

FRIENDLY NEWS FOR FRIENDLY PEOPLE

Augusta Country

November 1996
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Down on the farm
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1896



McKinley celebrates centennial at Dividing Ridge

By NANCY SORRELLS

MCKINLEY — There was a time when the village of McKinley in southern Augusta County went by a name considerably less glamorous than that of the 25th president of the United States.

The community perched high atop Dividing Ridge under the shadow of Little North Mountain in southwestern Augusta County was known simply as "Gravelly Hill" because of the stony soil that proliferated there.

That all changed in 1896 when William McKinley was elected president. His push to establish rural post offices across the country led to the beginning of one in the small general store in Gravelly Hill. Lifelong McKinley resident Irvin Rosen noted that his community is probably the only village in Virginia named for a president while the president was in office.

McKinley's administration was also probably the high-water mark of rural post offices. In 1903 there were 86 such establishments in Augusta County alone! Today there are around

See COVER STORY, page 3

Election of 1896 set standard for future presidential campaigns

By SUE SIMMONS

"McKinley wins but not by a landslide" the *Staunton Vindicator* headline read a few days after the election of 1896.

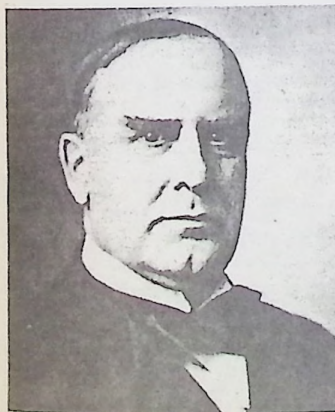
History would add "Both parties ruptured; Populism derailed; Revolution in Democratic Party sends conservatives packing."

In 1896 the nation had just emerged from the most serious economic depression it had ever experienced. The collapse of the New York Stock Exchange along with the earlier failure of Baring Brothers of London started a drain on the nation's gold reserve. One great railroad after another went bankrupt. Farmers were especially hurt as their wheat prices plummeted.

Many conservative democrats blamed silver and thought a return to the gold standard was the obvious solution.

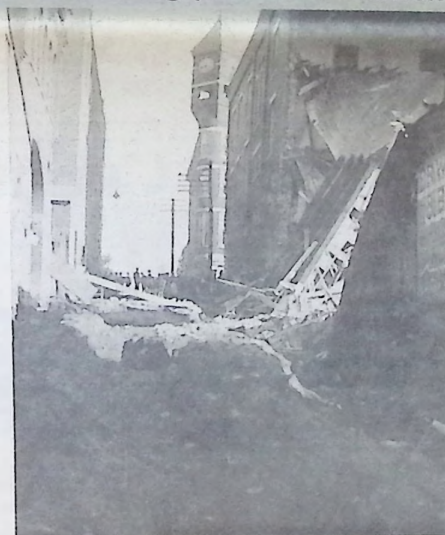
The Sherman Act was repealed and President Cleveland thought a \$100 million gold reserve in the treasury would restore confidence.

See ELECTION, page 5



WILLIAM MCKINLEY

All aboard the *Augusta Country* time machine for a trip 100 years back across time. Staunton was recovering from the most devastating flood in its history, Americans' attentions were focused on an upcoming presidential election, and a village in southwestern Augusta County was searching for a new name...



Rocks scattered in the pasture in the foreground of the photo at upper left tell the story of the southwestern Augusta County village of "Gravelly Hill." In the photo above, devastation in downtown Staunton as a result of the Great Flood of September 1896 can be seen from a vantage point looking north on Central Avenue from Johnson Street after the area was inundated with water when the Gypsy Hill Park lake burst.

Photos courtesy Irvin Rosen

Augusta Country 1896 Time Machine
stops on pages 3, 5, 10-11, and 15

Middelbrook Bazaar set for Nov. 2

MIDDLEBROOK — Area churches and civic organizations will fill the Middelbrook Community Center with crafts and home-baked goods Nov. 2 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the annual Middelbrook Community Bazaar.

Last year's event was a "great success" for those who participated, according to Twila Decker, organizer of the 1996 event. "We are looking forward to an even bigger bazaar this year," she said.

Items to be offered for sale will include baked goods such as cookies, cakes, pies, and breads, also produce and handcrafted items in-

cluding Christmas decorations.

Food will be available throughout the bazaar and door prizes will be given away each hour.

Last year's participants included Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church Youth Group, Arbor Hill Home makers, Middelbrook Church of God, St. John's Golden Deeds Bible Class, Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Walkers Creek Fire Department, Riverheads Week-day Religious Education, and the Newport Circle of New Providence Presbyterian Church.

Organizations wishing to reserve a booth at the bazaar should call Decker at 886-1088, Helen Jarvis at 886-9345, or Violet Swortzel at 337-1426. —



Katherine Fix, Judy Payne, Helen Harper, and Katherine Rosen of the St. John's Golden Deeds Bible Class display a rosebud afghan which will be given away at the Middelbrook Community Bazaar to be held Nov. 2.

AC staff photo

AROUND THE CORNER

A.A.R.P., Nov. 2
MT. CRAWFORD — A.A.R.P. Chapter 129 of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County will hold its monthly luncheon meeting at noon Nov. 2 at Evers Family Restaurant.

All persons 50 or older are welcome. Call 828-7497 for information. ---

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the esteemed Editor of *Augusta Country*!

Well, hoorah! For Augustinians like the Simmons tribe venturing West and pursuing 14'ers in Colorado.

I sympathize with your reporter: my own attempted assault on Yale's summit in early June of

1994 failed. I started late reaching the last 200 feet of exposed ridge ascent simultaneously with frigid, ferocious winds.

Maybe it is not how we respect the rules but how courageously we seek the heights.

Madison Brown, Staunton
Hear! Hear! The article Mr. Brown refers to appeared in the October 1996 issue of Augusta Country and was staff writer Sue Simmons' account of her family's trek up Colorado's 14,000-foot Mt. Yale.

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10:10 - Noon - "Middays" with Jim Britt
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COVER STORY

Continued from page 1

30 as the automobile, consolidation, and population shifts have taken their toll.

Even the McKinley post office had a short-lived existence according to Rosen, who is the unofficial resident historian of the community on the hill.

"Robert Archart was the first postmaster. He had the only store in this area, and it was a small room. He carried sugar, salt, baking powder, things you had to have, and the things that everybody needed," he said.

Finley Rosen, Irvin's father, was the second and last postmaster of McKinley. He bought the store from Robert Archart and ran it and the post office until 1908. The dozen years of operation, though, were enough to permanently affix the name of McKinley on the community.

But at least one man -- Irvin Rosen -- remembers the community's former name.

"They had the rocks here, that's for sure," he recalled. "There were rock piles everywhere," he said. "My father called it acid chestnut land. I don't know if the land made the chestnuts, or the chestnuts made the land, but every time you'd plow, you'd bring up more rocks, and you had to pick 'em off the fields. The people'd pick 'em off,

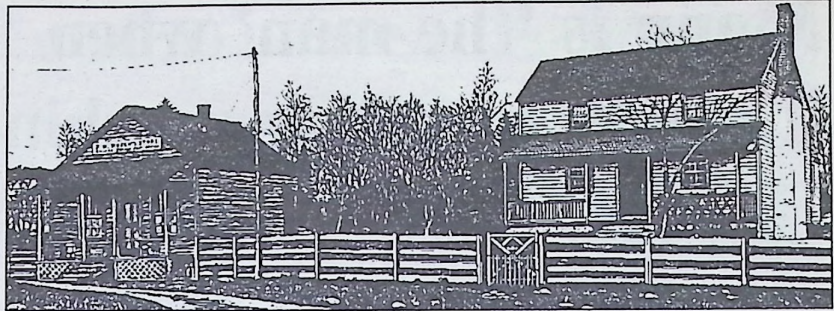
and put them in piles. Then in the winter when the ground was frozen, they would bring a horse and sled and haul them to the rock piles."

In true community spirit, the people made use of the rocks picked from the fields. "The neighbors gathered up and got a rock crusher about 1910 or 1912," Rosen said. "They hauled the rock to the crusher and used it to improve this road," he added indicating the road that runs in front of his house and through the center of the village.

Back then, there were many more trails and roads. The settlement that sprang up in this rocky countryside probably dates back to the 1850s according to Rosen. There were a number of log houses, and by the late 19th century a schoolhouse had been erected.

Today Rosen lives in the last schoolhouse that was built on the lot, but the original one was probably erected on the same site in 1877. Courthouse research reveals that John R. Buchanan sold the school board an acre of land in that year for \$26.50. The last school closed its doors in 1933, and it is in that renovated building that Rosen and his wife live today.

Before its closing, however, Rosen's parents boarded the school's teachers in their home just behind the school. In those days, the activity of the area centered around the school lot. Horses



In this sketch by Joe Nutt, Finley H. Rosen's merchandise store and United States Post Office is shown at left adjacent to his house

in the village of McKinley. The sketch was made from a 1907 photo.

Sketches courtesy Irvin Rosen

grazed in the schoolyard, a blacksmith operated his business a few yards away, and a shoemaker plied his trade nearby. Add to this cluster a store and a post office, and the community was almost complete.

Two other general stores, one run by V.G. Archart and the other by H.G. Archart, also operated for a number of years in the 20th century. Rounding out the picture was a pair of churches. At the west end of the village stands the oldest — McKinley United Methodist Church. The church began as a union church in 1842.

Three groups, the United Brethren, Lutheran and Reformed met in

a log building that was erected in the cemetery. That structure burned in 1870, and the Lutherans moved up the road to build St. Marks, now Redeemer. On the original site, a frame church was built in 1873, and then the current structure was erected in 1903 at the cost of \$750.

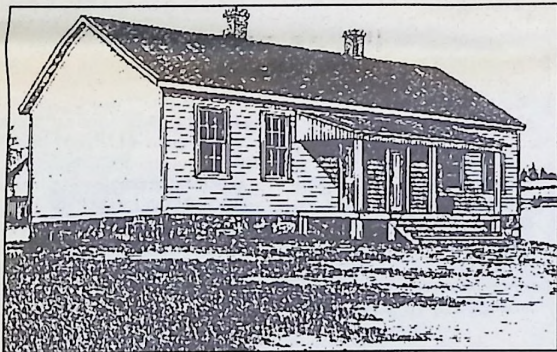
Many of the same families have lived on and farmed the land around McKinley since the beginning... Sensabaugh, Archart, Buchanan, Spitler, Miller, Wade, Patterson, Reed, Cason, Clemmer, and, since 1900, Rosen.

Through the last century, it has been those families who have kept alive the spirit of the McKinley

community. It has always been a nice place to live and raise a family, Rosen noted.

"Three rivers start here, Walkers Creek, Middle River and Moffetts Creek," he said of the ridge where the community is perched. He mentioned a barn at the top of the hill that, if moved 50 feet, would direct rainwater off one eave to the Shenandoah River which flows north, and water off the south eave would wind up in the James River.

"It's a nice place. We don't have early and late frosts. We always have a little breeze, and we don't have air pollution. Any way you leave, you go downhill," Rosen summed up. —



St. Mark's School, McKinley, Va.



McKinley United Methodist Church, October 1996

Photos by Nancy Sorrells



Redeemer Lutheran Church, formerly St. Mark's, McKinley, Va., October 1995

McKinley U.M. Church to host ACHS fall meeting

AC staff report

In recognition of the village of McKinley's 100th birthday, the fall meeting of the Augusta County Historical Society will be held in McKinley United Methodist Church (Va. 682) on Nov. 17 at 3 p.m.

Lifelong resident Irvin Rosen will present a history of the village and churches in McKinley. Following Rosen's presentation, Ken

Koons, a professor of history in his 15th year of teaching at Virginia Military Institute, will be the featured speaker. He will describe patterns of continuity and change in the history of agriculture in rural 19th century life in the Valley of Virginia.

Koons, whose doctoral work examined a rural area of Pennsylvania and various aspects of life there, will focus particularly on the

Shenandoah Valley as a center of wheat production in the 1800s.

Koons noted that his research into Valley agriculture during the last seven years has been a natural extension of his earlier work in Pennsylvania. Both areas were part of the Great Valley and have many similarities in their development of mixed farming practices and intensive wheat production, he said. —

Mann is 'the man' when it comes to voting machines

By SUE SIMMONS

Betty Davis, general registrar for Augusta County, knows how many voting machines must be put in each of Augusta's 25 precincts, "at least one for every 750 registered voters," she says of the county's 51 voting machines. She also knows that these machines cost the county \$2,695 each and that they come with a five-year guarantee. She also knows who to call when they break down.

"It's Charlie Mann who knows the most about them," she says quickly.

Mann is one of those rare individuals who has the ability to think with his hands.

He, along with assistants Ken Cason and Carl Sheets, are the mechanics who keep the voting machines in good repair and who ready them for use on election day.

A native of Augusta County, Mann was born and raised near Churchville 80 years ago. He admits he has never been away from Augusta except for the years he spent in the Air Force in World War II, his years as a student at University of Dayton (Ohio) and later at William and Mary, and the six months he worked in Ohio. A man whose energy and outlook belie his years, Mann can often be found

zipping around the government center — he walks a 10-minute mile — tending to last minute details before election day.

Asked how long he has been caretaker of the automatic voting machines, Mann shrugs, "Time is just two hands on a clock to me," further claiming he really doesn't remember when he started.

"George Beam got me involved in this," says Mann as he uses an electric drill to crank up a voting machine from its storage position.

Beam, the owner of Staunton Steam Laundry and Mann's employer, served on the Electoral Board at the time. The county employed two voting machine mechanics, I.H. Wagner and Mr. Berman, and they needed another. Beam suggested to Mann that he might want to get involved.

Voting machines, with their multitude of movable parts, are complex machines. The need to set up the machine and seal it before election day so that the count begins at zero further complicates matters.

The automatic voting machines — K30 print-o-matics — are manufactured by AVM Company in Jamestown, N.Y.

"Most mechanics have to go out to the factory for a two-week course," Mann explained, noting something he didn't have time to do.

"The factory man came to Augusta County to teach me. He spent about 30 minutes going over the machine. I asked him a few questions, and then told him I thought I understood it."

The factory rep was incredulous at first, but after testing Mann, he realized that, indeed, his student had mastered the machine.

With his engineer's mind, Mann says matter-of-factly, "I see things in ways other people don't." State law requires the machines be serviced every five years, a chore which Mann and his crew carry out.

In the months before the election, Mann sets up the machines. He first places the candidates' names in the correct order and seals the unused levers with special plates. Paper is loaded into the machine and the counters are set to zero — a process that must be checked and rechecked and documented.

The machines are eventually sealed, and the numbers on the public and protective counters recorded in conjunction with the machine's number.

The machines are then transported to the polling places. They are not unsealed again until election day when the precinct chief, using a special set of keys, opens the voting machine.

"There is no way to rig a voting



Charlie Mann pauses for a moment from preparing an Augusta County voting machine for the upcoming election.

Photo by Sue Simmons

machine," Mann declares. He hastens to add that election day is often a boring day.

The machines are entirely mechanical and can be used even if the electricity is cut off. "The only thing that requires electricity is the light in the machine."

Nevertheless, the polling places are supplied with paper ballots and a ballot box.

He recalled some unusual problems that occurred on two occasions.

Once a woman peeled the candidate's name off the machine and dropped it in the lever case, jamming the machine.

Another time the precinct chief

called to report no names appeared on the write-in paper even though they knew there had been quite a few write-ins. When Mann investigated it seems that a number of names were written on the cover that had to be lifted to expose the write-in paper. "Most of the time though, the curtain springs break or a lever snaps in half, and we will have to go out and make repairs."

Whether the problem is usual or unusual, Mann carries with him a supply of extra levers and Bungee cords along with the special tools outfitted exclusively for the machine. He also takes along his gift for seeing how things work. —

Work of election officials insures fair balloting

By SUE SIMMONS

Augusta County voters go to the polls on election day confident that their vote will count. It is, after all, the way things are done in a free democratic republic.

Actually, every vote counts in a free democratic republic because of the hard work and integrity of a multitude of people who work at keeping the elections fair and honest and above reproach.

The Electoral Board of three appointed by the Circuit Court and headed by Lionel Moomau of

Greenville oversees the election.

Precinct workers staff the polling places from before 5 a.m. until long after the polls close. Their presence guarantees that only registered voters vote and that only one vote is cast per registered voter. They count and report the votes at the end of the day. Any discrepancies must be addressed in writing or before a judge should it be necessary.

A team of mechanics keep voting machines in good order, seal the machines prior to election day, and certify that machine counts begin with zero before each balloting.

Any unexplained discrepancy could result in an entire precinct's votes being voided.

This does not happen in Augusta County thanks to the diligence of many dedicated people.

This year be sure to thank election officials for all the work they do to make your vote count. —

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Election

Continued from page 1

But the issues were more complex, and the gold drain continued unabated. When the gold reserves sank below \$62 million, the United States government issued bonds that were sold for gold. Four bond sales did save the gold standard.

It also divided the nation as deeply as had slavery just over 30 years earlier. By the time the election of 1896 rolled around, the issue was not McKinley versus Bryan — a battle of two Williams — it was gold versus silver. William McKinley was not a confirmed "goldbug," but he stood by his party's platform for gold. William Jennings Bryan seized the democratic nomination after he addressed the convention with the words, "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind on a cross of gold."

In a campaign without prece-

dence, Bryan traveled 18,000 miles by train and addressed an estimated 5 million people. He spoke about silver, the price of crops, the need to regulate the railroad, the cost of mortgages, the need for credit — in simple terms, the nation's economy. Sound familiar?

McKinley campaigned from his front porch in Canton, Ohio, by reading crafted speeches while his campaign manager Mark Hanna used the press to levy charges of socialism and anarchism against Bryan.

A wave of hysteria consequently swept through the conservative ranks. Bankers, businessmen, and industrialists contributed an unprecedented \$10 million to the McKinley campaign (compared to Bryan's \$300,000).

The popular vote was close; McKinley won with a plurality of 609,000 votes. Bryan carried no industrial state or urbanized state, and failed to win labor's support.

perhaps accounting for his defeat.

Virginia, like the rest of the South and most of the West, went heavily for Bryan.

In Augusta County, however, the vote was closer, with 3,781 votes cast for Bryan and 3,582 votes cast for McKinley.

A record number of Augusta voters stayed away from the polls, causing the paper to note that "Augusta had lost its banner county designation."

The issue of silver versus gold

that defined the election of 1896 seems little more than a curiosity in 1996. It is far more significant, however: 1896 marks a change in the American voters' attitudes toward the role of government. For the first time people demanded that the government do something to improve their economic condition. Politicians debated the role of government when it came to credit and mortgages and regulation.

Didn't someone once say "what's past is prologue?" —



William Jennings Bryan
1860-1925

Born: Salem, Ill.
Nebraska congressman, 1891-1893; U.S. presidential candidate, 1896, 1900, 1908; in 1912 helped elect Woodrow Wilson to the presidency. Wilson appointed Bryan Secretary of State, 1913; negotiated treaties with some 30 nations; resigned post prior to outset of World War I; advocated religious fundamentalism; appeared for the prosecution in 1925 Scopes Trial in which the teaching of Darwin's theory of evolution in public schools was at issue; during trial defense attorney Clarence Darrow called Bryan to the stand as the sole witness for the defense and used Bryan's ignorance of science and archaeology to build his case; John Scopes was found guilty and fined \$100; Bryan died a few days after the trial; later, the Tennessee Supreme Court overturned the Scopes decision on a technicality.
Reforms advocated by Bryan and later adopted:
Income Tax
Women's suffrage



William McKinley
1843-1901

Born: Niles, Ohio
Ohio congressman, 1877-1891; Governor of Ohio, 1891 and 1893; 25th President of the United States, 1896, re-elected in 1900; foreign affairs dominated by Spanish-American War; domestic affairs dominated by nation's economy; shot in Buffalo, N.Y., by anarchist Leon Czolgosz on Sept. 6, 1901, died eight days later.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

TOMMY H. ROSEN
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This is a plea for your compassion and help as a resident of the Augusta County area.

Augusta County operates a dog pound by private contract and does not utilize the Augusta SPCA as do Staunton and Waynesboro.

Approximately 500 dogs are taken to the Augusta Pound each year. This facility is unknown to most residents and confused with the SPCA by many. Impounded dogs are not advertised by description and are never advertised as being adoptable. The Pound is open by appointment only, and there is no telephone listing for the Pound to make an appointment. There seems to be no available medical care for injured or sick animals and other provisions are uncertain. All of this makes adoption almost non-existent. After five days dogs are euthanized (killed). Few records are available. The pound has turned over less than 10 dogs to the SPCA since 1990 for adoption.

The County Officials claim the Pound received a top ten award in the early 90s but the criteria of that award are unknown, and it does little to comfort the dogs held there waiting to die.

It is my opinion that this beautiful and prosperous county can do better.

Please will you help speak for the dogs by taking a few minutes to write to Dr. Charles W. Curry, Chairman, Augusta County Board of Supervisors, Route 2, Box 78B, Mt. Solon, Va. 22843, and encourage them to close the Augusta County Dog Pound and contract with the SPCA to handle all lost and abandoned animals in the county.

Tommy H. Rosen

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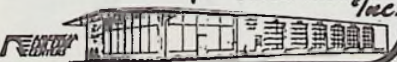
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CLOSED MONDAY

Dreams come true in Habitat for Humanity 'Blitz Build'

By BETH GREENAWALT

STAUNTON— Would-be home owners Connie and Linda Proulx and Carolyn Shuey of Staunton watched their dreams become reality during a recent week-long Habitat for Humanity "Blitz Build."

At 7 a.m. on Sept. 21, approximately 200 volunteers started building two houses side by side on Henderson Street in Staunton. Workers raced the weather, laboring until late that night to finish windows, doors and basic roofs before it started raining.

By Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. the inside dry walling was up and finishing work began.

"Everything's timed and coordinated together in order to get the house done in a week's time," said Frank Gibson of Staunton, who has served on the board of directors for the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Habitat for Humanity affiliate for the past three years.

Plans were laid far in advance. "We started organizing this in March," said Bob Quinn of Crimora, a member of the building committee as well as an on-site crew chief. "We broke ground in July and put in the foundation in August, working off and on week-ends and Saturdays."

Looking around at the hordes of busy volunteers midway through the project, he added, "The pace has picked up quite a bit."

"This is my first of many (Habitat for Humanity projects) I hope," said volunteer Jeff Kiser of Staunton as he built a porch ceiling on the house designated for the Proulxes. Kiser normally works with industrial air conditioning at McQuay in Verona. "They granted me a week's leave of ab-

sence to work on the project," he said.

Edward King of Staunton, crew chief for the house being built for the Shueys, decided to put his time to good use during a period of unemployment. "I've been working all week, doing framing, siding, dry wall... Later I'll put the cabinets in," he said.

Among others, groups from Mary Baldwin College and the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center joined the workers.

The weather was a constant challenge during the Blitz Build. Hurricane Fran blew through the area the day before the build was originally scheduled, forcing a two-week postponement. Power company employees were busy throughout the city repairing storm damage, thus delaying the hook-up of electricity to the new houses. Even the dedication ceremony on Sept. 29 was rained out.

Despite it all, the construction ran smoothly.

"Last year we did a Blitz Build on just one house," says Gibson. "We finished (the basic drywall) at 2:30 (the afternoon of the third day.) Today we were finished at 12:30 — with two houses. We're ahead of schedule on most things." With the Blitz Build, the organization completed its 10th local home.

The accelerated building event involved churches, businesses, civic organizations, individuals and groups of volunteer carpenters, plumbers, drywallers, roofers, painters, electricians and other workers, both skilled and unskilled.

"I've got a crew of almost 40 people from my church (St. Francis Catholic) here," said Gibson on Tuesday. Some provided food to the workers — including seven contractors from the church who

did most of the drywall. "Tomorrow the same crew will come and texture the ceiling, and then they'll be painting," he explained.

A number of businesses supported the effort by allowing employees time off to help.

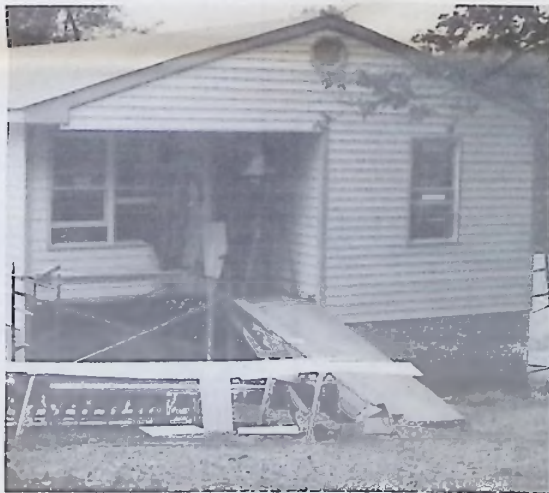
Habitat for Humanity International is a non-profit, ecumenical outreach which works in partnership with people in need. Using volunteer labor, the group builds basic quality shelter that is sold at no profit through interest-free mortgages. Loan payments go into a revolving fund that is used to build more houses. Habitat homeowners also invest hundreds of hours of their own labor (dubbed "sweat equity") into building their houses and the houses of others.

"The families getting these homes have each put in over 1,000 hours of labor, not only in this house but others also," says Gibson. "They're required to put in at least 200 hours to be eligible, but they've gone way over."

Quinn added: "They've worked so hard on homes for others. It's a good feeling to finally get to give them homes."



Carolyn Shuey, outside the new house on Henderson Street which she will share with her 12-year-old daughter Amanda, sorts through paint supplies during the Habitat Blitz Build held Sept. 21-28 in Staunton.



In photo at left, Frank Decker of McInt Spring and Jeff Kiser of Staunton put some of the finishing touches on one of the Habitat for Humanity houses built recently. Families who become Habitat homeowners put in 1,000 hours of sweat equity labor in the construction of their houses and others.



Owners-to-be Linda and Connie Proulx watch Jeff Kiser of Staunton work on the porch ceiling of their new house on Henderson Street which was built during a Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build Sept. 21-28.

Photos by Beth Greenawalt

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Halloween 1939 bank heist was spooky ordeal for victims

By VERA HAILEY

STUARTS DRAFT — From her birth in 1914 until 1995, Miss Billie Bussey has lived in Stuarts Draft. Her father, William Bussey, purchased a house on Flory Avenue in 1907 when he moved from Franklin County to Stuarts Draft to work at the new Peoples Bank. Last year Miss Bussey moved from her homeplace to Massie's Haven Home for Adults, just a couple of miles away.

William Bussey was one of the victims in what might be Stuarts Draft's most famous robbery. He enjoyed re-telling the story to his three daughters.

Halloween morning Oct. 31, 1939 started out like any other morning in the sedate little town. At the post office, which was across Wayne Avenue from the hardware store, the mail had been sorted. The Stuarts Draft Milling Company near the train tracks was in operation.

The Peoples Bank, which had been in downtown Stuarts Draft since 1907, had opened its doors and was ready for business as usual at 10 a.m. William Bussey and

Heber Shelton were working behind the counter that morning. Nelly Irvine, who had come to town carrying a basket of eggs to sell at the grocery store, walked in from Main Street and proceeded to do her customary banking business.

It was a few minutes after 10 when an automobile pulled up in front of the financial institution. Three strangers strolled in, brandishing a gun, and held it on the trio. According to Miss Bussey, one of them said, "This is a stick up. Do what I say."

Could this be some kind of Halloween prank? Hold-ups just didn't happen in this town!

The men opened the drawers and took the money. One of the robbers snatched a diamond stick pin that was in the cashiers drawer. "The pin belonged to my uncle... he had asked that it be put in the bank to keep it safe," Miss Bussey explained.

Bussey had stashed a gun inside the bank in case of such an emergency, but the chain of events was already in motion, and there was no time to make a move for the weapon. "He didn't shoot good,

so I'm glad he didn't," his daughter remarked.

The men and Irvine, with her egg basket, stood there trembling. A total of \$2,000 was crammed into a sack, but the worst was yet to come.

"After they got the money they made (Bussey, Shelton and Irvine) get into the bank vault, and they closed the door and locked them in. The lead-lined vault had no ventilation, and only a certain amount of oxygen would be available for the three of them."

There were only three people who knew the combination to the safe. Two of them were locked inside, and the third was the bank president, Mr. Churchman, who was out of town on vacation.

"Sometime later little Bobby Black came in to get change for a dime... he needed two nickels. When he noticed there was no one in the bank, he knew some-

thing was wrong... then he heard noises coming from the safe," Miss Bussey recalled.

Black immediately ran outside to get help. Jason Weaver, a local businessman, was walking down the street. Black hurriedly explained what he had found, and Weaver ran into the bank and put his ear to the wall of the vault.

To save oxygen, Bussey started tapping the combination on the wall of the safe. "(Weaver) tried many different ways of using the numbers with no luck... at first he couldn't figure out the sequence."

Meanwhile, the threesome was getting restless as Weaver's attempts at opening the lock were futile. Finally, the right combination was entered, and the door shifted.

Weaver swung open the heavy door and saw that his three friends had survived the ordeal. "They all looked scared to death."



BILLIE BUSSEY

The story ended on a happy note. The bandits were immediately captured and taken to a jail in Roanoke. The cash was returned to the bank. The diamond stick pin was reclaimed and given back to Miss Bussey's uncle. Weaver was the town hero and was offered a reward for his bravery, but refused it. No one is sure what happened to Irvine's eggs. —

Draft's '2 Bettys' crowned queens for a day

By VERA HAILEY

STUARTS DRAFT — Attendees of the 14th annual reunion of students of the old Stuarts Draft High School on Main Street paid special tribute to two former schoolmates, known as "the 2 Bettys."

Betty Eavers Ballew and Betty Yowell Kindig, founders of the gathering, celebrated their 50th class reunion and were crowned "Queens for a day" by moderators Gordon and Joy Houff. They were also presented with pins and corsages in recognition of their work over the years in planning this special event.

"This is a gold pin, does this mean we're retired?" asked Betty Kindig. Gordon Houff commented, "I guess every class is known for something, the class of 1946 was known for the 2 Bettys."

"We've known each other all our lives, because our mothers were friends. We even have the same aunt, although we're not kin," said



Betty Eavers Ballew, left, and Betty Yowell Kindig of Stuarts Draft High School's Class of 1946 were crowned "Queens for a Day" at their 50th reunion held recently.

Photo by Vera Hailey

Betty Ballew.

They also have the distinction of both marrying "James Earls." Betty Eavers married James Earl Ballew and Betty Yowell married James Earl Kindig. Both couples remained close friends over the years.

The musical entertainment for the reunion, Sound Directions, dedicated the classic George Gershwin tune, "Embraceable

You," to the 2 Bettys. "We know everybody likes to hug them," a group spokesman said.

Former teachers Eva Lee Kindig Appl and Mary Frances Williams Fridley were in attendance to celebrate with the class of 1946.

* Attendees represented the classes of 1927 through 1947, which was the last graduating class at the old school. —

Stuarts Draft High School Class of 1946

Helen Ambler Rackley, Arlene Brown Blackburn, Mildred Clark Layne, Jean Davies Long, Dolores Hite Lotts, Jo Scott Howell Calhoun, Gene Koontz, Irene Massie Arnold, Marie McClure Beck, Louise Meeks Richardson, Mary Ellen Spittler Brake, Violet Sweet Simmons, Dolly Mae Swisher Fitzgerald, Betty Eavers Ballew, Betty Yowell Kindig

Deceased class members: Homer Arehart, Dainty Brooks, Marjorie Brooks, Howard Campbell, Ruth Campbell, Sadie Campbell, Dick Chafin, Betty Jane Coiner, Maurice Fitzgerald, Buddy Lovegrove, Virginia Lowery, Louise Moore, Nellie Truslow, Raymond Weaver, Rodney Wilkins.



The building on Main Street in Stuarts Draft which formerly housed The Peoples Bank is now used for professional offices.

Photos by Vera Hailey

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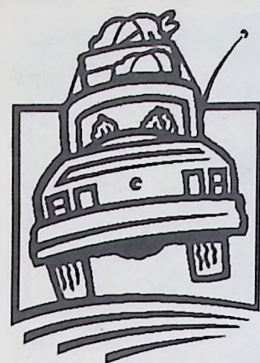
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Armagh delegation to visit Frontier Museum

AC staff report

STAUNTON — The signing of an agreement to develop cooperative cultural exchanges will be the outcome of a visit by a delegation of government officials, cultural leaders and business and tourism leaders from County Armagh, Northern Ireland to the Museum of American Frontier Culture on Oct. 27.

This visit is a follow-up to the one made by another delegation which came to the museum in May 1995 prior to President Clinton's White House Conference on Northern Ireland economic development. On that occasion, museum trustees and staff discussed possible areas of cooperation and exchange.

Since that time, plans have been made for the museum to offer a general public program on Scotch-Irish family roots, followed by an intensive workshop in Ulster genealogy in May 1997. Program presenter will be Grace McFarland Greer, head of Armagh Ancestry, the County Armagh branch of the Irish Genealogical Project, based in all 32 counties of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In addition, opportunities for an exchange fellowship are now being developed between the museum and the Northern Ireland group.

Among those representing the Armagh City and District Council coming to Staunton on this visit are Desmond Mitchell, chief executive, Mayor James Spears, James Sanderson, director of leisure and tourism, and John McNally, director of Armagh Business Centre. Others in the group include Seamus Mallon, member of parliament, and Gary Sloan representing the Armagh Campus of Queen's University Belfast.

They will be greeted, toured, and entertained by members of the museum's board of trustees, board of directors, and the senior staff, as well as local government officials. —

Notes from the road

Augusta Country staff writer Nancy Sorrells and contributing writer Katharine Brown set sail for Northern Ireland in July. Their visit took them to Armagh, the soon-to-be tourism partner of the Staunton-Augusta County area. In this issue of Augusta Country they file this special report to introduce the people, culture and history of Armagh.

Armagh:

Northern Ireland's 'city of saints and scholars'

By KATHARINE BROWN

ARMAGH, Northern Ireland — "City of saints and scholars in the orchard of Ireland" is a phrase that captures the essence of this place cherished by Ireland's people. This city, about the size of Staunton, lies in the middle of County Armagh, (pronounced R-Ma) Northern Ireland. The name comes from the Irish, Ard Macha, meaning "Macha's Height," for a legendary pagan queen who ruled about 650 B.C.

Just west of the city lies Navan Fort, once called Emain Macha, ancient seat of Celtic kings and place of worship, where archaeological findings go back 7,000 years. From the top of this hill one can see five of the six counties of Northern Ireland, as well as the tower and spires of Armagh's two cathedrals. The Navan Centre near the hill features exhibits on archaeology, Celtic mythology and the Irish oral tradition.

Tradition holds that St. Patrick built a stone church in 445 A.D. on what he called "my sweet hill," in the heart of the present city.

Old Irish folk game still lingers among locals

By NANCY SORRELLS

ARMAGH, Northern Ireland — It was a glorious day in Ireland, full of sunshine and breathtakingly green hills. We were ambling down from the peak of what was once an ancient fortress — Navan — just outside the city of Armagh, located in the county of Armagh, Northern Ireland.

To return to the Navan visitor center meant taking a short trail through fields and across a country road. It was in crossing the little-traveled, narrow, black-topped road that we were stopped short by bullets. Not to worry. There was little danger to our personal well-being. The game of bullets, or road bowls, in more modern terminology is a folk game of old and rather hazy origins.

Gone from the face of the earth except in two widely separated Irish counties, Armagh and County Cork, the contest testing the arms of local lads has lingered and thrived along the back roads in these two regions.

Around it grew a famous monastic school that attracted scholars from all of Europe.

In 1014, following the battle of Clontarf, Brian Boru, High King of Ireland who defeated the Norsemen, was buried at the church. In 1268, plans for the present cathedral were drawn. That cathedral was destroyed 17 times, and each time restored, most recently in 1840. From the time of the Reformation, this has been the Protestant cathedral of the Church of Ireland, and seat of the Archbishop of Armagh, who is the Anglican Primate of all of Ireland.

The city is a dream come true for the 18th century Archbishop Richard Robinson and his Dublin architect, Francis Johnston. Robinson was a wealthy English aristocrat and clergyman who dreamed of restoring the little town of Armagh as a great center of culture and learning.

Near the 13th century Franciscan Friary ruins, he built in 1768-70 a handsome palace which was the residence of Archbishops of

Armagh until about 1960. It is now the headquarters of the Armagh District Council. In 1781-86 Robinson built an exquisite small chapel beside the palace, with some of the finest woodcarving and plasterwork in Ireland. This now serves as a concert hall. The nearby palace stables were converted into a heritage center in 1991-92, with exhibits, gallery, shop and tea room.

In the heart of the town, across from the cathedral, Robinson founded the Armagh Public Library in 1771 to house his own books and engravings. This has become one of Ireland's finest scholarly libraries. On another hill, Robinson founded the Armagh Observatory. The Georgian building designed by Francis Johnston still is a center of astronomical research. On the observatory grounds is a modern planetarium, established in 1967, with the largest public telescope in Ireland, and high-tech star shows. Only Robinson's dream to found a university at Armagh remained unfulfilled.

The mall, in the center of the city, a former racecourse now home to the cricket club, is surrounded with handsome Georgian town houses. At one end is the classical court house, and at the other a Georgian jail. The tall-spired Presbyterian Church and the Armagh County Museum also face the mall. Nearby is St. Patrick's Triam, an adaptive re-use of old commercial buildings into an innovative visitor center, craft gallery, confer-

ence center, and restaurant. This includes an interpretive exhibit of Armagh history and a Land of Lilliput exhibit based on Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels."

The other great building which makes Armagh the Ecclesiastical See ARMAGH, page 16



Among the noteworthy structures in Armagh, the Ecclesiastical Capital of Ireland, is St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral. The twin towered neo-Gothic structure was dedicated in 1873.

Photo by Katharine Brown

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Appearing Nightly

See BULLETS, page 24

In Ireland, right is left, left is right — right?

By NANCY SORRELLS

Once when I was in high school my class went to a science fair. One booth had what appeared to be an easy test in motor/visual skills. The requested task appeared simple: Using a pencil on a piece of paper draw a five-point star by connecting the points using five intersecting lines. It's a basic task that many of us could zip through without a second thought. We have drawn stars like that for years.

Just as you might have guessed, however, there was a catch. I had to draw the star while looking in a mirror (and without looking down at the paper, my hand, or the pencil.) I had to think opposite, see one thing and tell my brain to reverse the tasks before sending them out as action. I couldn't do it. I failed miserably.

Which is why I was approaching the chance to drive in Ireland with more than a little trepidation. I knew that the opportunity would arise sooner or later, because Katharine Brown and I were going to be in the country almost three weeks and we were renting cars the entire time.

For Americans, the difficulty of driving in Ireland is four-fold: 1. Driving on the "wrong" side of the road; 2. Sitting on the "wrong" side of the car; 3. Shifting gears with the "wrong" hand; and 4. Trying to obey traffic rules, the existence of which you are not even aware.



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Being part of the British Isles means that the Irish drive on the left side of the road. Here in America we drive on the right, a legacy say some historians to the covered wagons of Conestoga Pennsylvania and their need to drive on that side so the teamster who was on the left side of the horses would not be forced into the ditch (more on ditches later in the story).

A background description of Irish roads is also necessary. Picturesque and narrow, they wind twisting and turning through the countryside. The improved roads would be akin to U.S. 11 or a few to I-81. These highways are called carriageways, and the really nice ones have medians separating the traffic flows. The Irish move at top speeds on their divided carriageways.

Most of the countryside, however, is criss-crossed with country lanes which somehow support two-way traffic (and often livestock) in a very narrow space. There are no shoulders and hedges and ditches crowd to within inches of the hard surfaces (more on hedges later). Accustomed to these conditions, Irish drivers still pass on these lanes and may zip along at 60 or so miles an hour.

Driving on the left on any of these roads seems simple at first — you merely reverse everything. O.K., let's try a sample driving exercise, as in executing a right hand turn? Here in America you turn tight to the inside; in Ireland you swing wide to the outside. The left-hand turn is the tight inside turn.

For people like me who are left-right impaired, quick visualization of correctly completing the turn is necessary until the routine becomes habit. The technique worked. Only once did I execute a turn head-on into traffic. Fortunately, my fellow traveler croaked out a nervous warning, and I was able to pull off on what was one of the few road shoulders in all of Ireland.

Successful Irish turning meant also blocking from my mind the ingrained idea of driving and turning from the right side of the road. By the end of my stay in Ireland the new skills were becoming habit, which were hard to break at 1 a.m. when I climbed, somewhat bleary-eyed from being awake 24 straight hours, in my car in America and tried to proceed home on the correct side of the road!

O.K., so you have learned how to turn. Now you have to learn who has the right-of-way at stops, and

how to pass. This must be done by eliminating any remnants of American driving memories from your brain. Nothing is universal in this world. In Ireland the light switch turns on and off differently and the telephone rings differently. So, too, passing is a bit different.

On the roads that are improved enough to have lines (these are in the minority believe me — but we will deal with the narrow roads later in the story) there appears to be a solid line running along the left hand side and then what Americans would interpret as a very wide shoulder. Au contraire. This is the line which you are supposed to STRADDLE if you are traveling at the speed limit or below. By moving over to the left you allow those drivers in a pinch for time to whip by you on the right and execute a quick pass.

Probably the most dreaded part of driving for Americans in the British Isles is the ROUNDABOUT. I have since talked to my fellow countrymen who have driven abroad, and they speak in hushed tones of the roundabout. Simply put — there are no intersections in Ireland. When you come to a point where two or more roads intersect, there is a circle which you enter from the left, and then proceed around until you spin off at your correct road. If you miss your turn you keep going around, again and again until you get it correct. This requires quick reflexes and instinct. There is no time to visualize the turn in your mind, with cars whipping around and around and turning hither and yon. You cannot contemplate who has the right-of-way. You just react.

My first roundabout came within an hour of landing in Ireland and traumatized me for days. Thankfully I was not driving and my fellow traveler had driven them before. None-



So much for driving with the right side of your brain. Katharine Brown, far left, watches as some Irish neighbors help change a tire after the car she was driving had a tangle with a hedge, far right. Photo by Nancy Sorrells

theless as I sat in the car staring stupidly at a map of Dublin while rush hour traffic from the airport whizzed around us, I began to get a bit nervous about my driving experience. It was days later before I screwed up the courage to conquer my first roundabout, and although they became easier by the end of our stay, I let Katharine do most of the city driving, and I stuck to country driving for much of the time.

Keep in mind that all of this visualization and reversing in the mind is being done simultaneously with another small difference — shifting gears with the left hand. There are almost no automatic cars in Ireland. They all come "with gears" as they say in Ireland. Much of this is for practicality's sake. Gas is incredibly expensive, and standard transmissions are more fuel efficient than automatics. Filling up our rented VW Golf took about \$25 American dollars, so we were glad enough to stick to a straight shift car even if it called for some awkwardness when trying to change gears.

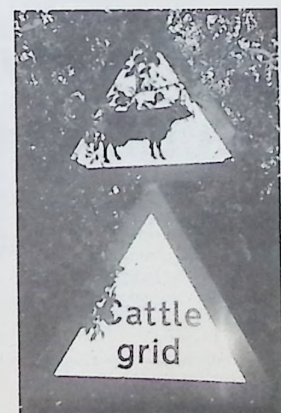
Most of the cars on the road are very small, compact cars. No town cars or pickup trucks in sight, and the parking spaces are equally small. Nonetheless, such small cars are apparently in high demand, and car theft is unusually high for such a rural country. I talked to several people who had their cars stolen in broad daylight from a guarded "park lot." The problem has reached such high proportions that it is illegal to leave your car unlocked in Northern Ireland!

With that said, I will proceed to

the fourth hurdle one must cross when driving in Ireland — road signage. Learning to read another country's traffic symbols is like learning a foreign language. Speed limits, for instance, are almost never posted. However as we exited congested areas onto open highway we often saw a round white sign with a black circle and slash through it. We knew the sign had a meaning, but it was days before we learned it meant you could resume the speed limit. (It was even longer before we learned what the speed limit was.)

Sometimes we would see a sign with a large exclamation point and nothing else. Sometimes the exclamation point would have an explanation like: "Hidden dip" or "Bump." We were quite amused by the signs that warned us of unexpected crossings: "Elderly People."

See DRIVING, page 24



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Yesterday once more

Church of the Brethren molded by trials, hardships

By SUE SIMMONS

STAUNTON — Staunton Church of the Brethren members no doubt will recall the trials and hardships of the church's formative years when celebrating its 100th anniversary Nov. 3.

The German Baptist Brethren Church promoted an evangelistic program in the last half of the 19th century. D.C. Flory of New Hope, influenced by the call to minister to areas "in need," drove his buggy into Staunton each Sunday to preach twice to a group of some 40 individuals. He was aided in his efforts by sister Temple Sauble, a missionary sent by the Mission Board, who visited members during the week and distributed religious tracts.

Under Flory's leadership and the direction of elders Samuel Driver, Enoch Brower, L.A. Wenger and Noah Fisher, a Sunday school grew from its first meeting on Nov. 1, 1896 in the Oddfellows Hall on Main Street (today E. Beverley Street).

By 1898, however, it was reported to the district by the Church Erection and Missionaries Committee that 98 people, 40 of whom were from the city of Staunton, regularly met and that eight of the members had been baptized. It also appears that the Oddfellows Hall no longer met the physical needs of the fledgling congregation. The soon-to-be church had purchased a lot on the corner of Churchville and

Central Avenue (the site of Young's Tru-value Hardware Store today) for the sum of \$750 with an eye toward constructing a meetinghouse.

A committee composed of elders from Barron Ridge, Elk Run, and Mt. Vernon churches, all neighboring congregations, voted the German Baptist Brethren Church of Staunton into existence on May 20, 1898. Its 19 Brethren and 20 sisters unanimously agreed to cooperate in the work of the new church and they elected Levi Wenger the presiding officer; John Kennedy, secretary; and J.M. Steffy, treasurer. George and Samuel Flory of Mt. Vernon; Samuel Huffman and Joseph Crickenbeger of Barron Ridge; Isaac Miller and John Rawlson of

Elk Run; and J.W. Steffy and J.P. Jordan of Staunton then "withdrew" to locate the boundary line for Staunton Church.

The congregation turned its attention to construction of a church house in September 1898. The Beaver Creek Congregation contributed \$47.45 to the new church which was used to pay indebtedness on the Oddfellows Hall rent. Subscriptions totaling \$802 were reported for the building fund. The business meeting decided then to build a frame house to be not less than 35 x 52 feet.

While construction on the meetinghouse progressed, the brethren and sisters settled down to the work of the church. Delegates were elected to both the district and annual conference. The congregation sent a paper to the district meeting disapproving cigarettes and asking the district to approve the Staunton church organization. D.C. Flory was elected minister on Feb. 11, 1899.

The Brethren believed that they had to be in perfect "love and union" one with the other. To that end, committees were formed to visit members who did not attend or who were not in harmony with their brethren.

Brother and Sister Wilkerson, two of the founding members, provide a colorful illustration. The Wilkersons had stopped attending church. A committee of two headed by Brother Garber paid the Wilkersons a visit. After speaking with Brother Wilkerson (the council minutes noted that the committee was unable to speak with Sister Wilkerson), it was learned that the couple was not in fellowship with Brother Sprouse whom they criticized for sporting a mustache but not a beard. The committee struggled to bring the parties back into fellowship with each other — Wilkerson explained to brother Garber that his mustache protected his lungs from dust, but he agreed to let his beard grow — but the contention dragged on for nearly two years when the minutes note that "the case of Brother and sister Wilkerson has been settled satisfactorily to them and the church."

The young church also was having trouble meeting its hall rent. It was decided to spend money from the subscriptions taken for the building fund to pay the rent on the Oddfellows Hall. It was also decided to pay out no more than \$10 for coffins "for those not able to pay for themselves." Eventually the church asked the district



Staunton Church of the Brethren, October 1996

AC staff photo

board for an additional \$10 a month to pay for the operating expenses of the church. Brother Steffy was appointed to solicit funds for further improvements on the church property. In October 1899 it was reported that the cash on hand, after paying a debt for stoves and an amount owed the janitor, was 44 cents.

When Flory resigned as minister in August 1899, it became necessary to find a new minister to locate in Staunton. After a series of interim pastors, Brother Jacob Garber was unanimously elected as the church's first resident minister in January 1902.

Despite what must have seemed like some real obstacles, the church grew physically and spiritually. The Sister's Aid Society, the first women's group, was created in February 1900 with sisters Steffy, Shumate, Deihl, Greaver, Michael, and Nettie Greaver appointed as officers of the society. The first men's group emerged in 1903 when a Christian Workers Society was organized with J.W. Garber appointed president, B.C. Harman, secretary and J.S. Hall, treasurer.

Catherine Wilkerson, born in November 1896, attended Sunday school and preaching in this small building as a young girl. She recalled "everything went on in that one little room — meetings, preaching, Sunday school." Baptisms

were conducted in the pond at Gypsy Hill Park where the entire congregation and the baptismal candidate would walk.

In November 1903 the church bought the United Brethren Church located on Lewis Street when that congregation built a new church on West Beverley Street (today St. Paul's United Methodist Church).

Money continued to be a problem for the Brethren. The church sent delegates to the district meeting in 1904, but did not have the funds to send representatives to the annual meeting. It was decided in February 1904 to take up a collection on the first Sunday of each month. The first collection yielded 74 cents. In April Brother Joe Garber was appointed to solicit members for money. Jacob Garber remained minister of the church, but it appears all was not well.

In June of 1905 a special council meeting was called and Garber was re-elected for another year. The integrity of the meeting was called into question, necessitating an investigation by a committee of five elders none of whom, it was expressed, could come from Augusta County. The committee reprimanded several church members for willfulness and overzealousness. It recommended that the brethren and sisters of the Staunton Church "be kindly affectioned toward each other and

See BRETHREN, page 11

Dunkers founded Brethren Church

By SUE SIMMONS

Suffering religious persecution resulting from the Thirty Years War, Alexander Mack and seven others found themselves on the Banks of the Eder River which flowed through Schwarzenau, Germany. There they were baptized by trine immersion, thus making them the first German Baptist Brethren and also outlaws of the state.

Beginning in 1729 the Brethren left Germany for America, settling first in Germantown near Philadelphia, and then spreading out onto the frontier of western Maryland and the Shenandoah Valley. The Brethren lived in closed agricultural communities centered around a meetinghouse. The Dunkers, as

they were derisively called by their countrymen, were considered oddities for a number of their beliefs, chief among them was that of "no force in religion."

As one of the three historic peace churches, Brethren suffered persecution in all of America's wars until World War II because of their pacifist stance.

Other religious practices of feet washing and love feast, anointing, and trine immersion also set the Brethren apart. The Brethren have no creed save the New Testament. Women were active voting participants in congregational business meetings and could hold the position of deaconess.

The Church of the Brethren remains a small denomination of a mere 250,000. —

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Brethren

Continued from page 10

that they labor for union and love forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forward unto those things which are before, press toward the mark of the prize in the high calling in Christ Jesus."

Clearly the brethren and sisters were not in love and harmony, and the church's wounds did not heal quickly. Communion was suspended indefinitely. Jacob Garber resigned shortly thereafter, and the church decided to elect a new minister.

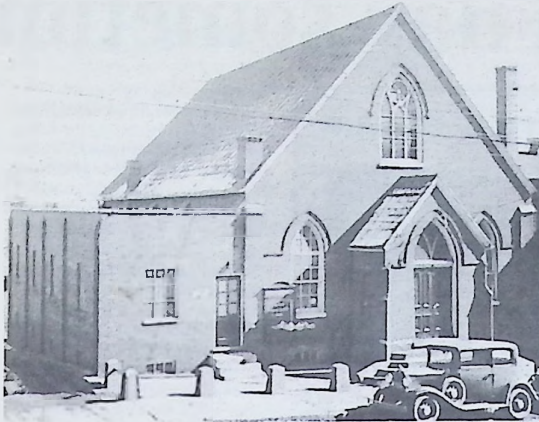
On Oct. 12, 1906 Brother Walter Thomas received the call. It was decided at that time to resume communion. The church thus returned to its ordinary rhythms. The march of ministers, however, continued. Noah Fisher was elected in July 1907. He was followed by A.B. Miller, Casper Driver, E.S. Coffman, George A. Phillips, S.D. Glick, Dee H. Miller, and D.L. Andes.

On May 15, a committee was authorized to borrow \$250 to defray the expenses of the church and to purchase 1,000 envelopes to distribute to adjoining and other churches who proposed to contribute to assist finances for the pastor's salary. Interestingly, this entry of May 15 is the first time the church is referred to as the Church of the Brethren of Staunton, Va.

To add to the church's financial woes, a late afternoon storm that perhaps spawned a tornado seriously damaged the church, ripping off the roof on Sunday, June 4, 1911. The trustees and the council met on June 6 at the YMCA and decided to continue services and appoint a committee of two to find a temporary place to meet. Subscriptions were taken to pay for the re-roofing of the church.

In March of 1913 and again in April of 1914 the Staunton Church sent a query to the second District of Virginia to formulate some plan by which the work in Staunton "may be continued." It appears the church was barely meeting its "running expenses," and it asked the District to supply the ministerial help. In October 1914 the church adopted an envelope system for collecting money. Sisters Catherine Wilkerson and Mary Deihl and Brother David Gilbert served on the committee that instituted this change in collection.

The first of three missionaries arrived from Bridgewater College



The United Brethren Church on Lewis Street was purchased in November 1903 by another Brethren congregation which would come to call itself Staunton Church of the Brethren.

Photo courtesy Staunton Church of the Brethren

in the summer of 1914. Miss Wilkerson recalled that the Missionaries were often sent to Brethren Churches, sometimes when the churches were between ministers, to do whatever church work needed to be done. They visited the sick and often organized women's activities at a time when any organized women's groups had been forbidden. According to Miss Wilkerson, all three of the missionaries came from Bridgewater and lived with various church families.

One in particular, Nelly Wampler, visited the sick and taught the chil-

dren how to quilt. "She had the children of the church sew the squares, and the women of the church pieced the squares together," Miss Wilkerson recalled. The quilts were then sold to support the building fund.

Elected ministers and missionary sisters, however, proved inadequate to fill the needs of the Staunton congregation. A letter petitioning the Mission Board to grant a permanent resident minister commented that a minister filling appointments each Sunday and not in touch with the work of

the church constantly resulted in many missed opportunities. The church promised to pay the pastor \$600 a year. This was a tall promise from a church that reported \$22.86 in the treasury in April 1916.

The late Casper Garber recalled in his memoirs that a man named Walter Harris, who was secretary of the Mission Board, came to see his parents John Cline and Stella Houff Garber, who were at the time serving a church in Buena Vista.

Brother Harris asked them to consider becoming the pastors of the Staunton Church. Brother and Sister Garber's experience in Buena Vista had been one of financial hardship, and they hesitated. Brother Harris told them that the church in Staunton was founding and Brother Garber would be the district's last effort to keep the church alive. If he did not succeed, they would close the church and recommend the members go to other churches.

The Garbers agreed to move to Staunton, where they would farm and minister. Brother Garber preached his first sermon at the Staunton Church on Dec. 1, 1918. The arrival of Brother Garber signaled a change in the fortunes and life of the Staunton Church. He gave his life to the Staunton Church, remaining there as pastor until 1947 and thus gave it the stability it needed.

The church home on Lewis Street under the guidance of a loving pastor provided the home for a church family to grow. Under Brother Garber's leadership, drama became part of the fellowship, the women reorganized under the guise of the Ladies Aid Society, and the mem-

bership continued to grow.

By the late 1950s the church was too small to meet the needs of its congregation. A lot was purchased on North Collier Street and construction began on a church. The new meetinghouse of the Brethren was dedicated in May 1959. A shift in demographics in the 1960s was manifested in tremendous congregational growth as rural brethren moved to urban areas like Staunton. Programs for youth and senior citizens alike provided a source of fellowship and service so important to the Brethren.

Today's congregation is active in disaster relief, outreach to local agencies such as SACRA, the Valley Mission, and Weekday Religious Education. It also helps support the Shenandoah District — much as the district once supported the church — Bridgewater College, and Bethany Seminar. The church supports the Hatcher Lantz Scholarship for Brethren students attending Eastern Mennonite High School and is active in a number of other community projects.

Just as Moses worked to guide the children of Israel through the Wilderness only to die before ever setting foot in the promised land, the founding brethren and sisters who gathered to hear preaching in the Oddfellows Hall 100 years ago, like Moses, started something.

Isaiah 51:1 commands men to "look to the rock from which you were hewn and the quarry from which you were dug." The Brethren of Staunton will do just that when they celebrate their centennial. —

Time capsule reveals history of Timber Ridge

By NANCY SORRELLS

TIMBER RIDGE — "It must have been a very daring act," said Mary Lipscomb, chairman of the Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church's History Committee, of the decision by her church's 1900 congregation to knock out a wall in the 18th century building and add wings to accommodate the expanding congregation.

Nonetheless, the turn-of-the-century building committee, chaired by D.J. Hileman, moved ahead with the idea. When the expansion was complete, a cornerstone with a sealed time capsule was placed in the wall of the refurbished building. That time capsule

was reopened at Timber Ridge's recent homecoming celebration, providing a glimpse into the past of the historic congregation. This year was chosen as the time to reopen the capsule, because 1996 marks the 250th anniversary of Timber Ridge's existence.

In addition to the time capsule ceremony, homecoming festivities included a special church service with three short historical dramas portraying important events in the history of the church; a program by a Christian clown troupe; a reception for Dr. I. Taylor Sanders II, the author of "A Journey in Faith: The History of Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church;" and the planting of a Dawn Redwood Tree.



Herman and Dolly Straub reveal the contents of a time capsule placed in the cornerstone at Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church 96 years ago.* Photo by Nancy Sorrells

The tree dedication was particularly memorable, because the soil around the tree was shoveled by 14-year-old Drew Mackey. Two hundred and fifty years ago, young Mackey's ancestors were among the first settlers in the region and helped found the church.

Much of the day's limelight was focused on the copper box which held mementos from another era in the Timber Ridge timeline. The box, which was soldered shut in 1900 and placed in a hand-carved niche within

the church's 600-pound cornerstone, proved up to the test of time.

For 96 years the white cornerstone, with the names of the 1900 pastor, J.L. Mauze, and building committee members Hileman, Ira Franklin Sterrett, W.A. Kinnear, J.H. Lackley, F.A. Ott, and R.H. Marr, chiseled on the outside, has housed the capsule and protected it from the elements.

When long-time members Dolly and Herman Straub, along with See CAPSULE, page 23

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On a charmed day sometime soon

Down on the farm we're thinking about what we get done in a day's time.

Quite often people will say to me, "I don't see how you do all that you do." I look at what other people are doing and find myself thinking the same thing. I'm guessing that they have found, as I have, that the more you have to do, the more you get done. If you don't have very much to do, then you don't get very much done. It's no rocket science formula. That's just the way it works out.

We all have those days when we can't seem to get anything done. Just about everything we approach to do seems impossible to accomplish, or we meet with complications at every turn. These are the kinds of days which fall into "the hurrier-I-go-the-behinder-I-get" category.

Then there are other days when we live a charmed existence. Everything we put our hands to comes to fruition. Like soft clay in a skilled potter's hands, the day's labors produce the most beautiful results. These are the kinds of days I like to think about. It's such a tantalizing notion that it prompts me to think about how much I might get done on a charmed day sometime soon.

There are a couple guarantees about charmed days. There are never floods on charmed days. It never snows on charmed days. In fact, it never even rains on charmed days. It's never too hot or too cold or too windy or too humid. The weather on charmed days approaches perfection.

If I were so fortunate to have just such a charmed day come into my life, there's so much I might do.

I might get up early and go to the barn to find that no new lambs had arrived overnight. I might fur-

DOWN ON THE FARM

BY
**BETTY JO
HAMILTON**



ther find that all the two-week-old lambs were in the highest of spirits and that every ewe and lamb was eager to get out to pasture. They would scurry up the lane not having to be prodded and coaxed if caught lingering along the way. All the lambs would race to the creek and not run back and forth causing me to have to chase one way then the other to break up their early morning frolics.

If I had a morning when the sheep cooperated completely, I might get done with the feeding in record time. Even having to offer a bottle or two here and there wouldn't really slow me down on a morning like that.

And if I got finished with the morning feeding early, think how much earlier I might get started on another chore. Like if all 135 of the remainder of the sheep had gotten mixed together and needed sorting? I could get an early start on herding them into the barnyard to do that.

If it was one of those charmed days, I might ride two fields back to where I see sheep grazing, give a couple toots of the horn, whoop and holler a couple times, and the sheep would just take off as hard as they could straight for the barn lots. How surprised I would be not

to have to weave crazily around the pasture herding them the whole half-mile to the barn, yelling myself hoarse in the process.

Of course, even on a charmed day, I would know there were sheep yet to be accounted for. Then I would go back out into the pasture and find the rest of the sheep lounging under shade trees on the bluff at the top of the hill just above the barn. Only on a charmed day would I find the rest of them all gathered within 150 yards of the pasture gate just waiting to be herded in.

While in the process of herding them in, on a charmed day, the cattle would all come racing down off the hill in pursuit of the sheep. Once the sheep had been contained in the barnyard, the cattle would wait patiently at the gate giving me just the opportunity for which I had been waiting to chase the bull into a holding pen. It would have been something I had been wanting to do for almost two weeks when finally a charmed day had come along.

Then before the sheep sorting began, I would take note that there were a few cows and calves in the pasture across the road which had not gotten moved to other pasture the week before with the rest of their counterparts. And since I wanted to take some of the sheep over there, wouldn't it be so much better to get those few straggling cows and calves moved instead of having them in the way the next time I wanted to bring the sheep in?

So, on a charmed day, I would leave the sheep standing in the barn lot and the bull in the holding pen, and drive to the pasture across the road. There I would race around the pasture tooting the horn and beating on the side of the truck to get the cattle moving, then one charmed cow and her calf would take the lead, and the rest would oblige and follow her out of the field. Once they were in the road, on a charmed day, I wouldn't even need help getting them across it and down the lane without having to chase them up and down the road before they decided where they were really supposed to go.

Once the cattle were safely in their new pasture, I would return to the barn to find the sheep and bull actually still were I had left them. Nobody had broken out. Everybody was just standing pa-

tiently awaiting my return.

Even on a charmed day, I might dread the task of sorting the sheep. After all, running 135 sheep through pens and sorting them one by one can be pretty daunting. But, if it were a charmed day, I might find that the sheep had pleasantly maintained their pre-mix sorts, for the most part. That the first group of sheep which had raced straight to the barn were all of one group and wouldn't need to be sorted at all. And the second group would have less than a dozen "outsiders" among its ranks. And that even the rams would be rather accommodating about the whole thing and not a single one of the — dare I say eight of them — would threaten to knock my lights out.

On a charmed day I might even feel so inclined as to take my chances on sorting through some of the soon-to-lamb ewes and pick out ones which appeared closest to delivery. It would be something I had time to do since the rest of the sorting had taken much less time than I had expected.

Once the sheep had been sorted and returned to their respective pastures and the bull turned out into the meadow where he could do no damage, I might find that it was time for lunch. And on a charmed day, not just that it was time for lunch, but that I had time to eat lunch. What a dandy day!

While I was taking my leisurely lunch break, I might check phone and e-mail messages and answer them. I might even feel like propping my feet up and leaning back for a 10- or 15-minute catnap after

I'd finished eating lunch. With so much of the day left, it would be a perfect time to regroup for the remainder of a charmed day.

With an afternoon stretching before me, I would set my schedule for the rest of the charmed day. I might decide to go to the other farm and throw some hay out for bulls shut up in the barnyard there. Then swing back by the post office to pick up the mail. Then coast over to a neighbor's house to deliver a jar of pickles — not that it was a pickle emergency or anything like that. But I'd had a quart of pickles set aside for a friend and just hadn't had time to deliver. Then after the pickle delivery I would stop back by the mechanic's shop to see if he'd worked any miracles on my ailing automobile.

Having done those errands, I might find myself back at home in time to begin another big chore — it being one of pulling a fence back up which flood waters had mashed flat a few weeks earlier. Finally the meadow had drained out enough to get to the fence, and certainly this would be the time to try to pull the fence back in place. Sure, it would take some effort. But after all, this is a charmed day, so I just might get it done.

And on a charmed day, I would get it done — and surprise myself in my success with the project. Sure it needs a little more work, but it will hold sheep for the time being. Maybe after the ground dries out some more, I can get some help to finish the job — that is until the next flood comes along.

See CHARMED, page 13



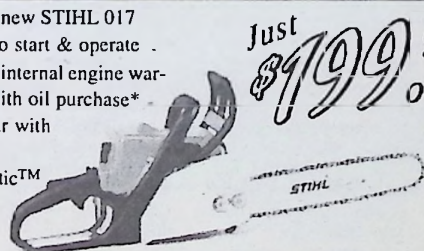
If I had a morning when the sheep cooperated completely, I might get done with the feeding in record time. Even having to offer a bottle or two here and there wouldn't really slow me down on a morning like that.

Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton

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•Charmed

Continued from page 12

With the fence pulled back in place, I would then find that the charmed day was winding down. The shadows were lengthening, and it was time once again to bring the ewes and lambs into the barnyard for evening feeding. But since this is a charmed day, there would have been no new arrivals during the day so therefore none to have to carry in from the pasture with a ewe running pell mell in my wake.

And all the two-week-old lambs would run swiftly into their overnight holding pen right behind their hungry mothers, none of whom would have the audacity to keep me waiting at the gate or make me run around in circles trying to get them in the pen. Likewise, their soon-to-deliver counterparts would come straight to the gate out of their day pasture then head for the barn and their feed, again not lingering and neither having to be prodded nor coaxed along the way.

And, lo and behold, with all the sheep fed and shut up for the night, I would find myself on the way to the house at 5:15 p.m. giving me an entire hour to get ready to go to a seed corn meeting. Just think of it! An entire hour to get ready to go somewhere. If I had an entire hour to get ready to go some-

where I'm sure I might find myself downright giddy. I might even be able to get completely clean instead of just going through the paces. And not only would I be completely clean, but I would arrive at the meeting on time. Surely a charmed day if ever there was one.

Of course, I'm not saying that you might not encounter a few detours and sidetracks even on a charmed day. For instance, after sorting the sheep and turning them out to pasture, you might find that a couple rams and a ewe had broken down a gate and escaped into the lane. But it's a charmed day, so you just leave them to their own devices and tie the gate back up with a piece of wire. And you figure you'll chase them back through a gate the next time you get them close to it. And because it's a charmed day, you later find they have gotten themselves back in the pasture without even having to lift a finger.

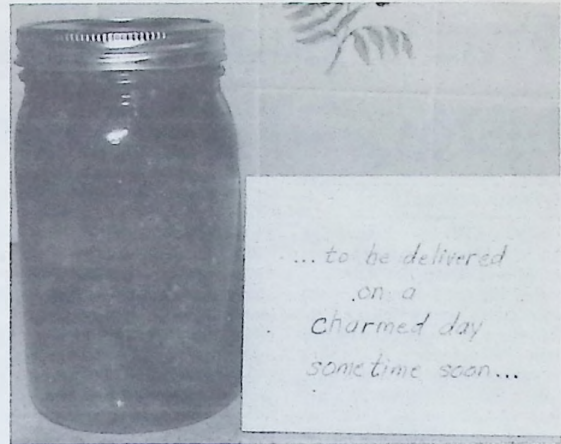
Then, too, you might also find yourself stuck in axle deep mud while trying to fix the fence, even on a charmed day. In fact, it might take you longer to get the tractor out of the mudbog than it does to fix the fence, but you do finally get it out. Of course, now you have a tremendous hole in the middle of the field, but you suppose it will

fill in eventually.

You also might find yourself having to chase a dozen or so ewes out of the lot where you just pulled the fence back into place. They have to go through the gate where the mudbog is where you had the tractor stuck, and in so doing, several of the extremely pregnant ewes manage to get themselves stuck in the mudbog. As sheep are not equipped with mud and snow grips and do not come in front-wheel or four-wheel drive varieties, you find yourself stepping into the mudbog to raise their rearends out of the mud and assist them in their predicaments.

Once you've gotten the ewes on firm ground, you find that you have become stuck in the mud, and try as you might, you can't get your foot out of the slurping, sucking mud hole in which it has become mudlocked. Tugging and pulling on a fencepost with all your strength, you eventually break free of the mud and find yourself thinking, "Gee, if anyone had seen that they probably would have thought it was pretty funny."

And for me at the end of the charmed day — after a delightful meal at the seed corn meeting — I might find myself back home and feeling the effects of all the labors over the course of the charmed day.



That jar of pickles on the counter might even get delivered to a friend on a charmed day sometime soon.

Settling into an easy chair, a cat curled up in my lap, I'm sure I would reflect on all the things I had gotten done on that charmed day despite a few pitfalls and stumbling blocks. And that if too many charmed days came along, I would get caught up with everything I have to do, and then there wouldn't be very much left for me to do which would mean I wouldn't be getting

very much done.

We have those charmed days every now and then down on the farm. There's so much to do and only so much time, charmed days notwithstanding. But oh, just thinking about the things I might get done on a charmed day is enough to hope one will come around sometime soon. —

Farm Bureau honors local youth

AC staff report

SANGERSVILLE — A Buffalo Gap sophomore and a Fort Defiance senior were honored when the Augusta County Farm Bureau held its 46th annual meeting Oct. 7 at the Sangersville-Towers Ruritan Hall.

Matthew Hickey, 15, son of

David and Linda Hickey of Rt. 1 Staunton, and Jason Roller, 17, son of Randy and Ann Roller of Fort Defiance, were recognized by being presented the Mary Frances Houff Good Citizenship Award and the Youth Leadership Award, respectively. Both Hickey and Roller are active in their school's FFA

chapters and show livestock at the annual 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show. Hickey was president of his freshman class at Gap and this year was elected president of the sophomore class.

Jason Shifflet, son of David and Kitra Shifflet of Grottoes and a freshman at Virginia Tech, was presented the Young Agriculturist Award. Shifflet, in partnership with his brother Adam, owns a purebred and commercial sheep operation and has been active on the local, state, and national levels in FFA chapter competition.

The Farm Bureau Women's Committee nominated Betty Jo Hamilton as its candidate for Virginia Farm Bureau's Farm Woman of the Year. Hamilton farms on her family's 550-acre beef cattle, sheep, and general crop operation near Middlebrook.

Richard Shifflet of Rt. 1, Swoope, was elected president by Farm Bureau members assembled at the meeting. Other officers elected include Charles Wonderley, vice



Richard Shifflet, newly elected president of the Augusta County Farm Bureau congratulates Matthew Hickey, center, and Jason Roller on the awards they received at the ACFB annual meeting held recently. AC staff photo

president; and Maxine Arey, women's chairman. Board members elected include Bryan Plemmons, Pastures District. Four at-large board members elected were

Forrest Ashby, Willard Cline, Katie Roudabush, and David Simmons. Directors going off the board after serving two consecutive terms were Daniel Flora, Robbie Brown, and Betty Hawpe.

Keynote speaker for the event was USDA District Conservationist Bobby Whitescarver.

Other business at the meeting included action on resolutions being passed on to the state and national Farm Bureau organizations for inclusion in their legislative agendas.

Resolutions will be acted on at the VBBF state convention to be held Dec. 2-5 in Richmond. Augusta Farm Bureau will be represented at the convention by at least five voting delegates. —

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Sun., 11 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

Fran's flood waters reveal history of local peoples

By NANCY SORRELLS

SPRING HILL — Take out an Augusta County map and study the Middle River. The waterway, one of the three branches of the Shenandoah River which rise from the county, twists and coils like a tightly wound spring as it makes its way north through Frank's Mill, Spring Hill and Verona. In early September, the remnants of Hurricane Fran deluged Augusta County and filled the bed of the Middle River beyond capacity. As the waters surged over the banks, the river's course shortened, deepened and straightened itself out, bypassing those bends and turns for the fastest route to the ocean. That's exactly what happened on the Wenger farm.

"The river horseshoes and is a mile around, but a good arm could throw a stone across. It just straightened itself out," James Wenger explained.

Although he and his wife, Lynn, and the rest of the family have seen the river rise before, it surpassed anything in their memory this time.

"We had more than '85, and some of our neighbors had three feet more," he said.

Most of the time floodwaters such as those that swelled the Middle River rework the landscape with a harsh and heavy hand. This time, however, the river also had a pleasant surprise in store for the family.

As the flood waters rose on Sept.

6, they breached a 25-foot limestone cliff and scoured the bare field that Wenger had just finished working and was ready to seed with timothy. With no cover crop to hold the soil, the water packed an extra punch scooping out the dirt that offered the least resistance.

From the bluff above, the family had watched the river take its shortcut across the field and had noticed an unusual swirling pattern of the water in one section.

"I figured we'd have a big ditch when we came down," James explained. "We saw it swirling down there like a tidal wave, so we knew it had dug a hole, and we thought it had gotten into some groundhog holes. As soon as the water was gone we started looking at what was left, and lo and behold...the kids came back up and said it was a house!"

What the Wengers now had in their field was a hole 20 feet long, 8 feet wide and up to 5 feet deep. The two shorter ends of the rectangular hole were lined with the remains of limestone walls, several courses thick and made of square, rough dressed rocks. Strewn out beyond the hole in the direction of the water's flow were the clues to the building's past life: more stones, old molded bricks, square nails, pieces of window glass, broken bits of dishes and crocks, even a clay marble, a horse bit, a spoon and buttons.

Needless to say, the find was a bit of a surprise to the Wengers whose family has owned and worked the farm for nearly 150 years.

Wenger, who has worked the field for many years, said he reckoned the building remains were down just deep enough that the farm machinery never disturbed the site and he has never noticed anything different with the crops planted over that area.

Realizing that they had a unique find on their hands, the family allowed local archaeologist Carol Nash to give the site a quick survey and record what had been discovered before the field was again put under cultivation. Nash is a former adjunct instructor of anthropology at James Madison University and is currently completing doctoral work in the study of prehistoric Virginia.

"The pit is most likely the shallow cellar or crawl space of a log cabin," said Nash, who was pleased to be able to document the structure. She theorized that the stone courses were the dry-stacked chimney bases to the house. "That these bases survived the flood is nothing short of miraculous," she noted.

Although the Wengers did not know about this building, it is in close proximity to a complex that once included a mill for flour and lumber, a log barn, a blacksmith shop and a log residence. A public road once bisected the site and headed into Staunton.

"My daddy used to say that you crossed the river 11 times to get to Staunton," said James of the road and the meandering ways of the river through the area.

Although the thousands of artifacts recovered from the site by the Wenger family have not been thoroughly analyzed, Nash noted in her report that the rusted iron, slivers of glass and chips of ceramics represent occupation from about 1790-1880. "The earliest datable ceramics include fragments of pearlware, a refined tableware imported from England between 1780 and 1830." Also abundant were locally manufactured red earthenware crock fragments as well as large amounts of hand-forged iron artifacts.

The field actually had another surprise in store for the family.



Nathan Wenger, son of James and Lynn Wenger of Spring Hill, looks at the stone foundation unearthed on the Wenger farm by flood waters from Hurricane Fran.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

James said his father had always found "arrowheads" in the field and additional stone points were uncovered by the floodwaters, but everybody was still surprised with Nash's analysis of these Native American pieces. Some were as old as 7,000 years she told the incredulous family, with the majority coming from around 4,000 years ago.

An interesting bit of trivia she passed on to the family is that the pointed pieces of rock the family had collected were not really "arrowheads," because the bow and arrow had not been invented 4,000 years ago! Rather, these stone tools were spearheads or hide scrapers or cutting knives. Although some of the stone is of local origin, many of the other points are not and arrived in the Wengers' field either by trade or travel by the Indian groups who came here.

A few hundred yards from the newly discovered building was evidence of human hands from thousands of years earlier — a series of hearths from a prehistoric camp along the ridge above the river dates from 4000 B.C. to 1500 B.C. (6,000-3,500 years ago!)

"When the site was inhabited... Native populations were practicing 'generalized foraging', meaning that their lives were organized

around the changing seasons and the resources available in the Middle River basin. The river-oriented camp was probably inhabited from late fall through the late spring, as it would have provided access to game, plants, and stone — all necessary to the existence of the first human inhabitants," Nash said. The two archaeological sites and the fact that two very large straight walnut trees were deposited in the field were bright spots amidst the destruction of Hurricane Fran. Wenger, whose hobby is furniture making, will make use of the trees, and the family has been having fun picking up the surface artifacts scattered around the field. Now that the sites have been documented, the best protection for the limestone feature is to fill it back in to prevent further deterioration according to Nash, who plans to work with the family to analyze the items which have been found.

Of the exciting turn of events, Lynn Wenger noted that sometimes there is a brighter side to something like a flood and pointed out that the field has been a center of excitement for the kids who never know what they are going to turn up when they walk around the bare earth. "That's what makes it so interesting," she said. —

Help available for flood victims

RICHMOND — Estimates on damage from Hurricane Fran's track across Virginia continue to grow. Among those hit hardest in the state were its agriculture producers.

"Apple, corn, tobacco, and vegetable crops in the affected areas were damaged. In addition, some dairy, livestock, and poultry operations have been affected by the flood," said J. Carlton Courter III, Virginia's agriculture commissioner. "Agency staff and I toured storm-damaged areas in the Shenandoah Valley and Southside Virginia, and the damage we saw was heartbreaking."

Agriculture damage from the Sept. 6 storm stands at \$72.7 million with \$50 million of that figure in damage to crops.

Farmers whose operations have been affected by Hurricane Fran should contact one of the 73 local offices of the Farm Service Agency (formerly ASCS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to determine their eligibility for low interest federal emergency loans and other disaster assistance programs administered by USDA.

See **HELP**, page 15



A tray is filled with artifacts uncovered by flood water. The items were gathered from the Wengers' field where a stone foundation was left exposed when the waters receded.



1-800-978-2794



The Great Flood of 1896 devastates Staunton

A century to the month 100 years before Hurricane Fran swept through the area, another "Great Flood" inundated the Staunton and Augusta County area with water.

On Sept. 29, 1896 a "most disastrous downpour" occurred causing the lake at Gypsy Hill Park to burst. Every downtown Staunton building within a mile was flooded and the corner of at least one Central Avenue structure crashed in. (See photo, page

1) Details of the storm and its damage were given in an article by staff writer Nancy Sorrells which appeared in the October 1996 edition of *Augusta Country*.

While interviewing Irvin Rosen of McKinley for an article in this month's *Augusta Country*, Nancy was presented with photos showing the flood's devastation in Staunton which Irvin had among

his collection of old photographs of the area.

The photo above left shows debris piled up at the underpass on Middlebrook Avenue. The tops of the bridges' arches are just barely visible in the background behind the heaps of wood and trash. The photo above right shows the devastation looking south from the

area around Stuart Hall. Houses at the top of Johnson Street hill can be seen in the distance.

In the photo below left, the destruction in the west end of the wharf area is shown. The upper left corner of this photo is shown in a closeup at right which shows a wagon turned on its end and two

others tangled amid debris. The photo in the lower right corner shows a vicinity of the city further west of the wharf area and east of Montgomery Hall Park along the railroad tracks.

Augusta Country extends special thanks to Irvin for sharing these photos with readers. ---



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Help

Continued from page 14

For application or other federal assistance, farmers may call the federal tele-registration number toll free at 1-800-462-9029. Farmers may also call the FEMA Disaster Helpline toll free at 1-800-525-0321 if they have questions about general federal assistance.

Virginia Gov. George Allen has announced that a donations referral system has been set up to help those affected by the hurricane

and subsequent flooding. The system was developed by a group of charitable and community service organizations working in cooperation with Virginia state government. To request assistance through this organization, call toll free at 1-800-747-8920. This number also may be used for organizations or individuals wishing to donate goods and services for flood relief. ---

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New Weyers Cave vet followed winding path to career choice

By LOIS SKEEN

WEYERS CAVE — When Bill Call steps out of his veterinary truck, he is at first a rather imposing figure. His easy smile and pleasant manner makes him less formidable though, along with his own description of his height at "five feet 18 inches." He strikes one as a person who is energetic, content, and who looks forward to getting up every day and going to work as a veterinarian.

Although he is obviously very comfortable in his job, Call has not always been a vet. In fact, his resume reads a little differently than that of most veterinary doctors.

As an undergraduate student at Auburn University, he majored in zoology, "because that's what I enjoyed." While at Auburn, he worked as a bartender — to help pay the bills — which led him to work in restaurant management in California and, later, in Dallas, Texas. He decided to return to his native Richmond, where he worked as a financial advisor and stockbroker for more than four years. While he enjoyed the job, at age 31 he realized he "couldn't see myself spending 30 more years sitting in an office," and began to do some soul-searching to determine his next career move.

The path he chose ultimately brought him to Augusta County. He bought part of the practice of David Gardner of Maple Lane Veterinary Clinic in Weyers Cave. While both men drive a truck with

Maple Lane written on the side, there are now really two separate businesses.

"Dr. Gardner was covered up with work, so we worked out 'a division of labor.' Dave's keeping the small animal clinic and the horse work, and I have the ruminant animal practice," explains Call. The ruminant practice involves working with sheep and goats, but about 90 percent of his time is spent with cattle, both beef and dairy cattle.

Beginning the first of November, Call will hang his shingle of Maple Lane Farm Veterinary Service at a new location in an office separate from Gardner's on Main Street in Mt. Sidney.

The transition of becoming a veterinarian involved much more than reading one too many James Herriot books. Call laughingly admits, "I haven't read a single one." When considering what he wanted to do after leaving his office job, he made some lists of things he liked, what he was good at, what he was not good at, and where he wanted to live.

Being outdoors instead of inside an office was the number one requirement. He says veterinary medicine appealed to him, because he likes the physical aspect, and staying active. The mental challenge was also an attraction. "I like science," admits Call. "It challenges your brain."

The field of medicine is nothing new to Call. His father is a retired physician, a general practitioner in

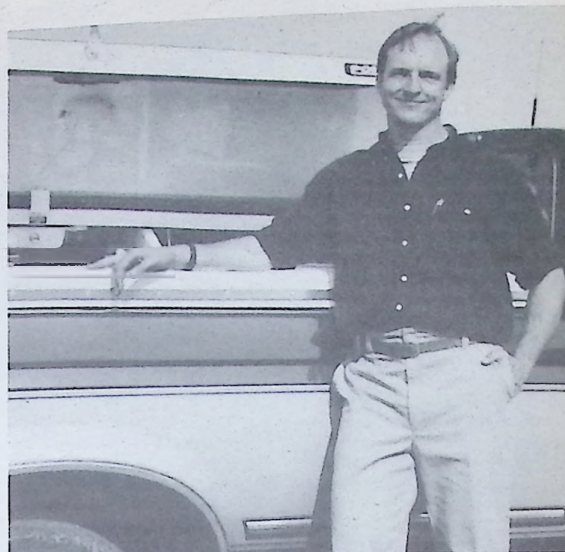
Richmond, his mother was a nurse and a nursing instructor, and he has two brothers who are physicians. Even his wife, Barbie, is a certified family nurse practitioner, although she has chosen to put off working while their two-year-old son, Hunter, is small.

After working in a five-vet cattle practice in Lancaster, Pa., Call earlier this year decided to return to Virginia. He and his wife wanted their son to grow up near their families. "I did not want to live for the weekends," says Call. "I decided to live in a place where I would like to spend a vacation."

Call sees his role as a veterinarian as more than treating an animal when it becomes sick. Terms like "wellness" and "preventative health care" are buzz words in the field of human health care, and he adheres to the same philosophy for the herds with which he works.

"It's a lot cheaper to prevent health problems than to fix them," says Call. "Cattle have the genetics to produce a lot of milk. The role I play is to remove the speed bumps from in front of the cows to let them do what they're bred to do. It might involve housing, nutrition, or udder health. You've got to go in once a month and make a plan. Find out what's going on, identify problems and how to fix them, so the dairyman can go where he wants to go."

Tucked amid the medicines and equipment in Call's truck is a laptop computer, which he uses to



Bill Call is the new "doc on the block" in northern Augusta County. He recently bought Maple Lane Farm Veterinary Service in Weyers Cave and is in the process of moving into offices in Mt. Sidney. Photo by Lola Skeen

help dairy producers troubleshoot problems. He can download information about the herd from the DHIA processing center in Raleigh, N.C., and make graphs that reveal trends in areas such as daily milk weights, somatic cell counts, days open, and other important factors that may help pinpoint problems.

"A farmer can see more from the graphs than from a page full of charts and numbers," says Call.

A continuing interest in finance and business for Call is evidenced by the copy of *The Wall Street Journal* that he keeps in his vet truck next to the computer. While he sticks to the vet work, and no longer does formal financial advising, he feels it is important for farmers to take a business approach to farming.

He thinks it is important for farmers to look at the whole economic picture, rather than just the information on their tax forms.

"There are financial ratios that farmers can use to determine their liquidity, to see if their net worth is increasing or decreasing over the long run," Call said. Although he feels strongly that financial management is important to any business, his career choice was not driven by economics.

Becoming a veterinarian meant returning to school at age 31, and the financial investment in the practice, inventory and equipment. The importance of enjoying what he was doing for a living made it worth the investment.

"I have no desire to be a member of the herd, to do what everyone else is doing," Call says with a smile.

When asked if his soul-searching led him to the right career choice, Call answered quickly, "Absolutely. Since I started this job I haven't had a bad day yet."

•Armagh

Continued from page 8

Capital of Ireland is St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral, begun by Archbishop Crolly in 1840, shortly after Catholic Emancipation. The twin towered neo-Gothic structure with elaborate interior mosaics was dedicated in 1873. It is the seat of the Cardinal, head of Ireland's dominant Roman Catholic church.

The city and county of Armagh have been called "Ulster's Camelot." The county is bounded on the north by Lough Neagh, Europe's largest natural lake, in an area of peat bogs. The ancestors of Confederate Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson are said to have come from here. The southern boundary with the Republic of Ireland, is mountainous terrain.

The county's two rivers are the Bann on the east, and the

Blackwater on the west. County Armagh, like the Shenandoah Valley, is famous for its apple orchards. Two fine country estates, Ardross House, from the late 17th century, and the Argory from the early 19th century, are National Trust properties where visitors can learn of the lives of the landed gentry in times gone by. Gosford Forest Park is a 580-acre forest and arboretum with nature trails for visitors.

From 1720-1920, thousands of Armagh emigrants came to America. The earliest were of English and Scottish background, including some of the original settlers on the Opequon tract in Frederick County in the 1730s. Many Augusta County settlers, such as the Cochran family, trace their roots to Armagh. Armagh Ancestry is a service of the county council to help family historians trace their ties to Ireland's Orchard and Eccle-

siastical Capital. The final piece of Archbishop Robinson's dream for the city is coming true with the recent establishment of a branch of Queen's University near the Library. —

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Here, there, everywhere

Students learn lessons in pumpkin patch

By PENNY PLEMMONS

CRAIGSVILLE — Kindergartners from Beverley Manor Elementary School and preschoolers from Covenant Presbyterian Preschool in Staunton had a pumpkin-picking good time at the Youell family farm in Craigsville recently.

Bill and Cathy Youell and their three sons have turned the planting and harvesting of pumpkins into an annual tradition. They plant a one-acre pumpkin and gourd patch with the specific purpose of having youngsters do the harvesting.

Small pumpkin varieties, such as the Teddy Bear Pumpkin and the Jack-B-Little pumpkin are planted with little pickers in mind.

"We don't spray for weeds, either," Cathy said, "because we know young children will be in the patch."

This year's harvest event turned into a two-day affair in order to accommodate the 90-plus children, parents and teachers who attended.

The Youells, glad to have such a large crowd, made one of the days a real family occasion. Bill took the day off from his chemical and environmental engineering job at Reynolds Metal in Grottoes. The 8-year-old Youell twins, Ryan and Shea, stayed home from school and 3-year-old Ross, who attends Covenant Preschool, got to have school in his own yard. Cathy was available for both days' events, because her job of teaching adult education occurs at night.

This is the fifth year that the Youells have invited the community

to their pumpkin patch. They are strong advocates of parental involvement in the schools and family commitment to the community.

"We want to teach our children to give back to their community," Cathy stated. "And the most important thing we can give back is our time."

The visitors rode a hay wagon to the pumpkin patch, and each child was able to wander through the vines and choose his or her own pumpkin and gourd to take home. According to preschool teacher Susan Herron, the 4-year-olds will extend their pumpkin patch experience to the classroom and will be active participants in preparing a pumpkin feast of pumpkin muffins, bread, and roasted seeds. Three-year-old preschoolers will spend time discussing pumpkin parts and how they are grown.

The kindergartners will also take their new knowledge back to school. They will have various writing and story experiences revolving around the pumpkin theme and will even incorporate math into their activities by measuring the pumpkins and discussing the ad-

vanced concept of circumference.

The harvesters were also treated to a petting zoo of barnyard animals and the Youell family pets. Cathy increased their variety of animals by borrowing a pygmy goat and three ducklings. Mary Flint, one of the kindergarten teachers, commented that, "being able to touch the webbed feet of the ducks was a unique learning experience for the students."

Cathy observed that "Alex" the cat seemed to be a favorite among the girls. "Molly" the golden lab accompanied each group on the hay ride. "Moo Moo" the black and white terrier ran excited circles around the children, wearing herself out by day's end.

The pumpkin patch field day ended with snack time and free play. Ms. Flint noted that, "the day was a wonderful hands-on experience" for the kindergartners and Ms. Herron remarked that the "diversity" of the field trip "from the hayride, to the pumpkin patch, to the different kinds of animals, made it a wonderful day for the preschoolers."



Timothy Lockett, a Covenant Presbyterian Church preschooler, finds what he's looking for in the Youell pumpkin patch in Craigsville.

Photo courtesy Covenant Preschool

Library reading garden is Augusta County's best kept secret

By VERA HAILEY

FISHERSVILLE — The best kept secret in Augusta County may just be the reading garden at the Augusta County Library. Everything is normally so "hush-hush" at the library, that few people are aware there is a beautiful and well-maintained garden just outside the west exit off the library's main floor.

The Friends of the Augusta County Library organized the reading garden about 10 years ago. It is maintained by volunteers, although a certain amount is budgeted each year for landscaping.

To find the garden, walk in the main entrance of the library, continue going straight, walk up the steps and out the glass doors. Lovely plants and wooden patio furniture give the garden its picturesque appearance.

The chairman of the library's landscape committee is Jean Wilkins of Waynesboro. A few others who help maintain the serene area of the garden are Mildred Hanger, Dot Gustin, Betty Pierce, Graphet Johnson, Kitty Coiner, Ann Spoelniki, Kathy Herbst, Jean Cornell-Lenci, and Lee Terwilliger. Although a sign inside the library

welcomes the public to use the garden, many people are not aware that it is available.

"I want to emphasize that some people still don't know the garden is here or what it's about. We want everyone to enjoy it," Wilkins said.

Library Director Barbara Burdette is grateful for the garden. "It really adds to the library... the staff enjoys eating lunch out here, school groups use it... It's a valuable part of the library," she commented.

The library's garden is not only a good place to read a book, but some people enjoy it as a spot to sit and meditate for a few moments. She said people of all ages have been using the garden.

Although the library friends maintain the garden, on occasion, plants or money have been donated in honor or memory of certain individuals.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help with the garden should contact Wilkins at 540/943-4262.



Barbara Burdette, standing, director of the Augusta County Library, and Jean Wilkins, chairman of the Friends of the Augusta County Library Landscape Committee, pose in the reading garden at the Augusta County Library.

Photo by Vera Hailey

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Merry Christmas from all the Chittums!

Schoolhouse News

RHS gearing up for annual silent auction

By HEATHER CALDWELL

GREENVILLE — The Riverheads High School Photojournalism Class is holding its annual silent auction on Nov. 25 and 26 which will feature a variety of items to please every member of the family.

The response to the auction has been overwhelming. Generous area businesses have given items unselfishly. Selected yearbook/photojournalism students went store to store asking for donations, items, or gift certificates. Area businesses

said they had been "hit hard" the past couple of weeks from many other schools and charitable causes. Yet, they still gave with a cheerful smile.

Community, family members, and friends are encouraged to come to the auction and place bids. Advertisements will be aired on radio stations Star 94.3 FM and Dixie 1240 AM the week before the auction. RHS Senior Carrie Root said, "The silent auction is a good way to get Christmas gifts for friends."

Items for the auction include: Mary Ann Vessey prints, Susan Chiaramonte prints, El Puerto gift certificate, The Beverley Restaurant gift certificate, The Stock Exchange Deli gift certificate, Silver Linings gift certificate and many others. Also a Noah's Ark tea set and \$50 silver dresser set are included.

Many area craftsmen have given various figurines made out of wood and other materials. Things for the home or things just for fun — you can find it all at the RHS Silent Auction. —



Delanie Vessey and Jenny Roudabush hold the Vessey print which Delanie's mother donated to the Riverheads High School Silent Auction to be held Nov. 25 and 26 at the school.

RHS staff photo

Local craftsman creates 'Bison Bandanna'

By PENNY PLEMMONS

CRAFTON'S PARK — Because of the kindness and woodworking skills of Robert P. Wright, the sophomore class at Buffalo Gap High School has been able to raise funds and promote school spirit with an affordable and attractive neckerchief.

Dubbed, the Bison Bandanna, the neckwear sports the school colors of black and gold and has as its centerpiece, Gap's mascot, a wooden bison designed and created by Wright.

The 81-year-old retired sheet metal draftsman and architectural designer donated his time as a "favor" to the high school.

"My wife and I attend Hebron Presbyterian Church and a lot of our young people go to Buffalo Gap," Wright said.

In order to make the wooden bison, Wright cut a single bison shaped pattern out of masonite to use as a template on a pine board.

"I can get 68 bison from one six-foot board," he commented.

He used a drill press to bore a hole through the length of the bison and then adroitly eased a scroll saw in and around curves to cut the actual shape from the wood. After a little sanding the completed wooden bison stands three and a half inches long and is a half inch thick. "It takes me about an hour to do six bison from start to finish," he said. Wright has donated 176 wooden bison to the sophomore class and is willing to do more if needed.

According to Sophomore class advisor, Linda Hickey, the wooden bison are just one example of

Wright's generosity. Last year he volunteered his time to carve out 400 small crosses to serve as a reminder of Lent. "The sophomore class is indebted to Mr. Wright," stated Linda. "We appreciate his support and commitment to our youth." The cost of the Bison Bandanna is \$10 and can be obtained

by calling Buffalo Gap High School. The proceeds go directly to the sophomore class and help offset prom and graduation expenses.

Other hand-crafted items by Wright can be found in the family business, Busy B Crafts & Friends, located inside the antique mall in Stuarts Draft. —



Buddy Wright wears one of the Bison Bandannas for which her husband Robert crafted the wooden bison. The neckerchiefs are being sold by Buffalo Gap High School's sophomore class as a fund-raising project.

Photo by Penny Plemmons

See you at the pole

By LAURYN PLEMMONS

SWOOP — Buffalo Gap High School students gathered around the school's flag pole on Sept. 18 to pray for their school, teachers, friends, families, government and most importantly for the safety of driving students. Fifteen students met at 7:30 a.m. to take part in the event called, "See You At the Pole." (SYATP)

"It was a great experience, and I hope that Gap will continue to have a "See You At the Pole" event in years to come," said sophomore Winter Rogers.

To advertise the time of prayer, students placed posters in strategic places around the school and made several announcements over the school's public address system.

"SYATP took great courage and

boldness, and I'm glad that Gap students have what it takes to pray out loud and in front of their peers," said sophomore Dustin Wright.

SYATP began in 1990 when several high school students in Texas used their school's flag pole as a rallying point to pray for their school and nation. As the report of this meeting rippled throughout the state, other students were challenged to do the same and on Sept. 12, 1990, 45,000 students met the challenge.

Various Christian organizations caught hold of the idea and began promoting the event nationally. Since its inception, the event has grown at an overwhelming pace.

For Gap students, See You At the Pole was an attempt to seek God's direction and to ask for His power to make a difference at the school, said participants. —

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Verona

Gap students seeing results of long renovation process

By LAURYN PLEMMONS

SWOOP—Slowly but steadily, Buffalo Gap High School is finally turning into the new improved building to which everyone is looking forward.

The most drastic change inside, so far, is the cafeteria. It has been totally reconstructed, with new paint and new tile. The office has also taken on a new look with new

carpet, counters, and a fresh coat of gray paint. A comfortable lounge has been included for the teachers' convenience. New doors and windows have been installed throughout the school. Along with a new coat of paint to the lockers and walls, Gap has received new electrical wiring, plumbing, central heating, and air conditioning.

The art room is one of the few rooms that is completely finished.

Everything in the room is painted purple which the art teacher, Ms. Ailer, says is to her liking.

The structure for the new gym and new classrooms has been completed. Construction crews are working frantically to have the new college-size gym ready for the boy's basketball season.

Quite a few classrooms have yet to be remodeled. Builders are working day and night to get this job

done. The elevator and the awning over the front of the school have yet to be installed.

During spirit week, students had the chance to dress like their tool-toting friends. The majority of students sported dirty old jeans, flannel shirts, muddy boots, and a handy tool belt.

The sights and sounds of construction have yet to cease. It seems as though the Nielsen Con-

struction Company has taken the school captive. After a year of working, the deafening sound of the jackhammer can still be heard just down the hall, and the sight of orange mud still surrounds the school. For many students, it is still a challenge to figure out where their classes have been moved.

Let's face it, for Buffalo Gap students, construction has become a way of life. —

RHS Geology Club prepares for Galapagos, Andes trips

By JENNY ROUDABUSH

GREENVILLE—This school year the Riverheads Geology Club is preparing to take its annual Galapagos trip in June. This is the most popular trip at Riverheads.

The past four years, the limit of 20 people going on the trip has been met. But this year, due to the rise in our school's population, the trip has been overbooked. Thirty-six people have put down their deposits. Due to this overwhelming

response, the first 20 will accompany RHS earth science teacher John Ludt to the Galapagos Islands and live on a 75-foot research boat for the first week of this excursion. The other 16 people will accompany Fort Defiance High School earth science teacher Robbie Killmon to the Andes.

During the second portion of the trip, they will be spending a week travelling in Ecuador. They will also visit villages famous for their quality leather goods, wood carvings and

bread dough figures. They will visit attractions like the equator and an eucalyptus forest. Waterfalls are also featured in this trip. After that, they'll try hiking the western slopes of the Andes. Lodging in haciendas which are rich in Ecuadorian culture and history will be an extra bonus to the young explorers.

Students preparing for this year's trip are looking forward to the excursion. And other students are waiting in line for the next one. ---

Activities under way for Riverheads FFA

By CARRIE HEIZER

GREENVILLE—The Riverheads FFA Chapter has started its activity-filled year.

Officers are Olen Swisher, president; Clay Fravel and Jake Shuey, co-vice presidents; David Bolin and Colby Irvine, co-secretaries; Jared Hemp and Justin Shomo, co-treasurers; Megan McIlwee, reporter; Carrie Heizer, sentinel; and Phillip Howell, student adviser.

Several members entered livestock projects in the Augusta

County Fair during summer vacation. The first activity for this school year was the crop and vegetable show which brought in over 900 entries despite the flooding from Hurricane Fran.

Swisher was elected federation reporter, and Shuey will serve as a federation director. They will both represent Riverheads on the county level. Craig Brown placed third while representing Riverheads in the Augusta Federation Tractor Operations Contest.

Ten freshmen attended the leadership workshop at Virginia Tech on Oct. 4. While there, they developed and sharpened their leadership skills. The chapter was well represented at the Virginia State Fair by entering 15 shop projects, such as bale spears and unrollers, wood splitters, and scraper blades. These projects received eight firsts and seven seconds.

Members entered a float in Riverheads' 1996 Homecoming game parade and won first place. The chapter will be represented at the National FFA convention in Kansas City, Nov. 12-17, by Swisher, Shuey, Fravel, Howell and Greg Buchanan.

Chapter members will be selling citrus fruit until Nov. 1. For information contact Gene McIlwee at Riverheads High School or an FFA member. ---

Tom Hanks shows off-camera talents in *That Thing You Do!*

By HANNAH SIMMONS

What's that thing Tom Hanks does? He makes his debut as the writer and director of *That Thing You Do!*, the new hit film at the Bijou.

This friendly, feel-good flick follows a small town garage band—the One-ders (pronounced Wonders) as it goes big time with a hit song.

The band plays a small gig. A disc jockey hears them and offers to be their manager. He takes them to a big shot Play-Ton Records representative played by Hanks. Their song, "That Thing You Do," climbs higher and higher on the music charts, until it is in the top ten songs.

The dreams of fortunes, fame, and stardom rest on their single hit and celebrity eludes the One-ders.

Never fear. Hanks (*Forrest Gump*, *Apollo 13*) won't let you down with a One-der-ful story that ends badly. The actors — Tom Everett Scott, Jonathan Schaech, Ethan Embry and Steve Zahn — playing the four band characters are relatively unknown on the big screen, but they turn in excel-

lent performances. Unlike their band counterparts, you will be hearing more from these actors.

Tom Everett Scott is a deadringer for Tom Hanks and actor Kirk Cameron has all the right ingredients for a teen heart-throb. Scott's character in this flick brings to mind Hanks' character in *Big* — goofy, awkward, and just plain lovable.

The cast is capped off with rising star Liv Tyler (*Silent Fall*), who is Jimmy's girl Faye.

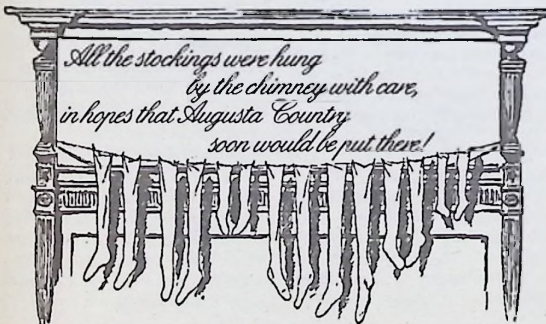
Tyler's character is not strong or one she could sink her teeth into, but she turns Faye into a loving innocent. To give credit to Tyler's acting ability, she makes the most of not too much of a role.

The plot of *That Thing You Do!* is predictable as do-wa-do-wa and sha-na-na-na. It's not deep, and it takes a while for the plot to develop.

Still you may not want to miss this one. The film is good, the music is good, the acting is good.

This is definitely a friendly movie for friendly people.

Hannah gives *That Thing You Do!* two-and-a-half bananas. The movie is rated PG. —



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The Hitching Post

Trail ride-a-thon benefits financially troubled therapeutic riding center

By BETH GREENAWALT

TIMBERVILLE—Ray Smith of Singers Glen and Glenwood Reubush of Linville remember the first Ride-A-Thon to benefit the Shenandoah Center for Therapeutic Riding.

"It was in November over on Massanutten Mountain, and it was so cold, so windy, that day!" recalls Smith of the event 14 (or was it 15?) years ago.

Five horseback riders had shown up, two of whom turned back halfway. Smith and Reubush — with his three-year-old granddaughter, Kelly Shipp, in front of him — were the only ones to complete the 10-mile ride. They netted a total of \$109 for the non-profit center, now located in Port Republic.

"This ride's come a long way," says Smith.

Since that year, the event has been hosted by Chick and Betty Wine of Willow Spring Farm in Timberville, usually on the first weekend in October.

The ride has grown into a well-established event that has won the national Rhulin award six years in a row. From a high some years ago of 188 riders at one time (over 300 for the weekend,) the two-day event has settled down to an average of 140 riders altogether.

Riders have the choice of riding 10 or 20 miles Saturday morning, with more 10-mile rides on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morn-

ing. "Sunday's always the bigger crowd," says Gary Haltermann of Singers Glen, who has taken part in the Ride-A-Thon for the past eight years. Participants are offered lunch halfway through the 20-mile ride, as well as a complimentary hot dog roast on Saturday and barbecued beef on Sunday upon their return. Everyone seemed to agree that the ride was "much better" since alcoholic beverages were banned at the event three years ago.

The name "Johnny Applesseed" was chosen in memory of John D. Chapman, former president of the Shenandoah center and Reubush's cousin.

"He had a son, Eric, in the (therapeutic riding) program. He's the one that got me interested. He drove for the Mason Dixon Truck-

ing Company for years and used the name Johnny Applesseed on the C.B.," says Reubush.

This year, with rain all but canceling the Sept. 28 afternoon ride, the numbers were down somewhat. Sunday drew a crowd of 61, while 40 came on Saturday. Five intrepid souls rode 10 miles through the afternoon's downpour, earning a little over \$200 in pledges. As a whole, the weekend event raised approximately \$7,000, compared with averages the past few years of \$12,000.

"This is our main fund-raising event of the year for the center," says Teresa Townsend of Timberville, an instructor in the therapeutic riding program and co-coordinator of the event. "Finances are especially important this year as we need to buy or

rent a farm before we can hold classes again." For the past year, the center has been unable to offer class sessions due to a lack of personnel and resources.

"We need help badly," says Reubush, a board member for the center who helps coordinate the Ride-A-Thon. "Not just money, but people to help and be on the board."

Many horsemen return year after year for the Ride-A-Thon. Smith, Reubush, and his granddaughter Kelly Shipp, the original trio, have ridden every year. This year, Shipp returned from college in Greenville, N.C. for the ride. Monroe Janney, 84, of Shenandoah County, also came back for another round.

"Seventy percent of the participants are repeat riders," says

See RIDE, page 21



Jeffrey Combs participates in a therapeutic riding session at the Shenandoah Center in Port Republic. The non-profit organization is currently searching for a new location.

I.B. smooths out the corners

As you know, I'm from Massachusetts and most of my training and background was in dressage and eventing. When I moved down to Virginia, I had to get used to things being done a little differently. One of the first things I found was that there were very few riding rings with CORNERS. I was introduced to the round pen.

Whenever you're introduced to something new, there's always a strong inclination to cling to the old. I have always worked in square or rectangular riding rings. Ovals and rounds were the most idiotic pens I'd ever seen. "Where are the corners? How's a horse supposed to bend properly?" There's no straight lines on the short end. I'd always looked at the railing coming at me in 90 degree corners as an "aid" to my turn. Round rings meant I never saw it coming. It was as if I was on an endless track that never "surprised" me anymore. Boring.

But then I started talking to some

horses that were trained in round pens, and they couldn't see the point in corners. I explained to them that corners determined the effectiveness of a horse's bend. The horse has to bend its body properly through the corners, not lean into them. The deeper a horse can go into a corner at different speeds, the more supple he is. But my round pen buddies thought that was funny. They were more interested in getting the job done than how fancy it looked. Reining, team penning, roping — East meets West — and we decided to see each other's point.

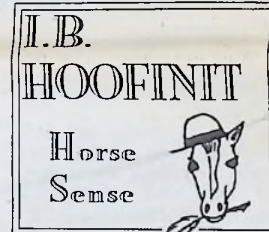
Dressage uses rectangular riding rings. We also use a lot of "schooling movements." Schooling movements are changes of rein. (much like a figure 8), circles, serpentines, halfturns and halfturns in reverse. The dressage ring uses letters at designated spots to determine the precision of each movement.

My friends tell me the round pen is for obedience training and transi-

tion work. Not too many schooling movements happen in a round pen. As a matter of fact most of the round pen and oval ring work really focuses on transitions, obedience, and manners. Schooling movements are not stressed as much.

I decided to try a round pen myself. It was approximately 60 feet across and perfectly round. My rider began to ask me to perform transition work — walk, trot, canter on command. As I went around and around, I recognized that it was a lot like a lunge line. Lunge line work is very popular where I am from. But also stressful on my head and neck because of the tension. I found the round pen elimi-

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



nated a lot of the stress of the lunge line, but I could work on circles and bending as well as my transitions in much the same way as with a lunge line. I found I began to enjoy it. But once again I had to relate it to the old in order to accept the new. Lunge line — round pen, now I can agree that it isn't as idiotic as I thought. —

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.

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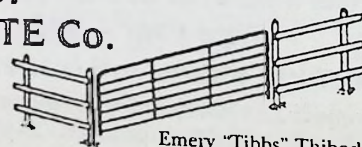
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Waynesboro rider excels with Tennessee Walkers

By CHRIS MARRS

WAYNESBORO — "I like Tennessee Walkers because of their excellent temperament, smooth ride, and they are very devoted to the owner or person who spends the most time with them," explains Kelly Fitzgerald, a 19-year-old competitive rider from Waynesboro Stables.

Kelly started riding nine years ago when her mom, Debbie, married Dwight Mongold, a trainer of Tennessee Walkers. She started showing six years ago for Jim Bevins, owner of the stable and horses. Showing Bevins' horses provided recognition for the barn, helped sell the horses, and also recognized the trainer, Dwight. Kelly also received her own recognition and awards.

Three horses, ridden and shown by Kelly, won championships from two major associations. In 1995, the Shenandoah Valley Horseman's Association year-end high-point awards went to Jim's Little Pistol, Juvenile EZ rider champion; to Bone Cave's Pride, Open EZ rider champion; and to Southbound Preacher, Juvenile Plantation Pleasure Champion. The Tri-State Walking Horse Association's 1995 high-point awards went to Jim's Little Pistol, Juvenile EZ Rider Reserve champion; Bone Cave's Pride, Open EZ Rider Reserve Champion; and Southbound Preacher, Juvenile Plantation Pleasure Reserve champion.

In 1994 Kelly was voted juvenile sportsman of the year by the Tri-State Walking Horse Association. In 1995 she won juvenile exhibitor

Pleasure Horse Division Champion. In 1993 she received the juvenile sportsman of the year from the Shenandoah Valley Horseman's Association. She is active in TSWHA, SVHA, the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' and Exhibitors' Association, and the American Walking Horse Association.

Kelly is in her second year at Virginia Tech studying animal science with an emphasis in large animals. When asked what she looks forward to in her near future, she smiles and begins to talk about her 7-year-old Tennessee Walker mare, "Souvenir's Magic Seal," having a foal in May. Next summer should be another busy and active one for Kelly, whether it's back in the show ring or in the barn with a new foal. —



Kelly Fitzgerald with "Pride's Bold Threat," one of the Tennessee Walkers she showed in 1993.

•Ride

Continued from page 20

Townsend. The ride attracts people from as far away as New Jersey and North Carolina, but most are from surrounding counties.

"It's my fourth or fifth year, I lose count," says Martha Long of Barboursville in Orange County. "I like to ride, I like the cause — I get to do two things at once. It's better than just donating money."

"I've been here about four years," says Ethan Shifflett of Stanardsville in Greene County. "I really enjoy it. If there's no bad luck, I plan to be back again next year."

Joy Haltermann of Singers

Glen has been part of the ride for the past seven years. She says: "We come every year. We enjoy riding, and we figure it's a good way to help the center out — to help the kids."

When operating, an average of 30 physically-challenged students from Page, Augusta, Shenandoah, and Albemarle counties, as well as from West Virginia and Charlottesville, benefit from weekly sessions in therapeutic riding at the center. Betty Wine, whose multi-handicapped grandson began riding with the center at the age of 10, says the program has greatly benefited Jeffrey.

"At first, when they put him on a horse they had to hold him on.

Now if they just hold him a bit on the leg, he can stay on by himself until they start trotting," she said.

Wine says the riding program is the best thing they've found to supplement Jeffrey's intensive home exercise program. "I'm real thrilled about it. He can walk a lot better now, and it's helped his overall development."

"We had taken him to quite a few different programs. They helped him but not as much as the riding did, because the riding gave him self confidence. He was so thrilled to be up on the horse. There's lots of things about the program that help them develop and realize that they can do something," she noted.

"He sure has missed the riding," Wine said. "I hope they can get the program started up again and going."

"I'm running into kids all the time who are saying, 'When are we going to ride again?'" says Townsend. "I have to say I don't know — that's the hardest thing." —



Riders start out on a 10-mile ride during a trail ride-athon held recently in Timberville. Pledges received by riders benefited the Shenandoah Center for Therapeutic Riding.

Photo by Beth Greenawalt



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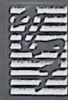
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Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin

October, 1996

Dear Maude,

Well, at long last our members of Congress have headed home to campaign. This year was so much different from the other election years I have spent in Washington. The last-minute activities for staff members were not as hectic as usual. During the last month of this session of Congress the members did not engage in their customary end of session flurry of activity, adding lots of special interest amendments to bills about completely unrelated issues which they knew would be passed. Instead they passed only a few necessary bills, (one, of course, to keep the government in operation until they get back, and with less attention being focused on them, add those special things to some new unrelated bill.) But now, after making those final appeals to the lobbyists and corporations for money, they have gone back home. It seems so quiet! Human nature is indeed fickle — for we love to complain about all of the work the members of Congress cause us when they are here, and then once they leave we complain again about having nothing to do!

In every office, however, from now until the final election results are in, workers will be discussing and analyzing the previous day's news regarding the presidential campaign as well as the local ones which interest them. With the early polls close, there are daily discussions about what one candidate or the other needed to do, what things would harm each campaign, what last-minute media attacks are rumored to be in the plans. As is always the custom, each side says it expects to win and are equally afraid they may not, but can not let their fears be detected. Many people I talk to seem to think that the election will be closer than some of the polls show.

As all of the candidates continue to promise us all sorts of things or come up with wonderful ideas on ways to make everything better, (most of which they might never get the chance to accomplish,) the exciting thing is that all of us who vote are really the ones with the power. We can vote them in, and we can vote them out. And as the voters become more vocal about their needs and informed on the issues, the candidates are faced with the unfamiliar task before them of listening — not to themselves talking — but to the voters talking. One of my friends here in Washington said the other day that it was so boring, and almost all of the candidates were saying the same things that he was not even going to vote. I let him have it. He has always been a bit of a "I-could-have-done-it-better" sort of person. I told him that if he did not vote I had better not hear him open his mouth about what is wrong with this country during the next four years. If you don't vote, you have no right to complain! Do you realize what it would do for this country if everyone who complains would go and vote and take part in the governmental process? We might have a little different activity on Capitol Hill!

Regardless of what many people think, those letters to your congressman do count, perhaps not as much as we might like, but they do. On any controversial issue before Congress, most of the offices have some staff member who keeps up with the correspondence which comes in on those issues, and the member will use that as one of his or her guidelines on how to vote.

But while they are all gone, we have this wonderful free time, and of course you know what I do on my lunch break. I cannot believe that my wardrobe is in such sorry shape. All of my suits have short skirts or pants, and this year the only thing to be seen in is long slinky skirt. Well, with absolutely not a one to my name I plan to have a glorious time buying lots of them. But I know that with my luck all the great skirts I find will not match any of the tops I



A bleeding heart

When Owen McDowell was 12 years old he watched his father die. It was an accident; both the death and Owen's participation in it. It wasn't until many years later that Owen came to the belief of his Scottish ancestors that there are no accidents. All things, whether for good or ill, occur according to a vast holy plan that always exceeds our understanding.

This belief gave Owen a tranquil mind and a large capacity to live with what he could not understand, including his father's death. This humility in the face of the unknown resulted in a self-deprecating sense of humor. All this came much later though, after much suffering.

On the day that it happened, Owen was a small boy not given to grand thoughts. What he experienced was a cruel accident without any purpose except to inflict a wound that he could never heal.

The morning began like every other morning. When Owen's father left the house just after sunrise, he looked like he did every morning dressed in a flannel shirt and denim overalls, his hair tousled, and the flesh sagging under his eyes. Owen ate the breakfast his mother made for him — two eggs, two slices of bacon, toast and apple juice. He walked to school. Nothing unusual. In fact, when he thought about it, which he often did, he was struck by the ordinariness of it all.

"My daddy died on an ordinary day, when no one expected it." That's the way he once put it to his daughter Ruth Anne as they stood with other kids waiting for the bus that would take them on an elementary school field trip. "So, honey, that means anything can happen any time, and especially when you least expect it. I want you to know I love you."

Owen didn't mean to frighten his little girl or plant morbid thoughts in her tender mind. It was just that the thought of something unexpected happening to the people he loved haunted him as he tended the fields in solitude. (Ruth Anne later told her father that what he said ruined her field trip, because she couldn't stand the fear of worrying about what might happen.)

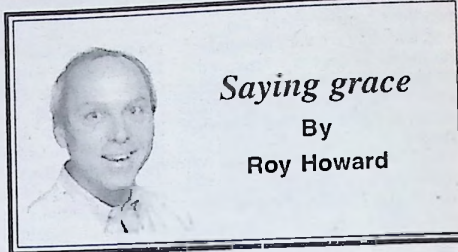
When Owen came home from school he said hello to his mother, grabbed an apple from a bowl on the kitchen table and went out the door to help his father. He walked down the lane behind the house and crossed into the field. Usually he could find his daddy immediately; not this time. He crossed one field, then walked over a hill into another before he saw the tractor in the distance. It took him a few seconds to realize that the tractor didn't look right. It had turned over. "Where's Daddy?" Owen could feel panic surging through him as he ran toward the overturned tractor. "Daddy!" he screamed from a hundred yards away. No answer. "Daddy! Where are you?" Still no answer. When Owen reached the tractor he was out of breath and nearly out of his mind. Then came the dreadful sound that he will remember for the rest of his life: his father's strong voice, now a whisper rose from under the tractor. "Help me, son. Help me."

The sight of his father, blood dripping from the corner of his mouth, pinned underneath the huge tractor overwhelmed Owen. Sobbing, Owen put his hands against the hot tractor and pushed hard. He stumbled back, then pushed hard again, screaming. He slammed his body again and again, recklessly throwing himself against the tractor. Too much was happening too fast. His father whispered, "Owen, stop. It's okay. Now, go get your mother. Quick, go get help."

But Owen couldn't bring himself to leave his father. His

already have, so I will be looking for new sweaters and blouses as well, and then who knows if my coat will be the right length or color or if any of my shoes will match, or... Oh what fun I am going to have!!

There has been talk of a few parties in the works — nothing like those of years back, of course, since those annoying gift limits make it difficult for the party givers with money to invite the hill staffers. But now that the reality of those regulations is sinking in, most of us have decided that if the lobbyists can't give free parties for us to attend, then we will just have to give our own. Two of my friends are planning a knock-out Halloween party.



Saying grace

By

Roy Howard

arms were throbbing. "I can't go. I can't. I won't leave you."

Owen squeezed his body underneath his father's back until his head and shoulders came to rest in Owen's lap. Blood trickled onto his jeans. Owen placed his small hand over the wound trying to stop the blood flowing from his father's head. His voice now thin as air: "Owen, get help ... I love you.... son ... tell your mother... I love her."

All Owen wanted to do was hold his father. "Daddy, I can't leave you. I can't."

The blood flowing from his father's head, covering his lap, brought to his mind a hymn his Grandmother McDowell taught him. When he was younger, she would rock him in her lap and sing loudly in soaring voice. "There's power, power, wonder working power in the blood of the lamb; there's power, power, wonder working power in the precious blood of the lamb."

Owen closed his eyes, wrapped his arms around his father's bloody shoulders, put his hands on his chest and sang through his tears.

The sun was down. It was nearly dark when Uncle Tom and his sister, Betsy, Owen's mother, found the two of them. Owen was rocking his father in his blood-drenched lap, eyes closed, singing wildly at the top of his tiny voice: "There's power, power, wonder working power in the blood of the lamb; There's power, power, wonder working power in the precious blood of the lamb." He didn't notice when his mother and uncle arrived nor did he know how much time had passed. Owen only knew that his father was no longer whimpering.

At the funeral Owen sat between his mother and Grandmother McDowell, alternately resting his head against their soft shoulders. He had never been to a funeral before. Uncle Tom, who told him to be a man and not to cry, was sitting next to his mother. Owen noticed tears coming down his face.

The minister's words all ran together, rolling over him, making no sense at all until he said the blood of Jesus covers all our sins once and forever. When Owen heard this, his heart ripped wide open. He felt the blood gush out of his wounded soul and he imagined Jesus' blood covering him just like his father's blood covered him by the tractor. He desperately wanted to hold his father in his arms again and never let him go. This yearning threatened to burst forth, but Owen bit down hard on his lip holding back his tears like his Uncle Tom had told him to do. Owen closed his eyes, put his hands over his ears and stopped listening. It was over.

After the death, Owen worked beside his Uncle Tom every day, early in the morning and after school until dark. When he finished school, he worked even harder. Somedays he imagined his father standing next to him in the field. In his absence, his heart remained an open, aching wound. But Owen let no one near it, not even himself, until he met a young, outspoken teacher named Esther Lyles. She changed everything. —

Guess I had better go out and get together a great costume, as well as look for a new party dress while I am shopping for all those skirts.

But back at the offices, the climate in D.C. is one of wait and watch — after the last election and so many changes, no one feels completely secure, for we know now that anything could happen. Even Dylan is getting excited about being able to come back to Washington to work — it looks as if his candidate may win if everyone they are counting on to vote for him does. But until then I'm off for the shops on Connecticut Avenue to buy new clothes!

Love to all at home, LuLu

Looking back at the 1996 gardening year

Nothing much happened in Middlebrook this week, except they rotated the stock down at the hardware store — out with the grass string trimmers and in with the rakes and snow scoops.

And then, of course, wood stoves across the Valley were cleaned out, fired up, and hovered over as cold weather settled in for the winter. The onslaught of cold nights and frosty morns was a definite sign of the end of yet another gardening year.

Here at Bittersweet Farmstead, we proclaim this as one of the best gardening seasons ever! Except for two minor exceptions (a cool spring and tropical storm Fran), it would have been perfect. Precipitation was more than adequate, bugs seemed to be less vigorous than in the past, and our efforts at enriching the soil last year paid off big time.

Some of the vegetable success stories we had this year included:

***Jersey Supermale asparagus** — We prepared deep trenches and enriched the soil with leaf compost in late March, planted the asparagus crowns in mid-April, and fertilized with aged chicken house litter in mid June. The plants took off and produced tall, rich green ferns so vigorous that we can hardly wait until next spring to harvest those tender and tasty young spears.

***Tye spinach** — Again, this variety proved to be a superb performer all spring and lasted well into July. With the cool spring, it just grew and grew. We could pick as much as we wanted every five days or so.

***Blue Clarage corn** — This is not a sweet corn, but a dent corn. The variety is an heirloom that dates many generations back and was hard to locate (we had to pay \$4 an ounce via mail order). The stand of corn was some-

what non-uniform; however, the ears filled out very well with deep blue kernels which we intend to grind into corn meal and make blue tortilla chips and blue corn meal muffins. This variety of corn is open-pollinated, so we saved some seed (a lot) to plant next year.

***Sugar Buns and Silver Queen corn** — As always, these two varieties performed like the proven sweet corns they are. Sugar Buns is yellow and early (70 days), while Silver Queen is white and late (91 days). Every time I open the freezer and see those ears of sweet and savory satisfaction, I holler up from the cellar to Sheila and ask "Hey! What's for dinner tonight?"

***Oregon Giant snow peas** — The first green produce of the season, this was a kitchen favorite at our house and very well-liked with our customers at the farmer's market.

***Garlic** — This was actually planted last gardening season (1995), but harvested in June of this year. We tried three varieties, and all turned out admirably. There is nothing like cooking with fresh garlic, as opposed to using that old dried-up California stuff. I heartily recommend Mild French Silverskin, Spanish Roja, and Elephant garlic. Some of the not-so-successful gardening efforts this year were:

***Ashworth corn** — This is an heirloom yellow sweet corn for which we had high hopes; however, it appeared to be like a magnet to corn earworms, which devastated the crop. Maybe it was because this is such an early corn (69 days) that it attracted the insects more than our other sweet corn plots. Oh well. The chickens loved it!

***Any variety of spring broccoli** — Try as we might, we just haven't had any luck with our broccoli transplants in the spring. Every deer, bird, groundhog, and

other leaf eating animal in the valley seems to stand in line to see who can eat our young broccoli plants first. Fall planted broccoli is doing quite well, though.

***Any variety of spring cabbage** — ditto.

***Annie Oakley okra** — Another crop for which we had high hopes, but with the late arriving spring and cool summer, the okra just seemed to sit there and say, "Hey! When are we going to have some hot weather around here? This is getting ridiculous!" Oh well, our love for fried okra means we simply must try again next year.

Finally, let's briefly discuss what we should be doing in our garden before really cold weather arrives on the scene.

Our first concern is for the soil, which is the entire basis for a good garden. Insure that you do not leave the topsoil bare through the winter. Cover it with a planted cover crop (annual ryegrass, oats, or vetch), a thick layer of straw or autumn leaves, or something like black plastic. The earthworms will really appreciate it come January! This



The Garden Path

By
Jeff Ishee

also prevents heaving of the soil via continual freezing and thawing.

Clean up old plant debris in the garden and add it to your compost pile. If you leave dead plants in the garden all winter (like corn stalks), they will become home to a legion of harmful insects. Next spring will bring an explosion of these insects as they come out of dormancy and start reproducing with... well, spring fever! Come the end of this month, forget about your garden and stay close to that wood stove. Oh yes, keep an eye out for the mail carrier. It won't be long until those seed catalogs start rolling in! —

•Capsule

Continued from page 11

Mrs. Lipscomb unsealed the box's contents recently, they were enlightened and reminded of the past. They also learned a lot more about that "very daring act" of the 1900 building committee which asked Col. R.A. Marr, an architect and professor at Virginia Military Institute, to draw up plans for the building expansion and to offer an estimate on the cost.

Marr's estimate of \$2,300 appeared reasonable to the committee, but many people among the congregation were disheartened when the contractors' bids came in at nearly \$2,000 more than the estimate. Facing the difficult task of either abandoning the idea of expansion or raising additional funds, Timber Ridge pastor, Mr. Mauze, determined to meet the congregation and ask them for the additional money. He summoned the members into the sanctuary, and "after two hours of the hardest work in my life," the sum was raised.

With the hard part behind them, the church was quickly renovated and a 1900 dedication ceremony was held to celebrate the sanctuary's completion. According to historians, the 1900 gathering of Timber Ridge members was the last big celebration where everyone arrived in horse-drawn buggies. Those people who came saw the cornerstone, which had been the idea of building

committee member Sterrett, placed on the outer wall of the wing. The stone weighs more than a quarter of a ton, and was purchased for the high price of \$12.50.

What secrets did the box yield to the late 20th century onlookers?

At least 33 items of paper including a Bible, a sermon, the June 28, 1900 copy of the Rockbridge County News, a list of Timber Ridge Sunday School scholars, a copy of the Timber Ridge Centennial address delivered in Oct. 1856, several Presbyterian newspapers, as well as several coins were removed from the box which was chock full of artifacts.

Dolly Straub was particularly pleased when she pulled a copy of "The Earnest Worker" from the box. She remembered her mother often walked the backroads of Rockbridge County to deliver the religious magazine to homes in need. "Later after she got a horse and buggy, she delivered it that way," recalled Mrs. Straub. "Whenever you saw dirt flying, you knew it was Mama either coming or going!"

For now the Timber Ridge treasure is carefully spread out on a table in the church library. After analysis of the contents, the time capsule will be refilled, items from the 1996 era added, and the cornerstone's contents placed back in the niche to wait for another generation seeking Timber Ridge's historical treasure. —

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Driving

Continued from page 9

"Children," "Pedestrians," "Cattle," and "Sheep." These were all very friendly signs with the silhouettes of images resembling benign extraterrestrial beings. But our favorite sign was one without any accompanying verbiage: just a car driving off a ramp into the water. Clearly something we did not want to do.

Most of the signs were pictures only, but those that had words often required further interpretation as well. Some signs warned of RAMPs (speed bumps), while others tipped us off to GRIDS (cattle guards). One of the most interesting was one we saw along the Antrim coast. It said: "CAUTION, ROAD MAY SUDDENLY SUBSIDE." Unfortunately, we already knew the meaning of that sign, but there had been no such warning when we experienced it a week earlier.

I speak of what is now referred to as the "hedge incident," in our travel

log. Remember the description of twisting country roads bordered very tightly on each side by ditches and big green bushy hedges?

We were driving along one such lane, making sure that we kept far left in order to avoid hitting oncoming traffic on what was a very narrow road when the road suddenly (and without warning from any sign) subsided. In other words, a chunk of the pavement was just gone. The lack of pavement was a problem, solved only by the left side of the car dropping down into the ditch and then plowing and rocking along through the hedge for a number of yards.

When we finally halted, the left side of the car looked like an army soldier in full camouflage with bits of twigs and bushes sticking out from all parts. The only real damage, however, was to the left front tire which had taken the brunt of the trip through the ditch and hedge. With the help of two older

gentlemen who kindly left their hurling match which they were watching on television and two women who were driving by, we were able to put the spare on and proceed to our night's destination.

There, we explained our predicament to friends who contacted more friends who were mechanics. Pleading the case of crazy Americans who don't know how to drive on the left side of the road (it was a Sunday evening with a Monday holiday coming up) they fixed the tire and wheel which needed a bit of reshaping.

Although he tried not to laugh, the teen-age boy who did a lovely repair job on the car was surely doing a lot of thinking about Americans who drive on the "wrong" side of the road and then are thrown for a loop when they come to Ireland and are forced to drive on the "right" side of the road. Or is that the "left" side of the road? Oh well, in Ireland, "left" is "right." —

Bullets

Continued from page 8

been a competition alley for at least 150 years. In fact, later research on the subject corroborated their memories.

References to the game of bullets can be found all over Ireland as early as 1714 when the Common Council of Londonderry banned the playing of the game "on the ramparts of the walls," or "in the Market House," under threat of a five shilling fine. The reason for the proclamation was that the game has always, and still does, invite gambling. Technically, the game is still illegal in Ireland, but in more recent years constables simply wink at the law. Scores are reported in the press and national contests are televised.

Although the game of road bowls survives in just two counties today, it was once played in most of Ireland's counties. Its origins are uncertain, but the game appears to have crossed into both Protestant and Catholic populations, and was most prevalent in communities of linen weavers. Armagh and Cork are traditionally strong linen-weaving areas, leading to the theory that the game may have been introduced there from 17th century immigrant weavers who brought the game from Scotland and England.

Whatever its origins, the game was persistent among the common folk of Ireland and would probably have been familiar to Shenandoah Valley residents who emigrated from Ireland. In County Londonderry, a region of Ulster (Northern Ireland) which sent many settlers to Virginia, it was observed in the 1830s that: "A play called 'bullet' is practiced in the summer by the parishioners. The bullet is of lead, from 1 and three-quarter to 2 pounds weight, and is hurled along some level road for a wager of either money or whiskey upon the best throw."

The game that we followed as it

progressed nearly a mile up the road would best be described as a loosely organized group of men moving up a lane. The group ranged in age from youngsters of around 10 years of age to men obviously in their 70s. The middle age men and teenagers were the competitors on this day although modern competitions include a range of age groups and even women. Because technique is as important as brute strength, men in their 60s and 70s can still be quite competitive.

On this day the older men were spotters and advice givers, carrying long pointed umbrellas which they used to mark the point where a bullet skidded off the road and into the underbrush. At other times the umbrellas served to emphasize an explanation of throwing technique or simply to lean on while the play progressed.

The only real danger in the game was stepping in front of a hurled bullet, so the non-competitors assumed the responsibility of warning pedestrians and passing cars.

According to both the Armagh players and further research, the techniques of the players from Armagh and Cork are quite different. Armagh players palm the bullet and then move back 30 yards or so behind the butt, or the tuft of grass, which has been placed in the road to mark where the iron ball stopped. The player then runs very quickly and releases the ball with a leap combined with a fast underarm throw. Technically he must land behind the butt after releasing the bullet, but this is a point that is stretched. "Ah, they take full advantage and sometimes a little bit more!" knowingly noted one of our escorts about the approach and landing point of the thrower.

The iron ball thrown by an Armagh player travels only 20 or 30 yards in the air, but hits the road so hard and fast that it zips along for several hundred more yards, careening off pavement and any

obstacles in its path. A good throw draws a string of comments from the crowd. "That was a real silky one," offers one man after the player's throw traveled long and far up the middle of the road.

A score in Cork would have a different look. The competitors have a shorter approach, but throw the bullet with a 360-degree arm swing. The bullet travels further in the air, landing 60 to 80 yards away before hitting the ground and rolling. Cork players negotiate the bends in the road by lofting the ball over, while Armagh players prefer to add a spin to the release to send the bullet zipping around a corner.

No matter the technique, the thrower uses a "handler" or "shower" to check out the road ahead and offer advice much like a golf caddy does.

Legends naturally surround the game, and there are many songs and stories about bullet throwers from years past. There was the famous "Red" Joe McVeigh who hailed from Armagh and traveled to Cork to defeat the famous Mick Barry in 1956. Cork has had the most recent larger-than-life bullet throwing hero in the person of Danny McParland who reigned in the 1950s and 1960s and still holds the record for the longest throw on the old Moy road — 512 yards!

Road bowls is experiencing something a revival these days and is being reintroduced in areas outside of Cork and Armagh. This is good and bad. Although it guarantees the continuance of an old folk game, regulation and publicity often change the character of folkways. All of this, of course, was beyond the concern of the Navan club we followed on that warm summer day.

We finally left the group when a zigzagging bullet plunged into the roadside hedge and was temporarily lost. "They'll be hunting there half an hour looking for it," said one of our escorts, "but it's all part of the game." —

4-H Livestock Club busy with projects

By CARRIE HEIZER

MIDDLEBROOK -- The Middlebrook 4-H Livestock Club met Sept. 26 at the Middlebrook Firehouse.

The past year was very busy with three fundraisers. Candy Easter eggs were sold, and the club had a food booth at the Tractor Supply Store open house.

The biggest and most successful project was the food booth at the Augusta County Fair which the club plans to do again next year. Leaders and members put a lot of effort into this project.

Club members are discussing the

possibility of purchasing several items for the club, one of them being the 4-H flag ensemble. One member's family purchased hats with the club name and the 4-H symbol.

The club is in the process of applying for a charter chapter. A Cloverbud group to be led by Susan Croft has been started.

In September, members took cattle and sheep to the Virginia State Fair. Next month members will visit farms to learn what to look for when picking market steers to show.

The club will continue to meet at the Middlebrook Firehouse on the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. ---

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