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Augusta Country

LION OR LAMB?

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SIX BELOW AND NOWHERE TO GO
PAGES 12-15

SUBSCRIBE AND WIN, PAGE 24!

George Washington, first of Virginia's eight native sons to be elected President of the United States, keeps a silent watch from the rotunda in Virginia's statehouse. Photo by Claude Simmons

State government: *Up close and personal*

AC staffers treated to everyday view of state government at work

By SUE SIMMONS

RICHMOND — There's only one way to see Richmond and the state's government at work, and that is to make a personal visit.

Augusta Country's press corps numbering five arrived in Richmond at 10 a.m. Feb. 19 and met David Botkins, Gov. George Allen's assistant press secretary, in the governor's third floor office. An auspicious place viewed from afar, the ornate halls belie the flurry of activity of the executive office when the legislature is in session.

David graciously showed *Augusta Country* staffers -- consisting of this staff writer, my husband/chauffeur/bodyguard, and three Augusta County High School students -- around the various staff rooms and press offices, giving us the opportunity to talk to speech writers and other staffers.

No visit to the Capitol is complete without a tour of the historic rotunda and original Senate and House of Delegate rooms. David secured the services of one of the many gracious docents who clearly revere the Capitol and Virginia's patriots.

The walls and halls are graced with paintings and statuary that set a dignified historic tone. The Richmond statehouse is one of the oldest governmental assemblies in the world to have met continuously in the same building.

After our tour, David showed us the press rooms out of which members of both print and broadcast media report General Assembly news.

Nancy Palmer, Del. Vance Wilkins' legislative aide, gathered us from David and took our group to meet Wilkins in his sixth floor office in the General Assembly Building which is adjacent to the Capitol. The busy minority leader's office is on the "Leadership" floor.

See related stories page 4 & 5

Taking time out of his hectic schedule, Wilkins met with our small group. Joining us was a group of government students from Southwest Virginia, led by a delegate's wife who also happened to be their teacher. Nancy and David Root, the other of Wilkins' pair of legislative aides, then answered questions about life and work in Virginia's capital.

The House and Senate went into session at noon. The filled galleries necessitated our having to watch the opening of the session on closed circuit television in one of the many committee rooms.

It was a thrill for the five of us, our high schools and *Augusta Country* to be introduced on the floor of the House. As they do for all guests, the delegates applauded.

After the delegates got down to business, we slipped into the gallery to watch the proceeding live before departing for a quick lunch in the assembly building's sixth floor cafeteria.

Following lunch, we sat in a Senate committee meeting and listened to delegates "speak to a bill" that had crossed over to the other house. Nancy then took us into a little known office in the assembly building — the Committee Clerks' Staff Office.

Here all legislation is printed, tracked, and disseminated. Far from being filled with insane grumpy people, the office is staffed with friendly smiling men and women who are willing to show and tell what they do. Nancy also arranged for a brief visit with a lobbyist who put a very human face on what can be the worrisome area of special interest.

Five hours in Richmond with state government staffers left us tired, yet exhilarated. The pace was hectic, and we were in awe that there are those who keep up four times

See GOVERNMENT, page 5

Native Stauntonian working in governor's press office

By SUE SIMMONS

RICHMOND — "I get such a lift when I come to work in the morning," David Botkins commented as he nodded at the colonnaded portal through which he passes each day.

Botkins works as the assistant press secretary to Virginia Governor George Allen.

A native of Augusta County, Botkins was born in Staunton where he spent his early years as well. After graduating from the University of Kentucky in 1987 with a degree in Political Science, David returned to Staunton to work as a staff writer for *The Daily News Leader*.

"I loved the dynamics of the political process," Botkins admitted, adding that working as a reporter offered him a great deal of latitude to cover political campaigns and other political stories.

Botkins cites the chance he had to cover the Clinton-Bush debates at the University of Richmond.

"The Leader sent me there as a full-blown member of the press corps. It was an exhilarating experience," he said.

The opportunity to join newly-elected Gov. George Allen's staff was a far too compelling offer to refuse.

"I believe in George Allen's vision of state government," Botkins stated, adding that his professional ethics as an objective journalist prevented him from campaigning for Allen.

It is his journalism experience, however, that Botkins credits with his success as the governor's assistant press secretary.

Having "been there," Botkins is very aware of the demands on journalists. "I know what needs to happen for a reporter."

Botkins adds that he feels he meets journalists and reporters needs in a quick and timely fashion.

"I try to be a facilitator for the press," he said.

Much of his work in the press office compares to his work as a reporter.

"I prepare a news product from and by the governor that is from his point of view," Botkins said, explaining that it is his job to present the governor's perspective to the public.

His is a high pressure job, but one Botkins finds extremely rewarding. He describes George Allen as a very easy person for whom to work.

"He treats people with respect but he maintains high standards of integrity and professionalism," Botkins said.

Botkins sees his position as temporary public service that will probably end with the Allen administration.

"You take a job like this realizing that it is not forever," Botkins said.

The electricity of Richmond in February, however, leaves little time to dwell on future prospects.

"The democratic process unfolds before your eyes," Botkins noted.

Whatever the future holds, David Botkins would not trade his present for anything. —

DAVID BOTKINS

Agriculture: Growing better every day to meet consumer demands

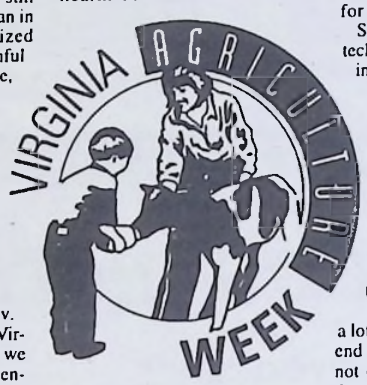
By J. CARLTON COURTER III

I'm not sure what most people think of the industry of agriculture, if indeed, they think of it at all. I suspect that most consumers still carry around an image of a man in bibbed overalls, a galvanized bucket in his hand, the faithful farm dog at his side. Agriculture, they may think, is timeless, changeless, and rooted in practices that go back to the beginning of history. While agriculture does have a proud tradition that even predates recorded history, in truth, agriculture is growing and changing every day to meet consumer demands now and in the future.

By proclamation of Gov. George Allen, March 16-23 is Virginia Agriculture Week, a time we set aside to celebrate the tremendous bounty of Virginia's fields and streams. Our message this year is "Growing Better Every Day," which encompasses many important points, chief among them stewardship of our natural resources and use of technology to provide a safe, wholesome, abundant, and affordable food supply.

Agriculture has come a long way from the days when almost everyone *did it, if only to feed themselves.* Now only two percent of the population is actively involved in farming, but increased production and efficiency allows each farmer to produce enough food for 128 people, 94 in the U.S. and 42 abroad.

While today's farmers are increasing production efficiency, they also are responding to consumer demands, producing meat lower in fat and cholesterol for the health-conscious consumer.



Today's hog is bred to be 50 percent leaner than those produced 20 years ago, resulting in retail cuts that are 15 percent leaner. The farmers have also met consumer demand for ethnic foods such as corn chips and tortillas by increasing production of food-grade corn, and through biotechnology, consumers can now enjoy a fresh tomato that *is* tasty even out of season.

Agriculture has come a long way from the days when teams of horses were used to till the land. Now farmers use machines that have the power of between 40 and 300 horses, and they employ advanced technologies to produce high-quality food safely and efficiently. They are also constantly improving production practices to reduce wind, water, and soil erosion so that better land is left for the next generation.

Some farmers are using a new technique called precision farming, which boosts crop yields and reduces waste by using satellite mapping and computers to match seed, fertilizer, and crop protection applications to specific soil conditions. The Information Age allows farmers to track weather conditions through satellites and gain access to information and research through the InterNet.

In other words, farmers can do a lot more with a lot less. And the end result is a food supply that is not only safe, wholesome, abundant, and affordable, but one that also offers an almost infinite variety. That's something to think about and be thankful for during Virginia Agriculture Week. ---

J. Carlton Courter II is commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture.

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Please recycle

Guitar makers perfecting craft in Fishersville

By VERA HAILEY

FISHERSVILLE -- The Huss & Dalton guitar making operation, located on Barterbrook Road between Fishersville and Staunton, was established in October 1995. Jeff Huss and Mark Dalton, former employees of Stelling Banjo Works in the Rockfish Valley, formed the partnership to manufacture high quality hand-crafted instruments.

Huss moved to the Shenandoah Valley in 1984 after graduating from the University of North Dakota law school. "My wife and I were living in student housing and had to move somewhere. We decided on Virginia because of the interest in bluegrass music associated with the area," said Huss.

After passing bar exams in North Dakota and Virginia, Huss' love of music and woodworking led him to Stelling Banjo Works. Before this, he had never made an instrument. His wife Diane, a physical therapist, found a job at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center and later started working for Spectrum Therapy in Charlottesville.

Huss enjoyed his nine years of making banjos and learned the specialized skills necessary to make musical pieces. His interests expanded, and he decided to make his own guitars.

"I had most of the production skills, except I was weak in the area of finishing. Mark Dalton had lots of experience in this area, because his Dad owned a(n auto) body shop," explained Huss. This background made Dalton an expert at applying the high quality lacquer finishes necessary for guitars.

After graduating from Gretna High School in 1981, Dalton went to work doing restoration in his Dad's body shop. In 1994 he started working for Stelling Banjo Works as a luthier or instrument builder. Last year he made the decision to leave his position and form the business with Huss.

"It was a big leap of faith and a big money investment to go into this business. It is something that you have to want bad enough and do what it takes to make it happen. It has taken a lot of money and a lot of time," Dalton explained.

Both men left more financially lucrative careers to form the equal partnership. Dalton's girlfriend Kim Robbins, a computer trainer, is the recordkeeper for the business. Her computer skills help keep their paperwork organized.

Jeff Huss and Mark Dalton, formerly of Stelling Banjo Works in the Rockfish Valley, have opened a guitar making craft house in Fishersville. The two men also are making a name for themselves as being consummate at their craft.

Photos by Thomas Tidd

Huss and Dalton are in the process of having a logo designed that will be put on each instrument. When asked if the Huss & Dalton guitar could become as well known as Taylor or Martin guitars, Huss replied, "I hope so!"

This dream could very well become a reality. An example of a small operation becoming a world class company is the Taylor Company. It started out 25 years ago as a small operation in California that made 1 or 2 guitars a month. Today they produce approximately 50 guitars per day.

Huss and Dalton both work 60 hours per week in their new joint business venture. What would one expect to pay for one of their creations?

"We're still working out logistics and standardizing some procedures in order to figure out how much time and materials will go into each guitar. Prices would be determined by the model and amount of custom design and inlay work that is necessary for special orders. Right now it takes about 70 hours of labor to make one guitar from start to finish," said Huss.

The two are concentrating on building a production line and choosing stock models to wholesale to the retail music store market. One completed guitar that is in the shop now would sell for about $1,800.

The entrepreneurs are both musicians. Dalton is a member of the Lynchburg-based group "Gypsy Moon." Huss is a member of the bluegrass group "The Blinky Moon Boys."

"We don't play much since the banjo player lives in Georgia, the fiddle player lives in Tennessee, the bass player is from Roanoke and the mandolin player is from Staunton, but we get together when we can," Huss explained.

As musicians, Huss and Dalton have a good ear for sound and utilize their knowledge of wood types and positioning the bracing and wood plates to create a distinctive sound.

"Our guitars definitely have a sound of their own, and the more the instrument is played the better the sound will become. The sound of a new guitar changes in the first couple of months as the string tension breaks in," Huss said.

Getting the right combination for sound and durability is a balancing act. The amount of pressure on the strings is 180 pounds, and Huss and Dalton try to make them light enough to vibrate for a good sound but heavy enough to be strong.

The most difficult part of the process is finding the right kinds of wood. In a corner of the workshop a stack of Honduran Rosewood cures on a special rack. A local man flew to Belize four years ago just to get this special variety. When this wood is used it creates a special sound.

Huss and Dalton also like to use other exotic woods such as East Indian rosewood, Brazilian rosewood, and Sitka spruce. Finding wood is an on-going challenge. Many of the types of wood that are coveted for use in making guitars are getting scarce, so some manufacturers have started experimenting with domestic hardwoods such as cherry and walnut.

Appalachian spruce, which was used in making Martin guitars in the early days and is sought after for use in making tops is now very hard to find. This wood comes from West Virginia and all that is left is on national forest land. It is against the law to cut any tree in these government protected forests, and even if a tree falls to the ground it has to be left there.

"It just so happened that a 400-year-old red spruce tree fell out of the forest and slid across a highway. Men were then permitted to haul away the tree because it was blocking the road. They charged about $200 for enough wood to make a guitar top, and they got about 300 pieces out of that trunk. We were lucky enough to get some of it," said Huss.

Inlays used for the guitars are much easier to find. Many shells and ornamentation are available via mail order. Shell pieces arrive in strips and pieces and are ground and cut with a fine lathe jeweler's saw. Mother-of-pearl, black pearl, and Tahitian snail shells are also used. Real tortoise shell is no longer used, because they are an endangered species. Simulated tortoise made of plastic is used instead. Special requests for custom inlay materials and designs are welcome as long as materials can be located.

Most orders received to date have come from local people through word-of-mouth advertising, but requests are trickling in from Tennessee. The pair have no plans to make electric guitars, but are considering making acoustic models that can be plugged into amplifiers.

Manley Allen, a very satisfied customer from Stuarts Draft, purchased a custom designed guitar last year. Allen, the host of popular weekly bluegrass sessions, considers the instrument one of his most prized possessions. At Allen's request, inlays of bear tracks were incorporated into the design all the way up the neck of the guitar. As with all of Huss and Daltons' guitars, Allen's is signed and numbered. A local musician recently admired the beauty of Allen's instrument, but wondered how such a breathtakingly beautiful piece would play and sound.

"Sometimes quality of sound is sacrificed when so much effort goes into making something so fancy," the musician commented.

Allen encouraged the veteran guitar picker to put his guitar to the ultimate test. The man picked up the guitar and started playing the old classic country tune, "Wildwood Flower." His unsolicited advertisement rang out: "I've played many, many guitars over the past 25 years of being in bands and as part of the local music scene, but this is definitely among the best, if not the best, guitar I've ever picked up. Of course I'd have to play it some more to know for sure, but I may be interested in investing in one of these."

So the guitars look great and have excellent sound. How can a customer be certain that a Huss & Dalton guitar will stand the test of time and remain in good condition after years of use?

"We don't really do anything radically different from companies such as Martin. The basic design and components are the same. Also, Jeff has been making guitars for five years now with good results," Dalton commented.

Questions about this new breed of guitar are welcome. The Huss & Dalton duo can be contacted at (540) 887-8049 or by writing Route 2, Box 455-D, Staunton, Va. 24401. ---

Manley Allen of Stuarts Draft shows off his custom-made Huss & Dalton guitar which features bear tracks inlaid on the fingerboard.

State government: Up close and personal

Capitol's architecture portrays Virginia's history

By HEATHER CALDWELL

RICHMOND — When visiting the Capitol of Virginia, one is amazed at all the architecture which meets the eye.

Displayed in the Rotunda is one of Virginia's most treasured works of art. The life-size statue of George Washington was commissioned by the General Assembly stipulating it to be "of the finest marble and the best workmanship."

Natural lighting is used in the rotunda by means of skylights in the ceiling. As one walks on the black and white tile, if looked at closely, fossils can be seen. Snails, shells, sea lilies, corals, and algae are contained in the checkerboard pattern.

Virginia is considered to be the "Mother of Presidents," because eight of her native sons have gone on to lead the United States with grace.

The old hall of the House of Delegates is the largest room in the Capitol. Enclosed in glass at the front of the room is "The Mace," a gold staff with a crown at the top. However this one is a replica, because the real one was mysteriously lost many, many years ago. Before every meeting in the House, the mace is removed and presented at the meetings.

Outside the Capitol, George Washington's tomb is clearly in view. Don't let this fool you. The tomb is indeed empty, because Washington did not wish to be buried there.

The Capitol is an amazing place to visit. It's very hard to conceive how much work goes into the running of this great place.

Our trip to the Capitol would not have been possible had it not been for the efforts of David Botkins, assistant press secretary to Gov. George Allen, Del. Vance Wilkins, R-Amherst, and his legislative aides, Nancy Palmer and David Root. They are to be acknowledged for making our trip both memorable and informative. —

Heather Caldwell is a junior at Riverheads High School. She is the RHS student editor of Augusta Country's Schoolhouse News section. She hopes to pursue a career in journalism.

Members of the *Augusta Country* press corps, from left, Heather Caldwell, Kim Wilson, Allen Myer, and Sue Simmons discuss the legislative process with Del. Vance Wilkins, R-Amherst, center. Heather, Kim, and Allen are Augusta County high school students and spent the day in Richmond to get an up close and personal look at the way state government functions. They were accompanied by Mrs. Simmons, an *Augusta Country* staff writer and Augusta County social studies teacher. Photo by Claude Simmons

Lobbyists represent broad spectrum of political interests

By ALLEN MYER

Lobbyists deal with many different bills, and are thus required to do extensive research to understand the material they cover. The better a lobbyist knows legislation, the more influence the lobbyist will have.

Lobbyists are among the most influential people in our government at the state and national levels. They represent the entire spectrum of interests, from breweries to pro-life groups. Most of America, however, knows relatively little about these powerful men and women who give the people they represent a much-needed voice in our government.

I spoke with Linnea Petty, a member of the lobbying firm David Bailey Associates in our state capital Richmond. The firm currently represents nine different clients, such as the Virginia Association of Commonwealth Rehabilitation Programs, whose main objective is putting people to work. Ms. Petty's job as a lobbyist involves a lot of talking, both with the clients she represents, and with the legislators whom they seek to influence.

Lawmakers can almost always have a good basis for making a decision on a bill from talking to lobbyists on both sides of an issue. Ms. Petty's firm does not fly senators or delegates to expensive resorts, nor do they influence lawmakers with anything other than facts and views of the issue at hand, although many lobbyists are notorious for such activities which border on vote buying. Lobbyists should not be partisan, and integrity should be kept in all they do, Ms. Petty says.

Lobbyists deal with many different bills, and are thus required to do extensive research to understand the material they cover. The better a lobbyist knows legislation, the more influence the lobbyist will have. Although many of them are criticized for selfishness, they play an important role in the American political game: they enable groups within the constituency to voice concerns which would otherwise go unheard. And the goal of government is to represent the people in making decisions for the good of the public, isn't it? —

Allen Myer is a senior at Wilson Memorial High School. He attends the governor's school, is active in drama and plays soccer. He plans to attend college and wants to major in political science.

Not your ordinary start

By KIM WILSON

RICHMOND — Although most of what takes place in the Capitol is strictly business, there is a time in the Virginia House of Delegates when an informal side of the government is seen. This period of time is set aside at the beginning of each day. A delegate will ask the Speaker for a "private privilege," which is a comment toward something not necessarily related to government.

In the part of the 1996 session which took place Feb. 19, the "private privileges" went on for a half-hour. A delegate's "private privileges" could include a public announcement such as a birthday or a public thank you to another delegate. However most "private privileges" are in context to special visitors the delegates would like to recognize. From family members to students, this is the chance for delegates to show their appreciation for their constituencies.

This time at the beginning is just the delegates' way of stretching before the main event. With all the informal business out of the way, it is once again time to do the job to which they were elected. Without skipping a beat, the legislators are amending this bill and deleting that one. Sometimes something great starts with something small. Such is the case with a session of Virginia's House of Delegates. —

Kim Wilson is a senior at Riverheads High School. She is interested in pursuing a career in journalism.

Nancy Palmer and politics:

Like a pig in mud

By SUE SIMMONS

RICHMOND — David Botkins, Gov. George Allen's assistant press secretary and native Stauntonian, credits Nancy Palmer with much of his enthusiasm for Richmond.

"The first time I came to Richmond as a young reporter Nancy Palmer took the time to show me around. Her excitement was infectious, and it didn't take long before I knew this was the place I wanted to be."

"I'm like a pig in mud," declared Nancy Palmer, legislative aide to Del. Vance Wilkins, R-Amherst, explaining her enthusiasm for politics and for her work at the General Assembly building.

PALMER

Along with co-worker David Root, the two aids tirelessly work to keep Wilkins' office running smoothly as he fulfills his usual legislative responsibilities along with ones that accompany his new office as Minority Leader of Virginia's House of Delegates.

"There are many more people who see the delegate now, simply because he is the minority leader," Palmer says, adding "an average of 30 calls a day come in from constituents.

"If you stacked up all the bills introduced in a session in both the House and Senate, the stack would be this high," Palmer said, raising her hands a good three-and-a-half feet above the floor.

Because of the volume of legislation facing delegates and senators, most work is done in committee — 20 committees and 55 sub-committees to be exact. Wilkins sits on three committees: Privileges and Elections Committee, Militia and Police Committee, and General Laws Committee. The latter of which is one of the largest committees in the House of Delegates, catching much of the legislation that isn't delegated to other committees.

Wilkins is pleased that his bill on Wills and Real Estate has been reported out of the house and has been carried over to the Senate. Partisan politics have killed much of Wilkins' legislation this session. "Sometimes with great relish," Palmer declared.

The phone rings. Someone knocks on the door. The delegate has misplaced his bill folder. Nancy Palmer remains unflappable. The smile on her face, however, is a strong indication that Nancy Palmer is indeed in her element.

A pig in mud, a rabbit in the carrot patch, a bee in flower garden — she loves every moment of it. —

Virginia: "Birthplace of Presidents"

By SUE SIMMONS

Virginia is known as the Birthplace of Presidents and for good reason.

Ten Virginians — men born on the hallowed soil of the Old Dominion — went on to become president.

First and best known is the Father of the Country, George Washington, born on Pope's Creek in Wakefield on the 11th day of February. (Feb. 22 became young George's birthday only after the British government adopted the Gregorian calendar.) After years spent as a gentleman planter, surveyor, and soldier, Washington came to the rescue of his country, first in 1776 when he assumed command of the Continental Army and again in 1790 when the Confederation failed, and the new Constitution called for the election of a president. Running unopposed as a federalist, Washington's greatest contribution was convincing people their future lay in a strong central union.

During Washington's first administration two factions developed. From one of them, the Democratic-Republicans came Thomas Jefferson, Virginia's second and America's third president.

Born in Albemarle County, Jefferson served his nation in many capacities — author of the Declaration of Independence, governor of Virginia, minister to France, secretary of state, and vice-president. Jefferson's faith in majority rule, individualism and decentralized government set him apart from his Virginia predecessor, and his successor, James Madison.

James Madison was a Virginian who was educated at Princeton — a break with tradition at the time. Small and scholarly, Madison almost single-handedly constructed the political system contained in the U.S. Constitution and then convinced the nation as the author of the Federalist Papers to adopt it. While he was the fourth President of the United States, the British attacked Baltimore, and burned Washington before being defeated three years later at the Battle of New Orleans.

James Monroe, the fifth president and last of the Virginia dynasty, had been a law student of Jefferson's and a friend of Madison's. While his administration is overshadowed by that of his predecessor and because the Federalist Party had met its end, Monroe's administration is known as the "Era of Good Feelings." The Missouri Compromise of 1820, however, presaged future crisis.

William Henry Harrison, ninth U.S. president, had a distinguished career as a western military hero, territorial administrator, congressman and diplomat. His nickname, "Tippecanoe," came from a battle of the same name in which troops led by Harrison emerged victorious. Yet Harrison is probably best known for being the oldest president at the time ever to be elected, being the last president born a British subject, being the first to die in office, and for serving the shortest term in U.S. history — a mere 30 days.

The 10th president (and our sixth Virginian if you're still counting) was the first vice president to succeed to the presidency — "Honest" John Tyler. While in office, the recently widowed 42-year-old president married 24-year-old Julia Gardner. She bore him seven children very late in his life. Two of Tyler's grandsons are alive today. Tyler was serving in the Confederate Congress at the time of his death in 1862.

Born in Virginia and raised in Kentucky, Zachary Taylor became the 12th president. It was not his defeat of the Mexican Army at Palo Alto, Monterey, and Buena Vista that won him his nickname "Old Rough and Ready" but rather his shabby attire and indifference to hardship. Taylor's hero status and his opponents serious blunders probably won him the presidency in 1848. Taylor had a knack for oversimplifying complex problems — he thought slavery was "much ado about nothing." Taylor died in office after becoming ill with cholera.

Woodrow Wilson, the eighth Virginian to become president and the nation's 28th, was born in Staunton, Va., and raised in Georgia and South Carolina. Wilson distinguished himself as a teacher and President of Princeton University before gaining national attention for cleaning up the New Jersey political machine as that state's governor. Wilson's progressive domestic agenda diminished after the United States entered World War I — an irony not lost on the progressive president. Wilson was the first president whose families arrived in America after the Revolution; he was the first president to have a parent born in another country; he was the first southerner elected after the Civil War; he was the first president to leave the country and travel to foreign soil while president.

Now, you may be wondering "Augusta Country said there were 10 Virginia presidents and only eight have been named." No, we didn't make a mistake. We said "presidents," but we didn't say "of the United States."

Can you name the other two Virginians who were presidents and the nations of which they were president? —

Send responses to Augusta Country, *P.O. Box 51, Middlebrook, Va. 24459. Person submitting correct answer will win a $20 gift certificate to a restaurant of his or her choice. If more than one correct answer is received, a drawing will be held. Answers must be submitted by March 20 to qualify. Look for the answer in the April issue of* Augusta Country!

Governor's office is hub of activity

By SUE SIMMONS

RICHMOND — When viewed from the floor below, the governor's third floor office looks like a forbidden inner sanctum — four ornate doors centered on four deeply hued walls upon which hang portraits of former governors. It is dignified, official, conservative. The doors hide the frenetic activity of the governor's staff.

Behind one door, a young page oversees the desk to Va. Gov. George Allen's office, a space she shares with the governor's security detail. Behind another door is the governor's policy office, political home of Jim Beamer, the executive's chief legislative liaison.

"He gets Republicans in line on the governor's legislation and counts heads before the vote," David Botkins, assistant press secretary to the governor, explained. The governor's press office lies behind yet another door.

The governor's immediate staff consists of his chief-of-staff, assistant chief-of-staff; speech writers, scheduler, press Secretary, assistant press secretary, and travel attaché.

During the 60 days of the legislative session, the apparent quiet of the third floor belies the frenetic pace of a governor and his staff hard at work. —

•Government

Continued from page 1

that pace and more for the 60 days of the legislative session. We also left convinced that every Virginian who is able should spend a day in the state capital during a session of the General Assembly session.

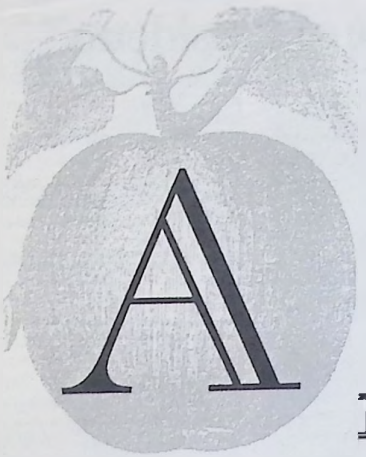
State government becomes more comprehensible and accessible. Strangers in business suits smile and greet you and sometimes make small talk — after all, you may be a constituent.

If as Tip O'Neill once said, "All politics is local," then this is where it all happens.

Too often when things are not quite right or comfortable, we complain that there ought to be a law and wonder why someone doesn't do something. Most of what we heard on our day in Richmond seemed somewhat less than relevant and often very technical and tedious.

We sensed, however, that it would have more direct impact on our lives than anything going on in Washington.

Get thee to Richmond. —



So tempting, Eve couldn't resist taking a bite. So nutritious, one a day is said to keep the doctor away. So admired, it is said to be the object of one's eye. So versatile, you can eat it raw, eat it stewed, eat it baked, eat it in a cake, eat it in a crust. You can even reduce it to pulp, spread it on bread or eat it cold as sauce. Whether you prefer it as fritters or sass, raw or in a glass, this versatile fruit comes in every shape and variety imaginable. As spring approaches and buds begin to form, we give you — perhaps the oldest fruit known to mankind, and, of course, discovered by a woman — the apple.

A is for...

Orchardist works to preserve heirloom varieties of apples

By NANCY SORRELLS

MONROE — Apples, history, and Tom Burford blend together like the ingredients for a fine culinary dish. This southern gentlemen, who grew up in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, knows of no other way to live, for the owner and operator of Burford Brothers in Monroe, Va., came to all the ingredients naturally.

"I was nearly born under an apple tree, but my mother was able to make it back into the house," Burford says of his apple beginnings 60 years ago.

Burford's father was an orchardist, and there has always been a love of fruit in the family tree.

"I come out of a strong orchard background. The family has been here (in Amherst County) since 1713, and before that they were in Yorktown (Virginia). They have always been very involved with fruit, and I grew up with this ingrained in me. There was always talk of grandfather exporting new fruit varieties to England. There was a thread of reverence for varieties that served the person well. It would have created a clamor, for instance, if an apple like Virginia Beauty, which was used in our family to make preserves, was allowed to die out," Burford says.

There was an even more personal level to Burford's links with fruit. Growing up in the hills of Amherst meant that everyone had "happenstance orchards." By this he means that grafting was commonly practiced among neighbors. "You visited someone who had an apple variety that you liked and you said, 'Before I go, I'll get a scion, and go home and graft it on a seedling,' which had been planted from seed. A family would have 30 or 40 varieties of fruit," he explained.

Tom Burford of Monroe shows off some of the fruits of his labors.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

The uses of those apples were naturally carried over into a variety of culinary delights that embedded themselves in the memories of youngsters growing up in such an environment.

"My grandmother made exquisite fruit wines. Her dewberry wine was for medicinal purposes, but our young tastebuds were glorified by it. My brother and I would walk to her house and practice coughing so we could get some of her medicine."

Even though he has had a nursery all his life and has always dabbled in fruit culture, it was not until 1980 that he and his brother, Russell, established Burford Brothers Nurseries and Orchard. Russell, who passed away late in 1994, and Tom started as entrepreneurs in other areas, like solar power, but all the while their nursery was getting larger and larger.

"Things were getting too big, so we pulled back and expanded the nursery," Burford explained of the professional beginnings of his orchard. Burford's orchard is different than most however. Instead of supplying people with large quantities of fruit, Burford supplies them with many heirloom and modern varieties of trees and then leads those aspiring orchardists along the path toward creating their own orchard.

Included in his work is the search for heirloom varieties of fruit, perhaps inspired by the pear tree standing in the yard outside his house. The tree, developed by his great-grandfather Burford, was there as early as 1866 and still bears abundantly ever year.

With such a strong heritage of fruits in his family, it is no wonder Burford has been drawn to the historical aspects of apples and apple cultivation. He lectures at and advises a dozen historic sites in the East, including Colonial Williamsburg and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. In addition, he has compiled a "must" book for those interested in documenting old apples varieties.

Titled, appropriately enough, "Apples: A Catalog of International Varieties," the $15 dollar book describes more than 300 historic varieties. In addition, the book includes an apple bibliography, apple definitions, apple shapes, and a short list of "lost" apple varieties. Of the book he said, "It's amazing where I find it. It has a way of defining who you are."

He goes on to explain his desire to relate apple growing to history. "My identity is strong with the history and giving lectures just reinforces that," Burford explained. "I derive an enormous amount of satisfaction from the education aspect."

There are other aspects of apples that Burford loves to explore, in particular the taste of apples. When pressed about his favorite apple, he launches into a story that essentially ends with: "My favorite one is the last one I ate.

"But I do have favorites," he adds. "And I have a strong recognition for the purpose of the apple. I like finding new varieties, because I am anxious to see what their flavors are like."

Burford likes many of the old standbys as well. Sitting in his barn on a hot July day, he looks at half a dozen varieties that are being harvested on his two-acre producing orchard and continues talking "Crow enjoyed a chunk out of that Rambo. Oh well, he eats Japanese beetles and Juney bugs," Burford exclaimed.

Overhead, a small plane buzzes the orchard, and Burford cocks his ear to the sky. "That's a friend of

See BURFORD, page 9

Cultivating the history of apples in Virginia

By NANCY SORRELLS

"The farmers of our county are beginning to pay more attention to fruit. Select varieties are introduced, and in a few years the article will be extensively sent to market. I planted a good orchard, fifteen years since, of some 500 trees, from the nursery of James Sinton, esq., near Richmond, Virginia. There is in my orchard much good fruit, and I rarely fail in raising enough for family use the year round."

Henry Boswell Jones, a well-to-do farmer in the upper Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, wrote the above words to the United States Commissioner of Patents in 1851. In a few short sentences, he sums up and verifies many of the conclusions agricultural historians make about 19th century fruit growing in western Virginia.

In many ways the science of orchards peaked in that century after expanding throughout the Colonial period. Today the orchard industry, although still an integral part of Virginia's rural economy, is vastly changed and headed, some experts believe, down a path of destruction.

Fruit growing, with a particular emphasis on apples and to a lesser degree peaches and pears, came to this country with the first settlers. For the most part, these types of fruit are not indigenous to North America; two crabapple varieties are the only native apples found here. And, although the crabs make viable pollen parents for domestic apples and produce a puckering power that livens up cider, they were not cultivated to any large degree. However, both Thomas Jefferson and George Washington grew them at their plantations along with many varieties of domestic apples, and Washington expressed a great preference for what he called "crab cider."

Unlike the native crabs, domestic apple varieties were deliberately brought to the New World by settlers and entrepreneurs. Because a true genetic clone of an apple usually cannot be reproduced through seed, the only way to insure the continuance of a particular variety is through grafting.

The first settlers realized this, and cuttings, called scion wood, were shipped to Virginia as early as the 1620s. However, seeds were often brought and planted as well, and as a result of the two processes, new varieties in Virginia and throughout America proliferated during

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Draft's Virginia Orchard portrays history of apple industry in Shenandoah Valley

By VERA HAILEY

STUARTS DRAFT -- During the 1920s-1940s, Augusta County had hundreds of acres of apple orchards. One orchard was the Virginia Valley Orchard Company, Inc. in Stuarts Draft. Now located on part of the site is the John E. Hailey farm and Shenandoah Valley Orchard Company, Inc. Hailey is the son of the former orchard foreman, Joe Hailey, and remembers stories told by his father. The elder Hailey died in 1979.

An original map shows the layout of the orchard when it began around 1912. Land was purchased from the Brown family in Stuarts Draft by the corporation, which was headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pa. Instead of issuing corporate stock, parcels of land were sold to individual investors. Apple trees were planted on some of the lots, but others remained in forest land. All of the profits from the entire operation were pooled, and every person received the same share of money regardless of whether they owned apple trees or oak trees.

Henry Borton from Pittsburgh was the general manager of the company. He never moved to the area but visited periodically. Clyde Moorhead was appointed superintendent of day-to-day operations. Moorhead, his wife and three children moved from Pulaski. The company built them a house on the property.

Three teams of horses were sent down from Pennsylvania. The company had purchased these for $500 per pair, a fortune when the orchard workers would only be making around $30 each month. "People came from all around to see those horses, because it was such a big deal in those days. Times were hard in this area back then, and it was a treat for them to see the horses," Hailey said.

In 1912 a well drilling company from Charlottesville was appointed to drill three wells on the property -- one well at the orchard and two at the Moorhead home. The steam driller was trammed all the way from Charlottesville. Since it was powered by steam this was a time consuming task. They had to stop at regular intervals, so the machine could regain power. The three well drillers assigned to the project arrived on the site in early spring and stayed all summer. John Hailey recalls his father mentioning that one of the men had a wooden leg.

Water was vital to the operation of the business. With no modern pesticides available, water was loaded into tanks and mixed with a lime/sulfur compound. Four-hundred gallons were mixed at a time. The tank and spray rig were then hooked up to a team of horses. It was crucial that the apple blossoms be sprayed to keep the apples from being spotted with disease and blight.

Joe Hailey started working for the orchard as a 21-year old and was later appointed foreman. He walked from his family's home (off Va. 610 near Rankin's Creek) each day in the beginning, but he was given a house to live in on the Moorhead property when he was promoted. His salary was then $100 per month which included his house, meals each day at the Moorhead home, a horse and buggy, and an automobile.

Workers at Virginia Valley Orchard Co. in Stuarts Draft use a horse-drawn rig to spray apple trees. The photo was taken April 22, 1922.

Photo courtesy Hailey family

"He wanted both because he really didn't like to drive a car," Hailey commented. It was a good thing he did not get too attached to it, because when the Depression came his pay was cut in half, and his car was taken away.

In the early days of the orchard all of the laborers walked to work. Hailey recalls his father talking about the Campbell family, from Love, who walked through the woods and down the rough Coal Road each day -- over 24 miles round trip. This was during the 1920s. They left the orchard each evening at 5 p.m. and always returned by 7 a.m. the next morning. The average worker was paid $1 a day for 10 hours of labor.

Many varieties of apples were grown in the Augusta County orchard. These included York, Imperial, Stayman, Maiden Blush, Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Black Twig, Ben Davis, and crab apples. Some of these are virtually non-existent today since new disease resistant varieties have been developed by horticulturalists.

Most of the apples raised in the orchard were not for local use. They were packed into barrels and put onboard trains at the old railway station in Stuarts Draft to be shipped to other domestic locations as well as to meet the demands of the overseas market. Horse and wagons were the mode of transporting the apples to the station until trucking became popular in the 1930s.

According to Hailey, the financial profitability of the orchard was predictable.

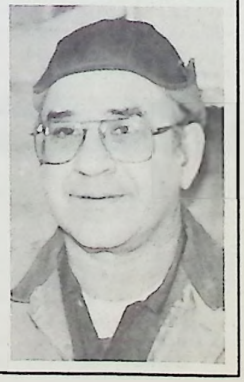
"One year every five years a profit was made, two years they broke even, and two years they lost money. It followed this pattern," he said.

In 1928 an unusual event occurred that would have a long-standing effect on the fate of the profitability of the business. A powerful ice storm plagued the area and wreaked havoc on the apple trees, which had reached good production levels. The weight of the ice broke all of the trees apart, and a strange remedy was mandated. Hailey recalls his father talking about the men who came and painted all the trees with blue paint. They pulled the trees back together, bolted them and tied them with wire. After this the trees were of lesser quality and did not last as long as they should have.

Tragedy struck the operation again that same year. A well was being hand-drilled on the property by a local man named Mr. Robertson. In those days a rope lowered a bucket to bring the dirt out the hole. A rope was used until it started to fray and then was replaced with a new one. One day the rope showed signs of wear, but they decided to use it for one more day. This decision proved fatal for Robertson, who was approximately 100 feet down in the hole when the rope broke. This breakage sent a full bucket of dirt hurling to the bottom, and the blow killed him.

In 1939 a sawmill was brought to the property to make boards for an apple packing shed. This structure is still standing today and houses the Stuarts Draft Cider Mill. It is operated under the Shenandoah Valley Orchard Company, Inc. Writing on the boards in the building still commands the reader to

See APPLES, page 9



John Hailey, owner of Shenandoah Valley Orchard Co., formerly Virginia Valley Orchard Co., recalls hearing his father talk about the early days of apple production at the orchard in Stuarts Draft.

Grafting preserves genetic diversity among apples

By NANCY SORRELLS

MONROE — "Fifty-one percent of success in grafting is a sharp knife," said Tom Burford during a chilly day last March when he was conducting a beginners' workshop on dormant wood grafting.

Burford runs Burford Brothers Orchard in Monroe, Va. (Amherst County) and specializes in fruit science as well as the history of fruit culture in America. I was one of two dozen or so people who were eager to learn how to make baby trees.

The half-day workshop introduced participants to the science of grafting — that is taking a branch from one apple variety and inserting it into a healthy root system so that the specific apple type of that branch is perpetuated.

In dormant wood grafting, scionwood — or branches from the previous year's growth — are cut and inserted into a compatible rootstock so that a new tree exhibiting qualities of the scionwood emerges. Grafting is important, and it is the only way to preserve a specific variety of fruit.

Because of the way apples reproduce from cross pollination, an apple seed will never produce *the exact same variety as the tree from which it fell. Grafting then is the only way to preserve the genetic diversity* of the thousands of apple varieties which have existed throughout history. If a tree dies without a graft ever being taken from it, its specific genetic code is lost forever.

So we were all sitting along two long rows of tables eagerly awaiting our chance to preserve heirloom varieties of apples by making new trees. But first we had to learn how to sharpen our knives and pruners in order to make good grafting cuts.. To create a union of scionwood and rootstock, the exposed tissues of the two plants must touch.

Technically speaking, according to Tom Burford's *Handbook on Grafting*, the two plant parts must have cambial contact. The cambium is the thin layer of active cells between the bark and the wood which produces new bark on the outside and new wood on the inside. This layer of living and dividing cells is the source of growth that increases the thickness of a woody stem and creates the annual growth rings.

Burford's students for the day were learning whip and tongue grafting. By angling a cut across the end of the scionwood and the top of the rootstock stem, we were creating open layers that allowed the cells from the two plants to unite. The angled cut exposed more surface area from the two parts and increased the chances of a successful graft. Although it takes only two cells touching correctly to graft, we were making sure that as many cells as possible were exposed.

"If the cells are severed cleanly, they will heal quickly," Burford explained, "but a dull knife crushes the cells."

With that knowledge weighing heavily on us, we moved forward with a lesson on properly sharpening a grafting knife.

"Baby" trees sprout and bloom in their first season after grafting. The light area on the trunk just below the leaves is the grafted joint.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

"A properly sharpened knife will give you 25 to 30 grafts, and then you can just touch it up on a leather strop," instructed Burford.

From there we moved to actual practice on pieces of wood. Soon we were all slicing through the scionwood with nice clean cuts.

"Vision and development of your hand muscles determines your own technique," Burford explained as he traveled around the room.

And, although Burford warned that "it's a dull blade that cuts the hands," scionwood was not the only thing sliced during the workshop. Adhesive bandages and first aid cream were handed out with a nonchalance that comes from seeing thousands upon thousands of baby trees emerge from the hands of new and experienced grafters.

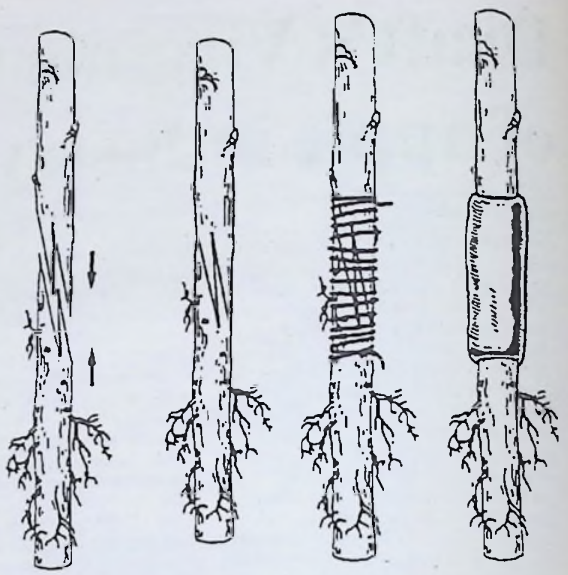
As participants reached a respectable level of proficiency with their cutting, they were given three rootstocks and the choice of three varieties of scionwood. Burford and his associates had hauled in dozens of bundles of scionwood, and the list of heirloom varieties we could choose from took a good 15 minutes to read. After agonizing over my choices, I finally decided on "Mother," "Swaar" and "Ralls."

Developed in the 1840s, Mother is a medium sized apple with smooth bright mottled red over a dark yellow skin. It has a creamy, juicy, sweet yellow flesh and ripens in September.

Swaar originated with Dutch settlers of New York before 1770, and the word swaar means "heavy apple" in Low Dutch. Its creamy flesh is fine-textured and sweet and improves when stored after it ripens in October.

Ralls is Virginia's own apple, developed in the 18th century in Amherst County by M. Caleb Ralls. The variety has a yellowish flesh with a greenish tinge and is dense, crisp and tender with a tart-sweet balance of flavor. It stores well and ripens in Virginia during the first week of October.

After carefully making the cuts and tongues on each piece of scionwood and rootstock, we fit the trees together making sure to carefully align the layers from each half. The whip-and-tongue graft which we were using is most suitable when the stock and scion are about the same diameter, as ours were.



The illustrations above show a root stock and scion being joined with a whip and tongue graft. At left the stock and scion are slipped together and interlock. At right, the graft is then tied and waxed. This grafting method is used to preserve heirloom varieties of apples.

Illustrations courtesy Tom Burford

We still had to be careful that the cambium layers of the two parts matched at least on one side because this is where the graft would emerge. Using adhesive tape, we carefully wrapped the tree at the newly joined section. This wrapping not only insured that the two layers would be tightly bound together, but it protected the wound from too much moisture as well as from drying out too much.

Within a short while I had three new trees laying in front of me, and Burford was instructing us on their continued care. As I eagerly soaked in everything he was telling us, I continued to practice my knife technique.

Perhaps it was that my attention was divided between listening to Burford and my knife work, or perhaps it was that I had used up my 25 to 30 cuts, and my knife had become dull. But right in the middle of Burford's talk I made a truly beautiful grafting slice through my finger immediately above my knuckle.

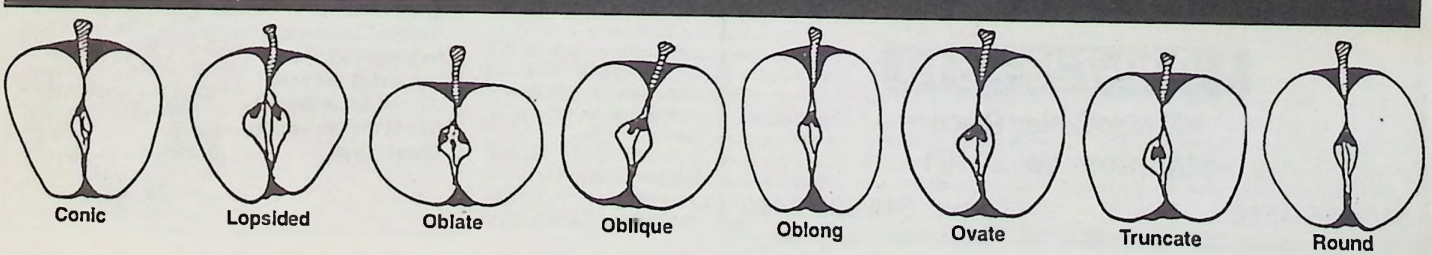
Not wanting to miss any "post grafting tree care," I quickly clamped my other fingers around what was a fairly significant flap of skin. At the conclusion of our instructions, I slipped over to a side table and was issued several bandages which, when wrapped tightly, stanched the blood flow.

Weeks later after my personal cut had long since healed, I rejoiced to see tiny green leaves emerging from my "children," meaning that their cuts had also healed, *and the* grafts were successful. I had agonized and hovered over the trees for many days waiting to see if they would emerge from dormancy. I continued to pamper the youngsters all summer, fertilizing them and watering them to help them survive the drought.

All three grew and prospered, but I still am anxious for spring to arrive so that I can see for myself how my new heirloom apple orchard survived the winter. —

Tom Burford offers a variety of instruction to individuals and groups. Sessions on grafting, pruning, orchard planning and management, fruit harvesting, and cider making can be arranged by writing: Burford Brothers, Monroe, VA 24574 or by calling 804-929-4950. Burford's Handbook on Grafting *is available for $6. He has compiled another book:* Apples: A Catalog of International Varieties, *that details the multitude of apple varieties and the specific qualities of each, which is available for $15.*

Shapes of apple varieties



•History

Continued from page 6

the 17th and 18th centuries.

In Amherst County, just east of the Blue Ridge Mountains of western Virginia, Tom Burford sits in the barn at his unique orchard and talks about the historic trail left by the apple in the New World. The southern gentleman with a soft drawl operates Burford Brothers, an orchard specializing in heirloom varieties of apples. Involved in more than just propagating and selling the old varieties, the orchard also passes on the tradition of the small orchardist through such hands-on workshops as grafting, budding and orchard design.

With apple family "roots" that stretch back centuries in a county where fruit growing has thrived since the early 18th century, Burford speaks for the generations when he discusses fruit.

"In the Colonial period there was no urge to do a lot of selective breeding. There were adequate wild fruits," he says. When particular fruit varieties drew attention, he notes, it was for their ability to be turned into fine drink: ciders, perries and brandies. Just as in the Old World, people knew better than to drink the water, and young and old alike had a cultivated taste for fruit drinks.

As more and more colonists made it to the shores of America, the number of fruit varieties saw an equally proportionate rise with each immigrant bringing a favorite variety from his or her own garden. As seeds from those trees were planted, the number of varieties eventually reproduced exponentially.

"Colonists brought seedlings, and they brought scionwood. In Ireland they got very clever. Carrie Pippin (an Irish apple variety) wood was grafted onto seedlings and brought over in potatoes. They would take the largest potato, split it in half, embed the roots in it so they would remain moist, and then tie the whole thing back together. When I look at little Carrie Pippin and think that it came over in this way, I think, 'Isn't it incredible that this genetic material may have come to me in a potato?'" says Burford in amazement.

The result of this fruit immigration and subsequent cultivation and expansion in America was that there were literally tens of thousands of fruit varieties by the 19th century. One record of the apple varieties in the world in 1850 lists 17,000 names, although Burford puts a more conservative estimate at 10,000! Either number is thousands more than remain today when mass marketing has pushed growers into cultivating only those apples that ship well and are cosmetically pleasing.

"If we scrounged the face of the earth today, we would find only three to four thousand varieties," Burford says with a touch of sadness. "We are very stupid. Many of these were varieties that would grow with little effort and produce a very dependable crop."

The concern in the 19th century was for varieties and the different niches those varieties filled. Some apples were for baking, others for cider or apple butter. Some types dried well, while others remained fresh for months in a cool root cellar.

"You grew them for different purposes," Burford explained. "You grew some that ripened as early as possible and were as sweet as possible, like the May of Virginia which has been around since the 1750s. In June the Carolina Red Junes were often the first and were used for fresh apple pies. Then the varieties just followed on and on. One of the last is the Lady Apple, thought of as decoration on wreaths, but which also makes an absolutely ambrosial cider. Arkansas blacks, Swaar and Virginia Greening were popular in the Valley (of Virginia) and kept a long time."

Burford noted that the average farm family in western Virginia had quite a variety of apples in the yard, garden and orchard in order to insure that apples could be harvested from May until late November.

"There was an interest or concern for getting varieties over a long period of ripening with specialized use. In the yard you might have Maiden Blush or Roxbury Russet or Ben Davis, all for drying because they retained flavor and remained bright and white. Apple butter making needed pumpkin sweet which is not only a tremendous apple, but has a limited amount of moisture so it cooks quickly," Burford said.

Henry Boswell Jones' 19th century neighbors in the Shenandoah Valley knew the necessity of having quite a few varieties of apples in their orchard. In 1862 Staunton's Joseph Waddell had 11 apple trees representing 10 different varieties nestled in his urban kitchen yard. Of the 11, two were listed as unknown varieties on the rough sketch Waddell created of his orchard. Of the other eight, seven are still available through orchards that specialize in heirloom varieties, but the final type, Berkeley's Red Prize, is probably extinct. A sad thought considering that this apple originated in the Shenandoah Valley according to Lee Calhoun, a North Carolinian who specializes in old apple varieties, and was sold by at least three Virginia nurseries form 1858 to 1896.

Of the other varieties in Waddell's garden, the Smokehouse originated in Pennsylvania in the early 1800s and was used as an all-purpose apple in September and a dessert apple in October. Maiden's Blush, has been identified as early as 1817 and ripens over a period of about a month in August when it is popular for cooking and dessert. In Virginia's mountains, Maiden's Blush was popular as a drying apple because its flesh remained white and bright. Northern Spy probably originated in New England in the 18th century. The trees bloom late and so escape frost, and then the fruit ripens in late September or early October. It is one of the best apples for storing in a root cellar.

Winesap, as the name hints, was a popular cider apple and appeared as dozens of different strains along the Atlantic Seaboard. It was first described as a cider apple in 1804, but was known in Virginia's Colonial period. In addition to cider, this apple was also used for cooking and dessert making and was an excellent keeper, ripening in October.

Swaar was another variety in Waddell's orchard. This fruit originated with the New York Dutch settlers before 1770, and the name "swaar" means heavy apple. The fruit, which ripens in October, is high in sugar content and thus ferments well. The heavy apples will hang on the tree even after the leaves have fallen. Summer Rose is an apple that was probably developed in New Jersey around 1800. The tree blooms late, but ripens in late July and early August. The white-fleshed, mild flavored fruit is more delicate than some and will not keep for long periods of time.

It is perhaps fitting that Waddell chose to place two Newtown Pippins in his yard because this variety is the most famous Virginia apple of all. Some historians believe they can trace the origins of this apple back to England in 1666. Also known as the Albemarle Pippin, this apple bears bountifully. In addition, its flavor improves after a few months of storage and cider from this fruit is considered among the very best.

Although its roots were from far away, the distinctive flavor that the Albemarle Pippin developed in the hills of Virginia established the state's international fame as an apple grower. In 1837 a resident of Albemarle County was Minister to the Court of St. James. Longing for some home-grown apples, he had a winter's supply of Albemarle Pippins shipped to London and parted with several barrels as a gift to Queen Victoria. She demanded more of the delightful apple, and Virginia's reputation was established.

According to the editor of *Southern Planter*, an agricultural journal of the time, discriminating buyers would part with 50 cents more a

See **VIRGINIA**, page 18

Tom Burford of Monroe with a new crop of apple trees.
Photo by Nancy Sorrells

Suggested reading:

1. *Apples: A Catalog of International Varieties*, $15 (refundable on the first order of five or more trees) from Burford Brothers

2. *Apples*, by Roger Yepsen, Illustrates in watercolors nearly 100 apple varieties, $18, also available from Tom Burford.

3. Much of the historical information came from a pamphlet written in the 1930s entitled *"A History of Fruit Growing in Virginia,"* by S.W. Fletcher, a professor of horticulture at The Pennsylvania State College. The pamphlet is found in the University of Virginia.

•Burford

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mine flying over to see what's ripe," he explained, noting that there were 300 producing varieties crammed into his orchard and 400 varieties which have been planted.

Altogether he markets 8,000 to10,000 trees a year and has two contract growers.

But the heart of his organization has to be the grassroots spread of the small orchard which he promotes through his workshops. Informal, hands-on classes in Pest and Disease Control; The Small Commercial Orchard, The Home Orchard: Planning and Planting; Planting and Pruning Fruit Trees; Dormant Wood Grafting; Advanced Grafting Techniques; Budding; Fruit Drying; and Cider making are all on the agenda for 1996.

"My workshops are kind of an agricultural United Nations," he said of the classes which are quickly gaining an excellent reputation. "They bring people together. No one is sitting there thinking, 'Am I really your social or intellectual equal?' They are all there just making little trees.

"There are those who think they are too old to be interested in growing fruit trees. But they will waste their life and don't realize they can start right now," he explained.

As the plane buzzes overhead again and Burford tromps through his orchard pointing out the history that he is preserving, it is easy to feel hope that all is not lost. Through everything he does with his orchards and the spinoffs, he continues to remember his roots and why he is drawn to fruit trees and compelled to pass that knowledge on to others.

"The historical aspect of fruit growing has been neglected," he says. —

To obtain: 1. Tom Burford's catalog and seminar and workshop brochure, write: Burford Brothers, Monroe, Va. 24574. 2. To obtain Lee Calhoun's Old Southern Apple Varieties *catalog, send $1 to cover postage and handling to: Calhoun's Nursery, 295 Blacktwig Road, Pittsboro, North Carolina, 27312.*

•Apples

Continued from page 7

use the caution of the Depression years: "Apples = $, treat them as such." This was left intact during remodeling of the building.

The orchard remained in operation until the early 1940s. A $40,000 legal suit had been filed against the corporation in a Harrisonburg court that prompted it to file for bankruptcy. The property was considered almost worthless at the time, and the corporation was anxious to dispose of it. The land was sold, much of it bought by Joe Hailey and E.M. Shultz.

The life of the Virginia Valley Orchard Company spanned four decades and was an economically important part of the development of a small rural town. Because of the jobs created by this enterprise, many people were able to survive the years of the Depression. ---

Our culinary heritage:

Lent is season of fasting

By ROBERTA HAMLIN

The custom of fasting during Lent is a very old one which goes back to the early church. By the 3rd Century it was customary to fast during Holy Week. It was not until the 7th Century that a fasting time 40 days prior to Easter was observed. This Lenten fast continued even after the Reformation mostly in the Anglican and Lutheran Churches. And in the 18th Century when this practice was no longer part of religious doctrine, John Wesley still encouraged its observation.

The English, always a thrifty people, would celebrate Shrove Tuesday, the day immediately preceding the first day of Lent, with a pancake supper. They did this in order to use up all the butter and eggs which they were expected not to eat during Lent. Today we might have dinner pancakes as follows:

Vegetable pancakes

3 Tbsp. butter or Olive Oil
1 cup chopped red onions
1/2 cup chopped green onions, tops included
1 cup chopped green pepper
1 cup chopped mushrooms
2 cups tomatoes, peeled and diced
Basil, parsley
1/3 cup flour
1/3 cup milk
2 eggs
1 Tbsp. butter, melted
1/2 cup grated sharp cheese
Parmesan cheese

Saute the onions, mushrooms and green pepper in butter or olive oil until limp. Add tomatoes and continue to cook until most of the water from the tomatoes has evaporated. Season with the basil and parsley and a little garlic salt if desired.

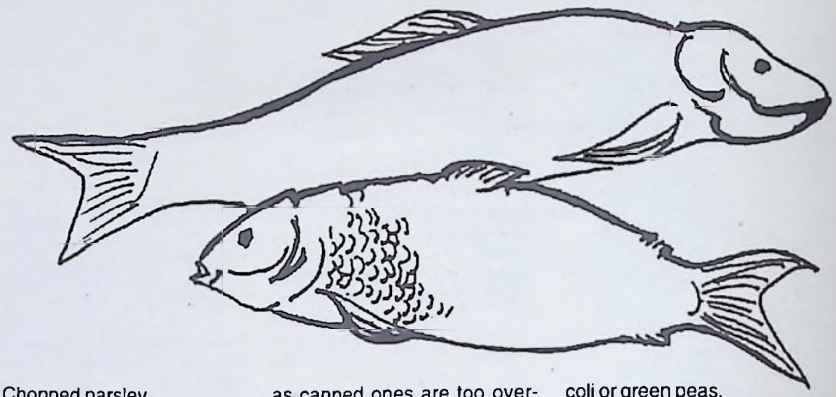
Beat together the milk and eggs and add to the flour. Blend until well mixed and add the melted butter. Stir in the vegetable mixture. Using 1/4 cup of the batter at a time, fry the pancakes until golden brown on both sides. Place pancakes on a baking sheet, place a heaping spoonful of cheese and a sprinkle of Parmesan on each and place under the broiler until cheese is melted.

The word lent comes from an Anglo-Saxon word "lencten" which means "springtime," and follows two festivals also of very ancient origin: Mardi Gras and Carnival. Mardi Gras is the French name for Shrove Tuesday. Carnival comes from the Italian "carnevale" and means "a farewell to meat." These festivals, which were probably a relic of the pagan festival in honor of Saturn, were one last season of merrymaking before the gloomy days of Lent.

In the early days of the Church, the law of fasting was strictly enforced. Very few exceptions were made, and there were legal repercussions for those who disobeyed. But the practice of eating fish on Fridays and during the season of Lent became fixed in many countries, even though this practice was no longer enforced by law.

For early settlers in this country, fish was extremely plentiful throughout the year, and when not, they would have a supply which they had salted or dried. With today's complex transportation system, almost any kind or fish is available at the supermarket any time of year.

During this season when fish is traditionally served, we can create many interesting meatless meals. If there is no fresh fish readily available, a vegetarian main dish can be very filling.



Vegetable quiche

2 lbs. fresh spinach
1/2 cup cheese (crumbled feta or grated sharp Cheddar)
3 eggs
1/2 cup cream
1/2 cup yogurt
Nutmeg
Lemon juice
Chopped parsley
Baked pie shell

Wash spinach and cook it briefly in the water that clings to its leaves. Drain and chop. Season to taste with salt and pepper and a little nutmeg. Add a few drops of lemon juice, combine well and spread into bottom of pie crust. (Simone Beck suggests spreading a thin layer of Dijon mustard in the bottom of the pie crust first.) Sprinkle cheese over top of spinach. Beat eggs, cream and yogurt well and pour over the top of spinach. Sprinkle with parsley and bake in a 350 degree oven for about 30 minutes or until the custard is set.

VARIATIONS: Substitute cooked fresh asparagus and hard boiled eggs for the spinach. Season with a little tarragon instead of nutmeg.

Chef and author James Beard suggests using grated carrots, seasoned with lemon juice, oregano and parsley, mixed with butter and spread in the crust with mustard.

Another variation substitutes green peas and onions, seasoned with mint for the spinach.

With a basic quiche, you can use just about anything vegetable you have in the refrigerator. Vegetables should be fresh however, as canned ones are too overcooked to do well in a quiche.

For those of us for whom time is not in excess, or when the children bring home a large group of friends, there is always that wonderful American favorite in all its variations: the tuna fish casserole.

Basic tuna casserole

2 cups cooked noodles
1 cup canned tuna fish
1 can cream of mushroom soup
Sherry, curry powder, mixed spices
Bread crumbs
Sharp cheese, grated

Combine first three ingredients, season with a little sherry or curry powder or a sprinkle of your favorite spice. Turn into a greased, ovenproof dish and top with bread crumbs and grated cheese. Bake in a 450 degree oven until cheese is melted and top is brown.

VARIATIONS:

(1) Instead of combining first three ingredients, arrange noodles and tuna in layers, season the soup with sherry or Worcestershire sauce, and pour it over the top. Top with bread crumbs.

(2) When layering as in variation (1) add a layer of a cooked green vegetable, such as broccoli or green peas.

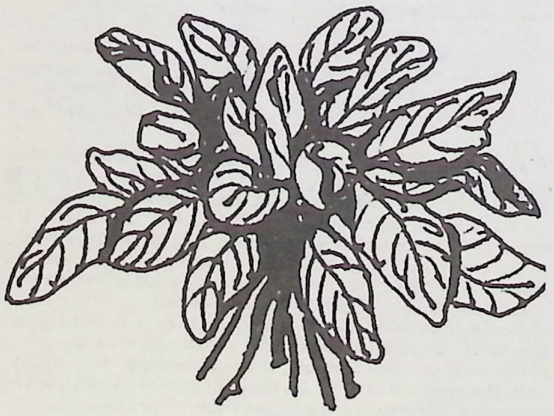
(3) Substitute 1 1/2 cups cream sauce for the soup and combine with the tuna. Add a cup of chopped watercress and a diced avocado. Combine and layer this mixture over the cooked noodles.

One other tasty dish that can be prepared in a hurry with canned fish is a salmon loaf. This basic recipe is found in so many cookbooks -- from the early Betty Crocker cookbook for two to the New York Times cookbook. It is both easy and satisfying.

Salmon loaf

2 cups canned salmon
3/4 cup milk
1 egg
2 cups bread crumbs
1 Tbsp. chopped onion
1 Tbsp. minced parsley
1 tsp. dill weed

Bone and flake salmon and discard skin. Combine the milk, egg and bread crumbs and stir into the salmon. Mix well and turn into a well greased loaf pan. Bake at 350 degrees about 45 minutes, or until top is nicely browned. Serve garnished with lemon wedges and sprigs of fresh dill. ---



Retired teacher's volunteer program teaches school children about Native Americans, life

By DEBORAH SENSABAUGH

FAIRFIELD — In today's educational society of no rules, situation ethics, and anything goes, Anna Belle Borthwick has put together a program that not only teaches history and ethics; it makes the kids want to be good.

Mrs. Borthwick packed up her educational tools years ago when she retired from a lifetime of teaching at Fairfield Elementary School in Rockbridge County. Among the boxes stored in her garage were a host of Native American artifacts she had collected over time.

A few years ago, however, Evelyn Harlow, third grade teacher at Fairfield, called Mrs. Borthwick with an unusual request. Would she get her Native American things out and come teach a unit about the Indians to the third graders?

And would Mrs. Borthwick not stop with factual presentations? Would she really teach about those Indians, about their orderly, tribal way of life complete with its system of rewards, punishments and social order?

Mrs. Borthwick's answer was a resounding "yes, I'd love to."

Digging through the old boxes in her garage was like a homecoming for Mrs. Borthwick. She pulled out craft samples from an Indian mission her class had supported; she dusted off Native American artifacts she had bought while on vacation and discovered the items she had been given by the Native Americans she had invited to visit the school when she was teaching her classes about them.

"I've always been interested in Native American culture," Mrs. Borthwick says. "I thought they got an unfair deal and were treated unfairly. Their contributions and achievements have been left out of American history, and I always taught about them when I was teaching school."

Among her artifacts are many items from the Pamunkey tribe of Virginia. She also has items from some Navajos in the southwest with whom she corresponded, and many Mandan things from a group of Indians who visited the school and lectured about their customs. *Her Mandan friends left Mrs. Borthwick with an Indian name — Princess Running Water.*

Princess Running Water -- Anna Belle Borthwick, right back – assembles her little tribe of Indians with the help of third grade teacher Evelyn Harlow, left back. The project led by Mrs. Borthwick helps the children learn about citizenship and history.
Photo by Euguen Fitzgerald

Now, each year when fall arrives, Princess Running Water, a.k.a. Mrs. Borthwick, dons her buckskin dress, beads, and feathers, and sets off for the nearby school.

The students are curious at first. They enjoy learning about the Indian way of life and the different tribes, especially those native to Virginia. When Mrs. Borthwick asks them if they would like to be part of the tribe, they are hooked. What child can resist the adventure of wearing this own "buckskin" clothes, of earning eagle feathers and beads for homework handed in, for chores done promptly, for creating order out of an often chaotic world of school, home and friends?

And since bad behavior earned the real Native Americans ostracism from the tribe, even the most rebellious of students soon decide for themselves that getting along and doing what they are told has its rewards.

"In some cases, the teacher finds children who seem hopeless. They are lazy, or tattletales, or won't do their homework. But at the end of the six-week Indian study unit, they are different children," Mrs. Borthwick tells.

"It provides great motivation. I have learned that in teaching, you can tell children to bring in their homework. Maybe they will or maybe they won't. But here, the chiefs are in charge, and they soon learn good habits as they are learning about the Native Americans," she adds.

The children also learn respect for nature including not littering, getting along with others and respect for parents and others in authority.

At the end of the unit, the new little braves and maidens invite their parents to a real Indian feast. They serve turkey, berry juice, pumpkin pie, popcorn, and other foods from the Native Americans. And they don't use knives and forks either.

Indian music is provided by drums, rattles, and flutes, complete with Indian dances. And the students show off their projects — peace pipes or calumets, grinding corn on rocks, sand painting and totem poles.

"We've gotten so interested in this that it goes on all year," Mrs. Borthwick says. "Evelyn (Mrs. Harlow) and I have as much fun as the children do."

Periodically, throughout the year, Princess Running Water visits her little tribe at Fairfield Elementary School to see how the braves and maidens are doing. "Sometimes, when I'm in the grocery story or downtown, a grown-up student will run up and give me a hug, telling me they are still a good Indian," she says with a smile.

Those who know Mrs. Borthwick well don't have to wonder where her heart for community volunteer service comes from. The Indian project at Fairfield and the demonstrations at other schools is only a small part of the loving and giving nature of Anne Belle Borthwick.

Her door is always open in the community. She regularly visits Western State Hospital, the District Home, and Natural Bridge Manor adult home with a group from the Fairfield Presbyterian Church. She is a board member of the Rockbridge Weekday Religious Education Program and plays in the Bell Choir at church. And her rickety old pickup truck is forever out on errands for her neighbors.

"My ideas about helping others became defined when I was taking care of my 96-year-old mother in Staunton," she explains "She was sick a lot, and I saw how good her neighbors were to her. I thought I could be a better person."

She continues, "I just can't say no. I think it is important to stay active, so I do when I am asked. A lot of people need visiting, and I have been blessed with good health."

She also visits inmates at Augusta Correctional Center in Craigsville. "I've seen people turn their lives around there," she says. "We visit them and love them. They have taught us a lot, too. They pray for us as much as we pray for them."

Mrs. Borthwick — honorary Indian princess, visitor, prayer warrior, community volunteer — says, "Selfishness and greed bother me, and while I maybe can't take on the whole world, I can take on a little bit of it." —

'Mr. Holland's Opus':

Take a hankie and enjoy

By HANNAH SIMMONS

If you believe one person can make a difference, Mr. Holland's Opus is the movie for you. After taking what he thought was a temporary job teaching music at the local high school, Glen Holland ends up with a family, a mortgage, and a career leaving him little time for composing music. Mr. Holland's plans are further complicated by his son Cole's deafness.

But Mr. Holland is never defeated. Creating connections between past and present, his students not only find music fun, but through the music they find themselves.

The movie is fun, because it is a blast from the past. Music from the 60s to the 90s has the viewer tapping feet and humming to the tune. It's a trip down memory lane. It even features the hits from 1810.

The more time Mr. Holland devotes to his students and family, the less time he has to compose music. But never fear, a life well spent is a life well lived.

Although he is more convincing as the middle age rather than the young Mr. Holland, Richard Dreyfuss turns in an award winning performance.

It is worth noting that actor Jay Thomas gives a seamless performance as the not-so-dumb coach with a heart of gold who, like Mr. Holland, looks for the best in kids and finds it.

This movie may appeal most to baby boomers, but anyone who has clocked time in a desk will like this movie. Oh, and take some tissues. You'll need them. —

Hannah gives Mr. Holland's Opus four bananas. It is rated PG for Parental Guidance.

Hannah Simmons is a junior at Buffalo Gap High School. She is the daughter of Claude and Sue Simmons of Frank's Mill. Hannah has offered to give Augusta Country *her comment on occasional movies and rates them on a scale of "Hannah bananas," with four bananas being the top rating a movie can receive.*

Are you having fun yet?

DOWN ON THE FARM

BY

BETTY JO HAMILTON

Down on the farm we're thinking about things that are work and things that are fun. Sometimes, depending on the conditions — specifically, the weather conditions — we're not sure that what we have to do can be classified as work. More likely it should be classified as torture, say, for instance, if existing weather conditions include snow and subzero temperatures and wind, and we're out in that weather doing things we normally have to do.

But we hate to be so negative as to classify what we do in such a manner. Instead, just for argument's sake, we'll say that if we can't call what we have to do work, then it must be fun.

There's no particular reason why you should take our word for this, so we'll let you decide for yourself by playing a little game we call "Are you having fun yet?" The game is simple. We present you with a situation and all the details thereof, and you decide if — given the circumstances — you would consider yourself to be having fun under similar conditions. Here goes.

It is 12:30 a.m. — that's midnight plus 30. You awake after having fallen asleep on the couch. You're feeling oh so toasty and warm. But... you know there are ewes due to lamb at the barn as well as new lambs which just arrived late in the afternoon, and it's pretty cold, so you figure you better go to the barn to see how everything is getting along. Since temperatures during the previous day only reached the single digits, you feel it is imperative that you make this midnight trip to the barn.

Shaking the sleep from your eyes and donning your warmest barn clothes — two pair of wool socks, hooded sweatshirt, down parka, and overalls — you head out into the darkness and to the barn.

(Are you having fun yet? No? Well, patience. The game is just beginning.)

Since you're wrapped up pretty warmly you don't notice how piercing the cold is. The wind is blowing stiffly, and the 10 inches of snow on the ground — which underneath is mostly sod frozen hard with excess water from previous rains and melted snowfalls — is so dry it squeaks beneath your feet with each step you take. You find yourself hurrying to reach the barn so you might get inside and at least be sheltered from the knifelike wind. Once you reach the barn and step inside a stable you realize you haven't been breathing for some time — the cold is so intense your body has automatically shut down your lungs in order to prevent internal freezing when you suck in the supercold air. So you stand for a few minutes to catch your breath, and get your bearings.

(Are you having fun yet? Don't dismay. The game has barely started.)

You check the lambs which arrived the previous day — a set of twins born around 1 p.m. and another set of twins born about 4 p.m. Since you made sure that all got milk shortly after they were born, you are reassured to see the four seem to be doing fine. You make both ewes and all of their lambs get up. The forced activity compels the lambs to begin nursing, and the ewes calmly abide the midnight snack.

You pick one of the lambs up and notice that the tips of its ears are frozen solid with afterbirth. Another of the lambs has an excessively but not unusually long umbilical cord. Something about it doesn't look quite right. So you examine it to find that it, too, is frozen solid. You convince yourself that both the lambs' ears and umbilical cord are best left alone, and count your blessings that you don't have any frozen body parts. But hey, the night is young.

(Are you having fun yet? You really should be having fun by this time, because all your systems checks thus far have been successful. But you're not through yet.)

In your midnight survey, you move on to the lambing shed where ewes which are close to lambing are kept. But when you try to open the shed's large rolling door you find its bottom edge is frozen solid to the ground. This forces you to retrace your steps to the stables so that you might enter the back way to the lambing shed. Following this course, you pass through the open front shed at the south end of the barn where ewes with two-week old lambs are kept, and, on this night a cow, which it was determined the previous day to be close to calving, has also been put.

(Are you having fun yet? Would you like to quit this game? OK. Everybody who wants to quit the game may do so at this point. But be warned — once you enter that shed where the cow is, your escape routes are few.)

You enter the shed and are only a little surprised to see that the cow has given birth. The newborn calf is up and walking around in the shed. Despite the fact that its hide is frosted with afterbirth, the calf seems to be in good shape. The cow is lying down. This you find a little odd since normally cows stand up after they've given birth so they can take care of the new calf and allow it to nurse.

You're not too concerned about the cow, primarily because you're thinking about getting to the lambing shed to check the ewes which you consider to be a bit more mishap prone than cows. Once in the lambing shed you thank a great and wonderful God for having kept any of the ewes from delivering lambs on such a terrifyingly cold night.

(Are you having fun yet? You should be. Any time you go to the barn on a cold night and there are no new lambs you should definitely classify yourself as blessed with the opportunity for at least a partial good night's sleep.)

You retrace your steps to the shed where the cow is. Although the stables and lambing sheds are brightly illuminated with electric lights, the shed on the end of the barn is lit only by what light spills over into it from the stables. In the dimness of the shed, you really can only see the outline of the cow, and actually the only reason you can see that is because the cow has a white face. You can see her face, but her body, which is black, is really more contrived reality than anything else. You place both your hands on her back, or where you think her back is, and yes, it is there, and kind of push on the cow thinking she'll probably get up. She doesn't.

(Are you having fun yet? Well, you will be soon.)

Something about this cow's condition is just nagging at you. She's not doing anything you would normally expect a cow to do just after delivering a calf. More than anything, you need her to be on her feet so the calf — which by now is sucking at a spot on the barn wall — can get some of that all important colostrum, the cow's first milk.

You start to lose patience with the cow, because by now you're beginning to notice that cold is sinking into your being. You'd sure like to get back to the house and close to the woodstove.

You become a bit more insistent with the cow, trying to make her get up, but she won't budge. Now that you've felt your way around the cow, you realize that — although she is lying down — she seems to be in what, by any standards and even for a cow, is an awkward position.

You just can't figure what's going on with this cow. She's had the calf. It seems fine. Why isn't the cow up? Maybe she's getting ready to prolapse. You decide an examination is in order.

(Are you having fun yet? OK. If you're not, this is absolutely, positively the last jumping off spot. Once you examine that cow, you're in for the duration. All right, you asked for it.)

It being lambing season you carry with you the necessary supplies for obstetrical examinations. You pull on a latex exam glove and probe the interior of the cow's birth canal. Your hand touches something hard, and, because the cow is lying in such a lopsided position, you assume her pelvic bone is protruding into the birth canal.

(Are you having fun yet? Some supplemental information is necessary for those who have never played this game and for those who have lived their lives without the experience of performing an obstetrical examination of a cow. Perhaps an example is in order.

Take a 30-gallon plastic trash bag with a drawstring closure, and, for the purpose of this example, we'll say the drawstring is made of elastic. Draw the elastic almost closed, leaving an opening of about six to eight inches. Give the bag to a friend.

At this point if you're the person playing the game you cover your eyes, and don't read the next section, because for a realistic cow obstetrical experience you can't know what your friend is placing in the bag.

Your friend places the following items in the bag — 10 large balloons filled with water, 20 small potatoes, seven 12-inch lengths of clothesline, four gallons of congealed gelatin, and a burlap sack to which four 18-inch medium sized dowels are attached and which is filled with 70 pounds of wet cement.

After your friend has prepared the bag, pull the drawstring end of the bag through a one-foot section of PVC pipe which measures no more than nine inches in diameter. This leaves the bulk of the bag and its contents dangling out the opposite end of the pipe.

Next dress yourself up warmly and take the bag with its contents and the pipe down to the local supermarket. Ask the grocer to adjust the temperature in the meat locker to minus six degrees. Set an electric fan up in the locker and turn the fan on high. Go in the meat locker, lay the bag containing the unknown objects on the floor on the windy side of the fan. Have someone turn off the lights. On your stomach and with your head at the elastic closure of the garbage bag, lie down on the concrete floor of the meat locker. Now place your hand through the opening of the bag, through the pipe passageway, and start trying to figure out what items your hand is coming in contact with. Isn't this fun? Well, there's more.)

The game returns to the shed now. Your obstetrical examination reveals that the cow is attempting to deliver a second calf. Yes, that's right. On one of the 10 coldest nights of your life, a cow has decided to have twin calves. Of course the cow can't have the second calf, because it is coming backward in a sitting down position with both its back legs folded forward. An oath slips through your clinched teeth.

(Are you having fun yet? You sure are. In fact, you're having so much fun that you decide it's a pity you're hogging it all to yourself.

(Continued on page 13)

The calf, hence forward known as Six Below, recharges his batteries after a supercold night in February.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

(Continued from page 12)

Others, you decide, should be permitted to join in the fun.)

You place a call to the veterinary emergency service, and a few minutes later a vet's sleepy voice is asking you what's wrong. You provide a brief explanation and are told he will attend your emergency call. You can tell by his enthusiastic response to your request for help that he has been eagerly awaiting just this kind of late night call.

You decide you probably could have even more fun if you try to get things organized before the vet arrives. Of course, what needs to be organized is the position of the calf so that it can make its way through the cow's birth canal. Perhaps, you think, you might be able to get the legs back and make a start on the job before the vet arrives.

Light, light, you need light and you know, furthermore, that the vet will require light in the shed where the cow is when he begins his work. You pull a pickup truck into the barnyard, and face it toward the open end of the shed so the headlights illuminate the shed's interior.

You retrieve some obstetrical sleeves from the house and return to the barn to work on the cow. Of course, this can't be accomplished while wearing all those heavy clothes, particularly the bulky parka, so you have to take it off. The hooded sweatshirt too, take it off. You can't maneuver your arm in the cow's birth canal with folds of a sweatshirt around your arm. You may keep your shirt on, but you have to push the sleeves up to your shoulders.

(Are you having fun yet?)

Lying on your stomach with your right arm in the cow's birth canal, you push as hard as you can against the calf's rump. Every time you push, the cow — which weighs about 1,000 pounds — pushes against you with all the forces of nature with which she is equipped.

Revert for a second to the trash bag analogy — remember those balloons filled with water?

As you push — in the garbage bag case you are pushing on the burlap bag filled with 70 pounds of wet cement — the pressure causes the water balloons to begin bursting, and the water comes gushing out — some on the ground, some on the cow, a lot on you. Now you're wet, and you're lying on the frozen ground with no coats on.

(Are you having fun yet?)

You push and push and push and push and push, and then push some more until the calf is finally back far enough that you can grab one of the feet. You start moving it back, folding it up, then try to get it folded back out in the position it might be if the calf were kicking up its heels. Almost there... almost... almost... just a little bit more... a little more... almost there, and... the cow pulls up on her front legs, her rear end swivels around, you going with it — that is until you crash into the barn wall — you lose your hold on the calf's foot, and all your progress on repositioning the calf is lost.

To prepare for a simulated cow obstetrical experience gather the following items: — 10 large balloons filled with water, 20 small potatoes, seven 12-inch lengths of clothesline, four gallons of congealed gelatin, a burlap sack, four 18-inch medium sized dowels, 70 pounds of wet cement, and a one-foot length of PVC pipe no more than nine inches in diameter.

(For those of you operating on the trash bag analogy, keep in mind that you're trying to turn two of the 18-inch dowels so they will come out through the eight-inch PVC pipe. You must do this without punching a hole in the bag with the ends of the dowels. You also must accomplish it without breaking the dowels. Remember that your arm is held rigid by the PVC pipe so that you can't bend your elbow. To offer an analogy on an analogy, it's like extending your arm straight out from your body and trying to make a 70-pound yo-yo come back up from the dropped position.)

Although your progress is about nil, you're determined. You're one of those contrary people who won't give up, particularly because you're having so much fun. So you work and work and work and work. After about 20 minutes your arms — by now you've been switching back and forth between your right and left arms — are numb to the elbow. You're not really noticing the cold, because the part of you that's inside the cow is quite warm from her body heat. You're also exerting a lot of energy in your efforts, so that's keeping you — well, at least your upper body — fairly warm.

You've been working for quite awhile and are beginning to wonder where the vet is. Your mental timer has been running, and you're sure he should have gotten to the farm by now. You convince yourself that he's only a few minutes away, and that with a little more effort you can get the calf's legs back, so you begin again.

You don't last very long this time though, because by now your arms are numb to the shoulder. Remember that — reverting to the trash bag analogy — you're lying on your stomach with your arms mostly up over your head, and with only the strength in one arm you're trying to reposition the 70-pound bag of wet cement, and it's six below zero, and the 1,000-pound cow is pushing against you with 10 times the strength you have.

The dogs begin to bark, and you see headlights coming down the lane. The vet has arrived, thank heavens, to share in your fun. Since it's been over an hour since you made contact with him you ask, in the most lighthearted of manners, if he went to the Waffle House for breakfast before coming out. He says, "No. You didn't think I was sitting at home waiting by the phone did you?" You say, "Well, I hadn't bothered to go to bed, so I didn't figure anybody else had either." He says, "Well, I had to get gas." Clever repartee out of the way, the happy-go-lucky vet then asks if you've got any hot water.

You inform him there is no hot water on the face of the earth, and he brings forth his bucket of obstetrical supplies in which someone has left about an inch of water, and all his equipment is frozen to the bottom of the bucket. Upon his insistence you make a trip back to the house for hot water and carry the bucket full plus another gallon milk jug full back to the barn. Having bypassed the kitchen while in the house, you note it is 2:26 a.m. — that's 2 a.m. plus 26. Doesn't time fly when you're having fun?

The vet has gleefully started his work by the time you return with the hot water. He's repositioned the cow and is ready to begin working on the calf. He too takes off his heavy outer jacket, rolls up his shirt sleeves, and dons a shoulder-length obstetrical glove. In a few moments he has one leg repositioned and exposed. He begins working on the second leg, gets to a sticking point and asks for help rolling the cow so her weight shifts to the opposite hip. A few moments later the second leg is brought out. You theorize out loud that as a result of your efforts with the cow you had loosened things up before the vet arrives. He agrees.

Obstetrical chains are attached to the calf's legs, and you and the vet start pulling. You get the calf out to its midsection then progress is halted. Keep in mind this is the point when you're trying to pull the 70-pound bag of wet cement out through the nine-inch PVC pipe.

The vet fetches a calf puller from his van, and in a few moments the second calf, steam rising from its body, is lying on the ground behind the cow. The shred of hope that the calf might be alive vanishes when you begin pulling mucous away from its nose, and the vet says, "No, he's not there." But still, after all that merriment, you have a live calf which needs care.

You ask the vet for a bag of colostrum powder, for you are sure the cow will not be providing any right away. After giving the cow some medication, the cheery vet departs. You thank him for his services and apologize for him having so much fun. "That's all right," he says. "It'll give me something to tell my grandchildren." As you watch the vet's van disappear into the night you reason to yourself that Mother Goose, Mr. Rodgers, and Barney should sufficiently stimulate youngsters, and future grandparents ought not to have near-death experiences in order to provide entertainment for their descendants.

(After having this much fun, you probably think you just can't stand any more, but... there is yet still more.)

Before turning your attentions to the calf, you check the lambing shed to see if any ewes have lambed, and, yes, of course, there is a ewe with a very small, but living lamb. You move her and it into a stall, then turn your mind back to the calf.

Thanking the heavens for the availability of a pickup truck, you lift the calf into the cab, and take the calf to the house. There you place it in the basement which is a little warmer than the barn, but not too warm for the calf. You mix the colostrum powder with warm water, put it in a nippled calf bottle and return to the basement. The calf is h-u-n-g-r-y and to your delight it drains the bottle — about three pints' worth — without pausing. The powdered colostrum is not a perfect replacement for the real thing, but it's enough to keep the calf — hence forward known as Six Below — going until morning when you hope the cow will be able to take over. Leaving the calf blinking in the darkness, you remember you have a bit more fun awaiting you.

From the house you fetch a baby bottle, return to the barn, and steal some milk from a ewe with an overabundance of same. The newborn lamb has gotten up but has a dazed look about it. When the nipple is inserted in its mouth, it too, like the calf, drains the bottle. The amount is no more than a couple ounces in the lamb's case, but it, too, is enough to keep the lamb going until its body adjusts to the new frozen world.

It is 3:30 when you return to the house — that's 3 a.m. plus 30. Your feet are like clubs on the ends of your feet. They have been sensationless for some time. Likewise the flesh on your legs feels strange. In the fury of your efforts with the cow, calves, ewes, and lambs, you forgot what subzero temperatures can do to human flesh. But you're back in your house, and it's warm, and that's all that matters. Or is it?

At 4 a.m. you think it might be a good idea if you went back outside, because 30 minutes after getting yourself back inside body parts begin to thaw. As this happens, it's as if every nerve ending near the surface of your skin is pressed in a vise. Your feet are the worst. You can barely stand. The skin on your legs feels as if someone has packed dry ice on it rendering that unforgettable freeze-dried sensation of burning and stinging. Your neck and shoulder muscles are no longer numb, but now ache with pains of overexertion.

You put on your warmest, fleece-lined sweatshirt and sweatpants, stretch out prone on the couch, and pull a cotton throw up under your chin. If you lie very still, you don't notice the pain so much. One move though, and pain shoots in all directions. You think to yourself, "I'm sure it's sinful to be having this much fun."

Down on the farm, we're thinking about how much fun we have sometimes, and isn't it a shame we couldn't spread some of it around? Because fun — real fun — is so hard to come by these days. —

Saluting area FFA chapters, members: National FFA Week, Feb. 17-24

See related story and photos, page 24

Chris Curry, 17
Senior, Buffalo Gap FFA
Project areas: Beef cattle operation, Livestock judging, Parliamentary procedure, Public Speaking

Growing up on a farm was reason enough for Chris to join the Future Farmers of America. He calls it "just another step on the ladder" which is leading him to a career in agriculture. In the fall Chris will attend Virginia Tech where he will major in animal science with his eye on becoming a veterinarian.

CHRIS

"Meeting people, getting involved, and learning leadership skills" have all been brought Chris' way through his FFA membership, he says.

"FFA has given me great leadership skills," he says. "It's gotten me better involved in other activities such as clubs at school."

Through Chris' participation with his chapter's livestock judging team, the six-year FFA member says *he learned more than how to select top animals in classes of livestock.*

"In livestock judging I learned how to evaluate situations," he said. "It helped my decision-making abilities."

Chris currently serves as president of the FFA chapter at Buffalo Gap High School. Although the organization has an agricultural emphasis, Curry says there's more to it than that.

"I think FFA is a great opportunity for anyone interested. You learn skills that would help you in any basic career past high school," he said.

For young folks interested in joining FFA, Curry says they only need to get involved.

"FFA isn't going to help you unless you help yourself," he said.

Chris is the son of Charles and Betsy Curry of Mt. Solon.

Scott Buchanan, 18
Senior, Riverheads FFA
Project areas: Livestock judging, Public speaking, Parliamentary procedure

Leadership skills he has learned in FFA have propelled Scott to the office of president of the Augusta FFA Federation. Holding the county-wide office has taken Scott to new places where he has met new people.

SCOTT

Scott's involvement in FFA was practically a foregone conclusion. He followed his father's footsteps in membership in the organization.

"It was a tradition in my family at first," Scott says of his initial reason for joining FFA. "But when I joined I realized I enjoyed it and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity, and thus I have continued."

Through practice and hard work, Scott has excelled in public speaking. Last year he placed second in the area contest, and this year he claimed the federation's top spot. The area contest will be in March, and Scott says he's aiming for a win which will send him to state competition at the convention in Blacksburg this summer. While some young people might find it difficult to speak in front of a group, Scott is relaxed.

"At first it was challenging to get motivated, but now it's almost second nature," he said. "You learn to get over your fears after doing it time and time again."

Scott has been an FFA member for six years and plans to pursue a career in agriculture which will begin at Virginia Tech in the fall.

"FFA had a lot to do with pushing me toward a career in agriculture," he said.

Scott says there's no reason why anyone couldn't benefit from FFA membership, even those who have no background in agriculture. He pointed to the example of an inner city high school student in New York where school's require students to take agriculture classes. The student excelled in the program and became national president of the organization.

Leadership, Scott says, is the most important skill he has gained from FFA.

"We're going to be tomorrow's leaders, and we need to get some experience for the future."

Scott is the son of Eddie and Kathleen Buchanan of Rockbridge Baths.

Neil Bosserman, 17
Senior, Stuarts Draft FFA
Project areas: Forestry management, Extemporaneous speaking, Livestock judging, Mechanics

Given a choice between agriculture and shop classes, Neil chose agriculture, which, he says, gave him "skills to use in the work place."

NEIL

Neil works for a local beef cattle producer and when the landowner decided to sell some timber, he called on Neil to help select trees to be harvested. Knowledge gained through his study of forestry management helped Neil get the job done. As an added bonus, his knowledge of trees helps him in his hobby of hunting. Knowing which trees produce fruit that animals eat brings Neil closer to bagging his wild game of choice.

President of Stuarts Draft's FFA chapter, Neil says the organization has enhanced his ability to lead. Likewise it has made him more confident and improved his self-esteem. Although he is working on a farm now, his career interest is likely to take him down quite a different path. Neil says he will attend college in the fall, plans to major in mechanical or aerospace engineering, "make a lot of money, and retire young." There's no lack of self-confidence in this young man.

Involvement in FFA has galvanized Neil's attitude about agriculture and farming.

"I've learned that farmers who most people refer to as 'dumb farmers' aren't dumb," he says. "I takes a lot more knowledge than people realize to be a farmer."

Neil is the son of J. Stuart and Nancy Bosserman of Stuarts Draft.

Jake Shuey, 15
Sophomore, Riverheads FFA
Project areas: Public speaking, Parliamentary procedure, dairy judging, forestry judging

Raised on a beef cattle farm, Jake says all his areas of involvement in FFA are important to him. From public speaking he has gained the ability to speak in front of a class. From parliamentary procedure he has learned to lead a group in an organized format. From dairy judging he has learned to make decisions based on knowledge.

JAKE

An FFA member for five years, Jake began taking agriculture classes in middle school.

"At first, FFA was just a bonus," he says. But through the years, it has become much more than that to Jake who is serving as reporter for the RHS chapter.

Competition in events has become a great motivation for Jake.

"I enjoy competing a lot," he says. "It's thrilling to actually get out and do something like public speaking. It gets your heart going when they start to announce winners."

Jake's desire to compete has taken him to the state level contest where in his first year he finished among the top three in the state in ag mechanics competition.

College may be a few years away for Jake, but he is already weighing his options. He hopes to attend Virginia Tech and is considering a major in soil management practices, soil science, or ecology. With farmers drawing fire from environmentalists in every sector of society, Jake says people need to look at things from the farmer's perspective.

"They better give farmers a break and see it from the farmer's standpoint," he said of this criticism. "That is, if they want to eat."

Jake has set a number of personal goals related to his FFA membership. He would like to advance to state-level competition in public speaking and parliamentary procedure and hopes to attend the national convention held annually in Kansas City.

Jake is the son of Susan Shuey of Spottswood.

Adam Holsinger, 17
Senior, Wilson FFA
Project areas: Forestry, Parliamentary procedure, Public speaking, dairy judging, beef cattle judging

Adam represents the newest generation of the typical farm family. His great-grandfather started a farm, and the family has been farming ever since. He credits his involvement in FFA to his father and Wilson ag instructor Stuart Moffett. It was Moffett who instructed the elder Holsinger in agriculture in high school. And it was Moffett who Adam says encouraged him to join FFA.

ADAM

His participation in public speaking contests has been important to Adam's character development, he says.

"It's had a big impact on me. (Through public speaking) you gain confidence in yourself and know you can do certain things," Adam says.

Coming from a dairy background, the six-year FFA member has surprised few folks by excelling in his dairy project. He has won his way to competition at the national convention two times in dairy judging and dairy showmanship. Adam called competition on the national level "really exciting, amazing... it's huge." The fact that the team of which Adam was a member consisted of a group of friends made the trip "even better," Adam said.

Adam is serving this year as Wilson's FFA president. He is the son of Daniel and Ellen Holsinger of Waynesboro.

Willie Morris, 17
Senior, Fort Defiance FFA
Project areas: Sheep, Livestock judging, Parliamentary procedure, Extemporaneous speaking, soils judging, dairy judging

"I've always been interested in agriculture in general," Willie says. "My older brothers and sister were in FFA, and it just seemed like something that would be for me."

Willie's family had been in the dairy business until 1983 when they switched to sheep production. The family's flock of 40 purebred Dorset ewes is what Willie helps manage. Showing the livestock is especially exciting for him, he says.

WILLIE

"It's exhilarating to know I'm there with all these other people to see who's better, and how much I really know," he says.

Willie, who is serving as Fort's president and the Augusta Federation's secretary this year, says, "FFA is the greatest youth organization in the country to give you skills for life through leadership."

Had he never joined FFA, Willie says he "wouldn't be outspoken, wouldn't have the confidence to stand up in front of people and express my views.

"I'd just be taking up space in high school if I didn't have FFA to give me the extra skills," he says. "If I had never joined FFA, I wouldn't want to excel. "It's given me the opportunity and desire to do my best in whatever I do."

Having traveled to the national convention twice, Willie says FFA has something for everybody.

"It gives (you) the skills to use in life. FFA will give back exactly what you put in it," he said. "FFA can take you anywhere you want to go. There's nothing you cannot accomplish through FFA."

Willie has his sights set on running for state FFA president at the convention this summer in Blacksburg. After taking a year off post-high school, he plans to attend Blue Ridge Community College for two years then transfer to Virginia Tech and hopes to major in agriculture economics.

Willie is the son of Ed and Brenda Morris of Bridgewater.

There very well may be a lot of farming in the futures of the FFA members interviewed for this story. But it's just as likely that there may be a future veterinarian, a future astronaut, a future senator, a future banker, or a future conservationist in the group. Wherever they end up, you can bet they'll credit their career successes to the strong foundation laid by their involvement in FFA. —

Beef cattle producers evaluate dollars spent vs. dollars returned

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON — The decline in the cattle market has forced producers to run their operations with a firm financial hand. Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau hosted an animal health information seminar in January to help beef cattle operators evaluate the dollar-return benefits versus dollars spent on technologies which are meant to increase production.

Representatives from Cargill and Mallinckrodt Veterinary spoke to the 150 producers in attendance at the meeting. For many, it was their first chance in a number of weeks to escape the trials of a difficult winter for a few hours of fellowship. If there were a few nodding heads among the audience as the speakers presented their topics, no one asked why.

Willie Hays of Cargill directed cattle producers thoughts to the summer ahead.

"Grass can't do it all," he said. Hays noted that forage, whether in the pasture or harvested, is "not always going to provide everything [cattle] need from a protein and energy standpoint." He said that making sure cattle are provided a nutritionally balanced ration will help producers "get the most out of cows and calves."

From a pasture standpoint, Hays pointed to seasonal changes affecting the quality of available forages. Routinely, spring and early summer pastures are high quality. As the season progresses, the quality declines, he said. Hay harvested falls into the same quality ranking, he noted and urged producers to have hay tested for protein content and to be aware of the nutritional needs of cows.

"The most critical time to meet cows' protein and energy needs is 90 days before calving and 90 days after calving," Hays said. Because forage quality varies, Hays reminded producers they may need to provide a protein supplement for cows "to fill in the gap between what cows are getting and what they need."

He suggested producers consider using a liquid protein supplement, one of which his company sells. The supplement's base is cane molasses and includes vitamins and minerals. In addition to providing a source of protein, the liquid helps to increase the digestibility of forage consumed by cattle, according to Hays. He said the product stimulates appetite and speeds up the digestion of protein.

This particular type of supplement is provided to cattle in 285-gallon lick tanks which Hays' company provides to producers. This makes the supplement available on a free-choice basis to cattle which is convenient for producers. Because it is a molasses-based product, it is extremely palatable to cattle, according to Hays.

Use of the protein supplement will promote adequate body condition in cows prior to calving, Hays said.

"Body condition scores tell us a lot about how cows will perform," he said. "It is key that all cows are performing as best they can."

Cows in good body condition will provide ample milk to calves which will promote high weaning weights, Hays noted. He also explained that cows' body condition scores prior to calving are directly related to conception rates after calving. He noted that cows with body condition scores of four have a 61 percent pregnancy rate as compared to those rating six with a 90 percent pregnancy rate.

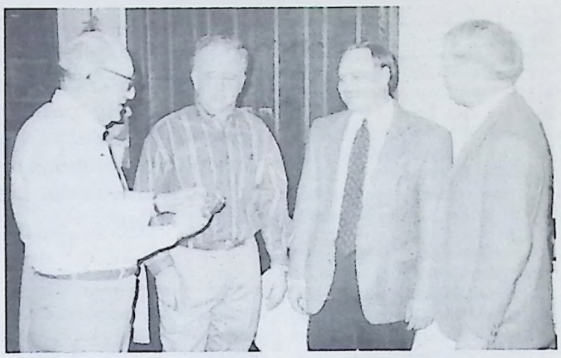
"Good forage plus a protein supplement equals dollars in the bank," Hays said.

Hunter Moss of Mallinckrodt Veterinary, formerly Pitman Moore, talked to the producers about the use of growth promotants in cattle. Mallinckrodt manufactures anabolic implants which are not hormones but rather mimic a hormonal response in animals. This results in a net increase in body growth rate, according to Moss.

Zerenol, the primary ingredient in Mallinckrodt's implant, increases the rate of gain in cattle and improves feed conversion, Moss said. The implant is placed subcutaneously in the back of a calf's ear. As it is gradually released into the animal's system, it prompts the production of naturally occurring growth hormones. The end result is that implanted cattle gain more weight than those not implanted. Moss noted that implanted replacement heifers average 18 additional pounds of weight and that growing cattle average 26 additional pounds of weight.

Looking ahead to warm weather, Moss urged producers to consider some type of fly control to use with their herds. He explained that horn flies, which are bloodsucking insects and cause intense irritation to cattle which results in poor growth, cost the cattle industry $700 million annually.

Ear tags impregnated with insecticides can help control fly problems, according to Moss. The tags feature a 150-day release of insecticide. Moss explained that for greatest effectiveness producers should delay placing ear tags on cattle until fly season reaches its threshold. Fly control is also available in pour-on products. Alternating between types of products will prevent flies from becoming resistant to insecticides, Moss said. —



Raymond Diehl of Waynesboro talks with Hunter Moss, Willie Hays, and Berkeley Gray at Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau's animal health meeting.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

Welcome to the next level

Corn packs genetic punch of insect resistance

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

MIDDLEBROOK — Termed by industry representatives as the biggest revolution in the seed business since the inception of hybrids in the 1930s, the development of insect resistant seeds has taken the industry to its next technological level.

Area corn and alfalfa producers gathered Feb. 9 at the Middlebrook Community Center to hear about the latest in seed advances. Hosted by Mycogen Plant Sciences and S.L. Hess & Sons of Harrisonburg, the program provided producers a chance to start thinking about spring planting.

Joe Emanuel of Mycogen told about the company's history. In its first 10 years, Mycogen was devoted solely to research. During that time it developed a strain of corn which is genetically equipped to be resistant to certain yield inhibiting insects, according to Emanuel. Mycogen produced seed corn with a gene patterned after a naturally occurring soil bacterium called Bacillus thuringiensis or simply referred to as Bt. This bacteria produces a protein which is toxic to the European corn borer.

Emanuel said that once Mycogen had established its technological base the company began maneuvering for a business base. In 1992 Mycogen acquired Jacques, a seed company, and in 1995 was awarded a patent on the Bt gene. Strains of seed corn equipped with the Bt gene and developed by Mycogen have proven to be "virtually 100 percent" effective against the European corn borer without the application of pesticide, according to Emanuel.

The company also discovered that Bt kills corn root worm, another insect which reduces yield, Emanuel said. According to the seed company representative, there are 36 known strains of Bt and Mycogen owns 30 of them. Emanuel likened the developing Bt technology to "holding a tiger by the tail." He said there is only one other seed company that has Bt protected seeds.

Mycogen has recently entered a 10-year agreement with Pioneer, the world's largest and most highly regarded seed company. Under the agreement Mycogen and Pioneer market the same product, the only difference being the brand name.

The use of Bt seed corn should bring increased yields to producers, Emanuel said. He explained that annual yield losses to corn borers fall in the 15 percent range. Sprays used to control the insect are only 50 to 65 percent effective, he said. Although Bt corn is resistant to corn borer, this doesn't mean the pest won't be present in corn. Corn borers ingest Bt and a protein in the gene kills the bore.

Emanuel spent a few minutes discussing with producers seed types available. He noted that farmers who make silage might want to consider a Mycogen seed developed specifically for silage. He said the company has strains of corn which are very digestible and have double the leaves of grain corn.

Jeff Phillips of S.L. Hess & Sons reminded producers to think about crop protection. He said the time is approaching to begin scouting alfalfa fields for winter annuals, and choose a weed control method. Products are available to control perennial weeds in corn. —

Diverse topics presented at Shenandoah Valley Ag Expo

By JEFF ISHEE

FISHERSVILLE — Farmers from across the Valley gathered at Augusta Expo Feb. 14 for the Shenandoah Valley Ag Expo. It was a superb occasion to spend a day talking with other farmers, Extension agents, equipment dealers, and experts in various disciplines of agriculture.

Beth Grove, who grew up on a dairy farm in Waynesboro and is now a graduate student at Virginia Tech, gave an excellent presentation on one of the newest high tech methods available to the dairy business: continuous electronic surveillance of dairy cows to improve reproductive efficiency.

Specifically, Miss Grove gave explicit details of a system called "Heat Watch," which works something like this. An electronic, battery powered transmitter is glued onto a cow's rump. This device signals mounting data to a remote antennae. Electronic information is then sent to a buffer, and then finally interfaced with a desktop or laptop computer. On average, a farmer spends about 25 minutes a day with the computer, which collates all of the reproductive information that a dairy manager could ever want.

When the farmer walks out to the barn in the morning and turns on his computer, he will instantly *know which cows are in heat, the cows' numbers, the transmitter numbers, the pen numbers,* how many mounts occurred in the past 24 hours, the precise moment of the onset of heat, and the number of days since the last heat occurred. It's all there on the computer screen waiting.

Studies at Virginia Tech have proven the system to be at least 95 percent accurate, a claim proven out by continuous video monitoring at the dairy barn in Blacksburg. As one might imagine, this technology does not come cheap; however, studies at the university have proven that the implementation of the Heat Watch system can be very cost effective in the long run by dramatically increasing conception rates, which in turn increases herd efficiency. Currently, the installation of the Heat Watch system will cost the average Virginia dairyman anywhere from $3,000 to $8,000, although leasing arrangements are available. Contact Jerry Swisher, area dairy Extension specialist at (540) 245-5750 for more information.

William McClung, an attorney and farmer from Rockbridge County, gave a colorful presentation entitled "Virginia Fencing Laws." He stressed that even though there are state laws on fencing, landowners should check with their respective county to see if there are any local laws that are applicable to specific fencing situations. Before a large audience of keenly interested farmers and landowners, McClung noted the differences between Augusta (a "fence in" county) and Rockbridge (a "fence out" county), by saying: "In Augusta County, if your cows come over to my property and you don't have a lawful fence, then you are out of luck."

"A good solution solves more than one problem, and it does not make new problems. A good solution will satisfy a whole range of criteria; it will be good in all respects. A farm that has found correct agricultural solutions to its problems will be fertile, productive, healthful, conservative, beautiful, pleasant to live on."

Wendell Berry
"The Gift of Good Land"

He then went on to define what a "lawful fence" is in the eyes of the state.

"In Virginia," McClung noted, "a lawful fence is basically either 5-foot high woven wire or 8 strands of barbed wire rising in specific increments to a height of 42 inches. The law states specifically how far apart posts are to be placed. High tensile fence is not addressed by Virginia law; however, there is a catch-all phrase in the fencing law which states that a lawful fence is 'any fence that is substantial enough to keep livestock from wiggling through it.'"

This brought a hearty response from the lively assembly of farmers. Hands shot up registering questions, and each one was addressed to the satisfaction of the majority of those in attendance. McClung added that "electric fence controllers must have an intermittent power flow."

The attorney then went on to discuss who pays for the building of a lawful fence.

"If the fence is to be built along a property line where no fence already exists, then you must give the adjoining property owner written notice of your intent to build a fence.

That property owner then has 10 days to respond with his intent. If he elects to leave his land fallow, then he has no financial responsibility to participate in the construction of the fence. If he responds with an intent to either begin or continue a crop or livestock usage of the land, then he is responsible for one half of the cost.

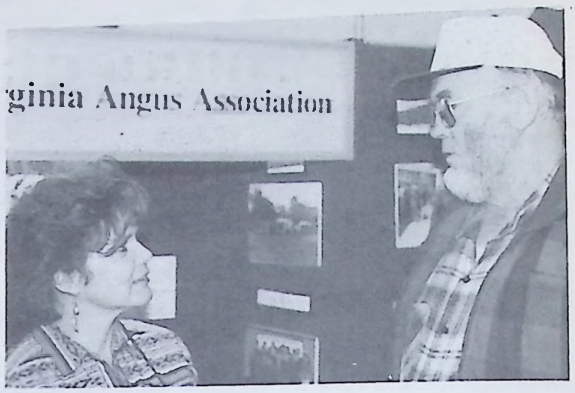
If the fence is to be built adjacent to a residential or industrial property, then that landowner does not have the election not to participate in the construction of the fence," McClung said. "Fallow is roughly defined as letting the land lie, and not using it for either livestock or crops."

Concerning maintenance of an existing boundary fence, McClung discussed specific scenarios and how they might be satisfactorily remedied by both property owners. "If land is leased," he stated, "the primary responsibility lies with the land owner rather than the person leasing the land."

Although there are several area customs concerning fencing arrangements, they are not written into the law. One seasoned custom states "Looking at the fence from my side, everything to the left of the center is my responsibility." This is a fine custom, but will not hold up in any court of law according to McClung.

"You have to use common sense, and just keep your cows in. If a tree falls across a boundary fence, then that is an act of God. But if you are aware of the situation first, then you should make an effort to remedy the predicament.

"If you just stand there and watch a neighbor's cows file through the hole in the fence and out onto the highway and don't do anything about it, we all know who the judge is going to side with. The easiest way to make an enemy out of a neighbor is to get into a fencing confrontation with him," McClung said. ---



Sally Breeden of the Virginia Angus Association talks with Bill Cope of Nelson County at the Shenandoah Valley Ag Expo held Feb. 14 in Fishersville. Photo by Jeff Ishee

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After the crash: American sheep industry faces monumental task of rebuilding

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

Following the industry collapse in 1993, operators deserted sheep production en masse. Numbers in the sheep industry today have hit an all-time low and represent the smallest number of sheep in the United States since the USDA began keeping records.

BLACKSBURG — The sheep industry cracked and crumbled when market prices crashed in 1993. That same year the National Wool Act, which provided wool incentive payments to sheep producers, was repealed. Predators sailed in with a cruel left jab that sent sheep producers reeling. According to industry analysts and despite the upswing in prices, the sheep industry is still staggering and is in serious need of innovation to revive and sustain it.

Sheep producers from Mid-Atlantic states recently gathered at Virginia Tech for the Va.-N.C. Shepherds' Symposium to update themselves on the latest in sheep production and management. They also took some time to hear the thoughts of sheep industry leaders on the direction of sheep production in the United States.

"How does it feel to be a minority of a minority?" Joe Harper, a lamb feedlot operator, asked the 140 sheep producers at the symposium. Harper's West Virginia feedlot sends 5,000 lambs to slaughter annually. He owns a 400-ewe flock *and runs 500 stocker cattle in the summer.* The former chairman of American Farm Bureau's Lamb Committee reminded sheep producers that farmers make up only 2 percent of the U.S. population. Of that percentage, only a handful are sheep producers.

Following the industry collapse in '93, operators deserted sheep production en masse. Harper said numbers in the sheep industry today have hit an all-time low and represent the smallest number of sheep in the United States since the USDA began keeping records.

Harper named predators as being the number one problem in the sheep industry today.

"We do need help to control predators," he said. "I don't have time to run a trap line, but these coyotes are really getting to me."

The wildlife population is exploding, according to Harper, who said: "And we're paying the bill."

"There are more bears in West Virginia than since the time of Daniel Boone," he said, noting that his operation is also preyed upon by wolves and mountain lions which are protected by the Endangered Species Act. There is a $10,000 fine for harassing an endangered species, Harper said. When a pair of mountain lions were killing sheep on one of his farms, Harper was told by a forester that the sheep would have to be moved away from the farm.

"They're making outlaws out of us," he said of environmentalists *who criticize farmers for attempting* to protect livestock from predators.

A vast improvement in lamb marketing has been made through the use of a yield and quality grading system. Harper is credited with writing the specifications for this system and shepherding its implementation.

While the new grading system has helped, Harper said, "The sheep industry is behind in meeting consumer demands." The industry needs to promote its product to white tablecloth and midscale restaurants, he said.

"The people who consume most of the lamb enjoy it, and they're going to buy it," Harper said. "Lamb buyers are not price shoppers."

The sheep industry has reached a crossroads, Harper said.

"We've seen the numbers decline and stabilize," he said. "We're losing our infrastructure as packing plants close down because there aren't enough lambs going to slaughter to keep them open. Consumer demand leveled off then increased a little."

Passage of the national checkoff for the sheep industry will promote its survival, according to Harper.

"We've got to have that (the checkoff). We cannot be factionalized," he said. "We need to present a unified lobby (in Washington)."

Some "musts" for the survival of the sheep industry in Harper's opinion are the establishment of a "viable national organization." Sheep producers must become politically active.

"We are a minority bucking an uphill trend," he said. "We have to be better informed in marketing our products and plan to market to meet demand. We have to be progressive — not be afraid to have a new idea and try it."

Jonathan May, a sheep producer from Timberville who runs a 1,000 ewe flock, 300 head of purebred Angus cows, and operates a lamb feedlot, agreed with Harper's "crossroads" theory.

"There's a lot of truth in so much of what he said. We're at an intersection, and we've been sitting there for 30 years," May noted. Nationwide sheep numbers peaked at 60 million and now stand at 10 million, according to the sheep producer who also works as a buyer for a packer.

"We've lost infrastructure, and we've lost momentum," May said. "We have a long uphill battle pulling back out."

The sheep industry's greatest loss may be the generation of youth which bypassed sheep production, May noted.

"We have lost a generation of sheep producers," he said. "We have allowed a generation of young people to come and go" without offering them a place in the industry.

"Do we view ourselves as an industry or a hobby?" May asked producers. "If we are an industry, then we have something to fight for. If we view the sheep business solely as a hobby then why bother? I contend that we should consider ourselves as an industry and act like one."

May noted that the recovery in lamb prices over the past 18 months is no cause for celebration. With the upswing in the lamb market, prices on breeding stock have skyrocketed. Ewes which less than two years ago were valued at $50 a head are now in the $160-$175/ head range. May said he felt this should not be the goal of sheep producers.

"We've lost infrastructure, and we've lost momentum. We have a long uphill battle pulling back out."
Jonathan May, Timberville sheep producer

"We have just come out of a totally demoralizing, disastrous situation," he said. May asked producers to consider the consequences of those buying high-dollar breeding stock. "Are they in the long term to stay? Are we not setting them up for economic disaster? We as an industry are responsible for our own destiny."

Guy Flora, editor of *Shepherd* magazine, anchored the industry forum and presented a national perspective. In his 10 years with the magazine, Flora said he has spoken at symposiums in 23 states. Through his travels he said he has determined the "perceived problems" in the sheep industry.

Flora said he has listened as sheep producers have named predators as the villain of the sheep industry. Producers also complain about imports, which — on an annual basis — Flora said account for only 10-15 percent of the U.S. market. Lack of promotion, loss of the Wool Act, cost of animal health, the club lamb market, and declining wool prices are also named by producers as problems facing the industry, according to Flora.

Sheep producers need to start noticing the "real problems" in the industry," Flora said.

"The biggest problem our industry has is we don't have enough lambs," he said. While he granted that consumption of lamb is down, he noted: "You can't consume it if it's not there."

Loss of infrastructure is hurting the industry, according to Flora. When the weekly lamb slaughter was at 90,000, packing plants could operate, he explained. When the kill fell to 70,000 per week, plants began closing.

Economics are also a problem for sheep producers, according to Flora.

"Sheep people nickel and dime themselves to death," he said. "I'm convinced the American sheep industry cannot exist without baling twine. We refuse to buy equipment. We refuse to build fences." Flora urged producers to make investments in their operations to improve profitability.

Another problem in the sheep industry relates to animal health, Flora said. While sheep producers complain about veterinary costs, he said, they misuse pharmaceuticals by administering the wrong dosage based on animals' weights. Without scales, Flora said, producers cannot be properly using medications.

He criticized producers for not paying attention to market demands. The 45 or more breeds of sheep in the United States provide great genetic diversity, he said, but questioned the use of "pet breeds."

"All breeds are good in their place," he said. However using pet breeds can be detrimental to the industry "when we stick by them regardless of what we're trying to market. You're running a business, and you've got to find out what the market is before you raise something."

Flora summed up his opinion of the sheep industry's future by outlining the potential for marketing lamb.

"If consumers want lamb, they will knock down the door to buy lamb." he said. "But we've got to produce the product the consumer wants." —

•Virginia

Continued from page 9

barrel for these particular apples.

For Waddell and Jones, both residents of the Valley of Virginia, obtaining a great many varieties would have been a simple matter.

"People had a degree of reverence for the fruit," Burford said of his 19th century counterparts. "There was a lot of competition at county fairs. The fairs brought forth hundreds of new varieties. Some were very good and became the winner for the county fair, and they would take that new variety to the state fair and compete with it," he explained.

Burford added that there were many more seedlings around because people planted seed in order to create rootstock on which to graft their favorite varieties. Sometimes the seedlings were allowed to grow and produce their own fruit and, thus, a new variety was created.

In addition to taking cuttings from trees and grafting, something most farmers at least dabbled with, there were quite a few nurseries from which farmers could order trees.

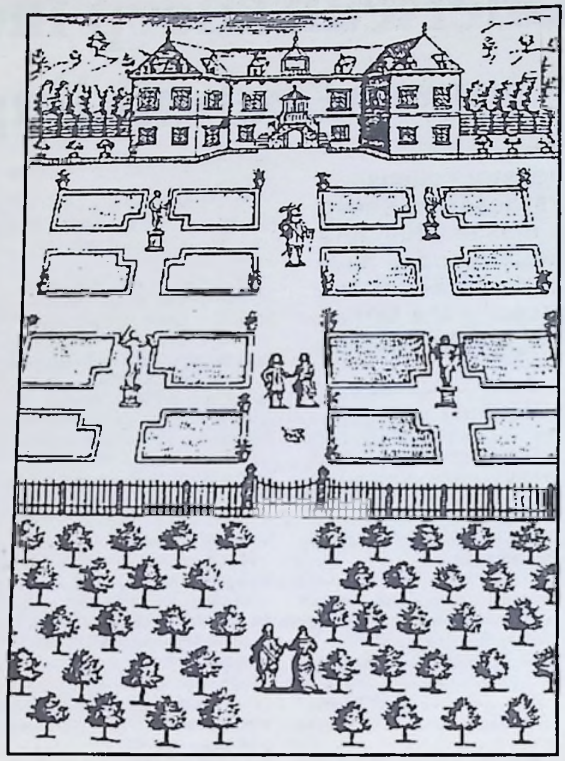
One of Virginia's biggest nurserymen was Franklin Davis who started in Rockbridge County, where Henry Boswell Jones lived, moved north to Staunton, where Joseph Waddell lived in the heart of the Valley of Virginia, and then eventually moved to Richmond, the state capital.

In 1858, Davis was located in Staunton and his descriptive catalog offered hundreds of plant varieties, including almost 10 pages of apples. And these varieties, according to Davis, were the narrowed-down group he selected, because they thrived best in the middle and southern portions of the country. A decade later in his Richmond catalog, Davis was moved to write of apple growing in Virginia: "There is no country in the world where it attains such perfection as it does in this; nor where its cultivation can be made more profitable than in Virginia."

On the eve of the Civil War, Davis charged 25 cents, or $20 per hundred, for his standard trees which were three to five feet tall when sold. Dwarf trees for gardens were 37 1/2 cents. The catalog divided the trees by ripening date, listing 16 summer varieties, 25 autumn varieties, and 48 varieties of winter apples. In addition, Davis offered a list of almost 300 varieties which he supplied in limited number.

Even as the apple heyday was taking place in Virginia, things were changing. It was a change created, according to Tom Burford, by a combination of the new railroad and man's insatiable desire for sweets. With the coming of the railroad came the ability to ship large quantities of apples to the northern urban markets, and growers leapt upon the new chance for profit.

"Apples were piled two and three stories high at the railroad tracks,"



Burford explains of this new combination of transportation and agriculture. The largest rise in the Valley of Virginia came at the conclusion of the Civil War (1861-1865). Prior to the war, only one railroad had ventured into the central Valley, but after the war tracks began to criss-cross the landscape.

"Since the War, farmers in the Valley of Virginia have turned their attention to the culture of this fruit (apples), as offering the most speedy and sure means of recuperation to their wasted farms and devastated homes. From the Potomac to the Tennessee orchards and vineyards are being planted with a rapidity truly surprising," noted the editor of *The Farmer* in 1866.

An 1866 letter written from, appropriately enough, Apple Grove, Va., discussed the prospect of linking apple profits to the railroad in the years to come.

"Dear Sister, ...Brother John wrote to Jimmie to join him in fruite raising; to buy a small farm on the rail road, either in Fauquire, Culppeper, Madison, or Orange. I do not know what they will do — Brother John thinks we would be more comfortably situated near a rail road."

According to Burford, there was a price to pay for the apple glory days. "It is because of man's desire for sugar, to experience the sense of sweet. When new varieties appeared, the sweeter a variety, the more people got excited. In the 1860s and 1870s, there were very few tart varieties, but many sweet varieties. And there were many small orchardists. This coincides with the coming of the railroad and the ability to supply big cities with large quantities of fruit. There was a saturation of sugar in all of these orchards. They were dripping with sugar," he notes in setting the stage for what happened next.

"With all that sugar, here come the insects," he says. Very soon it became impossible for small orchardists to grow large quantities of apples without the use of chemicals. In 1850 there were only four major insects which could substantially damage apples: the codlin moth, curcurlio, apple maggot, and scales. One hundred years later, in 1950, there were 40!

"Now there are five kinds of leaf roller alone, and dozens of mites. The insect population grew, and the ease and convenience with which fruit could be produced stopped. Sweet apples are the reason for the development of the chemical industry," Burford said in explaining his theory.

With the introduction of sprays, the apple industry entered a very profitable period, not for those interested in cultivating and developing particular varieties, but for businessmen. Stock companies were formed, and speculation on orchards skyrocketed. For many, fortunes were made overnight.

In 1919, one man paid $30,000 for his orchard in western Virginia and found he had enough fruit on the tree to pay for it that very season. The crash came in the 1930s, and many of the earlier orchards were ripped out. Large conglomerations then moved in and began selecting apple varieties to feed the markets. Selection was based upon ease of cultivation, ability to withstand shipping and storage, and pleasing appearance, and the gene pool began its modern shrinking.

The Valley of Virginia today is still closely linked to apples. In Winchester, located in the northern portion of the Valley, the Apple Blossom Festival draws national celebrities and thousands of people during its annual spring celebration of the fruit. But the days when the small orchardist could easily dabble in a dozen apple varieties have slipped away just as the thousands of apple types will never be tasted again.

Through people like Tom Burford in Monroe, Va., and Lee Calhoun in Pittsboro, N.C., however, the history of the apple is not dead. As they search through old documents and abandoned homesteads with equal ease, they follow the trail of the apple and keep it from teetering out of the picture forever. —

Schoolhouse News

They don't accept MasterCard or VISA at Buffalo Gap, but they do accept Black and Gold cards

By LAURYN PLEMMONS

The Buffalo Gap High School Administration has started a program that will reward students who achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or better. Students who achieve this goal are rewarded with a "Black" or "Gold" card.

The "Black Card" is given to students with a grade-point average of 3.5 or better. One of the many advantages of this card is a one-minute early release to lunch. Another advantage is a dollar off any sporting event or sockhop. Students who possess this card are given $3 off admission to Prom Promise activities. The card is also good for a half-day of independent study at home or at school.

The "Gold Card" is for students with a 4.0 or higher GPA. Like the "Black Card," the "Gold Card" may also be used for a one-minute early release to lunch. Seniors get special privileges with this option and are allowed to leave for lunch five minutes earlier than the rest of the student body. Hard working students who earn this card are allowed free admission to sporting events and Prom Promise activities. They all receive a $2 discount to the sockhops. And if that's not enough to spur a student to achieve academic excellence then maybe the full day of independent study at home or at school will do it.

These cards are given out after each six-week grading period. With the exception of the full or half day of independent study, students may use the options more than once throughout the next grading period.

This is an excellent incentive for which all BGHS students will want to strive. Not only do students want to possess the cards, but the those who gain knowledge in the process of earning them will be double winners in the long run. —

Riverheads' FHA staged a fashion show recently featuring styles from the past 50 years. Models included, front row - from left, Dawn Chaplin, Amy Badgley, Jennifer Curry, and Tammy Hughes; back row, from left, Stephanie Harris, Bobbie Huffman, and Jennifer Ishee.

Photo by Sheila Ishee

RHS FHA students model old fashions for a good cause

By JENNIFER ISHEE

GREENVILLE --- On Feb. 15, Riverheads' FHA held a fashion show in the RHS auditorium. The unique thing about this fashion show was that clothes from the past 50 years were modeled.

The clothes were loaned to student models by parents and teachers. The event would not have been possible without their support.

If you came to our fashion show, then you knew that you wouldn't need money for admission. Instead, admission was articles of clothing that were no longer in use, like old sweaters, socks, hats, etc. All of these will be shipped, by our FHA, to the homeless. We are still excepting donations.

Attendance at the fashion show was light, but memories soon came back to parents and teachers. But regardless of the size of the audience, all participants had a lot of fun modeling the old fashions.

"It was for a good cause and I had a lot of fun" said Dawn Chaplin, an RHS freshman and participant.

Thanks again for all the donations made, and don't forget that we are still accepting them! ---

RHS spring musical guaranteed to entertain

GREENVILLE — Riverheads High School drama department will present the musical "Give My Regards To Broadway," written by George M. Cohan, at 7:30 p.m., March 7.

The cast of 32 students, ranging from freshmen to seniors, will be directed by Bill Dillon. The music will be directed by, Jan Dillon.

The performance also includes a six-piece orchestra directed by Lynn Schafer. The performance will be held in the RHS auditorium.

Tickets at the door will be $3 for adults and $2 for students. —

Forensics winners

On Feb. 7 about 100 anxious students gathered at Riverheads High School to compete and participate in the first forensics meet of the year. Winners were, clockwise from top left, Libby Harris, second; Cynthia Seay, third; Elijah Ward, first; Abby Barker, third; Adam Hill, first; and Megan McIlwee, first. RHS staff photo

Swisher wins Pinewood Derby

BETHEL GREEN -- On a cold Saturday in January, 30 Cub Scouts of Pack 13 gathered at Bethel Presbyterian Church near Middlebrook for the annual Pinewood Derby.

During the previous months, with the assistance of a parent or den leader, each boy transformed a small block of wood into a colorful and speedy race car. He drew the design, cut the car from a rectangular block of pine, sanded and painted the body, added wheels and weights, and finally embellished the car with stickers or decals.

Prizes were awarded not only for the fastest cars, but for appearance.

Winners were: Justin Swisher of Rt. 1, Greenville, first; Clem Miller of Rt. 1, Staunton, second; David Thomas of Rt. 1, Staunton; and Jamie Hayes of Rt. 2, Greenville, best of show. All winners advance to district competition to be held at Ladd Elementary School. ---

David Thomas prepares to release his car in the Pinewood Derby. Parent Claude Smith looks on. AC staff photo

Here, there, everywhere

Augusta FCE holds achievement program

AC staff report

CENTERVILLE — Members of the Family Community Education Association in Augusta County met Feb. 15 at Summit Church of the Brethren for their annual achievement day.

It was a time to congratulate each other on accomplishments of the year just past, brush up on American history, and relax while being entertained by a barber shop quartet.

Philip Stone, president of Bridgewater College, spoke to those in attendance about a man in American history who is of particular interest to him. He told FCE members Abraham Lincoln has ties

STOGDALE

GROVE

to the Shenandoah Valley because his grandmother grew up on a homestead near Lacey Springs. Likewise, Lincoln's grandfather also hailed from the Valley but originated in an area which is now in present-day Augusta County. Stone revealed that houses in New Market and Dayton were originally owned by some of Lincoln's ancestors.

In her annual report, Helen Stogdale, Augusta FCE president, congratulated members on their community service efforts during 1995. She noted that the members of the Centerville club, which hosted the achievement program, totaled 883 hours of volunteer service to the community. She encouraged Augusta FCE members to "keep up the good work" and thanked them for their support throughout the year.

Officers elected for 1996 include Helen Stogdale and Judy Grove, co-presidents; Mary Glenn Davis, vice president; Johanna Bailey, secretary; and Betty Ott, treasurer.

Clubs recognized for achievement were Centerville, red; Lee-Manor, red; Spottswood, red; New Hope, blue; and Avis, blue. FCE objectives include attendance at training and president's council meetings, programs planned for club meetings, and contributions of time and money to community service projects. During 1995, Augusta FCE had 61 members countywide. Honored for 30 years of membership in FCE was Bessie Flory.

Helen Swortzel, county global chairman, presented reading awards to FCE members. The top reader for the year was Catherine Crickenberger with 250 books. Other readers recognized and the number of books each read included Linda Howdyshell, 150; Mary Jane Shaver, 108; Jean Critzer, 101; Geraldine Engle, 100; Grace Hollen, 92; Katherine Harmon, 62; Ann Wright, 60; Helen Stogdale, 58; Mary Kay Weaver, 52; Judy Grove, 50; Helen Braunworth, 21; Mary Crone, 15; Edna Fauber, 14; Mary Glenn Davis, 13; Nellie Flora, Winona Wimer, and Julia Arndt, 10 each; Helen Swortzel, 8; Betty Ott and Thelma Fauber, 7 each; Johanna Bailey, 6; and Jean Miller, 5.

CRICKENBERGER

Encore, an all-male quartet from Bridgewater, entertained FCE members with vocal selections of yesteryear. The songs reflected achievement day themes of Valentine's Day and the nation's history. —

Competition tests students' Bible knowledge

By PENNY PLEMMONS

SALEM — The pulpit has been cleared, and 46 third and fourth grade boys and girls sit in the choir loft. Youthful faces are bowed to keep eyes from wandering, and *little hands tightly clasp rectangular paddles. The sanctuary is brimming with excited spectators.* The afternoon sun beams through the stained glass windows and warms the already anxious crowd.

The missionary asks, "According to Ephesians 2:8-9, what are you saved by?" The audience is hushed, and all eyes are on the children. The missionary gives three choices, waits a few seconds and then gives the much awaited command, "paddles up." Cheers resound through the church as paddles are raised signifying the correct A, B, or C answer. Scorekeepers hurriedly record each child's answer, giving 10 points to correct ones.

A total of eight multiple choice questions are given. This completes the first half of the 1996 AWANA Bible Quiz. The same event is also going on in the gym with boys and girls from the fifth and sixth grades.

Ten Shenandoah Valley churches gathered at Grace Baptist Temple in Salem to test the prowess of their AWANA Club Quizzers. A morning quizzing event boasting nine different churches had already been completed.

The quizzing is two-fold. The multiple choice questions are posed to church teams consisting of no more than six quizzers. Quizzers score points for themselves as well as for their teams.

The second leg of the quizzing tournament is the nerve-wracking

WILSON

QUILLEN

speed quizzing. Twelve questions are presented to teams of no more than two courageous quizzers. With a thumb or finger hovering over a buzzer, participants must outdo their opponents by being first to signify that they know the correct answer.

Stepping up to a microphone they must quickly and accurately respond to such questions as, "name the books of the Old Testament." Quizzers "quiz out" when they have answered three questions correctly. A substitute may replace the "quizzed out" clubber and attempt to achieve "quiz out" status. Pressure is added to this quizzing round because five points are deducted from your team score for each incorrect answer. Ten points are given for correct answers.

Ridgeview Baptist Church in Stuarts Draft and Calvary Baptist Church in Staunton attended the AWANA quizzing event and claimed numerous awards. Mary Faith Wilson, representing Ridgeview in the morning heat, and Katie Quillen, representing Calvary in the afternoon heat, walked away as Quiz Champions.

Mary Faith Wilson has been involved in AWANA since she was three years old. This was her fourth AWANA Bible Quiz. She is a sixth grade homeschooler and is the daughter of Jerry and Diane Wilson of Stuarts Draft. The Wilsons attend Crossroads Baptist Church.

Katie Quillen is a second-year AWANA quizzer. She is in the fifth grade at Grace Christian School in Staunton. Katie prepared herself for quizzing by attending several practices. Katie is the daughter of Kirk and Barbara Quillen of Mint Springs. They attend Calvary.

The two girls received "Highest Honor" ribbons for 100 percent on the multiple choice quiz. They also earned a "Highest Honor" ribbon for quizzing out of the speed quiz. Both girls achieved the status of "Quiz Champion" for having the highest individual score in their perspective clubs. And to put icing on the cake, each girl was a member of a first place team and received a medallion.

Boys and girls quizzed separately and competed against their respective age group. Each first-time quizzer received a patch while returning quizzers received a pin.

See AWANA, page 21

Spring soon? No, but it's on the way

By MARK GATEWOOD

March is the month when the non-skiing segment of the populace begins looking in earnest for signs of the end of winter. We don't really have to wait that long for some modest signs of improvement. In fact, the celestial event that drives the whole process becomes evident in January as days become noticeably longer. However, an old weather adage from New England jerks us back to reality, noting that "As the days lengthen, the cold strengthens."

A few birds begin to tune up in January and February. On sunny days, you can hear tentative songs from the tufted titmouse and the two-note song of the black-capped chickadee, nemonically rendered as "spring soon!" But a true benchmark of ultra-early spring is the blooming of skunk cabbage from mid-January through February.

Skunk cabbage

We're comfortable with the idea of plants as passive collectors and users of solar energy. Look at the flower of the bloodroot and you see an upturned, bowl-shaped flower with white petals — a decent imitation of the solar hot dog cooker you made with cardboard and foil for a science fair project. In the bloodroot's case, the petals catch and gently redirect early spring sunshine to warm the plant's reproductive organs. But what about a plant with body heat?

Skunk cabbage is able to produce body heat through its metabolism and can raise its temperature as much as 31 degrees Fahrenheit above the surrounding temperature. This allows the expanding flower to melt its way through ice and snow which may cover its swampy habitat in January. In addition, the body heat may enhance the flower's charming smell, which is like that of rotting meat, and attracts as pollinators the same flies which feed on dead animal matter.

In the "But What Good Is It?" department, I learned on a visit to Cranberry Glades in West Virginia last summer that the root of skunk cabbage is a favored food of the black bear. A young male black bear of about one hundred pounds, probably recently separated from its mother, had been sighted along the boardwalk. I saw him one afternoon running across one of the glades and saw several divots where he, or some bear, had dug roots out of the bog.

I went to the glades early the next morning, camera in hand. In an area of thick shrub growth between two of the glades, I could hear a bear shredding vegetation. The darkly suggestive odor of crushed skunk cabbage hung in the humid July air. I could only admire the effect this meal must be having on the bear's breath and hoped he would finish off with a few pawfuls of spicebush bark. I never saw the bear, but I got the point of the food chain lesson. In feeding on the roots, bears must take in a few skunk cabbage seeds. Consumption equals seed dispersal, which is what it's all about.

Getting a head start is what it's all about for spring-blooming plants. Whether it's passive solar heating or metabolic body heat, anything that gets the seed out sooner confers an advantage. In the seed production business, "he that gets there fustest with the mostest" prevails. As an unintended but much appreciated side effect, these events give the winter-weary human some hope for a warmer future. —

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

Bethel youth participate in 30-Hour Famine Fast

AC staff report

BETHEL GREEN -- Youth and adults from Bethel Presbyterian *Church participated in the 30-Hour* Famine Fast Feb. 23-24. The effort was expected to raise more than $1,400 to be donated to worldwide hunger relief efforts.

Sponsored by World Vision International, the 30-Hour Famine Fast is held annually to bring attention to global hunger. Those participating in the fast do not eat for 30 hours. Pledges and donations are solicited covering the period of fasting, and, in turn, the money collected is used to assist in hunger relief.

Thirteen teens and five adults participated in the Bethel project. They began their fast at 1 p.m. on Feb. 23 and did not eat again until 7 p.m. on Feb. 24. During the 30 hours the group was together at the church and used to the time to educate themselves about world hunger.

Included in their program was a presentation by three volunteer mission workers who had traveled to Haiti with the Windy Cove Presbyterian Church Mission Team. Windy Cove is located in Millboro Springs.

In addition to educational activities, the group used the opportunity to carry out a service project which involved refurbishing shelves and cleaning toys in the church's preschool nursery. ---

•AWANA

Continued from page 20

AWANA is a non-denominational Bible centered children and youth organization. The acrostic AWANA is based on 2 Timothy 2:15, "approved workman are not ashamed." AWANA missionaries Dave and Charlotte Rees presided over the event.

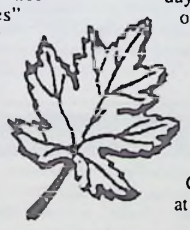
Other winners for Ridgeview were: 100 percent multiple choice/ Guards: Susan Fox and Amanda Smith; Pioneer, Grant Hutchens; Speed Quizzers/Chum, Julie Davis; Guard, Susan Fox and Pioneer, Robert Williamson.

Overall Ridgeview placed first, Blue Guard Team; second, Chums and Pioneers; third, Red Guard Team; fourth, Pals and tied for fourth, JV. Calvary's other winners were: 100 percent multiple choice/ Chum, Stephanie Fitzgerald; Speed Quizzers, Guards, Elizabeth Moore and Rana McCormick; Pioneer, Brad Hewitt. Overall Calvary placed first, Guards; second, Pioneers; third, Chums. —

Highland hosts annual Maple Festival in March

HIGHLAND COUNTY — "Virginia's Switzerland" invites you to travel the back roads and mountainous highways of Virginia to attend the 38th annual Highland Maple Festival, one of the Southeast Tourism Society's top 20 events for the past seven years.

Each year the small community of 2,600 people welcomes some 70,000 visitors to the festival. This unique celebration takes travelers back to earlier days when "tree sugar" and "tree lasses" were found on every table, when part of each spring's work was "opening" the trees and "boiling down" the "sugar water." The tours and exhibits are both enjoyable and educational — providing a glimpse of a long vanished way of life in America.



The event takes place March 9-10 and March 16-17. Visit the maple camps and view the process of "sugar" making from the tapping of the trees to bottling the finished product. Indulge in mounds of buckwheat cakes and sausage smothered with pure Highland Maple Syrup. Enjoy one of the largest craft shows of the season. Artists and crafters from all over the East Coast display their artistic creations in various locations throughout Highland County. Clogging groups, folk singers, and comedians will perform for festival goers free of charge.

Dances such as the "Buckwheat Stomp" and the "Maple Sugar Fling" take place each Friday and Saturday night of the festival.

Take time to visit a unique part of Virginia and enjoy down-home festivities of a small rural community.

For information call the Highland County Chamber of Commerce at 540/468-2550. —

Country Crossroads

Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin
February 1996

Dear Maude;

After all that snow in January, I had really hoped that all of us would be able to enjoy a bit of nice weather this month. But I guess that just was not to be! February has always been one of my least favorite months. Its main saving grace is Valentine's Day and with Dylan down in Georgia, even that was not exciting. He sent me some beautiful flowers, but it would have been so much nicer to have been able to see him. The end-of-the-season sales were good ones, but who wanted to get out in all that messy weather to check them out.

I realize that one of the reasons I have been so down on February is that it has always been one of the most unstimulating months in Washington, and this year was the worst. Before all of those new ethics rules, things were bad enough, but now there is absolutely nothing going on. Outside of showing up for the State of the Union address by the President, most of the members were out of town the rest of the time, many on their little "fact-finding" missions to hardship areas like South America or the Mediterranean countries.

The new ethics rules have all of the lobbyists running scared. The Louisianians were the first to get a "widely attended event" exemption for their big Mardi Gras ball. So they all bought tickets for the corporate officers only and did not invite any staff members to anything. The way the House rules are written, you cannot offer a House staff member even a glass of water, let alone a soda! It is so crazy!

One of my friends who works for a government relations firm that specializes in agricultural issues, said she thought the whole business was silly. Do they think that if she takes a receptionist from one of the member's offices out to lunch at the American Cafe and picks up the $15 tab for two of them, it will influence the congressman's vote? Then too, if you read the small print, the members of Congress are exempt from most of the restrictions. It is only the staff members who suffer. It certainly appears that this ethics legislation is not so much about ethics as it is about appearances. Most people in Washington expect it to vanish in a maze of rhetoric and mumbled exceptions within a very short time, and we will be back where we started, except that all the constituents in the home states will think that something actually was done -- more of Washington as usual.

What more can I write about? It is simply BORING, BORING, BORING, up here. Next month there has to be something exciting to tell you about. Meanwhile, keep warm and tell all the family I am thinking about them.

Love, Lulu

Who is my neighbor?

And the young man asked Jesus, "Just who is my neighbor?"

It was just after breakfast when we walked out of the dining hall at Camp Overlook near Keezletown into six, maybe eight inches of fresh fallen snow. Fourteen teenagers and I climbed into a borrowed church van to make the drive back to Augusta County after our two-day retreat and skiing adventure. The other 14 teenagers and three adults including my wife, got into their cars and we began our slow caravan over unplowed back roads toward the main highway.

You might think six inches of unplowed snow on the road is nothing to worry about. Think again; especially if you are carrying your children and the children of parents who are trusting you with their loved ones.

That morning we heard the news that a bus, loaded with college students on the way to a ski retreat in West Virginia, had careened off the highway, landing 50 feet down in a ravine. That's not a happy thought to carry along with as a journey home begins.

From the air we must have looked like a slow moving snake slinking carefully around every bend in the road, leisurely winding our way through the shadows of Massanutten mountain. Not many people were awake or if they were, they apparently weren't ready to begin shoveling the snow off their cars and out of their lanes. Then we approached the down slope of the first (and only) big hill. Going down a hill in such conditions is a great way to focus your spiritual attention and to put into practice everything you've learned about careful driving!

Down we went with no problem, then moved up the next hill steadily and slowly. Unfortunately, too slowly for my wife's car directly behind us. I glanced in the back mirror and saw her trying in vain to conquer the hill. No luck — too much packed snow. I couldn't stop or go back, for fear that the van would end up being stuck in the same predicament. There was nothing to do but go on, with the hope that I could find help up ahead.

Fifteen of us traveled on ahead, leaving the rest stuck behind. It was then, not surprisingly, that the young man's question to Jesus entered my mind.

Passing by farm house after farm house with no one in sight, I wondered, "Who is my neighbor"? Does she live in one of these homes? Will he be the one who notices my friends and family back down the road? Which stranger's house should I approach to knock on his door? And if someone opens the door, what will be the response — a cold rebuff or a warm offer to help?

Saying grace

By
Roy Howard

I know what I want the answer to be, but when you are faced with it you can never take such hospitality for granted. After all, how many people strolled by the man half-dead on the road to Jericho before the Samaritan stopped to help? No one could have predicted that the best, the brightest, and the most religious would pass by the man in need of help.

Approaching Keezletown, I spotted a man plowing his lane. Stopping by his house, I waved to get his attention. "There's a lady back down the road who is stuck. She's my wife, carrying the rest of our youth group. If you could help plow the road, I would really appreciate it."

"Over the hill?"

"Yes."

"Okay," he said it all without a smile, just a nod of his head and a tip of his hat. I moved on to get my precious cargo to the main highway, carrying with me the image of that man tipping his hat. I took his gesture as the sign of a neighbor. It was.

I learned later that a few minutes after we passed him, this neighbor went to the assistance of the rest of our caravan. He plowed the road with his blade, and he put a chain on the front of my wife's car to pull it up the hill. The rest of the cars followed her. A hour later we all arrived safely at our homebase destination. Once there I discovered another anonymous neighbor had plowed my own driveway clear.

On the one hand, stories with a happy ending like this are so frequent that we grow tired of hearing them. It's the cliché of the good country neighbor.

Of course, the man came to our assistance; that's what neighbors in the country do. On the other hand, the minute I take my neighbor's help for granted, something crucial is missing in the big picture. *Whether it occurs, in the city or the country, neighborliness is always a surprising act of goodness from one human being to another.* The man who helped me didn't have to help. He could have said, "No." Or, as soon as I drove away, he could have turned back to his own work, which was plenty enough. Instead, he did the generous, gracious thing by helping someone in need. Every time that happens it is worthy of mention and thanksgiving. Which is precisely why I tell you this story with deep gratitude for my neighbors.

"Well, what do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man in need?" "The one who treated him kindly," the young man responded. Jesus said, "Go and do likewise." —

Gap Advisory Council sponsoring seminar

SWOOPE — The Buffalo Gap High School Advisory Council will be sponsoring the seminar, Adolescent Depression and Suicide, at 7 p.m., March 11, in the high school library. Speakers will be Judith Minter, a licensed clinical social worker, and Bob Kolodner, a licensed professional counselor. Minter and Kolodner are employed by Augusta Psychological Services.

Gap Vice Principal Nancy Armstrong stated, "The seminar is not implying that all teen depression leads to suicide." She further added, "This seminar will also be beneficial in helping parents understand the grief and depression that Gap students are experiencing as a result of the recent deaths of their classmates." Three Buffalo Gap students were killed in separate car crashes the week of Feb. 18-24.

The BGHS Advisory Council is comprised of parents and faculty. Dr. Armstrong says that the purpose of the Council is, "to keep parents informed about academic issues and to provide an avenue of discussion for parental concerns as they relate to adolescents." The seminar is open to the public. —

In sympathy for those who mourn

By ROY HOWARD

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Psalm 46.1

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Psalm 90.12

Only those who have suffered the tragic loss of a child can know the full measure of grief that comes with such loss. It is presumptuous for those who have not suffered such tragedy to presume to know the pain. It is unique to those who suffer. The family and friends of Atley Armstrong, Angela Karr, and Sean Jones -- all students of Buffalo Gap High School -- have now entered the vast company of the grieving. We who have been spared want to stand close by those who mourn. Although we can't fully experience your pain, we offer our deepest and sincerest sympathy. Our sympathy helps us to touch your pain as if it were our very own. And in a way, your pain is our pain, because we all belong to the one human family. And because we care for you.

Where sorrow and sympathy meet together we can experience the consolation of God who grieves the needless loss of every human life. The shortest passage in the New Testament occurs after Jesus heard the news of his friend's death. When he was told that Lazarus had died, Jesus wept. God, who in Jesus wept for his friend, weeps with us in our sorrow. Human existence is precious. It may be snatched away in the instant a car spins out of control. When it's gone, in its place is a wounded heart.

The depth of your sorrow is matched only by the depth of your love. Here, in the depths of deepest sorrow and deepest love, God whose name is love, meets us and weeps with us.

To the parents, family and friends mourning your lost loved ones, we express our deepest sympathy. We stand with you.

We hope for that day when God shall dwell with us and wipe away every tear from our eyes; when death shall be no more; when mourning and crying will pass away. Until that blessed day, we are your caring friends weeping with you and for you. —

Roy Howard is pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church.

Monday's Wash Day — (and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday...)

By BETH GREENAWALT

On a cold January day, the morning after our family's first arrival in Hungary, we stood in a chilly prospective apartment. Actually, the only prospective apartment that Dave had been able to locate.

"...and that," our interpreter was saying, with a grand sweep of his hand, "is the clothes dryer."

A single string stretched across the bathroom.

I looked back at the young interpreter, one of the prize students in English from the Hungarian public high school where Dave would be teaching. There was no sign of humor in his face.

Suddenly I realized that we were, indeed, a long way from home.

I didn't balk at the tiny (500 square-foot) basement apartment, with the dark little kitchen under the slant of the landlord's staircase. Nor did I lose courage at the sight of a table shoved to one side of the narrow entrance hallway — our "dining room." After all, Dave had warned me that it was small; that at first he had thought it impossible for our family of five — but that there was simply nothing else even close to our price range that we could find at that time of the year. The resort town, located on the shores of Lake Balaton, was closed down for winter. Most of the houses stood empty, their owners long since gone back to the maelstrom of their normal lives.

So I closed my lips and tried to think how we might divide the living room in order to make a second bedroom. I thought about the advantages of not having much floor to need mopping and waxing.

But when we came to the bathroom cum laundry room and found that there was no washing machine to accompany the "dryer," I was moved to protest. Five of us, and baby Rosemarie in cloth diapers..."I'm sorry, but we have to have a washing machine."

I was adamant, as the prospective landlord could see at a glance. At once he became reassuring and suave. (Year-round tenants are a rare find in Balatonalmadi.) Something would be arranged.

As former secretary of the Communist Party in that county, he could draw upon unexpected resources. In fact, he called the principal of Dave's new school (a boarding facility, as is common among Hungarian high schools) and talked him into sending up one of the washing machines from the student dormitory. Naturally, they sent their least favorite.

Within a few days the washing machine was installed — a simple matter, as it drew on water from the sink's plumbing and drained into the bath tub. All the instructions were in Russian, but the English-speaking wife of one of the teachers at school gave Dave directions.

The machine was about 30 inches high. First, we opened the top of the metal case. Inside, an upright perforated drum was mounted on a horizontal axis. We had to turn it by hand to find the opening. When unlatched, a circular door came off to allow us to insert the clothes (about a third of what I thought of as a normal load.) I quickly learned that if I let go of the drum before the door was latched back, it was apt to rotate downward and dump our clothes into the inner workings of the machine.

"Careful when you put the latch back!" Dave warned — just as it snapped shut on my finger. Nursing the injured member, I closed the top of the machine and carefully turned the dial to 4A as per Renata's instructions.

"It takes about an hour to run," Dave told me as I exited the bathroom, followed him single file through the tiny kitchen, and then returned to unpacking in the living room. Dave was in the midst of making kitchen shelves from one of the packing crates.

About 40 minutes later I returned to find the bathroom hot and muggy and the little washer exhaling clouds of steam along with a strange whirring sound. Upon investigation, I found that our by-now-thoroughly-disinfected clothes were swishing about without benefit of rinse water. It had failed to refill.

"Are you sure she said 4A?" I asked Dave, and tried another setting. And then another. Throughout the days that followed, I tried all the settings, with the same result. Finally I found a rinse setting which didn't actually boil the clothes. I would put soap in and set it on "rinse." After about half an hour (or more, depending on when I remembered to return) I would start the machine over again on the same cycle, this time without the soap.

Despite the small size of the machine, I soon learned that the amount of laundry I could do at a time was in actuality determined by how many places I could find to hang wet clothes — and by how long they took to dry. In addition to the "dryer" in the bathroom, a clothesline stretched the length of our pocket-sized yard. The warm pipes and radiators of the heating system also became repositories for drying clothes.

Every few hours I learned to remove already-dry clothes and to rearrange the remaining items to the best advantage. Mornings I hung damp diapers out on the line with freezing fingers; in the afternoons I retrieved the stiff slabs of cotton.

By necessity, every day was wash day. Yet I began to find a comforting familiarity about hanging out and pinning each diaper neatly to the next. So had women throughout the years hung out the diapers of the children that would some day grow up to hang out the diapers for the next generation. So I had done countless times on sunny days at our home in Virginia, stopping now and then to enjoy the sweeping view of the Blue Ridge foothills, participating in an ancient rite nearly forgotten in these days of disposable diapers and automatic dryers.

Presently I found that if I stood on tip toe to peer over the hedge, I could even see Lake Balaton shining in the distance...

...before my next trip back to the steamy bathroom to reset the Russian wash machine. —

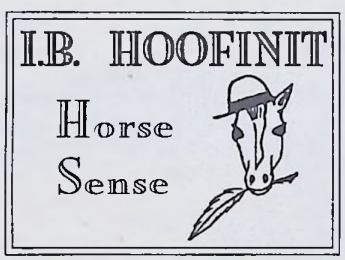
Horses suffer when young riders dislike pastime

I was once owned by a girl named Penny Tucker of Massachusetts. She was secretly afraid of horses, but her mother loved them. I always wonder to this day why her mother didn't just ride me and take care of me. I always knew the truth. Her mother loved me, but Penny was afraid of me. She was 12 years old, and I was big and scary to her. But what hurt me the most was that Penny hated being scared of me. And she picked me as the object of her hate. Behind her mom's back I was treated very badly by Penny.

Penny had a friend named Cindy Lawson. She was my sunshine during the darkest time of my life. When she came over she would brush me and hug me, and it made me feel better. I will never forget Penny, and I will never forget Cindy either.

I would have to say that most of the abuse I received in my life — the situation with Penny being the worst — was because the owners were either ignorant, afraid, or angry. Anger and hate can go hand in hand. Sometimes you can't always get back at the one with whom you are angry, especially children, so horses can become targets for this anger. I think Penny was angry at her mom for making her ride horses when she might have liked doing something else. And Penny took that anger out on me because she couldn't express it to her mom. I don't understand why parents can't understand how they affect their children. It is really easy to see in how they treat us.

If children are not able to express anger, jealousy, hate, or any of the negative emotions to the ones who deserve it, then a lot of times we are the ones punished. But we are big and strong and able to handle a lot. I have found that I can handle more than I ever thought possible. And it gives me a sense of strength to know that in some way I have helped a child through a difficult time.



Q: I am a 34-year-old woman newly introduced to the wonderful world of horses. I purchased my first horse five months ago, a three-year-old Arabian gelding, who quickly took advantage of my "greenness," and he became very uncontrollable. I traded him two weeks ago for a 15-year-old Arabian gelding who has "seen it all" and is very gentle. How can I avoid causing any problems with this horse due to my nervousness around horses and lack of experience?

Kathy Coggeshall, Sandwich, Mass.

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

I'm going to be honest with you. Nervous owners and riders SCARE ME TO DEATH! I never know what to expect of them. If I move my rear leg to chase a fly, they think I'm going to kick them. If I stomp my front foot because my leg is getting stiff, they jump back. I begin to feel pretty uncomfortable around them. I'm older now, so I don't let as much affect me, like you said: "I've seen it all, too."

Being a horse, I can make some suggestions to you that explain how I feel about things. Fast movements startle me. Coming up from behind and slapping me on the rump can make me jump. I don't kick, but a natural reaction can be a defensive kick. Defensive is the key word here. Depending upon how defensive we are, you can predict whether we'll react violently or not. Some of us are not defensive at all. And we would be the safest to work around.

Slow down your movements. Take more time, if necessary. Give yourself time to get to know your horse. Knowing you horse means knowing his reactions and habits. That way you can pretty much predict his behavior patterns and know where potential danger lies. And then there's always the "it happens," and you have to figure out why later. And you find out it was nothing that was your fault, but something that was going on in the horse's life that you didn't know about at the time.

I bit a girl on the arm one time for no reason that was her fault. I had been put in a field with a lot of horses, and all night I had been dodging kicks and bites. Actually I wasn't avoiding as many as I would have liked. I was learning the pecking order pretty fast, though. When morning came, and it was time to eat, I came out of the gate and bit the girl leading me because of all the horses behind me that were trying to bite me. I didn't mean to, it was just a reaction to the stress. The girl was a seasoned enough horsewoman to understand the situation and didn't punish me, which would have made matters worse. I was already feeling bad enough.

Sometimes nervous riders and owners are like that. They are under a lot of stress and sometimes we get blamed for things we didn't do. I have learned to take my knocks and keep trotting along. I try not to take it too personally because I have aged to a point where "I've seen it all, too." There's not much which surprises me anymore, but it seems like everything surprises the nervous ones. And like I said, it SCARES ME TO DEATH! But I have learned that I can handle almost anything that you could possibly dish out. That's what makes age so great for a beginner. Older horses are a great place to start if you're the nervous type. —

Questions to I.B. Hoofinit may be submitted to P.O. Box 2955, Staunton, Va. 24402-2955. I.B. Hoofinit is a fictitious horse character developed by Chris Marrs as a service to teach horse care. Questions submitted become the property of Chris Marrs, and answers are subject to editor approval. Information provided in this column is meant to be taken as general advice. Each horse, rider, owner and situation reflects different problems. I.B.'s answers are meant to be informative and enjoyable, but not binding. Common sense in any situation is a must.

FFA members of area high schools profiled in story on page 14!

Local FFA chapters promote agriculture with national observance

FFA members who lead chapter meetings may one day preside at board meetings. Today's agriscience students may pioneer advances in genetics tomorrow. Students who join agricultural education and FFA know they can apply what they learn in class to more than just the test: they're gaining career and leadership skills to last a lifetime.

The FFA's more than 444,497 members in 7,264 chapters in the United States, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands celebrated National FFA Week Feb. 17-24 to foster awareness of agricultural education and support for FFA. In Augusta County, school chapters stayed busy throughout the week.

Riverheads FFA hosted a farm toy show, a tractor drive-in, a pedal power tractor pull, Western dress-up day and a roping contest.

Showing their support for agriculture, members of the Buffalo Gap FFA sponsored Hat Day, Western Day, a tractor drive-in, served the faculty breakfast, and held a womanless beauty contest.

The highlight of the week at Stuarts Draft High School was the FFA chapter's annual pig roast. Activities during the day included horseshoe pitching, a hay bale stacking contest, and a pie eating contest.

Wilson Memorial FFA carried out its annual tradition of a venison cookout. Students prepared and served the meal in the agriculture department.

At Fort Defiance, FFA members showed their spirit on the week's opening day by wearing their favorite bandana. Chapter members also served lunch to school faculty one day, playing waiter and waitress attired in official FFA dress. The chapter also produced a television program call "Short Takes" and sponsored public service announcements on local radio stations.

National FFA Week is held each year during the week of George Washington's birthday to recognize his leadership and commitment to American agriculture. ---

Information for this article was provided by the area high schools' FFA chapters.

Rosalea Riley and Mandy Robinson, members of the Beverley Manor Middle School FFA chapter gather up baby chickens which are raised as part of the sixth-grade introduction to agriscience in which students learn about the developmental cycles of chickens.

Photo courtesy BMMS

Riverheads FFA members, from left, Benji Johnson, Chris Pultz, and Brandon Shultz, work on a welding project in their agriculture machinery service class.

Photo courtesy Riverheads FFA