"Friendly news for friendly people"

Augusta Country

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BRCC ARBORETUM HAS GROWN AND GROWN AND GROWN AND GROWN

Work of volunteers has filled campus with trees

By NANCY SORRELLS

WEYERS CAVE -- Ten years ago a pile of plants lay in the hallway at Blue Ridge Community College. They were there awaiting fate at the hands of the college's administration.

"When I came here in 1985 the only trees on campus were right around the building, and there were less than 15 species. I was doing a tree walk in the spring with a biology class, and the tree key was an embarrassment," remembers Anne Nielsen, project director of the Blue Ridge Community College Arboretum.

In order to give students better exposure to local plant species, Nielsen and a colleague dug up some trees and shrubs from friends' property in the area with the intention of planting them at Blue Ridge.

When he got wind of the goings-on in the biology department, the school's dean put a halt to things.

"He said, 'Where are you going to put them?'" Nielsen said. "Then the plants sat in the hall for a whole week while the powers-that-be decided what we could do."

When the final verdict was handed down, the biology teachers remembers feeling shock and humor.

"They came back at the end of the week and said, 'How about starting an arboretum?'" Nielsen's reply was: "Are you crazy?? I told them they were nuts. I asked them if they realized how long a tree takes to grow. That is exactly where it all started, and it has just gotten out of hand since then," she said with a chuckle as she drove her pick-up truck through the groves of trees and clumps of shrubs which dot eight acres of the BRCC campus.

A decade later, the dream has blossomed into a special preserve for botanists and naturalists and has become a true educational tool that reaches beyond the walls of the college. The most recent planting of native and naturalized woody plants brings the total specimens to 519, and the species number to 300. Included on the site are some of the state's rarest and endangered trees.

Take plant number 500 for instance, the round-leaved birch, *Betula uber* (Ashe) Fernald. This tree is one of four round-leaved birch on the property, but it is a rare enough sight in the rest of the Old Dominion that an outdoors-person could go a lifetime and never see one in the wild.

"These were given to us by VPI, and they are taking off nicely. There are only a half dozen or so left in the wild in their natural habitat around Mt. Rogers," Nielsen noted.

Also thriving despite the odds are two perfectly healthy American chestnuts that Nielsen theorizes have some natural resistance to the chestnut blight.

"They are from the wild, but they appeared to be seedlings and not root sprouts from trees with the blight," she said.

From the very beginning, Nielsen has guided a project with education in mind. "We decided that we wanted our arboretum as an educational tool rather than going for the garden-style look," she explained. It is for that reason that

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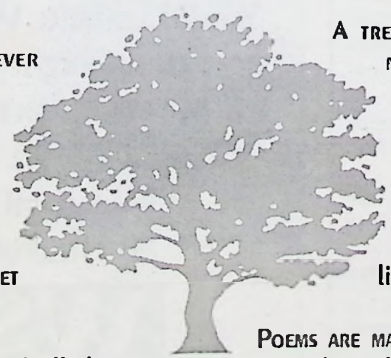
Arbor Day, April 26 -- See related story page 4

Anne Nielsen, project director of the Blue Ridge Community College Arboretum, examines a specimen in the mountainous species section of the arboretum. This is a Carolina hemlock, *Tsuga caroliniana* Englemann. It is among the many trees which have been planted on the BRCC campus by volunteers and staff.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

TREES



I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree. —

Joyce Kilmer

We'd like you to meet...

With Mother's Day coming up in May, we thought it appropriate to profile some very special *Augusta Country* staffers. Yes, all *Augusta Country* staffers are very special, but these four folks represent the two mother-daughter writing duos on the AC staff.

Sue Simmons and her daughter, Hannah, of Frank's Mill and Penny Plemmons and her daughter, Lauryn, of Craigsville, have been writing for *Augusta Country* for a number of months. In the Simmonses case, it was Sue who got the writing bug first, then Hannah offered to write a movie review column.

In the Plemmonses case, it was Lauryn who started contributing first — sending stories of interest from the Buffalo Gap school community. Penny followed her daughter's lead and has been writing feature stories originating from western Augusta County.

Interestingly enough, Sue and Penny are both self-described "military brats."

Describing herself, Sue wrote: "Sue Simmons was born a long, long, long time ago — as you can see from the gray hair — in Hartford, Conn. Sue was an Air Force brat who never traveled or lived in exotic places. Except for a brief year at Andrew's Air Force Base, she *lived in Fairfax County.*"

Penny briefly described her early years as a native-born Californian and an "army brat."

Sue attended Bridgewater College where she met her future husband, Claude, and earned a bachelor's degree in history.

Penny holds a bachelor of science degree in medical technology from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and Mercy Hospital in Charlotte, N.C.

She worked for a time in a private laboratory in Baton Rouge, La., where she met her future husband Bryan, a catfish farmer.

Life journeys eventually led both couples to Augusta County where they settled down to raise their families.

As it happens, both Hannah and Lauryn are students at Buffalo Gap High School. Sue says Hannah, "who has spent most of her life giggling and reading, is a girl who has a flair for finding fun where no one else can see it. Right now she finds it in books, movies, traveling, and friends. She loves Monty Python, Star Wars, poetry, swing, Broadway — and she is the only kid in 500 square miles who has memorized Shakespeare's St. Crispian Day's Speech from Henry V. She isn't sure she knows what she wants to be when she grows up, but thinks maybe she would like to be a teacher or a school librarian. Some days, however, she also wants to be a film critic, a chef, and a stand-up-comic."

Sue says mother and daughter enjoy haggling over words and fighting over who gets to use the computer as they try to meet their *Augusta Country* deadlines.

Hannah and Sue Simmons

Lauryn and Penny Plemmons

Lauryn is active in a multitude of school activities including Bison Against Drugs, Latin Club, and Student Action for Education. She is enrolled in Journalism I at Gap and writes for the school's "Black & Gold" newspaper. She is also an avid sports enthusiast and plays basketball and softball at Gap. She ranks her "lifetime highlight" as being picked as the "Milk Dud Celebrity Bat Girl" in 1993. For the honor, Lauryn received four free tickets to a Baltimore Orioles baseball game which included sitting in the dugout and meeting Cal Ripken Jr. plus other Orioles players. According to informed sources, Lauryn's hobby is talking on the telephone. "This is why we have call waiting," Penny says.

When not writing for *Augusta Country*, Penny works as an "all-purpose employee" on the Plemmons family's Casta Line Trout Farms. When she's not up to her elbows in fish, she works as a secretary at Calvary Baptist Church in Staunton.

Some years prior to her arrival on the *Augusta Country* scene, Sue spent several years as a homemaker, she says, "better known as her Earthmother period," before returning to work as a museum educator at the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace in Staunton. During those years — "better known as the return-to-store-bought-bread period" — she also earned a master's degree in history from James Madison University. Sue now teaches social studies for the Augusta County school system.

As busy as these four ladies are, *Augusta Country* counts itself fortunate to benefit from their many talents. —

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Please recycle

Gap senior weighing college scholarship options

By PENNY PLEMMONS

SWOOPE — High school successes that have bounced between the pasture and the paint are shaping the future of Buffalo Gap High School senior Amy Trout.

With dual interests in agriculture and basketball, Amy has narrowed her college search to institutions of higher learning which have capabilities of providing experiences in both areas.

Influenced by her brother, Andy, a Virginia Military Institute cadet, Amy applied for a military education and has received an Air Force Academy nomination.

According to Gap's Vice-Principal Nancy Armstrong, Amy is the fourth Gap student in the last 10 years to receive such an honor.

Factors in her selection include an interview with U.S. Congressman Bob Goodlatte, recommendations from school faculty and scholastic achievement test scores.

"I was greatly honored to nominate Amy Trout to the Air Force Academy," remarked Congressman Goodlatte. "As I talked with Amy I was impressed by her commitment, achievements, character and willingness to serve our nation. I am confident she will serve our country with distinction."

Goodlatte also commented that "if Amy is appointed, she will be attending an outstanding school and joining the world's finest military force."

Agreeing with Congressman Goodlatte's assessment of the Academy, Amy contends that, "the Academy is one of the top educational facilities in the country." The Air Force Academy, located in Denver, Colo., will give Amy a chance to play basketball for a Division 1 school and receive an undergraduate degree in animal-related studies. In return for this education, Trout will be required to serve six years in active duty with the Air Force or spend eight years in the reserves.

Lees-McRae College, a Division 2 school, in Banner Elk, N.C., is prepared to give Amy a full ride, offering basketball and academic scholarships. The Gap senior is also eyeing North Dakota State, another Division 2 school, which offers an animal science program with hands on experience on a working farm.

Amy's interest in production farming comes from her agricultural upbringing in Bath County where her parents, James and Susan Trout, operated Troutshire Farm and owned horses, goats and sheep.

Although her parent's are no longer farming, Amy's passion for animal husbandry has kept the family farm alive. Using the same Troutshire Farm name, she has created a thriving business breeding ewes at her home in Swoope.

Amy says that raising animals for show or for market takes "a lot of hard work. I get up early in the morning and go to bed late at night." Her hard work paid off last spring when animals she exhibited won the Grand Champion Pair of Lambs Award and the Reserve Grand Champion Pair of Hogs Award at the Augusta County 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show.

Future Farmers of America has been instrumental in educating Amy about all aspects of farming. She is vice president of Gap's FFA and president of FFA's parliamentary procedures team. She has earned FFA's State Farmer Award and represented BGHS at the National FFA Conference held last fall in Kansas City, Mo.

Amy's goal for Gap's FFA has been to increase membership, especially female membership. "When I started FFA as a 9th grader our club had only three girls. Today there are 20," she said. According to Amy, Gap's FFA has approximately 135 members.

Amy's agriculture knowledge also helped her win the title Augusta County Farm Bureau Federation Queen for 1995-96. She represented Augusta County in the Virginia Farm Bureau Queen competition in Williamsburg in November and placed in the final five, missing first place by only two-tenths of a point.

Trout's basketball highlights include being named to the Skyline Second Team and the All City-County Second Team. Playing center for the Lady Bisons this year, Amy, at 5' 11", bucketed an average of 16 points a game. She was the leading thief on the court, ending the year with a total of 29 steals. She also averaged 7 rebounds a game and shot 60 percent from the floor.

"Basketball is about strength," Amy says. "I love to beat and bang, especially if the opponent is my size. I don't mind getting dirty, and I measure my success by the number of bruises I earn."

Amy credits former basketball coach, Dennis Dull as being a very influential person in her life. "Coach Dull taught me about commitment, to follow through," she said. "He's helped me to build leadership skills and to be disciplined. He got me to two state championship basketball games."

Amy Trout of Swoope and her goat, "Snowflake"

Besides involvement in FFA and basketball, Amy is Gap's Student Council Association president and also heads the school's science club and Bison Against Drugs (BAD). She is a member of the Science Club, Prom Promise, Latin Club and the Varsity Club. She also plays first base for the varsity softball team.

With graduation around the corner, Amy recognizes that she has to make some quick decisions. She is continuing to pursue the Air Force Academy nomination and is scrutinizing financial packages offered by Lees-McRae, North Dakota State and a few Division 3 schools.

In making her college selection, Amy must also weigh the lucrative incentive offered by her father to encourage her to choose a college which offers a complete scholarship. The incentive — just what every farm girl needs —is a brand new 1996 Dodge truck. —

Staunton banker's career spans half a century

By SUE SIMMONS

STAUNTON — All work and no play might have made Jack a dull boy, but not George Doome, trust consultant at Planter's Bank, who celebrates his 52nd year in banking this year.

"I had a half-dozen jobs when I was a kid," Doome recalled. And he hasn't quit working.

Today he is an officer in the Trust Department at Planter's Bank, a job that caps the 84-year-old's career which spans more than half-a-century in the banking business. Son of John K. and Annie Doome, Doome was born in Staunton in 1912. His early years were spent on Sears Hill but his family later lived on Market Street and New Street. At an early age, Doome discovered that he liked to work.

"I worked when I was young, and I like making money," he said. Doome recalled painting beds and doing other odd jobs at Staunton Military Academy,

GEORGE K. DOOME

where his father, a baker by trade, worked managing a barracks. After graduating from Templeton Business College, Doome took a job as a runner for the National Valley Bank in Staunton.

"In those days money was transferred through the post office," he explained. "Two people carried the cash from the bank to the post office. The runner actually carried the money, and an armed guard followed the runner."

Money was transferred in this fashion once each day.

Doome was soon promoted to head bookkeeper in the note department and by 1947 was the general ledger bookkeeper."

Responsible for reconciling all the accounts for the entire bank for the day, Doome did not work "banker's hours."

"The tellers could go home after they balanced their transactions," Doome chuckled. "My day began at 6:30 in the morning, and I didn't go home until after five on most days.

Because great amounts of cash were handled, the bank took special precautions.

"Every bookkeeper had an alarm button at his feet and a loaded gun at his side," Doome remarked. The guns were issued by the bank. Doome added that he fortunately never had to use his gun. He also spoke of the cooperation between all the local banks.

"When checks came in from the other banks in town, we would just walk around to the other banks, exchange the checks, and figure out the outstanding balance," he said.

There were five banks in Staunton in 1947 — Farmer's Merchant Bank, Planter's Bank, Staunton National Bank, Augusta Bank, along with National Valley Bank.

That same year, Doome resigned from National Valley Bank and took a position at Staunton National as general ledger bookkeeper, teller, and, after it merged into First and Merchant National Bank, as head of its note department. In January 1960 Doome returned to National Valley Bank where he became the head of the Trust Department after the death of Chesley Peterfish. By 1975 Doome had been promoted to senior vice president and trust officer. Two years later he retired from National Valley Bank.

"Two weeks before I retired Planter's Bank called me and offered me a position," Doome said with a smile. He has worked as a trust consultant at Planter's ever since. In his spare time, Doome has been active in the Staunton Lions Club, Central United Methodist Church, and the American Institute of Banking Staunton Chapter. In addition to that, he plays in the Stonewall Brigade Band.

"My father was a musician, and I played the trumpet until 15 years ago," Doome commented, pointing to his lip. "You need a good lip to play trumpet. After I lost mine, I switched to the baritone horn."

He also said matter-of-factly, "This is the 62nd consecutive year I have played Monday nights in the park." Doome says he plans to retire someday, but he really likes to work.

Whether it's banking or music, when George Doome finds something he likes, he sticks with it. —

A little over 10 years ago there were less than 15 species of trees growing on the Blue Ridge Community College Campus in Weyers Cave. Today, there are more than 300. And the number is -- quite literally -- growing every day.

Anne Nielsen, left, of BRCC accepts the newest transplant to the college's arboretum from Polly Bundy, center, and Harriet Baldwin, members of the Beverley Manor chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The DAR's presentation is No. 518, a female American holly, and was planted recently in the arboretum's Piedmont section.
Photo by R.A. Baldwin

Arbor Day: Holiday for trees

By NANCY SORRELLS

In 1872 a Nebraska newspaper editor, J. Sterling Morton, had a visionary idea he introduced to the rest of the country. His idea was to have a tree-planting holiday called Arbor Day.

"Each generation takes the earth as trustees. We ought to bequeath to posterity as many forests and orchards as we have exhausted and consumed," he wrote while pushing his idea to the American people.

His plan was to offer prizes to people who planted the most number of trees. It is estimated that more than one million trees were planted on the initial day. By 1894, every state in the Union had an Arbor Day.

Morton's reasoning behind Arbor Day was to replenish the trees that Americans used every day for fuel, food, building materials and wind breaks. Just over a century later, the list of useful products garnered from trees has only expanded to include, among other things, paper products and medicines.

One product that Morton had not really considered turns out to be the most important of all — oxygen. Trees and other green plants provide oxygen as a byproduct of their own photosynthetic process, while also helping to reduce air pollution by absorbing carbon dioxide. In one year a healthy tree takes in 26 pounds of carbon dioxide and releases enough oxygen for four people.

Trees also reduce erosion by retaining soil with their roots and providing a buffer of leaves between rain and bare earth. The leaves also produce a rich compost which replenishes the soil. And trees are energy efficient. Evergreen trees provide wind barriers around houses, while deciduous trees provide cooling shade around a house in the summer and then allow the sun's warmth through in the winter.

Finally, trees fit neatly into the entire ecological system. They provide shelter and food for a variety of animals. For humans, trees improve the value of our landscape and provide a forest sanctuary in which to escape. In the history of humankind there is scarcely a great invention that would have been possible without trees. The discovery of fire and the invention of paper, wheels, boats, musical instruments and all rubber products would not have happened without the tree.

Honoring the tree on Arbor Day is a small way in which we can say, "thank you," to these steady plants without which we could not survive. Perhaps Theodore Roosevelt said it best when he noted: "A people without children would face a hopeless future; a country without trees is almost as hopeless." —

Continued from page 1

the major biogeographical areas of Virginia. Each site contains woody species typical of a different part of the state — valley, mountain, piedmont, coastal plain and lowland. Within each site are overstory species which will eventually grow more than 40 feet, and understory or edge species which will fill in below.

The landscape is incorporated into the site plan as well. A drainage ditch is taken full advantage of for several lowland species, while the sloping terrain at the top of the hill is used for the mountain species.

The hundreds of species are numbered, labeled and located on a site map which is distributed free to visitors.

"We wanted people to see a miniature of the species as they would be seen in nature. We put the different biogeographical zones together so that when you go into an area, you get a feeling of what it would be like in the wild," she said. "However, we cheated a little," she added. "Like in this ash grove. Here we have four different species and they are very hard to tell apart. But because they are close together like this you can study them and learn the differences."

In another case, in the mountain zone, two different species of hemlock are side by side.

"This is a botanist's paradise. A botanist can come here and in two hours do as much as on a day's hike as far as learning to distinguish the different species," she explained.

As she rumbled and bounced her truck through her dream come true, Neilsen had a story or an explanation about each portion of the arboretum.

"That is the Constitution Oak, planted by Congressman Jim Olin to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the constitution.

"Over there are two pure white naturally occurring redbud trees given to us by Elwood Fisher. They are probably the most beautiful thing we have out here. They bloom pure porcelain white.

"This is where we started. Notice the trees are bigger here. These are Valley species. There are a lot of oak and hickory."

Many of the stories Nielsen relates, however, are not about the plants at all. Rather, they are about the people who have made this dream a reality. Jacob Kagey who helps locate particular species and then painstakingly grows plants from seed; Hal Bush who returns every year to do the pruning despite being in his 80s; employees of the George Washington National Forest who have worked out a collecting agreement with the arboretum committee, and all the scouting groups, garden clubs and civic organizations which have lent a hand.

And then there is the committee itself which consists of Nielsen, Bush, Kagey, Elizabeth Kyger, Michael Renfroe and Patsy Shreckhise.

"The arboretum committee is made up of the same people who started on it. How many committees do you know like that?" Nielsen said of the group's commitment to its cause.

The dedication also extends to the Blue Ridge students who have accomplished most of the planting and to the college staff who make up what Nielsen affectionately calls "The Summer Swat Team."

"The staff checks on everything, and if they spot trouble, like an insect infestation, they write down the plant number and call me," she explained. "The head of the nursing department just retired and she received the gold fly-swatter award for the most years on the swat team."

Recently, however, Nielsen admits to thinking back to those early qualms and misgivings about starting an arboretum.

"I'm in my 60s, and I've begun thinking about the future of this place. But then a miraculous thing happened," she said in explaining an internal fund-raising campaign that has been launched at the school. Now, partially because of enthusiastic encouragement from BRCC president James Perkins, an endowment fund for the arboretum has been established and has reached $14,000. "What a relief!" she said of the fund which will now insure, at least, the future maintenance of the project. "We are supported entirely from local funds and volunteer efforts. We have really had lots of help along the way and could use help even with the weeding and upkeep," she said. Nielsen also invites people to come at anytime and explore the arboretum for themselves. The site guide is available at the school library and information desk or can be obtained by writing: Anne Nielsen, Biology Dept. BRCC, Box 80, Weyers Cave, Va. 24486 or by calling, 540-234-9261, ext. 240. —

Trees help counteract the "urban heat island" effect. Urban areas with a high percentage of concrete, highways, glass, and other objects are hotter than rural areas. These urban heat islands have reduced ventilation and warm temperatures. This causes an increase in the amount of ozone pollution in the air. Rural areas with trees are less likely to have the urban heat island effect, resulting in less ozone pollution. ---

For information about proper tree planting techniques, call the Augusta County Extension office at 245-5750.

When choosing a tree or shrub, it is important to consider the characteristics of all cultivars, keeping in mind the climate and cultural conditions of your site. Some cultivars may be resistant to diseases that are not a problem in your location, while others may show heat tolerance, pest resistance, soil tolerance, or other similar characteristics that better fit a situation. Choosing a plant appropriate for your location must be more than an aesthetic decision. ---

Birthplace celebrating Wilson's role as peacemaker

AC staff report

STAUNTON — The Woodrow Wilson Birthplace celebrates the 75th anniversary of President Woodrow Wilson's Nobel Peace Prize with the Peace Passport Project.

A museum-school-community collaboration aimed at Staunton City public and private schools grades K-12 and any other interested child or young person, the project will acknowledge Wilson's achievements as a peacemaker. At the same time it is designed to broaden young people's knowledge of peacemakers both in American history and in their community. Children can obtain a Peace Passport at the Birthplace. Up to 15 stamps can be collected by visiting designated places and participating in various activities. "Teachers are planning some fantastic things," Harriet Runkle, Woodrow Wilson Birthplace museum educator commented. "Dixon Elementary School third grade is using it as part of their study of the community and the fourth grade is visiting the Birthplace on a field trip. Joan Swift, a fifth grade teacher at McSwain and gifted storyteller, is going to tell a peace story to all the school's children. They are going to write some poetry as well."

RUNKLE

Ongoing activities include two conflict management workshops, after-school programs, a dance-a-thon and a kite festival,

"Children — both local and from out of town — can participate. We have a peace center in the solarium at the museum where children can write and post peace statements and make flags," Runkle said. The Birthplace will present a peace pole to the city of Staunton as the culminating activity. The pole will be installed at the library as a lasting symbol of the community's commitment to peace.

In addition to the Birthplace, the partnership includes Staunton City Schools, Staunton Office on Youth, Staunton Public Library, Staunton Youth Commission, Staunton/Augusta Art Center, Cybercafe, Community Federal Savings Bank, Staunton Rotary Club, Staunton Kiwanis Club, and Mr. and Mrs. John D. Eiland.

Anyone who is interested in participating or would like more information should call the Birthplace at 885-0897. —

Peace Passport Calendar of Events

May 13: Conflict Management Workshops, 7-9 p.m., Staunton City Library

April 30 & May 1: 3:30-4:30 p.m.. After-School Program at the Staunton City Public Library

May 10: Dance-a-Thon 6-8 p.m. for grades K-6 and 8 p.m. to midnight for grades 7-12 at the National Guard Armory

May 18: Peace Pole presentation, 11 a.m. at the Staunton Public Library

Peace Prize established by Swedish inventor Nobel

Upon his death, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, directed that the income from his $9 million estate be used to fund six annual prizes to reward individuals who have worked for the good of humanity. One of these prizes is the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Nobel peace prize is awarded to an individual or group who has done the most effective work in the interest of international peace.

The first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded in 1901 to Jean Henri Durant, the Swiss founder of the Red Cross and originator of the Geneva Convention and to Frederick Passy, founder of the French Peace Society.

A candidate may not apply directly for a prize. A qualified person must submit each name in writing. Different organizations make the actual selection. The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded each year on Dec. 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death, in Oslo, Norway. —

Some Americans who have won the Nobel Peace Prize

1906 — Theodore Roosevelt for negotiating the peace in the Russo-Japanese War

1912 — Elihu Root for settling the problem of Japanese immigration to California and organizing the Central American Peace Conference

1919 — Woodrow Wilson for attempting a just settlement of World War I and advocating a League of Nations

1929 — Frank Billings Kellogg for negotiating the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact

1931— Jane Addams for her work with the International League for Peace and Freedom; Nicholas M. Butler for his work with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

1945 — Cordell Hull for his peace efforts as secretary of state

1946 — John R. Mott for his YMCA work and for aiding displaced persons; Emily Greene Balch for her work with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

1953 — George C. Marshall for promoting peace through the European Recovery Program

1962 — Linus Palling for efforts to ban nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons testing

1964 — Martin Luther King, Jr. for leading the struggle for civil rights in the United States through non-violent means

1970 — Norman E. Borlaug for his role in developing high-yield grains that increased food production in developing countries

1973 — Henry A. Kissinger for his work in negotiating the Vietnam cease-fire agreement —

Augusta Country staff writer Sue Simmons compiled information about Nobel Peace prize winners and the origination of the award.

Yesterday once more

Timber Ridge: Stone walls portray solidity, endurance of congregation

EDITOR'S NOTE — This is the second in a series of six articles about churches in the area which are celebrating their 250th anniversaries this year.

By NANCY SORRELLS

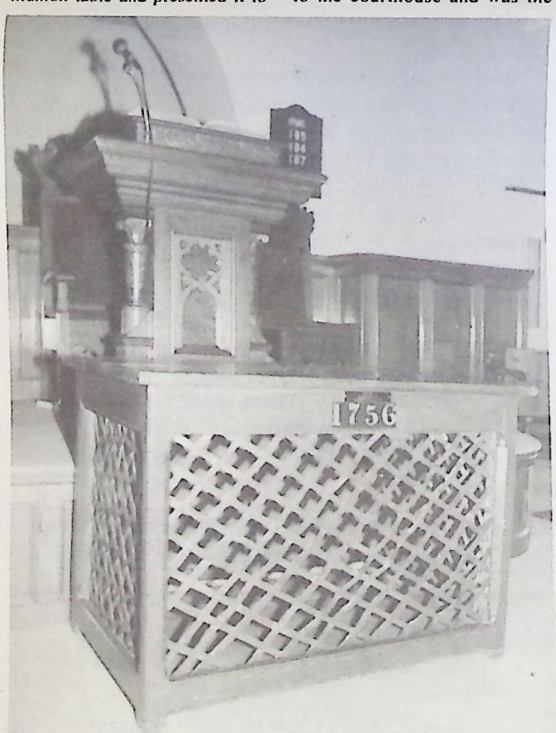
TIMBER RIDGE — The walnut communion table has stood in front of the pulpit at Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church for a long time. Almost as long as the walls of the meeting house have stood, solid and silent, around the congregation. Both are symbolic of the worship which has taken place here for 250 years. One offers spiritual comfort, the other physical. Both are gifts of the Scots-Irish Lyle family which came to this place as part of a larger settlement pattern into the Valley of Virginia.

In 1755 Daniel Lyle built the walls, quarried from local limestone a few hundred feet away. His nephew Samuel crafted the communion table and presented it to the congregation in 1756 as a gift for the newly completed meeting house. Two and a half centuries after Daniel and Samuel gave their gifts, Timber Ridge continues to flourish.

As part of their anniversary celebration, the people of the church are looking back at their history and forward to their continued mission. Washington and Lee University professor Taylor Sanders is writing a book on the church's history and how it meshes with America's larger historical picture. Sanders' book is due to be out in late 1996.

The area of Rockbridge County where Timber Ridge is located has always had a rich heritage. Located along the Great Wagon Road, today U.S. 11, the church and its people were witness to a constant flow and migration of people. The first movement brought these hardy Scots-Irish to the region in the late 1720s. Legend puts John Mackey as the first settler in 1727, but Ephriam McDowell beat him to the courthouse and was the first to record his land title in 1737. So many Presbyterian immigrants from Northern Ireland followed that the land became known as the Irish Tract.

Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church near Fairfield in a photo taken in the 1870s



The walnut communion table made in 1756 by a Scots-Irish settler of the northern Rockbridge County area still sits before the pulpit at Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church which is celebrating its 250th anniversay this year.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

By the 1740s these Presbyterians — called Dissenters because they had ecclesiastical views which differed from the established Anglican Church — began meeting for worship. Soon these groups gathered for worship at meeting houses. Because they were not affiliated with the established church in colonial Virginia, these houses of worship were legally called meeting houses, not churches, until after the American Revolution.

The first meeting house was at Timber Grove about two miles north of the present building. The structure was there by October 1741 when the Reverend John Craig, who was pastor to the north at Augusta Stone and Tinkling Spring, visited and baptized several children.

In 1746 John Blair arrived in the area and organized five meeting houses, including the Timber Ridge meeting house. Timber Ridge is the geographic placename for the area, given because of the long, narrow ridge that runs north to south stretching from Lexington to the present Augusta-Rockbridge line. The heavily timbered, well-watered region attracted many of the early settlers' families.

In 1753 John Brown accepted a call to Timber Ridge and another area meeting house, New Providence. By 1756 he had organized the group at Timber Ridge to build a new stone church. The land was purchased from the Houston family and the stonework was completed by Daniel Lyle. Although heavily remodeled over the years, the stone walls Lyle raised remain the core of today's church structure. There are just two remaining colonial Presbyterian meeting houses west of the Blue Ridge Mountains — Timber Ridge and Augusta Stone in Fort Defiance.

A good education and the Presbyterian church have always been linked very closely, and things were no different at Timber Ridge. There has always been an emphasis on education in the Presbyterian ministry and many schools and academies owe their beginnings to local Presbyterian churches.

Such is the case with Washington and Lee University in Lexington. Originally Augusta Academy, the school was started near Greenville by Robert Alexander. John Brown moved the school to the New Providence area in 1767. Brown resigned his pastorate at Timber Ridge in order to concen-

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•Brown

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trate on the school and his work at New Providence.

Around the start of the American Revolution, however, the school was moved to Timber Ridge. There it was led by the Reverend William Graham who was called to the pastorate at Timber Ridge. He changed the school's name to Liberty Hall and eventually moved it into Lexington.

Although the flourishing grammar school foundered during the American Revolution, Graham's steadfastness kept the doors open. At the close of the war, a generous endowment from George Washington revived the school and it was renamed Washington Academy in his honor. Robert E. Lee's name was added to the college's official title in 1871 after the Confederacy's former military hero served as college president.

The school and its graduates offered a training ground for the next generation of national leaders. An early student, Dr. Archibald Alexander, entered the ministry, became president of Hampden-Sydney College, and founded Princeton Theological Seminary. Samuel Houston, whose grandfather provided the land for the present stone church, attended school at the academy before going on to fame in Tennessee and Texas.

Through the years, history continued to happen at Timber Ridge. The first meeting of the Lexington Presbytery (now the Shenandoah Presbytery after it merged with Winchester in 1974) was held here in 1786. In 1818 a second church building was constructed in Fairfield. The two groups met under the same session until 1840 when the Fairfield congregation became an independent session.

Through all those times, the stone walls continued to stand and the Lord's Supper was administered from the walnut communion table. In 1871 a major renovation to the structure added the vestibule, and changed the windows to arched frames with diamond panes. The interior of the church was also drastically altered. The huge box pews with separate doors were removed and the pulpit was moved from the north to the present south end of the building. The main entrance was placed on the north end, but the original north door was closed, and two new doors were created. The east door, which was the original main entrance, was closed altogether.

At the turn of the century, the south wall was completely removed and wings were added from east to west. In 1953 an education building was added by recycling stone from area stone houses and chimneys which had fallen into disrepair. In 1973 the vestibule was enclosed.

Remaining in the vestibule however, is the cornerstone with the 1756 date and John Brown's initials. And inside, the communion table with its chamfered legs and latticework remains in front of the pulpit.

It is symbolic, notes the church's history brochure, "of the durability of Timber Ridge Church. The congregation continues to gather around this table, recognizing the Church endures throughout the ages only by faithful acknowledgment of the grace given through Jesus Christ's broken body and shed blood." —

Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church, April 1996

Fairfield Presbyterian joins anniversary celebration

By NANCY SORRELLS

FAIRFIELD — The Presbyterian heritage runs particularly deep within the folks of northern Rockbridge County. In the 18th century, so many Scots-Irish settled there that it was referred to as the Irish Tract.

With such a dense population, it is little wonder that five Presbyterian churches within a stone's throw of each other are celebrating their 250th birthdays. A sixth church, which is a direct descendant of that Presbyterian spirit, is joining in the celebration.

Fairfield Presbyterian Church, which was officially organized in 1840, is a sister church to Timber Ridge and is linking with the congregation of the older stone church in this year of celebrations.

From the very beginning, many of the worshipers at Timber Ridge lived four miles north in Fairfield — a prospering village along the Great Wagon Road. The Reverend John Brown, the minister who oversaw the construction of Timber Ridge, even had ties to Fairfield and operated Mount Pleasant School in the village.

As Fairfield grew and became the population center of the region, many of the Presbyterians tired of making the time-consuming horseback ride to Timber Ridge. In 1818, operating as the "united congregation of Timberridge and Fairfield," they constructed a brick building. Despite the second building, however, the congregation remained united at this point, operating under one pastorship, with one session and one eldership.

Within a few years, the Fairfield congregation became the stronger of the two and retained a majority of the eldership. With this strength came a desire for division. After an unsuccessful attempt to form the South River church, the Lexington Presbytery in 1840 granted a petition to form a separate church at Timber Ridge. With the granting of that petition, the Church of Timber Ridge (the old stone church) and the Timberridge and Fairfield Church were formed as two separate sessions.

The reasoning behind the retention of the word "timber ridge" in the Fairfield name is complicated but involves a concern over the ownership of the original lot on which the 1756 stone church stood. Because an Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church shared the Timber Ridge lot with the Presbyterian congregation in the stone church, the Fairfield group felt a need to protect their rights to the land and building.

Although severely weakened by the split, the original Timber Ridge congregation had revived sufficiently in 1850 that qualms of the Fairfield congregation were mollified, and they shortened the name of their house of worship to simply Fairfield Presbyterian Church. The 1818 building was replaced in 1852 by the Greek Revival building that still stands. The church was remodeled in 1900, and an education building was added in 1956.

Like any rift which creates a chasm among a group of people, the splitting of one church from the other caused some animosities. However, the two churches of Timber Ridge and Fairfield are long past those times and join hands this year to celebrate their common ancestry and look ahead to their future missions. —

Fairfield Presbyterian Church, April 1996

Rockbridge County's favorite son

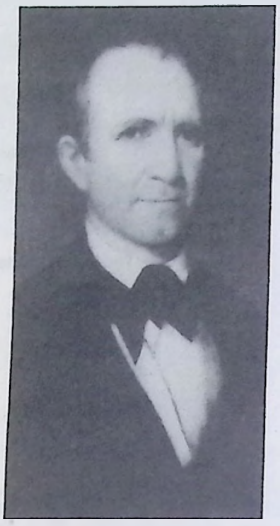
Sam Houston: General, governor, president

By NANCY SORRELLS

The Cherokee, with whom he lived for several extended periods of time, called him the Raven. Mexicans led by the infamous Santa Anna, knew him as General. Tennesseans would have called him Governor, and Texans, among whom he achieved his most lasting fame, might have referred to him as "Mr. President."

Sam Houston is probably Timber Ridge's best known native son. His family was intertwined with the Presbyterian church's earliest beginnings in what is now Rockbridge County. His grandfather, Robert Houston, and his great-grandfather, John Houston, were among the signers of the call to the Reverend John Brown in 1753. And in 1756 it was that same Robert Houston who allowed the newly formed congregation to purchase just over an acre of land from him for "five shillings sterling." Two hundred and fifty years later, that stone church still stands tall, and the fame of the Houston family stands alongside.

Today, a stone marker and picnic area are located just below the church which the Houston family helped found. The wayside commemorates Samuel Houston Jr. who was born *on the site in 1793. Although he came from less-than-humble beginnings,*



SAM HOUSTON

he still had to scramble to the top on America's frontier.

As noted previously, his grandfather and great-grandfather were pillars in the community and church, and his father, Samuel Houston Sr., was a Revolutionary War hero with Daniel Morgan's *riflemen. The elder Samuel went on* to become a professional soldier, increasing his community standing with marriage to Elizabeth Paxton, the daughter of the richest man in Rockbridge County.

In his early years, Sam Jr. sporadically attended school at Liberty Hall Academy, which once had been located at Timber Ridge. The academy moved into Lexington where it evolved into Washington and Lee University.

Wealth and position did not shelter the family from hard times, however. By 1807, constant spending by the elder Samuel Houston had the family on the verge of bankruptcy. Although determined to move his wife and children to Tennessee where other family members were prospering, he died before the move could be made. Undaunted, the widow Elizabeth Houston moved her family, including the teenage Sam, across the mountains to a 420-acre tract in Tennessee. The financially strapped family was still able to take nine horses, two wagons and several slaves with them as they migrated.

The fiery and independent nature of 14-year-old Samuel Jr. soon became evident. He suffered through one more year of schooling in Tennessee and then ran away to live with the Cherokee. At 21 he enlisted in the U.S. Army, fought bravely and was wounded in the Creek War.

His leadership abilities caught the eye of his commanding officer, Andrew Jackson, who invited him back to Nashville to study law under him. Jackson's protege soon entered the political arena, and was elected to Congress as a Tennessee representative from 1823-1827. In 1827, Samuel Houston was elected governor of Tennessee. His term ended in humiliation, however, when his wife of just three months deserted him in 1829.

The ensuing scandal forced Houston to resign his office and he again retreated to the familiarity of his Cherokee friends, becoming their spokesman to the whites.

Adventure called again in 1832 and the Rockbridge native was drawn to Texas, which was under Mexican control. Houston became commander of the Texas armies and was among the 59 signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. When he led the Texas army to victory over Mexico's General Antonio Lopez Santa Anna in 1836, Texas independence was assured.

During that same year, Houston was elected president of the new Republic of Texas, making Houston the first Virginian elected president of a foreign country. He served as president from 1836-1838 and then again from 1841-1844. After Texas entered the Union, he represented his adopted homeland as a senator for 13 years and governor for three years. He also settled down during those years, marrying Margaret Lea in 1840. Bitterly opposed to the American Civil War which was tearing apart the nation he had helped build, Houston was deposed as governor in 1861 for refusing to take the Confederate oath of allegiance.

When he died in 1863, he left behind a legacy of leadership sparked by his frontier spirit. The native son of Timber Ridge had used the pioneering spirit ingrained in those early Shenandoah families to help push back the untamed frontier.

His last words were perhaps indicative of the things he cared most about and had dedicated a lifetime to preserving: the land and the people on it. On July 26, 1863 he whispered, "Texas, Texas, Texas, Margaret," and breathed his last. —

Our culinary heritage

Rhubarb, strawberries: Early fruits of the season

By ROBERTA HAMLIN

After a long cold winter, when the calendar tells me that spring cannot be far away and regardless of what I see and feel outside, I cannot refrain from going out and scouting about in the herb garden to see if there are any early bits of growth to greet me.

The first tiny shoots of tarragon send my spirits soaring, and from then on I continually look for signs of emerging life. One of the very first foods to push forward in the spring is rhubarb.

Almost before the ground is thawed, the little nubs can be seen struggling forth, and by mid-April, the stalks are already well above ground, even after a winter such as we had this year, they will be 8 to 10 inches high and promising good things soon from the kitchen.

The Pennsylvania Dutch call rhubarb "pie plant" because they used it, much as they would apples, in pies. They also prepared a pudding with left over plain cake and stewed rhubarb:

Pennslyvania Dutch
Rhubarb Pudding

8-10 slices of dry, plain cake
1 lb. rhubarb, about 4 cups, chopped
1 cup sugar
1 tsp. grated lemon peel
2 tsp. lemon juice
2 egg whites
1/4 cup additional sugar

Prepare stewed rhubarb as follows: Wash and trim rhubarb and cut into 1-inch pieces. Combine with sugar, lemon peel and juice and cook over low heat, stirring, until sugar dissolves. Continue to cook about 15 more minutes, or until rhubarb is tender.

Line the bottom and sides of a buttered, 1 1/2 quart baking dish with slices of cake. Fill the dish with stewed rhubarb and bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes. Beat the egg whites until frothy, add the 1/4 cup of sugar gradually, continuing to beat until rounded peaks are formed. Remove pudding from oven and cover with the meringue. Return to oven until meringue is lightly browned, about 8 to 10 minutes.

In my collection of scribbled recipes, I found more than a dozen for rhubarb pies. One of the most intriguing, however, comes from New Zealand:

Rhubarb and gooseberry pie

Flaky pastry for a 9-inch pie pan, 2 crusts
(Almond extract)
4 cups rhubarb, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 lb. can gooseberries
1 cup sugar
1/3 cup flour
1 1/2 tsp. grated orange peel
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. salt
2 Tbsp. butter

(When you make the pastry, add 1 teaspoon almond extract to the flour-and-butter mixture before adding the ice water.) Line pie pan with half of the pastry. Combine rhubarb and gooseberries and toss with the sugar, flour and orange peel. Season with the cinnamon and salt. Turn into the pastry shell and dot with butter. Cover with a top crust. Flute and seal edges and cut decorative vents in top. Bake at 425 degrees for 35 minutes, then remove from oven and brush top lightly with milk. Sprinkle with a little sugar and return to the oven for another 10 minutes or until it is golden brown. Let pie cool on a wire rack. Serve it slightly warm, accompanied with vanilla ice cream.

This plant, which we treat as a fruit, is really a vegetable - a fleshy perennial of the buckwheat family. Originating in China, both the plant and the root have been used for centuries. It was cultivated there

and in the Old World of Europe as both an ornamental foliage plant and for the medicinal properties of the root.

Rhubarb was not grown much for food to any extent until the early 18th century, when it became popular especially in England, and was one of the plants most frequently cultivated in American gardens of the 18th century. My very favorite recipe for rhubarb comes from a small book of recipes for afternoon teas published in England:

Rhubarb gingerbread

4 Tbsp. butter
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup dark molasses
1 1/4 cups plain flour
1/2 tsp. soda
3 tsp. ground ginger
1 egg
Milk
1 1/4 lb. rhubarb
6 oz. crystallized ginger, chopped

Melt the butter, sugar and molasses over low heat. Sift together the flour, soda and 1 tsp. of the ginger. Add to ingredients above. Lightly beat egg and stir in. Add enough milk to give a soft consistency. Clean and chop the rhubarb. Butter and lightly flour an 8-inch cake pan. Spoon half the gingerbread mixture into the pan, top with the rhubarb, crystallized ginger and remaining ground ginger. Spoon in the remaining cake mixture and bake at 350 degrees for about 1 1/2 hours.

Perhaps the most often prepared rhubarb recipe combines rhubarb, which by the end of May is in abundance, with the first of one of our most favorite fruits, the strawberry, which is just beginning to come in. That wonderful spring dessert is the strawberry-rhubarb pie:

Strawberry-rhubarb pie

Flaky pastry for a 9-inch pie pan and a lattice top
1 1/2 lbs. rhubarb
1 pint strawberries
1 1/4 cups sugar
1/3 cup orange juice
2 Tbsp. quick-cooking tapioca
2 tsps. grated orange peel
1/4 tsp. salt
2 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. sugar

Cut the rhubarb into 1/2-inch slices, and halve the strawberries. Combine fruit with sugar, orange juice and peel, tapioca and salt. Let stand for about 15 minutes. Line pie pan with pastry. Roll out remaining pastry and cut into 1/2-inch strips. Spoon rhubarb mixture into pie shell; dot with butter. Arrange pastry strips in a lattice pattern over filling, trim and seal edges. Sprinkle with sugar and bake for 1 to 1 1/4 hours, until juices are thick and bubbly.

We consider the strawberry also as a fruit, but it is not really a true fruit, but a member of the rose family instead. The fruit we love so is a fleshy seed pod. Popular in Europe for many years, strawberries were first grown in this country about the same time as Rhubarb was introduced. In Europe, both the French and Italian serve their fresh strawberries peppered. The following is an adaptation of a recipe which James Beard says comes from the French city of Carcassonne:

Peppered strawberries

Large, ripe strawberries
Sugar
1/4 cup cognac
1/4 cup white wine vinegar
Whole black pepper

Cap strawberries and place in a deep bowl. Sprinkle with sugar to taste. Grate black pepper over the top (about 12 to 15 grinds should be sufficient). Combine the cognac and wine vinegar and pour over berries. Very gently turn and tilt bowl so that pepper and liquid covers all berries. Allow to stand for a few minutes, then serve with crisp cookies.

And, if there are still lots of rhubarb and strawberries left, try the following:

Rhubarb strawberry jelly

5 large stalks of rhubarb, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1/2 cup water
1 envelope sugar-free strawberry flavored gelatin
1 cup fresh strawberries, sliced

Place chopped rhubarb in a large sauce pan with the water and bring to a boil. Allow to simmer for 15 minutes. Stir in gelatin and strawberries and, when cooled slightly, pour into jelly glasses. Chill until set. Serve with whipped cream as a dessert. This jelly is a bit tart. You may wish to add a little sugar. —

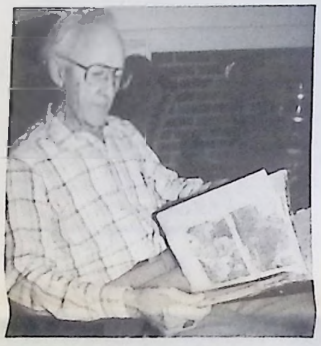
Scrapbooks detail history of family, community

By NANCY SORRELLS

MCKINLEY — Irvin Rosen recalls many a time when he went into his mother's kitchen and she was sitting there mixing flour and water as a paste for her scrapbooks.

Sallie Hildebrand Rosen passed away in 1967 at the age of 91, but her dozen scrapbooks remain with her son Irvin as a treasure trove of local history. For nearly 70 years, from about 1900 up until her death, Sallie sat down every few days, clipped items of interest from the local newspaper and pasted them in her books.

Page after page is filled from top to bottom with the articles, many of which mention her family and friends. The local news back then was certainly different — all encompassing; some would say downright gossipy. But the pages which speak of funerals and weddings and visits to other families in different parts of the county are a genealogist's dream come true.



Irvin Rosen of McKinley looks at one of the scrapbooks his mother kept for nearly 70 years beginning in 1900.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

Sallie was a Mennonite, born and raised at Madrid near Waynesboro. When she married Finley Rosen from McKinley and moved across the county, her life was opened to a whole new circle of acquaintances. For those reasons, the articles in her scrapbook are targeted around two portions of the county.

"She was born and raised at Madrid and knew many people down there," Irvin said. "She was familiar with those people."

Although many of the articles are obituaries, there are plenty of other interesting tidbits of local trivia as well. Items of local historical interest, like churches being dedicated and centenarians celebrating birthdays, are clipped and carefully pasted on the pages.

One scrapbook from the 1930s contains an article about a 102-year-old in Staunton, Hannah Diehl, who was born during Andrew Jackson's administration. Mrs. Diehl allowed that young women probably didn't live as long now because they "run around too much."

The same scrapbook contained a small 1937 wedding notice — Irvin T. Rosen and Melba L. Hampton who were married at the United Brethren parsonage on Sunday morning and then headed off to a honeymoon trip to Washington, D.C. and other eastern cities.

And if you think that weddings and funerals were all that interested Sallie, a third article tells of a McKinley couple who were tossed in jail after being caught red-handed with apple brandy. They were charged with possessing illegal whiskey and attempting to destroy the evidence.

Many of Sallie's earlier albums are nearly 100 years old and have become quite fragile. Her son has carefully taken those albums apart and preserved each page in a plastic sleeve. He then photocopied those albums. To save wear and tear on the originals, most people now look through the photocopied albums.

And people do come and look. Some come with a very specific purpose in mind — to determine a birthdate for social security requirements or to find out some family history.

"At one time, it was not necessary to get a birth certificate," Irvin recalls of an era earlier in the century. "You'd be surprised how many people came to her to find out that information and they (the government officials) would accept her scrapbook information. Just recently people came and looked at the scrapbooks for social security qualifications. People are also interested in the obituaries and in trying to find their roots."

Although in her later years Sallie went back and penciled in dates alongside many of her articles, Irvin said his only regret is that his mother did not add dates to more of the pages. Despite that, the time period to within a few months can be determined for most of the articles. A page from the 1938 newspaper tells of an Augusta couple, John William Cline and Sarah Virginia Zimmerman, who had been married 70 years. Married on Thursday, Christmas Eve in 1868, the couple remembered that John rode his horse to her home and afterward they rode to the home of the minister where they were married.

"It was a simple ceremony, with no attendants; and afterward they rode to the home of some of Mr. Cline's kinfolk and there spent Christmas and part of their honeymoon," the reporter wrote after an interview with the pair.

Many of the news clips were targeted toward the local gossip: "Willis Arehart, who had the misfortune to fall and break his limb while playing at school last week, is resting very comfortable."

"Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hemp were Staunton shoppers Saturday."

"Mr. and Mrs. E. St. Clair Turk visited Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Turk Sunday."

Bad news was just as common then as now. Murders, barn fires and even suicides drew detailed descriptions. In the 1930s a baby girl just a few days old was found in a suitcase on Greenville Avenue. The "finely formed girl baby" was unharmed, but no clues had been found "to throw any light on the parentage of the deserted babe."

Why Sallie began keeping her scrapbooks is somewhat of a mystery according to her son, but he feels genetics played a part.

"I think it runs in the family. Her grandfather kept all kinds of records, like all the records about his shop. My mother would save up the papers and almost every week she worked on her books," he said.

Finley and Sallie Rosen with their children, clockwise from left, Evelyn, Ethel, and Irvin. The photo was taken about 1918.

Although she may never have realized the wealth of knowledge she was accumulating for future historians, her hobby did earn her a few minor moments of glory late in her life. In 1957 she entered her books in the Hobby Show at Middlebrook. Competing against collections of guns, salt and pepper shakers, pencils and even antique furniture, Sallie took home third place. The resulting newspaper article, which noted that Mrs. Finley Rosen valued her scrapbook collection very highly was, of course, pasted in the next book.

Perhaps inspired by the success of her first show, Sallie entered her collection in the Staunton-Augusta Agricultural Fair in 1961 and won a blue ribbon for her scrapbooks.

Even today almost 30 years after his mother passed away, Irvin still gets the books out and looks at them, and often finds a new tidbit of information. Preserved in those yellowed pages are the memories of a family and a community which, if not for the dedication of one woman, would otherwise have disappeared. —

Preserving 'scraps' of history topic of seminar

By NANCY SORRELLS

Remember those pictures you took last year on vacation? How about the church bulletin from homecoming? Is there a newspaper clipping stuck away somewhere from your high school graduation?

Sadly, many family photos and bits of memorabilia are stuck away in a shoebox gathering dust and disintegrating. Within a few years the family history they hold will be lost.

To help alleviate this frustration and educate people about the importance of properly preserving photos, memorabilia and family stories, May 4 has been designated as the second annual National Scrapbook Day. It is appropriate because the entire month of May is National Photo Month.

Locally, the day is being celebrated with an open house (free, no registration required) and an all-day, hands-on workshop (small fee and pre-registration required) where participants will be bringing their photos and keepsakes — cards, certificates, newspaper clippings — to create a lasting family treasure. The workshop, to be held at Good Shepherd Church in Folly Mills, will provide the time, space, motivation and professional help needed to finally begin organizing and preserving years and years of those photos.

The day's events are being offered by Martha Walker, who works with Creative Memories, an organization dedicated to helping people create lasting photo albums and scrapbooks. "Many people have wonderful photos stuck in sticky, magnetic albums and labeled in ink, or worse not labeled at all. When they go back and look at their book full of memories, they are shocked to see the pictures yellowed and faded. I can show people how to prevent this kind of disaster and to create, instead, a photosafe album that will last for many years," Walker said.

"The paper pages of scrapbooks and the glue people use are just as bad. Both are highly acidic and will destroy the items placed on the pages. People invest so much money in cameras and film and then forget that all that money will go down the drain if the photos and keepsakes aren't properly preserved," she added.

Those attending the workshop, either for a half or full day, will learn the importance of beginning and maintaining the scrapbook album tradition, how to begin sorting and organizing past photos and memorabilia, how to use photo-safe techniques and products which will insure the longevity of a scrapbook and make it a family heirloom that will last for generations, and how to start and maintain a safe, meaningful and creative scrapbook.

Those who don't have time for a workshop are invited to stop by any time during the day for the scrapbook open house. Look around and register for a drawing for a free scrapbook. "This day is an opportunity to celebrate the recording of family history through scrapbook photo albums," Walker concluded. —

National Scrapbook Day Open House

May 4, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Church of The Good Shepherd parish house
U.S. 11 at Folly Mills, south of Staunton
Stop by to find out more about
how to create a Scrapbook Photo Album.

-- See scrapbookers in action -- Scrapbooks on display
-- Drawing for one free album and one free class

For more information contact:

Martha Walker 703.257-0664 or *Nancy Sorrells* 540/377-6390

VCC conference targets solutions to growth, change

By NANCY SORRELLS

HARRISONBURG — Citing what she called "an incredible opportunity to build some relationships," Faye Cooper, director of the Valley Conservation Council, welcomed a diverse audience of private citizens, representatives, farmers and developers to a day-long symposium on land use planning and conservation held at James Madison University April 13.

Targeted at solutions to facing growth and change within the Shenandoah Valley, the conference was co-sponsored by the Valley Conservation Council and Chesapeake Bay Foundation with assistance from the James Madison University College of Integrated Science and Technology.

"The topic today is land and how we use it. No place is as unique and special as the Valley of Virginia," Cooper continued. "But it is also clear that the Valley is growing and changing... what we put on the land changes it and every person here is a stakeholder."

The themes and ideas launched by Cooper were reiterated by Edward McMahon in his keynote address. *McMahon heads The Conservation Fund, a non-membership organization which purchases and protects land. Throughout his talk, McMahon stressed that he was not anti-growth and anti-development, but rather that everything was connected to everything else, and communities must strive to maintain their special character in the face of change.*

"Development is not the problem," he said. "The problem is the pattern of development. Growth and development can respect and enhance the character of a community and the quality of the landscape," he said.

Citing cases where communities requested new businesses to adapt to their uniqueness in architecture and land forms and to preserve green spaces as buffers, he noted that planned development can be a positive experience.

"You can grow without destroying the things you love," he emphasized, but warned: "If we don't plan for change that WILL occur, then we're going to fail."

McMahon's talk meshed well with the next speaker, Helen Smythers of the Fifth Planning District Commission. Smythers guides communities in western Virginia as they seek ways to adapt to change without compromising the land. She defined what she called a "viewshed" of a town or the vista that one sees when passing through an area. "Why should the gateway to each community look the same when they are all different communities?" she asked the audience. "Regular people can plan their community's future."

A late morning conference session focused on site design. Led by Elizabeth Brabeck, principal partner of Land Ethics, the group learned about the dynamics of site design and saw examples of open space development and the economics of each.

The other late morning session looked at land and resource conservation methods, particularly conservation easements and agricultural/forestal districts.

Estie Thomas of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation opened the meeting with a discussion of conservation easements, or legal agreements between a landowner and conservation organizations to guarantee the future use of the land. The legal agreement is attached to the land deed and is for perpetuity.

"Conservation easements are the most commonly used form of land protection," Thomas said. "These are voluntary, flexible, permanent and offer tangible financial benefits," she said in describing examples.

The restrictions, which usually limit development and protect a special ecosystem, are spelled out by the landowner who may want to prevent any development on a particular tract while retaining another portion as a house lot for heirs. "The restrictions depend on the wishes of the landowners. It continues the landowner's stewardship goals for the future. I can't stress enough how flexible the restrictions are; they depend on the wishes of the landowner. The flexibility is the beauty of conservation easements. You own your land, and you see it permanently protected for heirs or the community," she said.

The financial benefits are the icing on the cake for such easements, and these are immediate and substantial. In most cases the easement placed on the property restricts future development which, in the government's mind, reduces the top market value of the land. The difference between the fully developed potential value of the land and the undeveloped value qualifies as an immediate and substantial charitable contribution on both state and federal taxes. In the end, such an easement also drastically reduces estate taxes because the value of the land has technically been decreased.

Conservation easements have to be held by a conservation organization like the Chesapeake Bay Foundation or the Valley Conservation Council. Such easements are a relatively new concept in the Valley according to Cooper, but have already been drawn up by 30 landowners on 12 properties. Edward Walters, a Bath County landowner, who has placed an easement on his land, said the drawbacks are heavily outweighed by the advantages of such an agreement. "The places that are most vulnerable (to development) are the rural places like Bath County," he said.

Although not as permanent as an easement, Cooper noted that the first step in protecting land from development is often the creation of an agricultural/forestal district. These are rural zones of 200 acres or more which are reserved for the production of agricultural products and timber. One or many landowners may combine to create such a district. This voluntary agreement between landowners and a local

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CONSERVATION EASEMENTS – A conservation easement is a legal agreement in which a landowner retains ownership of his property yet conveys certain specified rights to the holder of the easement. Conservation easements are usually given to a non-profit, charitable land conservation organization or a public entity. Easements can be tailored to meet the owner's wishes regarding the future use of his land. Typically a conservation easement restricts development or uses that would destroy natural, scenic, or historic areas while at the same time allowing other traditional uses such as farming.

AGRICULTURAL/FORESTAL DISTRICTS – Agricultural/forestal districts are rural zones reserved for the production of agricultural products and timber. They are established according to state guidelines with the approval of the local governing body. In essence, a district constitutes a voluntary agreement between landowners and the government that no new, non-agricultural uses will take place in the district. An agricultural/forestal district provides much stronger protection for farmers and farmland than does traditional zoning. ---
For more information on conservation easements or agricultural/forestal districts, contact the Valley Conservation Council, P.O. Box 2335, Staunton, VA 24402; 540-886-3541.

Orchids proliferate by strange and twisted means

By MARK GATEWOOD

May is the month to look for the first of our native orchids. Yellow lady's slipper appears during the first week of the month in the low, rich woods. Pink lady's slipper or moccasin flower comes later in the month and into June on high, dry ridges with acidic soils.

Orchids catch our attention because of two characteristics — the complex, often bizarre, beauty of their flowers and their general rarity. Let's consider this characteristic of rarity by looking at a seeming contradiction: orchids may be the largest family of flowering plants.

Depending upon your authority, the orchid family contains as many as 25,000 species, comprising up to 10 percent of all flowering plants. This means there are a lot of different kinds of orchids, but there are never many individuals of a kind. Why? Because orchids do it the hard way.

Orchids use strategies of scent, mimicry and seduction to bring about pollination by insects. We don't have any of the really strange examples in this country, but in Europe and the tropics, there are orchids whose flowers look like female insects — even smell like female insects — to lure would-be mates. Bees and wasps are the usual victims of this scam. They go away from the encounter disappointed, but not without first having pollinated the orchid flower. What makes this arrangement even more unique is that orchids do not reward their pollinators, as do most flowers, with a drop of nectar. The insect gets only a puzzling experience for its trouble.

It all must work, though, as individual orchids are capable of producing thousands of seeds. But now we meet another example of doing it the hard way.

Consider an average seed. Having just shared the dinner table for a week with my fifth-grade daughter's sprouting lima bean project, this will serve as the example. As the fifth-grader should be able to tell you, the lima bean has two parts — the embryo, which is the baby plant, and the endosperm, which is a food supply to hold the baby plant until it can put down roots and put up leaves and get down to plant business. It carries its lunch, so to speak. The orchid seed, however, goes forth with no such endowment. In fact, it goes forth with a weighty challenge.

It is by now fairly well known that orchid plants must exist in a mutually beneficial relationship with a fungus in the soil. This is why most attempts to transplant orchids from the wild fail: not enough of the needed soil fungus goes with the transplant and the orchid dies. So the orchid seed — tiny, dust-like, windborne — must land on a patch of soil with the correct species of fungus in order to germinate and become a plant.


Lady's slipper

So there's the payoff: send your seed off on Mission: Improbable, but send enough of them that someone, somewhere, will succeed. And just how many thousands of seeds can an orchid produce? That's a reasonable question, and I found the answer in a botanical journal article on pollination of the Monkey-face Orchid (Try not to laugh; it's an endangered species.) a southern Appalachian native found in shaded bogs and seepage slopes.

As part of their study, the authors had to determine just how many seeds were produced by the plants in their study population. The answer? 9,309,318 seeds, produced by, if I'm reading this right, 577 plants. That's a lot of seeds, but it's not enough to get Monkey-face Orchid off the Endangered Species List. Why? Because orchids do it the hard way.

If you run across some of our native orchids this summer —the two lady's slippers already mentioned, the diminutive lady's tresses and the strikingly patterned downy rattlesnake-plantain of late summer, or any of a number of other species that are found in our mountains and valleys — remember the strange and twisted plots that brought each of them into existence. —

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

Cultivating farms of the 'morrow

Conference addresses sustainability, urban growth

By JEFF ISHEE

NATURAL BRIDGE — During a recent three-day conference at Natural Bridge Hotel, almost 100 interested and involved people gathered to discuss the development of a sustainable future for agriculture and rural lifestyles in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

"Connecting Our Farms and Gardens with Urban Growth" was the emphasis of the meeting, sponsored by The Sedalia Center in Big Island, the Voyager Foundation near Natural Bridge, the Virginia Association for Biological Farming, and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

The first day was spent in the fields of Voyager and Cascade Farm near Natural Bridge. This 600-acre working farm has focused its mission to be on the vanguard of sustainable farm management and to foster the work of the Voyager Foundation, a non-profit organization working in the areas of agriculture, health, education, and spiritual growth.

George E. Leidig, representing the Autrusa Consulting Group in Blue Bell, Pa., demonstrated farm scale composting for the enthusiastic bunch of conferees. To be sustainable, Leidig said, "The objective is to build humus back into overworked and tired soil. Humus is the basis of a good, healthy soil. At Autrusa, we took the guesswork out of farm scale composting and approached it from a scientific point of view. We promote utilizing organic compost followed by green manuring and crop rotation."

Asked how a farm can obtain the tons of organic matter necessary for farm scale composting, Leidig replied, "As a practical tip, use the material that you can rely on getting on a regular basis. Work with that, and then start experimenting." He then went on to emphasize on-farm materials such as manures, wood chips, "junk" hay, peanut hulls, spoiled silage, animal bedding, etc. Other local materials that could be used for large scale composting might include municipal leaf collections, poultry house manures, sawdust from lumber mills, etc.

"You have to use your imagination. As an example, this very farm (Cascade Farm) is growing 50 acres of sudan grass just to be used as an ingredient in their composting operation," he pointed out.

One member of the audience went on to comment that the large scale production of compost can not only benefit the soil of the farm that produces it, but can be sold as a "spin-off" business to golf courses for top dressing, to landscapers for mulch, and to gardeners for use in their backyard vegetable patch.

Michael Lachance, Extension agent for Nelson County, and Stuart Wilson of Black Twig Nursery, then showed the farm's low-input orchard, consisting of apples, peaches, and several other fruits. Surrounded by a high deer-proof fencing system, the hillside orchard was a flawless example of all the appropriate methods necessary to manage a low-input orchard.

"Siting is critical for a low-input orchard. All of the variables of the site must be considered, such as air drainage, sun, soil fertility, and the overall habitat," Lachance said. He then went on to define a low-input orchard as a "low spray orchard."

"Pest control early in the season is vital to prevent insects from getting at the tiny, nubbin-sized fruit," he said.

Wilson then described several natural pest management strategies for the orchardist such as early detection, regular monitoring, the use of beneficial insects, and the use of pheromone traps, sticky traps, rotenone, dormant oil spray, pyrethrin, and other inherently safe controls.

Day two of the conference was held indoors at the Natural Bridge Hotel. After breakfast, the gathering reconvened with the anticipation of hearing three dynamic and inspiring speakers, all advocates of diverse and creative interests: author & philosopher Trauger Groh, mega-developer John Clark, and innovative farmer Joel Salatin. —

Stuart Wilson explains pruning techniques for a "low-input" orchard at a farm conference held recently in Natural Bridge.

Photos by Jeff Ishee

Community supported farms have Old World roots

Trauger Groh, 63, told of his boyhood in Europe by relating, "When I was growing up in the 40s, we couldn't build tractors in Germany, because we were so busy building tanks, you see. We were lagging behind the American agricultural scene dramatically. I felt there was no future in farming, particularly family farming."

However, the European philosophy and methodology of community farming remained with Groh after he eventually migrated to the United States looking for a new life. For the past 33 years, he has been involved with farming for local communities and is now an internationally recognized advocate for community supported farming and bio-dynamic agriculture.

"When you see your ideas come to fruition, then you see reality. I see now that it is absolutely necessary that the farmer have total and sole control of his farm," he said.

Addressing the assembly directly, Groh said, "In this group today, we have non-farmers; we have farmers; and we have agricultural scientists. Between the three, there are vastly different interests. It is fascinating to consider that modern agronomy is the only natural science focused almost entirely on financial results."

Having captured his audience's attention, Groh then went on to note, "I may say some things today that you find unusual. But then, when you think about it, what did the usual ever bring us? We have to develop our senses for use on the farm to analyze every portion of the farm. Is it healthy? Is it correct for my farm? We have to trust our senses a little more. Science is wonderful. But our senses should override pure science.

"We have to present our farming concepts to the general public. We cannot do much with Manhattan, nor the desert regions. But we can do something with the farms we have. We have to unite with non-farmers, and what unites people is the spirit of a thing. If we do not have the spirit, we cannot attract people to our farms," Groh said.

He went on to point out some important trends in the typical American's food consumption.

"Do you realize that a recent study in Washington D.C. revealed that 50 percent of Americans do not eat any vegetables on a regular basis except the tomato on a pizza? And that 52 percent of Americans do not eat any fruit on a regular basis except the extracts sometimes found in soft drinks?" he said. After a gasp of realization from the audience, Groh commented on his interpretation of the state of the conventional meat industry by saying, "I can see in the future a wave of vegetarianism sweeping America. People will turn away from meat unless the commercial meat business is cleaned up."

Groh offered his view of an antidote for the state of American agriculture.

"Bio-regionalism is how you and I can change that," he said. "Bio-regionalism means that every community within itself supports itself, and everyone should be a part of it. Bio-regions exist of many parts, including cities, farms, gardens, factories, etc. Our Society cannot continue to live on an import/export culture. We must relearn self-production and sustainability. The American culture is presently based on specialization, routinization, and control. Do you understand that this is exactly opposite of nature's processes?"

Groh then summed up his topic by relating, "Every farm must be

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Food for thought

"We have no choice about whether to farm or not to farm."

From the book "Farms of Tomorrow," by Trauger Groh and Steven McFadden, reprinted with permission

"...[There is a] great variety in approaches to the farms of tomorrow. Generally these approaches are run in America under the name "Community Supported Agriculture" (CSA). As with many catchall names, the term community supported agriculture or CSA is slightly misleading. It implies that the problem is special support for agriculture. As important or necessary as that may be, it is secondary. Although it may seem a fine point, the primary need is not for the farm to be supported by the community, but rather for the community to support itself through farming. This is an essential of existence, not a convenience. We have no choice about whether to farm or not, as we have a choice about whether to produce TV sets or not. So we have to either farm or to support farmers, every one of us, at any cost. We can not give it up, because it is inconvenient or unprofitable.

Since our existence is primarily dependent on farming, we cannot entrust this essential activity solely to the farming population — just 2 percent of Americans. As farming becomes more and more remote from the life of the average person, it becomes less and less able to provide us with clean, healthy, life-giving food or a clean, healthy, life-giving environment. A small minority of farmers, laden with debt and overburdened with responsibility, cannot possibly meet the needs of all the people." —

Philosophy meets reality: 'Community' key to CSA operations

By JEFF ISHEE

The formation of a community supported agriculture (CSA) operation is based on a spirit of community.

Initiated by an innovative farmer or a group of interested individuals, a core association of people band together and pledge to cover the costs of the CSA farm or garden, including a decent living for a professional grower. Shares are purchased by the membership prior to the growing season. One share usually is enough for a family of four, but there is such a range of eating habits among families of different sizes that one cannot depend on that rule of thumb. Some families of two might eat a lot of fresh fruit and vegetables and easily consume one share; whereas, a family of six might eat fewer vegetables and so find one share sufficient. Families that do extensive freezing and canning may invest in two shares. Based on need, some CSA groups elect to offer "half-shares."

Then, once a week in season, mature crops are harvested by the grower and divided among the shareholders. Each gets a regular supply of fresh, locally grown produce during the growing season, and the growers get an assured living. The farmers are not only freed from the need to take upon themselves the financial risks inherent to farming, but also from the need to market or sell in the midst of growing season.

As an example, one CSA in Maine in 1988 sold a hundred shares for $320 each. Because of a nationwide drought, vegetable prices in local supermarkets skyrocketed, and the cost of an equivalent amount of vegetables was figured at $530. So, members of that particular CSA not only had the benefit of fresh locally grown produce, but they paid $210 less for it.

There is, however, the possibility of just the opposite happening, and the membership must be strong enough to stick together in difficult times. Again, the concept of a CSA places shared risk on the community, and not solely on the farmer. People inclined to join a CSA are usually community oriented in the first place. They sense that it is a group effort supporting local agriculture. They believe that they are doing something good, something worthwhile, something aimed at a healthy future. —

Row after row of composting materials stretch out across fields at Voyager/CASCADE Farm near Natural Bridge. The farm carries out large-scale composting growing some crops which go directly into compost when they are harvested.

Haymount: An intentional and sustainable community

Next on the platform was John Clark of Washington, D.C., who has for the past 18 years been involved in building new communities to meet our area's population growth. His latest project is Haymount. Located in Caroline County near Fredericksburg, Haymount is to be a new, walkable, intentional community with local food production, farmer's markets, and riverfront parks.

This is a new town planned "with the belief that sustainable development is based upon a trilogy of ecology, sociology, and economics. The design openly embraces a holistic approach to the healing of nature and the human spirit," Clark said.

When complete, the town will contain 4,000 homes, a quarter-million square feet of retail space, and a half-million square feet of office/commercial space. Haymount proposes to employ state-of-the-art techniques in waste water, storm water, and wildlife management. The design of the community discourages the use of the automobile while encouraging pedestrians and cyclists. It also encourages a front porch on every home, which Clark and his team say they believe "is vital to community spirit."

One listener at the conference said, "Sounds like a dream." However, Haymount appears to be a sound business proposition with potentially excellent profits for those that have invested in the enormous project.

"We'll put about $18 million into Haymount, and in the end, we anticipate that the lots will retail for (a total of) about $525 million," Clark said. "The total retail value of Haymount when completed many years down the road will be about $1 billion."

John Clark — self-described as "a developer who doesn't like developers" — and his immense team of professionals have been working on the concept of Haymount since 1988. It was then that The John A. Clark Company purchased a 1,700-acre farm along the Rappahannock River in Caroline County. The proposed project was so immense that it has taken years to perform infrastructure analysis, environmental impact research, architectural concept studies, and, invariably, to engage in the litigation that seems to be drawn like a magnet to concepts such as Haymount.

Seemingly, everything has been thought of by Clark and his team, including: over a dozen preplanned sites for spiritual life, housing that ranges from "affordable" to "starter castles," a built-in wildlife conservation component, an on-site organic farm that "replaces the destructive pattern of chemical agriculture that has occurred here for the past 40 years," and even the creation of a "pedestrian-friendly environment" where residents will have no more than a five-minute walk to any point in Haymount.

The developer is seeing that the educational needs of the community are met by agreeing to deed an elementary school to the citizens of Caroline County as well as an additional 13-acre school site. Clark will even build a library and has set aside an 80-acre college campus site for future construction.

Two thirds of the 1,700-acre site will be preserved as "perpetual forest and wildlife habitat" according to the developer.

"Before the first street was planned, our consultants evaluated the potential presence of endangered and threatened species, including ones considered by biologists to be sensitive, but not legally protected, such as species at the edge of their native range," he said.

Hundreds of such species were in fact identified, and, in keeping with the holistic approach of the development, a management plan was put in place considering food sources, habitat, foraging, and water availability. The developer believes that not only will these measures protect these species, but "in some cases actually increase habitat suitability."

The emphasis Clark stressed over and over again to the conference was that of sustainability.

"It is an ethic that accepts responsibility for the imprint and the impact of Haymount's development on the landscape and the environment. We believe it is the first major effort to include such a holistic approach accounting for even the indirect efforts of a project, and embrace an entire spectrum of environmental, social, economic, and urbanistic concerns," he said. —

Augusta farmer advocates alternative ag methods

Augusta County farmer Joel Salatin keynoted the Natural Bridge convention with his presentation on "Environmentally, Economically, and Emotionally Enhancing Agriculture." Author, columnist, and one of North America's most sought after farm speakers, Salatin operates Polyface farm near Swoope, the farm on which he grew up.

"With farmers leaving the land in droves, and plows poised to reclaim set-aside acres, it is time to offer an alternative that is both land and farmer friendly," said Salatin. "It's time to opt out. If conventional marketing channels won't or can't respond to our efforts, give us our price, or satisfy consumer desires, then we must redirect our focus to alternatives. We must produce it alternatively and market it alternatively."

"We cannot continue to treat the earth as a commodity. It is an organism." *Trauger Groh*

Farmers may find niche marketing beneficial to their enterprises, Salatin said.

"When we couple lower production costs (via sustainable methods) with a higher sale price through niche marketing, the gross margin becomes large indeed. By wearing the hats of producer, marketer, retailer, and advertiser, we pick up shares normally siphoned off by these parts of the food industry," he noted.

Describing his methods of Relationship Marketing, Salatin said, "Our marketing is not so much moving a commodity, but rather a natural outgrowth of building relationships with people by meeting their needs. What people need is good, clean food at an affordable price."

One deduces that educating the consumer is paramount to Salatin's marketing technique.

"I do not think it is too much to ask that a family that will routinely spend a week and $1,000 or more getting in touch with Thumper and Bambi at Disneyland spend a couple of hours a year getting in touch with their food supply," he said.

Offering customers a safe food supply is imperative, according to Salatin.

"Because of our patron community (buying direct from the farm), we do not flirt with things that the conventional crowd deems acceptable, because they haven't been 'proven' unsafe. We want to stay as far away from risky materials and procedures as possible, not see how close we can come," he said.

As soon as the farmer is removed from the names and faces of folks eating his produce, he is removed emotionally and mentally from the impact of his decisions, Salatin said. He cautioned that when urban sprawl creeps up on farmland, a farmer should not try to evade the new community, but rather use it, and treat it as an expanded customer base. —

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an individual organism, but at the same time it must be partners with the community. People must believe in your ideals and say, 'You have high ideals and I want to support you'. The community must support your farm, and hence your farm can support the community." —

Area youth preparing for annual livestock show

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

FISHERSVILLE — While March was busy going out like a lion, area 4-Hers were busy preparing their lambs (and steers) for the annual 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show.

For members of the Middlebrook 4-H Livestock Club, the last weekend in March turned out to be just right for their showing and fitting workshop. Although an ice storm caused the event to be moved from a local farmer's property to Augusta Expo, no one — neither animals nor exhibitors — seemed any worse for the wear.

The special interest 4-H club for those pursuing livestock projects formed this past November. Although the group meets at the Community Center in Middlebrook, members come from Deerfield, Craigsville, Stuarts Draft, and Greenville, as well as "the greater metropolitan Middlebrook area." Membership in the club is open to anyone age 9-19 in Augusta County.

In its first year, the club has seen participation skyrocket and includes 26 members from Cloverbuds to senior 4-Hers. According to one of the group's organizers, the club is meeting its goal of providing education to 4-Hers about their livestock projects.

51st annal 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show
May 1 & 2
Staunton Union Stockyard
May 1, 3:30 p.m.
Lamb Show
May 2, 8 a.m. --Hog Show
9:30 a.m. -- Steer Show
6:45 p.m.
Parade of Champions
7 p.m. Sale

"The kids are eager to learn," says J.R. Coleman, club leader. Joining Coleman at the helm of the club are his wife Betty, Dinah Johnston of Middlebrook, and Claude and Peggy Smith of HCR 32, Staunton. This group of leaders was joined recently by Betty's son, Kevin Smith, who is no stranger to showing at livestock exhibitions.

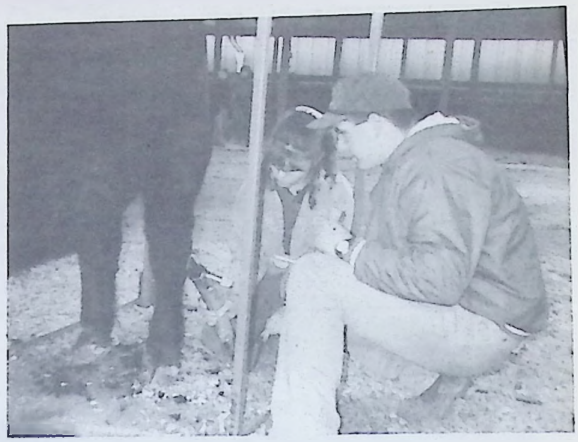
The 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show will be held May 1 and 2 at Staunton Union Stockyard. The 51st annual event of its kind, the show features a three-species exhibition which includes beef cattle, market lambs, and market hogs. The show is sponsored by area Ruritan clubs and the Staunton-Augusta Chamber of Commerce and draws participants from 4-H clubs and FFA chapters across Augusta County.

Interest in the event has always been keen. Parents and club members have found the experience of raising animals to sell at market to be a learning process. This is one of the primary reasons the Middlebrook club was formed, according to Coleman.

Since the club formed in November, monthly meetings have featured a variety of speakers who have presented information to help members learn about their projects. A representative of the local farmers' cooperative spoke to the group about feeds and nutritional requirements of animals. A swine producer came to tell members about raising hogs to show and sell. A member of the Market Animal Show buyers' committee presented a program about the sales procedure at the show and helped club members learn about finding buyers for their animals.

But at some point, there's only so much that can be done from a speaker's podium. Although club leaders had visited with members to observe the progress of their livestock, it seemed appropriate that the members be given an opportunity to get some real "hands-on" experience with some of the finer details of fitting and showing. It was from this standpoint that the club decided to hold a two-day showing and fitting workshop to help its members develop their skills in preparing animals for the show.

On the first day of the fitting and showing clinic, club members brought 15 show steers to Expo for a full day of primping. Blocking chutes were set up and veteran fitters demonstrated how to clip animals for show. "Full body clips" were the order of the day as it seemed that every inch of every animal was clipped, trimmed, combed, and then, clipped, trimmed and combed again. The feet, legs, tails, hindquarters, bellies, backs, shoulders, necks, briskets, heads, and muzzles of each calf were clipped or shaved close to the hide. Members had their turn at trying out the clippers so they might learn how to do some of the real work in getting steers ready for show.



Kevin Smith, right, of HCR 32, Staunton, gives Amanda Hemp of Middlebrook some tips on clipping her steer in preparation for the 51st annual 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show to be held May 1 and 2 at Staunton Union Stockyard. Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton

"For some of the smaller kids, it's hard," said Coleman. "They just aren't big enough yet to do some of this stuff, and the parents help out a lot. But they've got to learn, and this is the best way for them to learn."

Once steers were clipped and trimmed, they weren't "turned and done" until each had spent a few minutes on Kent Burch's cattle lift. Looking somewhat like a carnival ride, the lift operated off hydraulics. Steers were placed on the lift in a standing position and strapped into place. Once secure, a steer was picked up off the ground by the lift

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J.R. Coleman of HCR 32, Staunton, shears a lamb during a recent fitting and showing clinic held by members of the Middlebrook 4-H Livestock Club.

Sam Leonard, left, and Donnie Johnston, both of Middlebrook, put the finishing touches on a steer being prepared for the Market Animal Show.

•Show

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and turned horizontally, its feet positioned upward for trimming. Burch, of Shenandoah Caverns, took special care in trimming each hoof and then filed them down to a smooth and level finish. The pedicure, which lasted no more than a few minutes, is done to improve the steers' stance and walk.

With the steers' grooming tended to, the group adjourned until the following afternoon when they returned to Expo, this time with 16 show lambs in tow. Veteran sheep showmen Jim Ashby of Churchville and Burke Simmons of Fort Defiance gave club members a full afternoon of training on the finer points of sheep showing.

Ashby began the session by explaining proper fitting techniques to club members. With a lamb harnessed into position on a fitting table, Ashby went over the animal inch by inch explaining to club members the proper ways to fit a lamb for showing.

With all the pre-show preparation out of the way, club members were put to the test when they were instructed by Ashby and Simmons to bring their lambs into the "show ring" for judging. Experienced exhibitors went first, moving their lambs into position, setting them up, and taking instruction from Ashby and Simmons on proper show techniques. First-time exhibitors observed, using the opportunity to pick up some valuable examples from their veteran counterparts.

When the experienced participants had completed their paces, first-time exhibitors brought their lambs into the "show ring" to be scrutinized by Ashby and Simmons. The two senior showmen worked with each participant to show them how to position the lamb's feet, how to make it walk, and what to look for during judging.

"When you go in that ring, there're only three things that matter," said Ashby, "you, your lamb, and the judge. Don't be looking at Momma outside the ring or this friend or that friend. You pay attention to your lamb and the judge."

While a great deal of the emphasis in the show is placed on picking the top animals being exhibited, there is also incentive for members to do their best exhibiting livestock regardless of its conformation. Six showmanship awards — one for the top junior and senior showmen in each of the three species — are presented to the individuals who do the best job fitting and showing their animals. These prizes take the form of $100 U.S. Savings Bonds for each of the six winners and are sponsored by *Augusta Country*.

Once the club members had been in and out of the "show ring" a number of times, the weekend workshop again turned to a hands-on fitting clinic for participants. Lambs were placed on fitting tables and sheared of their heavy wool coats. Throughout the remainder of the afternoon, exhibitors and their parents learned about all the "dos and don'ts" of lamb showing and fitting.

This year's show features one of the biggest classes ever of steers, 155 of the animals having been registered and weighed in November. Lamb and hog numbers are steady with what they have been in past years with 198 lambs and 80 hogs registered for the show. More than 100 exhibitors will be participating in this year's event.

Market prices on steers and hogs have fallen off sharply during the past year, so exhibitors will need all the help they can get from buyers in order to break even on their livestock projects, said Rick Heidel, Augusta County Extension agent. He pointed out, however, that this is part of the project's learning experience and that club members are expected to find a market for their animals by soliciting buyers to bid on the animals.

Anyone interested in obtaining information about purchasing livestock exhibited in the show by 4-H and FFA members should call 245-5750. The show's buyers' committee also accepts donations from individuals who want to support the youth in their projects. These donations are pooled into a fund which is used to buy some animals when they are sold.

Buyers have the option of retaining ownership on animals bought for slaughter, or they can be "floored" which sends animals to slaughter with a packing house assuming responsibility for processing the carcasses. All exhibited animals will be auctioned at a sale to be held on the evening of the event's second day.

The show will get under way at 3:30 p.m. on May 1 with the lamb show. Hogs will be exhibited beginning at 8 a.m. on May 2 with the steer show to follow at the conclusion of the hog show at about 9:30. A Parade of Champions will precede the sale on Thursday night. The parade is set to begin at 6:45 p.m. with the sale to follow at about 7 p.m. —

Jim Ashby of Churchville points out the proper fitting techniques for a market lamb to a group of 4-Hers at a recent fitting and showing clinic held at Augusta Expo.

Burke Simmons, left, of Fort Defiance, "judges" a lamb exhibited by Josh Smith of HCR 32, Staunton. Simmons was helping novice exhibitors learn how to show their lambs for the upcoming 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show.

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Funding primary concern at SWCD meeting

By JEFF ISHEE

VERONA — Over 60 representatives of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) recently gathered for their spring meeting.

Jack Frye, director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)/Division of Soil and Water Conservation, addressed the gathering concerning the department's current and prospective projects. Funding for Soil and Water Conservation Districts was of critical interest due to current fiscal constraints placed on most branches of state government.

"We have about $200,000 to fund the Soil Survey Program, and we are trying to add about $60,000 to pay for everything necessary to keep three soil scientists in the field. We also had to spend $180,000 to complete a dam," he said.

By laying out all the DCR requirements for budget support, as well as the constraints, it was evident to those in attendance that every DCR dollar is being evaluated carefully.

Peter Larkin, standing in for Congressman Bob Goodlatte, R-6th, updated the gathering on the Farm Bill by saying it "encourages the farmer to plant for the market rather than the government." Larkin went on to say, "People are fed up with complicated government bureaucracy, and this Farm Bill includes new concepts such as an environmental acreage program, which will actually be an incentive to farmers. This bill will also end the idle acreage program. Overall, the Farm Bill is a bounty of good news for rural Virginia."

Del. Creigh Deeds, D-Warm Springs, addressed the audience by saying, "The Virginia we know is a rural farm culture; however, the way of life we know is also an industrial state. It is also a suburban state consisting of more growth, more roads, and more concentration of people in a small area. This directly affects agriculture."

Describing the Agricultural Stewardship Act (House Bill 1329) he introduced and which was recently signed into law by Gov. George Allen, Deeds said, "The Stewardship Act is designed to help both farmers and the environment. It is pro-farm. It is pro-environment. It is pro-rural Virginia."

When asked by an audience member about the state of funding for various conservation programs, Deeds responded, "Those of us who live in the country have a greater interest in preserving our soil, our water, and our way of life. The challenge is in financing these programs. Creative financing for conservation is more important now than ever." ---

Headwaters SWCD offers use of litter spreader

The Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District's litter spreader has been popular among area farmers. In fiscal year 94-95, it was in use for 96 days.

Rates for rental are:

— $80 per day for spreading litter in accordance with a nutrient management plan;

— $100 per day without a nutrient management plan;

— $40 per day for spreading shavings

To prevent the possibility of spreading disease between farms, washing the spreader after use is mandatory. There is a $50 fee for not washing the spreader completely.

To reserve the spreader, speak with Cathy Perry at the District Office in Verona by calling (540) 248-4328. —

Westwood Animal Hospital hosts EPM seminar

By CHRIS MARRS

STAUNTON — Westwood Animal Hospital hosted an EPM (equine protozoal myeloencephalitis) educational seminar March 23 at Ingleside. EPM is a newly identified and often fatal disease that is affecting the horse industry. Presently there is no vaccination for EPM.

David Grandstrom, an associate professor of parasitology at the University of Kentucky's Equine Research Center, was the main speaker at the seminar. Caused by a parasite — sarcocystis neurona — which attacks the equine neurologic system, EPM is considered the fastest growing neurologic disease of North America.

The life cycle of EPM is believed to begin with birds which are eaten by opossums. Contaminated feces from the opossum makes its way into feed and water eaten by horses. Once infected by ingesting the fecal matter, the horse becomes a dead end host for the parasite which is not contagious to other horses, people, or animals.

EPM, if left untreated, is fatal. The parasite attacks the horse's spinal cord, brain stem, or brain. Depending on the area of damage, symptoms of the disease may vary. Stumbling, lack of coordination, a wide spread stance, and even difficulty standing are symptoms of EPM. Other disorders are loss of body awareness, loss of balance, and loss of weight. Often the symptoms resemble another neurologic disease called Wobbler Syndrome.

Diagnosis consists of a blood test, cerebrospinal fluid test, and a Western blot analysis test developed by Grandstrom. The Western blot analysis of serum and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) has proven accurate in detecting EPM. Positive blood tests can mean exposure, with the incubation period being from two weeks to two years. A positive CSF test indicates that parasites have penetrated the blood-brain barrier, and the horse is suffering from EPM.

Treatment consists of using anti-inflammatory drugs in the early stages, along with sulfatrimethoprim and Daraprim. Treatment should continue for at least 30 days beyond the time when the horse stops showing signs of improvement. Each horse requires different lengths of treatments which can be costly. Early aggressive treatment is recommended and considered the best defense against EPM. Learning to identify the signs of the disease, taking action immediately with treatment, and continuing as long as necessary are three basic steps for keeping horses strong against this often fatal disease. —

Picking asparagus along the information superhighway

By JEFF ISHEE

FISHERSVILLE — A group of inquisitive farmers gathered at Valley Vocational Technical Center recently to participate in a session of "Farming The Internet." The day-long computer course was sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension. Rick Heidel, Agriculture Extension Agent for Augusta County, offered a presentation that was repeatedly met with raised eyebrows and exclamations of, "This is incredible!"

Explaining that the Internet is essentially a global collection of computer users (including thousands of farmers) who exchange information, Heidel said, "The Internet allows the farmer to access an immense variety of ag-related information from all over the world."

Some examples of the constantly updated information found along the superhighway presented include market reports, Farm Bill discussion groups, weather patterns and satellite images, beef management, aquaculture, gypsy moth developments, and Virginia Tech Extension News. There are also publications and newsletters accessible to the "Net surfing" farmer such as Arabian Horse Magazine, Successful Farming, Progressive Farmer, Master Gardener Database, Farm Journal Today, and even the USDA Phone Directory.

As an example, Heidel suggested the group research a random topic by exploring the Net for anything related to asparagus. One might think that vegetable growers would know everything possible about asparagus production because of experience, and the fact that they have kept all of those back issues of ag magazines and, "Yes, here it is. I've still got my August 1983 issue that has all the answers to every question ever asked about asparagus production." The Net surfing asparagus farmer, however, has much to glean from the superhighway.

By typing a-s-p-a-r-a-g-u-s into the search field of Netscape (an Internet computer program), within ten seconds the group was presented with a list of over 100 recently published articles relating to asparagus. Ranging from "Pesticides Applicable to the Asparagus Beetle" to "Analysis of the Variety Jersey Supermale Asparagus" to "Cooking a True Southern Asparagus Casserole," it was clear that for a broad collection of updated information on practically any subject, the Internet offers an almost limitless supply.

David Bear, representing CFW Communications, explained computer equipment requirements to the group by saying, "It is very easy to get on the Internet these days. Most home computers come configured with modems, software, and all the necessary hardware to get right on the Information Superhighway." Bear stated that a farmer should be equipped with at least a 486 machine that has a relatively fast modem (14.4 Kbps minimum) to get cost effective utilization on the Internet.

Heidel then illustrated the reality that local farmers can have instant access to a perpetual supply of agricultural information by saying, "The Internet is a global community, and just like your home town there are many citizens, businesses, and organizations that interact on a daily basis... access to the numerous agricultural resource sites should be of immense interest to anyone involved in farming."

Further information on "Farming The Internet" may be obtained by contacting Heidel at the Augusta Extension Office, 245-5750 or 942-5113. To reach Heidel via E-mail use the address rdheidel@vt.edu. —

Green and yellow mean just one thing...

And I'll bet one Mr. John Deere thought of it first

The Garden Path

By Jeff Ishee

Nothing much happened in Middlebrook this week, except the bookmobile stopped by. Had some pretty good books, too.

Then, of course, there was the first blossom of springtime. How enchanting it was to see the first flowers of the year bloom and bring such vibrancy, such intense color after such a lengthy and snowy winter. And even lovlier was to smell the bouquet of fragrance found in God's wonderful outdoors; to hear the bees humming; to see the earth turn brown again under the powerful spell of a farmer's disc. Looking out our farmhouse den window toward the kitchen garden, I see a palette of colors: chestnut brown, Kelly green, saffron yellow, and pearly white. It is a sweet, sweet sight for a gardener yearning for springtime.

Which leads us to an affair dear to the heart (and stomach) of many a vegetable gardener: SWEET CORN.

Now tell me, is there anything better than sweet corn fresh from *the garden?*

(long pause)

Well, I'm waiting.

(again a long pause)

I didn't think so.

Sweet corn has to be the favorite vegetable for gardeners from Lexington to Harrisonburg, from Norfolk to Winchester, and from Key West, Fla., to Spokane, Wash. One of my favorite sights here at Bittersweet Farmstead is to see our children sneaking out to the sweet corn patch during a hot summer mid-afternoon for a crunchy snack (sweet corn au natural).

The sweet corn we know today is a living tribute to both ancient societies and modern genetics. Recent developments in hybrids have given some varieties a candy-like sweetness which puts them in a class of their own. However, many of the traditional and heirloom sweet corns are truly matchless and should not be overlooked by the adventursome and innovative gardener.

These sweet corns are called "open-pollinated," or sometimes "standard" corn. The "O-P" varieties reproduce in kind from seed year after year, which is a trait hybrids do not have. The combination of sweetness and starch in O-P corn varieties gives them a robust taste and texture that is very satisfying; however, one should be forewarned that they do not have the uniformity and consistency to which most folks are accustomed. O-P varieties occasionally (like other things in nature) seem to "adapt" in ways that we don't want them to.

Which is better: open-pollinated or hybrid sweet corn? Well, it all depends on what is significant to you. Old-fashioned O-P sweet corn usually has an extended harvest period rather than maturing all at once. Of course, the farmer usually chooses hybrid sweet corn because he (or ever increasingly, she) wants the ears to mature simultaneously so they can be reaped most efficiently. The home gardener normally appreciates a more prolonged period of fresh-from-the-garden corn on the cob.

The recently developed supersweet and extrasweet hybrid corns are exceptionally sugary and tend to hold their sweetness in storage a little longer than other types. In spite of this characteristic, several old timers in Augusta country say that when their chickens, pigs, or cows are given a choice between O-P and hybrid grains, the animals seem to prefer the old O-P varieties. This may be because of a higher protein content. Or, perhaps, it may be due to the "true corn" flavor. Who knows? If only a pig could talk!

Nearly every gardener has insect problems of some kind, and synthetic insecticides can be helpful with sweet corn where more natural controls are not effective. The deciding factor (besides ethics) is usually one of scale. It's obvious that you can't hand pick the worms off five acres of sweet corn. But on a garden scale (like most of the readers of this column cultivate) there are solutions that are effective, safe to handle, and leave no harmful residue like some synthetic products do.

The only pesticide we use regularly on our sweet corn is Bacillus Thuringiensus (bt) var. Kurstaki (better known by the brand name Dipel). This is a non-toxic, state-of-the-art moth and worm larvae control. The active ingredient is devastating on European corn borer larvae, earworms, cabbage worms, fruit tree worms, and other crop damaging caterpillars, nevertheless, it is harmless to people, pets, fish, birds and beneficial insects. Dipel comes in granular (for dusting) or wet (for spraying) forms.

Oh sure. We get an occasional earworm in both our hybrid and open pollinated corn patches, but that's OK with us. The minor loss is usually acceptable. We figure that if a worm won't eat it, we durn sure aren't going to eat it. If we notice a lot of earworms, we either spray with Dipel, or just hand pick our garden sized plot and toss the bugs to the chickens. Chickens are a wonderful aid to pest control. They are, in fact, the only insecticide I know of that discernibly appreciates a nice, plump worm.

Other tips on growing sweet corn that readers of *Augusta Country* have submitted over the winter include:

— Don't sow your sweet corn until the soil is warm (at least 65 degrees).

— Plant in blocks of at least five rows for proper pollination. One or two long rows will not result in well filled ears.

— Side dress knee-high sweet corn with a fertilizer rich in nitrogen and phosphorous.

— After corn is 10 inches high, hill up the young plants to help conserve soil moisture and reduce wind damage. If you remember, last summer we had several wind shears (near tornado strength) around the Valley. One of the gusts flattened a small plot of Silver Queen here on the farmstead, but the boys and I saved it by going out and individually re-erecting every single stalk, and then hilling up the plants with four or five inches of soil. All I can say is, "It worked."

— Corn earworms can be controlled on a garden scale by inserting a medicine dropper half-filled with mineral oil into the silk of each ear after it has wilted and browned at the tip. This process literally suffocates the earworm. Some might think it "labor intensive," but on a calm July evening just before dusk, I consider it being more of a "once-a-year leisurely chore."

So sometime during the middle of this month, get out there and put those sweet corn seeds in the ground. Baby 'em. Throughout the early summer, treat those plants with a little TLC. Experiment a little in your pest control methods. Spend some time in the corn patch. Observation is the gardener's best tool.

Whether the variety you choose is open-pollinated or a supersweet hybrid, come July you'll be looking at the two favorite colors of vegetable gardeners: lush, green stalks... and deep, rich, yellow kernels of sugary confection. You'll be enjoying that most favorite vegetable of all... sweet corn. —

P.S. Do you think that John Deere may have painted his tractors green and yellow because he knows we like... naaaaaaahhhhhh. What a silly idea that would be.

Selected varieties(by Jeff) of Open-Pollinated and Hybrid sweet corns:

Open-pollinated

ASHWORTH - (69 days) Popular early yellow with 12 rows of bright yellow kernels. Flavor is said to be exceptional.

GOLDEN BANTAM - (78 days) Introduced in 1902 by Burpee. Two or more ears per stalk. Normally eight rows of golden kernels. Ears must be picked promptly at the milk stage.

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN (SHOEPEG) - (93 days) This white corn doesn't have rows at all, but tightly packed, round kernels. First introduced in the 1890s. Makes a very flavorful cream-style corn.

STOWELL'S EVERGREEN - (98 days) Traces back to Native American strain of sweet corn and first cultivated by Mid-Atlantic farmers in the 1850s. Ears are rather large with white kernels in 16-18 rows. Very dependable and remains milky for a long time.

HYBRID

SILVER QUEEN - (90 DAYS) What can you say about this quality standard for white sweet corn? Probably the most popular and dependable hybrid variety ever developed. Normally has 14-16 rows in nice tight husks.

SUGAR BUNS - (70 days) An especially sweet yellow that we've had great success with. Very tender and keeps well on the stalk. About 14 rows of deep, narrow kernels. Freezes well.

KANDY KORN - (83 days) Another standard of excellence here in the Valley. This best selling yellow produces superior quality 14-16 row ears for fresh, freezing, or canning. Stands tall and has good resistance to high winds. Germinates well in cool soil.

COTTON CANDY - (81 days) The white version of Kandy korn. Getting very popular with area gardeners because of its extended harvest period. —

Schoolhouse News

Wolves on the prowl at RES Career Fair

By RES FIFTH GRADERS

GREENVILLE — Wolves were on the prowl at Riverheads Elementary School April 4. But there was no cause for alarm. The wolves were part of an assembly held during the annual RES Career Fair.

According to RES guidance counselor and Career Fair organizer Lynn Presbury, numerous careers were on parade at the event. More than 50 presenters were on hand to talk to students about careers, she said.

"It feels good to have all these presenters here today," she said. A ballet dancer, a farrier, a llama trainer, a wolf breeder, a helicopter pilot, a robotics engineer, and representatives of the Future Farmers of America were among those making presentations to kindergarten through fifth grades during Career Fair 1996.

The 650 RES students spent the day participating and working with career fair presenters learning about various careers. The array of presenters was as varied as the colors of the rainbow, according to Mrs. Presbury.

"We have a race car mechanic and driver, a ballet dancer, a police officer, an equine journalist, a robotics engineer, and a stained glass window maker," she said, naming just a few of the many presenters on hand for the event.

As part of the Career Fair, the RES courtyard was turned into a barnyard. Some 75 members of the Riverheads High School FFA chapter filled the area with cattle, sheep, horses, goats, and a number of other farm creatures.

With roosters crowing and cows mooing in the background of RES' converted "barnyard," RES principal Robert Bateman spoke of the advantages of the Career Fair experience.

"We have Career Fair to help (students) learn things they can do when they grow up," he said. Bateman also noted that career education in elementary schools is mandated by the state.

By all appearances, the day seemed to go well.

"I feel great about the fair this year, because the weather turned out so nice and all the presenters showed up with no trouble. All the boys and girls have happy faces on, so it looks like they're having fun," said Jenna Bocock, an RES second grade teacher who helped organize Career Fair. She went on to explain the initiative behind the RES event.

While teaching at Churchville Elementary, Mrs. Bocock participated in a Career Fair held there. After joining the faculty at RES, she suggested the idea of a Career Fair to the school's administration. Since then, the fair has evolved into a day-long event wherein career presenters for each grade come to talk with students about their professions.

"I liked the idea that Churchville Elementary was using, so we brought it up at RES, and the principal and teachers thought it was a good idea and we pursued it," she said.

Bateman noted that career education is an important part of the elementary student's experience.

"You learn how to read, spell, and all of the academic subjects, but, it's important for you to see careers that might help you to think about things that you might like to do when you grow up," he said to students. "You need to make choices later, and we can show you different things that can help you make those choices."

See CAREER, page 19

Clay Fravel, 15, of Spottswood and a member of the Riverheads High School FFA chapter, takes care of his African Pygmy goat in the "barnyard" at the Riverheads Elementary School Career Fair held April 4.
RES staff photo

Matt Caldwell, 11, and Peter Dubinski, 10, both RES students, tune up a race car during the school's recent career day which featured careers ranging from race car driver to truck driver to ballet dancer. RES staff photo

Shenandoah Wolf Lair sustains heritage of species

Star, an Arctic wolf-white German shepherd hybrid, greets students at Riverheads Elementary School. Star's appearance was part of a special assembly held during the RES Career Fair on April 4. Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

By JEFF ISHEE

GREENVILLE — If there was a lot of "huffing and puffing" going on at Riverheads Elementary School recently, it wasn't because that nasty old wolf was after the three little pigs again.

In fact, as RES students were told by Boe McCarron, representing Shenandoah Wolf Lair, there's a whole lot more "huff" and "puff" to the storybook creatures' lives than there is to their wild canine counterparts on which stories are based. McCarron, accompanied by two animals, Star — a wolf hybrid that is 87 percent Arctic wolf and 13 percent white German shepherd — and Nakai, a purebred German shepherd, discussed the legacy and social practices of wolves to hundreds of kindergarten through sixth graders during the school's annual career fair held April 4.

Bringing a live wolf into the same room with hundreds of children might seem perilous; however, McCarron's animals exhibited extreme composure throughout his presentation.

"The wolf is not a dog," McCarron told RES students. Pointing out that the wolf is believed to be an ancestor of the domestic dog, he said, "Domestic dogs such as collies, German shepherds, and rottweilers have been through 10,000 to12,000 years of domestication. They have been molded and shaped for specific qualities. The greyhound is built for running, because we have bred that dog for that specific trait. The German shepherd is bred for guarding, tracking, and general protection. The border collie is bred for its herding instincts. Domesticated dogs need us for survival, and they generally love to obey commands."

The wolf, however, has not been through any domestication, according to McCarron.

"They will not obey verbal commands," McCarron explained. "Wolves are very socialized, but not domesticated. What I mean by that is that wolves in the wild live in packs. Now boys and girls, what I should say is that a pack of wolves is just a family of wolves. Doesn't 'family' sound better?"

Keeping their eyes on the sleek white wolf, the children then heard McCarron declare, "In every family, there is a hierarchy of socialization. At home, your parents are the "alpha pair." The alpha pair controls everything that happens with the family, such as where they live and what they do. And just like you

See WOLVES, page 19

Talented seniors contribute to Gladiator wrestling team

By ELIJAH WARD

GREENVILLE -- As they closed another successful wrestling season, the Riverheads Gladiators have many people to credit with their success. However, as with any good organization, the team would be nowhere without its senior leadership. This year the Gladiators bid farewell to three top athletes; Ryan Barnett, Larry Neff, and Bo Davis.

Ryan Barnett is unique among the three grapplers. While many wrestlers spend five to 10 years preparing for high school wrestling, Ryan is a third-year wrestler having only started as a sophomore. In that short time he has accomplished many things. His sophomore year he went from knowing nothing of wrestling in November to being a state tournament qualifier in February. His junior year he wrestled 103 pounds and was district champion and second in the region and state.

This year was an interesting saga for Ryan. He jumped three weight classes from 103 pounds to 125 pounds. After placing second at such a low weight and then jumping that far, a repeat of the successful 94-95 season was hard to foresee. However, Ryan lost only a few matches so he was a contender for the district title. He narrowly lost the title to Sean Jones of Buffalo Gap.

Tragically, Sean was killed five days later as the regional tournament loomed. As Ryan says, "After Districts, I worked hard to meet Sean in the finals at regionals. I had never had a death that close to me. It made focusing on wrestling, tough but I knew I had to push that aside." He then went on to place fourth in the state. Ryan plans to attend Virginia Tech and major in engineering.

Larry Neff has been an RHS powerhouse for 4 years. His record of 113 wins to 9 losses is like a basketball player scoring 1,000-career points. In addition, he has twice been a state champion -- an extremely rare feat. He also holds the school record for the quickest pin at 6 seconds. To quote Coach Pollock, "Larry is like a guaranteed 6 points." As teammate Ryan said, "He's the toughest guy I've ever met."

Bo Davis is the third of the big troika. He also has had an outstanding career including a state title at heavyweight. He holds the school record for the most pins in a season. He had 27 in the 93-94 season. His plans "definitely" include wrestling, perhaps at Elon College. The Gladiators will definitely have to work hard to make up the loss of these very successful three seniors. ---

Spring sports enthusiasts have little elbow room

By KIM WILSON

GREENVILLE -- As always with the start of spring comes spring sports, and the hassle over where to practice. However, there is another sport looking for practice areas this year and that is soccer.

This year soccer is a varsity sport unlike last year when it was just intramural. That brings the varsity spring sport count to seven. Other sports include girls' and boys' tennis, boys' and girls' track, softball and baseball. Not only do these teams have to be considered, but there are also junior varsity track teams for boys and girls, junior varsity baseball, and a girls' soccer team.

Practicing is a must for all of the sports, and that is sometimes easier said than done. When it is nice outside there usually is not much of a problem. The two tennis teams share the three courts, all the track teams use the track, softball and varsity baseball use the diamonds, and soccer uses the football field and practice field. JV baseball gets left out a little, but they do find a place to practice.

As far as varsity tennis goes, it does get to be a pain sharing three tennis courts between 14 girls and 10 boys. Other than that, things are fine until it rains. Then try getting a place to practice inside. Girls' tennis goes up to RES, boys' tennis heads to a classroom, and other teams have to share the halls, the gym, or cancel practice.

Spring sports are a lot of fun when you can finally get around to playing. Hopefully, with all the new construction, future students won't have this problem. Good luck to all the teams, and good luck finding a place to practice. ---

Simon's 'The Good Doctor' coming to Buffalo Gap stage

By NICKY MADDOX

SWOOPE -- Buffalo Gap High School's drama department will stage Neil Simon's comedy, "The Good Doctor" May 11 at the school.

This play takes place in Russia and consists of many tiny skits put into a two-act play. All of the skits are held together by the narrator, played by Cutch Tuttle. Many of the skits have a lax sense of humor, if not a fall-on-the-floor-laughing humor. The characters range from a desperate woman, played by Beth Sprouse, pushed over the edge of insanity, to a man, played by Nicky Maddox, obsessed with nostril problems.

Special concessions including Russian tea, coffee, cookies, and sparkling cider in champagne glasses will be served during the play's intermission. Admission price for the May 11 performance is $2.50. There will be a special sneak-peak performance May 10 with an admission price of $2. Times for the performances will be announced. Call BGHS at 337-6021 for information about show times. ---

Festival showcases fine arts

RHS staff report

STUARTS DRAFT -- The Augusta County Schools Fine Arts Festival was held March 29-30. There were inspiring performances by All-County Elementary Chorus, All-County Middle School Band, All-County High School Band and displays of art.

June Bosserman, RHS art teacher, selected some of her more prestigious students' art work to be displayed.

On Friday evening a parent commented that, "I could've listened to the music forever."

"Practicing for about 10 hours was very tiring, but the sound and quality of the music was worth it," said Christine Manley, RHS band member, who participated in the festival. ---

•Career

Continued from page 18

Students queried Bateman on his career choice.

"When you were little did you have a career fair?" one student asked. "Why did you want to be a principal?" said another.

Mr. Bateman said he didn't remember having a career day when he was an elementary-aged student. He noted that his career choice was probably tied to his adult role models.

"My grandmother was a teacher, and my parents were teachers," he said, "so I grew up around school and had a lot of interest in it."

Activities throughout the day were so fast paced that at least one teacher had to stop to change her shoes.

While race car drivers were telling students about making laps around the big oval and pulling in for pit stops to change tires, Bocock found herself in need of a pit stop.

"My feet were killing me!" she told fifth grade students after spending most of the morning seeing to the many details of the annual career event. By noon of that day the teacher said her feet "were so tired from running around to different areas" that she had to change shoes.

"These new shoes feel wonderful!" she exclaimed with relief.

Mrs. Bocock noted that in helping to organize Career Fair she invites career presenters and helps plan the school-wide assembly. Making its second appearance in as many years was a National Guard helicopter and its crew from Richmond.

Students asked Bocock to choose her favorite career presenter.

"I like the National Guard soldiers here today," she said. "The neat thing about the National Guard is that they are peacekeepers. Their job is not to go off and start wars, but to stop wars."

Meanwhile, students found one of their teachers "horsing around." Guidance counselor Presbury said it most likely would have been the equines which would have caught her fifth-grade attention.

"When I was young, I loved horses," she said. "If I were in your place today, I would probably be out there with the FFA group where the horses are."

Among career presenters was Augusta Country publisher and editor Betty Jo Hamilton who spoke to RES fifth-grade students. Students were curious as to what she likes about her career.

"When the issue is done, and done correctly it means that I've accomplished what I set out to do," she told the students.

By all accounts, and according to some RES students, the day was a success.

Josh Root spent part of the morning working with his mother who is a nurse at Augusta Medical Center in Fishersville.

"I've learned some new things about her job I didn't know before," he said.

"I enjoyed it a bunch," said RES fifth grader Jeremy Arehart of his Career Fair experience.

Each installment of Career Fair has seen improvement over the previous year, according to organizers. The '96 version was no different. Bateman commended Career Fair organizers for their work in putting together the event.

"It has gone incredibly smooth," he said.

Midway through the morning Presbury noted she was pleased with this year's effort.

"Everything is going well, especially the weather," she said. "You can't control the weather, or a lot of other things; but everything has turned out perfectly today. This is one of the best fairs we've ever had. But they have all been good." —

This article is a compilation of stories written by Riverheads Elementary School fifth-grade students who participated in a career session led by Augusta Country *publisher and editor Betty Jo Hamilton and marketing director Jeff Ishee during the RES Career Fair.*

•Wolves

Continued from page 18

might have an older brother or sister, a wolf pack has a line of seniority also. Some people call it a chain-of-command."

McCarron demonstrated the social differences between a wolf and a German shepherd by walking the two animals directly through the throng of seated children.

"If you'll observe the body language of Star (the wolf), she has her ears back, her tail wagging, and a happy expression on her face. She is happy to see all of you. She is gentle and very sociable," McCarron pointed out to the students. "Now, when you observe my trained German shepherd Nakai, his tail is very still. He does not stop to be sociable. His ears are alert, because he does not know you. He is really not interested in you. He is interested only in me, because he has been domesticated and is totally bonded to me."

The contrast between the two animals was certainly apparent, even to the youngest children in the group.

McCarron summarized his discourse by telling the RES students: "Our ancestors tried to eliminate the wolf, because they were scared to death of it. We have come up with fairy tales that lead us to believe that wolves are all bad, that they are vicious, and that they kill people. What really gets human beings mad is that the wolf steals our food, and anything that steals our food we want to get rid of. But, boys and girls, the wolf is at home in nature. It is a powerful predator that helps keep the food chain in balance. The wolf is there for a reason."

Only two species of wolves remain in the wild today, the gray, or timber, wolf (C.lupus), and the red wolf (C. rufus). Once among the most widespread mammals outside the tropics, the wolf is now found in substantial numbers only in a few regions in Europe, Asia, and North America.

For information about wolves or to schedule a presentation, call 540/867-9119 or write Shenandoah Wolf Lair, Rt. 1, Box 318-B, Fulks Run, Va. 22830. —

Here, there, everywhere

Historical Society speaker portrays Staunton of the 1950s

By VERA HAILEY

STAUNTON — Imagine Staunton a half a century ago — in a time before the Blue Ridge Parkway had been completed, when trains passed through the city six times a day, and the automobile traffic at the underpass created "the worst bottleneck in the state!"

Much is recognizable to our late 20th century eyes, but there were also big differences between that city, thriving and bustling in a post-war boom, and today's dispersed city. This was the Staunton presented by Patricia Menk to a crowd of more than 150 at the first-ever Augusta County Historical Society banquet held recently at Ingleside.

Menk is a retired professor of history at Mary Baldwin College where she taught from 1952-1981. She is author of *To Live in Time: The Sesquicentennial History of Mary Baldwin College*. In addition, she is a former mayor of Staunton and has been active in a variety of local history projects, including the Staunton Bicentennial Commission.

In her ACHS speech, Menk gave an overview of life in Staunton in the 1950s. A synopsis of her speech gives one a general idea of what life in the mid-20th century was like for Smalltown, America. It was a decade devoid of interstates and malls, but where downtown streets were thronged with shoppers. It was a town where no leash laws existed, and pets roamed freely. Horses could still be seen in the city, and a horse racing track adjacent to the lake at Gypsy Hill Park included a round barn nearby. Staunton hosted a six-day agricultural state fair complete with fireworks, acrobats and seven entertainment centers on the midway.

In 1945 the city census counted 19,927 residents. The most recent census, in 1990, shows only a modest increase, to 24,461, despite annexations which took a city of just 4.5 square miles and expanded it to 20 square miles. The reason, according to Menk, was that in 1950 houses and businesses were compact and close in proximity. The needs of the entire city were met by an area four blocks long and six blocks deep. Today the area is much more dispersed.

The cultural face of the city was different at mid-century. Segregation was still evident, but the walls of separation were slowly crumbling. City facilities open to African Americans were designated with a "C" in directories. Montgomery Hall Park became the center of the African American community. Minority-owned businesses such as the funeral home and catering businesses flourished.

The 1950s was the decade that brought dial service to Staunton's 9,200 telephones. After weeks of instruction in the media, the service was activated. One no longer heard the friendly operator's voice when making a call. The phone numbers also began with 5, which was followed by four digits.

But technology appeared in fits and starts. Of the 60 miles of city streets, 50 miles were paved, but only 25 percent of homes had indoor plumbing.

Automobile sales and service, tires and parts were in abundance.

Staunton was a compact, interrelated city with businesses and families clustered together. It was the government and financial hub of Augusta County. Banks in the city bragged that none of them had failed during the Depression. Schools started with the first grade and were very crowded. The Stonewall Jackson School was on a double shift with different groups of students reporting to school in the mornings and afternoons. The same teachers taught all day.

There were 20 barbershops, including two "C" shops, in 1950. By comparison, the 1994 telephone book showed only seven.

Parents in the 1950s took their children to full service shoe stores where an x-ray machine would make sure the shoes fit the bones of the foot.

On May 15, 1950 the Skyline Drive-In Theater opened. The Dixie and the Visulite were already open in the city. Movies were not shown on Sunday.

Much of Menk's information came from the archives of local newspapers, which printed two editions daily to keep up with all the news. A yearly subscription was $5 and individual copies sold for 15 cents per issue. In September, 1950 the paper started publishing stock quotations. Cigarette and beer ads were abundant. One ad boasted, "Not a single case of throat irritation due to Camels."

All babies in the birth announcements were born to married parents. Few pictures of women or African Americans appeared in the newspaper. Prices from days' past: permanent wave —$6.50, bananas — $.15 per pound, man's suit - $35.

A lady at a local department store was available to measure women for corsets so they could be fitted for "fashion and comfort." A six-room house with four acres sold for $3,250 — $500 down and $50 per month.

A fully equipped new Dodge car cost $1,895.

Life at mid-century was not always idyllic, however. In 1950 a polio epidemic started in Wythe County and spread northward to Augusta County. Over 500 cases were reported statewide, with several in Staunton. No one knew how to treat or cure the disease. A mail order catalog sold wallpaper impregnated with DDT to protect children from polio.

The new King's Daughters' Hospital, backed by an enormous amount of community support, opened in 1951. Everyone participated, donated and volunteered. An upscale women's dress shop ran this ad in the newspaper: "Your new dress can wait. King's Daughters' Hospital needs your money now."

In 1951 Staunton's slogan was "City of Tradition and Progress." By 1954 a new slogan emerged that continues to this day: "The Queen City — progressive city rich in heritage." In many ways the new slogan reflected the change and continuity of the city as the nation crossed the halfway mark of the century. —

Augusta Country staff writer Nancy Sorrells contributed to this article.

Mt. Tabor quilt show to feature family heirlooms

Ruby Rosen, left, and Ruth Cline, members of Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church historic committee, show some of the heirloom quilts that will be on display May 4 in a quilt show to be held at the church near Middlebrook.

AC staff photo

MIDDLEBROOK — Family and friends of the Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church congregation will bring their handmade quilts out for a special one-day showing May 4.

Sponsored by the church's historical committee, the quilt show will feature as many as 125 quilts belonging to families in the area. About 60 people will be displaying the handiwork of their families and will be on hand to tell about the quilts. Catalogues also have been prepared detailing information about each quilt.

The show will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with articles on display throughout the church building. Other items such as wall hangings will be displayed, and the show also will feature a textile exhibit to include needlepoint, cross stitch, embroidery, tatting, applique, coverlets and hook rugs. Demonstrations of tatting and quilting will be ongoing throughout the day.

Mt. Tabor last held a quilt show in 1988 to open the church's sesquicentennial celebration. The 1996 version of the show will benefit historic preservation projects and future restorations at the church which is located 1 mile west of Va. 252 (Middlebrook Road) on Va. 694.

Admission to the show is $3, and lunch will be available. Co-organizers of the event are Ruth Cline, Ruby Rosen, and Gary Rosen. —

Local DAR chapters present 1996 Good Citizen awards

AC staff report

STAUNTON — The Beverley Manor and The Col. Thomas Hughart chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution presented their annual Good Citizens Award to six area high school seniors recently. Receiving awards from the Beverley Manor chapter were Christina Tarullo of Robert E. Lee High School and Kathryn Mawyer of Wilson Memorial High School. Recipients of the Hughart chapter awards were Ryan Durham of Buffalo Gap High School, Beth Ashby of Fort Defiance High School, Paul Arehart of Riverheads High School, and Bill Sterrett of Grace Christian School.

In order to qualify for and win the Good Citizens Award, a student must demonstrate academic achievement and involvement in extracurricular activities and community service. Also, each entrant must write and submit an essay on some aspect of citizenship. The topic is unknown to the student before they begin writing. The essay must be written at school, in one draft, under the proctoring of a guidance counselor.


TARULLO


MAWYER


ASHBY


AREHART


STERRETT

Award recipients were presented with certificates and pins during each respective chapter's awards presentations. The competition continues at the district, state, and national level with these six students representing the local chapters in the contest. —

Augusta County Historical Society plans spring meeting

PLACE: Bethel Presbyterian Church, *Howardsville Road*
TIME: Sunday, May 19, 3 p.m.
SPEAKER: Nancy Sorrells, "*I mourn in bitterness: Bethel Church and the Civil War*"

BETHEL GREEN -- Unlike many other conflicts, a civil war often tears at the very fabric of a community, and the American Civil War did just that to the many communities in which the Reverend Francis McFarland interacted. This is the topic which will be explored in a lecture given by Nancy Sorrells at the spring meeting of the Augusta County Historical Society.

The meeting will be held at Bethel Presbyterian Church, located on Howardsville Road (Va. 701) near Greenville, May 19 at 3 p.m. The meeting is open to the public.

Sorrells' talk, "I mourn in bitterness: Bethel Church and the Civil War," is an intimate look at southern Augusta County during the war. The lens used to focus on the homefront is the life of the Reverend Francis McFarland, who was the minister at Bethel during the days of the conflict which pitted brother against brother. McFarland's daily diary, local newspaper accounts, and letters provide a rich picture of what was happening to the region away from the field of battle.

"Although he was a 72-year-old man in 1860 on the eve of the Civil War, he was profoundly affected by the conflict on many different levels and in many different ways," Sorrells explained. "As he watched his sons and neighbors' sons go off to war, preached the funerals of many who never returned, and agonized over the nation he loved, he was moved to pen in his diary: 'I mourn in bitterness over the state of things.'"

Sorrells' is research historian at the Museum of American Frontier Culture in Staunton. She holds a master's degree in local history from James Madison University. McFarland was the focus of her thesis work.

Adding to the significance of the meeting is the fact that the meeting will be in Bethel Church, one of six area churches celebrating 250th anniversaries this year. A short history of this historic sanctuary will be given at the meeting by a member of the Bethel congregation. —

AROUND THE CORNER

Va. Beef Expo, April 26-28

HARRISONBURG -- The seventh annual Virginia Beef Expo will be held April 26-28 at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds in Harrisonburg. The three-day event will showcase the seedstock cattle industry, commercial cattle industry, and related agri-business.

Special features of the Expo will include cattle shows and exhibits, demonstrations, contests, food, entertainment, consumer education and special activities for juniors. About 100 exhibitors are expected to participate in the Expo trade show.

For information about the Beef Expo call 540/231-9163 or write A.L. Eller Jr., Dept. of Animal and Poultry Science, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va. 24061-0306. ---

AARP, May 4

MT. CRAWFORD -- Harrisonburg-Rockingham AARP No. 129 will holds its monthly luncheon meeting at noon, May 4, at Evers Family Restaurant south of Harrisonburg.

Clayton Towers, weatherman, and an "old-fashioned variety show" will be the meeting's program.

All persons 50 or older are welcome. For information call Peggy Goodnough at 828-7497. ---

Braveheart:

Gibson makes courageous effort to tell the true story

By HANNAH SIMMONS

Just in case you have been living under a rock or have just returned from Mars and haven't heard yet that Braveheart swept the Oscars, you may be wondering what all the fuss is about.

If you like epic adventure or enjoy historical dramas or really like blood and gore, you may want to spend some time at your local discount cinema or check out the video of this movie which recently received the Oscar for Best Picture of 1995.

Mel Gibson directed himself in the lead of this romantic action adventure flick and pulled in the Best Director Oscar in the process. Gibson's Braveheart is epic and uncomplicated. For history buffs, the film remains true — for the most part to — to facts.

Gibson portrays the legendary Scotsman William Wallace who in 1300 led a rebellion against English rule. There is little question that the English are the bad guys when, in the first half-hour of the film, they kill Wallace's family, neighbors and eventually his wife. In the course of avenging his wife's death, Wallace raises an army of commoners and leads a rebellion to free Scotland. Spurred on by a simple desire to be free — and this is the true part, Wallace had a concept of freedom and democracy unheard of in the medieval world — the rebellious Scotsman defeated English King Edward III at the spectacular battle of Stirling Bridge where the odds were definitely not in the Scots favor.

So as not to be lost in the crowd of commoner compatriots during battle, Gibson's Wallace paints his face blue. It's hard to imagine Gibson not standing out in a crowd and as to why he chose the color blue instead green or red may escape the viewer. Face painting aside, Braveheart also won the Oscar for Best Make-up. Go figure.

Braveheart is a rather long movie at nearly three hours. Sometimes it feels like it lasts as long as William Wallace's rebellion. Filmed in the Scottish Highlands, the scenery is beautiful and to his credit Gibson did his homework remaining true to the story's facts.

Braveheart achieves authenticity with several gory battle scenes as well as city and town scenes. The actors, however, are just too modern looking with perfect teeth and blow-dried hair to be very believable as medieval people. (But the Banana's mother says who cares! You're talking about Mel Gibson here!)

The story of William Wallace does not have a happy ending, but Gibson manages to add some humor and heart to an otherwise wrenching story.

To his credit Gibson could have made the last scene of medieval torture far more graphic, but he spared the audience the gory details and simply acted like he was being hung, drawn, and quartered. —

Braveheart has violence, some sexual innuendo and carries an R rating. Hannah gives it three bananas.

Country Crossroads

Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin

April, 1996

Dear Maude,

It was very hard to come back to Washington after that wonderful long weekend in Middlebrook. I was glad to have missed the madness and traffic jams that first week of the month, however. With all of our "specialists" who predict and pronounce, we still never can get things quite right.

The powers that be announced that the cherry blossoms would be at their peak the week after Easter so that the festival would be glorious. The trees themselves seemed to have a different schedule in mind, and just up and bloomed a whole week early without consulting anyone. After all that awful weather, one day, suddenly, it was warm, and the trees burst forth, and everyone fled their offices at noon and headed for the tidal basin. It looked like New York City at rush hour. You could hardly cross the streets!

Two of my friends who were suffering from severe "officeitis" were among the first to dash and disappear. I am told that they did not return to their offices until after 3 p.m., claiming bad traffic and other standard calamities, but I know them well enough to expect they spent most of their time stretched out on a park bench (if one was available.) It is a good thing that I was on my way to Middlebrook by then, or I might have joined them. Or at least, I would have taken advantage of the good weather and workers flight to do a little shopping in the empty stores!! It would have been a great time to part with as much money as one would like.

Somehow, the new spring sherbet colors managed to sneak up on some of the stores, who started out with nice traditional navy and white and red spring outfits, only to see their neighbors along the street with limes and peaches and lemons ablaze in the windows. Up went the sale signs, and I guess they were off to capture the last of those fruity shades. But it made for good prices if one wanted some nice dull navy.

No one told all those Cherry Blossom princesses arriving in Washington on the 7th about the trees having changed the schedule, so they showed up full of expectations, only to find those beautiful pink blossoms leaving the trees and being blown about like snow as the princesses shivered around the Japanese Stone Lantern for the opening ceremonies. The falling blossoms turned to real, wet, blowing snow as the girls' week began, but by week's end, there came a beautiful day, although cherry blossom-less, for the final parade.

The girls must have wondered how one city could be such a jumble of contrasts. They did not realize that they were only witnessing the weather imitate the political climate!

Outside of the numbers of visitors on the streets and subways, the city is quiet right now... it always is when Congress is on one of its breaks. Most of my friends grumbled and complained on the 15th as they struggled with those exciting Federal Form 1040s. No one had much time earlier in the year to get their records together, so for about a week, shoeboxes of paper scraps appeared on everyone's kitchen table, and many frowns were seen. I have often wondered if Congress plans those Easter recesses so that they can be out of town at income tax time. I imagine that most of them do not wish to have to listen to what most of their employees have to say about the process.

The postal service gets the brunt of it all since most post offices in the area have special employees who wait until midnight of the 15th, standing by the door with great mail sacks for the speedy postmarking of those precious forms. They try their best to smile at their customers, but generally get only a rather exhausted growl in return. But as soon as that envelope has been deposited, there appear smiles on the faces of those who have relieved themselves of their tax burden.

When I got to my post office at 11:15, there were at least 25 people delivering their returns, but the number usually increases the closer it gets to midnight. Once relieved of their burdens, perfect strangers who meet only at this time of year often join together in impromptu parties. This midnight mailing has become a regular ritual with some people -- I have a few friends who finished their returns several weeks before, but could not bring themselves to mail them ahead of time and miss that last minute camaraderie. If anything could ever bring together all of the citizens of this country with a common bond, it would be the activities of April 15th. Watching all of it makes me wonder what some historian in some distant time will think of such a night... will it be considered some strange kind of spring rite?

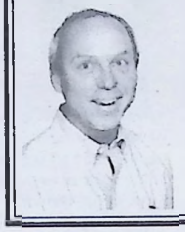
Most years during the Congressional spring break, there is much more cheerfulness than is being seen this time. The regular workers are just plain worn out and enjoying a bit of a rest. Working all kinds of hours in all kinds of weather can wear one out. Then having to part with all of one's available cash in order to keep the government going can take the last of anyone's mental energy. We are now awaiting the return of our leaders, so we can have something new and different to sink our teeth into and complain about.

And, at least for a little while, we will have time to join some of our friends for lunch or dinner (even if we all do have to go Dutch treat) at one of the good restaurants. There is an Italian place around the corner from the office that has been packed every day at noon for the last week or so. But none of the food here is ever as good as what we have every day in Middlebrook!

Give my love to all. I will report on the city shenanigans as soon as the cast returns.

Love,
LuLu

Consider the heavens



Saying grace

By
Roy Howard

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air.
Gerard Manley Hopkins

After the third night of intense, wide-eyed comet watching, my wife, late on this third night, said, in her usual nonchalant way, "This comet thing is wonderful, but you know every night there's a spectacular show going on up there; I wonder how many of us will notice it after all the excitement is over."

It's one of those off-hand comments that you want to tuck away, like a shining jewel, in the mind's treasure chest. Maybe it's because we've had such a long cold winter and one filled with tragic losses, that her words lifted my spirit; I welcomed them as an encouragement to remember and enjoy the essential goodness of life.

How true it is: every moment we are surrounded by wonders of creation that move our hearts to sing and our minds to ponder. I'm certain that the ancient Hebrew poets were star gazers and comet watchers, too. Who knows: maybe out in the Judean desert they witnessed one of Comet Hyakutake's earlier turns around earth. They certainly had enough wonder at the world around them to proclaim with marvelous poetry their gratitude.

"The heavens proclaim the glory of God, and the firmament shows forth the work of God's hands. One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another. Although they have no words or language, and the voices are not heard, their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the earth." (Psalm 19.1-4)

On Wednesday night, after a meeting, I walked out into the early evening remembering my wife's words. Once again I stood stunned underneath the dazzling display in this great beautiful sky. But what's this strange blackened-orange moon? I had forgotten the lunar eclipse! The family came running when I called. We all lifted our eyes up for awhile, and when all had gone inside except me, I stood there alone. Shooting stars, flying comets, the full moon in earth's shadow: what a grace to experience. *"The heavens proclaim the glory of God."* Indeed, they do; and what a profound pleasure it is, in this weary world, full of loss, to stand underneath them.

It's not only the heavens that are full of wonders.
The world is charged with the grandeur of God,
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil.
Gerard Manley Hopkins

Spring is finally here, (or at least the calendar says it is; given what we've experienced this year who knows what weather tomorrow will bring?!) Go to the nearest woods. Bring your children or you neighbors' children with you. Turn over a rock and see what you see. Stare into the gaping hole of old log; explore the leaves on the trees that still survive. Touch the bark. Watch closely the activities of birds preparing their nest, discovering their mates, protecting their young. Look at the ground around you coming to life in a million tiny ways. Stand and listen; just listen. Clear your mind of all the chatter. Be present to the present. Chances are excellent that you will hear a chorus of songs; you will see signs and wonders of the grace that surrounds us always.

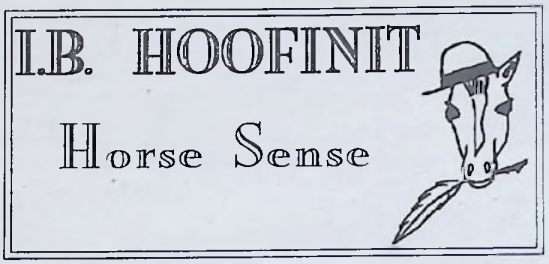
It's this experience of grace in creation that gives rise to wonder and wonder gives rise to prayer and isn't lived-prayer the purpose of our lives? This is prayer that rises above the boundaries of your particular denomination or non-denomination. It happens every day of the week and not just the one hour appointed for prayer. It rises from the joy of life in the daily work and recreation. I like to think of it occurring in the fields, blending in with sounds of farm work. Or on solitary walks at the close of a long day. In the Brother's Karamazov, Elder Zossima links this lived-prayer with the enjoyment of God's creation.

"Each time you pray, if you do so sincerely, there will be a flash of a new feeling in it, and a new thought as well, ... one that will give you courage and you will understand that prayer is education. ... [So]Love all God's creation, both the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love animals, love plants, love each thing. If you love each thing, you will perceive the mystery of God in all things. Once you perceive it, you will begin tirelessly to perceive more and more of it every day."

Every day is Earth Day. Pray without ceasing. —

This horse knows some very important people

EDITOR'S NOTE: I.B. Hoofinit is a fictitious horse character developed by Chris Marrs as a service to teach horse care. Questions to I.B. Hoofinit may be submitted to P.O. Box 2955, Staunton, VA 24402. Questions 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.



An apple a day may keep the doctor away, but there are times when I need my veterinarian. Tube worming and Coggins tests are common to horses, and veterinarians are important to our health and well being. Nutrition is another basic part of our care as well as grooming and exercise. These consultants help me when I find myself trying to answer questions that they sometimes take for granted.

Rick Heidel, Nutrition and stable management — Rick has been an Animal Science Extension *Specialist in Augusta County for* seven years and has conducted numerous *management meetings* on beef cattle, forage and pasture management and equine manage*ment. Rick holds* a degree in agriculture *from the University of* Kentucky. While a student in college, he moonlighted and worked on various thoroughbred farms. He also worked as a groom and showman at the Fasig Tipton and Keeneland Thoroughbred Sales in Lexington, Ky. Also while a student, he was s a member of UK's horse judging team. As a student and 4-H member, he won the 1979 State 4-H Reining Competition and was a team member on the winning state 4-H English Drill Team. As an adult, he has used his past experience working with 4-H by being a coach for the 1990 Virginia 4-H horse judging team and received the Youth Leader Award given by the Virginia Horse Council in 1990. Rick is a member of the Forage and Grassland Council in Virginia. He and his wife raise and breed horses and cattle on their farm. (I've known Rick for over five years, and we both know how important nutrition and pasture management is to the horse. Although we disagree over how much pasture is "enough." I like 50 acres myself, but Rick says I can get by on a lot less.

John Wise, veterinarian — John graduated from the University of Georgia in 1965. He established Westwood Animal Hospital in 1972 with Don Cromer. Snowden Hunter joined the team in 1974. Westwood Animal Hospital serves a 40-mile radius from Lexington to Harrisonburg, and from West Virginia to Afton Mountain. Westwood serves over 10,000 clients for both large and small animal veterinary service. John is a member of the Equine Practitioner Association, the Virginia Veterinarian Medical Association, and was president of the Blue Ridge Veterinarian Medical Association in 1995. (If anyone wants to know about keeping a horse healthy, John Wise is the one I turn to for help. His 31 years of experience gives me confidence, even though I hate needles!)

Leslie Cromer, therapeutic riding instructor — Leslie graduated from Radford University with a degree in therapeutic riding. She went to Orange County Riding Center in California to train in Therapeutic Riding during the summer of 1988. From there she went to Idaho State University where she worked with the handicapped outdoors group and developed a therapeutic horseback riding program. In 1990 she organized Ride with Pride, Inc., of Staunton, a local therapeutic riding program that operates out of Cabin Creek Stables. Volunteers help make Ride with Pride a success, and the program presently serves 25 clients in Augusta County. Ride with Pride hosts an annual Ride-a-thon and attends the State Horse Show at the Horse Center in Lexington. Leslie has been active in working with the handicapped. When Congress passed the Americans for Disabilities Act to make all public places accessible to the handicapped, Leslie went to the White House to show her support. Presently Leslie works at Charlestown Race Track in West Virginia as a pony girl and jockey. She has worked around horses all her life and enjoys riding as well as instructing. (When it comes to therapeutics, Leslie helps me understand how valuable horses are to the program. Riding us gives her clients physical therapy as well as on the ground as a volunteer. emotional benefits.)

Dwight Mongold, walkers — A licensed trainer through the National Horseshow Commission (made up of representatives from Tennessee walking horse breeders, owners, and trainers) Dwight has been a trainer for 21 years and is also a licensed judge. His father was a farrier who shod walkers. Growing up around the breed, Dwight became interested and knowledgeable about them. He has successfully shown several state, amateur, and open champions. He was successful at the World Celebration (which is the National Championships). He is still active in showing the local circuit which includes exhibitions in Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland. He has shown a three-time world champion and a two-time world grand champion in walking show pleasure. Dwight trains out of Waynesboro Stables. (Since I'm not a walker, but an Appaloosa Quarter Horse, Dwight helps me appreciate the running walk associated with this interesting breed.)

Cheryl Rickman Tsakis, Hunt seat — Cheryl has been riding and showing English equitation and hunters since 1963. As a teenager she trained her first unbroken horse under the guidance of top Medal/MacClay instructor Robert Hoskins and learned to ride "jumpers" with Showjumping Hall of Fame rider Harry deLeyer. She has competed on the recognized AHSA circuit and on an intercollegiate team with State University of New York at Farmingdale. As an amateur rider she attended teaching and training clinics with nationally known trainers Paul Vallarie, Tim Kees, and Ronnie Much who have had articles featured in Practical Horseman Magazine. If there is one horseman who had the most influence on Cheryl's riding career, it was the late Hugh Cassidy III. Cassidy served as a board member on the AHSA, hosted many "A" rated shows at his Old Field Farm on Long Island and was a trusted friend/colleague to Vladmir Littauer, founder of the Forward Seat Riding Philosophy. Cheryl was a student and friend of Cassidy's, participating in his shows as well as on the ground as a volunteer. (Cheryl has a friend of mine at her stable named Mikey. He came down with them from New York, and we boarded together for a while at a stable in Staunton until she got her barn built.)

Kim Harris, English tack — Owner and operator of the Bit 'n Bridle Tack Shop of Staunton which sells English and Western tack, Kim has agreed to be my authority on English tack. Kim started riding when she was six years old out at Gypsy Hill Park when Mr. Jones ran the stable there. Her dad owned race horses that competed at Charlestown, Laurel, and Penn-National Tracks. Kim competed and fox hunted while growing up. Today her tack store is a full service enterprise. Clothing, horse care needs, sportswear, gifts, and tack make up some of the supplies she offers. Types of saddles, qualities of leather, knowledge of fitting, and the reason why some saddles cost so much more than others are some questions Kim can help answer. Tack is literally "what the horse wears" as well as being important for control and comfort. Forward seat, dressage, all purpose, and endurance are all styles of saddles that serve different disciplines of riding. Snaffle, pelham, D-rings, full cheek, and egg-butt are different bits which can make a difference in bridle function. Got a question on English tack? I'd go ask Kim. (Saddle fitting is real important to me, especially if you like to ride for long periods of time. The more comfortable the saddle, the more I can enjoy the ride!)

Jay Tomlinson, farrier — In 1993 Jay graduated from Oklahoma Horseshoeing School. His apprenticeships include Roger Robertson, Mike Spitzer, David Law, and he is still apprenticing with Eddie Watson. He firmly believes that there is never an end to the learning process and will continue working apprenticeships. Jay works with veterinarians on corrective shoeing and likes doing "pathological shoeing." He has been a full time farrier for four years and has experience in heart bar shoes used on foundered horses and horses with severe quarter cracks. He also likes bar shoes for strains, thrush, and navicular. (I suffered founder in 1987 and had bar shoes put on me. At the time I had my nose in the grain I thought I was in heaven; boy, was there hell to pay later! There is such a thing as too much of a good thing.)

Parmer Bradley Jr., equine insurance — Parmer admits to being a "farm boy." Growing up on a farm, he felt it only natural to support the industry by becoming an insurance agent who specializes in the special needs of farmers. Working with veterinarians to determine value, condition, and risk of insuring horses, Bradley Insurance Services is one of the few companies that offers different equine insurance packages. Parmer started in insurance around 30 years ago and works with boarding stables, instructors, and horse owners, to help with their special needs. "The horse industry is unique," he says. In working with his clients he finds the right companies that are willing to work with the horse industry. (I was insured when boarded at the larger stables, and it was because at the time my owners had a lot of money invested in me.)

Liz Graves, walkers — Liz was a consultant of mine out of Raphine, but has since relocated herself to Minnesota where she has an all breed training and sales facility. She is the owner/operator of her stable. Her work includes judging on a national and international level. She is asked to do clinics nationally and judges about 12 shows a year. Her licenses include Walking Horse Trainer Association, Judge's License, Heart of America Walking Horse, and WSFI (Sidesaddle Federation) instructor. She has worked on and copyrighted the Plantation Walking Horse Gait and Conformation Standards. This rule book took two years to research and complete. Many groups are adopting these rules today. (Even though Liz is far away, I still appreciate her continuing to help me with this special breed.

As you can see, with help in understanding some of the things I am not familiar with, I am prepared to answer a wide range of questions. Instead of saying, "I don't know," I'm proud to be able to say, "I'll find out." —

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governing body lasts from four to 10 years and states that no new, non-agricultural uses will take place in the district. "These districts are not permanent, but they insure that the land remains in agricultural use," Cooper said. By creating a district, land-use taxation benefits are insured, and farmers are protected from nuisance ordinances which could limit their routine farm activities.

James Hepner, a Shenandoah County farmer, has been active in establishing such districts in his county. "Farmers are an endangered species, but we are the stewards of the land," he said. "I enjoy leaving the land better than how I got it. We must do something to maintain agriculture."

At the conclusion of a full morning's worth of ideas to ponder, the 75 or so participants in the conference gathered together for lunch and an inspiring talk from Robert Whitescarver of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. There was a lot of good news, he told the group in an upbeat speech, but continued work and vigilance are top priorities.

Work on riparian landscapes to halt stream erosion has been moving along rapidly in recent years, and as a result soil erosion in the Valley is at its lowest since the Civil War, he said noting one example of a positive change. In an interconnected ecosystem, this means good news for everybody, including the Valley's downstream neighbors on the Chesapeake Bay.

In an afternoon wrap-up session, Cooper charged the participants with the task of returning to their communities with a vision of the future. "What's missing is a true mission of what people want. Look at your community and think of what it will look like in 10 or 20 years. I hope each of you will go back to your locality and plant the seeds." —

Opening day of Farmer's Market sets sales record

By JENNIFER ISHEE

STAUNTON — "Hey, this is still warm!" exclaimed Andy Gutterman of Staunton early on the morning of April 13 as he examined a fresh apple pie. Indeed the baker's product was as fresh as it could possibly be, having been plucked from the farmhouse kitchen oven at midnight and delivered to the Staunton/Augusta Farmer's Market at sunrise on opening day of the '96 market season. The vendor replied to Gutterman's statement by modestly saying, "Well, our market customers deserve the best" — a market-wide philosophy which contributed to a record-setting opening day.

This example of producer/customer relationship was witnessed several times during the market's first sale day of the season. According to Market Master Marilyn Young, the farmer's market had a very successful day.

"By far, we had the most outstanding opening day in the history of the market," she said. Young went on to explain that it was a combination of nice sunny weather, new vendors, and an extensive variety of products fresh from local farms which contributed to the successful season opener.

Harry Crosby of Cros-B-Crest helps a patron on this season's opening day of the Staunton-Augusta Farmers Market.
AC staff photo

"Some of the fastest moving products were brown eggs, farm fresh bakery products, honey, cinnamon rolls, vegetable plants, and flowers. One of our vendors is even making an herbal hair rinse this year. Another is selling beef and pork raised on his family farm, and yet another has an all natural liquid plant fertilizer made on his Augusta County farmstead. This really shows the diversity of farm products we have available to our shoppers this spring," Young said. The market master said she expects a solid second row of vendors as the season progresses and more fresh produce is harvested.

The Staunton/Augusta Farmer's Market is located at the Wharf parking lot, and is open rain or shine every Saturday through October. Hours are 7a.m.-noon.

Farmers, gardeners, and bakers can participate in the "producers only" market by contacting Young at 540/885-7593. —