"Friendly news for friendly people"

Augusta Country

Will he or won't he?

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Meet the man who put Raphine on the map
Pages 3-5

A single flake does not a blizzard make

When Old Man Winter exhales

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

Technically — the weather forecasters said — it wasn't a blizzard. Technically — according to reports published in local newspapers and broadcast on local television stations — it wasn't a blizzard. Technically — according to folks who are capable of making their own decisions about what is or isn't a blizzard — the storm that moved up the Atlantic seaboard Jan. 6-8 looked and felt a lot like a blizzard. *If it looked like a blizzard and felt like a blizzard, then why — one might ask —* wasn't it a blizzard?

It all boils down to a matter of definition. According to weather dictionaries sanctioned by whoever it is that sanctions these things and whoever it is that has the authority to call a blizzard officially a blizzard, the winter storm which buried Augusta County, along with all of Virginia and several neighboring states, lacked the wind power to make it a blizzard by official standards. Snow storms being what they are — and since this one wasn't a blizzard — it seems appropriate that some time should be spent characterizing what the most recent snow storm actually was. And since the weather has been a might fractious — to say the least — ever since, it is appropriate that these conditions also be characterized and classified.

It wasn't necessary to rely on reports from the highway department or the National Weather Service to draw conclusions. One only needed to look out the window Jan. 7 or 8 to discern the situation. According to records kept at *Augusta Country* Central — this being the publisher and editor's home near Middlebrook — during the storm, snow began falling at about 2 a.m. Jan. 6. It was a very fine snow — fine, in this case, meaning it consisted of minute ice particles as opposed to fine as meaning satisfactory. What would occur over the ensuing two days was anything but satisfactory.

A storm which swept through the Shenandoah Valley Jan. 6-8 may not have been a snowfall record setter, but it did leave behind 30 inches of the white stuff which turned the area into a white wilderness. In this photo, Little North Mountain rises up behind snow-covered fields at the Glebe schoolhouse in western Augusta County.

Photo By Botty Jo Hamilton

Neither rain, nor sleet, nor blizzard? Mail carriers faced a difficult task of making deliveries following the snowstorm. With drifted snow blocking roads, there was little choice of where to pile the stuff to get it out of the way. These mailboxes on the Middlebrook Road south of Staunton required some shoveling before mail could be delivered.

Photo by Jeff Ishee

Snowfall continued for 48 hours ending at about 2 a.m. Jan. 8. The first day of the storm, Saturday, was a dainty prelude to what lay ahead. It did, in fact, snow all day but only accumulated to about one inch. The remarkable thing about this was that it was very unremarkable — the equivalent of a day-long summer drizzle when it seems as if there's been a lot of precipitation but which amounts to only tenths of an inch. But at 6 p.m. on the sixth, the January storm began to flex its muscles..

By midnight, six inches of snow had accumulated. With snow falling at approximately one inch per hour, white-out conditions had closed in by 3 a.m. At 7:30 a.m. it had been snowing for 30 hours and snow depth had exceeded 15 inches. The temperature was 10 degrees and winds gusted to 20 miles per hour. By this time if stockpiles of milk, bread, and toilet paper were low, one might have started worrying about when more supplies might be obtained.

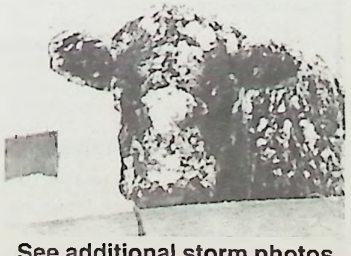
On farms in Augusta County the animals huddled in groups to shield each other from the wintry blast. Farmers were forced to wait out the storm, there being little that might be accomplished with visibility at less than an eighth of a mile and winds piling snow into drifts at every conceivable angle. It became difficult to tell which snow was falling and which snow had already fallen and was being redistributed by the wind. But then, what difference did that make?

Folks on dairy and poultry farms faced must-do situations. For poultry farmers, whose flocks were indoors, the concern became whether roofs would keep the outdoors out of doors. Some poultry houses were damaged when snowload collapsed roofs. Dairy farmers had to find a way to get the milking done, although some probably felt as if they had gone into the ice cream business. Both dairy and poultry producers faced the threat of power outages which could cause any number of problems for them.

Beef cattle and sheep producers faced different concerns. Farmers hoped cattle had been fed well enough the day before and that they might last through the storm without being fed. Sheep producers with lambs on the ground hurried to get them to shelter to prevent losses from suffocation in snow drifts.

By midday on the seventh the temperature had risen only to 17, and the wind was gusting stronger and more frequently than

See **COVER STORY**, page 12



See additional storm photos and stories, pages 11-14

Readers write in

Maybe it was just the holiday season that had people in the writing mood. *Augusta Country* received numerous letters from folks in all corners of the world during the past month like the following letter from Massachusetts:

Please send our best to Chris [Marrs] and let her know all of Town Hall wishes her great success!

Kathy Coggeshall
Sandwich, Mass.

Kathy's note was attached to a form ordering a subscription to be addressed to Kathy, Thelma, Nancy, c/o Town Hall, 130 Main St., Sandwich, Mass. 02563. Sandwich sounds like our kind of place -- where even at Town Hall folks know each other on a first-name basis. In a postscript Kathy supplied: "Nancy is I.B. Hoofinit's mom! Congratulations. Chris' column is great!!"

We agree, Kathy. Chris Marrs joined the staff in November and made her first editorial contribution in the January 1996 issue under the pen name, "I.B. Hoofinit." Chris' column will appear monthly and offers advice for those with equine interests.

Another New England neighbor wrote:

How I have enjoyed *Augusta Country*! Your reporters are the Charles Kuralts of the county. Your celebration of people, young and old, is so refreshing.

Best wishes for a happy and successful 1996!

Elisabeth Dyjak
Windham, Conn.

We certainly appreciate the compliment, Elisabeth. Perhaps our writers owe some of their success to the fact that they live and work in the communities of Augusta County from which they report. We're fortunate to have so many talented folks writing for us.

And from the Great Lakes region:

You people did a great job on your chestnut stories in the December 1995 issue. Would appreciate you sending two copies to me at my address below.

Bud Coulter
Elk Rapids, Mich.

They're on the way, Mr. Coulter. Thanks for writing in.

The mailbag even included some global communication:

Greetings from Espelkamp! Thank you so much for sending us the copies of the *Augusta Country* newspaper containing the article about our family ties. We enjoyed reading the whole paper. You do a very good job! Best wishes for the future!

The Kopelke Family
Espelkamp, Germany

It was our pleasure to meet the Kopelkes when they visited their Raphine, Va., relatives Margret and Arthur Henne. Augusta Country *staff writer Nancy Sorrells wrote the article about the family which appeared in the November 1995 issue.*

Local folks also checked in:

Merry Christmas to *Augusta Country*!

What a delightful article (articles) about Mary Jane Nuffer! I used to teach at Craigsville Elementary and learned to know her. What a privilege! Everything you wrote is so true and much more.

Now I would like to give my mother-in-law a gift subscription, please. Enclosed is the form with a check for $16.

Thank you for an interesting paper!

Margaret Grady
Rt. 1, Staunton

Augusta Country *staff writer Sue Simmons penned the articles about Craigsville Elementary School custodian Mary Jane Nuffer which were published in the January 1996 issue. Mrs. Nuffer certainly is a remarkable person, and we were pleased to bring her story to our readers. We also got a telephone call from Mrs. Grady's mother-in-law who lives in Craigsville and who said she's known "Mary Jane since she was just a little girl." Mrs. Grady Sr. underlined her daughter-in-law's laudatory remarks about Mrs. Nuffer.*

And last, but not least, from Swoope:

We enjoy this publication tremendously!

Nancy Holsinger
Swoope

Very simply put, Mrs. Holsinger. It is our goal that each Augusta Country *reader have the same experience as you. Thank you for your comment. ---*

We'd like you to meet...

This month Augusta Country introduces Vera Hailey of Stuarts Draft as its newest staff writer. But even though we're calling her new, Vera has been an AC contributing writer for a number of months now. Since she had been reliably contributing articles for some time we asked her if she would like to make the move to staff writer, and we were pleased when she accepted the offer.

An Augusta County native, Vera lived in Richmond for awhile then returned to the Stuarts Draft area in 1994. She received an associate degree in business management from Hesston College in Kansas in 1988 and a bachelor's degree from Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg in 1990. Her area of concentration in her college studies was business administration, accounting, sociology and socio-economic development.

Employed by Shenandoah Medical Supply, Inc. in Fishersville, Vera is also an antique dealer and raises beef cattle. She is the membership/public relations chairperson for the Augusta County Business and Professional Women's (BPW) group and is a member of the League of Women Voters of Waynesboro. Her interests include gardening, photography, collecting items from the 1930s and traveling.

Although Vera has traveled extensively in 15 countries, we hope she'll be spending a lot of time traveling around Augusta country and bringing in stories of the folks she meets. ---.

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Sales associate — Chris Marrs
RHS News advisor — Cherie Taylor
RHS News editor — Heather Caldwell

Staff writers

Vera Hailey, Betty Jo Hamilton, Roberta Hamlin, Roy Howard, Jeff Ishee, Sue Simmons, Lois Skeen, Nancy Sorrells, Terry Terrell

Contributing writers

Mark Gatewood, Penny Plemmons

Student writers

Carrie Heizer, Elijah Ward, Natalie Ward, Lauryn Plemmons, Kim Wilson

Call 885-0266 for publication information.

Please recycle

Tune your radio to WSVA 550 AM Feb. 7 at 10:10 a.m. when *Augusta Country* publisher and editor Betty Jo Hamilton goes on the air with *Midday* host Jim Britt. The studio telephone lines will be open to take calls about the area's friendly news source -- *Augusta Country*. See you on the radio!

Sewing machine inventor put Raphine on the map

It might be a real head scratcher for some folks. It might even qualify for the ultimate answer-question on the television game show *Jeopardy*.

Contestants, make your wagers.

"And the Final Jeopardy answer is: Southern Augusta County inventor who put the village of Raphine, Va., on the map. Good luck, contestants. You have 30 seconds." Dum, dum, dum, da-da, dum, dum, dum. The Jeopardy theme music plays in the background as contestants scribble out their questions.

Time's up. Game show host Alex Trbek calls on contestant number three – the poor sucker in third place. He's only buzzed in first six times and was wrong five times. "'Who is ------?' Oooo, no answer, too bad."

But despite the lackluster performance of contestant number three, it's been a close match. Only a couple hundred dollars separate a championship win from a year's supply of Rice-a-Roni. Alex moves on to the contestant holding down second place. "'Who is Cyrus McCormick?' Oh no, I'm sorry. Good guess though. McCormick invented the reaper. How much did you wager? All of it. Too bad." Then it's on to the first-place contestant and returning champion. The tension mounts as Alex calls for his answer.

"'Who is James Edward Allen Gibbs?' You're correct! Gibbs invented the chainstitch sewing machine. How much did you wager? All of it! That leaves you with a three-day total of $49,500." And the crowd goes wild.

Certainly reaper inventor McCormick has gotten his share of press through the years. But the man who -- literally -- put Raphine, Va., on the map is James Edward Allen Gibbs. This ingenious fellow spent most of his adult life refining his version of the sewing machine. When it came time for his neck of the woods to be named by the railroad, Gibbs asked that the area be called "Raphine" taken from the Greek work "raphis" which means to sew.

Augusta Country staff writer Nancy Sorrells tracked down some of Gibbs' descendants who still live in the area and filed the following report about the man who put Raphine on the map. ---

JAMES EDWARD ALLEN GIBBS

Combination of ideas created sewing machine

By NANCY SORRELLS

The history of the sewing machine is the record of a series of inventions rather than that of a single person devising a magic new machine from thin air. Nonetheless the machine that was the result of the merging of a half dozen or so key patents is included in the list of "most important" 19th century inventions.

Not only did the machine revolutionize the shoe and clothing industry, but for the first time in history, families were relieved of the burden of producing their own clothing.

The earliest known sewing machine was patented in England in 1790, but it probably never made it beyond the drawing board.

The first working machine was built in France by an enterprising tailor. Between 1830 and 1841, Barthelemy Thimmonnier put 80 of his new machines into use producing army uniforms. His machines were eventually destroyed by a mob of angry tailors who feared the new invention would put them out of business.

The modern sewing machine as we know it, however, was perfected in the United States over a period of 25 years from the 1830s until the 1850s. Walter Hunt first invented a workable lockstitch machine, meaning that a stitch was created with two threads, one from a spool and one from either a bobbin or a shuttle. Hunt's machine could only sew short, straight seams, however, and he never patented his invention.

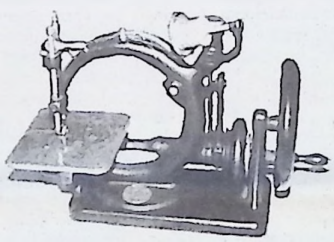
In 1846 Elias Howe was the first to patent a lockstitch machine with an eye-pointed needle and a bobbin, but it also sewed only short straight seams and never reached the commercial market.

Howe's machine had no cloth plate or table on which to rest the material, and the needle worked horizontally. Three years later, John Bachelder patented the first machine that could sew a seam of any length.

The breakthrough came in 1851 when Isaac Merrit Singer patented a lockstitch machine that could sew a curved seam. Among the fraternity of sewing machine inventors, Singer was not considered an inventor so much as a compiler of the designs of others. He essentially took Howe's machine and turned it over, thus giving the user a table on which to rest the material.

Within a short time, Singer also invented a treadle to operate his machine rather than a hand crank that all the earlier machines had. Perhaps more importantly, Singer put into place an aggressive marketing plan that popularized the machine with the American public.

Other lockstitching improvements and feeder mechanisms used to move material under the foot and needle were patented in the 1850s by a man named Allen B. Wilson. His biggest contribution was the use of a round bobbin and revolving hook instead of a shuttle. The Wheeler and Wilson machines were major competitors of Singer machines in the 19th century.



Willcox & Gibbs chainstitch sewing machine

Another leading machine manufacturer was Grover and Baker. William O. Grover and William E. Baker were Boston tailors who perfected a portable, double locked stitch machine in 1856. Both the Wheeler and Wilson machines and the Grover and Baker machines also patented new devices to feed cloth along the table.

Competing on the rapidly expanding sewing machine market of the mid-19th century was the company of Willcox & Gibbs. Of the duo — James Gibbs from Raphine, Va., — was the inventor and Charles Willcox was the financier. Although the pair found it necessary to use some of the sewing machine patents available, like the cloth feed and the level table, their sewing mechanism was entirely different from the other competitors on the market.

Willcox & Gibbs machines created a chain stitch, meaning that just one thread was used. There were some advantages to a chain stitch over the two-thread lockstitch that the other machines used. A chain stitch is strong and stretchy and today is used primarily for basting and closing the tops of bags and sacks. The disadvantage is that it tends to ravel easily. The lockstitch is not stretchy and is not as strong as a chain stitch, but does not easily ravel. The double locked stitch, which was invented by Grover and Baker, also uses two threads and is even stronger than the lockstitch.

Once the four or five top companies per-

See MACHINE, page 4

Family remembers Gibbs as smart old character

By NANCY SORRELLS

HARRISONBURG — Legend and lore surrounding sewing machine inventor James Edward Allen Gibbs has been sewn into the fabric of the Gibbs' family history according to Katheryne Lockridge, whose late husband Lancelot Charles Lockridge was a grandson of the Rockbridge inventor.

"L.C. loved to talk about him," remembers Katheryne, whose husband was a local farmer and also the postmaster at the Raphine post office named in honor of his grandfather.

"I think he must have been quite a character and probably a little conceited. After all the man had his picture taken on every street corner it seemed," she says with a laugh.

She's right on one account anyway — there are plenty of pictures of the bristle whiskered fellow with a prominent nose. One painting hangs in the Rockbridge County Courthouse. Before Katheryne and L.C. moved to their retirement home in Harrisonburg, another always hung in the stairwell of their Rockbridge home.

"My oldest granddaughter always said she was afraid of that old man hanging there," she says. "And the nose — we always called that the Gibbs nose. Some of the other relatives have the Gibbs nose too."

Despite his less-than-dashing looks and a slight streak of vanity, Gibbs most certainly was a likable fellow, Katheryne allows.

"Everyone seemed to like him. He was very active at Mt. Carmel Presbyterian Church (in Steeles Tavern)," she said.

Gibbs' generosity extended to his family. With money from his company, he bought farms for each of his surviving daughters

See FAMILY, page 5

Mint Spring woman's sewing machine traces stitches through time

By NANCY SORRELLS

MINT SPRING — Anna Ruth Berry has done a lot of sewing in her time. She is also fascinated with area history. All the more reason to appreciate the antique sewing machine she brought out of storage for a demonstration.

The black iron sewing machine with gold-colored trim is heavy — about 20 pounds — but despite the fact that it is well over a century old, it is clearly recognizable to even the most uninclined seamstress as a sewing machine. Most of the components are there: the arm holding the needle, the needle itself, the presser foot, the table and feeding mechanism, and even the spool holder.

Even more interesting is the brand name of this hand-cranked sewing machine —Willcox & Gibbs — and its connection with local history.

James Edward Allen Gibbs was born in northern Rockbridge County in 1829. Having a mechanical mind, Gibbs saw a crude drawing of a sewing machine in an ad *and copied it without knowing what the internal workings were like.* Unknowingly, he invented a sewing machine that was unlike any other on the market at the time. His machine was a chain stitch (single thread) machine, and he went to Philadelphia to patent his invention in 1857.

"My invention was so entirely out of the line of all other sewing machines made, that I believed for a time, that I could work independently of the combination and their patents," Gibbs explained in a 19th century Staunton newspaper article. "But I found no good practicable machine could be made without the roughened surface (Wilson's feed) and a modification of the Grover and Baker four motion feed," he added when explaining how his machine fit into the sewing machine patent picture of the time period.

While in Philadelphia obtaining his patent, Gibbs met Charles Willcox, and the two became business partners. With Willcox supplying the money and Gibbs the know-how, the first Willcox & Gibbs machines were produced in November 1858. The machines did well and in 1866, the company incorporated.

Gibbs continued to take an active role in the prospering business until his retirement in the 1880s. During all this time, the Gibbs and Willcox team continued to improve upon their machine. Their obsession was with creating the quietest running machine possible.

The Willcox & Gibbs owned by Anna Ruth reflects some of those improvements and lists eight patents, the last in 1871, on a brass plate mounted on the machine.

"This machine with its chain stitch is more akin to hand sewing than some of the others," explains Anna Ruth of her machine.

But despite its age, the machine is still in working condition she added, pointing to a piece of material with a line of chain stitches on it. "It would work right now if I had a needle," she said.

Unfortunately, the needle on her machine broke because the tension was not correct, and she has been unable to find a replacement needle despite haunting area antique stores. "The needle is shorter than a modern needle," Anna Ruth said. And so her century-old machine must sit idle until she can remedy the situation.

Anna Ruth explains that she wound up with the Willcox & Gibbs machine in the first place because of her father's love of local auctions. One day her father, C.C. Barnette, went to an auction in Rockbridge Baths and came home with a sewing machine and unique old buggy blanket.

"Daddy always found interesting things at auctions. When he bought this sewing machine he said it would be mine because I sewed a lot," Anna Ruth remembered.

Having the machine makes her realize what we take for granted today she added.

"We don't really appreciate what we have; we really take a lot for granted with our clothing today. I've enjoyed having this machine, because it really makes you think about a time before sewing machines. You know it really must have been something when these machines were finally made. They had been doing all the work by hand. Think of the hours that went into clothing a family. To have [a machine] that would finally make some stitches for you would have been wonderful. And to think that it was someone local who helped make it possible." —

Anna Ruth Berry of Mint Spring demonstrates her portable, handcrank Willcox & Gibbs sewing machine.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

Machine

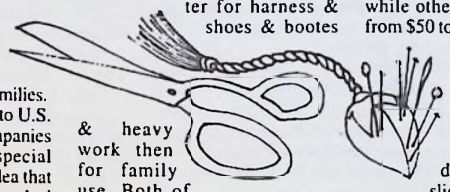
Continued from page 3

fected their machines and marketing strategies, the sewing machine became part of the American household and transformed the textile industry. For many years, however, the sewing machine was still a pricey item for most families. In order to make inroads into U.S. homes, many machine companies targeted ministers with special deals apparently with the idea that religious leaders held a great deal of sway over their congregations and would endorse the new product to their flocks.

In the 1850s, Singer's sent out a flyer offering "to any minister of the Gospel in charge of a congregation of any denomination, one sewing-machine of our manufacture, of the most improved kind, and of either size designated, at one half the regular cash price."

In an 1859 letter to an Augusta County minister, one man discussed the relative merits of the various machines on the market:

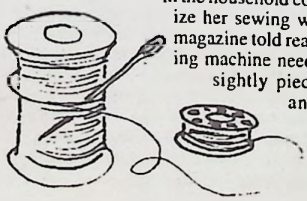
"Wheeler & Wilson Machine is rather difficult of management - is very easily put out of order & is of uneven stitch - Singer is much better for harness & shoes & bootes & heavy work then for family use. Both of them have the shuttle stitch. Grover and Baker I chose for my family use and I remain of the same judgment as to its Value. For a year it has Kept in perfect order and has done a great deal of work."



No matter the machine, even the less expensive models from each company were rather costly when put into context of a time when a working man's salary averaged between $1 and $2 a day. Singer's machines ranged in price from $40 to $67 for the model "inclosed in a rosewood cabinet case." Grover and Baker's machine during the same time period were even more pricey. The portable machine ranged in price from $75 to $90, while others were sold at prices from $50 to $125.

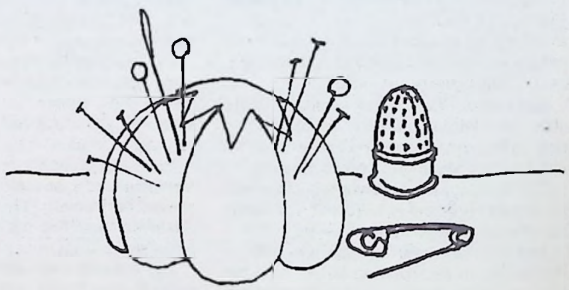
Willcox & Gibbs prided themselves on the fact that their machines were more affordable for the average household, and indeed, their prices were slightly lower than the rest of the competition. Although they entered the market almost a decade after the other major companies, they quickly caught up and won the endorsement of a number of prominent individuals.

In the 1870s, a Willcox & Gibbs machine complete with an iron stand could be purchased for $55, while one with a mahogany half case was $67. A top-of-the-line machine with a full cabinet case complete with drawers ran the buyer an even $100.



During the second half of the 19th century, most of the modern sewing machine accessories were also developed. The over-lock stitch, zig-zag and flat seam stitch (uses four threads) were all developed before 1900. The first electric motor appeared in the 1870s and largely replaced the treadle by the early 1900s. Even into the 1920s, however, motorizing your treadle machine was the "in" thing to do.

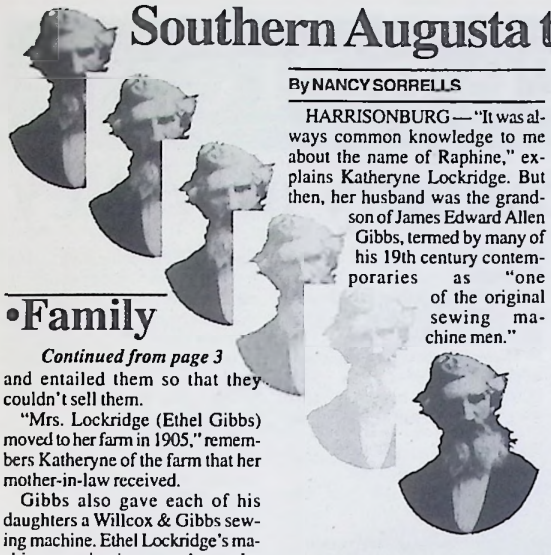
"No more back breaking, foot pumping machine sewing," noted *House and Garden* magazine in 1923. For just $15, the seamstress in the household could revolutionize her sewing work. The same magazine told readers that a sewing machine need not be an unsightly piece of furniture and went on to describe "an electric chain stitch machine which fits into the brown mahogany table," for just $150.



Some companies even sold electric motors that could be attached to a variety of household appliances. The Hamilton Beach Home Motor could be purchased for $18.50 in 1926. "That is why I get so much sewing done so quickly and easily and without ever getting tired," explained the advertisement. "This same motor with attachments mixes my cake batter, whips cream, beats eggs, mixes and beats dressings, sharpens knives and tools, and polishes and buffs silver."

Clearly from the tone of the advertisements in American magazines, the sewing machine had moved from being a jumble of new ideas to an indispensable part of the American household in well under a century. —

Southern Augusta town took name from famed invention



•Family

By NANCY SORRELLS

HARRISONBURG — "It was always common knowledge to me about the name of Raphine," explains Katheryne Lockridge. But then, her husband was the grandson of James Edward Allen Gibbs, termed by many of his 19th century contemporaries as "one of the original sewing machine men."

Continued from page 3

and entailed them so that they couldn't sell them.

"Mrs. Lockridge (Ethel Gibbs) moved to her farm in 1905," remembers Katheryne of the farm that her mother-in-law received.

Gibbs also gave each of his daughters a Willcox & Gibbs sewing machine. Ethel Lockridge's machine remains in use today under the able use of her daughter-in-law Katheryne.

"I spent my life sewing on that thing!" remembers Katheryne fondly. "I made all my children's baby clothes on it. When I was pregnant it was hard to operate the treadle, so L.C. put an electric motor on. When we moved here (to their retirement home), the old treadle was still hanging up, so we put it back on."

The "Automatic Silent Sewing Machine" with a full cabinet case still has its original instruction book which explains that the Willcox & Gibbs machine "stands preeminent amongst its rivals," and is "the Best Family Machine in the World." It came with a dozen needles, a needle wrench, a bottle of oil and an oil can as well as about 10 accessories like a tuckmaker, hemmer and ruffler.

"I bet I have changed the needles on this machine 10,000 times," says Katheryne. "I still sew on it. It makes a perfect chain stitch."

There are times, however, when the chain stitch is not the most desirable stitch to have in your clothing she adds. "It is good because if you make a mistake and you pull the right string, it comes right off. But if you go somewhere and rip a stitch, you are in bad shape. There was a story about a local lady around Raphine who had great wide ruffles on her petticoat. Well, a stitch ripped on her petticoat and she was losing her ruffle as she walked!"

More than 90 years after Gibbs passed away, the family still remembers the great inventor in a variety of ways. Katheryne's daughter, Kay Goodman, majored in home economics and owns two of Gibbs' machines on which she has done a great deal of sewing.

Also at Kay's house is what the family jokingly calls the "wall of patents." All of the patents Gibbs received are hanging up on the wall. Included are several sewing machine patents, as well as patents on a lock, a gun, and a bicycle.

Some of the inventiveness has carried on as well, she added. Katheryne's son Frank is very mechanically minded and her late husband, L.C. was as well. L.C. was forced to use his ingenuity after losing his right hand in a cornpicker. "He had to figure out how to do things left handed, so he changed all of his farm equipment so he could operate it," Katheryne recalls.

There are also other family mementos around the Lock-ridge home including the crib in which Gibbs was rocked as an infant, a music box he brought back to Raphine from a trip to Switzerland, and a book of obituaries from newspapers all over the country announcing the death of the great Virginia inventor.

"He must have been a smart old fellow," mused Katheryne. —

So what do sewing machines and the tiny village of Raphine, Va., located on the Augusta-Rockbridge county border, have in common? Just this: sewing machine inventor James Edward Allen Gibbs was born in northern Rockbridge County August 1, 1829. After growing up in the county, he moved to West Virginia where he employed his mechanical skills at a variety of trades including running a wool carding mill and then working on a surveying party. In the 1850s, after seeing a crude woodcut of a "new" sewing machine, he invented one of his own and went into the sewing machine business.

When the Civil War broke out and West Virginia remained with the Union, Gibbs brought his family back to Rockbridge County where he remained the rest of his life.

So now you know who Gibbs is, but what about Raphine?

Before the Civil War, Gibbs hooked up with the father and son duo of Charles and James Willcox respectively. The father was a financier and the son was an inventor like Gibbs. Together as Willcox & Gibbs, they began manufacturing Gibbs' sewing machine in 1858 and opened a New York City office to market their machines in 1859.

Although Gibbs enjoyed moderate success from his company before the Civil War, the conflict itself left him in financial straits. During the war he enlisted in the military but served only three weeks before typhoid fever and pneumonia left him unfit for duty. For the duration, he supervised the manufacture of salt petre (used in gunpowder) and also invented a repeating gun for the Confederacy's use.

At the war's conclusion he decided to travel to New York to see if anything was left of his company. What he discovered was that he was a very rich man. His partner had kept Gibbs' portion of the business protected and a much wealthier Gibbs was able to take up where he left off before the war.

Having decided that he would remain in Raphine for the rest of his life, he turned a lot of his attention to marketing the Willcox & Gibbs machine in the South. The angle chosen was that their machine was the cheapest, best for household use and the quietest, "even when running at the rate of two thousand stitches and upwards per minute."

As part of his Southern push, Gibbs had a pamphlet printed up lauding his machine. Included in the many endorsements was one from Robert E. Lee who wrote: "The Willcox and Gibbs Sewing Machine reached here safely yesterday. Esteem for its inventor, its simple mechanism, and the experience my daughters have in operating it, makes it a great favorite in my family, whose labors it lightens."

As long as he lived, Gibbs continued to take an active role in the local community in which he lived. In 1883, when the Baltimore and Ohio railroad came through, he allowed the line to be run across his land. He also donated land for a station with the stipulation that it be called Raphine. Why Raphine?

Raphine comes from the Greek word "Raphis" which means "needle" or "to sew." Raphine Hall was the name Gibbs gave to his two-story brick home which is still standing just outside the village of Raphine. Through his generosity to the railroad, Raphine also became the name for the hamlet through which the railroad passed.

Naturally, the B&O did some personal catering to the Gibbs family. "The train was known to stop at Raphine Hall and let off some of the family," recalls Katheryne Lockridge. "There was a story once of one family member who was going somewhere on the train and forgot her umbrella. The train stopped right there and let her get off and get her umbrella."

Gibbs died in 1902, and the railroad no longer operates, but the name of Raphine remains — a testimony to a man and his sewing machine, the only one of the great 19th century sewing machine inventors who lived outside of the New England states. —

Katheryne Lockridge of Harrisonburg sets up her Willcox & Gibbs sewing machine. Mrs. Lockbridge's husband was a grandson of sewing machine inventor and Raphine resident James Edward Allen Gibbs. Mrs. Lockridge's machine operates from a foot treadle and is a cabinet model.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

Sewing machine magazine advertisements courtesy John Taylor of Staunton. Page 4, lower left, *The Saturday Evening Post*, Sept. 7, 1918; Page 5, lower left, *The Saturday Evening Post*, Aug. 6, 1927. Orignial artwork on pages 4, 5, and 8 by Roberta Hamlin.

Yesterday once more

Slavery powered grain economy of Valley

AC staff report

Because so few African-Americans now live in the geographic area of Augusta County, Virginia, some people do not acknowledge that slavery existed in the county, and many others argue that it was either insignificant or at least different from elsewhere in Virginia.

Joseph Waddell, a 19th century historian reflected in his *Annals of Augusta County* that: "The institution of slavery never had a strong hold upon the people of Augusta. The Scotch-Irish race had no love for it, and German people were generally averse to it."

This conclusion is a myth.

Slavery not only existed in Augusta County, it permeated its society and provided necessary labor to the grain economy which supplied wheat to much of the country. Hiring practices which developed alongside the slave-based economy established slavery's broad appeal and acceptance. A large proportion of Augusta's slaveholders hired out their slaves' labor both to their slaveholding and non-slaveholding neighbors.

It is difficult to determine just how many Augusta County or Staunton residents "hired-out" or "hired-in" the labor of slaves. This determination is made more difficult by the use of the phrase "hiring." Hiring-in meant that an individual rented the labor of slave for household, farm, or business use; hiring-out indicates that an individual rented a slave to another.

To complicate matters, it was not uncommon for someone to hire-out one slave and hire-in another slave who may have been more suited to a particular task. In hiring out their slaves, owners found a convenient way to profit from unneeded slave labor.

Hiring out was the most common practice utilizing slave labor in Augusta County. Many owners came to rely on slave lease money as an annual source of income.

Slaves were hired for varying amounts of time — a day, a week, three months, a year. Frequently slaves were sent to a neighbor to work for a few hours or for the day. Hiring contracts were private rather than public agreements, often written on scraps of paper.

Nathaniel Massie, a prosperous Augusta County farmer, made a practice of sending two or three of his slaves to a storekeeper or businessman, to whom he was indebted, to work a few hours or for a day to reduce the amount of his debt. Massie also hired-in someone else's slave to haul apples to Scottsville, a trip that took several days.

Henry Boswell Jones, a Rockbridge County farmer living at Brownsburg near the Augusta County line, loaned Bob, his hired-in slave, to a friend for two weeks. Francis McFarland, a farmer and Presbyterian minister living near Greenville wrote in 1853, "Mrs. Sharp's Evaline came to help us for a few days."

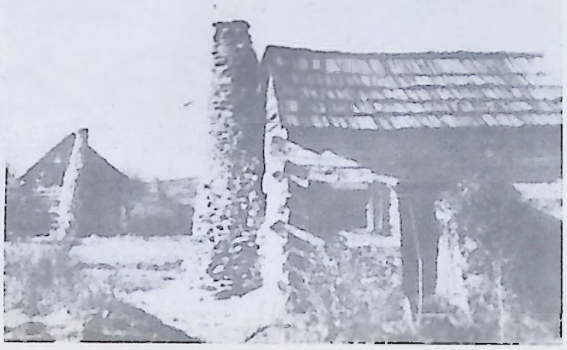
Annual hirings, however, appear to be the most common hiring situation. Contracts were often made around Christmas, for a fifty-one week period, beginning on New Year's Day and ending at Christmas when slaves returned home.

An interested employer shopped and searched for a hired hand, often going to the home of the owner to close the deal. Once the terms were agreed upon, the prospective employer signed a lease agreement stating the terms of the hire. This included the annual fee and any combination of the following: medical care, the provision of good and substantial clothing, a factory blanket, a wool hat, shoes, and the obligation to pay the taxes on the slave.

The case of the slave Jefferson, and his owner Joseph Smith, gives a fine example for understanding the specifics of the hiring system as practiced in Augusta County. Jefferson was the property of Joseph Smith, a wealthy community member and owner of Folly Farm. Smith owned anywhere from 30 to 50 adult slaves.

Between 1851 and 1864, approximately half of Smith's slaves were hired out to area farmers as a means of generating income and half were kept at home. In 1854 Smith's personal "Negro List" indicated that there were 19 slaves at home and 24 more who were hired out at the total rate of $967.50 per year. The list of slaves-for-hire and slaves-at-home did not change.

Certain individuals regularly hired the same slaves year after year. These slaves were hired either for credit or for cash. In some cases, it was for a combination of cash and goods; Emeline and later her two children were hired-out to Alexander Anderson for nine consecutive years for $45 cash and $5 in wood each year. Smith earned a substantial income from his slave hire, from between $465 in 1851 to as much as $967 in 1854.



These houses were located on U.S. 250 west of Staunton near the site of what is now National Cemetery. The buildings were said to be slaves' houses. They resemble the style of existing slave quarters throughout the upper Shenandoah Valley.

Jefferson appears on Smith's list in 1853 and is hired out to S.F. Taylor for $40. Surviving papers record Jefferson's yearly hiring for every year through 1857, at which time he was worth an annual rental amount of $110 to Smith. Although the 1858 and 1859 lists are missing, the 1860 list of "Negros to Hire" shows Jefferson being hired to "Mr. McFarlane" for $100.

The Reverend Francis McFarland's diary entries serve as verification for this transaction. The 26 December 1859 diary entry read: "I agreed to hire a Boy named Jefferson from Joseph Smith for the next year at $110."

McFarland's entry five days later relates more details of the business deal; "Sent Robert with my Bond for $110 for the hire of Jefferson." The deal between Smith and McFarland for the hire of Jefferson continued through the end of the Civil War.

There were two periods of peak activity in the Valley grain economy when labor exchange took place extensively. The busiest period was in late June and early July when wheat was harvested and hay was cut. Of equal importance was the period in late December and early January when grain was threshed. Additional hands were also needed during the fall when corn was shucked and stored, when wood was being cut, during spring and fall plowing, and in the fall or winter when animals were butchered.

The most active time on the farm, however, was late June and early July. At this time when wheat was ripe, time was of the essence because the crop had to be harvested before the grain became too ripe and fell from the stalk and before inclement weather could ruin the crop. The use of the reaper was not widespread in the Valley before the Civil War, so wheat harvest meant having several hands cutting the crop with grain cradles, while others were needed to rake the stalks and bind the sheaves and stack them in shocks to dry. Henry Boswell Jones, in a letter describing Valley wheat production, estimated that it took 15 hands per farm to harvest a crop of wheat.

Threshing time in the winter was also a time of shared labor on Augusta County farms. Threshing, or separating the grain from the husks, was a time-consuming process necessary for wheat, rye, oats, and cloverseed. Even when horse-powered threshing machines were used, the process was labor intensive. Again, it was a time when all hands, white and black, young and old, worked side-by-side.

Unlike their counterparts in Eastern Virginia, during the harvest, Shenandoah Valley masters often worked side-by-side in the fields with their slaves. While slaveholding brought status to owners, working side-by-side with slaves did not diminish that status as it did in plantation society.

Robert Lewis Dabney noted in his handwritten autobiography: "One Saturday I was in my little cornfield with my hired negro replanting corn-my wife sent a boy to call me."

Henry Boswell Jones, who was also for a time the Commissioner of the Roads for Brownsburg, frequently recounts that he worked on the road with "3 hands and my sons."

Slavery was a harsh taskmaster. If being hired was the reality of an Augusta County slave's life, being sold was the greatest fear.

Jonas Graybill, who lived on the Winchester Road, recalled that in the fall of the year numbers of

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Society report details history of slavery in Augusta County

AC staff report

Susanne Simmons presented the program at the fall meeting of the Augusta County Historical Society. Held at the historic Augusta Street United Methodist Church, Mrs. Simmons presented her research on slavery in Augusta County and its urban areas.

"When I first moved to Staunton from Baltimore I was surprised at the small African American population in this area. People commented to me that there were few slaves here in the valley, and that is why there were so few blacks living here today," Mrs. Simmons commented. "It was a statement I accepted as a fact — but one that turned out to be very wrong."

A teacher with the Augusta County school system, Mrs. Simmons told of an interesting experience she had early in her work career.

"While I worked at the Community Child Care Center I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Cora Carter, an elderly black woman who occasionally worked at the center. She asked me once why I didn't have any children. When I responded that it just hadn't happened yet, she looked at me and said quite seriously 'you need someone to work a root on you.'" Mrs. Simmons recalled that she had only once before in Baltimore heard a person seriously talk about "working roots."

"Working roots is an Africanism that is found in places with a large African American population and history of slavery," Mrs. Simmons explained.

Mrs. Simmons began researching local records at the court house and city hall when she worked at the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace as the museum educator. "I was surprised at the frequent and numerous mention of slaves in the records. The birthplace interpreted a room in the Manse as a slaves' room, and I become intrigued about who these people were," she said.

Mrs. Simmons said she eventually turned her interest into a thesis topic.

"To fulfill the requirements for a master's degree in history at James Madison University I had to write a thesis. I decided to find out all that I could about African Americans in Augusta County before the Civil War."

Fearing that she would be unable to find enough sources to write an adequate thesis, Simmons examined the years from 1745 to 1865 and looked at free blacks as well as slaves.

"My fears were unfounded," she said. "There were more sources than I could even begin to examine. Each chapter of my thesis could have been a thesis of its own."

Mrs. Simmons said she found through her research that Augusta County, despite claims to the contrary, was a slave society. Twenty-two percent of the population of Augusta County and thirty percent of the city of Staunton were slaves. Only about two percent of the population were free blacks.

"Slavery as it existed here was not identical to the institution found in the Virginia Tidewater or plantation South," Mrs. Simmons cautioned.

Most historians maintain that slavery did not fit into the grain economy of the Shenandoah Valley, however, Mrs. Simmons said she found that it actually fit very neatly due to the system of hiring.

"It was common for owners to hire-out their slaves to nonslaveholders during times of peak agricultural activity — planting, harvesting, threshing," she explained.

Hiring was so pervasive in this area that it was not uncommon for owners, especially those living in towns, to hire out all their slaves. Many slaves spent years with the same employer rather than with their owner.

As a result slavery greatly benefited the region's economy. By the 1850s property taxe on slaves was the greatest source of county revenue.

"The hardest thing to find are sources (documentation) generated by slaves themselves," Simmons adds. "Because this was a group of people who did not — could not — keep traditional records, all that we know about them has been generated by slaveholders. The historian and student must always be aware of that perspective. I have not been able to find a black "voice," and I may well never find one."

Simmons commented that it is difficult to find people who even remember former slaves from their youth or childhood.

"Mr. Arthur Ware told me that he regrets not talking to former slaves about their experiences when he had the chance," she noted, pointing to the loss of oral history on the subject of slavery in the valley.

When asked about the provocative nature of the subject, Mrs. Simmons responded: "Slavery is a difficult and uncomfortable subject. Ignoring it, however, does not mean it will disappear from history. When I go to a cemetery and see a slave's grave, I think that was someone's mother or father or aunt or brother or daughter. They meant something to someone.

"We honor no one when we ignore their experience. As a historian I have an obligation to tell their story and to get it right." —

Jim Howard, born a slave in 1856 at the Cochran Place in Folly Mill, holds the reins on horses pulling a Hamrick Funeral Home hearse. The photo was taken around 1900. It is believed that Howard was a son of the slave "Jefferson" who was hired out to Francis McFarland. Jefferson took the name Howard after he was freed. Photo courtesy Richard Hamrick

•Slavery

Continued from page 6

slaves were driven south through the Valley. An elder in the Brethren Church and an opponent of slavery, Graybill reported that "the men were handcuffed on the sides of a chain 40 or 50 feet long. Each one was given room enough to walk and to lie down at night to sleep. Frequently, they had to leave their wives and children and go south never to hear from them again."

A traveling Pennsylvania artist , Lewis Miller, put a human face on Graybill's recollection. His drawing of slaves being herded along the Great Wagon Road from Staunton to Tennessee by white slave drivers is accompanied by a description that conveys the finality of the trip.

"Arise! Arise! and weep no more, dry up your tears, we shall part no more. Come rise we go to Tennessee, that happy shore, to old Virginia never— never— never— return," are written above a watercolor sketch of 19 slaves being driven from Staunton.

Miller wrote at the bottom of the sketch: "The company going to Tennessee from Staunton, Augusta County, the law of Virginia suffered them to go on. I was Astonished at this boldness, the carrier Stopped a moment, then Ordered the march. I Saw the play it is commonly in this State, with the negro in droves Sold."

Former slaves interviewed by the WPA offered their perspective on the experience. Mary E. Wsey[sic], who lived in Staunton as a slave, recalled an aunt who was left feeble-minded by a fever and sometimes wandered off. "They sold her. They knew at the big house traders was coming [and] kept it from her. When they broke the news to her she said she just as soon belong to one white man as another. Tole all us good-bye like she was going on a visit. We never saw her no more."

Melinda Ann ("Roty") Ruffin, born in Augusta County, near Waynesboro in 1835, remembered being put on the "sellin'" block and sold as a nurse. Ballard Smith, a resident of Greenville, "put her on the block" but Roty recalled that, after she was sold, she "walked down as big as gall. That's why I ain't no Democrat."

By the middle of the 19th century, the Valley supplied the nation and the world with wheat and flour. As this agriculturally-rich area developed in the decades prior to the widespread use of mechanized equipment, the demand for slave labor rose. Most Augusta County farmers owned no slaves and those who did own human property owned comparatively few. The practice of slave hiring, however, provided the cornerstone upon which the grain economy and its related industries were built.

Without the use of hired slave labor, it is unlikely that Augusta County and its upper Shenandoah Valley neighbors would have become the breadbasket of the nation. —

University of Tennessee press will be publishing an essay written by Susanne Simmons and Nancy Sorrells "Never a Strong Hold: Hiring and the Development of Slavery in Augusta County, Virginia" due out in a collection in 1996. Information for this article was taken from that essay.

Our culinary heritage

Come in from the cold... soup's on

By ROBERTA HAMLIN

A nice hot bowl of soup on a cold winter's day can often be the most satisfying thing we could want to eat.

Soups have been a standard form of food for mankind since very early in recorded history. The first prehistoric men and women probably ate only raw meat. Once our early ancestors learned to make fire then tamed it, they began to roast their foods — both meat and roots.

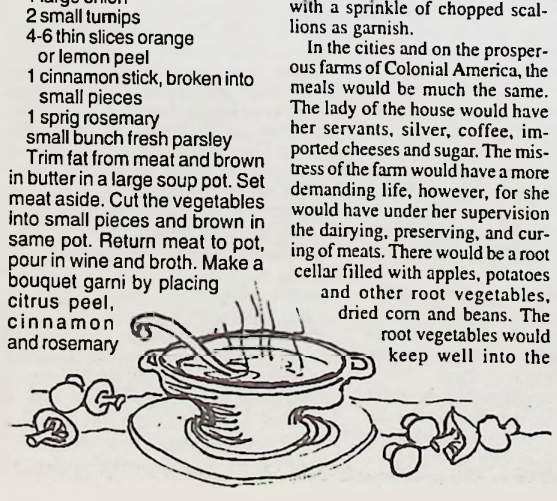
In the Ukraine, small pits have been found around ancient hearths. These pits were lined with stones, and then the meat and root vegetables were wrapped in leaves and cooked in the pits, which created a cooking environment similar to steaming. Our modern clambake uses this same technique.

In Central America, as early as 7,000 B.C., the natives created cooking pots from large hollowed out stones which were then permanently installed in the center of the cooking hearth. Soon people began to use animal stomachs as cooking pouches which could be hung over a fire, and later, as leatherworking techniques improved, they created leather pouches in which to cook their broths. But once they learned the techniques for pottery and metal containers, boiling became a much used technique, and the results of their "one-pot meals" containing scraps of preserved meats, combined with roots and nuts, were the beginnings of our soups of today. The following combines ingredients from several recipes of the 15th and 16th centuries.

Broth with Chops

1 1/2 to 2 lbs. meat (lamb or veal chops, or cubed beef)
3 tablespoon butter
5 cups water
1 cup dry white wine
1 stalk celery, chopped
2 carrots
1 large onion
2 small turnips
4-6 thin slices orange or lemon peel
1 cinnamon stick, broken into small pieces
1 sprig rosemary
small bunch fresh parsley

Trim fat from meat and brown in butter in a large soup pot. Set meat aside. Cut the vegetables into small pieces and brown in same pot. Return meat to pot, pour in wine and broth. Make a bouquet garni by placing citrus peel, cinnamon and rosemary in a piece of cheesecloth tied with string and add to pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and stir well. Cover and simmer for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, or until meat is tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and garnish with chopped parsley.



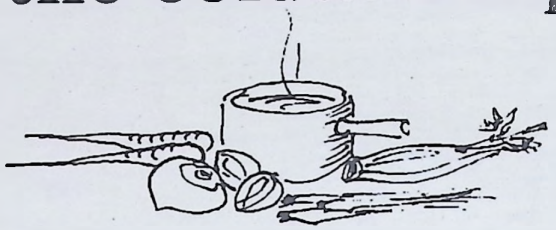
In the early centuries of the first millennium in India a wife would often prepare for her husband a main dish soup of rice and beans which was probably a somewhat watered-down version of our red beans and rice. The following recipe, which uses pasta instead of rice, is adapted from Anna Thomas' *The Vegetarian Epicure, Book Two*. It is one of the most filling and satisfying of soups for a cold, snowy day.

Creamy Bean Soup with Pasta

1 1/2 cups dried beans, preferably red kidney
Water to cover
1 large onion, copped
3 carrots, sliced
1 stalk celery, sliced, plus the leaves
2 to 4 garlic cloves, according to taste
1 sprig fresh thyme
1 sprig fresh rosemary
1 small can tomato sauce
4 oz. spinach fettucine noodles
1 tablespoon butter
Chopped scallions

Cook the beans in water for 1/2 hour, while preparing the other vegetables. Add onion, carrots, celery and herbs, and continue cooking until the beans are soft. Remove about 1/2 of the beans and vegetables, and puree in a blender. Return puree to the pot, add tomato sauce, and adjust the consistency with water. Bring soup to a simmer, and add the noodles. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes, or until noodles are tender. Be sure to watch carefully or the soup will stick to bottom of pot. Just before serving, stir in butter, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with a sprinkle of chopped scallions as garnish.

In the cities and on the prosperous farms of Colonial America, the meals would be much the same. The lady of the house would have her servants, silver, coffee, imported cheeses and sugar. The mistress of the farm would have a more demanding life, however, for she would have under her supervision the dairying, preserving, and curing of meats. There would be a root cellar filled with apples, potatoes and other root vegetables, dried corn and beans. The root vegetables would keep well into the winter, and the following is a nice soup using them.



Root Vegetable Soup

5-6 small potatoes
2 stalks celery
1 large onion
6 cups water
1/2 rutabaga
4 parsnips
4 carrots
1 sweet potato
1 sprig of rosemary
2 leaves sage
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 tablespoon butter

Chop all vegetables into bite-sized pieces. In a large pot cook the potatoes, celery and 1/2 of the onion in lightly salted water until tender. In another pot, cook the rutabaga in water to cover for 15 minutes. Next add the parsnips and carrots. Add the sweet potato and herbs last. Cook until vegetables are tender. Reserve about 1 cup of the white potatoes, celery and onion mixture, and puree the rest in a blender. Return puree to the pot, and add reserved potato mixture and other vegetables (drained). Adjust consistency with water from vegetables. Stir in cream, and season with white pepper and salt to taste. Stir in butter just before serving.

In the 18th Century in what is now Germany, at almost every meal there was a thick, hearty soup made from pork or sausages with cabbage or lentils, and among the dishes listed at a banquet in 1570 given by Pope Pious V, is a cabbage soup with sausages. The following recipe from Faye McCray in the *Church of the Good Shepherd at Folly Mills Cookbook* uses ham but would also be good with sausage.

Potato-Cabbage Soup with Ham

4 cups shredded cabbage
3 medium potatoes (about 1 pound)
2 medium carrots
1 bunch scallions (6 to 8)
1/4 lb. lean ham
4 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
2 cups water
1 can chicken broth (13 3/4 oz.)
1 teaspoon dill
1/2 teaspoon pepper

Shred cabbage. Peel and dice potatoes and carrots and chop scallions and ham into bite size pieces. In a medium saucepan, melt butter until hot, add potatoes, carrots and scallions, and sauté until scallions are wilted, about 5 minutes. Stir in flour and cook, stirring for 1 minute. Add cabbage, water, broth, dill and pepper and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low and add ham. Cover and simmer 20 minutes.

The menu for a banquet given in 1817 by King George IV of England started with four soups. The first was a creamy brown soup, made with madeira, foie gras, truffles and mushrooms. Below is a version using mushrooms available today.

Wild Mushroom Soup

2 ounces dried, wild mushrooms (Morels, shiitake)
3/4 cup sherry, or madeira
1/4 cup butter
2 cups onions, finely chopped
2 lbs. fresh mushrooms
4 cups vegetable stock (or a combination of water and chicken broth)
1 pint heavy cream

Soak the dried mushrooms in sherry or madeira for about an hour, stirring occasionally. Drain. Melt butter in a large pot, add onions, and cook over low heat until tender (about 10 minutes). Slice the fresh mushrooms, and add them to the pot. Cook 10 minutes. Next, add the drained, dried mushrooms and stock, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Add sherry or madeira in which the dried mushrooms were soaked (but not the sediment), and continue to simmer for another 15 to 20 minutes or until the dried mushrooms are tender. Puree the soup in a blender, return it to the pot and adjust seasonings. Add cream, and heat until steaming. Serve immediately.

Perhaps those soups which taste the best to us are the ones which we make from scratch and to taste. Soup itself is a food which is fairly easy to prepare. After all, most of the hard work is done by the ingredients themselves as they are allowed to simmer on the stove through a good portion of an afternoon.

Augusta Country staff writer Lee Ann Heizer says she has perfected a stalwart potato soup recipe which is not only a great warm-up on cold days, but also packs well in a Thermos for brown baggers.

Warm tummy potato soup

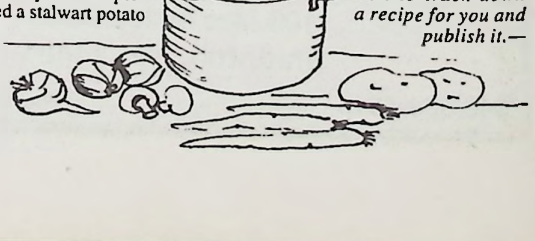
3 tablespoons margarine or butter
1 1/2 cups sliced celery
1 1/2 cups chopped onion
1 1/2 cups chicken broth, or; 1 1/2 cups water and 2 teaspoons granulated chicken bouillon
Dash or two of black pepper
7 cups peeled potatoes cut into 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick slices
4 cups water
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon parsley flakes
3 tablespoons flour
3/4 cup milk
2 tablespoons butter

In medium sauce pan melt 3 tablespoons of butter over low heat. Add celery and onion and sauté for 3 minutes. Add chicken broth (or water and bouillon) and pepper to taste. Simmer covered for five minutes. Remove from heat and reserve.

In a stock pot or dutch oven combine the potatoes, water and salt. Cook until the potatoes are partially done. Drain off one third of the liquid. To the potatoes and remaining broth add the chicken stock, onion, and celery mixture plus the parsley flakes. Cook until potatoes are tender. Remove from heat.

Make a thickening of 3 tablespoons flour and 1/4 cup milk. Gradually add remaining milk until mixture is smooth. Warm the thickening by adding 1/2 cup potato broth to the milk mixture, and mix thoroughly. Slowly add warmed thickening to potatoes and broth in stockpot, and stir thoroughly. Add 2 tablespoons butter (if desired for added richness). Return to low heat, and allow to heat through, but do not bring to boil. Makes six to eight servings. —

Do you have a favorite recipe you'd like to share with Augusta Country *readers? Perhaps you have an old family favorite that you'd like to pass along. Or is there a dish you've been dying to try but can't find the recipe? Send recipes or requests for recipes to Augusta Country, P.O. Box 51, Middlebrook, Va. 24459. Be sure to double check ingredient amounts before submitting recipes for publication. Recipes will be published as space permits. And we'll do what we can to track down a recipe for you and publish it.—*



Tuesday night is bluegrass night in Stuarts Draft

By VERA HAILEY

STUARTS DRAFT -- The live weekly bluegrass session at Manley and Betty Allen's home is one of the area's best kept musical secrets. Every Tuesday night for the past nine years an informal group of old-time musicians has gathered in the Allen garage in Stuarts Draft to play and sing mountain music.

Young and old alike flock to the Allens' garage with instruments in hand. On one particular evening recently the instruments included the guitar, banjo, bass guitar, fiddle, mandolin and six-string flat-top guitar.

Most of the musicians are self-taught and rely on natural talent rather than formal instruction. The Allens -- Manley, Gary and George, along with other family members -- are the faithful music lovers who keep the weekly gathering going strong. None have taken music lessons, but according to Betty, "You just don't find an Allen who can't play something."

Manley proudly tells the story of a family traveling from Maine to Florida who saw an article about the group in a newspaper at a rest area on Interstate 81. It just happened to be a Tuesday, and they made up their minds to get off the interstate at the Stuarts Draft exit to find the Allens. Two-and-a-half hours later the family with three daughters found the garage, and enjoyed the music. At the invitation of Bruce Clark, the family stopped in Fairfield on their way back to Maine for the Clark family bluegrass session.

With plenty of space for sitting, chatting and drinking coffee (no alcohol allowed!) around the wood stove, bluegrass fans tap their feet and sing along. Some of the crowd's favorite tunes are "White Oak On The Hill," "Rocky Top," and "Will The Circle Be Unbroken."

Some well-known bluegrass musicians have found their way to the garage in the woods as well. Most recently, Marty Brown visited. He was in Staunton promoting the new Wal-Mart store and was invited to join the group. An elderly lady in the crowd exclaimed, "I saw you on T.V.!" Jim Orange has been to the gathering numerous times. According to Manley, Bill Monroe had hoped to visit before winter but could not come because of illness. People from Washington, D.C. to Nashville to Colorado have shown up, a result of word-of-mouth enthusiasm for the quality of the music.

The Allen family welcomes bluegrass enthusiasts, both musicians and fans, to join them. There's no special invitation needed. If it's Tuesday night, the Allens are in their garage playing bluegrass music. —

Tuesday nights in Stuarts Draft mean one thing and one thing only in Manley and Betty Allen's garage. Bluegrass musicians from near and far gather there each Tuesday night to practice their craft. But the evenings are not just for musicians. Anyone who enjoys listening to bluegrass music is welcome to sit back, relax, and be serenaded by the original country music musicians.

Photo by Thomas Tidd

Rockbridge couple recycles old cabin, builds dream home

By DEBORAH SENSABAUGH

ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY — It seems just about everyone who moves to the country, buys an old house or cabin and renovates it on the spot. But for one Rockbridge County couple, renovation of an old log house near Greenville provided an opportunity to try out a different renovation idea.

Jim and Pat Tichenor moved to Rockbridge County several years ago when he retired from military service. With time on their hands and previous experience living in historic homes, the couple went the usual route in renovation projects. Their first was Fassifern, now a thriving bed and breakfast inn just east of the Virginia Horse Center near Lexington.

Their next self-assigned renovation chore was Oak Spring Farm, just south of Raphine. And when they were finished with the massive farmhouse it, too, was a quality bed and breakfast inn.

"We wanted to get away from it all — from all the hustle and bustle," Mrs. Tichenor explains. "We sold that one, too."

This time, however, the picturesque hillside the Tichenors purchased overlooking the South River valley included no house for them to renovate. So, they went out and found one — an early 1800s log cabin in a field near Greenville.

Renovation opportunities dwindle with the growing local population. Older houses and buildings become more and more decrepit, reducing the Tichenors' options of salvaging, relocating, rebuilding, and renovating. The couple was faced with developing a realistic renovation plan for buildings in either an undesirable location or in too deteriorated a condition for complete restoration.

Actually Glen Wilson, a Rockbridge artisan who seeks out unwanted log buildings, takes them down and reconstructs them, discovered the old house. Along with several outbuildings, the house had been considered by the Museum of American Frontier Culture near Staunton for an exchange program to Ireland.

Soon after, however, the old barn on the property fell in. Since the grouping would not be historically complete, the museum was no longer interested in any of the buildings.

But the old house on the property was about to get a second chance. The Tichenors fell in love with the old building. Possessing that rare sense of vision given only to old home restorers, the couple took the project to heart. "We didn't even want the entire old house, but we could not bear to leave part of it behind," Mrs. Tichenor admits.

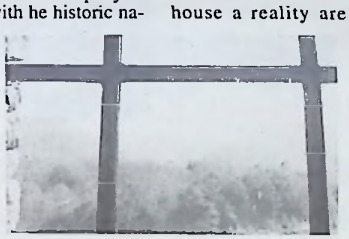
"It was being used as a barn with turkeys downstairs and bee hives upstairs. When the old folks passed away, the younger folks just locked the door and moved into a new house up on the hill," she adds. "The floors were rotted away, and the roof was rusted."

From these abandoned materials, the Tichenors began designing their retirement dream home from the old logs, stones, bricks, and other odds and ends of wood, furniture and antiques they had discovered through the years. The result is a very old house with many new, personalized touches that breathe life into every room.

The entire project took three years. Just as local craftsmen built projects in their home areas years ago, the Tichenors obtained the expertise of local crafters accustomed to working by hand and combining old techniques with new conveniences.

Wilson oversaw the dismantling of the old house, and set about cleaning and repairing the logs. His touch is evident as well in the field stone chimney, the stone foundation, and the original brick chimney with its new liner making it functional once again.

Exterior landscaping came courtesy of David Ramsey, a Rockbridge native who operates Turf Co. in Staunton. "We rejected an ornate and expensive landscaping plan from another company. It just didn't go with he historic nature of the building," the Tichenors explained. Mrs. Tich-enor provided plant-ings from other places they had lived, making the gardens a memory walk.



The sloping front yard will be planted in wildflowers, so travelers looking down from the Blue Ridge Parkway will be able to see a colorful field below.

"The old silo at Oak Spring Farm had been torn down. The wood had been stored in the barn. So I took a piece of it to Dave Jarrett (another local artisan) and asked him to cut it and see what we had. It was hard pine," Tichenor said.

The pine boards of the silo now glow on the front door, accented with leaded glass panes created locally by Rainelle's stained glass works.

Rick Miller's carpentry skills are evident inside the house. His craftsmanship added a creative staircase using pieces from the old house's kitchen floor. Other wood came from an old barn on the new homesite, and the original chair rails added in the 1860s grace the dining room walls once again.

Many of the wrought iron towel racks and other fixtures came from the forge of Manly Brown in Lexington, and Rails End metalcrafters in Lexington put the bedsteads together.

"We've met some wonderful people doing this, and we keep up with them," the Tichenors say.

But certainly not least among the artisans who made the house a reality are the Tichenors themselves.

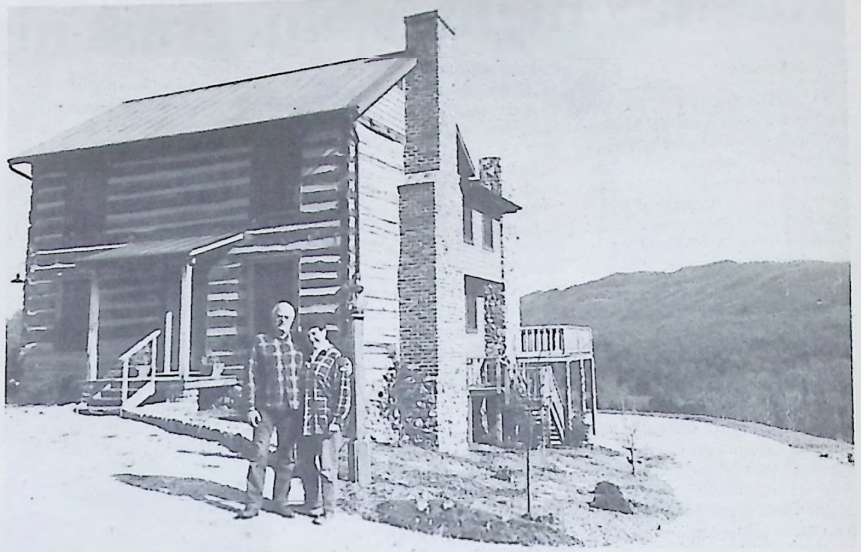
Upstairs, Tichenor has designed and built wooden closets. Combing salvage company warehouses and antique shops, the couple has come up with original-looking touches, like wainscoting, a hanging oil lamp over the dining room table, and wormy chestnut paneling.

"We carried on and tried to do what the owners would have done," Tichenor says. "And we recycled everything."

The furnishings in the house add the finishing touch —a chair stuffed with tobacco leaves, kitchen chairs from an antique shop in Fishersville, wall sconces from the old Neff Home, armoires from a Virginia Military Institute house in which the Hadsels lived, a toy wooden cart made by Tichenor's grandfather, lamps made from coffee grinders, old-fashioned gumball machines, and family artwork.

As with all owner-built homes, this one is not quite finished. "We still have some things to do," the couple admits.

Making the past live again is a never-ending task. —



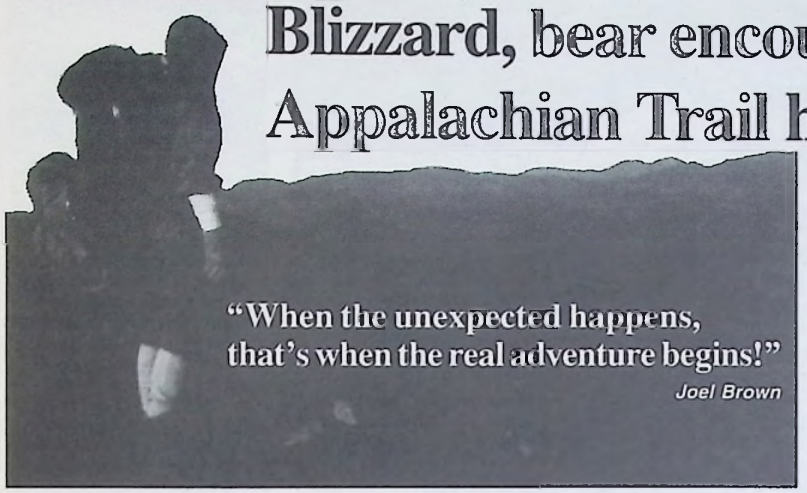
The Blue Ridge Mountains form a scenic backdrop for Jim and Pat Tichenor's dream home built overlooking the South River valley. The couple recycled a log cabin previously located near Greenville, and, with the help of local artisans, supplemented the logs with existing materials from other deteriorating structures to build a new home.

Photos by Deborah Sensabaugh

Rustic charm combined with modern elegance creates a cozy atmosphere in Jim and Pat Tichenor's "new" log cabin. The house is the third structural rehabilitation project undertaken by the couple.

When Old Man Winter exhales

Blizzard, bear encounter liven up Appalachian Trail hike for father, son



By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON - There are some people who hear of Madison Brown and his son Joel heading off on a hiking and camping trip in January and wonder if they are just slightly crazy. After learning about the daring duo's recent adventure in the Shenandoah National Park, which included a close encounter of the bear kind and getting plucked from the jaws of a blizzard, suspicions about the Browns' sanity are probably confirmed in the minds of many.

"We try to stay away from those people and not talk to them," said Madison recently of naysayers who question their choice of vacations. "Winter is a nice time of year to go camping. There are no mosquitoes and the trees have no leaves so that you get entirely different vistas," he added.

"In the winter there is less chance of rain," added his son, Joel. "Cold is more fun than wet."

Getting away together on a long backpacking trip has become somewhat of a tradition for much of the Brown family. Last year the two were joined by other family members on a 79-mile hike from one end of the Smoky Mountains to the other.

"We had a glorious time," Joel recalled. "This year we decided to stay closer to home and have a longer hike."

The planning for the journey from one end of the Shenandoah National Park to the other (106 miles) began almost three months ago when Madison sent a letter to Joel, who lives near Newcastle in Craig County, instructing him to keep the dates from December 31 to January 7 open.

Although their departure time and put-in spot were altered slightly because of a wedding and the ensuing celebration, the two stuffed their backpacks full of the necessary supplies and set off on Sunday, the last day of 1995, for what was to be about a 90-mile hike along the Appalachian Trail. After leaving a detailed itinerary with Madison's wife Katharine, the pair hiked into the park via Rip Rap Trail outside of Crimora and intersected the Appalachian Trail between milemarker 89 and 90. There they turned north and followed the trail through the park. The plan for the end of the hike called for Katharine to pick up the hikers a week later at Front Royal.

The opening day of the journey turned out to be gorgeous, and the hiking was fine. A nagging detail that would figure prominently in the trip days later was the fact that there were no rangers in the park, and the normally efficient self-registration system for hiking on the trail was not in place due to the federal budget standoff in Washington, D.C.

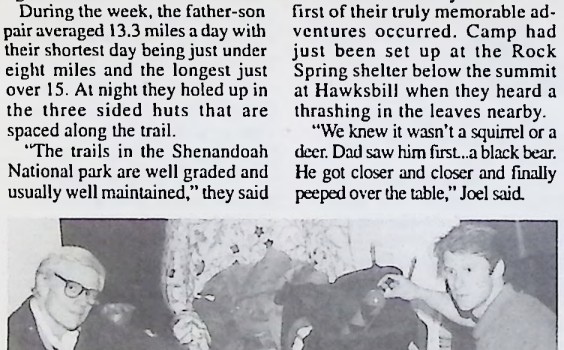
During the week, the father-son pair averaged 13.3 miles a day with their shortest day being just under eight miles and the longest just over 15. At night they holed up in the three sided huts that are spaced along the trail.

"The trails in the Shenandoah National park are well graded and usually well maintained," they said of the terrain they crossed. "This time of year is hard because we have had some ice storms and there are a lot of blow downs. But the trail is wide and well marked."

Although the rains moved in Tuesday making for a day of wet hiking, the scenery was worth the trip. "The Appalachian Trail and the Skyline Drive intertwine because both are seeking the crest of the mountains and the good views. The trail goes up and down. It seeks out water, and it seeks out good views," Madison said in describing the course of their trek.

Along the way they encountered a few humans and plenty of deer, skunks, grouse, squirrels and rabbits. They had been in the woods for five days when the first of their truly memorable adventures occurred. Camp had just been set up at the Rock Spring shelter below the summit at Hawksbill when they heard a thrashing in the leaves nearby.

"We knew it wasn't a squirrel or a deer. Dad saw him first...a black bear. He got closer and closer and finally peeped over the table," Joel said.



Safely back home, Madison Brown of Staunton and his son Joel of Newcastle look over the gear they carried on their recent Appalachian Trail hike. The two became stranded in the mountains near Front Royal when the Storm of '96 swept through the Mid-Atlantic states. In the photo at upper left, Madison pauses at Mary's Rock to gaze out across the mountains of Virginia.

Photo, upper left, by Joel Brown; Photo, bottom, by Nancy Sorrells

"We began to talk with increased volume as he began to back off," Madison continued.

On its own this intimate look at park wildlife would have been enough fuel for entertaining the family with camping stories, but that was not the end of the Browns' bear encounter. Later that night as they lay bundled in their sleeping bags inside the shelter, their four-legged visitor returned.

"I don't sleep a lot when I am camping," Joel explained. "So I woke up and heard what I thought was a pebble being ground into a rock," he added. As he peered groggily across the shelter, Joel saw a dark shape that he assumed to be one of their backpacks. "I thought, 'I don't remember us leaving our backpack there.' Then I looked up and saw that our backpacks were hanging up where they were supposed to be and realized the dark shape was the bear!

"He climbed up on the shelter and began to inspect my boot liner. I sat up and banged on the shelter and about that time I heard Dad say, 'I'm awake!'"

Only about six feet separated the noses of Joel and the bear, but being a "well-mannered and respectful bear," the ursine visitor decided to check out other places and wandered off before the sun came up.

The real memory-maker on the trip was yet to come, however. Unbeknownst to the Browns, a classic nor'easter was brewing hundreds of miles away and bearing down on the Mid-Atlantic region with a snowy vengeance. After the rain on Tuesday, the temperature for the trip never got above 28 degrees and night time lows hovered in the teens. On Saturday night as they settled into camp, a few flakes of snow began to filter down out of the sky, but nothing too heavy.

"A fellow coming in from Front Royal, where we were going out, said that Washington, D.C. was expecting six to 12 inches," Madison said. "We went to sleep with that silly snowfall and woke up with at least a foot of snow. After breakfast there was already another couple of inches and we realized that we were getting more than six to 12 inches."

The pair had met up with a through hiker heading south, and the three decided to stick together due to the deteriorating weather conditions that already included 16 to 18 inches of snow. Continuing with the planned 17-mile hike to Front Royal appeared to be out of the question so the three hikers had a powwow, according to Joel.

"We had a couple of plans. We could continue on our trail and stay at a shelter along the way; we could take a side trail out of the park and down off the crest of the mountains, or we could take a trail up to the Skyline Drive and follow the pavement. We figured if we met anybody, it would not be on the trail, but on the Drive," he explained of their choice to follow the road.

In the meantime, back in Staunton Katharine had not been so isolated from the weather reports which were predicting several feet of snow. When she arose Sunday morning and looked out the window she realized that not only was there no way the fellows would make it to Front Royal, but there was absolutely no way that she would be able to drive from Staunton to Front Royal to pick them up!

"I must have gotten up about 7 and started calling people by 7:30," she said. "I called the Staunton Police who put me in touch with the Front Royal police who put me in touch with the Warren County Sheriff's Office. I had a nice conversation with them and they were prepared to send out a search party, but then they realized Madison and Joel were in the Shenandoah National Park and so they put me in touch with the park service.

Luckily for everyone, Sunday was the first day that government employees returned from their furlough, so a ranger was able to get a message by 8:30 Sunday morning. Using the detailed itinerary that her husband and son had left, Katharine was able to tell the ranger exactly where they had spent the night.

Armed with that information, Ranger David Bauer set off in his four-wheel drive vehicle in search of the missing hikers. Bauer, a 10-year veteran of the Shenandoah National Park, has been through this kind of emergency before. He is the ranger in residence for medical emergencies in the northern part of the park and lives year-round at Piney River Ranger Station. Ironically, the Browns had passed his residence the day before as they hiked through the area.

"In 1993, Bauer was snowed in for four days and they had to come in and dig him out. But we saved him all that trouble this year," Madison said with a laugh.

As far as rescue operations go, things happened very quickly this time. Thanks to Katharine's early phone calls and the decision by the hikers to take the Skyline Drive, they were located fairly quickly.

"The going was strenuous in the snow. At first it was like walking on sand at the beach, but then..." said Madison as he remembered the hike just to get up to the roadway. "We made it up to the drive

See HIKE, page 14

When Old Man Winter exhales

While the sheep, above, opted to eat their way out of the blizzard, the cows below, left and right, could do little more than stand and stare. Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton

COVER STORY

Continued from page 1

it had earlier in the day. Conditions continued much the same throughout the afternoon and by 6 p.m. the temperature was back down to 10. Winds died down some but were still gusting fiercely on occasion. Accumulation of snow began to diminish as its quality changed from needle-like flakes to those bearing more resemblance to feathers. The snow seemed to sift down as if the storm was beginning to tire from its exercise.

At midnight Jan. 7 the temperature had dropped below 10 degrees, however the accurate temperature is not known, because a snowdrift had crested above the top of the fence post to which the official *Augusta Country* thermometer is attached, obliterating it from view.

Somewhere around 2 a.m. on Jan. 8 the snow stopped — finally. *Monday, Jan. 8 folks* awakened to a white wilderness under overcast skies. It was 14 degrees, skies showed signs of clearing, and 30 inches of snow had blanketed the Shenandoah Valley floor. Reports to the east of the Blue Ridge – called in by an *Augusta Country* subscriber in Lynchburg — put the total at 20 inches there. West of the Allegheny Mountains in Pocahontas, W.Va., reports of 48 inches of snow were noted. With the drifting caused by gusting wind and unless access was available with the use of a road grader or bulldozer, it was a "no go" in any direction for most folks. Va. Gov. George Allen declared a state of emergency, and the National Guard was activated in some areas to assist with emergency response situations.

Snow does strange things to the landscape and the environment. Of note is its effect on sound — snow on the ground has the same effect as fastening egg cartons to the walls of a room to make a crude recording studio. In an acoustically snow dampened world there was little which breached the silence of the day after the storm other than the vocalizations of unfed cattle and sheep.

Late in the afternoon the steady KA-chunk-KA-chunk-KA-chunk of an approaching bulldozer could be heard making its way through the four- and five-foot snowdrifts blocking Va. 876 west of Middlebrook. It was one of some 3,800 snowplows, road graders, bulldozers, and front-end loaders which were mobilized across Virginia to dig the state out of one of the worst winter storms in history. (But keep in mind, it wasn't a blizzard.)

Back on the farms, folks with tractors and front end loaders had their work cut out for them. With private contractors committed to highway snow removal, farmers grabbed their bootstraps and started digging out. Although the equivalent of moving a ton of sugar a teaspoon at a time, using tractors' front end loaders to scoop up the snow, and throw it somewhere — anywhere — was the only way to clear a path.

Once farmers had opened driveways and lanes to access feed stores, they turned their attention to giving livestock some room to maneuver. Paths were opened in fields to clear the way for hay to be fed and enable livestock to get to water.

Most folks found that paths which took all day to open on Tuesday drifted shut during the night due to blowing snow. And by the time those drifts were moved Wednesday morning, weather forecasters began predicting another major snowfall for the area. It was as if there were some wacky weather cheerleaders in the heavens chanting, "Let's have another one just like the other one!"

And so residents braced themselves, gathered in supplies (grocery store shelves were picked clean); filled containers of water, moved wood close to the back door, parked cars at bottoms of driveways, battened down the hatches, manned the torpedoes, took battle station positions, etc., etc. — and waited. But the second storm in less than a week was anticlimactic at best. About five inches of new snow fell from late in the night Jan. 11 and into the morning of the 12th bringing the week's total snow accumulation to 35 inches.

So if the snowstorm wasn't a blizzard, what was it? One might euphemistically refer to it as what happens when Old Man Winter exhales — that is, if one is in a euphemistic mood. But all the inconvenience, extra work, expense, aching muscles, and frayed nerves created by the storm had many people referring to it in rather uncomplimentary terms — some of which cannot be published herein.

Technically, it might not have been a blizzard. What it was is very simple. Technically, it was a mess — by this writer's definition anyway. And, in fact, others were of the same opinion.

"Isn't this a mess?" was the question on many folks' lips as the digout slowly progressed.

"Isn't this a mess?" Yes, technically and very definitively, it was a mess. —

As snowstorms rate, where does the Storm of '96 rank?

There have been a number of noteworthy winter storms to roll through the area. Here is a list of some which have been of record-setting proportions.

1772: 45-inch snowfall recorded at the farms of Mssrs. Washington and Jefferson.

Jan. 22-Feb. 3, 1966: Four snowstorms dump 37 inches on Augusta County.

March 1962: Late winter storm hits area hard with 35 inches of snow.

Jan. 6-7, 1996: A storm which wasn't a blizzard leaves 30 inches of snow in its wake.

March 1960: Record-setting storm with 27 1/2 inches of snow.

March 13-14, 1993: The Blizzard of the Century — yes, a genuine blizzard — 26 inches.

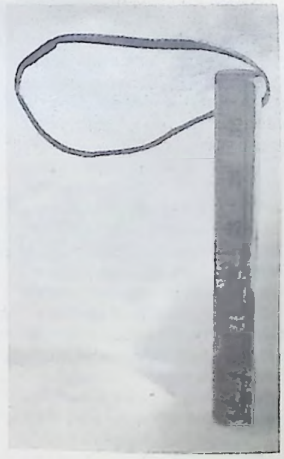
Feb. 16, 1899: 26-inch storm

Dec. 20, 1880: 24 inches in 24 hours — "...the snow seemed to descend at a furious rate," as was recorded in a Rockingham County man's diary.

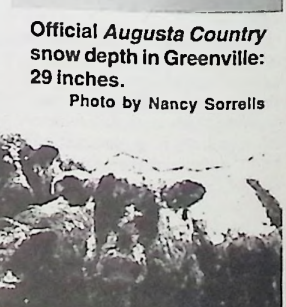
March 2, 1994: 18 inches, hardly considered a decent snowfall at all by other standard-setting winter storms.

(Information for this chart was taken from an article written by Augusta Country staff writer Nancy Sorrells and which appeared in the newspaper's April 1995 issue.)

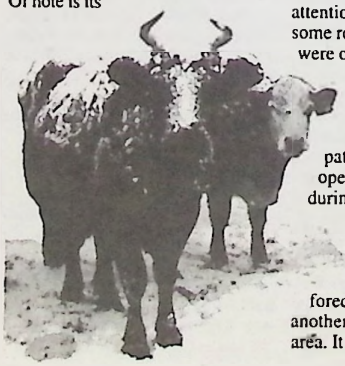
"Ya'll come! Now that we've got the path clear." Native Alabamian and blizzard rookie Sheila Ishee waves a greeting from the back door of her home near Middlebrook.
Photo by Jeff Ishee



Students from area schools had several days to perfect their skills with road conditions forcing schools to close for more than a week. In the photo at left, Tammy Hughes and Stephanie Harris of Middlebrook, front sled, and Benji Johnson of Vesuvius and Paul Arehart of Middlebrook, background, find the conditions just right for an afternoon of sledding.
Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton



Official *Augusta Country* snow depth in Greenville: 29 inches.
Photo by Nancy Sorrells

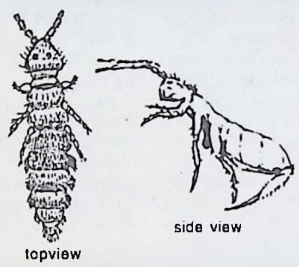


Snow fleas hopping on Shenandoah Mountain

By MARK GATEWOOD

My remedy for cabin fever on the Sunday following the blizzard was a snowshoe trek on the Shenandoah Mountain trail. I rightly guessed that the turnout at the Confederate Breastworks would be the only trailhead plowed out to allow safe parking. The snowshoe idea was not original. Some backpackers had snowshoed out earlier in the day. With the depth of snow, I was grateful for a packed trail.

Just beyond where the Shenandoah Mountain Trail diverges from the breastworks loop, I stopped to get my camera out of my pack. It was then I noticed that the tracks were littered with what appeared to be finely ground black pepper. Had the backpackers jettisoned their condiments in an effort to lighten their packs? No, folks. These were snow fleas!



Snowfleas or springtails

It's not a joke. Snow fleas are members of a primitive order of insects known as Collembolans. Insects of this order are tiny -- the snow fleas were only one millimeter in length -- and look rather like pudgy ants. In addition to the standard insect complement of six legs, Collembolans have a forked appendage on the abdomen, and here's where it starts to get weird. The forked appendage is brought forward under the abdomen and hooked onto a little clasp farther forward on the abdomen. When the insect releases the clasp, the fork catapults it through the air as much as six inches. This accounts for the group's common name, springtails.

Springtails live a quiet life in the leaf litter on the forest floor eating algae, pollen, and leaf mold. On sunny days the snow fleas venture out on the bases of tree trunks to feed. So what were they doing in the snowshoe tracks?

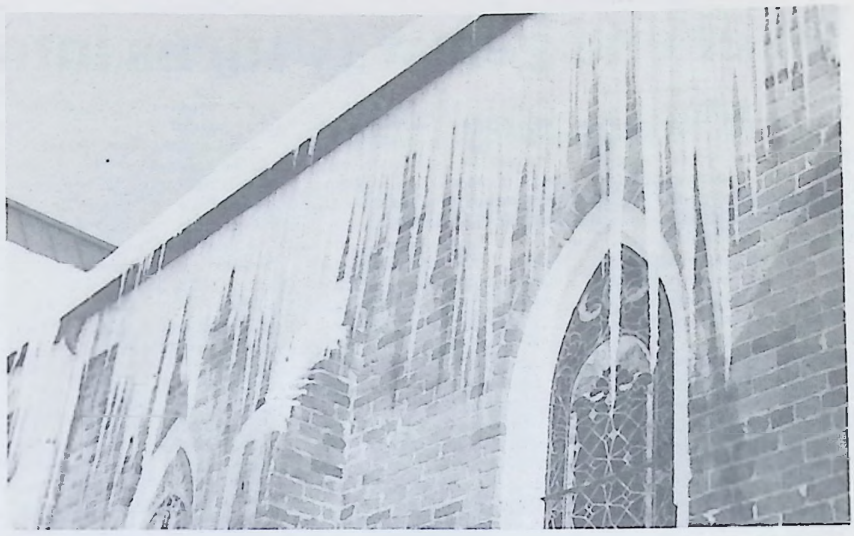
It was a sunny day, with light occasional wind. I didn't note the air temperature, but I'd guess it was at or slightly below freezing and dropping as the sun went down. I'd also guess that the snow fleas didn't figure on wind when they came out and were blown into the deep tracks where they couldn't get back out. Neither was this a restricted occurrence. I walked two miles and snow fleas were in the tracks all the way. In a few places, there were teaspoon-sized aggregations of the insects.

Insect activity in cold weather is not altogether uncommon. Insects don't generate heat, but they have some strategies for coping with even below-freezing temperatures. One strategy uses the chemical property of supercooling. A liquid that cools slowly and without agitation may avoid the crystal formation that leads to freezing. An insect may supercool by remaining absolutely still, but if it is jostled, its tissues will immediately freeze. A second strategy is the production of an antifreeze, glycerol, in the cells of the insect. This lowers the freezing point of the water in the cells. The snow fleas probably use microclimates -- tiny, protected niches that, even in the coldest weather, maintain temperatures that will support life, such as tunnels in the leaf litter and the sun-warmed area at the base of a dark-colored tree trunk.

Of course, I didn't get back to see what happened to those snow fleas, whether they boinged their way back to a tree trunk and back under the snow or whether they just froze to death imprisoned in snowshoe tracks. We all know, or have been reminded, that the weather is indifferent to the affairs of lives both large and small.

So next time you run across the word "biodiversity" and wonder what it has to do with you in Virginia, think about the snow fleas on Shenandoah Mountain, quietly doing their work of reducing the forest leaf litter to soil, and occasionally misjudging the weather. —

Make Gatewood lives in Churchville and is an avid outdoorsman. He holds a degree in wildlife conservation from the University of Missouri.



Cold temperatures lengthened icicles from overflowing gutters like these on Bethel Presbyterian Church near Middlebrook. Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

...and THEN it rained

AC staff report

With up to 35 inches of snow on the ground — the equivalent of 3 inches of rain — there seemed little hope that the fluffy stuff was going anywhere fast. But, the weather being what it is — unpredictable -- the January thaw hit, literally overnight, and the snow vanished.

On the count of three — Number One being the snow storm which rolled through Jan. 7 and Number Two being the lesser snow storm which passed through Jan. 11 — Augusta County and other Virginia localities were inundated with water Jan. 19 when 3-4 inches of rain fell in only a matter of hours.

With temperatures soaring into the 50s, rapid snow melt combined with the new precipitation to overflow river banks and flood roadways. The storm brought with it yet another unusual weather occurrence — for January anyway — in the form of an early morning thunderstorm.

Flooding throughout Virginia forced evacuations and caused mass power outages. Streets which only a few days earlier were impassable due to mounds of snow were made impassable once again due to high waters.

Snow which melted rapidly due to warm temperatures and heavy rains forced streams out of their banks and turned pastures into lakes. Compared to the drifts of two weeks before, the flooding was like a day at the beach. Yeah, right. Last one in's a rotten egg. Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

FOR SALE : 1 acre of water... Warm temperatures, 35 inches of melted snow, and four inches of rain created extensive flooding in Augusta County and surrounding areas Jan. 19. This photo was taken at the Middle River bridge near Verona. Photo by Nancy Sorrells

What goes up must come down and so did the temperature on the 19th. Within the span of a few hours the mercury dropped 40 degrees causing rapid freezing of standing water. Dangerous icing of roads occurred as water was forced from the ground as freezing contracted it causing drainage culverts to overflow and freeze. Road and weather conditions forced the closing of most area schools through the week of Jan. 8-12, again on the 15th, and yet again on the 19th.

What's next? It's anybody's guess, and folks assume that's what the weatherman does most of the time. But according to the *1996 Farmers' Almanac* — which features as reliable a weather forecast as any — snowstorms are predicted for Virginia Jan. 28-31 and Feb. 8-11 and the Mid-Atlantic states the 24th through the 29th. So keep the snow shovels handy. It ain't over 'til it's over. —

Weekend getaway turns into wintry nightmare

By NANCY SORRELLS

ZACK — When Wayne and Kathy Swisher decided to invite some friends up to their cabin for a weekend getaway, they had no idea what an adventure the next couple of days would become.

The Swishers use the cabin, located in Zack near Walkers Creek, as a hunting camp. Rustic but snug, the cabin has electricity and a wood stove, but the running water and the bathroom are "outside amenities."

The exciting weekend started Friday — the Friday before THE BLIZZARD to be exact — with six people holed up in the Zack getaway. On Saturday they were joined by 25 or 30 friends who came to enjoy the family gathering.

"We had a great time on Saturday," Kathy recalled. "We built a bonfire and the kids and adults went sleigh riding. We cooked a bunch of food on the grill and everybody enjoyed the snow."

Of course, all day Saturday a light, dry snow was filtering down over the Valley gradually altering the look of the landscape. After a day of fun, two-thirds of the group headed home. Those who left were "the smart ones" according to Wayne. Unfortunately, he, his wife Kathy and their two children, 8-year-old Laura and 10-year-old Justin, were not among the "smart group." *They remained at the cabin along with six other hardy souls: Kay Swisher, W.B. Speck, Carl and Judy Landes, Heath Potter, and Sheldon Pritchett.*

When dawn broke Sunday, the group realized that the fun snow from the previous day was now coming down full force and was quickly piling up. Deciding very early, that they had better head for home, the group packed up their remaining food and loaded everything into their five four-wheel drive vehicles for the short drive back to civilization.

Located just over the line in Rockbridge County, Zack is a few miles from McKinley, and in normal weather the ride from Zack to McKinley takes about 15 minutes. Obviously, with Old Man Winter in rare form, this was not going to be a normal trip, and the adventure soon began.

"Where we were it didn't seem like the wind was that bad," Kathy explained of the group's decision to leave the security of their cabin for the great white unknown. "But once we got out there the wind picked up. I don't know if we could have gotten back in once we got out," she said.

With their course irrevocably chosen, the group convoyed their vehicles for the trip home. As they forged through drift after drift, they soon realized the journey was not going to be easy. The Swisher family operates Swisher Trucking in Mint Spring and are contracted to the U.S. Postal Service for long-haul deliveries between post offices, so they are accustomed to traveling in adverse conditions. Their on-the-road experience would come in handy as they made their way along *the treacherous roads.*

Members of the group maintained vehicle-to-vehicle communication using citizen's band radios. They decided that only one vehicle at a time would brave the succession of hills up to Dividing Ridge in McKinley. That way if one vehicle ran into trouble, it could maneuver without another on its bumper.

Leading the convoy and breaking the trail was a full sized four-wheel drive pickup, but before the next vehicle could catch up, the howling wind had filled the truck's tracks with snow. Through the blinding snow and howling wind, what is usually a quick quarter-of-an-hour jaunt turned into a three-and-a-half hour nightmare. Three of the five vehicles became hopelessly mired in drifts and had it not been for the horsepower of a farm tractor the group's happy ending might not have occurred.

"We lost the first vehicle at Little North Mountain Farm, probably about 5 miles from the cabin. We got it off the road, but just left it and took everything we had out of it and carried it up the hill to another vehicle. So now we had four," Kathy said.

As they pushed on the going got rougher. "It snowed so hard one of the windshield wipers came off our vehicle," Wayne said.

"You couldn't drive more than 5 or 10 minutes before you had to stop and clean the windshield because it would freeze. We just stopped in the middle of the road, but that didn't seem to affect any of the traffic since we were the ONLY traffic," Kathy added.

The second vehicle in the group gave up the ghost at the *mountain road south of McKinley which cuts west to Craigs-ville.* Luckily, just as the door closed, a window was opened in the form of Gene Sensabaugh. Storm or no storm, farm animals have to be cared for, so Gene had his tractor with a three-point hitch bale carrier out in the middle of the snowstorm puttering up the road.

At first, because of the poor visibility, the group thought the lights on Gene's tractor were from a snowplow, but then they realized that no snowplow would be out to McKinley yet. Again the group pulled the circle of wagons in tighter. Gathering their supplies from the second abandoned vehicle, they clambered onto Gene's tractor. The kids and supplies went in the cab and the adults hung onto the bale carrier. With a tractor now breaking trail, the 10 plus Gene forged ahead once more.

After they lost the second car, the group realized they were in a real predicament. Before they abandoned the vehicle, Kathy got on the car phone and called come friends who lived near McKinley.

"I got a hold of Carl (Craig) and said 'hey we are hung up in a snow drift, and Gene Sensabaugh is here with his tractor, can we come up to your house?" Kathy recounted. "Carl said sure and hung up without asking how many people we had!"

Even with the tractor running up and down the hill, progress was slow and the final three-tenths of a mile hill to McKinley took a full hour to navigate. Parking two of the three vehicles at the top of the hill, they regrouped again and set off with just the full sized pickup and Gene's tractor toward the Craig's house just north of McKinley.

If there had been any traffic on the road that Sunday, the group would have been a sight to see with people piled in the back of the pickup, in the tractor cab and hanging off the bale carrier extending behind the tractor. Finally about 12:30 the motley group arrived at the Craigs only to find a 5-foot drift at the end of the driveway.

"We couldn't get the gate open, so we had to take the gate off its hinges," Kathy said.

Halfway up the driveway even the tractor was halted in drifts over the tops of the front tractor tires. With the vehicles halted, eight of the party grabbed supplies and forged through the snow across the final yards to the Craig's house.

The two people in the pickup truck then turned around with the intention of heading home. They got as far as the other side of McKinley before losing the truck when it slid off the road into a side ditch. After floundering on foot through the ever growing snowdrifts for three miles, they made it back to the Craig's about 6 p.m., bringing the total holed up in the restored farmhouse to an even dozen.

After receiving Kathy's call, the Craigs scrambled to prepare for their surprise company. When Carl had hung up from his brief phone conversation with Kathy, he had no idea how many to expect. After all the Craigs had just settled in for what they assumed would be a nice, quiet Sunday.

"We had just commented that we couldn't remember being snowed in just the two of us by ourselves for a long time," Ginny said with a laugh. "Then Carl got the call."

The Craigs were watching out the window as the group struggled up their driveway, and they began to count human forms as they pushed nearer and nearer the house.

"We counted as they got closer

See SWISHERS, page 15

•Hike

Continued from page 11

and had gone maybe a quarter of a mile when we heard the toot of a horn and looked behind us. There the ranger in the blazer with its lights flashing. He pulled up, opened the door, looked at me and said, 'Mr. Brown?'" recalled Madison.

"That was about 9:30 or 10. We were very surprised and pleased. He was terribly nice and competent. We got in and headed for Thornton Gap," he continued.

Although Thornton Gap, where the ranger headquarters is located, was only 14 miles away, it took the group between an hour and a half and two hours to reach it.

"By this time there was snow up to the bumper, and it was coming over the hood. We spent a great deal of time stopping and scraping. Visibility was low and we were keeping an eye out for other hikers who might be out there" Joel said.

Once the trio of blizzard hikers arrived at the ranger headquarters, Bauer insisted that their families be notified. He then questioned them very closely about the other hikers and campers they might have seen in the last few days.

"When the park was closed, the self-registration slips were removed; therefore there were no carbons telling them who was in there. They were counting on other people like us telling them who they had seen," Madison explained. For five hours the three hikers sat at the park headquarters with Bauer and all the while he was relaying information on the other people who might still be stranded in the park. Days later, the rangers were still looking for some of the hikers trapped in the blizzard.

Madison Brown stands outside one of the shelters along the Appalachian Trail where he and his son camped while on their January hike. Think you've got enough wood for the fire, Madison?

Photo by Joel Brown

"We were very impressed with the competence, enthusiasm, organization and care for us," Madison said of Bauer, and the work the park service did during the storm.

By late afternoon, the highway department had opened up a road so that the three hikers could be taken down to Luray where they holed up in a Ramada Inn and waited for the blizzard to end. They stayed in Luray Sunday and Monday night while the Shenandoah Valley dug out from 30 inches of snow. On Tuesday, with Katharine still snowed in and travel of any kind at a crawl, they wrangled a deal from a limousine service to haul them and their gear into Staunton.

Strick's Stretches brought them back to Staunton in a town car, but ironically the big luxury car could not make the final, snow-covered hill up to the Brown's house.

"We had to hike the final block home. The last ascent was on foot," they said. A day later, Madison and Joel were still sorting through the remains of their adventure. Camping equipment and maps were still strewn across the living room floor. Those eventually will get picked up and stored, but the memories will remain forever. On Wednesday they took their blizzard hiking buddy to Charlottesville so that he could continue his trek southward on the trail. In a few weeks, he plans to stop by Joel's house in Craig County near the trail to renew their friendship.

All-in-all things could have turned out much worse for the blizzard bunch, but common sense, luck, and some old fashioned worrying on Katharine's part combined for a speedy rescue from the storm. Although they joke about taking next year's trip to Cumberland Island off the sunny coast of Georgia, Madison and Joel deny that they were ever truly worried during this year's journey.

"When the unexpected happens, that's when the real adventure begins!" Joel said. —

•Swishers

Continued from page 14

and realized that it was a good many of them," Ginny said. "It was not easy walking in that snow. It was mean, and the drifts grew as nighttime came, because the wind was bad."

The Craigs ushered the half-frozen group into their "mud room" which normally serves as a transition area between the barn and the house. Located in the basement of their house, the room's most attractive feature is a woodstove which was fully stoked.

"We brought them in and sat them by the woodstove and tried to thaw them out. They were cold and scared. I think they needed a place right about then because they had just about used up their extra umph," Ginny remembered. "Everything that had zippers couldn't be budged until the zippers thawed. They were very thirsty, and we kept the water coming. As they thawed out, then different ones peeled out of their outer wear."

Once the urgency of the situation had died down, the numbers which had swelled from two to 12 had to assess their situation. Because she knew that there were plenty of supplies for her and her husband, Ginny had not participated in the grocery store madness before the blizzard hit.

"Luckily Kathy had a cooler full of meat and kept us supplied for three days. I had vegetables. We went through a five-pound bag of potatoes. We had them mashed, fried, any way you could do a potato. We were very fortunate they had a lot of food with them," Ginny added.

Even so, reasonable rationing was put into effect for the first couple of meals since the group had no idea how long they would be holed up.

"We said we were on a 'Ginny Craig' diet," Kathy said remembering their take-off on a popular dieting program.

Food was not the only thing that was used with caution. There are other, less spoken of shortages which can occur with a large number of people — toilet paper, for instance.

"We did discuss trying not to use any more than necessary," Kathy laughed.

"We thought we were well prepared for two," Ginny added. "Unfortunately we almost ran out!"

When they weren't eating or discussing rationing plans, everyone whiled away the time by watching movies, looking out the window to see if it was still snowing and listening to the wind blow.

Finally by Monday the snow had stopped, and they were faced with 30 or more inches of snow on the ground and drifts that were waist deep in places. The fellows helped dig the Craigs out, and by Monday they rescued the two vehicles which were left at Dividing Ridge. Tuesday uncovered the pick-up east of McKinley and the vehicle abandoned at the mountain road. The final vehicle was not recovered until Thursday.

Dozers opened up the road by the Craig's on Tuesday, and the stranded group could finally dig their way home, but they left with a healthy respect for the power of Old Man Winter and a large dose of thankfulness for the goodwill of neighbors.

"I'll never forget the woodstove in the Craig's cellar and their hospitality and also the roar of Gene's tractor!" Wayne said.

"We will also pay more attention to the weather report next time," Kathy added.

And having 10 people pop in on them has not dimmed the Craig's attitude according to Ginny. "It was a great group of people. Everybody was so cooperative and just pitched in. I don't guess I'll ever forget when they came in and were so glad. I could tell this group needed help, and we were glad to be there to help them. Around here it is neighbor helping neighbor. Hard times bring people together." —

Augusta County well represented at Va. Farm Show

By JEFF ISHEE

RICHMOND — Farmers from all over Virginia gathered Jan. 17-18 at the State Fairgrounds where the marvels of the newest developments in agriculture were showcased at the Virginia Farm Show. Young and old alike seemed entranced by the displays of a wide variety of farm equipment and supplies.

Little boys and girls were observed seated in behemoth tractor cabs, obviously letting their imaginations run rampant, as though they were already in the fields of grandpa's farm making hay. The grandpas stood silently as their sons made calculations on efficiency, cost, and practicality of purchasing the newest in farm equipment. In all likelihood, wise counsel from the elder generation probably followed on the drive from Richmond back to the farm.

Among things to be contemplated by Virginia farmers this year were:

- the state of the tobacco industry, and FDA proposals concerning it;
- the potential of raising exotic species such as llamas and alpacas for profit and pleasure;
- the feasibility of greenhouse hydroponics;
- the newest genetic modifications to feed corn;
- three-point hitch chippers for on-farm production of mulch and bedding;
- the capabilities of reel irrigation systems;
- seedstock quality for maximized beef production;
- NAFTA, GATT and how they have affected both domestic and foreign markets for Virginia's agriculture commodities.

Two full days of seminars were available to Commonwealth farmers, ranging from "Career Opportunities in Plant Agriculture" to "Farm Safety" to "Futures Markets" and "How to Get Into Poultry Production."

On Thursday, Augusta County farmer Joel Salatin spoke to a standing room only audience on "Economically, Environmentally, and Emotionally Enhancing Agriculture."

Pleased with the turnout, Salatin said, "Just to be invited to this farm show is a real delight for me. I have become known as an unconventional farmer using what some folks in this particular conventional crowd might call 'eccentric' methods to raise poultry and beef. For this assembly to lend me an ear for one hour is an accomplishment for Polyface Farm and sustainable agriculture." According to one show staff member, Salatin indeed had the largest and most attentive audience at the 1996 Farm Show.

Certainly, Augusta County and the Shenandoah Valley were favorably represented with other agricultural enterprises, such as Beverage Tractor from Stuarts Draft. Charlie Beverage Sr. had several models of Massey Ferguson and Zetor farm equipment on display, with prices that seemed favorable to a lot of "window shoppers."

James River Equipment from Fishersville exhibited state-of-the-art machinery from John Deere, Batwing, and Bobcat, while Bridgewater's Carlyle Grimm presented dependable Badger equipment. Staunton's Neverot Plastic Posts were prominently on display also.

The Augusta County representatives were among the show's 96 vendors who had their wares on display for farmers to scrutinize. —

Herd health linked to profitability at cattle producers' conference

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON — Cattle producers from across Virginia converged on Ingleside Nov. 1 to hear the latest on cow-calf and stocker herd health. Veterinarians and animal scientists spoke to the more than 150 seminar participants on a wide range of topics including everything from therapy for sick baby calves to the need for reproduction efficiency.

In order to address questions which arise in different types of cattle operations, the program was actually two workshops in one. "Break out" sessions were held simultaneously with one workshop addressing the concerns of producers who keep stockers and another workshop solely for the interests of cow-calf producers.

The cow-calf workshop opened with a discussion of the fundamental practices for treating sick baby calves. Terry Swecker, an assistant professor at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech, told producers that calves which have scours are suffering from a simple but potentially life-threatening intestinal malfunction.

Scours in baby calves may be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites and may also be the result of a nutritional imbalance, according to Swecker. Any of these will affect the fluid exchange in a calf's intestine, he said. Using a simple diagram of a calf's intestinal process, Swecker showed that fluid exchange in the intestines may be altered by any of the conditions which give rise to scours.

When a calf begins scouring, its body is expelling more fluid than the calf is absorbing. The first symptom of scours which producers may notice, Swecker said, is that the calf has diarrhea. Even though this causes problems for the calf, the veterinarian noted that the presence of diarrhea may not be all bad.

"Diarrhea is Mother Nature's way of getting something bad out," he said. Calves which have scours caused by bacteria or viruses may begin expelling large quantities of fluids simply because their bodies are attempting to eliminate the "bad bugs," according to Swecker. However, particularly for baby calves, the mechanism of elimination may quickly give rise to serious health problems.

Swecker noted that the excess secretion of fluid caused by scours in turn prompts a loss of fluid absorption and intestinal damage. Because of these conditions, calves with scours are unable to digest milk. Calves which go untreated for scours die due to dehydration which leads to the onset of shock caused by the loss of too much fluid. A secondary cause of death may be the spread of infection from the intestine to other organs of the calf's body.

Calves with scours can be treated successfully, according to Swecker.

"The cornerstone of treatment for scours is to give fluids," he said. "You have to keep more fluid going in than what's coming out."

Calves that are less than five percent dehydrated should be given 1-2 quarts of fluid per day, Swecker noted. Those that are six to eight percent dehydrated should be given 2-6 quarts of fluid per day with the amount given being proportional to the calf's body weight. Calves which are more than eight percent dehydrated must be given fluids intravenously for at least a day. Types of fluids given to scouring calves vary and may be obtained from animal health suppliers or veterinarians.

Swecker noted that he was reluctant to recommend the use of antibiotics to treat scours. He did say, however, that the use of some injectable antibiotics may prevent an infection from spreading to other parts of the calf's body. He suggested that producers might find the use of a coating or protective agent such as Pepto Bismol to be helpful in treating scours caused by bacteria in the intestines.

The most effective means of preventing scours in baby calves is to make sure newborns nurse soon after birth.

"Adequate colostrum intake is most important," Swecker said. Calves which have to be pulled or those nursing cows with bad udders may require a feeding of colostrum. Swecker told producers to keep frozen colostrum on hand to give newborn calves which are unable to nurse. Colostrum contains antibodies which should help shield baby calves from many diseases.

Another scours prevention method is to keep calving cows away from muddy areas.

"Mud is bad, dry is good," Swecker said. He explained that scouring calves drop viruses and bacteria on the ground. Cows' udders get dirty when they lie down then the next time a calf nurses, the bugs are spread to it causing scours.

Scours may also be prevented by vaccinating cows for scours late in pregnancy. The success of vaccinations, however, is reliant on the connection between a cow and its calf.

"Vaccine is no good if the calf doesn't get the colostrum," Swecker said.

In summary, Swecker told producers to prevent scours by managing the calving area. Calves with scours should be treated with fluids and intestinal coating agents. Veterinarians should be consulted on the use of antibiotics to treat scours. Ultimately, he said, producers may find that vaccinating cows for scours may be an appropriate means to prevent scours in baby calves.

Dee Whittier, also an associate professor at the Va.-Md. vet school, took some time to talk with cow-calf producers about treating other types of diseases affecting baby calves. He noted that losses from respiratory diseases in cattle represent a $1 billion loss annually to the cattle business. While many producers may think respiratory diseases are caused solely by viruses and bacteria, Whittier set the record straight.

"By in large respiratory disease is a stress-related disease," he said. "Respiratory diseases occur when cattle try to adapt to changes in the environment." For baby calves, these diseases must be treated quickly and effectively.

"Calves have so little reserve. They are very fragile," Whittier said. "You don't have a lot of time to wait for a treatment to work so for the most part you've got to make sure you choose the right treatment early on."

Whittier noted that cow-calf producers may improve "calf livability" by paying attention to some key areas of their operations. He echoed Swecker's comments regarding the importance of colostrum for newborn calves and the need for attention to cleanliness in areas where calves are born and kept. Good baby calf health may also be promoted by insuring that feed and water supplies are kept clean and that proper nutrition is maintained. Whittier also emphasized the importance of vaccinating pregnant cows to promote immunity to respiratory diseases. Vaccinated cows pass this immunity to their calves through the colostrum.

"Colostrum raises the disease threshold," Whittier said. "The first day of a calf's life that colostrum is really crucial. Twelve hours after birth the calf loses the ability to absorb antibodies."

Baby calves suffering from respiratory diseases can be treated, Whittier said.

"There are many, many viruses out there that can cause respiratory disease. Make sure you're treating calves with the proper product, get it into them quickly, and use the product according to label specifications," he said.

Whittier told producers they may also improve their success with baby calves by keeping cows under close scrutiny during calving. When newborn calves are arriving during cold weather, Whittier said problems resulting from exposure may prevent calves from thriving.

"Get 'em in, get 'em dry, and get 'em warm," Whittier instructed producers in dealing with newborn calves suffering from hypothermia.

Whittier also spent some time talking to producers about what animal health products they should keep in stock.

"You tend to get what you pay for," Whittier said regarding the vast array of antibiotics available on the market today. The cost of these products varies, and Whittier said producers have to decide what they are willing to pay to treat sick animals.

"Using the more economical product has the potential for saving money, but is it a more risky alternative?" he said.

In reviewing suggestions for deworming products, Whittier noted the price difference in various brands. He pointed out that producers may be faced with choosing between cost savings and convenience when choosing a dewormer.

"Reasonably priced products can be used very effectively if a little less convenience can be tolerated," he said. One area of herd health in which producers can save some money, according to Whittier, is the use of dewormers on adult cows.

"We have never been able to show a benefit on worming cows," he said. Emphasizing the bottom line on parasite control, Whittier said: "Spend your money on calves."

Cow-calf producers looking to increase profits can do so by delivering more calves to market, according to Tom Bailey, also a workshop leader at the conference and a member of the faculty at VMRCVM. This can be accomplished, he said, by working to achieve what he called "optimal reproduction efficiency."

Determining factors which affect this include the time of year that calves are born, body conditions and ages of cows, whether or not cows have a calf at side, and the soundness of the herd sire. He urged producers to pay particular attention to replacement heifers in their herds.

See **HEIFERS**, page 21

Country Trader

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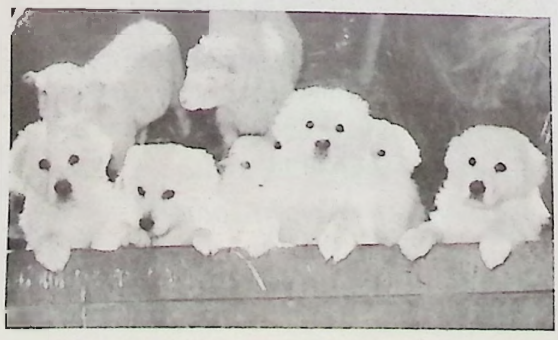

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PERSONALS

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'Survival of the fittest' thins out beef producers

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON — Survival of the fittest is a rule of nature which, simply put, says the strong will survive. With the current market condition in the cattle industry, the same rule applies to cow-calf producers.

Ingleside Resort was the gathering point Dec. 4 for some 200 cow-calf producers from across the state who met for the annual Virginia Beef Cow-Calf Conference. Weary from two years of downward price trends, those attending the conference didn't hear any predictions for improvement in the near future. However they did hear about management practices which will make their operations strong, efficient and, ultimately, survive the cattle market crash.

Bill McKinnon, Extension animal scientist at Virginia Tech, stated the obvious when he told the group that low cost producers can survive current market conditions.

"In the cattle industry, money flows down from the top," McKinnon said, noting that the money chain begins with the retailer. Below the retailers in descending order are the packers, feeder, backgrounder, and, at the bottom, the cow-calf producer. "Whatever's left, that's what the *cow-calf operator gets*," he noted.

McKinnon's advice? "Do the best *job you can in the market we're in.*"

According to McKinnon, prices at some late fall markets fell into the low 30s for heifers and the mid *40s for* steers. He urged producers to consider market trends at the time of sale before deciding when to sell. Since prices in the early fall are typically stronger — in the mid 60s most recently, according to McKinnon — it might have been more economically prudent to sell calves earlier than usual. Likewise, the market often shows improvement in early December. McKinnon noted that producers might need to "own cattle longer" and wait for a better market.

One way cow-calf operators can trim production costs is to go right to the source of their product, according to McKinnon.

"Get rid of marginal cows," he said. "Some cows absolutely aren't going to pay their way."

The feeder calf business is as competitive as any, McKinnon noted.

"You've got to be able to make it different, better, and cheaper per pound than your neighbor," he said.

The fate of cow-calf producers who are unable to economize is set, according to McKinnon.

"We're going to lose some folks out of the cattle business," he said.

McKinnon offered producers some pointers on determining what their costs are.

"You really have to focus on cost per pound," he said. To determine this amount, producers must know their total operating cost then divide it by the total pounds *produced. McKinnon granted that* total cost is a difficult figure to determine. Producers must place a value on machinery use and their time — figures which are not easily calculated. There are, however, other areas of the cow-calf operation — those which require direct out-of-pocket expense —which can be calculated and evaluated.

McKinnon urged producers to reduce supplemental feed costs. He noted that by doing a "better job of forage management" producers can harvest more feed off the ground rather than buying feed for cattle. He explained that producers need to use the "right genetics" to most efficiently produce calves with high weaning weights. Efficient cow-calf producers must work to reduce labor costs, McKinnon said, and maintain strong herd health.

Referring to data gathered which compared low cost producers to high cost producers, McKinnon pointed to primary differences between the two groups. The producers on the bottom end of the scale were spending less money overall, but in comparison to the high cost producers were spending more money on rental property, bulls, and herd health. The low cost operators were also producing calves with higher weaning weights than operators in the high cost category. Cow costs for operators at the lower end of the scale were less than for those at the top.

Factors which pushed producers toward the top of the scale were their costs of raised and purchased feed, *grazing costs*, and interest on debt.

McKinnon introduced producers to a three-page form which may be used to help cow-calf operators determine the per pound cost of their calves. The current year's tax return, a balance sheet, and cow inventory and production records are required to complete the form. In addition to helping the producer evaluate his costs, the data can be mailed to McKinnon who will be compiling all data gathered into a single report.

McKinnon urged cow-calf operators to set long term business goals for themselves. He noted that they should examine their enterprises to determine if they match their resources. The most powerful tool cow-calf operators have, according to McKinnon, is to keep and use records.

"Make decisions based upon facts and numbers, not emotions or biases," he said. When deciding whether to spend money on products or services, McKinnon encouraged producers to look carefully at what gains might be made in comparison to money spent. Operators should push salesmen to prove their product is worth the investment.

"Hold their feet to the fire," McKinnon said.

Cow-calf producers must think of their operations as a business and act accordingly.

"You've got to decide whether you're in the cattle business or just 'running a few cattle,'" he said.

John Johns, Extension animal scientist at the University of Kentucky, offered cow-calf producers some "tried and true" ways to cut costs through better forage utilization.

Although he encouraged producers to hold the line on expenses, he said, "It's not logical not to spend anything."

According to Johns, the cow-calf producer must ask himself the question: "Where do we cut costs without having major impact on reproduction or weaning weights?"

One area where operators may find some dollar savings is forage utilization.

"We need to manage either grazing or hay for quality. Group cattle so we are using forages where they best meet needs, and supplement only when needed," Johns said. He reminded producers that if they choose a supplement, it should complement the forage. The supplement should provide whatever the forage lacks. Stockpiling and rotational grazing are two options which producers may use to keep costs down, according to Johns.

Forage quality rather than quantity should be the primary consideration of producers, Johns said.

"Be conscious of maturity at utilization," he said. "We need to think about the amount of nutrients we're putting in hay and get away from thinking about the pounds of hay we're putting in the barn."

Johns reminded producers to have forages tested for total digestible nutrients. He noted that forage crops harvested in the late spring and early summer are high in nutrients and low in fiber. Cattle should be fed to fill their nutrient needs, Johns said, rather than being fed just to fill them up.

Use of supplements should be carefully evaluated, Johns explained.

"Randomly matching forage to cows means more money spent on supplement. You should supplement when you need to and match the supplement to meet the forage deficiency," he said.

Johns warned that cow-calf producers who need to supplement and don't will see a loss of body condition in cows, calf health problems increase, calf growth rate decline, and reproductive performance decrease.

Another cost-saving measure promoted by Johns is to reduce feeding loss.

"Feeding hay unprotected has resulted in 22 to 38 percent increase in hay use," he said.

Johns also noted that stockpiling fescue may bring with it some savings on time and money spent harvesting forages. He billed rotational grazing as opposed to continuous as a means by which operators can increase yields, increase forage quality and its utilization. He said that typical continuous grazing utilizes only 40 percent of available forage.

The Virginia Beef Cow-Calf Conference was sponsored by the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with cattle industry entities and services from across the state. For information about cow-calf production, call the Augusta County Extension Office at 245-5750. —

Beef convention Feb. 22-24 in Roanoke

DALEVILLE — The Virginia Beef Industry Convention will be held Feb. 22-24 at Hotel Roanoke.

Cattle producers from across the state will converge on the historic Roanoke hotel for the first time in 16 years and within a year of the hotel's reopening following extensive renovations.

In addition to annual meetings of various beef cattle associations, the convention will include educational seminars for participants. Topics to be presented include new beef products, U.S. beef exports, NCA calf health survey, retained ownership, computerizing a cattle herd, and cow costs. The convention will also include a large trade show.

For registration information call the Virginia Cattlemen's Association at 540/992-1009. Registering for the convention by Feb. 11 earns a $3 discount. One-day registration is available for Thursday and Saturday of the convention. In addition to advance reservations, registration is also available daily at the convention. —

Club lambs: Market niche for producers, valuable experience for youth

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

BLACKSBURG — Raising lambs for 4-H and FFA club project work represents an expanding niche in the sheep industry. Shepherds gathered for the Va.-N.C. Shepherds' Symposium held Dec. 1-2 at Virginia Tech were told how they can fit their product into this niche.

Monty Chappell of the University of Kentucky, Gary Ricketts of the University of Illinois, Matthew Miller, a junior at Tech and former junior sheep exhibitor, and Greg Lewis of Tech, explained the club lamb project and offered advice on how shepherds can tailor their operation to supply lambs to 4-H and FFA members.

Chappell led off the discussion cautioning shepherds to give some thought to the prospect of supplying lambs for club projects.

"You have a greater responsibility than simply merchandising sheep," he said. He reminded shepherds that involvement in a club lamb project can be very beneficial to young people.

"We can see what it's done for a lot of young people," Chappell said. He noted that individuals raising lambs learn responsibility and that the process can be a character *building experience.*

"You have in your hands this country's most important natural resource," Chappell reminded the shepherds. He urged them to be conscientious in their dealings with young people.

The first thing sheep producers who want to enter the club lamb market should do, Chappell said, is to identify the product they want to sell. Lambs raised for club projects should be heavily muscled, of moderate frame, and have eye appeal.

Because some 4-H and FFA members show lambs at a number of fairs over a certain period of time in the summer and early fall, Chappell noted that club lambs should have a "large show window." This allows the lamb to be used over a several week period for exhibiting as opposed to being underfinished or overfinished for shows at the beginning and end of the show season.

Chappell urged shepherds to be prepared to offer some instruction to club lamb novices.

"They need some direction in the right direction," he said. Chappell encouraged shepherds to give young people some basic insight to properly managed sheep production.

"They need to know you don't feed them out of a snuff box and water them with a tea kettle," he said.

Shepherds should be aware of rules pertaining to specific shows. These include knowing the deadline for date of ownership. Most shows require that exhibitors buy their lambs by a specific date and own them for a certain length of time prior to the show.

"You ought to know these rules, and you ought to abide by them," Chappell said. He emphasized that there should be "no fudging."

Of primary importance to the producer and the person wanting to buy a club lamb will be the lamb's show potential. The "bottom line" criteria for this, Chappell said, is muscling, balance, and eye appeal.

"The shoulder should express some rib, the lamb should be clean through the breast, and a high percentage of the lamb's body weight should be in the rack and the loin," Chappell said. "The lambs should have stout feet and legs under them." Lambs selected for projects also should be evaluated to determine if they are "tight hided" or free of wrinkles. Only the best lambs should be considered for project work, according to Chappell.

"This is not a dumping ground for sheep that are not physically sound," he said. "Young people need healthy sheep that will grow."

Specific characteristics which lambs should possess to have show potential include thick muscling in the lower leg which can be seen in a rear view of the lamb. From the front, *they should be a "tad narrower"* than in back," Chappell explained.

Club lamb selection and pricing was also the topic taken up by Ricketts of Illinois who first reminded producers that those wanting to enter the club lamb market "need to be starting with highly productive sheep." Ricketts began with a few tips on practices producers need to follow to provide high quality club lambs.

"We want young people to have a good experience with their project," Ricketts said. For this reason, he said, "We do not like to see lambs docked right up to the spinal column." He explained that there is a "big difference in the incidence of rectal prolapse" in lambs which are closely docked and those which are left with more tissue around the tailhead.

"There's no good reason for it," he said of close docking, "and there's a potential detriment to the lamb. We want to give young people their best chance to be successful." He pointed out that lambs with closely docked tails may prolapse near show date as they gain weight and consume large quantities of feed. Lambs with rectal prolapses cannot be used for exhibiting. Ricketts also noted that "male lambs should be properly castrated."

The relationship between the young person and the shepherd should not end with the sale of the lambs, Ricketts said.

"Show an interest in the people buying your lambs. Share some basic thoughts with them and help them. This is the way to get a young person started," he noted.

Ricketts advised producers to use caution in assisting young people in the selection of lambs to show. He echoed Chappell's comments about the frame size of lambs.

"Two inches of leg doesn't weigh a darn thing," he said, "but two inches of length does." He noted that length of loin and rump is an important consideration when choosing a lamb to show.

Another characteristic to be considered when selecting a lamb is its demeanor and appearance.

"It's hard to put a price tag on style," Ricketts said. He explained that show lambs which come in the ring with their heads up and appear alert are attractive to judges. Although he granted that this characteristic has little to do with the lamb's muscling or frame size, "it's something that does have some value to it," he said.

Producers will need to decide what price they will ask for club lambs, Ricketts noted. He urged producers to be "fair" with their customers but noted there is "no magical answer" to the price question.

"The basic price for a lot of people is the value of the lamb at 120 pounds. Then the better the lamb, the higher the price," he said. Producers who raise lambs which place well in competition may be able to demand more money for their product.

"You can command a higher price as your reputation grows," he said.

Ricketts encouraged producers to "be realistic" in the pricing game for club lambs.

"You need to decide what a young person can afford depending on how much the lamb is to be shown," he said.

He warned producers that they must sell lambs to young people.

"Club lamb producers need to sell their lambs, not rent their lambs," Ricketts said of producers who attempt to retain ownership of lambs. "This is not a way for young people to learn responsibility. They need to buy it."

Aside from selecting the right lamb to show, Ricketts told producers that the "exhibition of market and breeding stock at local, state, and national shows has become the 'picture window' of the livestock industry." He noted that major problems surfaced in 1994 which brought livestock exhibition under "great scrutiny." Ricketts said sheep producers must keep ethics in mind when assisting with club lamb projects.

"It only takes 1-2 percent of people doing things wrong to overshadow 98 percent doing thing right," he said. "The minute something goes wrong it catches the public eye... it's what gets the headline. We don't need that kind of publicity."

Those who follow unethical show practices "don't think about the far reaching effects," Ricketts said. "They are affecting all other livestock producers in the country."

While he admitted that there is a "tremendous value in competition," Ricketts said club members, their parents, and sheep producers need to "keep winning in the proper perspective." Club lamb projects "should be educational," he said. When all emphasis is placed on winning in the showring, Ricketts said "the desire to win becomes so great it completely offsets the value system."

According to Ricketts, unethical show practices include the use of illegal drugs, the illegal use of legal drugs, inhumanely altering animals' diets to drop weight or increase it, use of electrical stimulation to condition animals to tense up when touched, and improperly handling animals. He noted that unethical show practices can result in criminal charges. Ricketts spoke of a case in which a parent was prosecuted and convicted of contributing to the delinquency of a minor for using unethical practices in his child's club animal project.

"The vast majority of youth and adults want to be able to compete in an honest, friendly, and educational environment," Ricketts said of livestock exhibition competitors. "But the efforts of a few have wiped out the good efforts of the multitude.

"There is no reason why animals should be treated inhumanely," Ricketts said. "There's nothing logical about it in terms of good sheep management."

Due to the bad publicity generated by unethical and inhumane treatment of show animals, Ricketts noted that "some state fairs are considering wiping out market animal shows."

He reminded producers, parents, and club members they "need to be concerned about doing things right, and you need to be willing to stand tall and say, 'This is wrong,'" before our shows are wiped out from under our feet."

"What are we teaching the next generation?" Ricketts asked the audience. "We should be teaching them about sound genetics and sound management. Young people should spend their time shaping the future, not working their way out of a mess we've created."

Presenting a view from inside the showring, Miller spoke of showing lambs from the participant's standpoint. Having grown up in 4-H club lamb project work, he said that young people gain a "pride of

See LAMBS, page 21

Schoolhouse News

Gap freshmen 'rock' 'n roll in earth studies

By LAURYN PLEMMONS

BUFFALO GAP — Freshmen students at Buffalo Gap High school in Jenny Groh's and Ronnie Young's earth studies program have been working hard recently to present an informative panel discussion on a specific mineral.

The intent of this project was to become an expert on an assigned topic, to produce visual products to use in panel discussions, and to learn as much as possible about a mineral. The class previously had been taught and tested on 36 minerals. The Earth Studies group took a field trip to the Augusta County Library to gather information which would help them complete their project. Resources at the BGHS library were also available for student use.

Groups consisted of four members with one member designated as the leader. The leader opened and closed the panel discussion and fielded questions.

"Sometimes being the leader could be pretty tough — getting students to do their jobs and getting it done well," said participant Brooke Reeves. Group members chose one of four jobs to report on — geographer, geologist, mining engineer or miner.

The geographer's duty was to do a regional study of where the mineral is mined and to provide details about the region and the people who live there. Mineral processing and how minerals are used in everyday living was the mining engineer's job. The geologist researched mineral characteristics, formation, and location. The miner's job was to recreate a typical day in the life of a miner and to describe how the mineral was actually mined.

The panel discussions took place Jan. 2-5 in the BGHS auditorium. Students were expected to dress professionally and use a microphone to deliver a 15-minute discussion to an audience of about 40 people. Use of visual aids including overhead projectors and bulletin boards was encouraged.

"We've been doing this project for three years, and this year's class has been the best yet," said Mrs. Groh. Stephanie Wimer, a student participant, said, "I learned a lot and had fun with this project."

A total of 11 groups were evaluated and each individual graded on his or her part. The end product was that ninth graders at BGHS became more knowledgeable about their world and had a great time doing it. —

'Novel' idea boosts reading pleasure for RHS students

By KIM WILSON

GREENVILLE -- Recently at RHS the everyday ho-hum *duty of doing written book reports has* been replaced by creativity and inspiration.

Instead of trudging through a book and dreading the impending doom of writing about it, students in Cherie Taylor's and Chris Rockwell's classes can look forward to finishing up a good book. The two teachers collaborated to come up with the idea of making Book Report Cubes. The idea is actually an elaboration of something Rockwell and Taylor learned at a Differentiated Learning Program.

The students get to use the left side of their brains for a change and express their artistic talents by drawing pictures of importance relating to the books they read. Many students said they enjoyed this project a lot more than a usual book report. ---

Kelly Price, far left, Dulaney Vessey, and Stuart Shickel were asked to design cubes which displayed scenes on each of the cube's six sides from novels they read. The students built the cubes as part of a special reading project sponsored by English classes at Riverheads High School.

RHS staff photo

RHS player surpasses 1,000-mark on gridiron

By NATALIE WARD

GREENVILLE -- Ty Phillips is a senior at Riverheads High School. He plays football under Coach Ron Wilkerson as an offensive running back. Ty achieved his goal of 1,000 yards rushing this football season. He has played under Coach Wilkerson and assistant Coach Ray Norcross since his sophomore year.

"They told me I was about to reach 1,000 yards after the homecoming game against Luray. I worked hard the next few games, and part way through the William Monroe game I got it," said Ty.

Ty received a plaque which will hang in the school and was featured in an article in our local newspaper telling of this great achievement. "Mom seemed to be really proud of me," Ty said.

Ty hopes to attend Ferrum College in Virginia and play football next semester.

Congratulations Ty! ---

FHA entertains faculty with tea

GREENVILLE – On Dec. 13 the Riverheads FHA officers and advisors served the faculty the annual Holiday Tea. All the holiday dishes were prepared by Work and Family Study classes. Also during the tea, faculty enjoyed the decorations of wooden Santas and Christmas trees prepared by the students. This is a school tradition that FHA has provided for the teachers since the school opened in 1962. ---

Livestock Club hears swine report

By CARRIE HEIZER

MIDDLEBROOK -- The Middlebrook Livestock 4-H Club met Jan. 18 at the community center. The guest speaker was Steven Baker of Mt. Jackson. Baker spoke on swine projects from selection to show day fitting.

The Livestock Club will be participating in many activities during the next few months. On Feb. 17 the Augusta County 4-H Honor Club is sponsoring the first annual 4-H Valentine's Dance. On March 4 the group will have participants in demonstration/illustration talks. Members are also working hard on their Market Animal Show projects.

If anyone is interested in joining the club contact J.R. or Betty Coleman at 885-7553 for information. —

Groups combine talents for holiday spectacular

By ELIJAH WARD

GREENVILLE – Riverheads combined Choir and Band Concert/Art Show was held Dec. 20 at the school.

The first performance was by the Riverheads Chorale which is comprised of 18 singers who sang *Little Toy Train;, Still, Still, Still;* and *Celebrate the Feast of Lights.* Then the Riverheads Select Singers entered to a candlelit auditorium while singing Once in Royal David's City. They proceeded to the risers where they continued with Christmas in Killarney, Noel, Noel, Noel, and Carol of the Bells.

Next, they were joined by the chorale and a group of RHS band members. They performed *The Twelve Songs of Christmas.* Finally, the group sang Jesus, Born This Day with soloists Stephanie Thayer, Libby Harris, Mary Kessler, and Michelle Roughgarden. The choirs are directed by Jane Dillon. During intermission guests viewed work by the art classes. Art is taught by June Bosserman.

The audience returned to a performance worthy of any orchestra. The Riverheads Concert Band is under the direction of Ms. Lynn Shafer. They led off with Jesu Bambino. Then soloist Tom Taetzch took the spotlight during performances of tunes from "A Charlie Brown Christmas." The old English tune of Coventry Carol was performed next.

As its finale the band performed Christmas Fugue featuring the low brass section. Afterward, the following was heard from Paul Arehart, "When I heard the Carol of the Bells it gave me a thrill." Band member Corey Shaner said, "I enjoyed performing The Christmas Fugue in which I played the tuba."

The band and choir performed the next morning at an assembly for an enthusiastic student body. ---

Here, there, everywhere

Craigsville goes 'online' with library laptop

By PENNY PLEMMONS

CRAIGSVILLE — Craigsville residents now have the opportunity to "sled" the information superhighway via a laptop computer which is temporarily housed at the Craigsville Library Station.

Thanks to the efforts of Diantha McCauley, assistant director of the Augusta County Library, and Craigsville Library volunteer Mat Acord, the Craigsville Library was chosen as one out of eight sites in Virginia to receive a laptop grant from the State Library Youth Services.

The laptop is complete with Microsoft Windows software which enables users to produce professional letters, documents, and graphs. And with a click of the mouse you can put a compact disk into the computer and travel into an enormous world of information.

Acord noted that "by using this technology, Craigsville's school children can be on the competitive edge with other area students." The more adventuresome computer users can cruise online and browse the Internet via the Virginia Library Information Network.

As part of the grant requirement, Acord is giving introductory classes twice a month at the Craigsville Library Station. Six "Craigsvillians" chose Jan. 6 — the opening day of the Blizzard of '96 — to try out the laptop. Beverly Thompson, an Augusta County Department of Corrections Education teacher, came to Acord's first computer class "to supplement her on-the-job computer training." She plans to publish inmates' writings in a newsletter. Steven Churchill, a 16-year-old Buffalo Gap High School student, said, "I want to learn about the computer so that I can do better reports for school." And it was no secret why 6-year-old Justin Johnson accompanied his great-grandmother Nell Thompson to the class — he came to play games on the computer.

The laptop and its endless possibilities is on loan to the Craigsville Library Station until May. Acord stated that Craigsville City Council has been very supportive of the new technology and has provided funding for telephone online services. He is hopeful that the Council and financial supporters from the community will make it possible for the Craigsville Library to purchase a computer of its own.

Craigsville Library users will also be happy to know that the Augusta County Board of Supervisors has agreed to release funds to provide a computer modem that will link Craigsville Library Station directly to the Augusta County Library in Fishersville. This additional automation puts the Craigsville Library in great shape making it easy to check out books, renew books, look for books, and request interlibrary loans.

Don't be a stranger. Stop by the Craigsville Library Station and experience the computer sled ride of your life. You can sign up for classes by calling the library at 997-0280. Donations to purchase a permanent computer may be made to the Craigsville Library Station Computer Fund. —

Crozet novelists hit 'Pay Dirt' with pur-r-rfect mystery

By L. TABB MCBROWL

***Pay Dirt*, Rita Mae Brown and Sneaky Pie Brown, Bantam Books, December, 1995**

In this, the fourth Mrs. Murphy Mystery by Rita Mae Brown and her extremely able assistant the tiger cat Sneaky Pie Brown, the action *begins and ends at Ash Lawn Plantation, where several of the characters are guides. But in between, things center around that haven of gossip, the Crozet Post Office, where our heroine, Mrs.* Murphy (a tiger cat of great intelligence) hangs out. Harry, whose proper name is Mary Minor Haristeen, is the postmaster, but Mrs. Murphy and her friend Tucker, a Welsh Corgi, call her "Mother" since they have chosen to live with her.

The characters in this lighthearted murder mystery are created with humor and warmth by the two Ms. Browns and are seen as they appear not only to the limited human eye, but from the more in-depth feline perspective as well. What seems so evident to the animals, takes the denser humans a bit longer to discover which, of course, comes as no surprise to this critic.

Mrs. Murphy and Tucker are joined in their adventures by Pewter, a second feline character who resides at the market next door to the post office, is extremely fond of food, and also very helpful as an assistant.

It often takes both Mrs. Murphy and Pewter, running in circles, biting at ankles and caroling in loud voices to get the humans to do something. They admit that Harry is smarter than most, but they even have trouble getting through to her at times.

The story begins at Ash Lawn Plantation where Harry has taken a handsome gentleman friend on a tour. While they are visiting with several of the Crozet guides, a rather un-Virginian type of tourist shows up — a black leather clad biker from California, looking for someone named Malibu, whom he insists is supposed to be there. With Harry's friend Blair's assistance, he is persuaded to leave, but is found murdered a couple of days later.

L. Tabb McBrowl endorses Rita Mae and Sneaky Pie Brown's *Pay Dirt* with the Catnap Seal of Approval.

AC staff photo

From there the who and where gossip takes off. It is not until later in the story when first one then another of the inhabitants of Crozet also are found murdered that everyone begins to sit up and really take notice.

The animals do an admirable job of picking up clues. The sheriff and Coop (Cynthia Cooper, a local police officer) dash about inspecting and arresting, and everyone heads each day to the post office and market for the latest news. The scheme involves not only the biker and Malibu but a computer virus and missing funds from the Crozet bank as well. Mrs. Murphy does all she can, and with the help of Harry and others the mystery is finally solved with guns and fights and the animals to the rescue at Ash Lawn.

Among the excitement of the murders and computer virus, Rita Mae Brown also weaves a bit of romance for Harry as she is pursued by her handsome friend Blair and her ex-husband as well. Ms. Brown also throws into the plot one character with both new wife and old girl friend, who, needless to say, don't get along too well.

The plot moves along at a wonderfully funny and rapid pace which makes one not want to put the book down until it is finished. It's the kind of book one can curl up with all afternoon pausing only for an occasional cat nap.

People who are not owned by either cats or dogs may think the animals' ability to be crime sleuths a little silly. However the intelligence of four-footed friends is not a bit surprising. The two Ms. Browns are to be applauded for giving credit where credit is due and, in most cases, long overdue. The accomplishments of Mrs. Murphy and her friends in *Pay Dirt* make for a witty and pur-r-rfectly enjoyable adventure. —

L. Tabb McBrowl lives near Middlebrook. He holds a degree in mousing from the University of Feline Pursuits in Baraboo, Wisc.

Augusta library to display Russian items

AC staff report

FISHERSVILLE — The Augusta County Library will feature a Russian Memorabilia exhibit in its front display case Feb. 15-March 30. The exhibit will include a hand-crafted Russian doll set, stamps, Soviet currency, and a watercolor painting by a student at the University of Moscow.

The exhibit is part of a collection gathered by Vera Hailey of Stuarts Draft during a trip to the former Soviet Republic. In 1990, Ms. Hailey was part of a Soviet culture study group from Eastern Mennonite College which spent four weeks traveling in the Soviet Union. The tour included Russia, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, and the Ukraine. At the time of the tour, all these countries were still under communist rule.

"The cultural differences were especially evident to me because my suitcase was lost somewhere between New York and Czechoslovakia," Ms. Hailey recalled. "I found myself without clothing and necessities in a country where a pair of jeans or a bottle of aspirin could not be purchased in the government-owned stores for any price. It was frustrating and enlightening to be forced to obtain personal effects through the same channels as the average Soviet citizen."

After seeing the sights in Moscow, the EMC group boarded a train for Kiev in the Ukraine which is the breadbasket of the country. Ms. Hailey said effects of the Chernobyl nuclear explosion were very apparent.

"We had food shipped in from outlying areas, because it was still not safe to eat the flesh of animals which grazed on contaminated landscape or vegetables that were grown in soil exposed to radiation," she said. "Needless to say, Intourist (the Soviet travel organization) recommended that we drink only bottled soft drinks during our stay."

The group's travel itinerary took it to the Baltic Sea states of Latvia and Estonia. Ms. Hailey said the citizens of these countries, which had not experienced a long communist rule, were "generally lighter in spirit and had access to an abundant food supply." Due to the countries' proximity to western European nations Finland and Sweden, the Baltic states had a more western character than other Soviet states.

Travel to Leningrad enabled the EMC group to experience the "city of white nights." Ms. Hailey noted that due to the city's extreme northern location, the region experiences periods of 24 hours of darkness and 24 hours of daylight. The tour of Leningrad included stops at the famed Hermitage Museum and homes of the czars.

Perhaps the group's most enjoyable experiences awaited them in Georgia, near the borders of Iran and Turkey. Ms. Hailey said rich foods, excellent wine, and friendly people were abundant in this Soviet state.

"With its Middle Eastern climate and fun-loving people, Georgia was immensely enjoyed," she said.

The trip ended all too soon, according to Ms. Hailey who spent some time backpacking in Europe before returning to the states.

And her luggage? It was eventually found by the airline and returned to Ms. Hailey's home in Stuarts Draft.

Items to be on display represent only a sampling of Ms. Hailey's travels to Russia. She noted that the souvenirs she brought back with her from the trip show the rich heritage and diverse culture of the former Soviet republics. —

around the corner

Voices from the Past, Feb. 13, 7 p.m., Museum of American Frontier Culture, Visitor Center. Sponsored by McKee Foods. Living history storytellers put a face on the African-American experience with their dramatizations of 19th century characters. Free, open to the public. For information, 332-7850. —

Shenandoah Valley Ag Expo, Feb. 14, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Augusta Expo, Fishersville. Trade show, education seminars. Lunch, $2. Call 245-5750 for information. —

4-H Valentine's Dance, Feb. 17, 7:30 p.m.-midnight, Weyers Cave Community Center. Sponsored by Augusta County 4-H Honor Club. Couples, $5; Singles, $3. Open to youth of Augusta County. Call 245-5750 for information. —

The Problem of Slavery in American History, Feb. 20, 7 p.m., Museum of American Frontier Culture, Visitor Center. Sponsored by McKee Foods. Washington and Lee University history professor Dr. Ted DeLaney discusses popular perceptions of slavery and the relationship of those perceptions to historic reality. Free, open to the public. For information, 332-7850. —

Oral History Workshop, Fort Defiance High School, Feb. 24, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free, open to the public. Conducted by Chris Bolgiano, special collections librarian at James Madison University. Sponsored by Augusta County Historical Society. Register by Feb. 14. Write or call Lisa Hill Wilson, Rt. 4, Box 154, Bridgewater, Va. 22812 or call 540-828-2919. Bad weather date March 23. —

Augusta County Historical Society Banquet, March 4, 6:30 p.m., Ingleside. An evening of fellowship and history. Speaker: Dr. Pat Menk. $12 per person. Call or write Kit Carter, P.O. Box 60, Fort Defiance, Va. 24437, 540/248-0843 to reserve tickets which are also available at The Bookstack, Terry Court Drug Store, Weyers Cave Pharmacy, Grottoes Pharmacy. —

Tree seedlings available

Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation is selling small lots of bare root tree seedlings. Proceeds will benefit local conservation efforts.

Species available include white pine, Norway spruce, white oak, northern red oak, Chinese chestnut, sugar maple, yellow poplar, and persimmon. Seedlings will be sold in lots of 3 to 25.

Orders are to be placed and prepaid by Feb. 29. Pick up will be 9 a.m. to noon, March 16 at Headwaters' Augusta County Government Center office in Verona.

Order forms are available at Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau, public libraries, and the government center. Call 248-4328 for information. —

•Lambs

Continued from page 18

accomplishment" through participation in the projects. He said those who strive for the "purple ribbons" can become "addicted" to winning. Club members learn about sheep management and how to handle responsibility through involvement in the project work, according to Miller. The Tech junior downplayed the importance of winning as being a primary goal for those raising club lambs.

To parents in the crowd, Miller addressed the issue of cost involved in showing lambs. Although supplies purchased during the start up year may approach the $500-price range, he pointed out that most club members stay in the project for at least seven years. Averaged out over that period, the cost breaks down to about $70 a year, Miller explained. He noted that he felt this was a minimal investment in a child's interest, and the cost is probably even lower than some extracurricular activities chosen by youth.

Miller noted that participation in the club lamb project has many benefits. He said that it "breeds individual responsibility" and builds "family ties."

"You cannot do it on your own at first," he said. "It puts families together."

Miller noted that competition builds character in young people.

"It's an important thing to learn," he said. "It's easy to be a good winner. You've got to learn how to be a good loser." Project work also gives young people a respect for agriculture and promotes a desire to learn. "The more you do the better you become," he said.

A sense of personal pride and self-worth can be gained through club lamb involvement, according to Miller. He used a photograph taken of him with a show lamb to illustrate his point.

"If you'll notice in the picture, I'm grinning. The ultimate goal (of the project work) is to get grins," he said.

For information about club lamb projects contact the Augusta County Extension office at 245-5750. Agriculture instructors at county middle and high schools also can provide information about starting a club lamb project. —

•Heifers

Continued from page 16

"Most people don't start paying attention to first-calf heifers until they lay down to calf," he said. "It's too late then. The key is good heifer development."

Bailey noted that a cow's reproductive status is greatly affected by its overall health. Cows in good to moderate body condition have a 67 percent rate of conception on first service, he noted. First service conception rates for cows in fair to poor body condition may be as low as 47 percent.

Likewise a cow's fertility will be influenced by her need to provide nutrition to a calf at side, according to Bailey.

"Lactation takes a tremendous drain on cows," he said. "Cows nursing calves produce hormones which shut down reproductive cycling."

Bailey stressed the need for producers to have herd sires examined for breeding soundness. This should be done annually by a veterinarian about 30 days prior to the beginning of the breeding season. Making sure that cows are in good physical condition to become bred and determining the soundness of the herd sire will help producers improve reproductive efficiency, Bailey summarized.

"Missing a single cycle costs 40-45 pounds in individual calf weight," he said. With the profit margin on cattle sinking to an all-time low, Bailey noted that producers need to send as much weight to market as possible in order to survive financially. —

Country Crossroads

Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin
January, 1996

Dear Maude:

Can you believe this January!!! My southern blood rebels at all that snow and cold. To make things even worse, I completely ruined two -- not one but TWO -- new pairs of boots in that mess. Washington has no real way to deal with winter weather, and never has. With the first snow flake everyone goes crazy. About the middle of the month one of my friends said, "The mayor must have awakened, looked out his window, and said - 'my, it must have snowed last week.'" And it looked as if maybe it was the first time he had noticed it, for certainly nothing had been done to remove much of it, that was for sure.

The first week during that half-day between snow storms, some friends of mine had to drive into the city from the suburbs. The commute for everyone must have been terrible. It usually takes them about 20 minutes, but that day it was a three-and-a-half hour trip. By the time they got to the office it was nearly time to turn around and head home. And, of course on the return trip, there were those menacing clouds as the snow began to fall. Once it finally stopped, everyone was overjoyed, but two weeks after it began, there still were only little narrow paths through the great piles of *snow along the streets. Most of the drains were stopped up with the snow which had frozen around them, so each day as there was some melting, there would appear great lakes in the intersections where one could wade ankle deep and cars could roar along and splash everyone on the sidewalks.* Lots of ugly words could be heard. Thank goodness the warmer temperatures and rains came and washed most of it away. People's tempers were being tested.

The timing for such a mess underfoot was not bad, however, from my point of view, for now I have to get back to the shops to replace those ruined boots, and since no one was out for almost two weeks the merchants are having all sorts of sales trying to get rid of the winter merchandise. I should be able to get some great buys and maybe replace the two pairs with three!! And while I am at it, I might just as well take a look at some new dresses and suits. Might as well shop, can't do much else!

Of course the first day of the snow was also the first day that federal employees were scheduled to go back to work after their two-week paid vacations, and look what happened. Not an employee could have gotten there if they had tried! Dennis' friend Jerry said that it looked as if God wanted a balanced budget! But eventually the city managed to clear a cow path through some of the main streets, and -- again -- everyone was scheduled to go back. But here it came falling down again, and there were more days off. One man on the subway was talking about his work record — he had been taking some annual leave (some he had to either use or lose) when the furlough came. Then of course he did not have to go back. He had worked three days in the last five weeks and got paid full pay. Is this some creative way to balance the budget we don't understand?

Most people will tell you that the great theater Washington could use a new playwright -- those sessions of budget talks sounded like one of those old vinyl records when it got stuck -- "we will not agree... screech, we will not agree... screech, we will not agree...." Everyone quickly got tired of the silly arguments, especially since we knew that they had already decided what they had to do to get the bill signed. No one wanted it to look as if they were giving in. The most ridiculous thing of all is that in another year the Congress can introduce a new bill which would negate any measures they wanted to change. Everything the current crowd seems to be so concerned about, especially the most controversial cuts, do not take effect until the 7th year of the budget reconciliation plan. By that time there will have been three more election years, and who knows how many new people elected who may, or may not, agree with this year's legislation. It is enough to drive one crazy!

About all we are doing in the office is catch-up work. We spend a lot of time answering the telephone and trying to explain to concerned clients what is happening and what they can expect. With the absence of a farm bill by Feb. 15, the Department of Agriculture will have to act under the 1949 Agricultural Adjustment Act, which is a permanent law but not exactly what has been in effect in recent years. We get lots of calls from those farmers who are trying to plan their spring planting, but have no way of knowing what kinds of allotments they will be facing. It keeps us busy, just telling them we have no answers, and that is not what they want to hear.

Dylan is still in Georgia, helping with the family business and says that he is glad not to have to be up here in the mess -- weather or political. With all the uncertainty, he is certainly better off there. The one thing he does confess to missing, however, is that he can't come home with me for some of that good country cooking. He sends best wishes to everyone.

Ooops... there goes my phone. Another client wanting to know what's going on. Tell everyone I said "Hi."

Love, LuLu

Twelve old habits for a New Year

Saying grace
By
Roy Howard

The following are not New Year's resolutions. They are 12 simple habits that occurred to me while I was shoveling snow and at the same time trying to think positively. When I got to 12 I quit both the listing and shoveling! With this amount of snow, I'll be shoveling, along with all my neighbors, until April. I figure if I keep shoveling little by little and I work even slightly well on these old habits, my corner of the world will be much better. Besides, just the exercise of choosing these 12 was worth the effort. Each of them I have heard many times, which confirms what I have thought for years: there are very few new habits to learn. These old ones are enough to keep my attention for a lifetime.

1. Love God -- Okay, I'll start with the big one. Garrison Keillor says, "Of course, we are to love God; a truth like this is obvious, but if you stare at it too long it will make you go cross-eyed." It's best to step back for a wide view and accept the risky faith that everywhere I am, God is, too. Believing this wonderful mystery may draw me closer to the Creator who is nearer than my next breath. The adventure of learning how to love God is the only thing that matters in the end.

2. Love your neighbor -- This little habit seems more concrete and much closer to home. Literally. Perhaps if I love those with whom I'm creating a home, I can learn to love my neighbors next door and down the road and in the community. Neighbor-love knows no limits, of course, but to neglect the love of the persons in my home for some distant love makes no sense at all. Someone said, "it would be so much easier to love my neighbors if I didn't have any." I'll start at home and work my way out from here.

3. Love yourself -- This may be the most challenging. *There is something a little suspect about loving yourself. It is confused with selfishness or self-indulgence; like eating two scoops of ice-cream when you're allowed only one.* A major point in favor of loving yourself is that Jesus commands it in the same breath as he commands you to love God and neighbor. He even suggests it's impossible to love either of the other two, if you don't love yourself. Move over John Knox. If Jesus says it's all right, then it's all right with me.

4. Pay attention -- To every thing. Every face. Every voice. Every person, wholly. Every hill. Every valley. Every woods. Pay attention to everything. We are always walking on holy ground. You never know when a bush is going to catch fire, or a hill is going to leap for joy, or someone will tell you the one thing you desperately need to know.

5. Listen -- See above. I want to listen to others well. After all, the voice of God that we hear most often is the voice of human being. Think about it.

6. Forgive -- A world of pain can be healed by the act of forgiveness. Those who harm me I plan to forgive. I intend to ask forgiveness from those I offend. All of which means much of my life will be spent in giving and receiving forgiveness, which is actually not a bad way to spend the day. Such daily acts of forgiveness yield peace and harmony. That's the idea. Right, God?

7. Resist evil -- The hard part is recognizing evil for what is and naming it. Evil always wears some clever disguise. The more polite you are, the harder it is to confront people and institutions that destroy life. My short definition: evil is anything that destroys, corrupts, harms, and violates life. Evil-doers and evil results are not the same thing; some acts end in evil results that are unintentional. Still, both the acts and the results must be named and resisted. No easy task.

8. Seek the truth -- Flannery O'Conner the writer from Millidgeville, Ga., wrote, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you weird." Jesus says, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." I believe they are both right. I will keep seeking and trying to tell the truth. This is an election year. Need I say more?

9. Protect the weak and the vulnerable -- Children. The mentally ill. The severely retarded. The elderly poor. The widow and widower. These are the people, especially the children, who are increasingly being rendered expendable. Once a society has rendered certain people expendable, support for them dwindles. Soon, they suffer neglect, pity, and assault. This is happening; not in my home and not in yours. But not far from your home and mine. Social policy is made by incremental decisions no one notices until we feel the full weight. This is an election year. Need I say more?

10. Conserve creation -- I want to give as much consideration to the natural world as I do to my own home. Taking small steps to preserve its beauty and sustain its life. I do not trash my own home, or tolerate anyone who does. Why would I trash the planet or tolerate others violating the earthly home we share together? The longer we go on without radical changes in industry and economic development, the more complicated the decisions become.

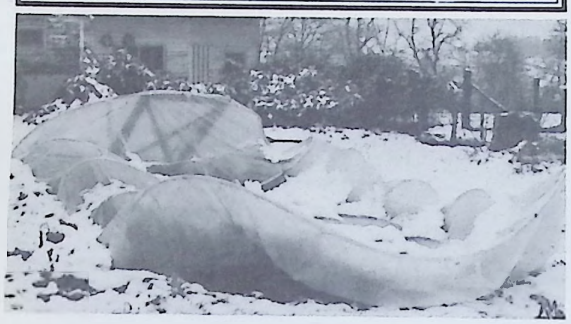
11. Be hopeful -- To be hopeless is the worst of all choices. Yes, the signs against hope are numerous and familiar. Small rural communities are barely hanging on against the economic tide; various species of plants, animals and wildlife are leaving the planet at an ever increasing rate; our desire for war and violence still seems insatiable. Nevertheless, I will take the poet-writer-farmer Wendell Berry's advice: A part of our obligation to our own being and to our descendants is to study life and our conditions, searching always for the authentic underpinnings of hope.

12. Laugh -- Laughter is a sign of freedom and trust. As frequently as possible, I'd like to laugh, even when the circumstances are grim. And especially whenever I take myself too seriously. Like making this list of 12 old habits. —

Hoop dreams and snowload nightmares

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the January 1996 issue, Jeff described the construction of his economical "hoop house," which is made of 3/4-inch PVC pipe and 6 mil UV treated polyfilm. Before he continues, a short reprisal is in order.

The Garden Path
By
Jeff Ishee



Hoop houses, like this one made with PVC piping for ribs and covered with polyfilm, are meant to be temporary structures, and this one was. It lasted all of five days before snowload caused it to collapse. Photos by Jeff Ishee

Having completed the hoop house on a cool November afternoon, I stepped inside and hung a thermometer from a ridge purlin. Within 20 minutes, the thermometer registered 65 degrees. "Umm huh," I said, as I stood alone in my little hoop house after a half day's work. "It's much simpler than I thought it would be. It's bullet proof, it's cozy, and above all, it's CHEAP!" Indeed, I had come in way under budget, having spent only $60 for materials. In all my manly pride, I thought, "Yeah. This is really great. I'm going to spend a lot of time out here."

And then, five days later it snowed. As I awoke at dawn to a scene of pure white Augusta County splendor and prepared to go feed the chickens, I took a moment and gazed out the window, thinking "How beauuuutiful!"

Long pause.

"Hey. Where is my hoop house?"

And now, the conclusion... or is it?

Nothing much happened in *Middlebrook this week, except the Little Debbie man came by.* And there was a snowplow right in front of him, clearing the way.

By the time you read this column, snow will doubtless have become known not only as a word with four letters, but a four-letter word! And we at the Ishee household (native Alabamians) are learning all about another term that is new to us. The word is "s-n-o-w-l-o-a-d," and we have learned how it applies to garden season extension structures.

Eliot Coleman, author of the matchless vegetable market gardening book *The New Organic Grower*, inspired me to build the hoop house discussed at length in his book. It is genuinely unsophisticated, so much so that the structure is also labeled a "walk-in-tunnel." It's a design that he explicitly states is for season extension, and not year-round production. Coleman says: "In any season extension, the aim is always to keep the systems as simple and economical as they can be without relinquishing the dependable control necessary to ensure the success of the protected cultivation." Understood. Basically, don't spend more than you have to in order to get a reliable payback.

So last Nov. 14 when we got 4 inches of snow here in the Valley, I walked outside to a scene of utter gardening disaster. As they say, pictures are worth a thousand words, hence the accompanying shots. El squisho! Straight to the ground the hoop house went.

For several days, I dared not go near the fallen mass of white plastic pipe and clear polyethylene. Dejected was I. Our geese, on the other hand, embraced the moment to hop into the shallow pool of melted snow held by the heap of poly. Apparently, they thought that I had built this little pool just for them. They swam around in tiny circles, honking away, conspicuously content with how the project had concluded.

But concluded it wasn't. December was spent pondering the problem of determining what happened. Every time I walked by the wreckage, I scratched my head, and deliberated about how to solve this particular predicament. This included asking neighboring farmers for advice, reading the applicable section of *The New Organic Grower* several times over, and even getting advice from an engineer cousin of my wife's. And here is what I have learned.

1. DON'T MESS WITH A PROVEN DESIGN. Eliot Coleman's design was wonderfully uncomplicated, inexpensive, and almost effortless to construct. The predicament I caused was brought on when I attempted to modify the original design in order to make the structure stronger. I added two supplementary purlins to the hoops about 3 feet down from the apex. And then, when it snowed, the plastic was not perfectly taut and the snow was able to accumulate in the "cup" formed between the apex purlin and the lower purlins. The weight of the snow increased until it was simply too much for the flexible 3/4-inch PVC hoops, and the entire structure plummeted to the ground. Lesson learned: By trying to strengthen the hoop house with additional purlins, I actually weakened it. Next time, stick to the design.

2. SEASON EXTENSION STRUCTURES ARE EXACTLY THAT... NOT FOR SEASON CREATION. Eliot Coleman has written marvelously about getting the most out of a gardening year by utilizing efficient, low cost structures. I tried to get more out of a structure than it was designed to do. A greenhouse is year round. A hoop house is not. Lesson learned: Re-erect the hoop house in March, and take it down at the end of October. If you want to garden in January in the Valley, buy a greenhouse (and lots of heating fuel).

So, as of this writing, I look out the den window toward the garden, and can not even discern the location of the hoop house. It's lying absolutely flat, under 27 inches of snow. When we are finally able to dig out from the Blizzard of '96, I intend to disassemble the structure (30 minutes at the most), and stow it until late March, when we will begin our market gardening efforts in earnest. All of the parts are still undamaged, so reconstruction should be a breeze. We will keep you updated via this column.

Meanwhile, for the geese, life is gooood! —

One man's tragedy, one goose's triumph... the collapse of the hoop house created an above ground "water garden" which the geese have claimed for a wading pool.

It's seed catalog time

If your mailbox is like mine, it has been inundated with seed catalogs lately. Here are my favorites, which you might enjoy perusing. Send 'em a postcard, and they will send you a '96 catalog.

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE SEED EXCHANGE
P.O. Box 170, Earlysville, Va. 22936
(A local, family operated company. Dr. Jeff McCormack has created a superior seed business, packed with heirlooms. Free catalog to active customers, otherwise $3.)

THE COOK'S GARDEN
P.O. Box 535, Londonderry, Vt. 05148
(Free. Seeds and supplies for the "New American Kitchen Garden")

TOTALLY TOMATOES
P.O. Box 1626, Augusta, Ga. 30903
(Free. Over 350 varieties of tomatoes and peppers!)

MILLER NURSERIES
5060 West Lake Road, Canandaigua, N.Y. 14424
(Free. "Antique" apple section alone worth the effort of ordering this catalog!)

STOKES SEEDS
P.O. Box 548, Buffalo, N.Y. 14240-0548
(Free. Has to be THE catalog for commercial varieties of vegetables and flowers.)

R.H. SHUMWAY SEEDSMAN
P.O. Box 1, Graniteville, S.C. 29829
(Free. The best illustrated catalog of them all. A real pleasure to read. Special bulk section for farmers.)

JOHNNY'S SELECTED SEEDS
Foss Hill Rd, Albion, Maine 04910-9731
(Free. My personal favorite. An education in itself when you read this catalog from cover to cover. Great for home and market gardeners alike.)

Lose the little races; win the big ones

I.B. HOOFINIT Horse Sense

I was once a school horse in a lesson program at a stable that taught beginner and intermediate riders. I worked under an instructor, Belle Knight, who taught students the importance of effective discipline.

You see, she made the rider realize that what they did today had an important effect on what happens in the future. I learn what is expected of me by my rider's commands of what she wants me do to versus what I am willing to do for her. There are some horses that are more willing than others. Of course we can be MADE to do a lot. The threat of a crop across our rump is real effective motivation. For some horses that is what they respond to. And some horses respond better to encouragement and praise. I guess I have a middle here. I like encouragement, but there are times when it takes a crop too.

Anyway, this program Belle taught was called Objective Riding. It took into consideration the whole picture of what the student and horse were trying to accomplish. It created balance of all the training requirements necessary to turn out a responsive, willing horse.

The rider was asked — at any given time — to give up his wants for the best interest of the horse. For example, one of the classes she was teaching was working with a line over a cross rail, around a barrel, and back. Two riders raced each other over similar courses for the benefits of competition. After a few races, one of the horses began to anticipate the rider's commands and "charge" for the finish line. The rider felt the loss of control and began to be scared. Belle stopped the rider and asked her what her main objective was at that point. *The student said it was to slow the horse down. And Belle said, "That's right. You have to lose the next few races in order to bring your horse back under control."*

To ask a rider to lose a race in front of a whole class makes me realize how important us horses must be to them. Because it didn't matter how it looked to everybody else in the ring at the time. Slowing down the horse to make it a better partner for the next day was more important than winning. Which is really the main point of learning to ride horses.

Effective discipline doesn't always mean on the horse. Sometimes discipline means the rider also has to learn control. Because the race isn't always just once or twice around the barrel. Sometimes the race can last a long time. And it's in knowing how to lose a few little ones that can help us win the bigger race — the race that makes a partnership between you and your horse. —

Q: What's the worst thing you can do to a horse?

Adam Patterson, The Edge riding stable

"Sometimes the only thing that makes sense is horse sense."

The worst thing you can do to me is allow me to get away with anything that you can't live with later. This comes under the area of discipline. I don't understand why people are confused about this issue. It is pretty basic. There is nothing worse for me than *the "Crack Down" method.*

So many people use this method it deserves some attention. I call it the "Crack Down" method, because I am going along doing my thing when, all of the sudden, everything comes crashing down on my head. I don't understand why all the little things I was allowed to do finally added up to "The Big One."

I could be having a student riding me in a lesson, not really paying attention to the little things I do to see if I can get away with them. I can tell the rider is starting to get annoyed, but I still haven't received any signals that tell me what's wrong, or to correct my behavior. The next thing I know, the rider is coming off, the instructor is getting on, and it's CRACK DOWN TIME.

Or I could be doing little things, and I know when the rider tries to correct me he's really timid with his approach, and I ignore most of the corrections. I hear the instructor really start to get after the lesson student, hoping the lesson student will get after me. If that doesn't work, the student comes off, the instructor gets on, and it's CRACK DOWN TIME.

Or I get down right stubborn and insist on my own way, and the student is at a loss because, I am stronger and able to push my weight around. Then the student comes off, the instructor gets on, but I'm pretty smart. I know better than to challenge the instructor, so the game begins. The instructor ALLOWS me the bad behavior, I get caught, and it's CRACK DOWN TIME. You see to make an association, discipline has to come to me at the time I am doing something wrong. Otherwise it doesn't register. I need an action/reaction association. And by allowing bad behavior while on my back so it can be corrected at the time it happens is effective discipline. If I don't do anything wrong while she's there I can't be disciplined. So when I get away with something from a rider long enough, that rider comes off, the instructor gets on, and she allows it to happen to her, then she can correct me for it. But this method hurts because prevention would have been better for me. Correcting all the little things as they come up would hurt me less than having the instructor CRACK DOWN on me for accumulated misconduct.

But either way, I am happier when disciplined, because I know I am loved. Bad behavior causes riders to dislike me, and I don't always know why they do not like me. But I can feel it. When I am on my best behavior everyone wants to ride me, and that is my worth. So my instructor is my best friend when she disciplines me, because I am worth more because of it. It is better than being sent away to trainers or even the meat market. Because if I cannot be ridden, or even cared for properly without being a danger to the ones I love, then what good am I?

It's like I said, the worst thing you can do to me is allow me to get away with anything that you can't live with later. —