After awhile we heard the hooting of a train. I checked my watch — 2:23, right on time for Budapest.

Somewhere across the ocean, our families were making dressing and Waldorf salad. The roast turkey's aroma filled the house and stirred appetites.

Finally Dave returned. No boot. We trudged on.

A man overtook us, then stopped, pointing to Rosemarie's remaining boot with an incomprehensible stream of words. Fortunately, Dave's Hungarian was somewhat better than mine.

"He saw Rosemarie's boot back near the gas station. Should I go look?" Obviously Dave was hoping I'd say no. When I reminded him of the cost of boots in Hungary, added to the fact that we hadn't brought any other shoes for our daughter, he headed back. This time he took his backpack, and the children and I struggled on. Dave thought there was another train at 3:35.

At the summit of the last hill he caught up with us, Rosemarie's boot tucked under his arm. Just then another departing train blew its whistle. Dave checked his watch.

"Oh, the 2:40 to Budapest. I'd forgotten about that one."

I stared at him, my mouth open. Three trains missed — it must be a new record! I thought, reviewing the ridiculously exquisite comedy of errors. Suddenly, I couldn't help laughing.

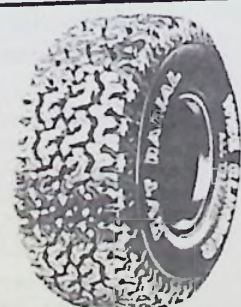
Our three beautiful children looked up at me with tentative smiles. Dave grinned, and I smiled back.

Yes, I did indeed have a lot to be thankful for. —

## GITCHELL'S CAMERA SHOP

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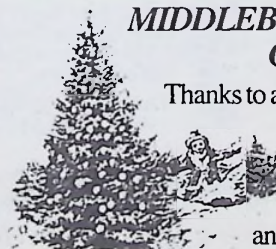


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# Here, there, everywhere

## Recycle, reuse

### Create unique gift wrap with old feed bags, twine

By VERA HAILEY

What do country folks do with empty animal feed bags and used baler twine?

In this age of reusing and recycling, why not bypass the local landfill and create unique wrapping paper for holiday gifts?

The modern craft paper feed bag, a descendant of the material variety of yesteryear, is often colorful and displays a logo of the manufacturer. For example the local farmers' co-op has bags with red and blue farm animal print on a tan background. Another area feed supply store sells its animal feed in red checkered bags. The paper is sturdy, and depending on the original contents, often has a sweet smell of molasses as an added bonus!

Instead of spending a small fortune on mass produced wrapping paper, use this simple technique to create package adornment that is sure to be remembered. Cut off the top and bottom of the bag. Separate the layers of the bag. Use the colorful outer layer and wrap the gift in the usual fashion. Then tie with baler twine for a country look.

The feed bag's inner layer of paper can be used to make gift tags, or it can also be used for wrapping. This plain paper can be painted or stamped with holiday patterns to make one-of-a-kind designs.

Be creative this holiday season and use available materials to make a Merry Christmas country style. ...

Vera Hailey lives in Stuarts Draft and owns and operates Vintage Decor.



One-of-a-kind gift wrap can be made using the colorful bags of feed sacks. Tie packages with baler twine for a holiday country look.

Photo by Vera Hailey

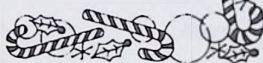


## DULL OIL CO. and its employees

would like to take this opportunity to wish you, our valued customers, a Merry Christmas and a happy and joyous New Year. We would like to thank you for allowing us to provide you with our services over the past year and hope you will allow us to continue to serve you in the future.

Again, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to each of you from

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Honored as 1995 Outstanding 4-Hers at the annual 4-H Achievement Night held Nov. 5 at Weyers Cave Community Center were, from left, Elizabeth Napier, Kim Brinkley, Amy Swope, and Aaron Shiflett.

Photo courtesy Augusta Extension Office

## 4-H youth honored for achievements

WEYERS CAVE -- Augusta County 4-Hers were honored for accomplishments in their club project work at the annual 4-H Achievement Night held Nov. 5 at Weyers Cave Community Center.

Chosen Outstanding Senior 4-Hers were Kim Brinkley, daughter of George and Debbie Brinkley of Churchville, and Elizabeth Napier,

daughter of Don and Evelyn Napier of Rt. 2, Greenville. Outstanding Junior 4-Hers honored were Aaron Shiflett, son of Larry and Suzie Shiflett of Fort Defiance, and Amy Swope, daughter of Linda and Bob Swope of New Hope.

Augusta Farm Bureau presented

awards to two outstanding 4-Hers. Tiffany Zeiner, daughter of Dave and Cheryl Zeiner of Rt. 5, Staunton, and Annie Davis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Davis of Rt. 3, Staunton, were presented awards by Sharon Phillips, Augusta Farm Bureau's

See 4-H, page 23



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**JESUS,**

For it is he who will save  
his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

**Happy Holidays**

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# 4-H

Continued from page 22

women's chairman.

The Young Farmers organization presented its outstanding senior award to Andrea Farley. The YF Outstanding Junior award was presented to Zachary Waldron.

Other award winners and their areas of accomplishment included:

**Dairy Judging:** Beau Leech, Jennifer Leech, Audrey Fuller, Amy Holsinger, John Patterson, Catherine Knight, Melvin Heatwole, Zachary Waldron, Bridget Copey, Greg Holsinger, Laurie Davis, and Adam Holsinger.

**Horse Judging:** Dorothy Propst, Natasha Massie, and Lisa Kelly.

**Livestock Judging:** Jonathan Riley, Jonathan Coleman, Roselea Riley, Byron Phillips, Matt Hickey, Josh Burner, Wes Marshall, J.T. Begoon, Scott Hickey, Darren Howdyshell, Kara Michael, Wes Begoon, Chris Curry, Amy Trout, Jason Massie, and Ashley Craun.

**Dairy:** Brandon Waldron, Zachary Waldron, Lydia Moore, Charlie Moore, Bridget Copey, Kimberly Hyden, Kenny Hyden, Byron Phillips, Kylene Phillips, Audrey Fuller, Elizabeth Fuller, Beau Leech, and Jennifer Leech.

**Camp counselor:** Amy Bos-serman, Briana Flowers, Jessica Garber, R. J. G. Maday, Julie Grimm, Lisa Kelly, Sarah Lilly, Natasha Massie, Elizabeth Napier, Joey Skelton, Jason Massie, and Jeremy Wilcher.

**Presentations:** Kara Michaels, Heather Rockwell, Willie Woods, Daniel Salatin, Aaron Shiflett, Amanda Rexrode, Laura Rexrode, and Justin Via.

**Fashion Review:** Amy Swope, Jennifer Young, Crystal Carcofe, and Emily Curry.

**Share-the-Fun:** Mary Pat Alexander, Courtney Andes, Ashley Banes, Abby Butler, Bretagne Byrd, Annick Caneyet, Crystal Carcofe, Amber Clements, Melissa Cobb, Emily Curry, Angela Faren, Lauren Floyd, Laura Hash, Ashley Holcomb, Abby Huffman, Enn Murray, Ellen Murray,

Emily Painter, Adam Procter, Aaron Shiflett, Amy Swope, Lynette Swope, Zachary Waldron, and Jennifer Young.

**Record books:** Bryan Glass, Daniel Salatin, Aaron Shiflett, Cole Heizer, Ellen Murray, Annie Davis, James Murray, Enn Murray, Heather Rockwell, Willie Woods, Amanda Rexrode, Laura Rexrode, Junior Rexrode, Elizabeth Cupp, and Tim Cupp. Also, Rachel Bernier, Rebekah Bernier, Sarah Bernier, Rochelle Birchfield, Rebecca Cook, Grace Hickin, Kate Lam, Jessica

Schullery, Brandi Smithkin, Brandon Smithkin, John Stratton, Julie Waltz, Naomi Higby, Renda Higby, and Robie Davis.

**Leaders recognized for service included:** One year -- J.R. Coleman, Nancy Glass, William Heizer, Susie Shiflett, Linda Woods, William Woods, Patricia Remple, Kathryn Propst, Steve Quick, William M. Fulton, Donald Studer, Joyce Keagy, David Schullery, Barry Newell, Millard Matthews, Larry Evans, Louis Wood, and Donald Clements; five years -- Debra Fifer, Barbara

Fuller, Shirley Kaufman, Patricia Lam, Donna Riley, Lisa Rockwell, Lois Sken, and Linda Swope; 10 years -- David Shiflett; and 15 years -- Crystal Grove.

Honor club inductees were Silas Valentine, Brandon Smithkin, Daniel Salatin, Josh Burner, Jenlyn Sheets, Emily Curry, Ashley Kancofe, Natasha Massie, Wes Marshall,

Kara Michael, Bobby Swope, and Heather Rockwell.

Ambassadors recognized included Caren Urgolites, Joshua Urgolites, Tiana Urgolites, Andrea Farley, Angela Farley, David Lam, Paul Jausen, Sam Higby, Beth Gardner, Will Henry, Silas Valentine, Jason Massie, and Jennifer Glass. ---



Yvonne Smith Miller, right, of Harrisonburg, won the Virginia Make It With Wool contest held Nov. 11 at Ingleside in Staunton. Her wool blazer and slacks ensemble will be judged in the National Make it With Wool Contest. Roselea Riley, left, of Rt. 1, Staunton, competed in the contest's junior division. She is an Augusta County 4-H member.

AC staff photos

## AROUND THE CORNER

### Live Nativity

Live Nativities will be on display 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Dec. 21-23, at Hebron Presbyterian Church west of Staunton, and 5 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., Dec. 17, at Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church near Middlebrook. The Hebron Nativity will include Christmas music from the bell tower. In the event of inclement weather, the Mt. Tabor Nativity will be rescheduled to Dec. 22. For information about Hebron's Nativity call 886-0059. For information about Mt. Tabor's Nativity call 885-4422. ---



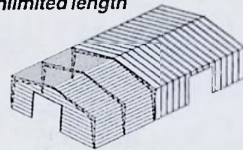
The Augusta FFA Leadership Conference was held Nov. 1 at Riverheads High School. Scott Buchanan, Augusta Federation president, far right, talks with the program's guest speakers, from left, Jon Repair, Rockbridge Extension agent; Betty Jo Hamilton, Augusta Country publisher and editor; Bruce Bowman, a Waynesboro veterinarian; and Beverly Roller, a former ag instructor.

Photo courtesy Augusta FFA



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Luke 2:14

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## •Genetics

*Continued from page 8*  
have 15 lines of trees to prevent inbreeding," Hebard said.

It is a process that takes a long time -- years in fact -- before success or failure becomes noticeable. Nevertheless, Hebard is confident that progress is being made. "Today we can protect the tree to the point that we can grow and produce nuts but not timber," he said.

Progress is being made on other fronts as well. A vaccination of sorts is being developed and has been successfully administered to infected trees one at a time. The logistics of administering such a vaccine to forests full of trees, however, has not been perfected. At the same time, a hypovirulence has also been discovered -- the fungus has a virus. In some cases, the fungus itself has sickened.

With efforts like these, there is hope that the forests first gazed upon by DeSoto and his men will again return to America. As he looked at a picture taken at the turn of the 20th century of immense chestnut trees dwarfing Appalachian loggers, Hebard was optimistic. "I'm confident that someday we'll be able to see chestnut trees like these again," he said.

Chestnut research projects receive only minimal government support, and the breeding work relies totally on private support. Individuals wishing to help support the return of the chestnut may join the American Chestnut Foundation, 469 Main St., P.O. Box 4044, Bennington, Vt. 05201-4044. Members receive "The Journal of The American Chestnut Foundation" and "The Bark" which provide information on progress and foundation news.

ACF members also receive a state newsletter in states where there is an active chapter, access to expert advice on growing chestnuts, opportunities to assist in research and breeding activities, and an invitation to attend the annual meeting to hear firsthand about foundation projects and meet scientists working in the field.

While ACF welcomes donations in any amount, a minimum annual donation of \$40 entitles donors to member status. ---

# POSTSCRIPT

## It's never too early to start planning

By JEFF ISHEE

Nothing much happened in Middlebrook this, except we ran into an *Augusta Country* reader down at the general store who asked about the variety of spinach I mentioned in November's Garden Path column. Here are some things that we learned concerning the "Tyee" variety of spinach.

One of the few hybrids we grow at Bittersweet Farmstead, Tyee spinach is a bolt-resistant, savoyed (crinkled leaf) variety that does well in cool soil. In spring, you should sow the seed about one inch apart, half an inch deep, and in rows 12 inches apart as soon as the soil is workable (up to six weeks prior to the last frost). For a continuous harvest, plant about every 10 days. Be sure to sprinkle a little lime in the row before you sow. Spinach likes a pH of 6.5 to 7.5. It has an upright growth configuration, which keeps the leaves clean.

The Tyee variety is dark green and chock full of vitamins. In fact, one of the healthiest foods you can grow... and it's so easy. One seed catalog calls it "the standard of

comparison in savoyed spinach," while another says "it has the excellent combination of being both a fast grower and a slow bolter." The trick to keep it from bolting is to keep the soil as cool as possible. Spinach reacts to soil temperature, not air temperature; therefore, it is critical to mulch around the plants and keep the sunlight from heating up the soil as long as feasible. This also cuts down on weeding. My favorite

mulch is peanut hulls, which you can get at the farmers' co-op for two bucks and change. Using this method, we had fresh spinach at the Farmer's Market well into the summer.

From the Ishee family, thank you all so much for your support during this, our first year in the Valley. We wish for each of you a joyous yet reverent Christmas season and the very best for 1996. ---

It's never too early to start planning next year's garden. During the upcoming winter months when you find yourself "housebound" you'll want to have plenty of seed catalogs on hand to help you think about what you'll do with that garden spot when the weather begins to warm. Free seed catalogs from which "Tyee" variety of spinach may be ordered may be obtained by writing to the following addresses:

**Johnny's Selected Seeds** (my favorite seed catalog)

Foss Hill Road  
Albion, ME 04910-9731

**Pinetree Garden Seeds**

Box 300  
New Gloucester, ME 04260

**Vermont Bean Seed Company**

Garden Lane  
Fair Haven, Vermont 05743

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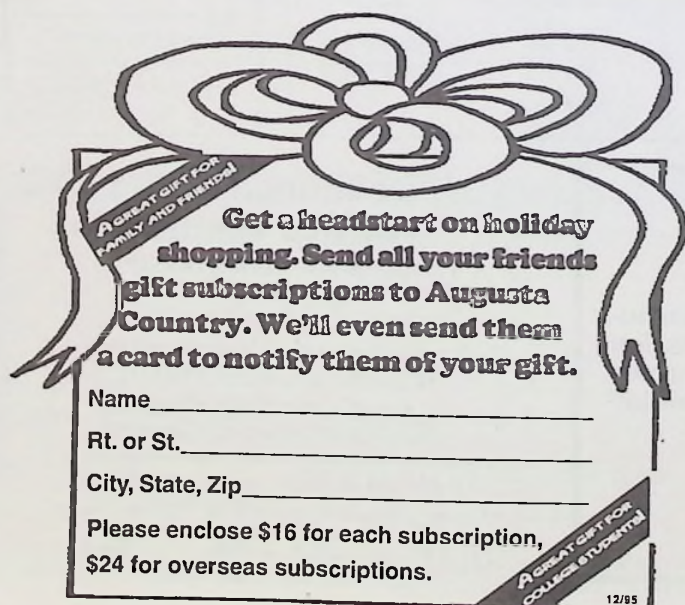
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