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Augusta Country

"FRIENDLY NEWS

FOR FRIENDLY PEOPLE"

October 1996
Vol. 3, Issue 9

P.O. Box 51

Down on the Farm
Pages 16 and 17

SUBSCRIBE AND WIN, PAGE 32!

Middlebrook, Va. 24459

A 'freshet' by any other name...



Hurricane Fran left its mark on the Augusta County area Sept. 6 when remnants of the storm dumped 8-12 inches of rain on the region. Scenes like the one depicted in the photo above, taken near Middlebrook, were all too common as flood waters began to recede.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

Hurricane Fran: One of 'the big ones'



Sandra Fitzgerald, of Cold Springs Road east of Greenville, peers across the chasm left in her driveway by Hurricane Fran when the storm passed through the Augusta County area Sept. 6. Mrs. Fitzgerald narrowly missed being swept away by the water which destroyed the road. See story, page 4.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

By NANCY SORRELLS

They called it a "freshet." It is a word which hardly conjures up terror, destruction, and a turn-your-world-upside-down wall of water. To me the word should be pronounced in a light, lilting voice that speaks of springtime and fresh air and used in the same sentence with Irish Spring soap and sparkling water.

Today we have a harsher, more guttural word for havoc wreaked by water — FLOOD. We even give a name to some floods, linking it either to a region, as in the great Johnstown Flood, or to the storm designation as in Hurricane Fran, and thus create a proper noun complete with capital letters.

But freshet or flood, named or nameless, the same power of water that laid a heavy hand on Augusta County and surrounding areas recently has been felt by local residents for generations. In the days before satellite imagery and national storm prediction centers, the floods often struck without warning.

In Staunton, rainfall amounts were first recorded in 1928 with the official rain gauge placed at Staunton Military Academy. Even though the specifics of the weather were not recorded before that time, the newspapers described the effects of the floods and freshets in gruesome detail. Most often the di-

See COVER STORY, page 4

How to help

Various agencies throughout the Mid-Atlantic United States have set up relief services for individuals who sustained damage due to Hurricane Fran. In addition to calling the local Red Cross affiliate at 886-9151, the following organizations or individuals may be contacted for information about helping with flood relief in specific areas.

Elkton — Rockingham County around Elkton was hit hard. Designated money for Elkton as well as canned food or work crews may be channeled through Joe Carson at Asbury United Methodist Church, 540/434-2836 (work) or 540/434-4141 (home).

Front Royal — Damage in this area amounts to \$46 million. FEMA and the Red Cross are on-site. Help in this area is being coordinated by the Congregation Community Action Project, 540/636-2448.

Craigsville — The community of Augusta Springs near Craigsville sustained the worst damage in that area. They particularly need bedroom and living room furniture. The contact person is Olivia Haney, 540/997-9135.

Moorefield/Petersburg, W.Va. — Call Bruce Macbeth at Moorefield Presbyterian Church, 304/538-2307, for information.

Monetary donations to assist with flood relief are welcome. Help is also needed with clean-up and rebuilding efforts. Clean-up kits, health kits, and food kits may also be assembled and sent to areas of need. For information about how to assist particular areas in need call the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at 1-800-872-3283. In Virginia, call 1-800-747-8920.

•Sangersville residents recovering from back-to-back floods
•Virginia agriculture hit hard -- again
See stories, pages 4 and 5
•Homes in Frank's Mill swept away in deluge
See story, Page 19

Big pumpkin draws big crowd at fair

FISHERSVILLE -- The Augusta Country Fair booth at the Augusta County Fair was frequented by more than a few curious passersby. The booth was had to miss with the giant pumpkin grown by Matt Ishee of Middlebrook as its feature attraction.

Throughout the fair, folks stopped by the booth and took a shot at guessing the pumpkin's weight. When the five-day event was over, 258 people had registered their guesses in the hope of winning a year's subscription to *Augusta Country*.

Augusta Country.

The pumpkin -- a Dill's Atlantic Giant -- measured 72 inches around an weighed 66 pounds. Two people, Chris Munson of Mt. Solon and Nancy Hash of Waynesboro, hit the nail on the head with their guesses of 66 pounds exactly.

Five people were off by only one pound and guessed 65 pounds. They were Victoria Taylor of Rt. 3, Waynesboro, Diane Mules of HCR

32, Staunton, Carl E. Caricofe of New Hope, Cheri Eckard of Staunton, and Mae Glover of HCR 32, Staunton. Cole Heizer of HCR 32 Staunton just missed it by going over a pound and guessed 67 pounds.

Each of these eight individuals received one-year subscriptions to *Augusta Country* as their prizes for guessing the pumpkin's weight. We enjoyed chatting with everyone who came to the booth. Thanks for stopping by! ---

Middlebrook area landowners eye ag-forestal district

AC staff report

MIDDLEBROOK -- An agriculture-forestal district is being considered for the Middlebrook-Newport area of Augusta County.

An informational meeting was held Sept. 19 at the Community Center in Middlebrook to inform landowners about the formation of

an ag-forestal district. Riverheads Supervisor Don Hanger and Middle River Supervisor Kay Frye were on hand to help explain the purpose of the district to 25 people who attended the meeting.

Legislative action by the Virginia General Assembly in 1977 allows the formation of ag-forestal districts which are used to protect

agriculture and open spaces. The districts also are intended to preserve the natural, cultural, and scenic integrity of an area.

The formation of an ag-forestal district buffers an area from development which is not in keeping with agriculture use. Inclusion in an ag-forestal district insures that property will retain land use taxation.

Landowners in the Middlebrook area who would like information about having property included in the ag-forestal district should call Van Anderson, assistant director of the Valley Conservation Council, at 886-3541, Jim Bundy at 886-7968, or Alex Sproul at 886-9485. ---

We'd like you to meet...

Augusta Country is pleased to announce the addition of a new sales associate to the newspaper's marketing staff. Leslie Scheffel joined *Augusta Country* in August and is already contributing to the paper in servicing existing accounts and finding new ones.

Leslie background is a diverse one and includes experience in car sales and leasing and retail sales. She has the advantage of having owned and operated her own business for 10 years. This experience will help her advise retail clients in marketing their business through *Augusta Country*.

Although Leslie is a native of New Jersey, she considers Montreal, Canada as home. She holds a bachelor of science degree from Rutgers University in Newark, N.J.

Leslie resides in Staunton on Lammermoor Drive but says there's an 18th farmhouse out there somewhere with her name on it. We welcome Leslie to our staff and look forward to the success she will have introducing businesses to *Augusta Country*. ---



Augusta Country

is published 11 times each year by
See-KWA! Publishing

P.O. Box 51 Middlebrook, Va. 24459

Subscription rate: \$16 per year

Publisher & editor Betty Jo Hamilton
Marketing director Jeff Ishee
Sales associate Chris Marrs
Sales associate Leslie Scheffel
RHS News advisor Cherie Taylor
RHS News editor Heather Caldwell

Staff writers

Vera Hailey Deborah Sensabaugh
Betty Jo Hamilton Sue Simmons
Roberta Hamlin Lois Skeen
Roy Howard Nancy Sorrells
Jeff Ishee

Contributing writers

Katharine Brown Chris Marrs
Sarah Francisco Penny Plemmons
Beth Greenawalt

Student writers

Heather Caldwell Lauryn Plemmons
Ruth Jones Jenny Roudabush

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The Candy Shop
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AROUND THE CORNER

A.A.R.P., Oct. 5

MT. CRAWFORD -- A.A.R.P. Chapter 129 of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County will hold its monthly luncheon meeting at noon Oct. 5 at Evers Family Restaurant.

The program will be by the Bridgewater Village Choir. All persons 50 or older are welcome. Call 828-7497 for information. ---

Church supper, Oct. 5

MIDDLEBROOK -- St. John's United Church of Christ will hold its annual country ham and turkey dinner from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Oct. 5 at the church. The buffet meal will include country ham, roast turkey and all the trimmings, vegetables, pies, and choice of beverage. Cost for adults is \$9, children 4 to 12 is \$4, and children under 3 eat free.

A Country Store featuring crafts, baked goods, and produce will be open during meal hours as well. ---

Harvest Day, Oct. 12

SPRING HILL -- Spring Hill Presbyterian Church celebrates Harvest Day Oct. 12 with activities which begin at 9 a.m. on the church grounds.

The day will include an auction beginning at 10 a.m. Food, including fried oysters,

country ham sandwiches, homemade ice cream, pies, hot dogs, hamburgers, and other concessions, will be available throughout the day until 2 p.m.

Harvest Day proceeds will benefit church projects. ---

Fall festival, Oct. 12-13

MONTEREY -- Highland County hosts its annual Hand and Harvest Fall Foliage Festival Oct. 12-13. A flea market and bake sale will be held in McDowell and crafters will show their wares on the courthouse lawn in Monterey. A parade of antique and classic cars will be held at 12:30 Oct. 12 in Monterey. Local civic organizations will serve food including chicken dinners, ham sandwiches, apple dumplings, and more.

For information call 540/468-2550. ---

Bazaar, Nov. 2

MIDDLEBROOK -- The Middlebrook Community Bazaar will be held from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nov. 2 at the Middlebrook Community Center.

Nine area church and civic groups have reserved booths to sell home baked goods, arts and crafts, hand sewn items, Christmas items and produce. Door prizes will be awarded throughout the day. Lunch will be available.

For information about the bazaar or to reserve a booth, call 886-1088 or 337-1426. ---

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7:42am - Rush Limbaugh Update
8:30am - Paul Harvey
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12:35pm - Agribusiness with Homer & Ishi

1:00 - 4:00pm - Rush Limbaugh
4:00pm - "Late Afternoons" with Mike Schikman
5:30pm - Paul Harvey's "Rest of the Story"
5:45pm - Winston Cup Today
6:30pm - "Speaking Of" with Mike Schikman
7:00 - 10:00pm - "TalkNet" with Bruce Williams
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Trio of women bring old building back to life

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON — When Pamela Driscoll, Elisabeth Dyjak and Janet Wilkins began the massive clean-up in the 100-year-old building which they had just bought, they found themselves in the middle of a jumble of thousands of old, dusty, wooden hangers. The hangers were left over from the days when the building, located on the corner of West Beverley Street and Central Avenue in downtown Staunton, was a huge department store. In fact,

Timberlake was THE dry goods store in downtown Staunton.

Undaunted by the enormous clean-up, renovation and rehabilitation task ahead of them, the trio took a positive approach. They simply shined up dozens of the wooden hangers, festooned them with ribbons and attached a tag saying "Hang Out At 101 West Beverley Street." They distributed the trademark gift to friends and fellow downtown business owners. It was a typical approach for the three business women who joined

forces to form The Windham Company.

"We are visionaries," said Elisabeth. "We see potential in just about anything."

But even for visionaries, buying and renovating an old commercial building downtown is no run-of-the-mill dream, especially for women. Luckily they had some construction and real estate background to get them going.

"Pam and I had been in a real estate group with four women who built a spec house," Janet explained.

"We had a great time with the spec

house," Pam added. "At first we would go in a building supply store, and when we walked in there was just silence," she said with a laugh while explaining how a male-oriented world reacted to the enterprising women.

Gradually the men got used to a female presence. Pam and Janet were so enthused about their first project that they began looking around for another venture. When Elisabeth, a long-time friend of Janet's, moved into downtown Staunton, she seemed the right person to add some very well developed organizational skills to a new company. "The three of us kept thinking about renovating an old building for commercial space. We knew there were treasures already here that we could turn around," Janet explained.

After looking at one other structure, they settled on the building occupying the corner of West Beverley and Central. Although the three-story structure housed a dry goods store in its heyday, it was most recently the home to a men's clothing store.

The 7,200-square foot building, which was designed by a local architecture firm that included the soon-to-be famous T.J. Collins as one of its architects, was built in 1897. The first two floors were originally used for the department store, while the third was never used for anything other than storage. Realizing that they had an architectural jewel that would fit into Staunton's turn-of-the-century downtown theme, the group has worked closely with Historic Staunton and the Mainstreet Program while trying to restore the building to its original splendor.

"We want to restore the historic integrity of the building while also preparing it for the 21st century. This is a wonderful opportunity to prepare a building to go another 100 years," Janet said.

The trio credit Amy Masterman of Historic Staunton, Jennifer Kibby of the Staunton Downtown Association, and the architectural firm of Frazier Associates with guiding them through the entire renovation process. "Amy was really efficient and professional, and she is delightful and enthusiastic to work with," Elisabeth said of the process that led them through a rehabilitation historic tax resources application. Extensive photographs as well as detailed descriptions of the building's condition and planned renovations had to be prepared.

The Mainstreet Program helped them design a facade that closely matched the original 1897 building front. Finding a photograph of the old facade was a challenge. Perhaps the most photographed historic building in downtown Staunton is the clocktower building on the opposite corner from their building. The women found plenty of pictures with just a piece of their building on the side, but only one clear image of the original facade. That lone photograph, however, was

enough to send the designers at Frazier to the drawing board to create a plan.

Armed with that design, the women moved ahead with a contractor to renovate the building both inside and out. On the exterior, passersby will immediately notice a different, centrally-located entrance, or more precisely the original entrance. Sometime in the 1950s or 60s an aluminum and cement awning was attached to the building, and the entrance was moved to the building's east corner. Taking the building back in time meant reversing that process.

"The most notable change on the outside was when we had that awning removed. The building crew was very concerned about completing the removal at a slow time when the downtown streets were not very busy. So very early one morning Pam and I were here with coffee cups in our hand to watch while they began cutting away steel girders," Elisabeth said.

Another building crisis came with the interior floor. "The floor had a slant and was not functional. It has always had a slant, but we leveled it to make the whole building handicapped accessible," Elisabeth explained.

The third, and perhaps the most exciting change, is the reopening of the Central Avenue entryway to create a spacious, airy lobby and to reopen a series of windows along that same wall. "For the first time ever the building has a North Central address. We are 2 N. Central Ave.," noted Janet.

Working with the contractor to carry out all these changes has been exciting the three exclaimed.

"This is our first venture like this with an old building, but our supervisor here knows we are always really clear about what we want. They have been amazed at how quickly we've made decisions. The three of us have no problem agreeing on things," Pam said.

Events have moved rapidly for the Windham company. Less than six months ago the women closed on the building and in October they are aiming for an opening of the first floor. A Windham-owned business will be housed in the Beverley Street side, while the Central Avenue portion will be rented out to an established hairstylist.

"With our renovations we now have two good business spaces instead of one dark tunnel," Janet explained of the first-floor layout. The Windham business will be The Heavenly Bake Shop, managed by Don Middleton. The Central Avenue space has already been re-



The building at 101 W. Beverley St. in downtown Staunton is being renovated to offer two retail spaces at street level. The building formerly was Esquire Men's Shop, and earlier, Timberlakes.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

served for Endea Distinctive Designs, a hair stylist business owned and operated by Angel Snead.

Endea customers will enter the building through the Central Avenue lobby which will also have an elevator for the upper two floors. Phase II of the women's plan involves completing the top floors and filling that commercial space.

"We are not passive building owners," explained Elisabeth of the group's efforts to fit the upstairs space to the needs of area businesses.

"Actually, we're relentless," chimed in Janet. "We're actively recruiting. We are matching the building with the business or the business with the building. Whichever way, we can design it to match your needs."

"We're committed to getting the upper floors in use. Economically it will improve downtown if people are using the upstairs of the buildings," Pam explained of her group's desire to see the project through to completion.

From selecting the building supplies, to designing the decor of the bake shop, the trio has been anything but passive about this project.

"We all share an interest in space and aesthetics," Pam noted in explaining why the project has taken off.

"We just really believe in downtown. Beverley Street is a busy little street. We observe many people coming and going all the time. And we are going to be right here ready for them," said Elisabeth. Without a moment's hesitation, her two partners nodded their heads in enthusiastic agreement. —



Standing amid the renovation and construction process in their building at 101 W. Beverley St. are, from left, Janet Wilkins, Pam Driscoll, and Elisabeth Dyjak. The women have pooled their financial and creative resources to renovate the historic downtown Staunton structure.



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Water, debris pack wallop in Greenville

AC staff report

GREENVILLE -- Sandra Fitzgerald, of Cold Springs Road east of Greenville, had just moved some belongings to high ground and was walking away from what is usually no more than a tiny creek which runs beneath her driveway. But Hurricane Fran turned it into a dangerous wall of water in which Mrs. Fitzgerald narrowly missed being swept away.

Now the Fitzgeralds' driveway is marred by a gaping hole estimated at 12-15 feet deep and 20 feet across. It will require a 50-foot storm culvert and several dump truck loads of dirt and rock to repair.

Mrs. Fitzgerald had been near the ravine before the road washed out. As she stepped back up to the top of the hill, she heard a terrible noise, and the entire driveway was swept away by a wall of water and debris which had built up on the opposite side of the storm culvert. A few moments later and she would have been washed downstream as well.

Her husband, Sidney Fitzgerald, said that the driveway was put in more than 40 years ago.

"When I tell people my driveway was washed out by the hurricane, it doesn't really sink in to them how big the hole is," Mrs. Fitzgerald said. ---

Sangersville residents rally around victims of third and fourth '96 floods

By BETH GREENAWALT

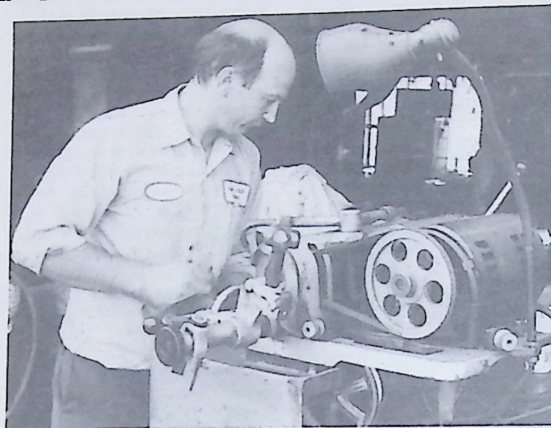
SANGERSVILLE — While victims all over Virginia and the Carolinas are struggling to recover from flood damage, for Sangersville residents it's getting to be old hat. Hurricane Fran was just the latest — and the worst — in a series of floods which have plagued the community. The area has been hit by high waters four times in 1996 alone.

"We've kind of lost track of how often we've been flooded this year," says Susan Kincaid of K&M's Country Store at the intersection of Va. 727 and 730.

"I've lived here 41 years, and I've never seen anything like it," says Dale Howdysell, owner of Dale's Auto Repair in Sangersville. "I stood here and watched it, and I still don't believe it." The garage was invaded in August by 32 inches of water "and a whole lot of mud" during localized flash flooding; less than two weeks later Hurricane Fran hit.

The August flood began with a hard rain which started Monday the 26th a little before dusk. Although the three-and-a-half inches of rain within a few hours was only half of what the nearby Clover Hill area received, creeks feeding into North River reportedly clogged, resulting in flash flooding in areas near the intersection of Va. 727 and 730.

"I was outside, and I could see a white sheet of rain coming across the field towards me," remembers



Dale Howdysell of Sangersville cleans up a valve grind machine following the August flooding.

Photo by Beth Greenawalt

area resident Ranita Cook.

By 10:30 that night, roads, houses and businesses were flooding; by 1 a.m., though, much of the water had receded.

"It came quick; there wasn't much you could do about it," says Howdysell. "This whole area down here has been hit real hard."

In January and June of 1996 the area also suffered flooding. What concerns residents is that the flooding seemed to be going from bad to worse — even before something as major as the hurricane hit.

"We built (the garage) in 1960, and we never had any flooding except in '85, when we had two or three inches in here," says Howdysell. "Now this is the fourth time since January of this year, but the most water we've had in here before was six inches."

Howdysell says he "can't even begin to figure" the monetary damages yet. In the August flood, 19 cars were flooded, seven of them being totally submerged. Five or six cars are thought to be a total loss; in addition, all the office pa-

pers and records were destroyed. "We'll have to start all over, and I've thrown away a lot of stuff that wasn't worth cleaning up." Grimacing a bit, he added, "We wanted to clean house, but we really weren't planning on doing it this way."

During Hurricane Fran, Howdysell was able to prevent further property loss by sealing the garage doors and pumping out water throughout the day.

Friends and neighbors have rallied around the flood victims. "We had a lot of help Monday and Tuesday; I counted nine at one time in here helping. They washed everything out for me," reports Howdysell following the August flood. "We started at 1 a.m. Tuesday night after the water went down. We'll salvage 95 percent of the tools and equipment, although I won't know for some time about damage to the electrical equipment."

Erika Mason of K&M's Country Store also reported lots of helpers — even before she and her daughter, Susan Kincaid, were able to make it to the scene during the August flood.

"We had about three inches in here that time and a lot of mud," says Mason. "The guys that come in the store all the time cleaned it up for us that same night — they stayed up and worked and had it clean for us in the morning."

"We really have good, good friends up here," she said.

The store didn't fare so well during Hurricane Fran, although it was open for business as usual the next day. "This last time, we got about a foot of water inside," Kincaid reported. In addition to merchandise, much of the store's equipment was destroyed. This time, the ice machine, recovered after it traveled

See CLEAN UP, page 32

COVER STORY

Continued from page 1

sastrous water hit in late August, September or October, but sometimes the floods were occasioned by the disappearance of winter, in which case March was a prime month. This year's flood came exactly a century to the month after the "Great Flood" of Tuesday Sept. 29, 1876. Although official rain measurements were not kept, newspapers noted in that year that the Staunton area was "visited between the hours of 9 and 12 o'clock by the most disastrous downpour, flood and destruction to the life and property that has ever occurred in its eventful history." The freshet caused by a deluge of rain was

worsened when the lake at Gypsy Hill Park burst, sending its contents rolling toward downtown. The newspapers described the flood as "A Night of Terror," in which "death and disaster" visited the area. Because of the burst lake, the city of Staunton was hit particularly hard, leading a reporter of the "Augusta Argus" to describe the "terrible calamity visited upon the city of Staunton."

Just as in the 1996 flood, the 1896 flood saw Lewis Creek jump its banks, swamp the Greenville Avenue bridge, and roll through the town. Merchant Frank T. Ware was walking in Staunton when he heard the incredible noise of the lake dam breaking. Pushing thoughts of his own safety aside, he ran down Cen-

tral Avenue ahead of the flood, shouting that water was coming. His cries went unheeded by others who thought they were hearing the cries of a rowdy drunk.

Ware himself was almost swept away as every downtown building within a mile was flooded and the corner of at least one Central Avenue structure crashed in. The Wilkes building, with its first floor filled with coffins, broke in half after the coffins floated to the ceiling; three city saloons were swamped; the jail yard walls fell in, and the sounds of groaning horses from the flooded stables could be heard through the night.

Four Stauntonians, "Horse Rad-ish" Jim Smith and his family, lost their lives in the disaster which was estimated to have created a quarter of a million dollars (these are 1896 estimates and are not adjusted for inflation) in damages.

The county, too, was hit hard by the freshet. "From Greenville all along the South River to below Waynesboro is wreck and ruin," noted the papers. In Avis, between Greenville and Stuarts Draft, P.V. Coffey saw his corn crop get washed away, while the Rockland Mill near Weyers Cave was picked

See CROPS, page 17

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Losses to agriculture widespread in wake of Fran

RICHMOND -- Hurricane Fran dealt a \$51 million blow to Virginia agriculture, according to early estimates from the state Farm Service Agency.

Ruined corn and soybean crops combined for approximately \$14 million in damages. Significant grain damage was spread from Bedford and Patrick counties in the west to Powhatan and Goochland counties in the east, and from Mecklenburg and Pittsylvania counties in the southern part of the state north to Shenandoah County.

Once expected to enjoy the highest prices and the second highest yields on record, some Virginia corn producers took a big hit during Hurricane Fran as it made its way across the state Sept. 6.

Strong winds and flooding severely damaged corn crops in parts of Virginia, including many Southside and Shenandoah Valley counties.

As if that wasn't enough, some farmers were looking at the best crop they've had in years and also the potential for having over \$4-a-bushel corn, Jim Lawson, deputy state statistician.

"We've never had \$4 corn. So it was like a double loss in that sense," Lawson said.

The devastation is on an individual-locality basis, Lawson explained. For those farmers in the river valley areas, the loss is severe. "They're losing everything."

In Augusta County, Rick Heidel, Extension agent, said in excess of 1,400 acres of corn was lost.

But most of the corn in elevated

areas was spared.

"So the broad picture maybe doesn't look so bad," said Tom Stanley, area agronomist at the Augusta County Extension office. Stanley estimated about a 5 to 10 percent reduction in yield for corn silage and under 5 percent reduction in corn for grain.

"Our concern is that we do have a large number of farmers who are along these river banks," he said.

More than \$1 million worth of hay fell victim to Fran's wrath as well. Buckingham and Rockingham counties experienced the most severe damage for the feed crop.

Initial figures show that Fran's impact on the state's multi-million dollar apple crop focused in Albemarle and Nelson Counties.

Fierce winds yanked a considerable amount of nearly-ripe fruit from the trees and knocked down many of the trees as well.

Remnants of Hurricane Fran demolished poultry houses and killed 500,000 chickens and turkeys in four Shenandoah Valley counties.

The North River overflowed its banks and sent one poultry house a mile downstream in Rockingham County. The river entered another poultry house, bringing the roof down and drowning all the chickens for a combined loss of 220,000 broilers, which belonged to Rocco Enterprises, Inc. The storm also demolished a third poultry house in that county.

At the scene of the demolished poultry houses, broiler producer Sidney Grove marveled at how the

river had snapped six-inch thick timbers like toothpicks before carrying the entire poultry house downstream. The giant heap of timbers and aluminum came to rest against a stand of tall oaks on the banks of Silver Creek. The river also toppled four feed bins beside the poultry houses and spilled the contents.

In Augusta County, a Deerfield poultry producer lost 17,000 birds to the flood and a 30 x 124-foot litter shed near Greenville was torn from its foundation and capsized. Work on the structure has just been completed the week before the storm, according to the producer-owner. ---

Information for this article was taken from News Leads, a weekly publication of the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation.

Of skunks, floods and neighbors

By BETH GREENAWALT

SANGERSVILLE — Friends, relatives, even whole communities, joined in our celebration the day our flight arrived safely in the U.S., back from three-and-a-half years spent overseas in Hungary. Fireworks, parties, parades and picnics....

Of course, it might have had something to do with the fact that we arrived home in the United States on the Fourth of July.

We then began the house hunting and job hunting within reach of Harrisonburg, where my husband Dave would be going to school; the problem was to know which to do first.

As we drove the highways and byways of Virginia, every now and then we would pass odorous spots where someone had hit a skunk. About the third time we encountered such a place one day, Dave took a long whiff and said, "You know, I really don't mind the skunk smell anymore. After all, it means that we're back in America."

After years of moves and globe trotting, we longed for a small corner of the earth to call our own. Realtors told us it was impossible to find anything at all suitable in our price range. Bankers politely (or not so politely) turned down our loan applications. Undeterred, we recruited friends to pray.

Thus it was that, by the grace of God (and the kindness of a Staunton banker and a private investor) on Aug. 22 we closed on a

small older "for-sale-by-owner" home on 8/10 of an acre in Sangersville in northwestern Augusta County.

Camping in the living room while renovating the rest of the house, we enjoyed the peaceful farm setting and the small meandering stream bordering the back of the property.

Four days later, on a Monday night, Sangersville was hit by flash flooding. The "little" creek in back ate out five-foot hunks of our new yard and transformed much of the rest of it into a wading pool.

On Thursday, a man from the county's Soil Conservation office came to assess the situation. "You have a serious situation here," he observed, adding that unfortunately there were no funds available to help. While talking about permits and projects with rip rap which were far beyond our pocketbook, he advised us to remove some fallen trees blocking the creek as a first step.

As soon as he heard about the difficulty, Vernon Fultz, who keeps cows in the pasture behind our house, came with his tractor to drag out the logs. Thus we were introduced to one of our new neighbors — who it turned out was already acquainted with some of our old ones.

Glenn Colvin of Greenville had come out that day to help with electrical wiring. He ended up doing everything from putting in insulation and installing paneling to helping pull trees out of the creek. Ap-

parently, he and Vernon used to work together some 20 years back. Then came Hurricane Fran.

Thursday, Sept. 5, we went to bed to the sound of rain. Sometime in the night our electricity went off; however, just that day we'd gotten our gas cook stove hooked up, so we weren't too worried.

We did wonder if we shouldn't try to shift the dog house up to higher ground. It was too heavy to lift easily ourselves, though, and our trailer or even our wheelbarrow would bog down in the soggy ground if we tried to load it.

At first light on Friday, I walked through the driving rain to look at the creek. It was still at a fairly normal level. We talked about going or staying, but decided to stay; everyone said water had never gotten up as high as our house before.

About 9 a.m., just as the boys were starting their second bowl of hot oatmeal, rescue squad personnel knocked on our door and ordered us to leave immediately.

"We're evacuating the whole Sangersville area — we're giving it about 30 minutes. Bring bedding and plan to be gone for two or three days."

With visions of 20-foot walls of water coming at us, we began grabbing up sleeping bags and children — and animals. Already we'd been adding to our menagerie — two cats, and two Angora rabbits (for our son Matthew's projected wool venture) had recently joined Fluffy, the children's guinea pig, and Esau, our Golden Retriever. Fortunately we hadn't yet gotten back our dairy goat, Adelle, nor Lance and Blaze, our horses. They were still with friends in Middlebrook who kept them while we were overseas. Nor had Jon yet purchased the laying ducks he's been wanting.

We thrust Cottonball and Wiggles in with the guinea pig and bundled the cage into the car along with the children. The cats and litter box went upstairs; at the last

History-making hurricanes and floods

Oct. 10, 1804 A famous snow hurricane occurred. Unusual coastal storm caused northerly gales from Maine to New Jersey. Heavy snow in New Jersey, 3 feet reported at crest of Green Mountains, a foot of snow in the Berkshires at Goshen, Conn.

Sept. 8, 1900 Greatest weather disaster in U.S. record occurred when hurricane struck Galveston, Tex. Tides 15 feet high washed over island, drowning more than 6,000 persons. Hurricane destroyed 3,600 houses — total damage more than \$30 million, winds 120 mph, 20 foot storm surge. Surf was 300 feet inland from former water line following storm. Hurricane claimed another 1,200 lives outside of Galveston area.

Sept. 16, 1929 Hurricane San Felipe, monster hurricane, left 600 dead in Guadeloupe, 300 dead in Puerto Rico, headed for Florida's Lake Okeechobee. When storm ended lake covered an area the size of the state of Delaware. Beneath its waters were 2,000 victims. Only survivors were those who reached large hotels for safety and a group of 50 people who got onto a raft to take their chances in the middle of the lake.

Sept. 2, 1935 Perhaps the most intense hurricane ever to hit the U.S. struck the Florida Keys with 200 mph winds, produced 15-foot tide and waves 30 feet high. 400 persons perished in the storm on that Labor Day.

Sept. 21, 1938 The "Long Island Express" smashed into Long Island, bisected New England — wind gusts to 186 mph, 600 persons killed, \$500 million in damage; hurricane lasted 12 days, destroyed 275 million trees. Produced gargantuan waves with 150 mph winds. Waves smashed against northeast shore with such force that earthquake recording machines on the Pacific coast clearly showed the shock of each wave.

Sept. 9, 1944 The Great Atlantic Hurricane ravaged the east coast. The storm killed 22 persons and caused \$63 million damage in Chesapeake Bay area, then besieged New England killing 390

persons and causing another \$100 million damage.

Sept. 5, 1950 Hurricane Easy produced the greatest 24-hour rainfall in U.S. weather records. The hurricane deluged Yanketown on the upper west coast of Florida, with 38.7 inches of rain.

Oct. 15, 1954 Hurricane Hazel struck Carolina coastline, demolished every pier in a 170-mile stretch from Myrtle Beach to Cedar Island, N.C.; obliterated entire lines of beach homes; destroyed 1,500 homes as it moved inland with 17 foot tides and \$163 million damage; 98 killed.

Aug. 12, 1955 During the second week in August, Hurricanes Connie and Diane produced as much as 19 inches of rain in northeast U.S. forcing rivers from Virginia to Massachusetts to high flood. Flooding claimed 187 lives.

Aug. 19, 1969 Hurricane "Never Say Die" Camille left loose a cloud-burst in Virginia resulting in flash floods and landslides which killed 151 persons and caused \$140 million in damages. Massies Mill, Va., received 27 in. of rain.

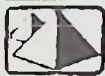
Sept. 9, 1971 Hurricane Ginger formed and remained a hurricane until Oct. 5. The 27-day life span was the longest of record for any hurricane in the North Atlantic Ocean.

June 7, 1972 Richmond, Va., experienced its worst flood of record as rains from Hurricane Agnes pushed the water level at city locks to a height of 36.5 feet.

Nov. 4, 1985 A super wet Gulf storm dumped upwards of 15 inches of rain in the mountains of Virginia and West Virginia causing devastating damage and claiming 40 lives.

Sept. 21, 1989 Hurricane Hugo made landfall near Sullivan's Island, S.C. — 13 deaths, 22 related deaths, 420 persons injured, \$8 billion in damage including \$2 billion to crops; wind gusts to 138 mph; storm surge of 20.2 feet at Secewee Bay. Shrimp boats found half-mile inland after storm. Moved toward Charlotte, N.C., causing another \$210 million in damage plus another \$97 million crop losses.

Excerpted from compilation by Hugh Crowther, Storm Prediction Center



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See EVACUATION, page 32

Staunton woman walks 130 miles in Georgia heat; raises \$11,000 for Habitat for Humanity

By BETH GREENAWALT

STAUNTON — Six months ago, if you'd told Marney Gibbs, 60, that she would be spending the last week of August walking across 130 miles of steamy Georgia terrain, she probably wouldn't have believed you.

"I've never done anything like this before," she said after completion of The Nostalgic Walk held Aug. 24-30 in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the founding of Habitat for Humanity International. "This was definitely a challenge, but I felt good that I was able to do it. I worked hard for a good cause."

By completing the walk, Gibbs, a clinical social worker who is affiliated with Blue Ridge Counseling Associates in Staunton, raised approximately \$11,000 in sponsor pledges to build houses for the homeless.

Ninety percent of the funds Gibbs raised will be distributed through the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Habitat for Humanity, with which she has been involved for the past four years. This local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International was incorporated in 1993 and plans to complete its 12th house locally by the end of 1996.

Ten percent of the funds will go to build houses overseas. Habitat for Humanity International hopes to raise a million dollars to build houses around the world through Walk-a-thon pledges.

"We walked between 15 to 20 miles a day for seven days," Gibbs reports. "I heard someone call it an endurance walk, and that's really what it was."

Gibbs says that the first two days, the pace of the walk was rapid, covering about four miles an hour. "There were a lot of badly blistered feet. I kind of intuitively knew to stay in the back and go a little slower, and I did okay."

The third day, Gibbs said, medics who accompanied the group forced walkers to slow down to an average of three and a half miles an hour.

"The two medics were just lovely people, we became very dependent upon them," she says. A support group of six to eight traveled with the walkers, helping with everything from drying rained-on sleeping bags at the laundromat to organizing water breaks and meals.



Marney Gibbs of Staunton walks the road from Americus to Atlanta, Ga., in a 130-mile fund-raising walk to benefit Habitat for Humanity. This photo was taken the day after a rainstorm. Shoes dangle to dry from Marney's fanny pack.

Jacob Battle, a "wonderful" man from Americus, Ga., served as cheerleader, leading the group in chants and hymns as they marched. Police escorts traveled at the front and back of the troupe.

Approximately 150 supporters of Habitat for Humanity participated in some part of the walk. Between 90 and 100 completed the entire walk. People of all ages took part, including a woman with a baby on her back and a man in his 80s. "There were a lot of 60-year-olds, so I felt right at home," Gibbs says. "Some people rested in the medic van until they recovered and could join us walking again," Gibbs says. "There were a lot of people praying for me. I was really pleased my feet held up, and I was able to walk the

whole way."

Although she habitually enjoys walking a mile or so for exercise, Gibbs said she didn't really know what to expect on such a long walk. "There are these moments where you wonder if you're insane, but you made the commitment, so you just keep going."

Gibbs says she learned lots of tricks along the way. "Powder the inside of your socks, and if you have to walk in heat, soak a

bandanna in ice water and either put it on top of your head or tie it around your neck. If it's real hot, fill the bandanna with ice cubes, and hang it around your neck."

She laughed, "I had read about using ice cubes and bandannas before I went, but I couldn't imagine actually doing it. But believe me, when it gets hot, it helps."

The weather for much of the walk was in the 90s and humid, typical of Georgia in August. The ecumenical group stayed in church fellowship halls along the way. Although there were some initial complications with luggage in towns where smaller facilities forced the group to stay in different locations, Gibbs

said overall it worked well.

"Most of the churches were wonderfully hospitable; many provided meals," she remembers. "One place, we were greeted with a band and singing; in another, with fresh watermelon." In each town, the group, led by founder and executive director Millard Fuller, held an evening service. "In every one, he had so many different, wonderful stories to tell," Gibbs recalls.

The last day, the walkers joined with other fund-raising groups to enter Atlanta together on Friday afternoon, Aug. 30, for the opening ceremonies of the 20th anniversary of Habitat for Humanity International celebration.

"At least 200, maybe 250, of us walked and rode in together," Gibbs says. "There were five different groups of bikers that came all the way from Ontario, Manitoba, Lynchburg, Louisville and Tallahassee, and a couple that walked from Olympia, Wash."

Although former U.S. President Jimmy Carter had originally planned to take part in the event, Gibbs says, "Amy chose that weekend to get married, so he sent a video he'd just made at the Jimmy Carter Work Project in Hungary instead."

Upon arrival in Atlanta, Gibbs was disappointed not to find her husband, John Zinn, volunteer director for the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro affiliate, waiting for her. Due to travel complications with Amtrak, he wasn't able to make it to Atlanta to greet her on Friday as planned. "He sent me flowers at the hotel, though, and got there the next day," she remembers. "So he did his best."

Gibbs says the most enjoyable part of the trip was being with the other participants. "These people are filled with light, just luminous,

caring. I enjoyed my contact with them so much; I met such interesting people." Three couples came overseas to participate, from Japan, Zaire, and Ireland, she noted.

Hugh O'Brian, 80, also from Ireland, had been on all the previous Habitat walks (held in 1983, 1986, and 1988.) "He walked a great deal — maybe all the way — and sang ballads for us at lunchtime," Gibbs remembers.

"Everyone had such a positive attitude, even when they were walking with the most awful blisters. The only time people got frustrated was when we were held back, like one day when we were on Good Morning America."

Even when the group encountered torrential showers entering Barnesville, Ga., Gibbs says everyone kept a good attitude. "The heavens opened, and the rain poured down, but people just kept walking; they could have gotten into the vans, but it was the end of the day, and everyone just kept on. It was just part of the walk."

Although she says she wouldn't trade the experience for anything, Gibbs doesn't know if she'll ever tackle a similar project.

"Do it again?" she asked. "I don't know. It would have to be something I really wanted and cared about, because it's hard work. But," she added, "I'll be glad to share a lot of helpful tips with anyone else who wants to try!"

Individuals wishing to contribute to Marney Gibbs' walk for pledges may send donations to the Staunton/Augusta Habitat for Humanity, P.O. Box 572, Staunton, VA 24402. When Augusta Country went to press, Staunton/Augusta Habitat was in the middle of blitz building two houses on Henderson Street in Staunton with dedication of the houses set for Sept. 29.

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Aaron Blacka of Stuarts Draft works on her "ducktorate" degree at Disney World in Orlando, Fla. A student at Virginia Tech, Blacka was enrolled in the program this summer as part of her course work.

Stuarts Draft woman earns Disney 'Ducktorate' degree

By VERA HAILEY

STUARTS DRAFT — Aaron Blacka of Stuarts Draft, a student at Virginia Tech, spent three months of her summer vacation working with famous "characters" such as Mickey, Minnie and Cinderella. You guessed it — she was at Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

Disney operates a college program and recruits students from around the country to work for the summer. In addition to having an inexpensive source of labor for their busiest season, they hope that some will return to Disney after graduation from college.

Blacka originally found out about the opportunity from an article in *Southern Living* magazine that mentioned Disney's environmental programs. As a forestry and wildlife resources major, she was intrigued. Knowing that Disney representatives would be at Virginia Tech, she arranged for an interview and was called back for a phone interview before she was offered the job. Being chosen was quite an honor, as the competition for the limited positions was fierce.

"I had worked at the (Shenandoah) Acres camp store all of my life and wanted another experience," she commented. Her father is vice

president of the family owned and operated resort in Stuarts Draft.

After driving to Orlando, she was apprehensive and not quite sure if she had made the right decision. "Now I'm really glad I did it," she said. "I learned more down there than I would have staying at home."

Blacka lived in a pre-arranged student apartment complex. Her five roommates were from Pennsylvania, Indiana, Tennessee, North Carolina and Alabama. "It just so happened that I had all American roommates. There were many international people participating."

Program participants had a choice of job assignments. Blacka chose to work as a custodian, because it allowed the most guest interaction. "My job was panning and brooming and cleaning up in the Liberty Square area. Occasionally I would have to clean restrooms for eight hours," Blacka explained. Once a day she emptied all the trash cans in her area, and sometimes mopped up a spilled drink. That was as close as she got to working with environmental issues.

After her initial training in Walt Disney philosophy, she learned to abide by the guest service guidelines. They included making eye contact with guests, smiling and generally being cheerful, starting

each guest interaction with a hello or welcome, preserving the magical guest experience.

All participants received a coveted tour of the famous underground tunnel system at Disney. Hallways underground throughout the park keep vehicles, dumpsters and offices from the sight of guests. The tunnels also house the elaborate costumes provided by Disney. It also gave employees, who are called cast members, a place to relax on breaks.

Seminars were held once a week for 2 1/2 hours each. The college program focused on three areas: the working experience, the learning experience and the living experience. Although she did not receive actual credit hours for her work, they will be recognized on her transcript as a co-op job experience.

The time she spent in sunny Florida was not all work. "On an average day, I was at the pool for a few hours, watched TV and then took a shuttle to work at 4:15 p.m. My working hours were 5 p.m. to 1:45 a.m.," Blacka said.

After successfully completing the course requirements Blacka received a "Ducktorate" degree in management and communication. If she had missed a single seminar, she would have only gotten her "Mouseters." —

Author finds story at the well

By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK — Mary Belle Buchanan passed away in 1985 at the age of 74. "A staunch lady who kept a zealous lookout over her yard," she had lived an average life in the village of Middlebrook, sticking by her principals, raising a family, and tending to her home with care. But she has not been forgotten.

Mary Belle touched the life of Joyce Law Liptrap decades ago, but Joyce never forgot and has authored a small booklet to help others remember Mary Belle.

Middlebrook and a way of life that is vanishing.

"Mary Belle's Artesian Well," is the story of Middlebrook and Sunday afternoons on the ballfield and how a small child learned a lesson about ice-cold well water and, even more importantly, about life while growing up in the 1950s.

"Middlebrook for me was the best place a kid could grow up," explained Joyce. "We only knew to have fun. We worked hard around the house and then had fun. Sunday afternoons were totally free time, and the ballfield was

the lifeblood of the town."

The Buchanans, Lucas and his wife Mary Belle and their son Roger, lived directly across from the ballfield. In their lot was a well with what Joyce remembers as the coolest, most refreshing water in the world.

"The water trough was fashioned by Osie Beard, the Middlebrook blacksmith, and it came from the water box off an old steam tractor engine," Joyce writes in her booklet.

Although the end of the story is a secret, suffice it to say that Mary Belle did not allow children to drink from the well and what happened when a group of kids decided to sneak a drink is told in vivid detail.

"I learned a lot from Mary Belle and about Mary Belle. I did a heap of growing up," Joyce explained.

Although the true story of Mary Belle and the well happened years ago, Joyce's memory is still crystal clear. Putting that memory down on paper fulfills a long-time dream Joyce has had to be an author.

"I have been writing since I was 10 and sending things to publishers since I was 12 and getting polite rejection letters," she said of her love of writing.

Not everything has been rejected, however. Several of her religious poems have been published. She has also fine-tuned her talent by earning a degree at Mary

Baldwin College where she graduated in 1992 with a major in English and a minor in art.

She sees this booklet as one in a series about growing up in Middlebrook, perhaps all to be combined into a larger book one day.

"This little book was a gift to me. I felt I had all the skills, and all I lacked was the printing ability," she explained.

Although small — there are just nine pages of type and four pages of Joyce's artwork — there is a lot packed between the covers. In addition to the story and a layout of the Middlebrook town, a poem she wrote about the Buchanans and a picture of Lucas and Mary Belle are included.

"When I showed the book to Lucas and Roger (Buchanan), they both cried. They couldn't believe someone would write a story about an ordinary person," she said in explaining how her story has struck a chord with local people.

Joyce's creative streak has not stopped with the publication of this booklet. Already she is working on the text and the artwork for another family story. This one, called "Pony Cow," is about her aunt's family of 12 children who grew up on a farm in the Depression and suddenly discovered that they could ride the family milk cow! Yet another story



JOYCE LAW LIPTRAP

idea involves some of the other Middlebrook characters she knew while growing up there.

In order to get all her ideas and drawings down on paper, Joyce rises at 5 a.m. and works until 3 in the afternoon. She has founded her own publishing company, Emmanuel Publications, to market "Mary Belle's Artesian Well," which is available in book or cassette at The Way Christian Bookstore in Stuarts Draft, Middlebrook General Store, and Natural Way Food Store and Heavenbound Bookstore in Staunton.

Joyce is obviously excited about her first publishing venture.

"This is a little book for adults and children," she explained about "Mary Belle's Artesian Well." —

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Winning Cook-Off recipes prove everything tastes good with beef

HARRISONBURG—Cuz's Uptown Barbeque, Cabins and Resort in Pounding Mill was selected as the grand prize winner at this year's Beef Inn Style Cook-Off held recently during the Virginia Beef Expo at Rockingham County Fairgrounds.

Cuz's Acapulco Beef Filet, prepared by Michael Oder, was named "Best of Beef," and winner of a check for \$1,000. The original recipe features both a burgundy mole sauce and a sweet salsa to accent beef tenderloin steaks.

Second place in the Cook-Off went to Eldon — the Inn at Chatham, which won \$500 with Peggy Wesley's Easy Country Beef Cassoulet, the classic French dish streamlined for the 90s. The Inn at Third Run in Lexington captured third place honors and \$300 with Beef Bourbon Union Run, a whiskey-flamed tenderloin prepared by Brian Serens.

Runners up receiving \$100 prizes were The Mark Addy in Nellysford with Dad's London Broil; The Garden and the Sea Inn in New Church with Beef Tournedos with Oysters in Pepper Sauce; and Thistle Hill Bed and Breakfast in Boston with Whiskey Steak.

Entries were judged on their taste, ease of preparation, overall appeal and appearance.

"The wide variety of recipes and ingredients shows just how versatile beef is," noted Andria Hurst, assistant foods editor for *Southern Living* magazine, who was one of three judges for the contest. "In the six Cook-Off dishes, beef was variously paired with honey, vinegar, poblano chili, jalapeno peppers, wine, oysters, whiskey, and even semisweet chocolate. Every combination produced delicious results."

Other judges included Karen Spradley, food editor, *Southern Inns and Bed and Breakfasts* magazine, and Nancy Finch, food editor, *Cooperative Farmer* magazine.

The Beef Inn Style Cook-Off was sponsored by the Virginia Cattle Industry Board in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and was funded by beef producers' check-off dollars. —

GRAND PRIZE

Cuz's Acapulco Beef Filet

2 12-oz. center cut beef tenderloin steaks
2 6-inch corn tortillas
1 sweet white onion, cut into two 3/4-inch slices
1 sweet red or yellow pepper
1 small tomato, chopped
3 jalapeno peppers, cored, halved and seeded
Cilantro
Burgundy Mole Sauce
8 whole peeled cloves of garlic
3 oz. olive oil

4 oz. red wine
8 oz. beef stock
3 oz. soy sauce
1/4 oz. semisweet chocolate
4 oz. fresh mushrooms (Shiitake, Portabella)
Sweet Salsa
1 green onion, finely chopped
1 small fresh jalapeno, finely chopped
1/4 oz. cilantro, finely chopped
3 oz. prepared salsa
2 oz. catsup
Juice of one lime
1/4 avocado, chopped

Prepare Burgundy Mole Sauce and Sweet Salsa (see below). Sauté or grill sweet peppers, tomatoes, and jalapenos until tender. Grill the tenderloin steak filet until medium rare or preferred doneness. While steak finishes, carefully grill tortilla until crisp. Grill sweet onion slices for 10 minutes or until soft. To serve, stack tortilla, sweet pepper mixture, beef filet, grilled onions, and Burgundy Mole Sauce. Finish with a large dollop of Sweet Salsa and top with cilantro. Makes 2 servings.

To prepare Burgundy Mole Sauce: Sauté garlic cloves in oil 15 minutes or until browned. Drain oil; add remaining sauce ingredients. Cook at a slow boil for 30 more minutes. To prepare Sweet Salsa: Combine all salsa ingredients.

—Cuz's Uptown Barbeque Cabins & Resort, Pounding Mill, Va.

SECOND PLACE

Easy Country Beef Cassoulet

6 bacon strips, cut in 1/2-inch slices
1 1/2-lb. lean beef (top Sirloin), cut in 1-inch cubes
4 T. flour
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 large yellow onion, coarsely chopped
3 carrots, peeled and sliced in disks
8 oz. summer sausage, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1 15-oz. can great northern beans
1 16-oz. can diced tomatoes
1 16-oz. can beef broth

1/4 c. red wine
1 bay leaf
1/4 tsp. dried thyme
1/8 tsp. nutmeg
1 1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1 c. bread crumbs

In a large pot over medium heat, brown bacon slices. Add beef cubes and cook until brown, stirring occasionally. Add flour and stir until incorporated. Add all other ingredients except bread crumbs; bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Transfer to a baking dish; top with buttered bread crumbs. Bake at 375 degrees for one hour or until meat is tender. Serve over a slice of crusty French bread. Makes 8 servings.

—Eldon Restaurant: Eldon — The Inn at Chatham

THIRD PLACE

Beef Bourbon Union Run

1/2 c. minced onions, divided
2 T. butter, divided
2 1/2 c. water
1 4.9-oz. package wild rice
2 c. beef base, divided
1 16-oz. beef tenderloin, cut into 4-oz. servings
1 T. olive oil
1 c. fresh mushrooms, sliced
1/2 tsp. fresh garlic, minced
2 shots whiskey
1/2 tsp. cracked black pepper (or to taste)
1 T. cornstarch

In a medium size saucepan, sauté onions in one tablespoon butter at medium heat until soft. Add 2 1/2 cups water to mixture and bring to a boil. Add rice and 1 cup beef base; cover and simmer for approximately 10 minutes or until rice is cooked. When rice is cooked, heat a medium size skillet over high heat; add beef tenderloin pieces to skillet and brown. Add one tablespoon olive oil, 1/4 cup minced onions, and mushrooms and cook for one minute; add minced garlic. Carefully add whiskey — stand back away from the skillet as it will flame up. After the alcohol has burned off, combine black pepper, 1 cup beef base and cornstarch and add to items in skillet. Add 1 T. butter and reduce to desired

thickness. Serve over rice. Makes 2 to 4 servings.
—The Inn at Union Run, Lexington, Va.

RUNNER-UP

Dad's London Broil

1 2-lb. London Broil (beef top round or flank steak)
1/4 c. finely chopped celery
1/4 c. chopped onion
1/4 c. minced fresh sage
1 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 c. soy sauce
1/4 c. honey
2 T. tarragon vinegar
1/2 c. olive oil
1/4 c. Chinese hot oil
Garnish: Fresh sage and scallion brushes

Score the beef. To prepare marinade, in a small bowl, combine all dry ingredients — celery, onion, sage, ginger and gar-

lic. In another larger mixing bowl, whisk together all liquids — soy sauce, honey, tarragon vinegar, and oils. Combine wet and dry marinade ingredients; mix well. Pour marinade over beef and marinate for 4 to 5 hours, turning once. Grill or broil beef 5 minutes per side or until medium rare. To serve, slice diagonally across the grain. Garnish with bunches of fresh sage and scallion brushes. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

—The Mark Addy, Nellysford, Va.

See BEEF, page 9



Chef Michael Oder of Cuz's Uptown Barbeque, Cabins and Resort in Pounding Mill, Va., shows off his grand prize-winning entry at the Beef Inn Style Cook-Off during the Virginia Beef Expo held recently in Harrisonburg. Cuz's Acapulco Beef Filet was named "Best of Beef" during the event, sponsored by the Virginia Cattle Industry Board.
Photo courtesy VCIB

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Home economist: Low fat doesn't mean low taste

By VERA HAILEY

Are you trying to cut down on your fat intake and still consume more than lettuce and low-fat cottage cheese? Do you think that reducing the fat in your favorite desert recipe will automatically cause the finished product to taste like Styrofoam?

Meet Sarah Ann Whitmore, home economist for five Virginia counties. A member of the Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, Whitmore services the counties of Augusta, Rockingham, Rockbridge, Highland and Bath through the Agriculture Extension Office. She received a bachelor of science degree in home economics from Madison College and a master's degree in child development from Florida State University.

Her goal is to educate the consumer in the areas of nutrition and wellness, family stability and home-based financial management. Whitmore teaches individuals how to eat healthier, follow dietary guidelines, interpret food labels and recognize the importance of using the food guide pyramid.

"While cutting down on fat is important, it is still important to eat red meat, because vitamin B12 does not come from plant sources... the key is a balanced diet and portion control," she commented. As a guideline, Whitmore suggests that a serving of meat should not be larger than a deck of cards.

Whitmore recommends eating a variety of fresh vegetables. "We're fortunate in this area to have access to high quality home-grown produce."

Most people can benefit by modifying what they already eat instead of attempting to acquire a taste for strictly low-fat foods. One way to modify the diet is to make adjustments in the types and amounts of ingredients in recipes so that the result is just as satisfying but fits



SARAH ANN WHITMORE

better with a healthier lifestyle.

Grocery stores stock products such as nonfat sour cream, skim milk, nonfat dry milk and low or nonfat soups. These can be substituted for the suggested recipe components. Few recipes need to be followed exactly to assure a good quality product.

"You may not like what you do at first, so start by reducing fat by 1/4 of what the recipe calls for... and don't forget that you must add liquid back to the recipe, at least half as much liquid as the fat reduced," she warned.

A cookie or bread recipe can be made healthier by substituting non-

fat dry milk for some of the flour. Fat can be drastically reduced in a traditional casserole by substituting nonfat sour cream for the fatty variety most commonly used.

Whitmore shares some suggestions from the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension:

—Use reduced-calorie sour cream or mayonnaise. To reduce fat further, use plain nonfat yogurt, buttermilk or blended cottage cheese instead of regular ingredients for sauces, dips and salad dressings. If a sauce made with yogurt is to be heated, add 1 tablespoon of cornstarch to 1 cup of yogurt to prevent separation.

—To thicken sauces and gravies without lumping, eliminate fat and instead mix cornstarch or flour with a small amount of cold liquid. Stir this mixture slowly into the hot liquid to be thickened and bring it back to a boil, stirring constantly.

—Use two egg whites or an egg substitute product instead of one whole egg. In some recipes, simply decrease the total number of eggs. This is especially true if the fat and sugar also are decreased in the recipe.

—Fat and sugar provide moistness and richness to recipes. When they are reduced, liquid needs to be added back, usually in the form of water, milk, fruit juice, applesauce, or fruit or vegetable pulp. Add back at least half as much liquid as sugar and fat reduced. —

Here is an example of modifying a Pumpkin Bread recipe (taken from a Service in Action newsletter by Pat Kendall, Ph.D.):

Original	Low fat
3/4 c. pumpkin	1 c. pumpkin
1/2 c. sugar	1/2 c. sugar
1/2 c. vegetable oil	2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 egg white	1/2 cup plain low-fat yogurt
1 c. all-purpose flour	3/4 c. all-purpose flour
1/2 c. whole wheat flour	3/4 c. whole wheat flour
1 tsp. baking powder	1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda	1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground cinnamon	1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. salt	1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 c. chopped nuts	1/2 c. raisins

In large mixer bowl beat together pumpkin, sugar, oil and egg or yogurt. In a medium bowl combine the flours, baking powder, soda, cinnamon, and salt; add to pumpkin mixture, stirring just until moistened. Stir in the nuts or raisins. Pour into a greased 9x5x3-inch loaf pan. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for about 1 hour or until a wooden toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes, then remove from pan and cool completely.

Approximate nutritional value per slice:

Original	Low fat
155 calories	105 calories
9 grams fat	2 grams fat
53 percent calories from fat	17 percent calories from fat
0 mg. cholesterol	0 mg. cholesterol

•Beef

Continued from page 8

RUNNER UP

Beef Tournedos with Oysters

2-3 dried red medium hot peppers
1 medium bell pepper
4-5 jalapeno peppers
1 5-inch long poblano chili
1/4 c. Chardonnay
1-2 cloves garlic
1 tsp. allspice
1 1/2 to 2 lbs. beef tenderloin
8 medium oysters
4 oz. clarified butter
3 T. heavy cream
Salt to taste

To make pepper sauce, soak red pepper for 1/2-hour in warm water. Roast and peel all the green peppers. Place in food processor and puree. Add red peppers. Add a little Chardonnay

if the mixture is too dry to puree. Add garlic and allspice. Salt if needed. Set the pepper mixture aside.

Trim the beef tenderloin and cut into 3/4-inch thick medallions (about 3-4 oz. each). Sauté the medallions in clarified butter until reaching the desired doneness. Remove to warmed platter. Add oysters and sauté for 1 to 1 1/2-minutes or until edges curl slightly. Remove to separate plate. Pour off remaining butter, add the Chardonnay (about 1/4 cup), deglaze the sauté pan (the wine will remove the residue sticking to the bottom of the pan). Reduce the liquid by about half. Add 3 tablespoons of heavy cream, 3-4 tablespoons pepper sauce mixture, the slightly cooked oysters and stir for 1-2 minutes.

Place the beef medallions on

serving plates; top each medallion with an oyster. Pour the remaining juice from the holding platter into the sauce. Heat momentarily and then spoon over the medallions. Garnish with red and green bell pepper rings and serve with mixed rice and your favorite vegetables. Makes 4 servings.

— The Garden and See Inn, New Church, Va.

RUNNER UP

Whiskey Steak

4 T. clarified butter, divided
4 beef tenderloin steaks (about 6 oz. each)
4 shallots, chopped
1 T. chives
1 T. parsley
1 T. tarragon
1 oz. bourbon or Scotch
Preheat grill pan to high heat.

Add 2 tablespoons butter and sear steaks one minute on each side. Remove steaks. Add another 2 tablespoons butter and sauté shallots. Add herbs and whiskey. Cook 2 minutes. Return steaks to pan and grill 3 minutes on each side or to preferred doneness. Serve on warmed plate with pan drippings sauce. Excellent served with carrot cream. Makes 4 servings

Carrot Cream: Peel and thinly slice one pound carrots. Place in pan and cover with heavy cream or half-and-half. Simmer over low heat until carrots are tender, about 25 minutes. Puree and serve immediately.

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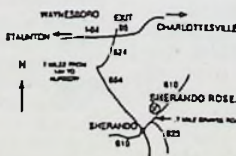
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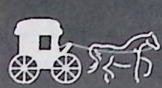
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Yesterday once more



New Monmouth Church has clear sense of identity

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

By KATHARINE BROWN

Some people might think that a church which had three different names and five different church buildings suffered from an identity crisis. New Monmouth Church, west of Lexington in Rockbridge County, may have changed its name and its house of worship, but it has a very clear sense of its identity as one of the oldest Presbyterian churches in the Valley of Virginia.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the Reverend John Blair's visit in 1746 to put the Forks of James congregation "in church order." Forks of James first appears in Augusta County records in 1752, just before the French and Indian War enflamed the frontier. The congregation's first meeting house was a log building on Wood's Creek where Lexington now stands. Native American raids in the Kerr's Creek area where many members lived resulted in the deaths of 60 persons, while another 25-35 were carried into captivity. After that war the congregation moved to Whistle Creek, where their second place of worship of hewn timber adjacent to Hall family land was called "Hall's Meeting House."

The congregation had only supply ministers until 1776 when William Graham became principal of the presbytery's academy at Timber Ridge. Graham also became pastor for Timber Ridge and for Hall's Meeting House. When the American Revolution broke out, many men from these congregations, including Graham, fought for independence.

Graham led Hall's congregation to build their third meeting house. This structure, begun in 1788 on Whistle Creek, was a stone building with a gallery, part of which was reserved for slaves. Individual members built their own pews, and a section was reserved for the students at Liberty Hall. The largest pledges came from James Moore, William

McKee and Graham himself. The stonemason was Samuel Henry of Augusta County. The ruins of this building still stand.

A revival in 1789 brought new members and encouraged Graham to stay. The connection with Timber Ridge ended, and in its place, the Hall's members in Lexington secured Graham's preaching for one-third of his time. The tie between the Lexington and Whistle Creek congregations lasted until 1819. Graham replaced Rouse's traditional metric psalms with Watt's livelier, more emotional and evangelical psalms and hymns, to the dismay of some conservative members.

The name changed again in 1793 to "New Monmouth Church," possibly commemorating the 1778 Battle of Monmouth fought in the Monmouth Hills near Princeton, New Jersey, where William Graham had studied. Graham had a sharp tongue in political matters, and had opposed the ratification of the Constitution. He spoke out in favor of the Pennsylvania farmers who promoted the 1794 Whiskey Rebellion, and in 1796 resigned as pastor and moved to Ohio.

New Monmouth had no regular pastor until 1799, when a Rockbridge native, George Baxter, accepted the call, serving also as rector of Washington Academy (later College) as Liberty Hall was renamed. Baxter, an imposing man and powerful preacher, brought the revivals of the Second Great Awakening to New Monmouth. The separation of the Lexington Church from New Monmouth in 1819, and Baxter's resignation in 1821 left the congregation weak and dependent upon supply preachers.

The Civil War and Reconstruction years were difficult for the congregation, but the arrival of a new minister, Daniel A. Penick, in 1873, brought stability. Membership grew in his long pastorate, reaching 200 by 1900. In these years, the church established mission and outpost schools, and its elders campaigned against alcohol. In 1882 the congregation decided to tear down their 1850s brick church and replace it with the brick Gothic structure that is the present church.

The new century brought an emphasis on foreign mission under the pastorate of D.N. Yarbrow. One of the most famous American missionaries to Africa, William McCuchan Morrison, came from New Monmouth. An active evangelizing program during World War I brought many new members into the fold. In the "Roaring 20s" under the pastorate of O.M. Anderson, New Monmouth sent another missionary into



New Monmouth Presbyterian Church congregation, 1902

the foreign field, Mary Wilson McCown, who served in China from 1920-1942. John Walton Weathers became pastor in 1928 and served through the difficult years of the Great Depression. His wife reorganized and modernized the youth work and skillfully taught the men's Bible class. Forty-three members of New Monmouth served their country in the armed forces during World War II. With peace, the congregation gathered to celebrate its bicentennial in 1946, and to bid farewell to its pastor.

During the pastorate of Carlyle A. McDonald (1947-1953), members of New Monmouth lost their Sunday School building to fire in 1949, and experienced the most severe flooding on record in 1950. They rejoiced in the dedication of the new Sunday School building in May, 1951. In 1953, New Monmouth called a distinguished missionary and diplomat from China — Frances Wilson Price — to its pulpit. He and his wife had been held prisoner by the Communists in Shanghai, and were the last representatives of the Presbyterian Church to leave China.

The congregation soon learned that their pastor had been elected Moderator of the General Assembly. Price's work at New Monmouth did much to heal divisions and wounds over various issues, and to strengthen lay leadership. The congregation was saddened when he resigned in 1955 to accept posts with the National Council of Churches.

When Stafford M. Query arrived as pastor in 1957, he led New Monmouth to adopt a rotation of deacons, and spurred a project to expand the Sunday School building. Under him and his successor, John Myers, III (1967-1970), the quiet rural congregation tried to cope with the bewildering social changes in the nation — desegregation, civil rights, presidential assassinations and the Vietnam war — but sometimes found it easier to battle the evils of liquor licenses for local stores and support the ef-

fort to keep weekday Bible education in the local public schools.

Ralph Buchanan (1971-78) followed in the quieter, more conservative 70s, emphasizing evangelism, home missions, a bus ministry, and youth work. In that decade in which the nation celebrated its bicentennial, New Monmouth took important steps to preserve its own history, and gratefully accepted the legacy of Beatrice Fitzpatrick Peevehouse, which placed the church on a sound financial basis with an endowment. Church improvements in that same decade that would have shocked the stalwart Calvinist pioneer ancestors of the members included: an organ donated by the W.A. Wilson family, a cross donated by W.F. Knick, and stained glass windows. It was a strong church that called Lewis V. Boyle in 1978, and that congregation continues strong and healthy as it marks its 250th anniversary in 1996. —

Katharine Brown is director of research and collections at the Museum of American Frontier Culture and formerly was the executive director of Woodrow Wilson Birthplace. She holds a doctorate degree in history from The Johns Hopkins University. She and her husband Madison live in Staunton.

Material for this article is drawn from the book "Now Let the Gospel Trumpet Blow: A History of New Monmouth Presbyterian Church, 1746-1980," by Professor I. Taylor Sanders II, of Washington and Lee University, published by the church in 1986. Photos were reproduced from those which were used to illustrate the book.



New Monmouth as it appears today



New Monmouth as it appeared in the early 20th century

Local genealogy society celebrates anniversary

By VERA HAILEY

WAYNESBORO — Price planned it, and they came... Herman Price of Waynesboro

lives to "dig up" ancestors. His life-long hobby of family history research and genealogy led to the creation of an local organization to assist both the beginner and nov-

ice researcher. The Augusta County Genealogical Society first met one year ago this month — in October 1995.

One of the most difficult obstacles Price faced was finding a suitable public place to meet when he did not yet have a group. In order to attract a group he needed a place to meet.

"I asked the library for a place to hold monthly meetings and they asked how many were in the group...I said none," Price said. He finally convinced an Augusta County Library employee in Fishersville to allow him to use the downstairs kitchen.

As soon as a location was secured, an advertisement was placed in a local newspaper that summoned any interested persons to attend. One has to plan and scheme to attract the rare kind of person who spends his or her spare time strolling through graveyards, sifting through dusty books at the local courthouse and traveling to

genealogical libraries. While the rest of the population is dreaming of a tropical vacation in some exotic hideaway, these odd birds envision going to Salt Lake City, Utah to visit the Latter Day Saints archives.

Price decided that gathering on the second Wednesday of each month from 1-3:30 p.m. would best suit the schedules of most of the genealogists. "Young people usually don't come to genealogy groups, because they haven't reached the point in their lives where they're interested in family history," he explained.

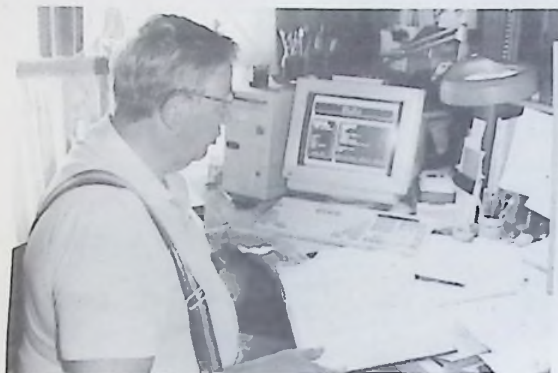
One year later, the average attendance at the monthly meeting is 10. A mailing list of 25 local family history buffs has been compiled for dispersing material. The cozy size of the group allows each attendee ample time to ask for help from others and offer suggestions. Success stories, such as "how I found great grandfather so-and-so," are always popular.

Surnames currently being investigated by members include Taylor, Brown, Coffey, Campbell, Hunt, Hodge, Sydnors, Henderson, and many others.

Some participants are actively involved in the compilation of material for the forthcoming "Augusta Heritage Book" that will be published in 1997 by Walsworth Publishing.

The group hopes to attract more members and eventually schedule speakers who are specialists in specific areas of research. There is currently no membership fee, but those in attendance are sometimes asked to contribute a dollar each to pay for upcoming projects and defray the cost of postage.

Anyone interested in information about the Augusta Genealogical Society may contact Price at 540/942-9029. Or, just show up at meeting time and introduce yourself to the man in the kitchen wearing striped suspenders. —



Herman Price of Waynesboro looks over some of the research materials he uses in his genealogy projects.

(Photo by Vera Hailey)

Church World Service honors former Bethel pastor

AC staff report

BETHEL GREEN — Church World Service is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. As part of the event, John Barton of CWS was on hand at Bethel Presbyterian Church's homecoming and 250th anniversary

celebration Aug. 25 to present a special recognition to former Bethel pastor R. Murphy Williams.

Williams served the Bethel pastorate from 1948-51. During his tenure he served as the volunteer director in Virginia of the Christian Rural Overseas Program, which

has come to be known as "CROP."

According to Barton, Church World Service had its beginning in the midst of World War II. It was formed as an effort to "reach out and witness to all who hurt and suffer." In its formative years, CWS coordinated the contribution of gifts in kind from rural areas which were used for relief around the world.

Barton noted that 50 years later, every city in the United States holds a CROP walk each year to raise funds for CWS. In the past 10 years, \$120 million has been raised for relief overseas. Barton extended his thanks on behalf of CWS' nationwide organization to Williams for the role he played in helping CROP with its start in Virginia. Williams was presented with a plaque from CWS commemorating the occasion. —



John Barton, left, of Church World Service, presents a plaque to R. Murphy Williams, a former pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church. Williams was the first volunteer of the Church Relief Overseas Program or CROP in Virginia.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

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Notes from the road

Augusta Country staff and contributing writers have been globetrotting again. Sue Simmons, Roberta Hamlin, and Sarah Francisco fill us in on the sights and sounds of Kansas and points west, Costa Rica, and Ireland.

Kansas reflects cultural pluralism of America

By SUE SIMMONS

KANSAS AND POINTS WEST
— Horace Greeley once said "I like Kansas — more than I had expected to."

What is not to like about a state 82,277 miles square filled with a two-and-a-quarter million friendly people who are "just folks" and boasts 300 clear days a year? It isn't flat either. The little Ozarks located in the east give way to the rolling Flint Hills and Smoky Hills in the center of the state. And while it flattens out west of center, the high plains in the far west are a tapestry of creeks, rivers, dry washes and rolling prairie. Mt. Sunflower in Wallace County is the state's highest point at 4,039 feet above sea level.

Kansas is no melting pot. Although its peoples come from many diverse backgrounds — both ethnically and culturally — each has retained characteristics of its ancestors' societies. The state reflects the cultural pluralism that makes America unique. A trip through the state is a trip through the many cultures that have come to mean "American."

Nicodemus, located on U.S. 24 in the high plains, is a town populated by African Americans de-

scended from freedmen who found opportunity and land in the west. Named after a legendary slave who was the first to buy his freedom, the town holds an Emancipation Get-together the last weekend of July.

Francisco Coronado arrived in the heartland of Kansas, the south central region of the state, nearly 68 years before the Susan Constant landed at Jamestown. The conquistadors didn't stay; the Swedes and the Russians did. The picturesque town of Lindsborg located on U.S. 81 is aptly named "Little Sweden U.S.A." Oras one of the town's residents said standing by one of the thousand Dala horses found in the town, "We are more Swedish than Sweden."

A variety of Swedish foods and folk art, both imported and locally produced, can be purchased at any one of the many craft houses and restaurants. Ingled Sill, pickled herring to the uninitiated, is sold by the gallon at the local IGA. Limpa (Swedish Rye bread) and Korv (Swedish Sausage) are also to be had.

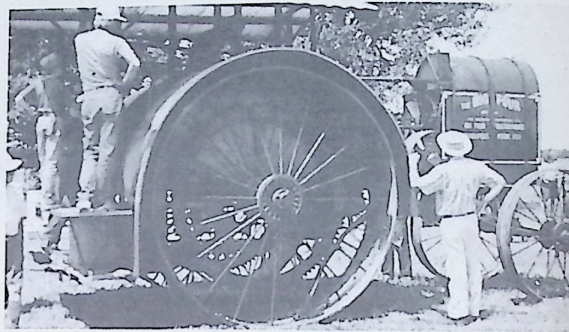
Swedish is still spoken, almost as a first language, and a hint of the Swedish dialect colors local speech. The only word an outsider need know, however, is "Uff da," a vernacular that means anything

you want it to.

Midsummer's Day held every June celebrates Lindsborg's Swedish heritage.

On state road 15, 30 miles south of Lindsborg, and not too far from Heston, Kans., home of Heston Farm Machinery, is the community of Goessel, populated by descendants of Russian Mennonites. In 1874 the entire village of Alexanderwohl in southern Russia relocated itself to the Kansas prairie with the help of the Santa Fe Railroad. In what was perhaps one of the largest land sales ever made in the United States, the Santa Fe Railroad sold 100,000 acres of railroad land to this community of Mennonites. For the railroad, the sale meant profits from real estate and, if the Mennonites succeeded as farmers, perpetual railroad customers.

Led by Elder Jacob Buller, the village's knowledge of wheat farming in what is today the Ukraine transferred well to a similar terrain on the Kansas plains. Bringing with them a variety of hard red winter wheat called "Turkey Wheat" and with the help of American technology in the form of McCormick's Reaper, the Mennonites transformed Kansas into America's — and the world's — breadbasket.



Each summer Goessel, Kans., is host to the mother-of-all-gas-and-steam shows. The town is in the heart of the nation's breadbasket.

Photo by Claude Simmons

Goessel celebrates "Threshing Days" the first weekend of August. This mother-of-all-gas-and-steam shows features farm machinery, threshing demonstrations, tours of the Mennonite Heritage Complex, and a great little parade with more old tractors and cars than imaginable.

Russian food featured at Threshing Days includes Verenike with

ham gravy (this resembles a fried pierogi — noodle dough filled with a dry cottage cheese mixture), Bierocks, country sausage (bratle for), cole slaw, cherry monst, zwieback.

Goessel calls itself a small town with a big heart — big enough to make you like Kansas much more than you might expect. —

McCormick's Reaper, wheat made Kansas world's breadbasket

By SUE SIMMONS

Kansas and Augusta County are forever linked.

The technology supplied by Augusta County's own Cyrus McCormick, the industry of Goessel's Russian Mennonites and a little seed called "Turkey Wheat" turned Kansas into the breadbasket of the world.

Once that distinction belonged to counties of the Shenandoah Valley and most especially Augusta. So much so that young Cyrus McCormick, with the help of one of his father's slaves, invented a machine to harvest wheat.

The machine, known as McCormick's Reaper, did not work well on the rolling hills of the Shenandoah Valley. It wasn't until McCormick moved his operation to Chicago that the reaper's potential was truly realized. It was a move that happily coincided with the

homesteading of the American West, which brought technology, farmers, and seeds together.

Kansas did not magically become a wheat producing region. In the 1870s it was not known if Kansas soil would support a wheat crop much less what kind of wheat would do best.

Kansas farmers, however, took the plunge. Fertile soil, good weather,

adequate rainfall, and the use of improved farm machinery combined to make Turkey wheat one of the most successful in the world. Indeed, it made Kansas a sea of wheat with its "amber waves of grain." Later improvements in tillage practices, pesticides and fertilizers, seed development, and marketing techniques turned Kansas into the breadbasket of the world. —

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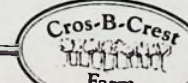
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Irish countryside reminiscent of Virginia's Shenandoah

By SARAH FRANCISCO

While tromping through an Irish cemetery, Shenandoah Valley names sprang up before me: Patterson, Wilson, McCormick, Campbell, Gillispie, and Moore. Many of the Valley's settlers were of Irish descent, a common thread we have with Ireland today.

The topography is similar to the Valley, and often I found myself thinking, "This looks like home," just as the early settlers from Ireland must have thought as they put down roots in this valley.

Ireland is about the size of West Virginia, with occasional small mountains. In the north, the soil is rocky, and the land is hilly, and agriculture dominates the economy. Sheep farming is the main industry in the north, and cattle are rarely seen except in the gently rolling green hills of the larger farms in the south. Everywhere, the sheep were largely unfenced, and finding sheep wandering in the road was a common occurrence.

Although the soil is poor, and grass sparse, sheep seemed ever present, wandering about picking at sprigs of grass while their lambs played on the outcroppings of rocks. Most of the sheep were woolly highland breeds, and only in the manicured meadows of the Southeast did we see developed breeds such as Suffolk and Cheviot.

Ancient monuments dot the countryside. Sheep graze among them in a casual fashion. As a developed country, Ireland has not been ruined by strip malls and theme parks, and tourists even roam among the sheep to visit many castles and forts.

Farmers in Ireland, as everywhere, face problems not of their own making in commodities and politics.

Having heard much of "Mad Cow Disease," I was prepared to



Sheep grazing the hills of the Irish countryside are a familiar sight. Pastures are not fenced, so sheep are often encountered in roadways.

Photos by Sarah Francisco

forgo any thought of hamburgers and steaks. But in Ireland there is no trace of worry about the problem and certainly no signs in restaurants about the source of their beef. One woman I talked to at the McNutt Woolen Mill stated that "everything in Ireland is good to eat!" It proved to be true.

We stayed for several nights in a bed and breakfast on a farm near Derry, with the Hunter family as our hosts. According to William Hunter of Eglinton in County Londonderry, who raises cattle, problems related to bovine spongiform encephalopathy, which is blamed for causing Cruetzfeldt-Jakob Disease in humans, is being blown out of proportion by European Common Market Countries such as France and Germany. Hunter reckons that they can't raise beef as good as Irish and Scottish

beef, so they are trying to cut United Kingdom beef out of the market for a couple of years hoping to gain market share for Europe. I can attest to the quality of beef raised in Ireland; it was the best I have ever had!

Just as Staunton has its Farmer's Market, every town across Ireland has its market day. We were fortunate to be in Kenmare, County Kerry, on market day. There is no central stockyard with holding pens; farmers simply unload their animals in the street, and the docile creatures mill around in small groups waiting for the next move.

Since farms seem to be small, the animals are used to a lot of personal attention and are not wild like "range" cattle. They make way without panic for cars and pedestrians winding their way through the narrow streets. Many fruits and

vegetables were in evidence, and even pieces of farm machinery were sitting around for sale. The whole scene was also a social event, with neighbors and friends visiting as they peddled their wares and tended their livestock.

During our drive between Derry and Kinsale, on the southern tip of Ireland, we spent one night in Oranmore, about five miles south of Galway city. On our way we stopped at a rural horse show just north of Galway. Things are casual for these local shows, which apparently rotate from one farmer's field to another.

In this case the ring was marked out with string tied to stakes in the flattest part of a cow pasture. The jumps were the only element of the show that weren't makeshift, but even they were clearly gathered from many different sources.

Most of the horses were small and sturdy, looking as though they might double for working animals during the weekdays. There was the relaxed spirit of a neighborhood gathering, rather than a tense one

focused only on winning ribbons. Most of the riders and onlookers appeared to know one another well, and greeted mistakes on the course with a calm attitude. The show seemed to be a forum for the riders to test their abilities and those of their horses, perhaps in preparation for the fox hunting season. The practice around the course seemed more important than carrying home ribbons, although there was a lot of pride in winning and a sense of tough competition.

Even though I was there for two weeks, I barely scratched the surface of places to visit and things to do. The people are especially friendly and helpful, from shopkeepers to farmers. With no language barrier, English-speaking visitors to Ireland can enjoy getting to know these wonderful people. A trip to Ireland is recommended for travelers from all walks of life.

Sarah Francisco is a senior at Mary Baldwin College. She traveled to Ireland as part of her course work during May 1996.



Market Day in Ireland brings the farmers and all their products, including livestock, to the town square.

•Modern

Continued from page 14

ley to help with the planting and harvesting, it is difficult to imagine someone actually planting a field that size by hand. This year I also watched as one man harvested a small field of hay, which was directly in front of Jenny's parent's house, with a machete and a rake. The field was the size of a medium building lot, and it took him two days.

My first visit in 1992 had been in July during the rainy season, but since it had not rained for several days, and we went on a weekend, Jenny's father was able to drive up the narrow road all the way to the gate to the farm. We only walked the rest of the way up the drive to the house. But the second visit, while not during the rainy season, was made during the week and we were not able to find anyone to give us a ride there, so Jenny said, "We can take the bus to Guatuso and walk the rest of the way."

It did not sound like such a big

deal, especially when she explained that Virginia and Tuto often walked it to get supplies. Americans really do not do as much walking as we like to think we do. Even Jenny, who is younger than I, grew tired before we reached the mountainside entrance to the farm.

We walked up those 60 degree slopes, one after another, until I was afraid I would not make it. I had visions of them having to come down with a stretcher to get me! But once there the view was worth every step.

The farm is in two sections, the main part contains the house and is where most of the coffee is grown. We made an extensive tour, led by Tuto, on my previous visit. The other section is on the other side of the narrow road from Guatuso and is no longer farmed, but allowed to grow with the native fruits. There are banana trees, plantains, oranges, sweet lemons and other fruits native only to Costa Rica.

On that first visit, not only did

we tour the main farm, but also went across the road to explore the lush growth, the streams, and to harvest a large bunch of bananas for Jenny's children. But, on this last visit, we spent most of our time at the main farm.

Now, Virginia and Tuto grow mostly coffee, which once planted does not require a lot of work. The coffee trees, actually evergreen shrubs, have to be pruned yearly, but that is not too labor intensive. They have people who come and help with the harvest, which was just completed, and Tuto was drying ripe coffee beans on screens in the sun which they would keep for their own use.

After the beans are dried, he stores them in a shed on the property. Whenever Virginia needs some, Tuto brings in a big basket full. To roast the beans, she places them in a large cast iron skillet, puts the skillet on top of the small wood cook stove, and stirs. The aroma is heavenly. After our lunch on this last visit, she and Jenny

roasted several pounds of beans for us to bring home with us.

Their farmhouse is modern and comfortable — there is the traditional living-dining room, with bedrooms off to the side, and a large modern kitchen. But the area they love best is the area to the back of the house where there is a second kitchen with a very large sink and a wood stove. Beside it is what we would call a porch, but Tuto calls the corridor. This kind of structure is found on many houses in the country. They are like covered porches, but with no windows or screens. (For some reason, there is no problem with flies or bugs in the central area of Costa Rica.) It is in this back kitchen, on the wood stove, that most of the cooking is done, and the beans are roasted.

When Virginia asks if you want coffee, and no one in their right mind would ever refuse a cup of Costa Rican coffee, it will have just been roasted and will then be freshly ground.

We lingered as long as we dared

with them, neither one of us wanting to leave such a peaceful and beautiful spot, but the last bus back to San Jose would not wait for us. So off we went back down those steep slopes. The going down seemed a little easier, until we realized that this time it was our knees that were becoming weaker and weaker.

Visiting with such warm and strong and healthy people both at the farm and throughout the country, made me reflect on the difference between their lives and ours.

First of all, there is the question of space. We have vast fields, unused forests, wide roads with wide median strips. Their roads are narrow and take up as little space as possible, for they treasure every square foot of land, since there is so little of it. Most of the population also has less of what we consider luxuries. Even in San Jose, families have only one car. But the people of Costa Rica have a warmth and love of life that is one of the most precious of all luxuries. —

Four floods and a funeral

Down on the farm we're thinking about getting things done. It's not that we don't get things done. We do manage to accomplish much. But, sometimes it seems, we never get certain things completely done.

And while some projects are difficult to see through to their completion, others are simply difficult to schedule into the routine of work that must be done, regardless of whatever else comes up.

We're always doing something. This we know, because at the end of every day we're quite tired, so we know we did something that day. But sometimes to look around, you wonder what it was that we actually did on a particular day.

We plant crops, we harvest crops, we tend to new arrivals in the form of calves and lambs, we feed livestock, we sort cattle and sheep, we move them from one place to another, and we repair machinery, among other things. These are things which demand to be done. They are chores of necessity — chores which dictate our schedule and make decisions for us about what we will be doing on a certain day. We have little choice in the matter.

If it's summer, and the sun is shining, then we're making hay somewhere. If it's summer and it's raining, then we're repairing machinery somewhere. If it's winter and regardless of the weather conditions, then we're feeding livestock somewhere. If it's spring or fall,

DOWN ON THE FARM

BY
**BETTY JO
HAMILTON**



then we're somewhere checking cows or sheep for the health of new arrivals. We always seem to be doing something somewhere, but sometimes the something we're doing is not the only something that needs to be done.

For instance, we're plagued by the nagging problem of fence repair. My brother-in-law despairs of our lack of attention to these matters. He's always exhorting us to high standards of fence maintenance.

"You've just got to keep up with it. You ought to be putting up three or four rolls of woven wire every year. Set some posts when you have a chance, then go back later, and put up the fence," he says trying to rally us to the fence-building cause. But his is a voice in the wilderness. There always seems to be something which holds us back, distracts us from a much needed fence-building task. The cattle or sheep might get out, but the occasion usually occurs when there's only time to patch the fence with

the best intentions of returning later to do the job thoroughly.

Finally, this summer, I made a stand on the fence-building dilemma. Hay making was practically over, corn chopping was a few weeks off, calving and lambing were in states of suspended animation. Like the slogan for the popular sporting goods company, there was nothing left to do, but "just do it."

Having decided that we would "do it," we only had to decide how to do it and where to begin.

The dread which hung over the fence-building project was that deep in our hearts we knew we had to start at the worst spot — a 300-yard stretch of fence which would include the construction of three flood gates spanning a large creek. Since we'd seen three floods in

seven month's time, the aptly named flood gates had been damaged, patched, and repaired until there was little left to them other than good intentions.

Although there seemed to be little hope for a lasting solution to the problem of flood gates, a plan was made. A date was set — Aug. 26 — for the work to begin. All else would be ignored.

Old fences and flood gates were pulled out, heads were scratched to determine the best method for reconstruction and replacement. Four full days were spent building a 150-yard span of brand new fence — setting posts, braces, stretching wire — and a craftily suspended and floatable flood gate. Existing fence and some new high tensile wire were used at the other two flood gates.

Into the beginning of the next week, we were still tweaking our flood gates toward perfection — adding a board here to keep cows from pushing through, adding a board there to keep cows from wading under. With one more day of tweaking we would be able to step back and admire the culmination of at least one part of the fence-building project.

But a telephone call bringing news of a relative's death in South Carolina sent some of us traveling for a funeral. It was a time to put fence building aside regardless of its dire need. Yes, sometimes on the farm we do put other things ahead of whatever all-important farm chores need doing. Besides, "the fence and the flood gates will be there when I get back," I told myself.

Three days and a hurricane later, I returned from the funeral trip to find the place in shambles. Friday, Sept. 6 marked the day Hurricane Fran — oops, Tropical Storm Fran, just like the 30-inch not-blizzard in January, we were told what we experienced was only a tropical storm not a hurricane — steamrolled the valley. I waded through thigh-high water to get to my house finding the basement filled with water to the same depth as my lane. Water was virtually everywhere. Flood gates were gone. Fences were gone. If it could float it did, if it couldn't, it was buried beneath mud and cress and other assorted debris.

Some of what we had done the



Fences, flood gates, roadways, anything in its path was all of what waters from Hurricane Fran took with them as creeks and rivers overflowed their banks.

Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton

week before was undone and in worse shape than before we had repaired it. Having been blessed with soaking rains almost every week of the summer, the ground held very little of the 8-12 inches of rain Fran dumped on the area in less than 24 hours. Drainage ditches turned into creeks, creeks turned into rivers, and rivers turned into surging, violent crests of water that claimed houses, livelihoods, and lives.

"I don't know where to start," was what my father said Saturday morning when he came to my back door. Since I had been pumping water out of my basement until 6:30 a.m., my immediate answer was that I would like to start by going to bed. But knowing downed fences at every corner of the farm would allow livestock to wander and intermingling with neighbors' livestock would be enough to keep anybody awake, so it was no time to sleep.

Floods and other natural disasters are truly horrific to witness and in which to be caught. We can't fathom the forces which bring such indiscriminate devastation among us. We count ourselves lucky,

blessed, even watched over, should we lose only material possessions. Loss of human life in these instances is beyond comprehension and reckoning. The only thing that lifts us up is the reaching out of one person wanting to help another person in need.

Where to start for us on that Saturday morning was a matter of priorities — water had washed out a section of fence around a corn field and cattle had been helping themselves through a day and a night. As my father and I headed toward that project, a relative showed up to assist. There was no need to ask, "How can I help?" The need was apparent.

Close to lunchtime we were ready to attack another problem — the washed out fences and flood gates on either side of the property. A neighbor loaned us all the necessary equipment and fence-building materials to repair the washed out fence. Another neighbor showed up to help with the fence bordering his property, then helped us on our side which borders road front. Four extra pairs of

See HELP, page 17



Few folks lacked for things to do in the aftermath of Hurricane Fran. Pumping water out of basements was one of many clean-up chores to be done.



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•Help

Continued from page 16

hands added to our two turned an all-day job into a half-day one leaving us enough time to fix another washed out flood gate.

Tempted the next day to skip church and make other critical repairs, we instead attended morning services. A churchyard planning session after the close of worship set the work order for the afternoon — yet another flood gate and fence to repair, a feat which required a host of neighbors and relatives to accomplish.

In the first place, the road between us and the washed out flood gate was gone — yes, simply, gone, in two places. The possibility of just getting to the farm was debatable. But on the way we encountered three more neighbors who had spent all of that morning and the day before using their front-end loaders and tractors to push rock delivered by state contractors into gaping holes and mud bogs in the road. When we encountered them, they had used 45 tons of rock to repair the road which they made

passable until state crews could finish the job a few days later.

Flood gate and fence repairs again were completed with the help of relatives and neighbors, one of whom had fallen in the creek while helping yet another neighbor with flood gate replacement. Again, a difficult job was made easy and bearable with the help of others. Before an entire week had passed post-Fran, five flood gates had been rebuilt and two sections of fence repaired.

At this writing, standing water in pastures continues to be a problem as does water running out of every crevice and cranny near waterways. The threat of residual rain from yet another hurricane looms on the western horizon. Everyone hopes Fran was "the big one." As one of our neighbors said, "These hundred-year storms are making me old." A blizzard in 1993, back-to-back floods in June 1995, a 30-inch snowstorm in January 1996 followed a week later by another flood, and most recently Hurricane Fran are all events which create the sensation of growing old at an accelerated rate.

Down on the farm we're thinking about four floods and a funeral — times of crisis, turmoil, despair, and reckoning. Flood wa-

ter rises and churns, sweeps away whatever lies in its path, then recedes and leaves us looking for a place to begin again. And we're

thankful for people who find us amid that confusion, help us sort through the debris, and show us the way to dry ground. —



Hurricane Fran created the necessity for the formation of a flood-gate-building/fence-repairing militia as neighbors joined forces to

achieve common goals of keeping livestock from crossing property lines. High water left few fences along waterways intact.

•Crops

Continued from page 4

up, swept two miles downstream and put to rest in a meadow. In New Hope, the bridge to the Wampers was washed out.

The old-timers who witnessed the flood of 1896 recalled that the calamity was the worst visited upon the region since the Freshet of 1870, which occurred 26 years to the day before the 1896 flood. That disaster struck the heart of the county's agriculture and industry, causing damage to or destroying more than 30 mills, leaving entire fields in complete waste, and sweeping fences downstream.

The greatest destruction was along the Middle River where at least 14 mills, including the one at West View, were washed from sight, and the Parkersburg Turnpike bridge was destroyed. The Mt. Vernon Mill in Spring Hill lost 3,000 bushels of wheat and 100 barrels of flour when a portion of the mill was swept downstream, only to come to a halt when it lodged in another mill some miles distant.

Along the South River, Jonathan Lewis coped with the disaster in a unique way. Finding his house surrounded by water, he saved his horses by bringing them into his home for two days. The 1876 flood, of course, had a predecessor in the minds of the old-timers who remembered the freshet of 1860, but every generation remembers a particular calamity as the worst of all time.

In March 1936, for instance, the newspaper headlines screamed of a heavy rainfall which caused the "worst flood since 1896." One person died in the deluge. "High waters cause widespread damage; Lewis Creek Floods Lower Section of City; Highways Flooded; Communication Lines Broken," reported

the headlines of the day.

The flood was caused by a rainfall of more than 4 inches in 16 hours. The storm death was that of an aged man whose buggy overturned into Christians Creek at the iron bridge on the old Barterbrook road. All over the county, trees were down and bridges swept away. In Craigsville the water was several feet deep in the post of-

hours late. Flash floods caused by 4 inches of rain in a short span of time on Sept. 10, 1950 caused havoc in the area. Rockbridge was particularly hard hit with an estimated \$2 million worth of damage.

Some 20th century floods will go down in the annals of history with names that will be recalled years later. Camille, Agnes and Hugo will never be forgotten by area resi-

There was a great deal of flooding in the Brands Flat and Fishersville areas where a Democratic rally at State Senator Curry Carter's Fishersville home was postponed due to high waters. In Middlebrook the flash flood destroyed the bridge between the school and the village. For a short while "confusion reigned while the youngsters went about the busi-

ness of getting home."

Even after she blew out of the area, Hazel's effects were felt as trees, whose roots could no longer grip the saturated soil, continued to topple. "Hazel struck one Stauntonian a low blow after she passed," recounted the reports of a tree that demolished a woman's 1949 Buick and caused \$500 worth of damage.

Five years after Hazel, Hurricane Gracie plodded up through western North Carolina and into Virginia in late September and early October 1959. Three tornadoes spawned by

Rains and floods have been sweeping through the Valley of Virginia eons longer than man has made his presence felt. And every few years the flood of a lifetime makes its swift, costly and traumatic appearance.

fice, but true to their professional creed, the postal employees remained at their station, sorting the mail while standing on tables. A schoolbus load of county children was marooned in a garage on Greenville Avenue when their bus was halted by rising water.

In Waynesboro the Crompton plant and parts of the DuPont plant were shut down after being enveloped by the South River's rising waters. J.E. Morris of Staunton could only watch in disbelief as his used automobile parts business succumbed to the flood. "He stood and watched his business rise on the foam of the muddy water and disappear," noted the newspaper.

The 1930s saw a number of floods crash through the area, rewriting the rainfall records again and again. The records which were started at SMA in 1928, were shattered in 1935 when 2.5 inches of rain fell in 14.5 hours on Sept. 4, bringing the grand total of rain in the first five days of September to 5 inches.

In August 1946 heavy rainfall caused the "South River (to go) on a Rampage in Waynesboro business areas," and made the usual punctual train service there several

hours late. Some look even further back to 1954, for instance, when Hurricane Hazel visited the area in October of that year.

The Oct. 15 newspaper headlined that "Hurricane Hazel Hits at Carolina Coasts," while the next day the paper announced: "Hurricane Leaves 26 Dead in Path of Northward Move." By the time Hazel dropped by the Valley, her storm fury was spent, but she managed to squeeze out 5-6 inches of downpour that created flooding and damage but no deaths or serious injuries.

ness of getting home."

Even after she blew out of the area, Hazel's effects were felt as trees, whose roots could no longer grip the saturated soil, continued to topple. "Hazel struck one Stauntonian a low blow after she passed," recounted the reports of a tree that demolished a woman's 1949 Buick and caused \$500 worth of damage.

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Craun wins Hickey Memorial Award

AC staff report

HARRISONBURG — Ashley Craun of Springhill won the Scott Hickey Memorial Senior Showmanship Award at the Virginia Junior Sheep Breeder's Association Show held recently at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds.

The award was sponsored by Travis Black of Dry Hollow Farm in Lexington. Black is a former co-competitor of Hickey's who was active in sheep showing in Augusta County and surrounding ar-

areas. Black is a junior in high school and gave the award in memory of Hickey who died of meningitis during his freshman year at Virginia Military Institute.

The award will always be awarded to senior showmen, age 14 to 21, who compete in the Junior Breeder's Show. It includes a rotating plaque which stays one year in the winner's county as well as an individual trophy awarded to each year's winner.

Judging for the showmanship award is based on how well an ani-

mal is presented by an exhibitor.

"You have to make the lamb look as appealing as possible to the judge without making yourself noticeable," Craun said. "You have to know the faults of your animals and how to fix faults to make the animal look good."

Craun has been showing sheep for eight years and is a sophomore at Virginia Tech. He owns a purebred Dorset flock of 25 ewes. He is the son of Benny and Gail Craun of Rt. 5, Staunton. —

1996 Augusta County Fair: Cows, kids, and more

AC staff report

FISHERSVILLE — The Augusta County Fair marked its second annual event with a large turnout for each evening of the five-day event. Exhibits and participation were up over the previous year, according to fair organizers.

In the exhibit hall, businesses and organizations from around the area held door prize drawings and barked their wares to potential customers. On the grounds, midway rides whirled and twirled in the night air to the screams of delighted children and teens. At the barns, livestock of practically every variety was washed, buffed, and polished for competition.

Some of the most popular events at the fair were the costume classes for children and livestock. The crowd delighted in the antics of the sheep costume class where children and lambs showed up dressed as the tooth fairy, a mouse and its cheese, Little Miss Muffet, and Bo-Peep. Brothers John and Samuel Croft won the junior sheep costume class with their spotted "Holstein" lamb which Samuel demonstrated milking for the audience. They are the sons of Daniel Croft of Swoope. Second and third place, respectively were won by Emily and Sarah Hord, daughters of Steve and Nancy Hord of McKinley.

In the intermediate division of the sheep costume class Amanda Hemp dressed as Cinderella and her "pumpkin" lamb won first place. Amanda is the daughter of Karen and Mike Hemp of Middlebrook. Josh Smith, son of Claude and Peggy Smith of HCR 32, Staunton, placed second, and Amber Clements finished third.

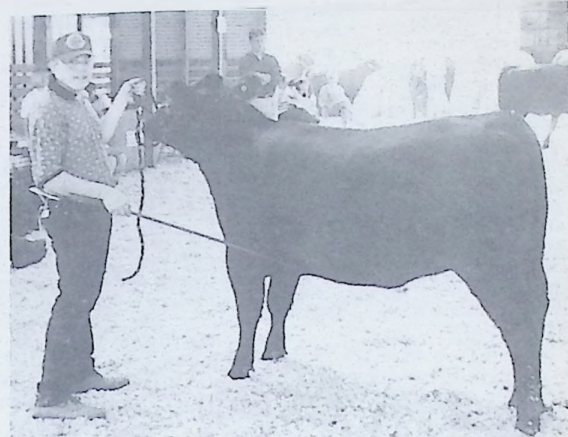
In market lamb competition, Kaila Redifer, 5, showed the Grand Champion. It was an impressive first outing for the young lady who also showed the Reserve Grand Champion and the Grand Champion pair of lambs. Kaila is the daughter of Doug and Jill Redifer of Rt. 5, Staunton.

In the beef cattle show, J.T. Begoon of Grottoes claimed Grand Champion honors in the commercial heifer show. Carrie Heizer of Arbor Hill exhibited the Reserve Grand Champion commercial heifer.

Weather smiled on the fair throughout the week. Only on the fair's last day did a heavy afternoon downpour curtail events, causing the horse show to be cut short. However, evening activities which included a draft horse pull and fireworks were held as scheduled. —



Kaila Redifer of Rt. 5, Staunton, exhibited the Grand Champion market lamb at the Augusta County Fair. She also claimed honors for Reserve Grand Champion and Grand Champion pair.



J.T. Begoon of Grottoes showed the Grand Champion commercial heifer at the Augusta County Fair.

Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton

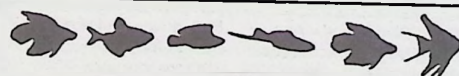


John and Sam Croft took first prize in the junior division of the sheep costume class at the Augusta County Fair.



Participants in the junior sheep costume class included, from left, Emily, Sarah, and Elizabeth Hord, and Billie Jo Swope. The Hord sisters are daughters of Steve and Nancy Hord of McKinley. Billie Jo is the daughter of Dwight and Betty Swope of Churchville.

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Franks Mill caught on front lines of Hurricane Fran

By SUE SIMMONS

FRANKS MILL—Middle River rises at North Mountain and winds its way through Swoope, Churchville, Franks Mill, and Verona on its way to North River. Until Hurricane Fran dumped its deluge of rain on Augusta County on Sept. 6, it was easy to ignore Middle River. Turn left at Franks Mill today, and you won't ever again take this lazy river for granted.

Of the seven houses located on Hundley Distillery Road, five suffered severe or total destruction as the river crashed through property. The Mill at Frank's Mill flooded into the second floor. Gabe Frank, a

grandson of the Frank who purchased the mill from American Mills and owned and operated it for many years recalled a high water mark in the first floor from a 1936 flood.

The spring house at the historic Frank's Mill suffered serious damage when its walls buckled, and the roof floated off and into the guard-rail along the road. This damage, while a nuisance, pales in comparison to what occurred along Va. 728, Hundley Distillery Road.

Water covered the bridge completely and stretched a width of 300 yards. The debris line in narrow places along the road indicates the water rose 14 feet at some points. Steve Moore, whose house was

damaged in the 1985 flood and was washed off its foundation this time, commented, "The first time was tough. This is just disgusting."

Herb and Carol Wiegles whose home is located 125 yards from the river's channel had 71 inches of water in their house. The Wiegles had just moved back into the area after spending several years abroad. Their furniture had arrived four days before the hurricane.

To add insult to injury, the

Wiegles realized their house had been looted in their absence, discovering some electronic equipment and a chain saw had been taken from dry, secure places.

Still, friends and strangers rallied to help. A man named Fred from Churchville drove up and offered to help. He spent several hours picking up broken glass and uprighting slick household items in the house. Teachers from Clymore Elementary School, called

into action by Donna Wells and Cheryl Fauerbach, laundered bags of muddy clothes. Friends showed up to sort through the furniture and other household items over the next few days and into the next weekend.

Herb Wiegles laughed wryly when he observed: "I was thinking about having a small party and inviting all the people we hadn't seen in the last six years. These are all the people I was going to invite." —

Climatology? Cosmetology? It's all water under the bridge

By NANCY SORRELLS

Predicting the weather is by no means an exact science. But then, neither is calling information to get a telephone number.

Putting together a story on the history of floods in the Shenandoah Valley created a number of trivia questions that I could not answer.

Knowing that the Commonwealth of Virginia has a state climatologist, I called information and requested the number for Virginia Climatology, then dutifully dialed the number I was given. It didn't take long for the woman on the other end and me to figure out that we weren't operating on the same plane of thought.

"Who did you want to talk to anyway?" she said when I explained my interest in weather trivia. "Because this is Virginia Cosmetology!"

A brief regrouping led me to the right place, the State Climatology Office at the University of Virginia and Research Coordinator Jerry Stenger. And, although he knew nothing about haircuts and perms, he was quite knowledgeable when it came to weather facts.

I had wondered when hurricanes began receiving human names, like Fran and Gustav, and discovered

that it was only quite recently, 1950 in fact, that this happened. Newspapers before that time only describe a big storm, tropical storm, hurricane or simply a big blow, when reporting tropical storms and hurricanes.

The first three seasons of hurricanes after that change (1950-52) received military names based on a military alphabet, like Able, Baker, etc. Then, in 1953, real names were given, but the same 26 names were tagged on the storms every year with Alice always being the initial storm of the season. This must have proved boring, and in 1955 a new set of women's names was used each season, although some noteworthy storms had their names retired.

Political correctness came into play in 1979, and the storm names began alternating between a man's name and a woman's name. One year the "A" storm is given a man's name, and the next year the season begins with a woman's name. Names aren't handed out willy-nilly to any old thunderstorm that crops up. A hurricane begins its life as a tropical disturbance, an area of somewhat organized thunderstorm activity. If those storms evolve into more organized cir-

See WEATHER, page 21

Dairy 4-Hers find fun at the fair

AC staff report

FISHERSVILLE—What better way to spend the last week of summer vacation than with friends at the county fair? More than 40 Augusta County 4-H youth spent their last five days of vacation at the Augusta County Fair at Expoland, caring for their calves, participating in hands on workshops, showing, and enjoying a few fun activities as well.

The county fair is not all rides and cotton candy for 4-Hers showing animals. They spend the best part of a week at the fair, managing to find plenty of things to do to keep them busy most of the day and evening.

A Barnyard Rodeo held the first evening of the fair gave all the livestock kids a chance to have fun together as they paired off to race through challenges such as apple bobbing, jumping rope with a halter, a feed-sack race, and twirling around a showstick until you're dizzy enough to fall down trying to do anything else.

The next day, the dairy exhibitors got instructions and hands-on practice at clipping and fitting as well as tips for presenting their animals in the showing.

The chance to show what they learned was presented in the Fitting and Showmanship classes, complete with a "Pee-Wee" class for those under 7 years old. The Junior class winner was Evan Shifflett. In the Intermediate age division Karen Inman was first and Zachary Waldron placed second. Senior winners were Kendra Inman, first, and Mindy Switzer, second. The Intermediate winners were selected Champion and Reserve Champion Showman.

Champion Dairy Showman Karen Inman faced an extra challenge when she competed with the beef and sheep showmanship contest, showing animals from all three species. She won the competition, and was named Overall Champion Showman.

Another fun activity was the obstacle course on Friday evening. Participants pushed, pulled, and pleaded with their show heifers to run around barrels, through a water hazard, and under a plastic curtain while the stopwatch was ticking.

"Molly Moo," the fuzzy, pink

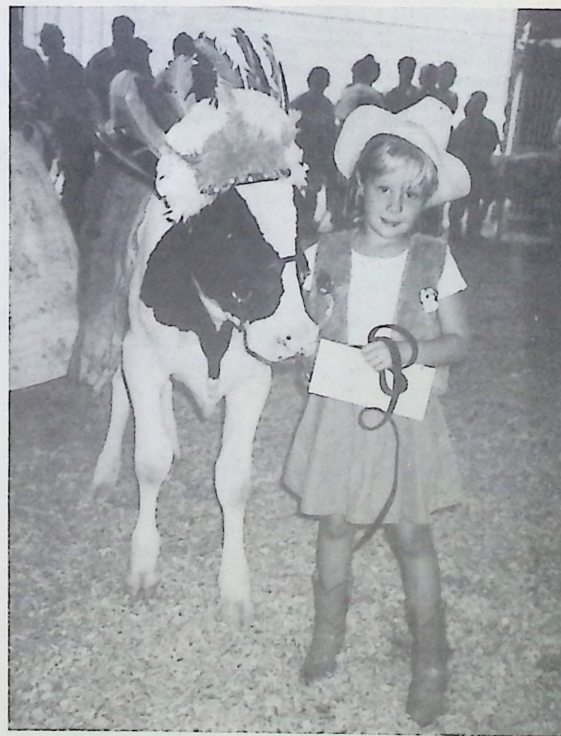
cow was cheering on participants while handing out materials promoting dairy products from an attractive dairy display the exhibitors put up in a corner of the showbarn.

Type classes were held for evaluating the conformation of the animals. Champions of each breed were as follows: Ayrshire Champion, Sarah Hord; Reserve Champion, Sarah Hord; Brown Swiss Champion, Travis Miller; Reserve Champion, Bryan Wilson; Jersey Champion, Zachary Waldron; Reserve Champion, Bridget Copsey; Holstein Champion, Kendra Inman; Reserve Champion, Aaron Shifflett; Red and White Holstein Champion, Brandon Waldron; Reserve Champion, Megan Switzer. Kendra Inman's Champion Holstein was chosen as Supreme Champion, and Brandon Waldron's Champion Red and White Holstein was Reserve Supreme Champion.

Costume classes for the sheep and dairy cattle were once again a favorite event of the exhibitors and provided great entertainment for all fair-goers in the crowd. Staunton Mayor John Avoli bravely served as judge for this class. His favorite was Cowgirl Kelly Skeen and her Indian calf. In second place was a covered wagon drawn by a Holstein ox. The third place entry was a group of colorful crayons. All of the entries were appreciated by the crowd.

In their "spare time," members of the dairy club made some money for their treasuries by providing a little community service of picking up trash around the fairgrounds.

It was a very busy week, full of hard work, learning experiences, and lots of fun with friends — a wonderful way to end the summer. —



"Cowgirl" Kelly Skeen of Mt. Solon with her "Native American" calf won the dairy calf costume class at the Augusta County Fair.

AC staff photo




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Cattlegwoman is also a conservationist

By LOIS SKEEN

MT. CRAWFORD — Many of today's cattle producers are compensating for smaller profit margins by expanding their numbers and producing more volume. It is rare these days to find a cattlegman making a living from a moderately-sized operation with no outside source of income, no income from other farming enterprises, and with no additional labor other than himself.

One exception is at Grove Church Farm, just south of Mt. Crawford, where, incidentally, the cattlegman happens to be a cattlegwoman. Dorothy Lee Rosen is the owner, the manager, and the labor force here where she has a 70-cow herd on the 138-acre farm. Although it has sometimes seemed "next to impossible," as Ms. Rosen puts it, she began making a living for herself and her two young children in 1970 when her mother died, and the farm was left to her.

"No other job or income supports this operation. The cattle and farm demand my full-time attention!" says Rosen.

Her father had kept a small herd when he ran the farm, and Ms. Rosen built her herd with some of the cows from this foundation. She kept the crossbred cows that milked best and bought some more, making milk production the main selection criteria. She bred these cows to Simmental bulls by artificial insemination. "I couldn't afford an expensive bull or cows, so I started with A.I. in 1972 to build up my herd."

Over the next 20 years, she built the herd into a reputable herd of Black Simmental cattle. "I went with Simmentals because they are good milk producers and because of their ability to convert forage into milk," explains Ms. Rosen. She

developed her market niche, selling breeding stock as well as numerous club calves and show prospect heifers to customers from North Carolina to Indiana. Her calves have gone on to win Grand Championship honors for their new owners several times in Virginia shows as well as out-of-state fairs, building a base of repeat buyers for her cattle.

The herd was dispersed in 1992 with a successful sale which drew buyers from as far away as Nebraska. The extra income from the sale was put back into the farm to improve the barn and cattle-working facilities. Rosen is back in business with a herd of 70 Angus and "composite" cows with papers, which are bred by crossing the cows back to Black Simmental, Maine Anjou, and Chi-Angus bulls by means of artificial insemination.

Just as Ms. Rosen made a plan for improving her herd, she has made a plan for improving her farm. A rotational grazing system has evolved from an original plan of cross-fencing to keep cattle off pastures until a first cutting of hay was harvested. A complete system of rotational grazing is in place now. By cross-fencing pastures with electrified high-tensile barbed wire and installing water lines to four new water troughs, the cattle graze in smaller groups, moving about once a week to a new paddock. This system allows better use of the pasture grasses, extends the grazing season, and allows an increased stocking rate. The smaller groups also are more conducive to sorting cattle for breeding and observing any health problems.

"I can't say enough good things about rotational grazing," exclaimed Ms. Rosen. "It has so many different benefits."

Rosen has also fenced off the ponds and the spring-fed stream on the farm to prevent cattle access and reduce erosion of the banks. She is in the process of building cattle cross-overs to allow cattle and machinery movement from one paddock to the next without going through the stream. Shale rocks on the crossovers washed away, so they were replaced with limestone rocks, which remained in place even after Hurricane Fran waters washed over them. A cement-like slurry mixture will be added to cover these rocks and hold them together.

The need for chemical fertilizers has been limited by the utilization of alternative sources of nitrogen, including poultry litter and municipal sludge, which is made available by the nearby regional sewer authority. The sludge is a good method of fertilization when used responsibly, according to Ms. Rosen. It is put on once a year on fields away from the stream. The well-established sod in the pastures reduces the run-off. She runs a soil test regularly, and uses lime to neutralize any pH problems. "The sludge is provided and applied at no charge to me, and this has really helped me to keep my costs down," says Rosen.

The sludge also increased the hay yield significantly. A neighboring farmer does the hay for half the crop, eliminating the need for Rosen to invest in and maintain costly equipment. Since the sludge has been used, yields have improved enough to supply all the hay Rosen needs from her half of the crop.

Sharing the hay in return for getting it harvested is just one way Ms. Rosen gets by with a little help from her friends. "I couldn't survive without the graces of other people," Rosen says. "None of us is an island in the farming commu-



Dorothy Lee Rosen of Mt. Crawford with an Angus cow from her herd.
Photos by Lois Skeen

nity. We work together. I often have friends come by and help me work cattle, and thank goodness my son, Lee, keeps what machinery and equipment I have working, because I am NOT mechanical!" she admits.

The conservation practices in place at Grove Church Farm earned Ms. Rosen a nomination for Virginia's Environmental Stewardship Award. She won second-place in the district stewardship contest.

Ms. Rosen's dedication to soil conservation was heightened as she observed some other area farms losing topsoil because of erosion. "Their farm is basically gone. There's no topsoil left. It's in the Chesapeake. I want to be a good steward of the land. I just think it's very important."

Four years ago when Ms. Rosen had her dispersal sale, she could have left the cattle business for good. Both of her children were grown and on their own. She jokes, "I probably would have been better off to rent the farm and go live at the beach somewhere." Instead, she improved her facilities, and put in a conservation plan to improve

the efficiency of her operation and preserve her farmland for the future. Why? Part of the answer becomes obvious when Ms. Rosen takes a visitor to the barn to look at this year's crop of club calves she is just weaning.

"Look at the meat in him, and without any creep feed!" Ms. Rosen said of one calf. And of another: "This one is out of a cow that had a champion steer last year in Pennsylvania." The excitement in her voice reveals an enthusiasm for what she is doing and her affection and appreciation for her cows.

This energetic, savvy cattlegwoman has been able to be successful and stay afloat for more than 20 years in the cattle business. No doubt that is partly because she has developed a sound plan covering things from management to marketing, and tried to carry out that plan in an efficient and cost-effective manner. But the key to her success may simply be that she cares a great deal about her farm and her cattle, and truly enjoys getting up every day and working hard to accomplish her goals. —



Dorothy Rosen stands on a creek crossover which withstood waters from Hurricane

Fran. The waterway is fenced off to prevent cattle from degrading the creek banks.



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Farmer's Market growth surpasses all records

AC Staff report

STAUNTON — Growth of the Staunton/Augusta Farmer's Market continues to astonish vendors who sell there. Market Master Marilyn Young reports.

"This year we seem to be breaking every record there is. Our farmer participation is up, our weekly sales are up, and excitement about the market continues to flourish. In 1993, the first year of the market, our goal was to have a day or two each season when sales exceeded \$2,000. Now our market, as a whole, is averaging almost \$3,000 per market day, and occasionally we hit \$4,000! Frankly, we are not sure where the top is, but

we know that market consumers seem happier than ever, and our farmers are all smiles this year."

Farmer's representative Jeff Ishee said, "This market year has been a great one for every vendor, and we still have several weeks left in the season. There have been some Saturday mornings at the Wharf parking lot where we were completely swamped with customers. Of course, the weather this year has been ideal for vegetable and fruit production. Thankfully Hurricane Fran came just after the sweet corn harvest (the market had its first emergency closure ever on Sept. 7 due to the hurricane). There will continue to be a bounty of produce being hauled into Staunton

every Saturday morning."

Sales figures for the market this year prove the popularity of genuine farmer's markets like Staunton/Augusta, where each vendor must produce his/her own product, hence the term "producer's only" market. "There have been several attempts locally to get in on the action caused by the popularity of farmer's markets nationwide," said Ishee. "The USDA reports that there has been a 20 percent increase in the number of local farmer's markets in the last two years alone. In Staunton, our market is so popular that area consumers are spending an average of \$800 per hour some mornings. We have several customers who do a major

percentage of their grocery shopping at the market getting fresh bread, produce, meat, eggs and other farm products; therefore, we have started providing shopping baskets as a convenience for the customer."

Ishee encouraged other farmers to participate by saying, "Right now, the demand for fresh local produce far exceeds the supply, and area farmers can cash in on this demand by planning now for next year's market season. There is no long term commitment to be a vendor at our market. You can come every Saturday of the seven-month season, or you can come once or twice. It's up to the farmer.

We'll provide the market if you can just supply the farm products.

"One good item to bring right now would be a load of clean straw to sell to city gardeners as they mulch their gardens this fall. Be creative, and just look around your farm. What do you have that other people need?"

The Staunton/Augusta Farmer's Market is open Saturday mornings at the Wharf parking lot in historic downtown Staunton from 7 a.m. — noon, rain or shine. The market season will continue through the last Saturday in October.

For information about the market, call Market Master Marilyn Young at (540) 885-7593. —

Bt corn, soil compaction addressed at field day

By JEFF ISHEE

STUARTS DRAFT — Several farmers gathered recently for a field demonstration day at the Stuarts Draft farm of the David Fitzgerald family. Topics discussed at length were new varieties of corn and compaction of soil in fields.

Northrup King and Pioneer seed company representatives discussed several new corn hybrids available for Shenandoah Valley producers. One of the new crop technologies is "Bt" corn, which stands for *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a naturally occurring soil bacteria. The bacteria produces an insecticidal crystal protein (ICP) lethal to certain insects. The gene in the new corn hybrids comes from a Bt strain that produces proteins controlling the Lepidopteran family of insects.

So how does Bt protect corn? Representatives explained that when the gene is added to selected corn hybrids, it "programs" the plant to produce the Bt ICP in plant tissue. This lets the corn plants themselves control the European corn borer, a major pest in North America. When a corn borer larva ingests an ICP, the protein causes the insect to stop feeding and die. One seed company representative said "basically, the worm gets a stomach ache and dies of starvation. Bt has also been proven to be harmless to humans, animals, birds, and beneficial insects."

Bt corn hybrids have been proven to resist the corn borer from stalk to the ears and tassels — anywhere that bores feed — for season-long protection. Because it lasts all season, this eliminates the difficulty of properly timing chemical insecticide applications. Northrup King also claims that Bt corn is biodegradable and environmentally safe.

There are some farmers, however, that oppose the use of the new Bt corn hybrids. Elizabeth Peyton, a physician in Fayette, Mo., wrote recently in a national publication "the genetic engineering of Bt into plants is a deliberate and unnecessary overuse of Bt, and can be expected to make Bt useless within a few growing seasons." One seed company official advised that a producer should never allocate his entire seeding to only Bt varieties.

Research continues on this new technology, and farmers should consult an Extension agent for the latest recommendations.

Another topic not so controversial was the issue of soil compaction, which is defined by the Soil Science Society of America as "increasing soil bulk density and decreasing porosity due to application of mechanical forces to the soil." Charles Elliot, a soil specialist from Portsmouth, defined it as "the moving of soil particles closer together by external forces. Packing the soil together results in the loss of pore space within the soil.

This in turn leads to poorer internal drainage and aeration. When compacted, the soil cannot percolate."

According to Elliot, crop yields can be reduced by 25-50 percent when plant roots are impeded by soil compaction. During the field day demonstration, he illustrated compaction by inserting a thin rod into the top 18 inches of soil in a corn field. "On this particular field," he said, "we have a good example of soil compaction caused by tractor tire tracks. Between 6 and 8 inches down, there is a hardpan of soil that is almost impenetrable to water." The tool Elliot used slid gracefully down for 6 inches, then it took almost a superhuman effort to push the rod on through the 2-inch layer of compaction. After it broke through, the tool slid easily down to its handle. "Without this tool, you could estimate soil com-

paction in a field by watching your drainage. If a wet field is always wet, or a dry field is always dry, you probably have soil compaction. Compacted topsoil dries out slowly due to poor percolation.

"Corn roots should penetrate at least 24 inches into the soil, and ideally 4 feet," he said. "The stalks depend daily on new growth of root tissue that absorbs water and nutrients. Plant symptoms of soil compaction can be shorter-than-normal plants; a yellow cast on leaves, and shallow root systems."

One solution to soil compaction offered by Elliot is to limit the number of passes of heavy equipment across a field. "Fall harvest tends to cause deep compaction due to higher axle weight loads. The influence of heavy axle loads on dry soil may persist for 3 to 4 years.

But in wet soil the compaction can linger for nearly 10 years."

Another solution offered is to use an implement designed to break up compaction by lifting, twisting, and shattering the hardpan layer. These implements can be preset to place shanks within an inch under the compaction layer. Elliot said that the use of this "low-till" tool increases aeration, diminishes soil erosion, and minimizes surface residue disturbance. Elliot went on to assert: "This increases water absorption, and provides a warmer soil in the spring for planting. The soil can percolate much better if the compaction is broken up."

Farmers should analyze their fields to determine if a soil compaction problem is limiting their yields. More information on this subject is available from county Extension agents. —

•Weather

Continued from page 19

lation with winds of less than 31 mph then the weather pattern is called a tropical depression.

The depression becomes a tropical storm if the winds become stronger than 31 mph but less than 74 mph. It is at this point that the storm can be christened with a name. If the newly named tropical storm continues to build and has winds that exceed 74 mph it is called a hurricane.

The understanding of how storms are born and evolve has grown by leaps and bounds since the introduction of satellite imagery. The very first pictures of tropical depressions were sent back to earth by a polar orbiting satellite in 1960. The first completely operational weather satellite went on line in 1966. It was not until 1974, however, that full satellite coverage and hurricane tracking was made available with the GOES satellite. The GOES

sends images back both in the daytime and during the night.

Although satellite weather records are relatively new to the science of climatology, official record keeping of temperatures and precipitation goes back many, many years according to Stenger.

"There were many weather stations in the late 1800s, but not many of the original ones from when the Weather Bureau started at the turn of the century are still around. Some of the early stations were taken over from the old army signal corps," he explained.

Two weather stations that date back many years are in our own backyard. Rockingham County's Dale Enterprise has been officially recording weather since 1880 and forms were filed from Dale Enterprise to Richmond as early as 1893.

"The Dale Enterprise station has been in the same location since 1880. This is very unusual and very valuable for weather

statistics," Stenger said.

The other long-term facility is McCormick Observatory in Charlottesville which has been the site of weather observations for 101 years. Other areas, like Staunton, have been keeping official records for a relatively short time. The first official rainfall measurements in Staunton took place in 1928. The official recording station was located at Staunton Military Academy (now the Mary Baldwin campus).

Man has always been fascinated and frustrated by weather. As Mark Twain wrote: "Everyone talks about the weather, but no one does anything about it." Although lacking the ability to alter weather patterns, the advent of satellite images and computer analysis of weather databases since Twain's, have given us the advantage of solving some weather enigmas. But unraveling Mother Nature's secrets, just like getting the perfect haircut, has often proved elusive. —

Reeves, Mossy Creek win NCBA environmental award

MT. SOLON -- Ernie Reeves of Mossy Creek Farm is the 1996 National Cattleman's Beef Association Region I Environmental Award Winner. The award honors cattle farmers and ranchers who use innovative practices to improve natural resources while maintaining or increasing profitability.

Reeves' environmental practices on the family's 2,200-acre beef cattle

and poultry farm were featured in an article which appeared in the July 1996 edition of *Augusta Country*.

NCBA Region I includes Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and New York. Reeves will travel to the January 1997 NCBA convention in Kansas City where a national winner will be announced.

The Hitching Post

Horse camp helps young Bosnian refugee find happiness

By BETH GREENAWALT

LEXINGTON — Sanela Osmanovic, 12, came to Lexington, last March straight from a Bosnian refugee camp, after a childhood spent growing up in a war-torn country.

"She only had three months of school back in Bosnia; she can't read or write," remembers Robert Moses, who has organized Lexington Presbyterian Church's sponsorship of Sanela's family.

"She was disturbed because of the refugee camp, and frightened. She was terrified when she came of doctors and bugs and animals," said Moses.

Beginning with English lessons at home, the church has overseen a varied and comprehensive program to help Sanela adjust and learn and regain health.

"Not just the people in the church, but all the people in the community — probably over 200 — have helped, from dentists and doctors to translators to child specialists," says Moses.

A school bus driver helping with the Kids' Castle Day Camp near Lexington first sparked Sanela's interest in horses, inviting her to the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington. There Sanela sat on a horse and was led around.

"She liked it and wasn't afraid of it," says Moses.

Then Moses spotted an announcement for the "All About Horses" day camp running from July 8 through Aug. 2 near Buena Vista, sponsored by Virginia Mountain Outfitters in cooperation with the Blue Ridge 4-H Horse and Mule Adventure Club. He thought

it would be a logical next step.

"I'd read stories about Deborah Sensabaugh (owner of Virginia Mountain Outfitters and coordinator of the camp)," says Moses. "I told the (sponsorship coordinating) committee that if Sanela could go to that for a week, she'd be ready for just about anything. I considered it to be equivalent to Marine Boot Camp."

Moses feels that participation in the camp was a turning point for Sanela. "I stopped by (to pick her up) at 7:30 a.m., and she got home at 5:30," he says. "She liked it; she told her parents she liked it. Of course she was tired, but by the next morning she was ready to go again."

Deborah Sensabaugh, coordinator of the camp, says that she was glad that Sanela was able to participate. "It was a neat opportunity to be able to work with her. Her teacher said that to see the joy on Sanela's face the first time she rode was really something."

Sensabaugh says that working with Sanela was a positive experience for other camp participants as well. "We try to stress having the kids help each other and learn to deal with kids who have special challenges.

It's good for all the kids."

Despite Sanela's inexperience and limited English, Sensabaugh says, "She fit in, she did fine. In fact, she did better than some."

"The horseback riding was a big part in building her self confidence," says Moses. "That was the big plus in the total summer program. I was extremely pleased; I thought it was a fantastic thing."

After completing the Virginia Mountain Outfitters camp, Sanela went on to participate in a two-week program at Southern Virginia Women's College. "The three things she liked best were gymnastics, horseback riding and swimming," Moses recalls.

"All these events brought her along during the summer. By the end of the summer, everybody could see a big change in her. Sanela's come a long way."

"Now she's taking a full course at school (seventh grade) and she's happy. Really happy," says Moses.

Most surprising is that the child who, just a few months ago, was terrified of doctors and animals now goes to the dentist by herself, rides horses — and has a cat of her own. —



Linda White of Brownsburg, a teacher at the "All About Horses" day camp near Buena Vista, helps Sanela Osmanovic, 12, learn to ride on an American Bashkir Curly Horse named Rosie. Learning to ride horses reportedly helped the newly-arrived Bosnian refugee to develop her self confidence.

Photo by Beth Greenawalt

Va.'s first lady to lead 4-H benefit trail ride

AC staff report

LEXINGTON — Susan Allen, Virginia's First Lady, plans to lead 150 other horseback riders on a 10-mile 4-H Benefit Trail Ride at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington on Oct. 12, when fall foliage is expected to be at its peak.

The largest youth organization in America, 4-H provides training and leadership to youth and encourages the development of character and skills through participation. 4-H emphasizes participating in meaningful work and building strong family relationships. Over 115,000 youth are involved in Virginia 4-H.

Those of any age who want to participate in the "First Lady's Trail Ride

to Benefit 4-H" but can't ride may find a spot on one of the wagons and carriages that will accompany the ride, or can participate as a "Ghost Rider." Each participant must have gathered pledges totaling at least \$350 in order to ride. "Ghost Riders" don't actually ride, but do collect pledges. Proceeds will benefit the Virginia 4-H Foundation and the Virginia 4-H Foundation Horse Program.

Youth riders must be at least 9 years old (as of Jan. 1, 1996) and those under 14 must have a parent or guardian attend. All riders must provide their own horses.

For more information, call the 4-H Foundation at (540)231-6372. Those interested in sponsoring a rider should call 540/828-2034. —

Keep tack under lock and key

FAIRFAX — Horse owners need to keep a watchful eye on their equipment, an expert warned. Recent reports indicated tack theft is on the rise, especially in Virginia.

Since December 1995, more than 13 incidents of tack theft have been reported in Virginia. Cases also have been reported in South Carolina, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Losses have ranged up to \$18,000 in stolen tack, including high-dollar saddles, bridles, and breast collars.

"The thieves who are doing the major damage are professional thieves," said Reid Folsom, an agricultural security consultant, who has been studying tack theft in order to identify patterns and ways to prevent the theft, as well as to help recover stolen property. "I believe it's a ring. It's organized. They have an established way to get rid of the saddles to get money."

It is possible that the stolen

tack is being transported across state lines, Folsom said. That would explain why the tack is never recovered near the location from which it was taken. In fact, most stolen tack is never recovered at all, he added.

Most cases of tack theft have occurred in the afternoon when the horse owner is away at work. In rural areas where the horse owners tend to work at home on the farm, many of the thefts have occurred at night when the owners are asleep.

Folsom offered these tips to horse owners: take note of unusual visitors; install a professional barn alarm; clearly mark tack so as to identify it later if it is recovered; and have a security inspection performed on your property to identify the risks of theft. —

Information for this article was taken from News Leads, a weekly publication of Virginia Farm Bureau Federation.

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Jo Struby: An instructor for instructors

By CHRIS MARRS

STAUNTON -- National Riding instructor Jo Struby was the guest of honor when Margot and Phil Case of Shenandoah Farms hosted an instructors' clinic Aug. 15-16.

Struby holds a master's degree in education and a bachelor of science degree in equestrian studies from Salem College, now Salem-Teikyo University, and graduated magna cum laude. She holds a riding master diploma from Meredith Manor School of Horsemanship, now Meredith Manor International Equestrian Centre, where she was named to Who's Who for Outstanding Students in American Vocational and Technical Schools.

As a rider, competitor, and ath-

lete, Struby is committed to her chosen sport -- three-day eventing and horse trials. She has trained and competed through the advanced level in eventing. In dressage she has trained horses above the Prix St. George's level. She has earned the USDF Bronze and Silver Medal Rider Awards. Struby also has experience with show hunters, show jumpers, fox hunters, western and saddleseat.

As an administrator, she was formerly the dean of Meredith Manor. She has a strong professional background in teacher education, program administration, and curriculum development. While teaching at this internationally known school for 10 years, she focused on the development of the jump-

ing and teaching departments.

As former vice president of education for the United States Combined Training Association, Struby, served on the executive committee and board of governors. During her tenure, she developed the AHSA-USCTA Combined Training Officials seminars as well as educational seminars for the membership. In 1988, she received the USCTA's Governor's Cup Award for outstanding contributions to the sport of eventing.

As a consultant, she developed a working student program involving training and breeding for the Akhal-Teke Stud in Staunton and advised Wetherbee Farm in Boxboro, Mass., on developing their Fitness by Riding Program.

Students attending Struby's seminar included instructors from Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. Her clinic focused on teaching methods and techniques that riding instructors use for training students. Struby recognizes the importance of the instructor's role in the development of their students' skills, talent, and knowledge. Teacher's methods are perpetuated through their students. Famous teachers actually carve and mold the direction of horsemanship, she said.

On a personal level, I spoke with Struby about her own profession and riding. I asked why she chose combined training.

"I wanted a competitive chance," she explained. "I felt I

wasn't getting enough blue ribbons in the hunt ring. I am not an equitation enthusiast."

Struby evented when she was 16 years old. She explained that she fox hunted and liked it, but did not care for form or style. Combined training focuses more on doing the job, not how you look.

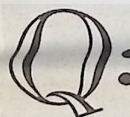
Shenandoah Farms provided a program showcasing their Akhal-Tekes to participants in the clinic. The Cases imported the first stallion and mare for their farm in 1979 and 1980. Through additional importation and breeding, the Akhal-Tekes now number more than 40 purebred and several halfbreeds. This unusual breed originated in southern Turkmenistan by the "Teke" tribe on the "Akhal" oasis.

For information or a free brochure about the Akhal-Tekes, call Shenandoah Farms at 886-1870. ---

Choose instructor based on what you want to learn

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 reflect different problems. I.B.'s answers are meant to be informative and enjoyable, but not binding. Common sense in any situation is a must.



How do I choose a riding instructor? Where do I find one, and how much does it cost to take lessons?

I have known more children who want horses before they even know how to ride. I am a firm believer in lessons first. Learn the basics before buying your first horse. I have been a school horse for many years and know beginners when they get on my back. I can put too much past them because of their ignorance. It's sad, but they don't know how to communicate well, they don't understand me and my behavior, and

they often are too afraid to stand up for themselves. If it wasn't for the instructor in the ring, I would be able to do what I want and sooner or later really hurt someone.

There are different riding instructors. Most beginners need to start off with basics, so they should look for an instructor who teaches what they need to know. If the rider wants to jump or fox hunt, they need to find an instructor who

teaches the basics in this discipline. If they want to ride western or stock seat, eventually work cattle, rein, or show pleasure, then they need to find an instructor who can help them learn those basics. Another discipline is saddleseat, and there are instructors who can teach them about gaited horses, too.

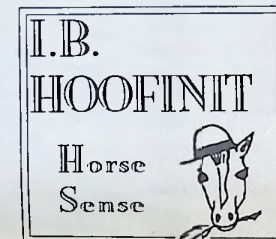
First, go to a stable and ask. One stable will lead to another until you find what you are looking for. Horse people tend to know what's going on in the horse world and who's doing what where. Most stable managers can direct you toward where you want to go.

The cost of lessons depends on the stable, the level of the instructor, the equipment, and whether the lessons are private or group. Group lessons generally run a lot cheaper than private, but time is divided between four or more students. Some stables provide hard hats, saddles, etc. Some ask that you provide your own boots and hard hat. The level of the instructor can de-

termine cost. The higher the level of the instructor, the higher the asking price, and they've earned it. The stable can set its prices according to the quality of its horses. Horses are expensive to keep and maintain. Horses that have more talent and ability are going to cost more per lesson than, say, a grade school horse that isn't expected to do more than teach the walk, trot, canter.

Always check out the facility to see where you will be riding. A clean riding ring is important. Safety is a first around horses, and a well organized, well run stable will reflect this. Talk to the instructor about what you want to learn, and when you begin lessons plan to stick with them.

Learning to ride is a long process especially with one lesson a week. Giving yourself six months of lessons is a minimum to begin to feel comfortable about what is expected. Instructors will often give you different horses to ride to



build skill and ability. One horse will build confidence, but many horses build on your ability to communicate effectively.

I have taught many beginners and have learned to enjoy teaching them. I am older now, so I forgive more mistakes than I used to. I can tolerate misunderstandings and see past the rough edges to what's going to be there when the work is done. That is what I like best. It takes a long time, but it is worth every minute to bring each rider to his or her fullest potential. ---



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Breeding stock determines quality of flock

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

BLACKSBURG — The bottom line for any successful sheep producer is the quality of the breeding stock in the flock.

Selecting replacement ewes and rams takes the careful attention of shepherds. Monty Chappell of the University of Kentucky and Gary Ricketts of the University of Illinois gave sheep producers attending a shepherds' symposium held at Virginia Tech some pointers in choosing the right animals to get the job done.

Chappell suggested that inexperienced producers should start their flocks with mature ewes. He explained that yearling ewes can often be difficult to manage through their first lambing and are more likely to be successful under the care of experienced shepherds.

He cautioned producers to be aware of the overall health of breeding stock and to carefully evaluate sheep for potential health problems. Chappell said that the body condition of ewes post lactation is a good indication of the quality of

the ewe. Animals which lose too much body condition during lactation are difficult to bring back into the breeding cycle, he said, therefore ewes must be able to hold their condition despite lactation.

Size is an important factor in selecting replacement ewes, according to Chappell.

"We need volume, but we don't need fence jumpers," he said. "(Ewes weighing) 150-160 pounds are adequate. There's a saying, '200-pound ewes are for very young, very athletic people.'"

Ewes being considered for purchase should be examined to determine their age, Chappell said. He instructed shepherds to learn how to age sheep by looking at their teeth. Deteriorating dental work is a sign of advancing age, according to Chappell who reminded shepherds that older ewes are approaching years of low productivity.

Ewes' udders also should be examined for soundness, Chappell said. "If a ewe for any reason has a problem with her udder she'll have two or three lambs," he said, stating one of Murphy's Laws.

Chappell said within a month of drying off after lactation, ewes' udders should resemble an empty tobacco pouch. Udders with abnormal shapes or hardness are suspect for dysfunction, he said.

Chappell urged producers to take their time in selecting replacement ewes for their flocks.

"Spend some time looking at the ewes," he said. "Don't make it a drive-by effort."

Ricketts explained that producers need to look at the numbers behind ewes before deciding which ones to keep for replacement.

"We seem to like to use our eyes and not our data," he said. "We have to learn to ideally put things together."

Production records will assist shepherds in making decisions about lambs to hold over for replacements, Ricketts explained.

"First look at the data, evaluate it, then go to the sheep," he said. "Select a few more animals on productivity then we want to keep. You should base choices of replacements on the lifetime productivity of their dams."

Likewise in selecting rams for breeding purposes, Chappell and

Ricketts said producers should rely on numbers. The lifetime lambing percentage of a ram's dam should be taken into consideration as well as the ram's weight gain per day of age. Whether the ram was from a multiple birth or single and its weight

at birth should also be considered. Rams should also be evaluated for reproductive soundness before a final decision is made regarding which ones to keep for breeding purposes, the two animal scientists said. —



Monty Chappell of the University of Kentucky gives sheep producers attending a shepherds' symposium held at Virginia Tech some pointers on choosing replacement ewes.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

Tincup: Lark around the links

EDITOR'S NOTE: Hannah "Banana" Simmons went to a movie recently, but it was so bad she says it wasn't worth reviewing. She's working down at the "Bijou" now, so she should know. To preserve Hannah's public image and dignity, a relative submitted the following review.

By HANNAH'S MOTHER

The summer sweep is over, and the movie house seems like a dull place. But don't disappear. If you haven't already seen it, *Tincup* is light little ditty that will give you a laugh and not demand anything from you. Kevin Costner, (*Waterworld*, *Robin Hood*) who mercifully did not produce or direct this movie, plays Roy McAvoy, a wanna-be golf pro who cannot pass up any opportunity to go for the gusto. Along with his friend Romeo, played superbly by comedian Cheech Marin, the two run an armadillo-infested driving range in west Texas.

Happy driving golf balls, swilling beer, and hanging out with the guys, McAvoy's world is turned upside down when psychologist Dr. Molly Griswald shows up for golf lessons. Played by Rene Russo, (*In the Line of Fire*, *Mr. Destiny*) the slightly neurotic shrink wants to learn the game so she can impress her boyfriend, a golf-pro, David Simms, played by Don Johnson, (*TV's Nash Bridges*) who also happens to be

McAvoy's longtime nemesis.

Predictably a love triangle develops and is played out on the links as McAvoy decides to enter the U.S. Open to impress the unattainable Dr. Griswald.

Even if you think golf is about as exciting as watching grass grow, and you don't know an eagle from a double-bogey, *Tincup* gets you excited about the game. It's sort of the Rocky of golf.

Costner plays the part he plays best, that of a hapless yet lovable dufus. Russo is dizzy and neurotic and compulsive all at the same time as she at first resists McAvoy's advances and then succumbs. Don Johnson plays the part of a shallow insufferable small-time star probably because it is a part he practices every day.

It is Marin who steals the show, however. This 60s comedian has great comic timing, leaving the others in the dust.

While the message of the movie — that playing it safe to win is a pale choice when you can make a fool of yourself and lose spectacularly — is not exactly a good family values theme, there is no need to really think about it. This is potato chip pleasure: a McMovie; a Lite film.

And the theater is dark, so no one will notice the puzzled look on your face when you can't figure out why all the golf nuts in the audience are gasping over some great shot.

Hannah's mom gives *Tincup* two bananas. It is rated R for language and skin. —

Augusta Farm Bureau to hold annual meeting

STAUNTON -- The Augusta County Farm Bureau Federation will hold its annual meeting 6:30 p.m., Oct. 7 at Sangerville-Towers Ruritan Building.

Bobby Whitescarver of the Natural Resources Conservation Service will present the keynote speech.

Other business slated for the meeting includes the approval of resolutions to be sent to the Virginia Farm Bureau for consideration at the state convention to be held Dec. 2-5 in Richmond. Augusta County will send five voting delegates to the convention.

Each year the Farm Bureau sets its "platform" of legislative issues to pursue. Resolutions are made at the

local level, then passed on to the state. Farm Bureau lobbies for legislative action to promote agriculture production locally and nationwide.

Officers for the coming year will be elected. Individuals nominated include Rick Shiflett, president; Charles Wonderly, vice president; and Maxine Arey, women's chairman. Board members up for election for at-large seats are Katy Roudabush of Mt. Solon, David Simmons of Fort Defiance, and Willard Cline of Grottoes. Directors standing for re-election are Bryan Plemmons of Goshen and Forrest Ashby of Staunton.

Harold Armstrong, president, will be completing his fourth consecutive term in office and will move to

the immediate past president slot on the board. Directors going off the board and who have completed two terms in office are Dan Flora, Robbie Brown, and Betty Hawpe.

Also at the annual meeting, Farm Bureau will present awards to outstanding youth in the community. Awards to be announced are Young Agriculturist, Youth Leadership, Miss Augusta County Farm Bureau, Young Farmer of the Year, and Mary Frances Houff Good Citizenship.

Farm Bureau members are invited to attend the meeting. The meal will be served by the Sangerville-Towers Ruritan. Meal reservations need to be made by calling the Augusta County Farm Bureau office at 886-2353. ---

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Here, there, everywhere

Spottswood residents host community picnic

They've lost their post office, but not that friendly feeling!

By DAVE and BETH GREENAWALT

SPOTTSWOOD — Nearly 90 residents and friends gathered Aug. 17, for a community picnic designed in part to keep the friendly relationships of the past alive.

"We lost our post office two or three years ago. Now there's no place to meet with people in the community," explained Ken Koons, who hosted the event along with his wife, Deb. "You see each other on the road and wave, but that's about all."

So, covered dishes in hand, residents converged on the Koons' lawn (across from the old post office) for some old-fashioned fun and fellowship.

In addition to renewing old friendships, residents were quick to welcome newcomers.

The Tolley family of Walkers Creek came. "We're going to live here soon," explained Pat Tolley.

Estimating that he only recognized about half of those present, Koons said, "There are a lot of new people who've moved in that we don't know."

When time for dessert rolled around, participants could choose homemade ice cream from freezers of butter pecan, banana, strawberry, peach, raspberry, or cherry to top off their favorite cake or pie.

There was a small price to pay first, however. Before they could get their ice cream, resident Charlotte Holden (who attended the event despite a recent heart attack) required each person to stand up and introduce himself or herself.

Residents were enthusiastic about the picnic, the first community-wide get-together since a pig roast hosted by the Holdens in 1989.

"Community!" said homemaker Joanne Hicken, a Spottswood resident for 17 years. "Events like this bring people together — it does the

opposite of what computers do. It encourages community rather than discourages it like technology does."

Resident Deb Koons said that the biggest problem in planning community events is in defining Spottswood — how far does it go? Spottswood once boasted three grocery stores, a train depot, a Ford dealership, a stockyard, a bauxite industry, a high school, and an elementary school. Now, mostly what's left is the name.

"It's kind of dead around here anymore," says Melvin Rosen, a lifelong resident.

What people seem to miss most, however, is the sense of community. Warren Bradley, another lifelong resident, says that the biggest change is with the people. "I used to know everybody," he said.

Now, most people commute to work and only pass on the road. Bradley drives northeast to Hershey in Stuarts Draft, resident Frank Debrat travels north to Harrisonburg to teach at James Madison University, and Koons goes south to his job in the history department at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington while Mrs. Koons travels east to Charlottesville where she works in a research laboratory at the University of Virginia.

Many even commute to distant churches. "Churches used to bring people together," said Hicken, whose family drives to Harrisonburg's Grace Community Church.

Some have retired to Spottswood after a lifetime of moves. George MacDonald — "Mac D" — settled in the area after a career spent constructing bridges, tunnels, and roads "all up and down the East Coast."

However, for at least one day, celebrating community in picture-perfect weather, the fragmentation of modern life was forgotten.

Although no longer living, Mary

Alice McClure's presence was still felt. A teacher in Spottswood for many years, "Miss Mary" was mentioned by many.

"For all of you who have known this house as Miss Mary's, just go in and look around. Make yourself at home," Mrs. Koons invited in her opening comments, with a gesture toward the residence built in the 1880s.

"She was living here at least as early as 1934," recalled Robert Earhart, who opened the picnic with prayer. "She was an institution here."

"Many people say, 'Miss Mary was my teacher,'" Mrs. Koons commented. "If you mail something to 'Miss Mary's house, Spottswood,' it'll get here."

"I'm 75 years old, and she was here as far back as I can remember," added Rosen. "She taught me in the sixth grade."

Although conscious of the past, residents also celebrated new life, singing "Happy birthday" around a cake for Robert Trombetta, son of Vance and Christina, "one year old today!" —



Dalton Campbell, 4, center, enjoys some fellowship with Nat Bradley, 10, and Amy Bradley, 6, right, at a picnic held recently by Spottswood community residents.

Photo by Dot Greenawalt

Preserving resources is focus of Earth Connection workshop

AC staff report

Paula Gonzalez is interested in options.

"We need to awaken as many people as possible," she says. "People don't realize that the next generation's lives are desperately compromised."

Gonzalez' primary concern is that of preserving the earth's natural resources, and ultimately preserving earth itself.

A free-lance lecturer who holds a doctorate in biology from Catholic University in Washington, D.C., Gonzalez will be holding a workshop, "Restoring God's creation," Oct. 19 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sponsored by Shenandoah Presbytery and the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Harrisonburg, the workshop will be held at Bridgewater College's Science Center. It will give participants the chance to explore options advocated by Gonzalez to help preserve natural resources.

Since 1981 Gonzalez, who is af-

filiated with the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, Ohio, has been working to make people aware of the concerns which affect global futures. Her work in the area of environmental protection has not been limited to words and public appearances only.

Rather, she has put "action in faith" by directing the construction of a 4,000-square-foot "earth friendly" office building in Cincinnati. Her reputation in the field has given her the opportunity to work as a consultant to architecture firms designing buildings which use energy sources other than those derived from fossil fuels, petroleum products, or nuclear power plants.

In addition to constructing a building which does not deplete natural resources, the building was built from available materials removed from old buildings slated for demolition. The structure which Gonzalez envisioned, helped design, and see through the construction process, serves as the headquarters for "Earth Connection" of which Gonzalez is the founding director. The building has been appraised by insurance adjusters at \$535,000 and was built for an actual cost of \$260,000 by reusing components of build-

ings being torn down.

However, the ecological benefit of the completed structure may outweigh the economics of its construction, according to Gonzalez.

"We have a moral and spiritual challenge if we are to sustain ourselves on this planet," she says. "As Christians we are called to a renaissance of creativity. We need to find ways to do things which are less exploitive and less pollutive (of the environment). There are alternative ways of doing many things we do which are totally destructive."

Gonzalez will be outlining her "earth friendly" alternatives and options during the Oct. 19 workshop. Seminars will include "Our Endangered Planet," which will help participants understand major environmental challenges; "Hope Through Alternatives," which will present alternatives to present-day industrial energy sources; and "Celebrating the Sacred Earth Community," which is designed to guide participants back to an "authentic Christian lifestyle reflective of a spiritual connection to nature."

Pre-registration for the workshop is not necessary. Lunch will be available at the college for a small fee. For information call 828-6073 or 886-2844. —

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Schoolhouse News

RHS construction inconvenient, but worth wait

By RUTH JONES

GREENVILLE -- Clanging and banging. Remodeling and renewing. It has all been very much a part of what the faculty and students at Riverheads High School have experienced in the past year. During the summer before the 1995-96 school year, construction began for the school. It continued throughout the school year, and there are still some finishing

touches being made at this time. "When it is finished we will have the equivalent of a totally new building. It will be wonderful!" said Dennis Case, assistant principal.

During the initial phase of the construction last year, there were dim halls, lots of noise, plenty of headaches, and classes meeting in all kinds of places. Teachers endured a lot during this time. Many times, students watched as teachers hunted for papers and other

materials, still trying to get organized after switching rooms.

Kathleen Buchanan was one of the teachers hit worst by construction inconveniences. Mrs. Buchanan has been out of her room for four months and three weeks. It has been a frustrating experience for her, and she said she will be glad to move back to her room very soon. Being able to get back teaching materials and lab settings will be very much appre-

ciated, she noted.

Now students and teachers are back to a remodeled building that is beginning to look brand new. The classrooms have new windows, tiled floors, and best of all - central air and heat.

The biggest change of all is the office. With carpeted floors, more space, and a new guidance office, everything looks brand new.

"It's wonderful, and the lockers

are beautiful!" said guidance counselor, Layton Manus.

Through it all, everyone is beginning to see the benefits. It is going to be a better year for everyone now that the main part of the construction is over. Teachers and students are settling down and really getting to business. Sandy Katherman summed up the whole process when she said: "I think it's worth the wait." ---

Back to (home) school

By BETH GREENAWALT

STAUNTON -- Many families prepare for school's return by buying new notebooks and pencils, jeans or lunch boxes, finding out who's with which teacher and where the new homeroom is.

Others, however, are planning their own schedules and field trips, looking over curriculums, and signing up for everything from 4-H and BOOK-IT programs to daytime swimming and gymnastic lessons.

Across the nation, homeschooling has become a popular option for many, and Augusta County is no exception. A local group of home schoolers, PEACH (Parent Educators of Augusta County Homes) boasts 90 member families. Approximately 25-30 of those families came together for a picnic Aug. 30 at Montgomery Hall Park in Staunton to celebrate the beginning of a new school year.

Those who came browsed over a table of used curricula, signed up for various special activities and events, and swapped stories.

Grace Hickin, 12, of Spottswood, admitted to some mixed feelings as she enters her sixth year of homeschooling.

"Sometimes I feel kind of left out when my friends are going back to school. In a way I want to go with them, but I like homeschooling better really," she said.

Hickin, who competes regularly in swim meets as a member of the Shenandoah Marlins Aquatic Club (SMAC) at the Waynesboro YMCA, says she likes going at her own pace and having a flexible schedule.

"You can get more done in half the time. I guess, because you



Christine Showalter of Staunton, vice president of PEACH, helps homeschooler Barbara Knopp, also of Staunton, sign up for the BOOK-IT program sponsored by Pizza Hut.

Photo by Beth Greenawalt

don't have to spend time going from classroom to classroom and have your day all scheduled out," she explained.

After trying private, public and Christian schools, Samantha Brown, 11, of Staunton, also favors home school.

"You don't have to wait on the teacher if she's with another student, because in homeschool she can come right to you. You don't have to worry about people laughing at you if you make a mistake," she said.

"I learn more in home school than in public school, because I can understand most of the things," Brown adds. "They teach it so I can learn it, but in public school it's really complicated, because they don't explain all the things about what you're doing."

Many of the parents and students are pleased with the creative advantages and variety of experiences their children receive through home education, as well as the opportunity to grow closer as a family.

"We're in our fourth year of homeschooling now," says Pamela Brown Gaines of Staunton, whose children range in age from 7 to 11.

"My mother and I are breaking it up and doing different things — she's doing most of the academic parts, and I'm doing the other things, like foreign languages and traveling. They read about it and then we go and see it."

Sue Wilson of Staunton, who homeschools Andrew, her 9-year-old son, says, "I like the freedom it gives us as a family. Freedom to travel; to take advantage of things in the community. I find myself very aware of teaching all the time, using every opportunity and taking advantage of the situation from an educational standpoint."

Joanne Hickin of Spottswood, who is teaching her 10 and 12-year-olds at home, says, "If you go to school, you don't have time to read for fun, you're so busy doing assignments. We do things like put out a family newsletter every month. It really helps them in writing and organizing."

"We're library junkies," laughs Gaines. "I felt really good when we went into the library, and my five-year-old could use the computer as well as an adult."

Kate Lam, 14, of Waynesboro,

See HOME, page 27

Gap junior attends conservation camp

By LAURYN PLEMMONS

SWOPE -- Sheila Nycum, a junior at Buffalo Gap High School, was one of 73 teens who spent an interesting week at Virginia Tech's Youth Conservation Camp.

Thirty-six different soil and water conservation districts were represented at this fun-filled camp.

After filling out an application and writing an essay, Sheila was chosen to represent the Headwaters district.

"I feel that being an active



NYCUM

officer in the Science Club at Gap helped me to be chosen," stated Sheila.

The ready-to-learn campers, were given the privilege to have a hands-on study with soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatics, and watershed management. The students learned how the water quality in Virginia waterways relates to agriculture and urban land uses. Campers traveled to various run-off systems, and evaluated them to decide if they were the best systems to use.

"Canoeing down the New River was definitely the best part of the camp," said Sheila.

Sheila is also an active member in FFA and is part of Gap's varsity cheerleading squad. She is the daughter of James and Brenda Nycum of Swope. —

RHS ready to go online

By JENNY ROUDABUSH

GREENVILLE -- Riverheads High School will join other area high schools and jump online this fall.

By the end of September Riverheads Media Center will be hooked up to the Internet. As con-

struction allows, other classrooms will join.

The Internet will be used as a resource tool for the whole school.

"This will allow RHS students to further their education and knowledge of computers by roaming the net," said Susan Wilk, librarian. ---

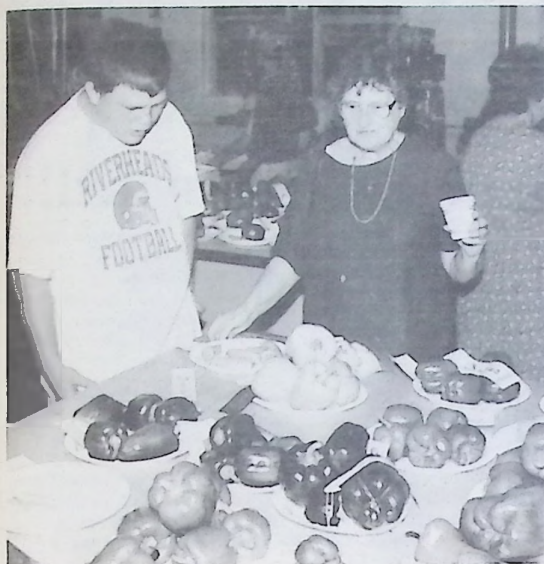
Riverheads' yearbooks available

GREENVILLE -- The 1995-96 Riverheads High School yearbooks will arrive around Sept. 27. Books will be available before and after school. All former students and enrolled students are encouraged to come and pick their books up.

The sales for 1996-97 yearbooks will begin on Nov. 4. Cost will be \$32 or \$16 down. This yearbook will contain 24 full color pages. Please try to bring money to school as early as possible so that the yearbook staff will know how many books need to be ordered. ---

Making your list and checking it twice?
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SEE PAGE 29 for details.

RHS crop show brings in 900 exhibits



Aaron Hawley, a Riverheads student and FFA member, and Yvonne Goodson of McKinley, look over the assortment of pepper varieties on display at the Riverheads FFA Crop and Vegetable Show held recently.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

By HEATHER CALDWELL

GREENVILLE -- More than 900 crop and vegetable exhibits were on display Sept. 11 at the annual Riverheads FFA Crop and Vegetable Show.

Junior Jake Shuey said, "RHS FFA Chapter's first activity (of the year) displayed a wealth of color and variety." Senior Craig Brown agreed. Overall winners were Neil Buchanan and Jared Hemp.

Agricultural students were required to enter at least 10 exhibits. Their effort counted as part of the first six-week grading period. There were 60 participants and 900 exhibits entered. Various crops on display included walnuts, chestnuts, almonds, buckeye alfalfa, tomatoes, potatoes, and many other summer garden items. Judging was performed after school by Finley Lotts, guidance counselor at RHS, and Stuart Moffet, ag teacher at WMHS.

A total of 450 ribbons were awarded. First place blue ribbons were worth 75 cents, second place red ribbons were worth 50 cents, and third place white ribbons were worth 25 cents. The cash premiums were taken out of the FFA treasury.

Eugene McIlwee, RHS ag teacher, stated that the money given was "just a little incentive to help motivate the students."

Some students were very competitive in their attempts to bring home the first place blue ribbons. Clay Fravel said, "As long as I win the corn contest, I don't care."

About 100 parents, family, and friends viewed the exhibits. Refreshments were served and enjoyed by all who attended. McIlwee and ag teacher Deborah Stroll said they were very pleased with the excellent turnout.

McIlwee stated, "There was very good quality in the crops viewed. Out of 200 items possible, about two-thirds of them were covered."

Perhaps one of the most viewed and exciting exhibits was the prize-winning cabbage exhibited by McIlwee's daughter, Megan. All students agreed that the show was a "fun" way to get the school year started.

RHS FFA officers for 1996-97 are Olen Swisher, president; Clay Fravel and Jake Shuey, vice-presidents; David Bolin and Colby Irvine, secretary; Jared Hemp and Justin Shomo, treasurers; Megan McIlwee, reporter; and Philip Howell, student adviser. ---



Megan McIlwee shows off her blue ribbon and the BIG head of cabbage which claimed the prize. Megan was among RHS FFA members exhibiting items in the chapter's annual crop and vegetable show.

RHS staff photo

•Home

Continued from page 26

has been homeschooled all of her life. Active in both the Augusta County Galloping 4-H and PEACH 4-H clubs as well as church, she says, "Your mom is able to pay more attention to you 'cause she doesn't have to watch all the other kids in a classroom. You can get all your work done in the morning, and there's a lot more time to get things done that you like to. Also, you don't have the pressure that you get at school like drugs and stuff."

With 13 years of experience teaching in public schools, Wilson points to the more thorough approach that home education allows. "I use a box curriculum, where everything comes together in a unit," she said. "In public school, I

never once made it through the whole curriculum during the year.

"With Andrew, we work through the materials for the grade, and when he's done, he's done. We do some work in the summer, too."

Most homeschooling parents have no formal training in teaching, but believe that, nonetheless, they are able to do an effective job of educating their children. Studies comparing nationwide test scores confirm their contention, with many homeschoolers consistently scoring above grade level.

"Everything I see now with my kids is an opportunity to teach history, or life. You'll never see any more creative kids," says Gaines. "I ask the kids every year, 'Are you ready to go back to regular school?' and they all say a resounding, 'No!'" ---



Champion tractor operator

Greg Buchanan of Middlebrook and a member of the Riverheads FFA chapter is congratulated by Dave Walsh, general manager of Stickley's, Inc. of Staunton. Greg won the state FFA tractor operator's contest held this summer at Virginia Tech. Stickley's provides equipment and other services for instructional purposes to area high schools. Greg is the son of Lacy and Kay Buchanan.

RHS staff photo

Guidelines for safe farming

National Farm Safety and Health Week was observed Sept. 15-21. The goal of the week's emphasis is to promote safe farm practices.

Farm safety and health can be improved in many ways. A good way to start is to abide by the National Safety Council's seven helpful hints to safety:

1. Appoint a person responsible for a farm safety program. 2. Establish a system to ensure compliance.

3. Develop a system for communicating with employees in ways that are "understandable." 4. Set up a system to identify hazards. 5. Investigate injuries and illnesses. Record accidents and explain causes. 6. Correct identified hazards or deficiencies that appear during investigation. 7. Conduct training. ---

Mary Beth Hyllon of the Fort Defiance FFA provided information for this article.



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National 4-H Week

Oct. 6-12, 1996



Augusta County 4-H... more than you ever imagined!!

By JENNIFER MERCER

VERONA — Livestock, horses, shooting education, dairy, judging, wildlife, foods, clothing, forestry, dogs, cats, veterinary science, computers, and aerospace are just a few project areas offered by the Augusta County 4-H Program to youth ages 5-19 years of age. Cloverbuds, 4-H Community Clubs, Special Interest Clubs, and Judging Teams as well as in-school programs make up the heart of the 4-H program. All 4-H age youth from Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro are eligible to participate in 4-H programs.

Most clubs meet one evening per month for one to two hours. Meetings consist of a business meeting lead by the elected youth officers of the club. Some type of educational program based on a given club's programs and projects will be held in addition to the regular business meeting. Frequently, clubs will have activities in between their regularly scheduled meetings for workshops, clinics, and competitions.

In addition to the club meetings and activities, 4-H offers a vast array of county, area, district, and state programs such as the Share the Fun Talent Show, Public Speaking and Presentations Contest, Fashion Revue Contest, Wildlife Habitat Evaluation, Shooting Education activities for the entire family, summer camps, weekend camps throughout the year, adult volunteer leader training in shooting education, high adventure, first aid, and much more. To find out details about any 4-H Club or activity, call Jennifer Mercer at 540/245-5750.

Augusta County 4-H special interest clubs

The 4-H Outdoor Sports Club, Galloping 4-H'ers, Dairy Club, Middlebrook Livestock 4-H Club, and Light Horse and Pony Club are the special interest clubs that are currently active in Augusta County.

The 4-H Outdoor Sports Club is a shooting education club. They have an air rifle program and are soon to have an archery program. The club emphasizes shooting safety and fundamentals. Members practice on an indoor range in Verona on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month and attend field trips to places like Shenandale Gun Club. They also participate in 4-H competitions and educational

events such as 4-H State Sports A Field Days, 4-H State Shoot, and 4-H Shooting Education Camps.

The Galloping 4-H'ers and the Light Horse and Pony Clubs are 4-H horse groups that meet once per month. These clubs offer fun and educational activities for horse owners and non-owners and novice and advanced horsemen. In addition to regularly scheduled business meetings, the clubs will hold fitting and showmanship clinics, horse judging clinics, gymkhana (games) days, and hippology contests, as well as traveling to shows and other horse events as spectators and/or participants. The Galloping 4-H'ers meet on the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Virginia Power building in Verona. The Light Horse and Pony Club meets in the Extension Office on the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

The Middlebrook Livestock 4-H Club focuses on programs for

youth who show or would like to show livestock. Fitting and Showmanship clinics for beef cattle, lambs and hogs are held in addition to guest speakers on health, nutrition, marketing, and selection topics. Youth learn about all aspects of the livestock industry through other club and county activities such as the annual Market Animal Show, county fair, and presentations and public speaking contests. This club meets on the third Thursday of each month in Middlebrook.

The 4-H Dairy Club holds meetings for youth interested in dairy cattle. This club meets on the third Tuesday of each month and holds educational activities such as a dairy quiz bowl, dairy judging practice, dairy fitting and showmanship clinics, as well as participation in the Augusta County Fair and the June is Dairy Month poster contest.

New clubs are constantly being

See 4-H, page 29

A listing of the current clubs active in Augusta County are as follows:

Community Clubs	Leader	Meeting Place
North River Comm. 4-H Club	Betsy Curry	Mount Solon
RL Coffey 4-H Club	Don Napier	Raphine
Willing Workers Sr. 4-H Club	Helen Stogdale	Weyers Cave
Willing Workers Jr. 4-H Club	Suzie Shiflett	Weyers Cave
Springhill 4-H Club	Debbie Brinkley	Springhill
Blue Ridge 4-H Club	Rick Williams	Staunton Draft
PEACH 4-H Club	Brenda Rose	Staunton
Special Interest Clubs	Leader	Meeting Place
Middlebrook Livestock	JR Coleman	Middlebrook
4-H Outdoor Sports Club	Don Studer	Verona
Galloping 4-H'ers	Lynn Noel	Verona
Light Horse & Pony 4-H Club	Diane Hinch	Verona
4-H Dairy Club	Crystal Grove	Verona
4-H Honor Club	Jennifer Mercer	Verona
Cloverbuds	Leader	Meeting Place
North River	Cindy Moore	Churchville
Willing Workers	Helen Stogdale	Weyers Cave
Middlebrook Livestock	Betty Coleman	Middlebrook
PEACH	Debbie Bourgeois	Staunton
Judging Teams	Leader	Meeting Place
4-H Livestock Judging	Shirley Kaufman	Verona & farms
4-H Horse Judging	Chris Marrs	Verona & farms
4-H Dairy Judging	Lois Skeen	Verona & farms
4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation	Jennifer Mercer	Verona



4-H members work as a team to make their way through the "Challenge Course" at junior camp.

Photos by Jennifer Mercer



Competitors get their balance at the starting line of the wheelbarrow race held during Gymkhana Day at Waynesboro Stables.



In photo at left, children visit with a baby duck at the Petting Zoo sponsored by the Augusta County 4-H Honor club at the Augusta County Fair. In the photo at right, a young 4-Her makes a friend at Horse Camp.



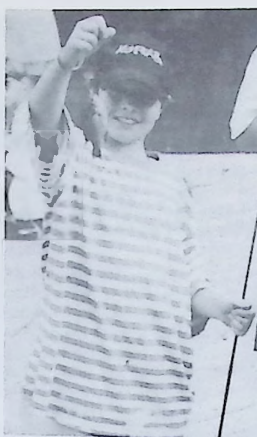
4-H

Continued from page 28

formed within the 4-H program in Augusta County. Some potential clubs to look for in the future may be a Wildlife 4-H Club, an Outdoor Adventure / High Adventure 4-H Club, a 4-H Dog Club or a 4-H Small Animals / Veterinary Science Club.

In order to begin any new club, adult leadership is mandatory. 4-H is a volunteer driven organization. Without the help of the many adult volunteers who support the program, these clubs would not exist.

Any adult who has an interest in any area mentioned or just enjoys working with youth, should consider starting a 4-H Club. Please call Jennifer Mercer, Extension Agent, 4-H Youth at 540/245-5750 for more information on joining any currently active clubs, starting a new club, or for more information. —



A 4-Her shows off the first fish caught during a day of fishing at junior camp.

In the photo at left, Augusta County teen counselor Eric Wampler helps participants over a wall on the "Challenge Course."

Lord's Acre Sale to benefit flood victims

MINT SPRING — Mint Spring United Methodist Church will hold its 28th annual Lord's Acre Day Sale Oct. 12. All proceeds will benefit local flood relief efforts.

The event will be held at the Mint Spring Ruritan Building on U.S. 11 in Mint Spring and will begin at 11 a.m. Crafts, quilts, baked goods, and other items will be on sale at a bazaar throughout the day. Lunch will be available.

Supper will be served beginning at 7 p.m. and will include a choice of two meats from barbecued beef or chicken and ham. Cost is \$9 for adults and \$4 for children. Also included in the price of the meal will be vegetables, salads and dessert.

An auction of items donated to the event will begin at 7:30 p.m.

For information, call 337-0569. —

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Girls 11 & under AAU win bronze

By PENNY PLEMMONS

ROANOKE — The Staunton girls' 11-and-under AAU basketball team captured the bronze medal in the 1996 Commonwealth Games of Virginia held in Roanoke this past July.

Determination brought success as the 12-member team hit the courts in high gear and narrowly won games against the Roanoke Shooting Stars, Fauquier Knights and Colonial Capital Patriots.

Head coach Dave Herr stated that the combination of "team work and hustle" led the Staunton girls to victory. The three wins placed Staunton in the championship game for the gold medal. The team adopted the rally cry of "one, two, three, heart" after a Colonial Capital Patriot parent commented that the Staunton girls "had heart" on the court.

The girls battled the Roanoke Stars for the gold medal but were unable to overcome a size disadvantage. The team moved on to

challenge Spotsylvania for the silver medal and once again fell short, thereby becoming third place bronze medal winners.

Top scorers, Katy Herr & Megan LaPorte led the Staunton team in baskets by contributing 5 points each game. Mary Beth Proctor and Aquilla Pryor contributed 4 points per game and Jessica Fortune bucketed 3 points a game. Players, Ally Plemmons, Danielle Powell, Ashley O'Roark & Aquilla Pryor materialized into a formidable defense with Pryor leading in rebounds. Beverly Walsh, Gina McPherson and Kerri Hite also contributed to the triumphs.

Assistant Coach Jennifer Nuckols attributed the team's success to their positive attitudes. She stated that, "the girls got along well and demonstrated great sportsmanship on and off the court." The Commonwealth Games are not new to Jennifer. She has attended the games as a player three times. She

also helped Robert E. Lee High School's team become state basketball champs in 1995.

"My goal as a coach," stated Jennifer, "was to help the girls gain experience and to have a great

time." According to forward Megan LaPorte that goal was reached. Megan stated that the games were "a neat way to end the basketball season, because it was fun and challenging." —



Members of Staunton girls' 11 and under AAU bronze-winning basketball team were, front row, from left: Ashley O'Roark, Danielle Powell, Ally Plemmons, Aquilla Pryor, and Megan LaPorte; second row, from left: Coach Dave Herr, Kerri Hite, Katy Herr, Gina McPherson, Beverly Walsh, Mary Beth Proctor, Jessica Fortune, and Assistant Coach Jennifer Nuckols. Photo courtesy Kevin Walsh

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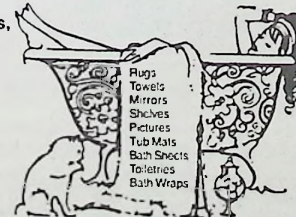
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Country Crossroads

Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin
September, 1996

Dear Maude,

Just when you think you have things figured out and settle down to enjoy a nice quiet August, things change!

Our summers are usually so predictable with their flurries of work and spells when everyone is gone, but this year has certainly been different. In August, especially when it is a presidential election year, almost all of the members of Congress are off to their political conventions making speeches and waving flags and the like, and the city is filled with droves of tourists, treating their children to a little bit of our country's history in order to prepare them for the upcoming school year. Not so this time! Many of the Republicans decided to stay in Washington rather than go to their convention where they might be held responsible by their constituents for any unpopular platform items. And since there was so little for the Democrats to decide at their convention, many of them also stayed in Washington. So here they were, hanging around their offices and getting in the way of nice long lunches, etc. It was not fair.

The rhetoric of both parties in this season of "grab-the-vote" is so similar that one is hard pressed to distinguish one from the other. While watching the Republican convention on television, I fell asleep on the sofa, and when I awoke in those first minutes of disorientation, I thought I was hearing a Democrat talking. But no, it was just another speaker saying what he thought all of America wanted to hear.

This time, however, it seems that there really is very little difference in the basic platforms, except for the far right and far left — which we will always have. One can't tell if both of the parties are concerned about the same things or are instead concerned about being elected and are using the citizens' concerns for attention.

Dylan, of course, is all excited and calls every day or two to ask questions about activities here. Much to his mother's distress, he left the family company to help in one of the local campaigns. He hopes that if his candidate wins he can return to the city. I am afraid he misses Washington more than he likes to admit. Even if his candidate does not get elected, with all of the new people who will be arriving in January there will be jobs. I expect that he probably will be returning to try and find a position with one of them. That certainly would make me happy, because then I would be going to a lot more parties, and could go buy myself some new party clothes also.

With so many bosses hanging around and all that awful weather, it feels like we, the left-in-the-city workers, had no August break at all. For sure enough, as soon as Labor Day was over, the nation's lawmakers reconvened. There is really not much to tell about what they have been up to, other than doing a lot of smiling and waving at the tourists' cameras. It is, of course, for those who are retiring (and there are quite a few) one last chance to make all those speeches for the public record. It would be very tempting, I would think, for those departing members to be able to say what they please without worrying about whether the voters like it or not.

There is another side to the coin, however. If they decide, after the required waiting period, that they want to set up shop as a lobbyist or consultant, then they must be very careful not to anger those fellow colleagues of whom they will be asking favors in the future.

Just a week or two ago both houses did pass one bill which will make the voters happy, but not the poor workers on the Hill. Under Sen. Helms leadership, they passed a measure to freeze the salaries of all Members and staff for this year. It will be the third straight year without a wage increase. But it certainly would not look good to give one-



Enduring love

Esther is sitting on the glider enjoying a peaceful late afternoon on the screen porch. On her lap is a large, stainless steel bowl filled with fresh picked lima beans. She takes one in her left hand, tears the end of the pod with her right thumb and forefinger and pulls the string. The pod opens neatly on the seam revealing four healthy limas. She drops the beans into the other bowl next to her on the glider, then tosses the remains in the paper bag on the floor. When it's full she'll walk to the compost pile to dump the pods and save the bag for another round. She stretches her toes, grips the floor and with a slight backward pull sets the glider in motion. The sun has gone over the hill. The light is pleasant on the eyes. A late summer breeze whispers through the screen. The air is cool. Almost sweater time, thinks Esther.

She slowly takes a bean from the bowl, opening the pod, listening to the crows flying wildly through the trees. They are unusually agitated; maybe it's the season although she's never noticed them this raucous before. Esther is in no hurry to finish, not rushing to get anywhere. This is her resting place. Doing this simple thing well — getting the beans done, cooking them just right — is her delight. Esther never calls this work, although it surely is. She just does it and enjoys it; moving from one household chore to the next. Resting in the middle of the day to write notes to her grandchildren or cards to a friend or a church member in the hospital. The rhythm of her day follows the path of the sun. There is always something to do and no rush to do it all. She tells herself what she remembers her mother saying: what doesn't get done today will wait until tomorrow. The saying has never proved wrong.

Ruth, Esther's daughter, once told her she ought to count the hours she spends "doing" beans, baking bread, canning tomatoes, making pickles, cleaning house and cooking dinner. Then tally it up and give Owen a bill for her service. "Daddy needs to know what you do all day and how hard you work around here."

Esther said firmly, "Honey, what makes you think your Daddy doesn't already know?" (Ruth never liked it when her mother called her honey.)

"Well, he sure doesn't say much if he does." Her voice was defensive.

"Ruth Ann," (that's the name Esther uses when she wants to make a point) "just because your daddy doesn't say much doesn't mean he isn't talking. Watch him when he comes in. Listen to what you see. You've got an awful lot to learn. I wonder, — Lord, Ruth Ann — I wonder what's got into you."

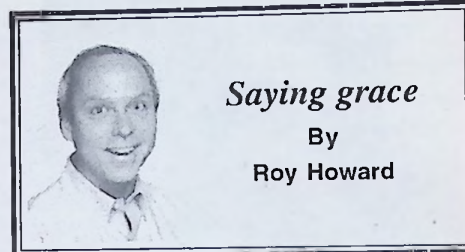
It has been several weeks since Esther went with Ruth and the grandchildren to the beach. The memory returns as she gently pushes the glider and drops lima beans into the bowl. A hummingbird lands for an instant on the feeder, quickly sips the red juice and darts away. At the beach she noticed there was something different about Ruth. They were both without their husbands, because Ruth said it would be good for them.

"Just the two of us on a get-away" is exactly the way Ruth

self a raise while asking the voters of America to sacrifice in order to balance the budget. While the bill looks good to the voters who feel that the members should be able to live on over \$130,000 a year, it also affects all of the staff as well, by eliminating the automatic cost-of-living increase for now. But the employees are hoping that in conference there is a chance that things might work out for them.

So now, as the days grow shorter, we settle into our routine tasks. Back to the filing. Back to mornings scanning the newspaper for articles the boss needs to read. Back to all of those things that make it a long time between nine and five. One of my friends said that she thought the holidays were reversed. We should celebrate Labor Day at the end of May, as we labored to get caught up on our work so we could enjoy a little holiday, and Memorial Day should be the first of September, in memory of those summer days.

Love, Lulu



Saying grace

By
Roy Howard

put it, never mentioning that the "two of us" included her two children. Not exactly the two of us, thought Esther, but she didn't say anything. She knew Owen couldn't leave the farm for a beach vacation even if he wanted to, which he most certainly didn't. So either she went alone or not at all, and besides she did like helping out with the kids. Finally, she persuaded herself that maybe Ruth was right. A mother should go on a vacation alone with her daughter even though Esther never thought it necessary to take her mother for a get-away. Thinking about what her mother would have said about such an offer made Esther laugh out loud and almost lose the bowl of beans. Another push of the glider; the hummingbird darts in and away again. The last light is a soft, yellow radiance on the leaves flickering in the breeze.

That's the difference! The thought drops like a lima bean into Esther's waiting mind. I've been watching Owen come and go for so long that I love knowing him as much as I love him. He doesn't even speak, and I know his thoughts just by watching carefully his hands or noticing how he's walking when he crosses the room. I know what those wrinkles on his forehead mean, because I remember when we were kids and neither of us had any wrinkles. When I look in his eyes I know what he is saying before he opens his lips. I know, and he knows I know. I love the thought of him knowing that I know him so well. That's the difference. Her mind is at peace as the darkness takes over the porch. Ruth doesn't have this knowledge with her husband Todd. It can only be gained slowly, carefully over long years of marriage. Owen had become a part of Esther. It was this intimacy that stirred up the terrible longing for him at the beach, filling her with homesickness. Now she understands it wasn't homesickness at all. The embarrassment she felt when she cried was all wrong, and Ruth was wrong to suggest she was too dependent on Owen. It's silly for someone your age to be homesick, is the way Ruth put it. She doesn't understand. It was love that ached within me, Esther remembered. Enduring love. A gift of flesh and soul that brings a longing deeper than words.

Ruth and Todd have not received this gift. How could they? It comes after years of careful attention to each other. How could they? Ruth plans a "get-away" without Todd whenever she can, and Todd doesn't seem to care. He either works or plays sports. Neither one has much time for the kids nor for each other. When they come to visit, they can't sit still. They make everyone else nervous. No wonder Ruth doesn't understand my longing for Owen. She hasn't endured enough to know anything. How can she know the delight I feel watching Owen put a piece of my peach pie in his mouth and silently wipe the crumbs from his lips?

It's dark. Esther takes the bowl off her lap. The work is finished for today. The crickets are coming on strong. Soon they will fill the air with their clicking. Owen and Esther often lie in bed listening to the crickets as they drift asleep. Whenever Owen says the clicking is the sound of crickets rubbing their legs together Esther laughs as loudly as the first time he told her that years ago. It's not even funny, but they laugh anyway.

Sometimes on hot nights they lie on the sheets listening to the crickets, telling stories and laughing in the dark, while they endure the heat and wait for the air to cool down. —

Let's grow fresh garlic

Nothing much happened in Middlebrook this week, except they plowed up an old softball in the cornfield adjacent to the ball diamond. It was 485 feet from home plate. Just one of those little things that make you go, "Hunnummm."

And then, of course, there was the very first turning of autumn leaves on the dogwood trees. After such a lush and abundant summer, the first signal of fall colors to come seemed appropriate. During the next few weeks, we should all just go out on the front porch, be still, and appreciate God's goodness all around us. We should be thankful for the summer's bountiful harvest, that the canning and freezing is behind us, thus bringing to a close another glorious gardening season... almost.

Believe it or not, we intrepid vegetable gardeners have one more thing to plant this season: garlic. What should be a staple of every garden is a fascinating root crop that has a genuine mystique about it. Garlic is an ancient plant that is not really considered as a food, a spice, or an herb; however, its popularity and health benefits are undeniable. We Americans love garlic, as evidenced by the fact the we consumed almost a full pound of garlic per person last year. The demand has been so high that we even have to import some fresh garlic to supply our requirements.

Now, of course, the garlic you see in the grocery store is not "fresh" garlic. Packed in little cardboard cartons wrapped in cellophane, it probably came from Gilroy, Calif., which is the capital of commercial garlic production. Dried grocery store garlic bulbs are generally of the white softneck variety for a couple of reasons: it has a long shelf life,

and it is fairly easy to grow, especially in warm, sunny climates like California. There is nothing unsuitable about commercial garlic, it just can't compete with fresh garlic from your own garden. Your own fresh garlic compares to commercial garlic like your own vine-ripened tomatoes compare with boxed Mexican tomatoes. It's not even a contest.

So, let's plant some garlic this fall to harvest in 1997.

First of all, there are two varieties of garlic: softneck and hardneck. Hardneck evolved from wild garlic and is also known as "topsetting garlic." It grows a seedstalk rising from one to six feet above the leafy portion of the plant. The flower stalks are topped with tiny little bulbils. Hardneck garlics normally produce between six and 10 large cloves per bulb. Most folks readily admit that hardneck garlics have much more flavor than softneck varieties.

This isn't to say that softnecks are inadequate. Softneck types, sometimes called "artichoke garlic," are extremely productive, vigorous, and usually have more, but smaller, cloves per bulb. Softneck garlics are also highly suited for processing into flavorings. For instance, over 60 percent of California white commercial softneck garlic is dehydrated and sold as garlic powder.

Last year, we planted both types at Bittersweet Farmstead. We got our seed stock from two different sources: Southern Exposure Seed Exchange (SESE) in Albemarle County; and our neighboring vendor, Jim Chaffins, at the Staunton/Augusta Farmer's Market who is known as "the Garlic Man." I recommend that you not try to plant supermarket garlic cloves, as it was probably treated with an anti-

sprouting chemical. The two varieties we tried were Mild French Silverskin (softneck) and Spanish Roja (hardneck), both of which turned out wonderfully.

To prepare the garlic bed for its fall planting date, we grew three successive crops of buckwheat all summer long, which is an excellent green manure. The buckwheat grows fast and furious, shading out any weeds before they can even think about coming up. We tilled in each stand of buckwheat when it was about a month old and starting to flower. This dramatically increased soil tilth and suppressed all of the weeds.

The garlic bed, in full sun, was then planted in early October. This date concurred with Dr. Jeff McCormack's (owner of SESE) recommendation that Valley garlic growers plant anytime between the second week of September and the third week of October. The purpose of fall planting is to give the bulbs a little root growth before winter in order that they won't be heaved out of the ground by heavy frosts.

We tilled particularly deep (at least 8 inches) to aerate the soil and give the garlic bulbs plenty of nice loose topsoil to grow in. It is important that you plant the cloves scab end down. The scab end is where the future root will grow. Select only the largest and healthiest looking cloves for planting. Space the cloves about 6 inches apart and about 2 inches deep. We planted in rows 30 inches apart to allow the tiller room for future cultivation.

Once planted, pat down the soil in the row and water lightly. It is crucial that you not allow the top few inches of soil in your garlic bed to dry out in the fall. You should avoid excessive moisture, however, as this may lead to clove rotting. Apply a thin layer of mulch, such as straw, partially decayed and shredded leaves, or fresh grass clippings from the lawn mower. About a month after planting, go back and apply a nice thick mulch (at least 6") to the garlic bed. This will help protect the soil, and will decay slowly over the winter.

Next spring one day, you'll suddenly no-



The Garden Path

By
Jeff Ishee

tice garlic leaves shooting up through the shrunken layer of mulch. Once the plants are about 3 or 4 inches tall, you should apply a foliar feed relatively high in nitrogen. We use a fish/kelp combination that is easily mixed in the sprayer. This really helps the young garlic plants get off to a good start, supplying the leaves with readily available nutrients. Feed the plants in this manner all spring at two week intervals. Weeds should not be a problem if you keep the plants well mulched, but like any vegetable, keep the soil as weed free as possible. Garlic doesn't compete well with weeds.

Sometime in late May or early June, you'll notice the leaves beginning to turn brown and fall over. This is the signal that your harvest of fresh garlic is near. When there are only 5 or 6 green leaves remaining, go ahead and pull the garlic up after loosening the soil around it with a spade. Be sure that you don't allow the plant to turn completely brown, as this will dramatically decrease the storage potential of your bulbs. Rub the dirt from the bulbs by hand and bundle the plants together with twine or rubber bands, 6 per bunch. Hang the bunches in an airy, hot, dry and dark place for a few weeks. A ventilated attic is a fine choice. You must not allow direct light to hit the garlic or it will turn green. You can use your own fresh garlic for cooking anytime after harvest, and if stored properly should last for several months.

Growing your own fresh garlic is not difficult at all, and the taste is vastly superior to what you find at the grocery store. Not many of our garden crops take 9 months from planting to harvest, but fresh garlic is definitely worth the wait. —

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•Evacuation

Continued from page 5

minute I ran back to set out the forgotten food and water.

"Come on!" Dave called, dragging Esau through the rain to the car. "The roads will be covered if we don't get going!"

Already the creek had risen to capacity, ready to spill over its banks.

Dave switched on the car and then suddenly turned back to me. "Do you think we should go down and try to move the dog house?"

"You just said we'd better go," I said in surprise. "If we want to get out, we'd better get going; it's already been half an hour," I responded, and we left it to its fate.

As we drove away, I remembered Dave building the sturdy wooden house, back when Esau was a puppy and Matthew a toddler.

We drove through Mt. Solon and on toward Bridgewater. At several spots, water was across the road. In the last — and worst — one, a line of pickups waited behind a small car that had stalled out. I could hear the children praying in the back seat as we slowly made our way through the deepening water.

As we passed through Bridgewater, North River didn't seem much higher than normal. The first house beside the bridge was still up for sale; we had never stopped to look at it while house hunting because of its proximity to the river.

"If that house gets it, all the others on the street will, too," Dave said. "They're not any higher."

We drove down to Greenville, trying to reach Dave's parents' home. Waters swirling over a bend in the road stopped us not far from their house. I wondered how my parents near Lynchburg were faring; their home is in a low-lying area near a creek.

"We could walk on the fence,"

Matthew suggested, pointing to the half-submerged posts bordering the road.

Instead, we drove to Wal-Mart in Staunton, where a clerk armed with a flashlight helped me buy a few supplies in the darkened store. We thought about going to a designated shelter, but wondered if they would accept our animals.

We began to know just a little bit about how refugees feel, even though we still had a car and some cash, all of our family and even our pets.

Finally we drove back north to Harrisonburg to Dave's sister, all the time wondering if we shouldn't just have stayed at the house — if it was still there.

Later that night, we tried to return after an "all clear" phone call from a neighbor. We found Va. 42 in Bridgewater — and that whole row of houses we'd passed by earlier — flooded with three to four feet of water at the North River bridge. As we headed south, we found U.S. 11 and other bridges overflowing as well. Finally driving south on I-81 to Weyers Cave, we made it over North River and once more turned toward home.

As we drove cautiously, we found dry pavement where in the morning there had been water — and water where before there had been none.

Nearing the country store in Sangersville, Dave stopped to look over the bridge. Although the pavement surfacing was broken and the bridge strewn with rocks, the structure itself appeared to be okay. He had the children and I get out while he drove across it, though, "just in case."

Our six-year-old, Jon, didn't want to leave his blanket in the car, saying, "But what if the bridge breaks and the car falls in?" I refrained from pointing out that in that case we might lose a

lot more than his blanket.

We returned home without mishap to find the house itself dry, the cellar filled with several feet of water, and the dog house swept away — along with another 10 feet of yard and our clothesline. Our 8/10 of an acre is rapidly shrinking.

The next day, while Dave reset the clothesline, Jon and I looked over downstream creek banks and fields. We didn't find the doghouse, but I did find a ladder I hadn't realized was missing and our trash-burning barrel.

On the way back, I slipped on muddy grass and severely twisted my knee.

So now I'm forced to sit with my leg propped up while the clean up continues around me. We were relatively fortunate. Some people have lost so much more than we have. But, even so, it can be discouraging. One of our neighbors says he's just about ready to give up, and I can understand how he feels.

Then I remember how when it had seemed impossible to buy the house, we prayed for God's will — and the doors opened. Friends and relatives have showered us with everything from lawn mowers and a garden tiller to bath towels and canned goods. New neighbors have welcomed us with garden produce, desserts, and even a big dish of lasagna. Many have stopped by to express concern and see if they can't help in some way.

We still miss our friends in Hungary, but — in spite of storms and floods — it's with a sense of homecoming that we're settling into life here. Even as earlier He led us across the ocean, we believe that now, God has brought us here.

But if anyone finds an old red dog house washed up somewhere downstream from Sangersville — please let us know. —

•Clean up

Continued from page 4

about 100 feet in the previous flood, was carried a quarter of a mile until it slammed against a low water bridge.

"At least we salvaged the dumpster this time," says Kincaid. "My husband had tied it to a tree."

Zula and Rhonda Casady, whose home has now flooded for the fourth time this year, have also been appreciative of help from friends and neighbors.

"We had six to eight inches all over, 10 inches deep some places (during the August flood)," reports Mrs. Casady. "When we realized we couldn't wait to do more and went out of the house, we stepped down into water most of the way up to our hips."

Following Hurricane Fran, they came home to find that 18 inches of water had coursed through the house, leaving behind up to half an inch of mud on everything. "Nothing but slick mud, it was almost like walking on ice. The more you wash, the more you find that

needs to be (washed)," Mrs. Casady says. This time, the family also lost a number of prized possessions, such as their children's swing set and their porch swing.

From sweeping out water to cleaning off mud, canning what garden produce wasn't destroyed, to bringing in meals and sheltering their horses and calf, "We've had a lot of people to help. People sure have rallied around," says Rhonda. "There were 10 or 12 of us here sweeping floors."

"The Red Cross came by Saturday to give us some cleaning kits," reports Mrs. Casady. "It's the first time they've been around with all of this — but it all helps."

Residents may be discouraged and even angry, but most are not defeated.

"Four times this year is a little bit much," says Rhonda. "The banks are washed out, there's nothing hardly left."

"The government won't let us dig the river out deeper or clear the streams, and they need to put in a higher and wider bridge (on Rt.

730)," Mrs. Casady agrees. "Everybody's trash washes down, and it all stops right there and jams up at the bridge. The bridge almost washed out this time."

"I'm getting kind of fed up with it; we're going to have to try to make some changes and see if we can't do something," Howdyshell states. "But I'm not going to give up yet; this is just a mighty setback."

"It's pretty discouraging, but we're a lot luckier than many. I figure you've just got to pick up and keep going," Kincaid says.

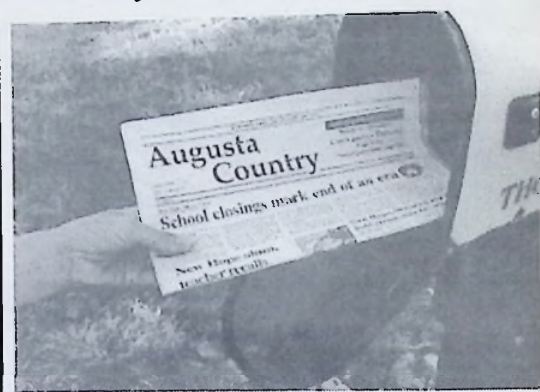
"I guess I'll have to keep on; I don't know what else to do. We've still got a house, when a lot of people have lost theirs," says Mrs. Casady. "There's still a lot to be thankful for, but sometimes you have to look for it. I hope there's better days ahead."

Although current road signs are spelled "Sangersville," a number of long-time residents claim that the town is properly known as "Sangersville."

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