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"FRIENDLY NEWS FOR FRIENDLY PEOPLE"

# Augusta Country

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## EXCLUSIVE REPORT



# Santa opens Waynesboro workshop

*Elves work around the  
clock to meet deadline*

By NANCY SORRELLS

WAYNESBORO — In a stunning announcement yesterday, Santa Claus revealed that he has opened a workshop in Waynesboro.

Although city officials could not be reached for comment, members of Waynesboro Church of the Brethren confirmed that

the jolly old elf himself has recruited church members to his legion of elves.

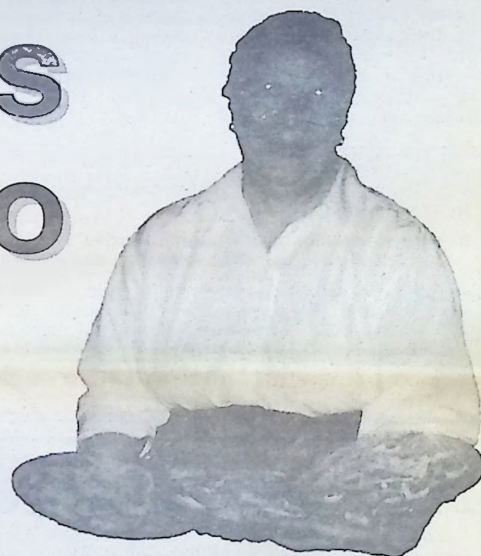
It may not be the North Pole, but the quantity of products crafted, baked, sewn and built by the congregation of the Waynesboro Church of the Brethren certainly couldn't be much below the production level achieved by St. Nick's elfin work crew. And unlike Santa's North Pole crew that is working toward a Dec. 24 deadline, Waynesboro church members are on a much tighter schedule.

This year's worth of labor from the Waynesboro workshop must be ready for the church's fourth annual Christmas Cookie and Craft Bazaar Dec. 6 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wanda Garber, "elf in charge of cookie production" at Santa's Waynesboro Church of the

Brethren workshop, shows off some of the delectable items which will be for sale at a bazaar to be held Dec. 6 at the church.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells



The proceeds from the event, which will be held in the church's fellowship hall, go toward the church kitchen renovation as well as the National Youth Conference. The church is located at 364 Bridge Ave. in Waynesboro.

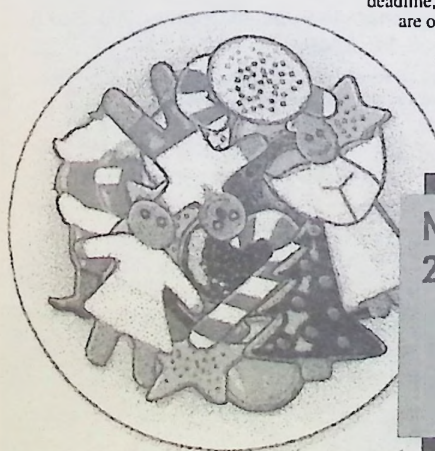
According to the Thelma Campbell and Anita Heatwole, elves in charge of total production, it has been the lure of the fresh-baked Christmas cookies which has drawn past customers to the sale. Santa's elves would certainly have to keep their ovens going 24 hours a day to turn out the 200 dozen or so cookies which are baked,

packaged and sold that day.

"All the church members, even the men, make the cookies. We make about 100 calls and most respond with two or three dozen cookies," said Wanda Garber, elf in charge of cookie production, of the logistics of filling five tables with cookies for sale. "The decorated Christmas cookies are a big seller, but we also have special diet cookies like low fat, and low cholesterol. One lady buys her cookies for the whole year and freezes them. All the cookies sell well," she added.

And as if that isn't enough to throw even the most well-intentioned Santa off his diet,

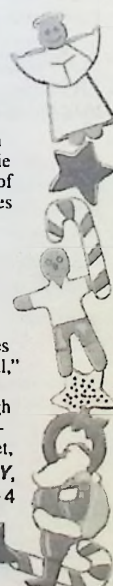
See **COVER STORY**,  
page 4



Mrs. Claus reveals secret to  
20-pound holiday weight gain:

*"It's not just a diet,  
it's a way of life!"*

See page 5 for complete details





We stay busy at *Augusta Country*. The writers and sales associates spend a lot of time each month gathering stories and advertisements to include in the newspaper. As busy as we are, we try to remember who we're working for — *Augusta Country's* readers.

It's easy to forget sometimes. We get wrapped up in stories we're writing or ads being designed and our focus gets a little fuzzy. But when the newspaper has been printed and mailed each

month, the goal of delivering an entertaining and — we hope — thoughtful product to readers has been accomplished once again.

# Thank you

Although we do not say it every month, we want readers to know the *Augusta Country* staff appreciates your support throughout the

year. Each subscriber plays an important part in *Augusta Country's* existence. For without readers, without an audience, there would be no purpose in publishing the newspaper.

Thank you, then, *Augusta Country* readers, for continuing to support this endeavor by subscribing, renewing your subscriptions, and sharing your newspaper with family and friends. Your comments and suggestions encourage the *Augusta Country* staff in their efforts to bring you stories about the lifestyle and heritage of Augusta County and surrounding areas.

Thanks also to businesses which support *Augusta Country* through their advertisements. The confidence they demonstrate in *Augusta*

*Country's* ability to deliver their message to readers plays a vital role in sustaining the newspaper.

It is during the final weeks of the year — perhaps more than any other time during the year — that we re-

fect on challenges met and goals achieved. But we also want to take this time to let readers and advertisers know that your support of *Augusta Country* is appreciated by each member of the newspaper's staff.

*From all of us at Augusta Country, we wish you joy and happiness this holiday season. May the New Year bring many blessings to you and your family.*

## Harrisonburg-Rockingham AARP to meet

MT. CRAWFORD — AARP Chapter 129 of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County will hold its monthly luncheon meeting at noon Dec. 6 at Evers Family Restaurant.

A program of music and carol

singing will be presented by the Bridgewater Village Choir. The meeting will also include the installation of officers for 1998.

All persons 50 or older are welcome. For information, call 540/828-7497. —

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## Middlebrook Club elects officers

By ROBERT GROGG

MIDDLEBROOK — The Middlebrook 4-H Livestock Club met recently and installed officers.

Serving terms of office for the 1997-98 club year are Carrie Heizer, president; Colby Irvine, vice president; Jonathan Coleman,

treasurer; Doug Grimm, secretary; Austin Johnston, parliamentarian; and Robert Grogg, reporter.

Burke Simmons of the Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau was guest speaker. He talked to 4-Hers about feeding and caring for their Market Animal Show project steers. —

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# Community Men's Chorus sings gospel music with class

By BETH GREENAWALT

They are farmers, builders, and engineers during the work week, but when the seven members of the Community Men's Chorus of Mt. Solon tune up, they can't hide their musical professionalism. Their smooth harmony resounds in a rich, mellow tone which pulsates through the building, filling it with warmth and a sound which rivals better known groups yet carries a flavor all its own.

During the past three years, the group has given more than 100 performances in Virginia, West Virginia, and Ohio.

"In the beginning, we sang at Sangersville, Parnassus, and Mossy Creek a lot — our home churches," laughs alto Rick Reeves. The chorus had its beginnings

in a hymn sing back in June 1994, when the Rev. Floetta Legg asked all the men in the audience to come up and sing. "I'd always wanted to get a men's group like this started," remembers lead singer Steve Garner. "So several of us started getting together."

Now they're singing at numerous church and community events, sometimes to audiences as large as 500 or 600. So far in 1997 they've performed at more than 50 events, ranging from churches, picnics, family reunions, Ruritan and Lions Clubs and nursing homes to the Augusta County Farm Bureau annual meeting, the Shenandoah Valley Cooperative annual staff Christmas banquet and the Central Valley Habitat for Humanity annual meeting. Upcoming engagements include Waynesboro

First Night, the Highland County Fair, and performances on radio stations in Hot Springs and Monterey in Virginia, and Dunmore, W.Va. Next year they've been invited to sing in Nashville.

"Mostly we have one engagement a weekend, and a lot of times one during the week as well," says lead singer Steve Garner, who handles the bookings. Some weekends the group gives three performances, with two in one day. "We sing for anyone who wants to hear us."

In addition, they practice one to three times a week. Despite their busy schedule, however, members say their families are very supportive.

"As far as us being gone anyway," laughs lead Larry Howdyshell. "Our wives are often our biggest critics. They don't mind telling us when we need to improve."

Often the spouses accompany the group on trips. Pianist Linda McNett's husband Doug would serve as bus driver — "If we had a bus," quips bass Myron Rummell. At present, members pack their equipment into a van and follow in cars. "Once we get all the equipment in, there's only room for the driver and one passenger."

Members of the group have had little formal musical training.

"Rick plays the harmonica, and I learned guitar," says Garner. But they all grew up singing hymns. Although they practice at Sangersville United Methodist, the chorus has members from Methodist, Brethren, and Presbyterian churches.

"We're well versed," says Reeves. "We hear a lot of good sermons — we do a lot of revivals."

"It's unique, to go around to the different kinds of churches," Howdyshell says.



Members of the Community Men's Chorus perform at Bridgewater Park during an August 1997 appearance.

"Some clap with every song, some clap at the end — and some don't do anything," says Garner. "You start skipping songs and thinking they don't like it and then at the end they come to you and say, 'We really enjoyed it.' The more they get into it, the more we do."

from Parnassus, Sangersville, Mossy Creek, Bridgewater and, of course, Mt. Solon. They resist the name "Mt. Solon Community Chorus," however, insisting, "We're everyone's community chorus."

Although they'll accept donations to cover costs, the group sings just because they enjoy it. "We meet a lot of real nice people,"

says McNett. "It really makes you feel good when people are clapping and enjoying it."

"Our theme is 'Don't quit your day job,'" jokes Reeves. "We just have a good time with each other, and we probably laugh more than we practice."

"Yeah, we could probably be pretty good if we spent more of the time actually practicing," chuckles tenor Frank Evers. "We all get along well."

"We have a good time when we practice and when we play, and people seem to enjoy us. They keep inviting us back, anyway," says Garner.

For booking information call or write Community Men's Chorus c/o Steve Garner, 944 George Walton's Road, Mt. Solon, Va. 22843, 540/350-2888. —

"Our wives are often our biggest critics. They don't mind telling us when we need to improve."

Larry Howdyshell  
Community Men's Chorus

The group sings for Methodists, Brethrens, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Baptists, Menonites "and regular old heathens," says bass Mark Crum. "We don't discriminate."

"Not as long as they'll listen or at least feed us," laughs Reeves.

Except for Garner, all the members grew up in the area, hailing



Members of the Community Men's Chorus include, from left, Mark Crum, Myron Rummel, Larry Howdyshell, Linda McNett, accompanist, Rick Reeves, Steve Garner, and Frank Evers.



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each customer who walks in will receive a "just-out-of-the-oven" cookie to munch on while shopping. "We will be baking cookies all morning," Garber explained, adding that the fellowship hall stage will also be decorated to look like a cafe where hot drinks and fresh-baked cookies will be served for a donation.

Cookies are far from the only product turned out of this holiday workshop. In fact, the church has a craft group that meets year round every Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon or 6 to 8 p.m. Occasionally the group also has a day-long work meeting as well.

**Elf Recruit Jordan Coiner, 11, holds a handmade American doll alongside some clothes which will be for sale at the annual Christmas Cookie and Craft Bazaar to be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 6 at Waynesboro Church of the Brethren.**

The goal of these elves could very well be "let nothing go unrecycled." They turn scraps of material into beautiful braided wool rugs, placemats and chair mats, ice cream containers become cloth-covered baskets, even a lowly piece of dried okra becomes a beautiful angel fit to hang on a Christmas tree.

One of the specialty items turned out by the group has been handmade braided wool rugs, placemats, and chair mats. This year, however, it looks like a blue Christmas — as in denim blue — is in the making. Although the traditional wool items will be offered for sale, the crafters discovered a new recycling item in the denim scraps from a North Carolina factory. When Ms. Heatwole

returned from the south with a pickup truck full of denim scraps and discards, the group went to work washing, trimming, pressing, cutting into strips, and rolling the yards of denim. "We probably washed 100 washer loads," Heatwole said.

Louise Vakil, elf in charge of denim production, pointed to a few items made with the scraps. The majority of



the blue material has been turned into strips for the braided rugs. She calculated that it takes 15 yards of the strips (and countless hours of work) to make a 5 x 7-foot oval rug. But they have also made vests, placemats, shop aprons, clocks, and a sewing organizer, all of which will be sold at the bazaar.

Another featured item this year will be clothing for the popular 18-inch American Girl dolls. This corner of the workshop was taken over by the head elves with Ms. Campbell sewing miniature outfits for the dolls and Ms.

Heatwole knitting them.

This year's bazaar will overflow with variety, noted the chairwomen, with more than 100 different people personally involved in making, baking, or creating. Even the pastor has gotten into the act and will be selling bagel slicers.

A handmade quilt will be offered through silent auction and a P. Buckley Moss print will be available as well. In fact, even Santa's elves could not have turned out more variety than this: tree ornaments, cloth books for toddlers, wooden articles, comforters, baskets, wreaths, hand-knit sweaters, teddy bears, oak quilt racks, and poinsettias to name just a few items.

The youth group has also become very involved in the bazaar and has sponsored the production of a church cookbook which will be offered for sale. Their table will feature ham biscuits and homemade candy. Much of the day's proceeds will go toward the National Youth Conference which is only held once every four years.

Yet another table squeezed into the bountiful room will have SERRV items, all hand crafts from Third World countries. "We consider this a

See **BAZAAR**, page 5

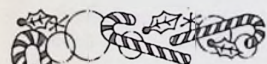


Thelma Campbell, left, and Anita Heatwole, "head elves in charge of total production," make their list and check it twice for items being prepared at Santa's Waynesboro workshop located in Waynesboro Church of the Brethren.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells



Elizabeth Palmer, one of the many members of Waynesboro Church of the Brethren who works in Santa's secret Waynesboro workshop, holds rolls of denim which will be braided into rugs.

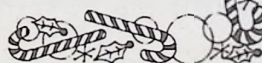


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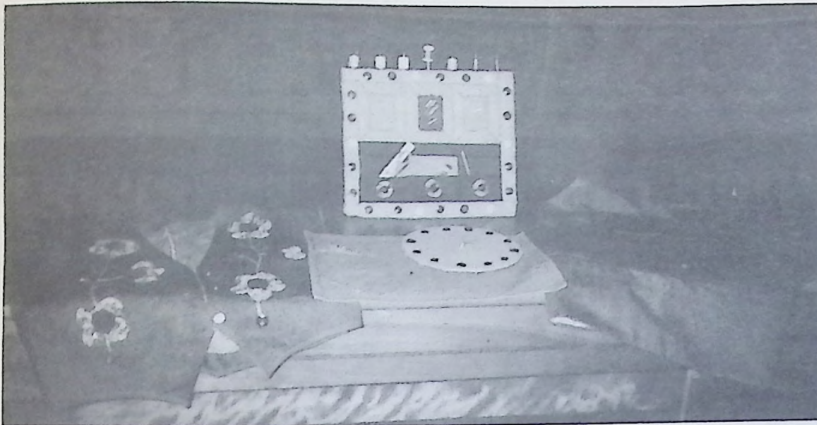
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This EXCLUSIVE hidden camera photo made by elves in Santa's secret shows just a few of the items being Waynesboro workshop.

## Bazaar

*Continued from page 4*  
mission project. Through the sales we are helping those who are trying to help themselves," noted the head elves.

Although this is only the fourth year for the bazaar, the head elves are enthusiastic about how fulfilling and productive the event has become.

"We were between pastors and needed something to do as a church," explained Ms. Heatwole of

the bazaar's beginnings. "Each church group took the idea and ran with it and it has grown and grown."

"This is really a total church project," added Ms. Campbell. "The whole church pitches in and everybody does their own thing so that it is not a burden on anybody."

Although the hustle and bustle and craftsmanship of the products at the bazaar do resemble Santa's workshop in many ways, there is one big difference. Elves work on orders

placed in advance with Santa making deliveries on Christmas Eve. In Waynesboro, you'll have to come to the workshop and choose from the myriad items filling the fellowship hall. The best thing to do is mark Dec. 6 on your calendar and then heed the advice of the head elves when they say, "COME EARLY!" And don't be surprised if you see a sleigh with eight tiny reindeer flying low over Waynesboro Church of the Brethren Dec. 6. —



Louise Vakil of Waynesboro Church of the Brethren shows off a braided denim rug and appliquéd vest and sweatshirt, all of which will be for sale Dec. 6 at the church's annual bazaar.

# Mrs. Claus: Gain 20 pounds and keep it on!

## AC staff report

Sure, everybody thinks Santa Claus has the hard job of delivering all those presents Christmas Eve. But Mrs. Claus is the one who really puts in the hours.

Every batch of cookies, every cheeseball, every bowl of egg nog made by Santa's elves has to be taste-tested before being delivered for holiday parties and family gatherings.

"It's not a diet, it's a way of life," Mrs. Claus said. "And the great

thing about it is, you can gain 20 pounds without even blinking. There are no pills, no food exchanges, no pre-packaged foods, no high protein drinks. It's just overeating — plain and simple."

Santa's better half says there's no easy way to do her job.

"It's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it," she said. "Imagine what would happen if we turned out a sugar cookie that wasn't sugary enough or a pecan roll that wasn't nutty enough.

We'd be out of business."

The busiest time of year for Mrs. Claus is from Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve. She said there are some backorders to catch up on between Christmas and New Year's.

But after Jan. 1, the elves' ovens pretty much come to a standstill.

"Things are pretty slow in January," she said. "There's so little being baked, sometimes I have to resort to Twinkies and HoHos to

keep my weight up."

Santa Claus credits Mrs. Claus with keeping all the holiday preparations on track.

"She goes like gangbusters," he said. "I couldn't do it without her." —

Here are two popular recipes taken from the Waynesboro Church of the Brethren's new cookbook. These items will be sold at the bazaar, but they're so good, you might want to make some more after you've gobbled down your purchase.

### Puppy Chow

2 sticks margarine  
1 c. peanut butter  
2 c. chocolate chips  
14 c. Rice Chex (one 12-oz. box)  
1 box 10x sugar (1 lb.)  
Melt margarine, peanut butter

and chocolate chips together and pour over Rice Chex. Stir gently to coat Chex. Put mixture in large plastic bag and shake with 10x sugar.

### Raisin Puffs

1 1/2 c. raisins  
1 c. water  
1 c. shortening  
1 1/2 c. white sugar  
2 eggs, slightly beaten  
3 1/2 c. sifted flour  
1/2 tsp. salt

1 tsp. soda  
1 tsp. vanilla

Cook raisins in water over moderate heat until all the water is absorbed. Set aside until fluffy. Sift flour with soda and salt. Add to creamed mixture with cooked raisins and vanilla. Mix well. Shape dough into small balls the size of walnuts. Roll each in granulated sugar. Place on greased baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees about 15 minutes. 6-8 dozen. —

Bring Augusta Country home for the holidays.  
See page 8 for details



## Old-Fashioned Christmas Greetings

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# Local men take to streets of N.Y.C. for marathon race

By SUE SIMMONS

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Perhaps you saw it on TV, read about it in the newspaper, or listened to it on radio — the New York City Marathon, 32,000 runners from all over the world snaking their way through the five boroughs of New York City.

While they weren't easy to pick out of the crowd, Ronnie Young and Johnny Sayers, two Augusta County men, joined the crowd of long-distance runners.

Actually, the marathon began for the two men last spring when a friend with whom they serve in the National Guard suggested they apply. In February, the two men sent off for an application which didn't arrive until May.

"Of the 35,000 slots, 10,000 are international runners and 10,000 come from the tri-state area. That leaves 10,000 places for anyone else," Sayers explained. "In addition, the Achilles Track Club for handicapped runners also participates."

Selection is made on a first-come, first-served basis.

Sayers and Young filled out and mailed their applications the day they received them — along with their \$100 entrance fees. In July they received notification that they had been selected and that they had to join the U.S. Track and Field As-

sociation in order to participate.

Given the fact that 60,000 applications poured in for the 10,000 slots, the two felt fortunate to have made the cut.

The race was scheduled for Nov. 2. The two runners and their wives left for New York City Oct. 31 intending to make an event of the trip. "Driving into New York City is a cinch," Sayers offered. "We got so excited about seeing the skyline, we missed the ramp," Young added, setting the record straight.

Once they had checked into their hotel rooms, the four headed to the New York Coliseum where all the participants got a picture ID, their number, and a T-shirt. An exposition of vendors also filled the hall. They returned the next morning at 6:30 a.m. to board buses that took runners to the race's starting line at Staten Island. After arriving at Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island at the entrance to the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, they were scanned in, fed and then left to wait for starting time.

Sayers wore his Buffalo Gap High School T-shirt and VMI hat hoping to attract the attention of any Shenandoah Valley participants. "Only a guy from Charlottesville said anything," he commented. "But several Japanese took my picture."

Sponsors provided food and drink as the 32,000 runners



John Sayers, left, and Ronnie Young look over coverage of the New York City Marathon in *The New York Times*. The two men

were among 32,000 runners who completed the 26-mile race recently.

Photo by Claude Simmons

amassed. "And they had what must have been the world's longest urinal," Young laughed, describing a six-inch PVC pipe cut in half measuring 380 feet long. The race began at 10:30. Post position was determined by each runner's average time and runners were lined up with the fastest in the front.

"For runners in the rear, it took up to 10 minutes to start," Young explained.

"There were 12,000 people in front of me and 18,000 behind me," Sayers said. Runners crossed the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. Normally closed to pedestrian traffic, hundreds of people enter the race just to walk across this bridge and then they quit the race.

"The course is not a flat course," Young says. "This bridge is the highest ascent at 274 feet."

After crossing the Verrazano, the course wound 12 miles through Brooklyn before it crossed the Pulaski

Bridge into Queens. After cutting through Queens, the Queensboro Bridge carried the runners into Manhattan, north into the Bronx for a mile and then back into Manhattan through Harlem, down Sixth Avenue and into Central Park and the finish line.

Crowds of people lined the route, but according to Sayers, they changed. "Brooklyn had a lot of working people. The crowds thinned out in Bedford-Stuyvesant, though. That's the only place I've ever seen a black-topped softball field," Young said. "Think about it."

Even Hasidic Jews came out to watch in the Williamsburg section, "but it was a more sedate crowd," according to the runners.

Of all the neighborhoods, Harlem gave the warmest welcome. A choir and a big "Welcome to Harlem" sign said it all. All was not smooth sailing however. It started raining about 10:30 and it stormed just after noon.

"It rained and it rained hard off and on," Young said. Then about noon there was thunder and lightning.

"It was strange. The buildings are so tall you couldn't see the lightning. Just the reflected light. It was so cold my lips turned purple," Young said.

The discomfort didn't last forever. At the finish, bands played and Sprint provided free long distance phone service for runners to call loved ones back home. That evening the racing association rented the Roseland nightclub on 52nd Street where "Boogie Nights" entertained as runners relaxed and watched video tapes of the race.

It seems like a lot of money, time and effort to run yourself ragged in a driving rain crushed by tens of thousands of people. But to a runner it's worth it. "We can't go play in a tennis tournament with a star," Sayers said. "But we got to run this race with the winner." —

## Greeks claim origins of marathon

In 490 B.C. the Persian King Darius II decided to attack the Greeks for an earlier transgression. The two armies met on the plains of Marathon. The Greeks were outnumbered two to one. Not waiting for the Persians to take the offensive, the Athenians struck. The Persians suffered a terrible defeat, losing 6,000 soldiers to 192 Greeks.

According to legend, a messenger named Pheidippides carried the news of the victory of the battle of Marathon back to Athens. Because Pheidippides had run 280 miles in four days, he barely managed to reach the city and deliver the message before he fell to the ground dead from exhaustion.

Ever since, people have used the word marathon to describe a long-distance race. —

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# Hefty purse awaits N.Y.C. marathon winners

By SUE SIMMONS

Had either Ronnie Young or Johnny Sayers won the New York City Marathon, they would have brought home a \$50,000 cash prize, a \$30,000 sports utility vehicle and a \$10,000 watch.

Only 600 people broke the three-hour mark in finishing the race. The first American to cross the finish line came in 15th.

Winner John Kagwe of Kenya dusted the field, finishing with a time of 2:08:00. Kagwe could have erased the 26.2-mile course record except that he broke running's cardinal rule. He bought a new pair of shoes just before the race.

And the darn things came untied — three times.

And he had to stop to tie them — three times. The two local men also competed in the 1983 Boston Marathon. "Running has changed a lot over the years," Sayers explains. "When we ran in Boston, the qualifying standards were hard. Today people run just to be part of the race, not to win. This race was a moving party."

The New York City Marathon has grown in popularity. When it first started in 1970, 55 people finished. This year 30,332 people finished in the 10-hour limit. And how did the home-boys do?

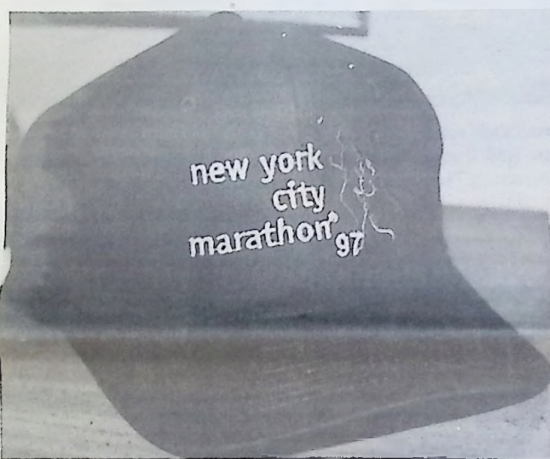
Young finished the race in 3:42:30 and Sayers in 4:10:50. —



Runners snake their way along the 26-mile course of the New York City Marathon. John Sayers and Ronnie Young, both of Augusta

County, were among the 32,000 participants in the 1997 event.

Photo courtesy Joan Sayers



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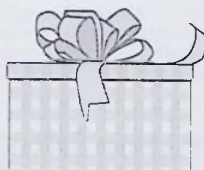
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Subscription details, page 8

RICHMOND — You may not think deer hunting season and the holiday season have a lot in common, but generous hunters can give those who are less fortunate a reason to be thankful this Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Hunters who would like to help the needy can donate deer to the Hunters for the Hungry program, which helps to feed thousands of needy Virginians every year. The program raises funds to pay for professional processing of the meat, then gives it, free of charge, to food banks, churches and soup kitchens statewide.

"We've already had deer donated from the early muzzleloading season and the early archery season, so we have a good bit of meat already," said David Horne, director of the Hunters for the Hungry program. "With the opening of firearms season we'll start getting a good number of deer that we can process and provide to people from Thanksgiving on through Christmas and into the winter."

The goal for the program this

year is to process 150,000 pounds of venison. Since the program started in 1991 it has provided 500,000 pounds of meat to feed the less fortunate.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries estimates 200,000 deer will be harvested this year.

General firearms season for deer runs through Nov. 29 west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and through Jan. 3 in the eastern part of the state.

Anyone interested in donating deer or money for the meat processing may call 1-800-352-4868.

This information was provided by the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation news service.

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# Local group cares for Appalachian Trail

By NANCY SORRELLS

"The Appalachian Trail is conceived as the backbone of a super reservation and primeval recreation ground covering the length (and width) of the Appalachian Range itself, its ultimate purpose being to extend acquaintance with the scenery and serve as a guide to the understanding of nature."

Such were the words of New Englander Benton MacKaye, the forester who dreamed up the idea of a 2,000-mile long footpath stretching the length of the East Coast and connecting Maine to Georgia. More than 75 years after the first stretch of trail was opened in 1922 and exactly 60 years since the entire trail was complete in 1937, the trail still beckons to thousands each year. Many people spend a few hours or days hiking a portion of the trail, and each year a few hardy adventurers traverse the entire length of the Appalachian Trail.

The trail is maintained by a private organization founded in 1925 called the Appalachian Trail Conference. Still active today, this group clears the trail of fallen debris, freshens the white blazes which guide hikers on their 2,000-mile journey, and maintains markers and lean-tos.

Hikers who walk the Appalachian Trail know that each day's journey can be broken down into little segments. The same holds true of the trail's coordinating body, the Appalachian Trail Conference. This organization is broken down into districts, which are then broken down into area clubs. Locally the Southern Shenandoah Valley chapter, is the southern-most club within the Potomac Appalachian Trail District. The 100 or so mem-

bers of the SSVVC who come mostly from Augusta and Rockingham Counties, maintain an active presence not only on the trail within the Shenandoah National Park, but through hikes and outings throughout Virginia and West Virginia.

Suzanne Goings, president of the local chapter, explained that her group's main reason for existing is to maintain and protect the Appalachian Trail. Virginia has over 500 miles of the trail, more than any other state, and 103 of those miles pass through Shenandoah National Park.

"We're very loyal to the trail. So many people don't even know the Appalachian Trail exists and that blows my mind," she said.

The Southern Shenandoah chapter under Goings' direction has adopted five miles of the trail within the park, from Pine Field Gap to Loft Mountain Campground. Three times a year members of the group have work days in which they remove fallen trees, keep weeds on the trails down and maintain water bars that prevent soil erosion. Individual members of the group have also adopted portions of the trail, bringing the chapter's total trail maintenance to about 15 miles. You can get very attached to a particular trail or portion of the pathway that you have helped, Goings explained. "You get so you know the old oak tree at such and such a turn that came down in the last storm," she said.

The behind-the-scenes work done by the club members should be appreciated by any hiker who does not have to climb over fallen trees, stumble through deep gullies or push through grasping brambles. The battle is a constant one, however, and when storms like Hurricane Fran blow through or gypsy moths and pinebark beetles kill trees, the workload increases. When mature trees blow down, not only does the trail have to be cleared, but the increased light encourages growth of underbrush, briars and brambles, so the weedwackers have to arrive in force.

For chapter members, it's not all work and no play, however, and the group hikes year round. Hikes take



Members of the Southern Shenandoah Valley chapter of the Appalachian Trail Conference take a break from hiking along Tea

Creek in West Virginia. The group plans hikes and helps care for a section of the Appalachian Trail. Photos courtesy SSVVC

place on alternating Saturdays and Sundays every other weekend with 10 or 15 people usually showing up for the adventure. Although they never tire of the Appalachian Trail — "When you walk a trail in the opposite direction it can look totally different," the chapter president said — they branch out to other trails as well, including those in the national forests and state parks.

"We are fortunate in Virginia because there are quite a few areas besides the AT. We do have a variety. You can't beat Virginia, and the mountains here are gorgeous," Goings noted.

One project within the Shenandoah National Park has been to hike the park's 103 Appalachian Trail miles, in seven to 10-mile day hikes. Ten years ago the group realized a similar goal, walking from Rockfish Gap to Front Royal during the year. In 1996, they reversed the direction and completed the distance by going south from Front Royal and winding up in Rockfish Gap.

The members vary as much as the trails they explore, the president went on to say.

"Their ages are from early 20s to late 70s. They are environmentally conscious, love the outdoors, the solitude and the exercise. Some are very active politically keeping up with legislation concerning the environment, while others do their work out on the trail," she said.

In addition to day hikes, members are welcome to attend two camping weekends a year, one in the spring and one in the fall.

"Everyone brings their own tents and shares good meals and good fellowship," Goings said, adding that she met her husband through the organization.

The group is always looking for

new members interested in hiking or helping to care for the trail. Although the Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter does have a general, sit-down meeting complete with speakers, elections and chapter business once a year in November, that's not the normal way the club operates.

"We have very few formal meetings," Goings explained. "We have a lot of club meetings on the trail."

Those interested in becoming a member of the Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter of the Appalachian Trail Conference may call Doris True at 540/885-4526 or Vernon Garber at 540/886-9218. Or they can check out the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club on the internet at <http://patc.simplenet.com>.



Alvin Dove, a member of the SSVVC, clears weeds along a section of the Appalachian Trail.

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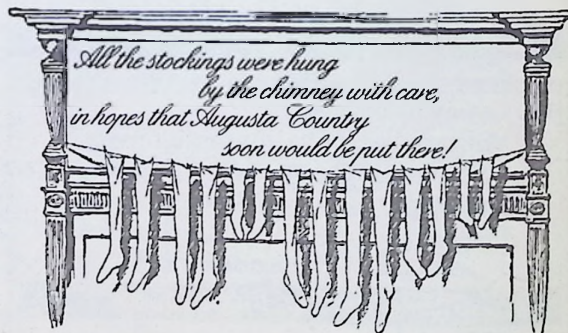
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# Artisans display work, demonstrate crafts at Waynesboro's AVA

By VERA HAILEY

WAYNESBORO — The Association of Virginia Artisans (AVA) displays, promotes and sells the work of a wide range of crafters

from across the state. Their current membership is reaching toward 300 as more and more people are submitting samples of their work, hoping to be selected to join the prestigious organization.

The AVA store, located at 327 W. Main Street in downtown Waynesboro, makes quality hand-crafted items available for purchase to the public. These include furniture, framed artwork, baskets, jewelry, beadwork, carvings, stained glass, weaving, dried floral arrangements, pottery and much more.

The Waynesboro chapter of the AVA is a haven for the creative and uniquely talented. A recent meeting featured items made by members in a session of "show-n-tell." Techniques in knitting, beadwork and painting were highlighted.

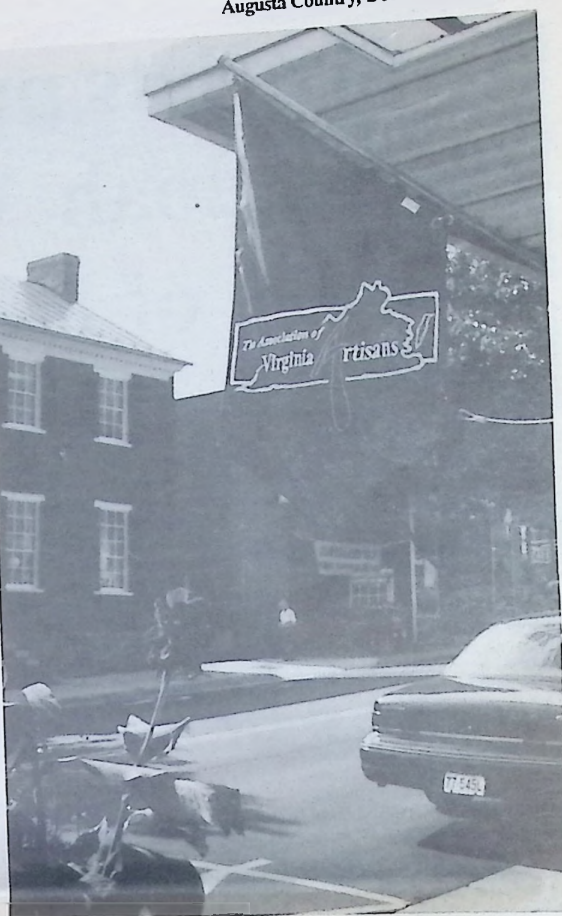
Eddie Eckman brought some samples of knitting to show the group. "I start with a small piece to make sure I like the colors and the pattern before I start on a sweater," Eckman explained.

When writing patterns for publications, such as the *Interweave Knits* magazine, she submits directions for making an item along with a sketch of what the finished product will look like. "If a magazine wants to buy the pattern, they accept it and we talk about what type of yarn I'll use to make it. I supply a written pattern with an article so that others will know how to make it," Eckman said.

She then submits a prototype of the item, usually made with yarn supplied by advertisers of the publication. After the article appears in print, Eckman receives payment for her design, with the bonus of being able to keep the finished item. "I've been lucky with having two-thirds of the patterns I send in being accepted. The average is about 10 percent," Eckman said.

Caren Brosi uses her keen artistic eye to design and painstakingly piece together tiny Japanese beads on a cardboard toilet paper holder with string that resembles dental floss. "The tube gives me something to hold onto," she said. Brosi designs and makes intricate beadwork creations, such as jewelry and small decorative pouches.

She purchases the pricey beads from Japan "as close to the



Upcoming opening reception at the AVA shop at 327 W. Main St. in Waynesboro: Dec. 5, 7-9 p.m., Silk Wearables and Accents by Gail Spell of Maurertown, Va.



Artisans use a variety of media, including clay, wood, metal, and fiber, to craft creations on display at the Association of Virginia Artisans in Waynesboro.

Photos by Vera Haley

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source as possible" to get the best price in a market where a small box of the supplies can cost several thousand dollars.

Completed pouches sell for as little as \$300 with the larger commissioned works costing much more. "I really don't make much money an hour for my time. I do it for my need to create and be creative," commented Brosi, who is special projects coordinator for Fishburne Military School.

Malone Moss has been in arts and crafts for over 25 years. Although she does not produce items to sell, she enjoys dabbling in a variety of art forms. Her item to show the group was a painting made especially for the Oak Grove Theater pro-

duction, *The Foreigner*.

"The play took place in a fishing lodge in a town in Georgia. I thought the lodge should have a picture of the deceased character mentioned in the script, Old Man Meeks," Moss explained. She requested a photo of play director Mike Lafferty, who gave her permission to be the model for a portrait of Meeks.

Moss was determined to produce a suitable likeness that would enhance the production by looking authentically old. In order to show signs of age, Moss took a piece of cardboard and applied black paint and crackle glaze.

"I used ceramic paint, which was what I had in my basement. It didn't look old enough, so I took a half-cup of coffee that I had down there and slathered it on," she said. She also utilized charcoal, pencils and spray paint.

Proud of the effectiveness of the painting, which is co-owned by the artist and Lafferty, Moss explained, "Stage art has nothing to do with what you would hang in your home, but it works on the stage."

The Waynesboro chapter of AVA meets monthly, every third Thursday at St. John's Episcopal Church. For more information, call 540/943-9AVA.



# Ag districts protect Shenandoah Valley's heritage of land

By NANCY SORRELLS

**NEW HOPE** — One look at Armstrong Shiflett tells you this is a working man — someone more at home in jeans or coveralls than a suit, one who gazes out at the world through a weathered face, and gestures with thick, calloused hands. Chat with him for a minute or two, however, and you'll discover that this Valley farmer is an intensely passionate man as well. In fact, the work and the passion are about the same thing — farmland. He is self-described as someone who wants to "die with my boots on."

Seven years ago, Shiflett was the mover and the shaker behind the groundbreaking New Hope Agricultural/Forestral District which reserved nearly 6,000 acres of Augusta County land for the production of agricultural products and timber. It was the first such district in Augusta County and marked one of the first projects supported by the then-fledgling Valley Conservation Council.

Seven years can change a lot of things. The New Hope district is currently undergoing a renewal process and this time things are different. Back in 1990, the idea of reserving a rural area and protecting it from development was a foreign idea to local officials who only approved the district designation by a narrow margin. Today, people have learned from shining examples set by Shiflett and his fellow district participants. So much so that by the time the renewal process is complete, more than 2,000 more acres of land will have been added to the district.

During the last seven years the VCC was growing as well, learning from successes like those in New Hope. Today VCC is using its land conservation expertise to guide farmers in other parts of Augusta County through the agricultural district process. It is an effort that does much more than preserve the livelihood of farmers; it also preserves the open spaces and beauty that have drawn visitors to the Shenandoah Valley for years.

Since its success in 1990, VCC has promoted agricultural districts as a viable tool in maintaining the Valley's rural agrarian heritage. According to the organization's literature on the subject, "Districts are voluntary. They are initiated by a landowner or group of landowners as a mutual undertaking with the local government."

Districts must have a core of 200 acres of contiguous land with out-

lying parcels that are within a mile of the boundary of the 200-acre core. There is no minimum acreage, no minimum number of landowners and no maximum acreage required to join. No one is forced to join the district even if district tracts surround non-participant parcels of land. On a map, the district might have a Swiss cheese appearance.

When forming the district, which can be for a mutually agreeable length of time ranging from 4 to 10 years, each owner agrees not to convert farm, forest or open space to more intense commercial, industrial or residential uses. In return, participants are offered protection

from nuisance ordinances that might limit customary farming and forestry practices and are offered assurances that the district will be considered when local planning decisions, utility projects and rezonings occur.

When asked why the district was so important to him, Shiflett thought for a moment then looked out the window of his 19th-century farmhouse as he slowly began to speak. "I can't lay my fingers on the big things... it protects us against zoning and residential development... but really we are just preserving the land and our area," he said.



Land owned by Armstrong and Josephine Shiflett is included in the New Hope Agricultural/Forestral District. Shiflett was instrumental in bringing landowners together to form the district.

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The New Hope Agricultural/Forestral District reserves nearly 6,000 acres of Augusta County land for the production of agricultural products and timber.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

In a way, he's fulfilling a debt he owes to his parents, grandparents and great grandparents. "My family's been farming in the area since 1770 and my wife's family too. I started farming when I was 16 or before that on my dad's farm. Me and my brother started with him on this farm. You don't appreciate your parents until you get older, but what I'm enthused over now I wouldn't have if it weren't for my great grandparents and grandparents. It's an ongoing thing," he said.

Shiflett and his wife Josephine have three children. Their son Larry is a partner in the dairy and beef operation that now supports two families. "We're going to preserve the land as long as we can. I've got a couple of grandchildren and to them the farm is their life. Me and my wife have stuck together on the farm, it is our life. I've enjoyed it and worked at it," he explained.

Another member of the ag district and Shiflett's neighbor, Kay Frye, also took a leading role in the approval process for the district seven years ago. Her job was to handle

much of the paperwork, she explained. Today a member of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors and a newspaper reporter, Frye is the smallest landowner in the group. A herd of cattle and horses run on her neatly fenced 31-acre farm.

"The agricultural district is a mechanism where owners can band together," she explained. A thought which was echoed by Shiflett who said simply, "In numbers there's strength."

"You always have more of an impact and presence when you group together. What happens to farmland is very important and with this district farming is more likely to continue for a longer period. We have quite a few full-time farmers in our district," she said.

The law for agricultural districts had been on the books for a number of years before Shiflett and Frye began organizing. Shiflett pointed to a picnic meeting 20 years ago where area farmers first kicked the idea around but those thoughts lay dormant for 10 years.

See **DISTRICT**, page 11

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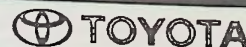


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## District

Continued from page 10

Local government was not keen on the idea in those days either.

Then in 1990 a core group of eight property owners with 2,000 acres of land met at Shiflett's house. The results of that meeting still amaze Frye and Shiflett seven years later. "In 30-45 minutes the core group decided on it (pursuing the ag district). I was amazed. The unanimity of it was surprising and gratifying," said Frye.

"Can you believe that we sat in here with 10 or 12 farm people and everybody agreed and decided on something in 30 minutes?" said Shiflett who still shakes his head in wonder. "From that we knew that our only obstacle was the government. Soon almost 30 people joined in. We got backing from average people. The people just responded. They wanted to do it," he added.

In addition to the landowners, the group received help from a number of organizations like the Virginia Wildlife Center, Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District, Virginia Cooperative Extension and VCC. "VCC was one of the main groups that supported us. They appeared at public hearings. It was so helpful to have a group like that behind us. Their moral support and attendance at the meetings (before the county supervisors) were important and carried a lot of weight," Frye remembered.

A by-product of the district also was been the protection of the Civil War site of the Battle of Piedmont through private ownership. By preserving the open space and farmland that contains the land where the 1864 battle took place, the battlefield remains much as it looked more than a century ago.

There will be no subdivisions on this land where so many died in defense of hearth and home.

The respect and awe felt by the farmers for the bloody clash that took place here is evident in Shiflett's words. From his house he can see the battlelines, and he has always heard the family stories about the wounded and dying that lay all around the farmyard. To him this historic heritage is part of the land.

"Sometimes when I get out there on the land I think about all the blood that flowed on this land and how many died. One man visited here from Tennessee. He had nine family members in the battle. One was killed and buried in the garden and after the war the family came from Tennessee with a team and a wagon and dug up the body, packed it in salt and took it home. It's a lot of history here!"

Whether it's the preservation of a battlefield or the farmland, the results of the ag district project are easy to see — or not see — depending on how you look at it.

What you won't see as you drive along the backroads that crisscross the district are subdivisions, bulldozed sites awaiting new businesses, widened roads and sewer lines being laid. What you do see are silos, tractors out in the fields, farmers walking their horses and cattle in the pasture.

"There has been very little development and change on the land in the district. This is a really scenic area through here with all of these dairy farms. A number of children on those farms will take them over. When we renew we may lose one or two landowners but we will gain several thousand more acres. From I-81 to the South River will be nearly one solid piece of land in the district. And it worked so well

the first time that we are renewing for the maximum of 10 years this time!" said Frye.

The whole process is worth the effort according to Shiflett. "Every morning I look out at the mountains and the sun comes up and I see the sun shining through the trees. It is beautiful. I see it every morning and I never get tired of it. Anywhere I look I can see the Alleghenies to the west, the Blue Ridge to the east, the Massanutten to the north and as far south as the eye can carry. And it's all farms," he said while trying to convey what the agricultural district means to him and his family.

Frye summed up his point a little later in the day as she gave a guided tour along the lines of the district.

"The whole point is, are people like Armstrong Shiflett going to be around in 30 years in Augusta County? Is agriculture going to be important enough? Agriculture as an industry needs land. If we lose agriculture we are going to lose an awful lot." —



Property in the New Hope Ag District varies in size from several hundred acres to 30 acres, the latter of which landowner Kay Frye, a member of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors, signed up to include in the district.

## VCC promotes natural, cultural heritage of Valley

By NANCY SORRELLS

If you haven't heard of the Valley Conservation Council by now you are either new to the area or have been living under a rock for the last seven years. If you are a new Valley of Virginia resident, listen up. If you have been living under a rock and that rock is surrounded by the scenic pastures, mountains and streams of the Valley, then you might want to thank the VCC. Better yet, you might want to join.

Founded in 1990 as "a non-profit citizens' organization (which) promotes land use that sustains the natural and cultural heritage of the Valley region of Virginia," the group has been quietly doing big things in the 11 counties it serves from Frederick south to Botetourt.

Seven years ago, VCC began quite humbly as a steering committee of 10 people. Today there are approximately 1,000 members with the largest component coming from Augusta County, Staunton and Waynesboro. The members are a real mix according to Faye Cooper, the executive director and one of the founders. "We have

farmers, natural resource people, city and county dwellers. It is a politically mixed group, but they are all people who care about the Valley," she explained.

Cooper brings years of experience and a vivacious, non-stop attitude to the executive director's office. Technically she works 30 hours a week and has a support staff of two. That's technically. Obviously that doesn't include all the presentations she gives to groups around the state or government hearings she attends, or workshops she helps present.

Cooper holds degrees in psychology and special education, but worked for a number of years with The Nature Conservancy, a nationwide organization which VCC has patterned itself after in many ways. The Nature Conservancy was "great training ground" for her work, and Cooper has been caught up in land conservation work ever since.

She can't help but be proud of what VCC has accomplished in less than a decade. Since its incorporation the organization has

— Assisted landowners in the

protection of more than 11,000 acres of farmland and open space through the application of voluntary protection methods such as conservation easements and agricultural/forestry districts;

— Influenced the development of six county and city comprehensive plans in a pro-conservation direction through member participation;

— Established the VCC Land Trust as a mechanism for receiving gifts of land from individuals who want to protect the natural, historic, or agricultural values of their properties;

— Published the study of relative costs and revenues of different land uses in Augusta County, revealing the value of agricultural land and open space to localities;

— Hosted numerous public forums regarding the value of open space lands and the use of voluntary land conservation tools;

— Established a strong board of directors and sound fiscal foundation growing from a \$5,000 budget in 1990 to a 1997 operating budget of \$130,000.

See VCC, page 18

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# The mellowness of my dotage

Down on the farm we're thinking about changing gears. We hesitate to broach the subject, but we're thinking it's time things got a bit of a facelift, so to speak, down on the farm.

Many readers have been kind to express their affection for the wit and — dare we say, wisdom — offered through these pages. But a comment received after last month's "Susan Lucci and sauerkraut" offering shook us up a bit.

The comment was volunteered by a reader — that would be one of you — that the author of Down on the Farm — that would be me — has become, and I quote, "downright mellow in your dotage." I was hoping no one had noticed — not my mellowness, mind you. I was hoping no one had noticed my dotage. I noticed it some time ago, but suppose I have done well to conceal it from the general public to this point.

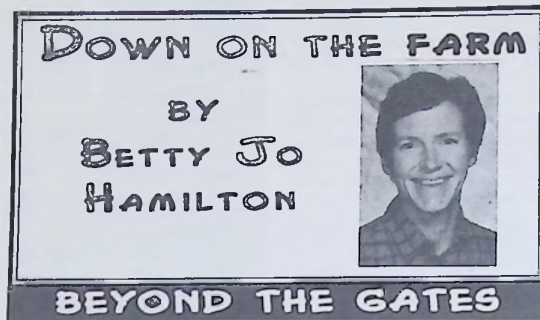
Anyway, I thought I would try something a little different in this outing down on the farm to see if I can shake things up a bit. Not that I'm trying to recapture any of the glory of days gone by. But if I have progressed into a mellow midlife, then perhaps it is best acknowledged than ignored.

So some of the things you'll read in this particular column will relate to life down on the farm. Other things may not necessarily relate to the farm.

Just to get things going and so you can ease into this, we'll start on the farm and then move on.

Lambs are arriving down on the farm. They have been since the beginning of October. Folks are surprised when I say lambs are coming now, because most people think this is one of those spring things which occurs down on the farm. And so it is. But with lamb prices topping out at \$1.40/pound this past April, it's difficult to resist getting some lambs on the ground to aim for this market. Even with winter feed costs, we think we might still be able to make a buck or two (no pun intended) on fall born lambs.

Also, while we can't handle 125



ewes through the lambing barn in the spring (and don't really want to try) we find we can nearly always maintain a sense of mellowness if we have about 50 ewes at a time due to lamb in October, November, and February. To promote this end, some of you may recall a column I wrote a few months back about putting the ewes on a very specific reproductive schedule by synchronizing their heat cycles.

This is the third year we've tried this in conjunction with fall lambing down on the farm. And while I'm always hesitant to proclaim something a success because I know the minute I make that pronouncement something will go absolutely haywire which will prove me absolutely wrong most especially when the something involves sheep, I will — with some reservations — call the reproductive synchronization and fall lambing successes.

It's hard to argue with \$1.40/pound for lambs. When we got that for 90-pound lambs we sold this past April we were dumbstruck, speechless, required resuscitation, defibrillation, shock trauma trousers — well, you get the general idea. So of course, after we recovered from all of the above, we couldn't get back home quick enough to get the ewes started toward producing more fall born lambs. And since we'd had such success with synchronizing the ewes to deliver their lambs by appointment, we couldn't dial the feed mill quickly

enough to have the "magic" ration mixed to feed the ewes.

The process of stacking the reproductive deck against the ewes prior to breeding this past May resulted in the arrival of 52 lambs Oct. 3-7. Of 40 ewes bred in this group, 25 delivered their lambs during this five-day period. Ewes cycle every 17 days and synchronizing them puts them all on the same schedule from a reproductive standpoint. The next set of arrivals occurred Oct. 19-27 when another 10 ewes delivered their lambs. Thereafter the lamb arrivals from a second group of 30 ewes occurred beginning Nov. 6, then again Nov. 23, all arriving in five- to seven-day intervals or thereabouts. And because we had rigged it thusly, none arrived on Thanksgiving or Christmas. (Yes, Virginia shepherds, there is a Santa Claus, a Great Pumpkin, an Easter Bunny... just think of all the holidays we've missed while tending ewes during lambing seasons.)

It may be difficult for those not specifically schooled in ovine matters to grasp why lambing by appointment is so advantageous. However when you consider that ewes unsynchronized at breeding will have lambs any time during a 30- to 45-day period, you can understand that the shepherd never knows whether to be worried if some ewes are tortuously overdue or hazardedly premature. It also means that the shepherd has to be "on call" basically 24 hours a day

for six weeks which becomes physically impossible at some point. But, on the other hand, most shepherds can muster a five- or seven-day 24-hour schedule, especially if they know a break in lambing is just a few days away.

But why, ultimately is the lambing by appointment preferred? Well, I will simply say that, for me, it facilitates the mellowness of my dotage. The unpredictability of ovine conception left to nature's own devices only yields the unpredictability of lambing at odd hours over many long days, through holidays, weekends, and just basically, whenever. This hardly facilitates mellowness. It does, on the other hand, promote dotage. But we hope, perhaps, that lambing by appointment might inhibit the process of dotage, if only slightly.

With the arrival of so many lambs in such a short period of time, there would be — of course — the occasional newborn which required extra attention. I found one such creature on a midnight check of the lambing pens. The poor fellow was suffering from what I call, "Polite Lamb Syndrome." This is a malady which some lambs often exhibit wherein they are so polite, they will not nurse without permission. While this may seem proper etiquette from a human perspective, from a newborn lamb's perspective it is the quickest way to starve to death. Finding a lamb in such a predicament, the shepherd asks, "How badly do I want this lamb to live?" because the measures necessary to right the situation might be seen as extreme, if not right down

eccentric, by almost anyone.

So I carried the poor unresponsive but breathing creature to the house and set up the KICU, that's Kitchen Intensive Care Unit, to try to coax the lamb back toward life. After being fed some milk with a tube feeder, after being injected subcutaneously with 50 percent dextrose solution, and after some time spent nestled against a hot water bottle and wrapped in an old sweatshirt, the lamb showed some signs of reviving. But I've seen many lambs like this revive then crash and die just as surely as if they had been left at the barn to do it on their own in a less-than-spectacular fashion.

But this particular lamb was a bit more tenacious than most. He eventually progressed to a special lamb box — a deep drawer from an old kitchen cupboard — where the lamb slept off and on for a number of days between feedings of a specially-mixed formula given through a stomach tube. The lamb eventually recovered enough strength to totter about the kitchen, into the living room, and onto the back porch. The weather was warm enough that it spent an afternoon hour or so in the yard, not doing much, just standing and looking, and then being returned to the old kitchen cupboard drawer for another long nap.

As the lamb continued to regain its strength, it eventually refused to tolerate the box any longer. Not that the lamb was anywhere near mended. The second day it had started wheezing and sniffing, so

See LAMB, page 13

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## Lamb

Continued from page 12

penicillin injections were required. The lamb still would not eat of its own volition after three days and only received nourishment via the stomach tube three times a day — morning, midafternoon, and mid-night. I continued to ask myself how badly I wanted the lamb to live as it took over most of my living space, too strong was it to keep confined to the drawer, too weak was it to be expected to make it at the barn.

After five days the lamb was dubbed "Spook." It was not uncommon that I would be awakened in the night by a staccato "tunk-kit-ta, tunk-kit-ta, tunk-kit-ta," which was the sound of the lamb's hooves on the hardwood floors as it made its way through the dark somewhere in the house. It was nearly amusing to wake up in the morning and remember there was a lamb wandering room to room and wonder where it might be and exactly how much mess it had made during the night.

Speaking of messes, you're probably wondering how that was managed. Well, once again we go back to the question, "How badly do I want this lamb to live?" There was some mess, but not too much. Since the lamb was taking in very little nourishment, there was not much in the way of excess coming out. And anyway, isn't that what paper towels are made for? And certainly someone in the mellow-ness of my dotage could tolerate the minor inconveniences of a calve-lesing lamb.

As it progressed, the lamb eventually developed an appetite and began nursing from a bottle. It spent a few hours outside each day, then was brought back in the house at night. With its bodily processes at about 85 percent, it became necessary to confine the lamb to the utility room at night which at least restricted cleanup to easy-care vinyl flooring. Ten days passed and

the lamb still had not spent a night outdoors since being brought to the house. In fact, bringing the lamb to the house to revive it created its own set of problems in that once the lamb became acclimated to 70-degree round-the-clock temperatures indoors, it had to be reacquainted to the 30-degree temperature swings of day and night spent outdoors.

Two weeks passed. The lamb nursed strongly and had recovered a great deal of body mass. The fact that its size was on the increase even became noticeable. The time came to return the lamb to the barn and, with another set of lambs due to arrive, it might even be possible to graft it onto an unsuspecting ewe. Of course, there was no hope of returning it to its own mother — another problem created in taking the lamb to the house. Once a lamb is removed from the ewe for longer than a day, it is unlikely the mother will reclaim it. And bottle feeding the lamb creates yet another problem. The lamb becomes bonded to humans, so now it is firmly convinced it has nothing in common with what should be its pasture mates. Two attempts at grafting the lamb onto ewes with newborns were unsuccessful. But perhaps in the mellow-ness of my dotage I can accommodate the company of a lamb which follows me wherever I go around the barn and pasture.

And now on to other matters.

### Beyond the gates

I went down to the local discount department store the other night for my weekly grocery shopping.

First of all, I'd just like to say, "Yikes! Where do all these people come from?" Normally there are not so many shoppers, but this particular night was Halloween Eve and the store was packed. I was not surprised a day later when the Cable News Network midday Factoid provided that Halloween is second only to Christmas in retail sales. But it sure seems like people really have gone over the top with Halloween. Granted, it is the first candy holiday since Easter. And I'm as tickled as the next person to fill my candy dish with ghoulish treats after the long candy drought since Easter's pastel M&Ms. But, wow, this Halloween business is really booming.

So anyway, there I am in the giant discount department store Halloween candy section looking for

my favorite treat when I couldn't help but overhear two ladies talking. I wasn't eavesdropping, mind you. It just happened that I was looking for the Nestlé Crunchkins (which I couldn't find) and these two ladies nearby were having a little visit.

"I hear you're getting married," one said to the other.

"Yeah, I guess so," the other said with not too much enthusiasm. "December, I guess," again with not too much enthusiasm.

"Let me see your ring," the other said cheerily.

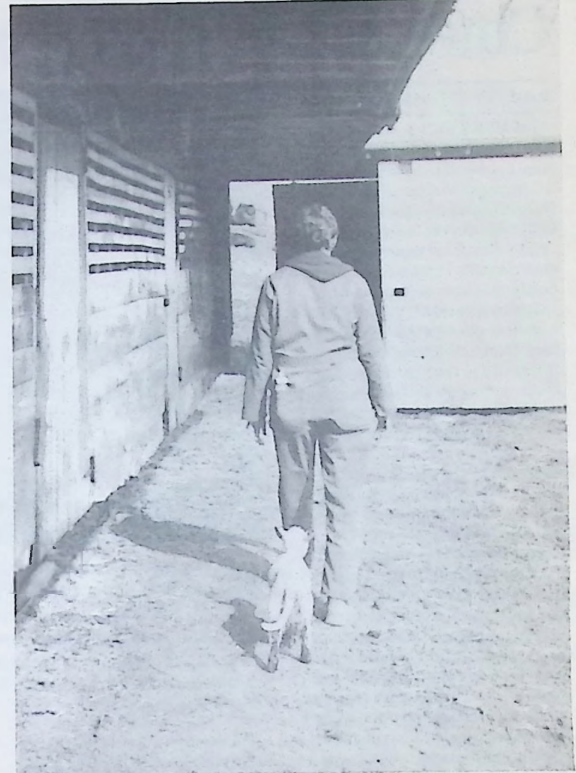
"Oh yeah," the newly engaged woman said blandly showing "the ring."

The inquirer went on to say something of a congratulatory nature before the none-too-enthusiastic, soon-to-be-newly-wed said, "Well, I guess it will work. He's in California."

That's the extent of the conversation I heard since I continued on my way. But I couldn't help thinking that there are probably a lot of married folks whose wedded bliss would be enhanced if they lived a continent apart from their spouses. So best wishes go out to this lucky lady in her impending cross-continental nuptials.

And then there was the new display case in the deli section. There it was — big as a Buick, just sitting there empty waiting to be filled with whatever delectable items the kitchen staff might whip up. The thing that was unusual was that the case was clearly empty. You could see from half a store away it was empty. Not even a sign, not even a tag was attached to the case. However I couldn't help but notice that people seemed to be moving around the case and peering into it as if it were filled with exotic meats and cheeses from all corners of the earth. Perhaps they could see what I could not. But then, we're living in such a technologically advanced society, the display case might have been filled with virtual groceries for all I know.

And then there was the incident in the pet food section. It was my week to buy dog food. My multicane existence requires that I buy dog food in 50-pound bags. In my dotage, I've found myself lingering at the pet food section staring a long time at those 50-pound bags of dog food before attempting to put one in my grocery cart. It seems these bags once were no problem



Once removed from its birth mother, a lamb follows who it believes to be its mother — even if that someone happens to bear a resemblance to Mr. Greenjeans.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

for me. I'd just grab one, hoist it upward and onto my grocery cart without thinking. Lately though, it seems I have to spend a lot of time visualizing myself accomplishing the feat before I actually undertake it.

On this occasion, evidently, I didn't spend enough time visualizing the task. First, I had trouble pulling a bag out of the pile. Then, off balance, I had even more trouble getting it up high enough to rest on the cart which rolled away from me as I shifted the weight of the bag of dog food against the cart which didn't help matters any. I found myself losing the battle with the bag, felt my knees buckling as the weight of the dog food pushed me backwards. Then just as it seemed I would go down, I found the strength in my legs to push the bag off me and onto the cart.

But my plight had not gone unnoticed. Just as I won the battle with the bag, I heard a voice behind me say, "You got it?" I turned

to see a lady pushing past me with her cart, ready to lend a hand.

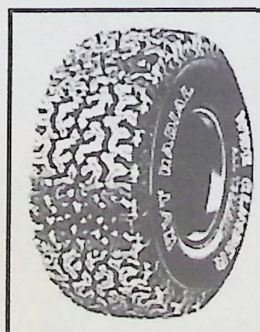
"Yes," I said rather meekly. "I didn't used to have any trouble with these bags."

"I started getting the little bags," the woman said, nodding to two five-pound bags of dog food in her cart. "Maybe I just need smaller dogs," I said. The woman smiled and pushed her way on into shopper anonymity. The struggle with the bag of dog food left me wondering if perhaps both my mellow-ness and my dotage have left me vulnerable to the futility of lifting anything weighing more than 50 pounds.

So there you have it. A bit of a change perhaps from the routine Down on the farm, but I've decided it's useless to ignore the effects of the progression of time on one's physiology and mentality. Caught red-handed in the mellow-ness of my dotage, I'm hoping I won't slip too much too fast either down on the farm or beyond the gates. —

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# Cows are blue-chip commodities for cattle producers

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

FISHERSVILLE — In the four-legged stock market, cows are blue-chip commodities. Virginia Tech faculty and Virginia Cooperative Extension specialists told area cattle producers how to get the most value from their bovine production units in a seminar held recently at Augusta Expo.

Led by John Hall, Virginia Tech's new beef cow specialist, the seminar, "Beef Cow 2000," included information to help cattle producers make decisions about raising and managing replacement heifers for the future. Joined by Dee Whittier of Virginia Tech and Bill McKinnon, Extension animal scientist, Hall told cattle producers how to make the most of replacement heifers selected for herds.

Whittier and Hall emphasized the need for proper nutrition for growing heifers. Hall noted that a correct balance of protein and energy in feed rations for heifers is needed to promote fertility. Heifers must gain 1-1 3/4 pounds per day from weaning to breeding in order to reach the preferred size and weight at breeding time, Hall explained.

Whittier provided some feed ration options which included balancing rations of fescue and alfalfa hays with shelled corn or using corn silage mixed with soybean meal or broiler litter. The cost of these rations ranged from 40 cents to 75 cents per head per day.

"These are basic commodities," Whittier said. "You don't have to go to a fancy feed ration to get the weight gains desired."



Dee Whittier, a Virginia Tech veterinarian, uses an anesthetized calf and a skeletal pelvic model to demonstrate repositioning the legs in a breech birth presentation. Rick Heidel, Augusta County Extension agent, assists. Whittier and other Virginia Tech specialists spoke to area cattle producers during a seminar held recently at Augusta Expo in Fishersville.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

While many cattle producers strive to include protein in heifers' diets, Whittier urged that energy is the determining factor in promoting weight gain.

"You need to supplement the energy source to acquire the desired gain per day," Whittier said. McKinnon told producers two primary factors affecting the onset of puberty in heifers are age and weight.

"They must pass these thresholds to reach puberty," he said. McKinnon noted that heifers should conceive at 12 to 14 months of age. By that time they should have reached 65 percent of their mature body weight. Heifers are more likely to conceive after cycling several times, McKinnon noted. Success in breeding heifers is likely when heifers surpass age and weight thresholds in order to begin cycling prior

to the breeding season.

Hall explained the two primary factors affecting calving difficulty or dystocia in replacement heifers are pelvic area and calf birth weight. Potential replacement heifers can be measured for pelvic area which should be at least 140 square centimeters. This can be done by a veterinarian when heifers are being selected for replacement.

Bulls with low birth weight EPDs (expected progeny difference) should be used to breed replacement heifers, McKinnon said.

"The calf's birth weight is the single most significant factor affecting calving difficulty," he noted. "It is easy to measure and is highly heritable or predictable."

Other factors affecting replacement heifer growth are the presence of parasites and developmental nutrition.

Whittier explained that an appropriate deworming strategy should be used with replacement heifers. He suggested that heifers weaned and kept in dry lots should be dewormed once at weaning time. Heifers weaned on "safe pasture" or parasite-free pasture may be dewormed once at weaning. However heifers weaned and returned to "infected" pastures should be dewormed at weaning and at a second interval depending on the anthelmintic used. Whittier explained that sequential deworming will maximize the value of forages.

Producers also were urged to keep in mind the changing nutritional needs as heifers develop after conceiving. During early ges-

tation, the heifer is still growing and should receive the proper ration to promote 1 to 1 1/4 pounds of gain per day, Whittier said. Precalving nutrition is also important. While there is rapid fetal growth and mammary tissue increase during late gestation, the heifer is still growing, according to Whittier. During this time, a feed ration including 10 percent crude protein and 60 percent total digestible nutrients should be fed to promote 1.8 to 2.4 pounds of gain per day, Whittier said.

Cattle producers also received some tips from Whittier, who is a veterinarian, on dealing with calving malpresentations. Using an anesthetized calf and a skeletal pelvic model, Whittier demonstrated to producers how calves in incorrect birth positions can be repositioned for proper delivery.

He told producers that heifers due to calve should be checked three times a day. Heifers taking longer than two hours to deliver a calf should be assisted. Whittier instructed producers to use no more than "three stout folks" to pull a calf. When calving difficulty occurs and no progress has been made in delivering the calf after 30 minutes of effort, producers should call their veterinarian for assistance.

Other topics covered during the seminar included buying versus raising replacement heifers, heifer selection, and managing two- and three-year-old cows. For information about topics covered in the Beef Cow 2000 seminar, call Rick Heidel, Augusta County Extension agent, at 245-5750. —

## Virginia Cow-calf Conference to explore alliances

VERONA — "Practical Alliances for Virginia Cattlemen" will be the theme of this year's Beef Cow-Calf Conference to be held Dec. 8 at Ingleside.

As the cattle industry and the expectations of its customers continue to change, cow-calf producers must seek new ways of doing business.

According to John Hall, Virginia Tech beef cow specialist, the purpose of the Virginia Beef Cow-Calf Conference is to allow cow-calf producers and related industry professionals to understand the changes occurring in the industry and provide an opportunity for producers to interact with other Virginia cattle producers who are already involved in some of these new "alliances" or "networks."

The conference will open with registration beginning at 8 a.m. The morning session will open at 9 a.m. and will feature nationally recognized experts discussing changes in the industry and the

opportunity provided by alliances. Morning speakers will include Casey Kelly from Cattle-Fax, Larry Corah with NCBA, Warren Weibert of Decatur Feedyards and Dave Nichols from Nichols Farms in Iowa. In the afternoon, participants will have an opportunity to visit with several Virginia producers involved in "alliances" ranging from specialized feeder cattle marketing, to input-breeding/marketing co-op, to retained ownership. Speakers for the afternoon session, scheduled to begin at 1 p.m., include producers/alliance coordinators Jim Myers, James Bennett, John Mitchell, and Jerry Burner. Also on the afternoon

program are Reggie Reynolds of the Virginia Cattlemen's Association and Bill McKinnon, Virginia Tech marketing specialist.

A trade show will accompany the conference with co-sponsoring companies having exhibits and information for participants. The conference is designed as a one-day, in-depth educational event for commercial cow-calf producers, backgrounders, purebred breeders, professional workers and allied industry personnel.

Registration fee for the conference is \$25 per person which includes lunch and a copy of the proceedings. Advance registration is

required by Nov. 28. To register, send name and address to John Hall, Dept. of Animal and Poultry Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

24061-0306. Registration fee may be paid upon arrival at the conference. For information about the conference, call 540/231-5253. —

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# Farmers appraise new varieties of seedcorn

By JEFFISHEE

HARRISONBURG — Corn producers from around the Shenandoah Valley gathered recently for the 1997 Corn Hybrid Selection Meeting. Tom Stanley, Extension agent for agronomic crops based in Augusta County, said, "We were very pleased with the enthusiastic interest and resulting large crowd of farmers that came to this meeting." Proof of the keen interest in new corn varieties was the fact that 50 percent more farmers showed up for the meet-

ing than were anticipated.

"The corn hybrid business is very competitive," said Stanley. "Farmers spend a good deal of money on seed, and this new era of genetic technology is presenting a big opportunity for farmers to tailor their crop production to their farm and their needs."

Agribusiness corporations have spent many years and millions of dollars analyzing and enhancing specialty hybrid corn varieties. Genetic modifications in corn include improvements in pest resistance, herbicide resis-

tance, and drought resistance.

"A word of caution, however, is that we must not lose sight of the traditional traits in corn that include yield, quality and consistency," Stanley said. "Every corn producer has his own preferences when it comes to corn hybrid selection, but resistance to gray leaf spot is very much on the minds of our farmers."

Gray leaf spot is a common disease problem for corn producers in the Shenandoah Valley.

"We also look for corn hybrids that will produce high yields of silage. More than 50 percent of our (corn) acreage is chopped for silage," Stanley said.

Mark Mattingly, agronomist with Hoffman Seeds in State College, Pa., told area farmers about the vast selection of specialty corns available for their operation.

"Specialty corns are hybrids that have an additional trait other than those we find in traditional corn varieties," he said.

Examples might include high oil corn for the production of corn oil. Another example is Bt corn, which is genetically altered to improve resistance to the European corn borer.

"There is a huge variety of hybrid specialty corns in development now that will change the choices that farmers have in their

operations," Mattingly said.

Hoffman Seeds is offering 65 commercial varieties of corn this year, 19 of which have built-in resistance to the European corn borer. "At the same time, we have different stages of testing for experimental varieties where we are looking at up to 500 different corn hybrids," the seed company representative said.

Stanley emphasized the importance of each farmer selecting the proper variety of seed corn for planting in 1998. He stressed that each farmer has to look at not only the yield performance data, but the economics of incorporating a new, genetically engineered product on the farm. —



## Kinsinger hosts seedcorn meeting

Simon Kinsinger of Stuarts Draft, right, a Stine seed sales representative, talks with Tom Capper, district sales manager for Stine during a seedcorn meeting held recently in Stuarts Draft. Characteristics of various corn, soybean, and alfalfa hybrid varieties were discussed.

AC staff photo

## New Virginia program recognizes 'Century Farms'

RICHMOND — The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has begun accepting applications for the new Virginia Century Farm program.

Authorized by the 1997 Virginia General Assembly, the program was established to honor farm families in Virginia whose property has been in the same family for at least 100 consecutive years.

"By recognizing these farms, the Commonwealth pays tribute to the enduring spirit of agriculture in the Commonwealth, the diligent and dedicated efforts of generations of Virginians, and the contributions they have made to the economy of the state," said J. Carlton Courter III, VDACS commis-

sioner. "It recognizes those whose goal has always been to produce the best food and fiber to supply the citizens of the Commonwealth, the nation and even the world."

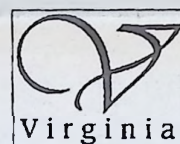
A farm must meet three criteria to be certified as a Virginia Century Farm: it must have been owned by the same family for at least 100

consecutive years; must be lived on or actually farmed by a descendant of the original owner, and must gross over \$2,500 annually from the sale of farm products.

Century Farm families will receive several emblems of honor including a certificate and a sign which can be displayed outdoors.

Applications may be obtained from VDACS by calling 804/786-2373, by sending a request to Century Farm, VDACS, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, Va. 23218, at the department's regional offices, or on the Internet at <http://www.state.va.us/~vdacs/vdacs.htm>.

Applications also are available at local Extension offices and Virginia Farm Bureau Federation offices. There is no fee to apply. —



## CENTURY FARM

## Va.-N.C. Shepherds' Symposium set for Dec. 5-6

BLACKSBURG — The 1997 Virginia-North Carolina Shepherds' Symposium will be held Dec. 5-6 at Virginia Tech.

A variety of topics including flock health, lambing management, feed alternatives, and grading and marketing alternatives will be covered in the two-day event. Seminars begin at 1:30 p.m. Dec.

5 in Tech's Donaldson Brown Conference Center with registration opening at 11 a.m.

The Virginia Sheep Industry Association Board of Directors meeting will be at 3:30 p.m. in the Executive Conference room and is open to all sheep producers.

Activities begin at 7 a.m. Dec. 6 with the Virginia Sheep Pro-

ducers Association annual meeting. The symposium will adjourn at noon with a tour of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine.

Advance registration for the symposium is \$15 for adults and \$5 for youth under age 18. On-site registration is \$20. There are additional fees for the lamb banquet Friday evening and the breakfast Saturday morning. A limited number of advance tickets are available for these meals.

For registration information about the Va.-N.C. Shepherds' Symposium call Bill McKinnon at 540/231-9160. —

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# Notes from the road

Augusta Country contributing writer Deborah Sensabaugh continues her horseback travelog along the American Discovery Trail. This month she introduces us to some folks she met along the trail in Delaware.

## People make long trail memorable

By DEBORAH SENSABAUGH

The questions with no easy answers are always the first asked: "How far did you go?" or "How many miles did you travel? Per day or week?"

I have found no easy way to explain that my dad and I made no time traveling by horseback through adversity; it seemed forever. We rode hard on the American Discovery Trail through balmy days when breezes kissed the trail and clouds flung shadows across the forests. Those miles flew. My horse, gaunt in drought, needed more time off than I imagined when I plotted in dreams and traced lines on maps I didn't draw. Trails have no respect for conventional reckoning of time.

Not having the advantage of bicycling the ADT, we couldn't eat miles with speeding tires and simply prop the two-wheelers up at night. Unlike hikers who backpack their weekly rations, we couldn't carry horse provisions for a week. We didn't stop at tourist attractions (no place to tie up our horses); we

didn't shop in nearby towns. In tending to our animals' needs, however, we met all kinds of folks. They stood like milestones, opening windows on their worlds and inviting us to take a peek.

My friend Janice Arney rescued us in mid-Delaware, easing her truck and trailer to a stop beside the latest major highway that passed for a trail. One look at her pasture, her big farmhouse, and we were hooked. "We need a layover day." Plus, Janice had hinted at seafood restaurants and soft trails through pine forests. After battling traffic and uncertainty for miles, I needed to meet the real Delaware.

Janice and Kenneth Arney coax life from Delaware's dusty fields — 600 acres that aren't even theirs. The solid farmer explains, "People buy land to be near the beach, but all they want is the house and the location. I take care of the land for them." Sometimes he pays a lease and sometimes not. The land spawns golden wheat, cracking a whip for the family — moisture content, combines, trucks to the docks, the going price per ton.

Janice dances to the chirping songs of peeping poultry. From the moment the trucks unload the 50,000 chicks to the rumble of the market semis, she mothers the birds. By the time the mortgage is paid, the poultry houses will provide a good income. Like most American farmers, the Arneys count pennies between paychecks.

And like most farmers, Kenny has a job "on the side." Since the wheat isn't quite dry enough for prime price, he takes Dad on his plumbing shop rounds. I load up a tired "Ben" so Janice can show me what Delaware's trails are like. We skirt marshy ponds aflit with water birds. Ben's hooves fall soft in white sand as I duck under soft-needled pines that meet above the trail.

"I just wanted you to know Delaware isn't all beach traffic and pastel condos," Janice rides a huge quarter horse she trained herself. She's got a fine youngster coming along — her concession to the hard farm life.

We must have taxed the Eastern Shore's seafood industry. At the Red Mill Crab House, huge platters of red crabs clattered across paper-muffled tables to the accompaniment of pitchers of Coke and paper trays of hush puppies (sprinkled with powdered sugar) and steamed shrimp. Piles of spidery legs and blushed shells grew obscene in front of each of us.

Next night, it was off to a carnival for oyster fritter sandwiches. In dismay, I thought of all that dried trail food in our packs. Tomorrow we'd trailer across the Chesapeake and around D.C. Before encountering the Arneys, I couldn't wait to leave the state. Now, I hated to say goodbye.

Jim Hoehn caught us boiling water on a steaming July day near the Pennyfields Lock on Maryland's C&O Canal Trail. We had a couple hundred miles of the tow-



Joshua Stone, left, and Matthew Greenawalt rub down "Ben" and "Rachel" after a long day on the American Discovery Trail. Daniel Taylor, grandson of Ric and Sharon Taylor of Ric O Shar Ranch in Delaware, keeps "Rachel" company.

path to ride, and had barely begun. Even though we were trespassing on government clover, we stopped anyway. From a small creek that flowed from Maryland suburbia, Dad found clean-looking water. But we boiled just to be safe.

The hiker admired our horses and mule. We chatted and he left abruptly.

About an hour later, he jogged back to our campsite. He balanced two frosty quarts of water with a canal guidebook published by the Boy Scouts. His running commentary included helpful hints about the trail, and as we met numbers of "know nothing" Park Service employees, we wondered often why folks like Jim Hoehn weren't hired to make the trail usable and enjoyable.

For years, I've heard Northern Virginians tout multi-use or shared-use trails. So many trails criss-cross the mountains that users seldom meet, much less squabble about trails. So the C&O was the first shared-use trail I'd ridden. I

expected some problems from speeding bikes and disgruntled hikers. Instead what I found were scores of wonderful, helpful folks who wanted to chat, pat our horses, and help us out.

One biking couple pedaled to Poole's General Merchandise and Feed and persuaded Mrs. Poole to open up on her day off. Others gave us trail information, held our horses or just talked about themselves and their part of the country. I did not

See *TRAIL*, page 21



Deborah Sensabaugh, left, and Matthew Greenawalt give "Ben" and "Rachel" some early morning exercise before setting out on the American Discovery Trail.

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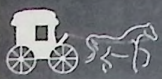
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# Yesterday once more



## Springdale Church puts history in pages of book

By VERA HAILEY

The first paragraph of the introduction in the newly-published book, *Where the River Flows*, by Kathryn Huber, sums up the essence of a church's history:

"Springdale Mennonite Church is located about one-fourth mile north of one of South River's meandering loops through the farmland of southeastern Augusta County. The first Mennonites who settled there came searching for land to ensure homes and a livelihood for their families. They

brought with them a strong faith in God's providence and a willingness to work. The legacy they left for those who came later to worship and fellowship at Springdale is a richly woven tapestry of lives joined in joy and pain, in disappointment and fruitfulness, in labor and celebration. It is a confirmation that God moves graciously in and through imperfect humanity to create a community of faith and hope."

By the early 1800s, Mennonites had moved to Augusta County from Shenandoah and

Rockingham counties. These German settlers originally had migrated to Virginia from what is now Lancaster County, Pa.

By 1825, two groups of Augusta County Mennonites started using churches as houses of worship, as opposed to the traditional use of private homes for services. These were the Hildebrand congregation and what would become the Springdale church. The Springdale group used a small school building, known as Kendig's School, that was located on the site of their current church and were known as the Kendig's congregation.

In the early years, church leaders were chosen by a lot method. Nominations were received from the congregation and a special meeting was called. Identical books, equal to the number of candidates, were placed at the front of the church. A slip of paper was placed in one of the books. The candidates were directed to come forward and choose a book. The one who chose the book containing the paper being was ordained because God had chosen him for the office.

By the time of the Civil War, the pacifist Mennonite presence in the Shenandoah Valley was well-established. Gen. Stonewall Jackson wrote of the group: "There lives a people in the Valley of Virginia, that are not hard to bring to the army. While there they are obedient to their officers. Nor is it difficult to



A view from the north side of Springdale Mennonite Church shows the addition made to the church in 1991.

have them take aim, but it is impossible to get them to take the correct aim. I, therefore, think it better to leave them at their homes that they may produce supplies for the army."

When a new church building was constructed in 1886, the church name was officially changed from Kendig's to Spring Dale. The spelling eventually evolved into Springdale as one word.

The Mennonites at Springdale were instrumental in starting more churches in the area. Contact made with Scots-Irish families living near Back Creek in the mountains above Sherando resulted in the beginning of the Mountain View Mennonite Church, established in 1900. The church, now known as Stuarts Draft

Mennonite Church and first known as Valley View, was started in 1916. The Greenmonte congregation near Greenville began in 1949.

In 1943, a school was started. By 1950, a school building had been built about a mile from the church. This served the local Mennonite population until 1965.

Extensive addition and renovation to the church building has taken place over the past two decades.

The church history book is dedicated to the memory of Bishop Roy D. Kiser who began the research for a written history before his death.

Anyone interested in purchasing a copy of Springdale's history may call the church at 540/949-8945. —



1825-1886

This photo was taken after building was moved and converted to a barn.



1886-1941

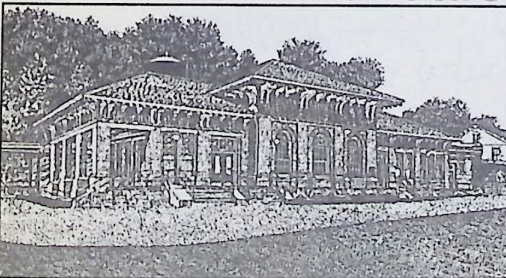


1941-1991

Springdale Mennonite Church  
Rt. 2, Waynesboro

A commemorative postcard published in 1978 showed three facades of Springdale Mennonite Church which recently released a book detailing its history.

## Augusta County Historical Calendars



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## Birthplace exhibit portrays Staunton during Wilson years

By SUE SIMMONS

STAUNTON — Just when it seems the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace and Museum has put on the best exhibit ever, it outdoes itself.

The recent installment to the Valley Collects series, "Staunton Stories: The City during the Wilson Years" runs until Jan. 4, 1998.

Sponsored by Bell Atlantic and Community Bank, the exhibit gives a "snapshot" of Staunton within the context of the Wilson family's arrival in Staunton in 1855 to Wilson's visit as the President-elect in 1912.

Jam-packed with pictures, clothes, letters, diaries, and a variety of other objects — from a Western Lunatic Asylum initialed water glass to a

saxophone to a trunk found in the Edmund Cabell cabin — the exhibit brings Staunton of yesteryear to life.

As the Birthplace's gift to the city of Staunton's sesquicentennial celebration, the exhibit is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week through November and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. beginning in December.

If you need something to do with out-of-town guests over the holidays, spend some time at the Staunton Stories exhibit. And don't forget the annual Birthplace open house scheduled for Dec. 28 — Woodrow Wilson's birthday — from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For information about the exhibits or the birthplace, call 885-0897 or 1-888-4WOODRO. —



Newly-elected President Woodrow Wilson waves his hat during a pre-inaugural visit to Staunton in 1912.



# The Full Monty takes on gender issues bare handed

Peter Gatteno's *The Full Monty* has knocked *Four Weddings and a Funeral* out of place as the most popular British movie ever to play in America.

For good reason too. It's the blue-collar answer to terminal yuppieism.

This unsophisticated little film is set and was shot in Sheffield, England's steel-city. Hard times follow the closing of the steel mill. The film follows a group of out-of-work men struggling to keep their families and their self-respect intact.

Robert Carlyle plays Gaz, a 30-year-old working class hustler trying to make a buck — or a quid as they say — and who is in serious danger of losing the right to see his son unless he comes up with back child support. One evening, he, friend Dave, and son



Nate happen upon women pouring in to see the Chippendales — a male strip show.

Hordes of women paying to see men take off their clothes is almost more than Gaz and Dave can bare — oops — bear. That is until they realize how much money can be made from a roomful of women will-

ing to pay to ogle male strippers. Gaz hatches a plan. He recruits a motley crew of six unemployed men to become the local version of Chippendales — Hot Steel.

These "blokes" — none of whom remotely resembles Hugh Grant — are skinny and fat, pidgeon-chested and muscular, young and middle age. That they can't dance is only slightly less daunting than the act of actually having to take off their clothes. As they practice and work at putting together their dance routine, the men come to grips with their roles

as husbands and fathers, their responsibility as bread winners, and simply what it means to be a man.

The movie does a marvelous job of turning the tables — both on the characters and on the audience. Gaz, Dave, and Gerald and the rest of Hot Steel are subjected to the same casual yet harsh criticism they dish out to women. It also does a number on the movie-going audience, which generally takes female nudity — gratuitous or not — in movies for granted. There is some, but not much, nudity in the movie, yet you squirm

in your seat at the very thought of what may be coming next.

Writer Simon Beaufoy manages a script that talks a great deal about stripping and being naked without actually showing it. This is probably not a movie for prudes. But if you enjoy adult humor, a little slapstick, and a chance to laugh at the human condition, *The Full Monty* will leave you chuckling all the way home.

Hannah Banana's Mom gives *The* (hilarious) *Full Monty* four bananas. The movie is rated R for language and some nudity. —

## Honor Society active at RHS

By JACKIE NORRIS

GREENVILLE — The Blue Ridge chapter of the National Honor Society at RHS remains active throughout the school year. It promotes academic achievements as well as humanitarian projects. Road clean ups near Augusta County's Greenville Recycling and Solid Waste Center occur periodically during the school year. The clean ups are small steps toward a cleaner environment, even though members must drag themselves out of bed and get a little dirty.

The service project for this year was a new and enjoyable experience, serving spaghetti at the Valley Mission. All of the members pulled together to prepare, serve and clean up the food that was cooked. Morgan Sproul said, "To be in NHS is a great privilege and allows me the opportunity to help others."

The NHS can be fun also and is currently planning a holiday celebration to take place in December. However, the focus right now is the upcoming induction of the new members who are Lori Anderson, Jeb Arbaugh, John Barr, Michelle Bernier, Bill Brannock, Jason Bunn, Matt Caldwell, Rachel Church, Carrie Dolive, Leah Dubinski, Laura Edwards, Johnathan Fitzgerald, Emily

Gallegly, Douglas Grimm, Brennan Haltli, Jennifer Haltli, Kelly Hardie, Carrie Heizer, Calvin Hemp Jr., Amanda Huffman, Sarah Jennings, Emily Moore, Amos Painter, Daniel Pirkil, Morgan Pittkin, Hollis Poats, Robert Shipp, Martha Shull, William Simmons, Julia Vessey, Chapman Williams, and Hillary Wysor. —

## • VCC

Continued from page 11

Clearly VCC has pursued its mission of "promoting land use that sustains the farms, open spaces and cultural heritage of the Valley of Virginia." Architectural surveys, landscape studies of Civil War battles, watershed protection projects, and helping arrange historic and scenic easements are among the many projects supported by VCC. Not only does VCC advise and guide landowners, but because the group is also a land trust, it can receive gifts of land and hold easements for conservation and community purposes.

Cooper explained what she calls the three focal points of the organization. "We provide technical service to private landowners who wish to take steps to protect land and we provide public policy influence through member participation. If we just concentrated on the first one without the second one,

our work would be comparable to spot zoning. Because we emphasize public awareness through educational programs, we can tie it all together through individual citizens and localities," she said.

So, if you didn't know about VCC, you do now. Cooper and the one thousand VCC members can look back on the past seven years with a sense of accomplishment, and toward the future with a feeling of hope.

"We have developed our mission and goals carefully," she said. "We are not confrontational or adversarial. We just promote good land use."

If you would like to know more about VCC, write Valley Conservation Council, P.O. Box 2335, Staunton, Va. 24402 or call 540-886-3541. —

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# Schoolhouse News

## RHS band reaping rewards for hard work

By KELLY KURAPATSKIE

GREENVILLE — Throughout the past year Riverheads Gladiators Marching Band has participated in many competitions. Its first competition was Sept. 27, at Stonewall Showcase of Bands where it competed in class AA. The band received third place in

its class, third place drumline, and became the highest ranked band in Augusta County.

On Oct. 4 the band attended the Lord Botetourt competition. It received first place general effect, first place drumline, first place marching and maneuvering and first place in music. The Marching Gladiators also received a second place in

colorguard. The drum majors, Katie Manley and Kelly Kurapatskie, received a superior rating and the class received the Band of the Day in class A and class AA.

The band also attended the James Madison University Parade of Champions competition Oct. 11 and the Greenbrier East Oct. 25. At Greenbrier the band received second place drum major and third place drumline.

The Riverheads Marching Band has done an excellent job this past year. The band is under the direction of a new band leader and has done extremely well. Not only has the band done well in the past, it will continue this tradition into the future. —



The Riverheads High School band performs during halftime festivities at a recent football game. RHS staff photo

## RHS student earns Merit commendation

GREENVILLE — Micah J. Ward of Riverheads High School has been named a Commended Student in the 1998 National Merit Scholarship Program.

A letter of commendation from the school and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) which conducts the program will be presented by RHS principal Gregory McGee to this scholastically talented senior.

Ward is the son of John and Mari Ward of Greenville. He is a member of the Geology Club, cross country and tennis teams at RHS. He serves as reporter for the National Honor Society, treasurer of the Drama Club, captain of the Academic Team, and was a delegate to Boys' State. He is active in his church and community.

About 35,000 commended students throughout the nation are

being honored for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the competition for Merit Scholarship awards to be offered next spring, commended students placed among the top five percent of more than a million students who entered the 1998 Merit Program by taking the 1996 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

"The Merit Program is extremely competitive," commented an NMSC spokesperson, "and the young men and women named Commended Students can be proud of their designation."

NMSC honors scholastically talented students in an effort to encourage public interest in the achievements and to broaden their educational opportunities, as well as to credit their schools for the important role they play in their development. —

## FHA at RHS takes service to community seriously

By RUTH JONES

GREENVILLE — The Future Homemakers of America at Riverheads High School have held many community service projects in the past. The most popular is the annual Halloween party for the area children. The popularity of this year's event was no surprise with a turnout of close to 200 children. There were many games and activities including Witches Brew, Face Painting and Go Fishing.

Another big community service project is dressing teddy bears for the needy. Every year bears are donated to RHS for the students to dress. The people who have the best-dressed bears are rewarded. The bears are then returned and given to needy children as cuddly Christmas presents.

The Riverheads FHA chapter is also doing an all-year project for the Valley Mission in Staunton. Each month FHA prepares a dinner for residents. This year FHA members are collecting Campbell's Soup labels for the mission. This part of the community service has been a great encouragement for Valley Mission residents.

Overall, FHA has had a jam-packed year full of encouraging projects for the community which has uplifted many residents.

Kathleen Buchanan, RHS FHA adviser, said, "Community service projects allow members to

become involved in a very active and caring way. It promotes a lifetime in volunteering." —



A Riverheads High School FHA member opens a prize for a young participant during the school's annual Halloween party for area children. RHS staff photo



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# The Hitching Post

## Micki Noell gets early start in show ring



Micki Noell sits astride "Diamond," the pony she rode during the 1997 show season. The awards won by the young equestrian and her mount are displayed in the photo's foreground.

By CHRIS MARRS

STAUNTON — What is so special about the horse?

"You can RIDE it!" exclaims Micki Noell, the 7-year-old daughter of Tee and Neils Schroeder of Staunton. And ride she does. Micki has been riding since she was 2 years old and started competing at 3.

"I broke 'Diamond' when I was six," she says. "Diamond" is the pony Micki rode this year in competition. He is a chestnut gelding only 11 hands high.

"Mom couldn't ride him. She led me around on him," Micki says. After that, Tee let Micki and "Diamond" go in the round pen. Tee serves as Micki's coach.

"When I do something wrong, she helps me," Micki says of her mom and coach.

"Diamond" and Micki had a rough beginning.

"He bucked me off at the first

show," she says. Tee says that was the only time it happened. After that, "Diamond" was fine.

Micki is proud of her ribbons and shows off seven blues, five reds, two whites, and five yellows. Her goal next year is to show "Lily," a 14.2 hand Appaloosa filly, in western pleasure.

Micki also likes to walk her dogs around the neighborhood and go fishing and crabbing. The family takes time to head to the Chesapeake Bay to fish. Micki says she catches spots, croakers and flounder. Tee says her daughter loves fishing. Micki is a Cloverbud with the Galloping 4-Hers.

For now Micki's goal is to compete at the "big" shows. What is "big?" That would be the registered Appaloosa and registered quarter horse shows. For a 7-year-old, Micki is pretty sure of where she wants to go. "Diamond" has been sold and next show season should see Micki on her new horse "Lily."

"Lily's" my favorite horse because she lopes smooth and doesn't bounce," Micki says.

Micki recalls her most memorable award. It was a first place ribbon in Brownsburg at an all western show.

"I got excited because it was my first one," the young equestrian says.

Micki is looking forward to competition next year which should see her add many more blue ribbons to her collection. —

### 4-H Hippology contest results

**Botetourt County**  
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 2nd judging  
 7th quiz  
 Senior team  
 1st overall

**Shayna Pollner, junior —**  
 1st overall  
 1st quiz  
 9th judging

**Virginia Horse Festival**  
**High Senior Team —**  
 Crystal Hatkevich, Kate Lam, Stefani Massie, and Dana Noel

**High Individual**  
 Stefani Massie

**2nd high Individual**  
 Kate Lam

## Galloping 4-Hers mostly like horsing around

By CHRIS MARRS

VERONA — The Augusta County Galloping 4-Hers is a special interest 4-H club that focuses on learning all about the club members' favorite topic — horses.

The club boasts a minimum of 35 members with almost 15 adults who attend meetings too. There are five main volunteer leaders who keep this club active

and involved in horsemanship. Lynne Noel, Pat O'Neal, Lucy Ritchie, Nancy Cheek and Ann Murray all work together to provide educational speakers, farm visits, showmanship workshops, and even a Gymkhanna Day.

Of all the activities offered in this club, the favorite of the group is Hippology.

"Hippology is a competition that revolves around knowledge, around horse activities, tack,

health, feeds, management, and care," Lynne explained. There are no "horses" in this competition, so non-horse owners can participate too. The club members compete in "teams" and also as individuals, but the scores of each team member are added up to find the winning team. Although most members are horse owners, non-horse owners are welcome to join the club. Members only need to have an interest in horses.

Some members provide com-

munity service such as volunteering for Ride with Pride, a therapeutic riding program in Staunton. Many club members volunteered to help at the Petting Zoo at the Augusta County Fair this summer. Another big project was the Augusta County Fair Horse Show. Approximately one half of the horse show committee was made up of parents of Galloping 4-Hers. The club realized a dream in the building of a permanent riding

See 4-Hers, page 21




**THE HITCHING POST**

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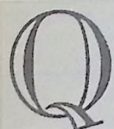
**Wills & Kroger**

in the Staunton Mall

in the Statler Square Shopping Center



# Horses communicate with body language, voices



Dear I.B.: What does it mean when a horse whinnies?

Horses have different meanings for their vocal sounds. We mostly communicate through body language. I will often lay my ears back on my head if I am irritated. Or I might switch my tail back and forth as a warning. A sign that I am happy is when I put my ears forward and take an interest in what is going on.

Vocal sounds also are a part of our communication system. A mare

will nicker to her foal. Stallions will whinny at mares and "call out" to them. Sometimes horses will whinny to each other in greeting. It is a form of acknowledgment. Often vocal communication is used when we can't get right up to the other horse. A whinny can bring back an answer and we can get a "feel" for each other.

Horses also can whinny when

they are separated. I became very attracted to a quiet little mare one time. Every time the owner would take her out for a ride, we would whinny back and forth to each other. When I heard her answer, I could keep a sense of where she was. Finally the owner pulled her away for a long term and we sort of "lost touch."

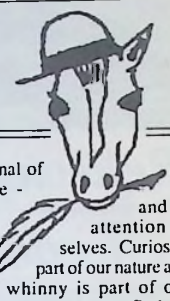
I will whinny to my owner around supper time, because I know she is there to feed me. The whinny is to make sure she remembers me. I don't want to take any chances when it comes to the grain. If I whinny, I let her know I am there, I see her, and I'm waiting.

Sometimes I will whinny to a

strange horse if I don't recognize him. His answer can tell me if he's friendly and also whether I know him. When I am in a stall, it is difficult for me to see everything going on. A whinny can sometimes let me know who's there.

I guess you could say that the whinny of a horse is a sign of affection. We use it as a friendly greet-

ing, a signal of where - abouts, and to bring attention to ourselves. Curiosity is part of our nature and the whinny is part of our communication process to find out who's who, who's where, and who's feeding us tonight. —



## I.B. HOOFINIT Horse Sense

*I.B. Hoofinit is a fictitious horse character developed by Chris Marrs as a service to teach horse care. Questions to I.B. Hoofinit may be submitted to P.O. Box 2955, Staunton, Va. 24402. Questions become the property of Chris Marrs, and answers are subject to editor*

*approval. Information provided in this column is meant to be taken as general advice. Each horse, rider, owner, and situation reflects different problems. I.B.'s answers are meant to be informative and enjoyable, but not binding. Common sense in any situation is a must.*

## Trail

Continued from page 16

hear one complaint about horse hoof erosion or horse manure or horses eating government grass.

One day, near Brunswick, I took a good long look at "Ben" and said to Dad, "We're going to have to go home and get the rig. This guy needs more groceries than we can find along this trail."

At home, I readied the truck and trailer for the long haul — new tires,

oil change, different gear, and a whole truckload of high-powered horse feed for "Ben."

Soon as he gained his weight back, we left for Maryland again, taking up the trail where we had left off at Brunswick. This time, Beth Greenawalt and kids were along as a support crew. As those first canal miles disappeared under "Ben's" hooves, I felt at home.

Along the canal trail, we encountered a jogger training for a mara-

thon. I jogged Ben a little, to keep up. The jogger explained about the long slow distance regimen that enabled him to run steady mile after mile. I explained to him horse stats. We do the same type of training for endurance horses.

The jogger was writing the great American novel and working in Washington, D.C. Because of the Amtrak line, Brunswick was becoming a bedroom community for D.C.

"But not in the old days," he said. "There were more taverns and houses of ill repute in Brunswick than any other canal town. It was a swinging place."

He talked about the Brunswick of yesterday and I talked about the trail I'd seen so far.

That night we trailered to the Shenandoah River and stayed two days with Ruth Schaeffe, whose daughter lives in Harrisonburg. Her neighbors, Dave and Angie Chiccarelli, own a race horse. Dave gave me a crash course in the world of racing as we drove to Charles Town track and I met "In the Blue." A sprinter, "Blue" looked like she could burn up the track.

We spent two days at Williamsport, camping in the town park where the muddy Conococheague Creek looses herself in the gigantic Potomac. While I sat outside the visitor center where the Howell Brothers wove canal magic with bluegrass and wild takes, Beth and her kids left for home and my dad arrived to fill the support team role.

George Washington Howell finagles a battered fiddle inlaid with mother-of-pearl. He's not sure she's a Stradivarius, but she's got the trademarks and the golden sound. He swings into his composi-

tion "The C&O Canal Waltz." Suddenly I can see them — the ladies in hoops and the gentlemen dashing in Confederate gray. G.W. pauses to recite a litany about his great grandfather's Civil War experiences.

Leaning on his cane, 86-year-old William Turner recollects the mules he's driven down the towpath, the coal he's hauled. He talks about the great flood of 1929 and how it spelled doom for the damaged canal. "After that, I went to work tending bar."

Above the town, Abner Doubleday's earthworks sent shells into Williamsport. Turner digs in his pocket and brings out a souvenir — a button from the Massachusetts Volunteers. "Dug it up in my yard."

Edward Howell, G.W.'s brother, is quiet. He likes mules and wears a Park Service volunteer cap. That evening, as an orange sun sputters in the Potomac, he brings his wife to visit and helps me feed my mule, "Rachel." "We rode the whole canal, a bunch of us. That was years ago," he said, stroking "Rachel's" sleek blackness. "I have a mule at home, but she's pretty much just a pet."

Next morning he brings us a hundred pounds of corn to keep "Rachel" fat all the way to Cumberland.

Great Falls, where the restored canal begins, features pristine reconstructed buildings and even a team of mules and a canal boat. There you can watch how life was.

But my vote for the ultimate canal town goes to Williamsport, where canal magic takes you back to the real world of men and mules, coal dirt and muddy water, hard work and miles tallied. There you

can live the past with the Howell Brothers and William Turner.

Stores along the trail are like oases. Poole's near Seneca Lock where everything crowds under one roof — tack, groceries, sandwiches, junk food, dried food, and a whole second building bulging with animal feed. Reels and Wheels at Taylors Landing — not much there, but what's there is cold and frosty. And then there's Bill's at Little Orleans.

Bill tends bar. But he masterminds fishing tournaments, too, and presides over years of stories. Lives lived and enjoyed. Trophy bass sliding out of Potomac waters. Canoes down the river. His store has lots of fishing tackle, and bottles of Scotch lined behind a worn counter with lumpy red stools where generations of fishers have drowned sorrows over the ones that got away. "I've been written up in National Geographic and the Washingtonian," he explains. He still grouches about a bad review some lycra-clad biker gave in a trail book. As locals and trail folks come and go, I think the city biker has had little effect on Bill's clientele.

We pull soft drinks from the dark cavern of an ancient cooler, the red kind emblazoned with Coke bottles and red knobs on the lid. Bill points to the dollar bills framed on the ceiling. "People brought them here from all over." I squint at the names and places scribbled on the dollars. "Had to quit, though. Ran out of room and it makes the place too dark."

That night we stayed at Ric O Shar Ranch, a horse farm owned by a retired couple from Baltimore. Next morning, we returned to Bill's for some history, more stories and soft drinks for the trail ahead.

That's how I came to measure the trail this summer. Not in miles traveled, but in people met, stories shared, lives swapped, tales traded, and friends made. The miles traveled day after day, make it a trail. The lives encountered along the way make it an American discovery. —

## 4-Hers

Continued from page 20

ring at Augusta Expo in Fishersville. The ring was ready in time for this year's horse show at the fair.

In foresight of future events, the ring was made large enough to accommodate other livestock events. All materials for ring construction were donated — posts, lumber, grit, grading services, and even a 12-foot by 16-foot secretary's booth in the form of a log house. The ring still requires some finishing touches. The club is looking forward to a day of painting and is making plans to continue fundraising for the project.

The club has one major fundraiser per year at the county fair which is a food booth. A great deal of participation comes from the parents and almost all the food is donated. The money

raised with this project gives the club its working budget for the entire year.

Part of the program as a Galloping 4-Her is the horse projects. These are recordkeeping projects in horsemanship that offer achievement awards. Horse owners are expected to keep records on their horses in health, vet, farmer, and general care. Non-horse owners can keep records of horsemanship through local lesson programs.

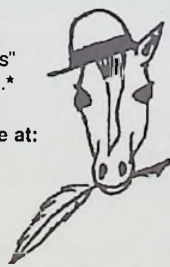
Galloping 4-Her meetings are held at the Virginia Power Company building in Verona on the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Volunteers with an interest in horses are always welcome, as well as new members. For information about the Galloping 4-Hers, contact Jennifer Mercer at the Augusta County Extension Office, 245-5750. —

## Horse Care Tips!

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# Country Crossroads

## Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin  
November 1997



Dear Maude,

Well, at last Congress has adjourned for the year and most of the members have gone home. What a welcome relief after those last few weeks! In addition to much debate over Fast-Track, the immigration issue, and arguments over the inclusion of language concerning international family planning agencies in the funding measures for the United Nations and International Monetary Fund, there was also great noise made in those last days about tax cuts. No one is sure what anyone meant to cut, however. And as for campaign reform, they seem to have worked out a deal. After a deadlock with proponents vowing to attach this measure to every bill that came along, the members promised a vote by next March. Now the members can go home and tell their constituents that they did something. The something they did was to promise to do something next spring. It sounded like so much was happening, and now that it is all over, very little legislation actually was passed. But then, what's new? There's always next year, and since it is not an election year, they can wait and worry about those important issues later.

After the adjournment of every session of Congress, there is always a let-down time when no one wants to do anything but sit still and listen to the quiet. You will find people who are usually maniacally busy just staring out the window. I found myself doing that a couple of days after this adjournment. It was a dreary, rainy day, and I said to myself, "Well, you made it through another session, why not celebrate and do something really interesting?" The thing that came to mind was that new exhibit at the Woodrow Wilson House. I decided to reward myself with a preview of the exhibit before Anna Lee came over with the boys. So off I went in the gray drizzle.

The exhibit is titled "American Homespun for the President's House" and is centered around Ellen Axson Wilson's decoration of the President's bedroom, referred to as the "Blue Mountain Room."

The First Lady was an accomplished artist in her own right, and soon after she and President Wilson moved into the White House, she began to redecorate the family quarters. For this room she decided to use hand-crafted items which she had seen at the first display and sale by the Southern Industrial Educational Association held in Washington in the spring of 1913. This organization had been founded to help provide funds for settlement schools in the south where industrial and homemaking skills were taught. The 1913 show was organized for two reasons — first, to help the women of the mountain areas earn money with their skills, and second, to bring attention to the fine crafts produced by those women of Appalachia. Mrs. Wilson visited the show many times and chose fabrics and other crafts for the family quarters at the White House. She also met weavers whose work was at the show, and they wove some items especially for the "Blue Mountain Room."

Mrs. Wilson did a great deal to further the cause of the southern Appalachian crafts revival. When Wilson became president, Mrs. Wilson agreed to become honorary president of the Southern Industrial Educational Association and served in that position until her death in 1914. At that time her daughter, Margaret became the honorary president. While President Wilson was concerned with the transition into the Industrial Age, the first lady was busy helping with the arts and crafts revival. Because of her encouragement and interest, the crafts now survive and are appreciated by most Americans.

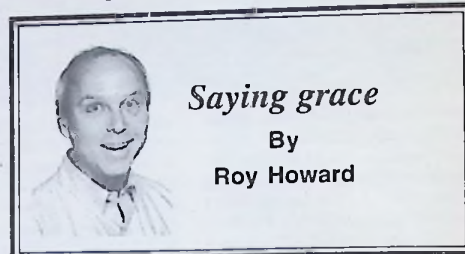
## Caught up in beauty

Every year I say the same thing. "The leaves this year are brighter, more stunning to the eye than ever before." Dazzled by the mountains draped in their multi-colored quilt, I forget how dazzling they were last year. Gazing at the maple tree beside the cemetery with leaves so yellow it takes your breath away, I can't imagine a tree ever more gorgeous than this one at this moment. The only adequate human response to such beauty is praise and gratitude. Nothing less will suffice. Enjoying this annual display of nature's wonders adorning every hillside and believing the response of praise springs forth in countless hearts, I imagine a great chorus filling the hills and valleys every autumn. Rising on the lips of drivers along I-81 as they grip the wheel in fear dodging one another is a gasp of delight. "Have you ever seen such a sight?!" is the joyful refrain repeated hundreds of times of day. I enjoy such an imaginary chorus filling the Valley because I know all too well the ever-present chorus of woe attached to this world's sorrows. For this glorious time — is it six weeks or longer? — all anyone wants to talk about is the beauty that surrounds them each day they step into the world. How refreshing it is to have at least one, sometimes two or three, conversations in a single day about trees splashed with color.

Coming off one of those conversations with an elderly lady in which she was jubilant over the leaves of the trees in her yard, I realized that for 30 minutes, maybe longer, we had engaged in non-stop rejoicing over the simple gift of autumn trees. Not a complaint entered our revelry, nor did wickedness and woe dull our senses nor smother the joy of our gratitude for this grace in which we were standing.

Caught up in this beauty, you might say we lost sight of all else. Actually, we gained our proper sight of the wonders and marvels that surround us all the time but usually are pushed to the background by other sights. The evidence that God's world is soiled, smeared and violated occupies a great deal of our sight. Too much. It takes a shock of beauty to restore the proper order; an immersion into goodness so dazzling, so uplifting that we are compelled to notice.

The colors of autumn are this to me: a baptism-by-immersion into beauty that recovers praise as the primary human



Saying grace

By  
Roy Howard

**T**each us to  
number our  
days, that we  
may present  
to you a  
heart of wisdom.

Psalm 90:12

response to God. After my conversation with the wise lady I wondered what our lives would be like if we lost ourselves in wonder, awe and praise for 30 minutes every day. Would

such an daily dose of gratitude change the way we see everything and everyone else? Would our woes have less power over us and would we be more compassionate toward our foes? Beauty will not make this world's ugliness vanish; but if we pay careful attention, the beauty of God may heal us, restore us and ultimately save us from harm.

You can't keep the maple leaves yellow. They will fall and the color fade away. Autumn reminds us that everything passes away including ourselves. As much as I want to hold onto this time, I can't; it is passing away. Next year's blessings must be received as this year's blessings: with open hands of grati-

tude for gifts unearned and unexpected. Each blessing surpasses the previous one. We are given beauty at this moment to savor, enjoy and share. But when we try to preserve the moment forever, we are disappointed. All things change. We have this moment alone to cherish and for which we offer praise. We can not hold it or repeat it again. It is as true for the leaves as it is for our lives.

Cherish this moment. Enjoy the beauty given to you now. Savor the gifts of autumn. Lift your heart in praise. Sing with the Psalmist: "Teach us to number our days, that we may present to you a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:12) —

One room at the Woodrow Wilson House has been set up for this exhibit where the crafts are beautifully displayed with large photographs showing their use in the President's bedroom. The actual woven coverlets and rugs are not those which were originally in the White House. (The ones purchased by Mrs. Wilson have long since been worn beyond use and have disappeared.) The exhibited items are other pieces woven at the same time, by the same two weavers, Elmeda McHargue Walker and Josephine Mast. They are of the same patterns and size. Some came from the weavers' families and some from the Smithsonian. The workmanship is incredible. The larger pieces are woven in strips and stitched together, with seams that can not be seen. As I looked at those large coverlets and bedspreads, I could not help but remember how your mother would weave little squares on that tiny hand loom of hers and make throws for all of us. (I still have mine!)

Mrs. Clinton found in storage at the White House a slipper chair which was shown in old photographs of the bedroom after Mrs. Wilson's decoration. A contemporary weaver duplicated the traditional colonial overshot pattern woven by Elmeda Walker and from this fabric a slipcover for that chair has been constructed for the exhibit.

Also displayed in the exhibit are two of Mrs. Wilson's paintings which had hung in the White House bedroom. (I remember several years back when there was an exhibit of

Mrs. Wilson's paintings in Staunton, Mama raved about them. For some reason, I was not able to get to the exhibit — now I wish I could have seen it as well. The paintings on display are beautiful. Mama always was one to enjoy fine art and crafts. She just never was very interested in any hands-on contact with them.)

Also in the exhibit are two cases of beautiful baskets which were among the crafts sold at that first Craft Exchange sale. Exquisitely done, they are made in the southern Appalachian style. The baskets were given to the Smithsonian Institution many years ago and this is the first time they have been displayed. And just as you enter the exhibit, in a small glass case there is a memorial calendar which is on loan from the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace in Staunton. Just seeing it, made me homesick for the Valley.

Needless to say, I completely forgot about all that craziness of the past weeks. I did not even notice that drizzle of rain when I left the museum. As soon as we have a good weekend, Anna Lee and they boys will come for another adventure and I will happily go back to show the exhibit to them.

Love to all,  
LuLu

(The exhibit at the Woodrow Wilson House, 2340 S Street, NW, Washington, D.C., runs until April 20, 1998.)



*You never thought of these before!*

## Christmas gifts for the gardener

Nothing much happened in Middlebrook this week. But over in Swoope, there was some kind of excitement. Seems a farmer, who shall remain nameless, dropped a pig off his pickup truck. At least that's what he thinks happened.

All he knows is that he went to a nearby farm, he bought four feeder pigs. When he got home, there were only three in the truck. Well, yeah... I suppose the missing pig could have sprouted wings and flew up into the big blue sky; however, the odds, well, the odds are just kind of slim of that actually happening.

By the way... has anybody seen a 45-pound red gilt walking around without supervision? If so, you can give me a call at... well, on second thought, just leave a message at the general store about where you saw the pig last. I'm sure word will get around and the rightful owner will show up pronto with a bucket of corn and a repaired tailgate.

Speaking of pronto, Christmas is coming up forthwith and 'tis the season for gift giving. I have a question for all of you serious gardeners. Of the thousands of choices available, which gardening tools, gadgets or implements would you most like to receive as a gift on Christmas morning? Is it that big-wheel garden cart you've been looking at in the catalogs? Or maybe it's the new spade with a fiberglass handle? How about that lightweight one-row seeder?

If you are not a gardener, but know one on your Christmas list, may I offer a few suggestions? I can guarantee that the following distinctive Christmas gifts will please any enthusiastic gardener. Be forewarned however. The recipient is just liable to hug your neck and smother you with kisses of gratitude.

So here it is, the 1997 Gardening Gifts Christmas List:

\*Gifts under \$10 (for gardening acquaintances)

— A gift certificate from Joe Furr livestock. For \$10, your gardening pal can purchase as much cow manure as he can load onto a pickup truck. Don't worry. Your gardening friend will know exactly what to do with it.

— A collection of sunflower seeds from Johnny's Selected Seeds. For \$7, your friend will be able to experience the summer of 1998 with the radiance of Giant Sungold, Autumn Beauty, Italian White, and Velvet Queen sunflowers. A stunning collection of seeds that will remind your gardener of this unique gift all summer long.

— A leather fly swatter from Lehman's catalog. When gardeners come in from a hot August afternoon of weeding, the last thing they want to bother with is a pesky fly. Nail 'em with this hand-sewn leather swatter from the Amish country of Ohio. (Attention cheap-skates! Your gardening friend will never know that you spent less than five bucks on this.)

\* Gifts under \$50 (for gardening comrades)

— *Fifty Easy Old-Fashioned Roses, Climbers and Vines*, an excellent hard-cover book from noted garden writer Anne M. Zeman. For those who know a gardening buddy who is interested in growing old roses but doesn't know where to start, here is a fine reference work to give as a Christmas gift. Published by Henry Holt and Co., 1995, \$25.

— A quart of Garlic Barrier botanical insect repellent. For about \$20, you can give your friend a unique gift that does not actually kill insects on garden plants. It just repels them and sends them over to the neighbor's garden. This dilutes to make more than two gallons of spray. They say it is approved by the California SPCGI (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Garden Insects).

— A truck load of mulch from Shenandoah Valley Landscape and Garden Center. Yes, yes, yes. For only \$45, this is a distinctive gift that your gardening friend will really



*The Garden Path*

By Jeff Ishee

appreciate. He may even invite you to come over and help spread the mulch in the spring.

\* Gifts under \$500 (for your gardening spouse)

— An antique apple orchard. Impress your better half with 25 different varieties of "antique" apple trees which will be delivered in springtime. Miller Nurseries offers Fall Pippin, Gravenstein, Spitzenburg and dozens of other hard-to-find apple trees. For about \$400, you can give a gift that will truly last a lifetime.

— Lamotte's Complete Combination Soil Test Kit. This is a splendid addition to any serious gardener's tool shed shelf. As you can imagine, model no. STH-5 allows an in-depth analysis of the soil. For \$275, you can really impress your other half (the one with the green thumb). You can also tell him or her to go play in the dirt and get away with it.

\* Gifts under \$5,000 (for you!)

— A Ferrari tiller. You think I'm kidding. Yes, Ferrari really does build garden tillers, except over in Italy, they call them "walking tractors." For about five grand (and up... way, way up!) you can fire up a diesel powered, seven-speed, electric start, powerhouse of an implement that will churn your garden into submission with just one pass. Even Santa himself would trade his sleigh for this ultimate gardener's Christmas gift.

From the Ishee family to yours, Merry Christmas everyone! ---

### Resources for the 1997 Gardening Gifts Christmas List:

- 1) Joe Furr Livestock — Va. 252 just south of Staunton. Call 885-0267.
- 2) Johnny's Selected Seeds — Call 540/437-4301 and ask for free catalog. Sunflower Collection is item no. 872.
- 3) Lehman's — Call 330/857-5757, or you can find them on the Internet at [www.Lehmans.com](http://www.Lehmans.com). Hand-sewn leather fly swatter is item no. LFS.
- 4) Old Fashioned Roses book — Any respectable bookstore can obtain a copy in just a few days.
- 5) Garlic Barrier — Most garden stores and catalogs carry this new item.
- 6) Truck-load of mulch — Shenandoah Valley Landscape and Garden Center in Verona. Call 248-2708.
- 7) Soil test kit — Nasco Farm and Ranch catalog. Call 209/545-1600.
- 8) Antique apple orchard — Miller Nurseries. Call 1-800-836-9630.
- 9) Walking tractor — Mainline, P.O. Box 526, London, OH 43140.

## Virginia Dept. of Forestry offers free seedling catalog

### AC staff report

The Virginia Department of Forestry publishes a tree seedling catalog for Virginia landowners. The catalog, *Virginia Trees for Virginia's Forests*, includes more than 45 species of seedlings that have been grown at one of the state's three forestry centers. These include the Augusta Forestry Center near Waynesboro,

the New Kent Forestry Center near Providence Forge and the Garland Gray Forestry Center near Littleton. Covering more than 1200 acres, the nurseries produce over 38 million seedlings annually.

The Virginia Department of Forestry has been in the seedling business for 80 years. When putting money in the ground in the form of tree seedlings, landowners need to start with the best stock available,

suited for Virginia soils and climate. The cultivation practices used by foresters in raising these seedlings are based on over 30 years of research and experience in quality production.

In addition to bare root seedlings, the catalog also offers landowners several different specialty packs and seed mixtures suitable for various wildlife habitats, screening, use in wetland areas and for erosion control.

For a free copy of the 1997-98 catalog, write to: Virginia Department of Forestry, P.O. Box 2393,

Staunton, Va. 24402. You may also call Forestry Technician Jeff Brower in Staunton at 332-7770. —

Examples of seedlings available in the 1997-98 catalog include:

- 1) Chinese Chestnut, mature height: 30 to 40 feet — \$55 for 50 seedlings; \$160 for 500
- 2) Sugar Maple, mature height: 70 to 110 feet — \$55 for 50 seedlings; \$160 for 500
- 3) Eastern White Pine, used as Christmas trees — \$40 for 50 seedlings, \$75 for 500
- 4) Sycamore, mature height: 60 to 80 feet — \$40 for 50 seedlings; \$125 for 500
- 5) Virginia Pine, mature height: 60 to 70 feet — \$35 for 50 seedlings; \$55 for 500
- 6) White Oak, mature height: 60 to 100 feet — \$40 for 50 seedlings; \$100 for 500



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# Augusta 4-H recognizes outstanding members

## AC staff report

**CEDAR GREEN** — Four Augusta County 4-Hers were recognized recently for outstanding accomplishments in project work.

Erin Murray, 13, and Robert Grogg, 10, were honored as Outstanding Junior 4-Hers for 1996-97 and Jennifer Smith, 18, and Daniel Salatin, 16, received the awards as Outstanding Senior 4-Hers during Augusta County's 4-H Achievement Night held Nov. 16 at the American Legion Hall.

Murray, the daughter of Ann and Riley Murray of New Hope, is a member of the Galloping 4-Hers and is president of the Willing Workers Junior 4-H Club. She has participated in 4-H events at the county and district levels including presentations and Share the Fun. For the 96-97 project year she completed six project books. In addition to her 4-H activities, Murray is active in school and community with Girl Scouts, piano, ballet, and flute.

Grogg, the son of Raymond and

Teresa Grogg of Churchville, is a member of the Middlebrook 4-H Livestock Club and serves as club reporter. He has exhibited lambs in Augusta County's 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show, the Junior Virginia Sheep Breeders Show, and the Junior Virginia Purebred Sheep Show at the Virginia State Fair. He has been active in club projects including the food booth at the Augusta County Fair and the Easter egg sale. Grogg completed two Wildlife project books during the 1996-97 4-H year.

Also a member of the Middlebrook 4-H Livestock Club, Smith is the daughter of Claude and Peggy Smith of Arbor Hill. Smith was recognized for her "tremendous leadership abilities by serving as a resource person and mentor to younger club members." She has served as club president and chaired various committees through her club work including the group's Christmas project and fair fundraising committee. She has exhibited steers and lambs in the

Market Animal Show and has participated in the steer and lamb fitting and showmanship clinics, the steer selection clinic, and worked in the food booth at the fair. Beyond the local level, she has attended the Virginia Beef Expo and Virginia State Fair to assist fellow 4-H members with animals exhibited.

Salatin, is the son of Joel and Teresa Salatin of Swoope. He is a member of the Augusta County Honor Club and is president of the 1997-98 4-H County Council. Salatin was commended for his leadership abilities by leading the presentations workshop for all county 4-H members. He also provided leadership for the Augusta County Fair Petting Zoo as well as the Spring Petting Zoo held for all area daycare centers. He has served as the district chairperson for the 4-H public speaking contest and has been an invited speaker for the Page County 4-H Presentations Workshop. Beyond 4-H, Salatin speaks to large audiences such as the Stockman Grass Framer North



Outstanding 4-Hers recognized recently for their achievements were, from left, Daniel Salatin, Jennifer Smith, Erin Murray, and Robert Grogg. Mac Swortzel of the Augusta County Cooperative Council made the presentation.

AC staff photo

American Grazing Conference held in Texas. He was also runner up for the Virginia Farmer's Direct Marketing Youth Award.

Mac Swortzel, vice president for credit of Staunton Farm Credit and a member of the Augusta County Cooperative Council, presented \$100 U.S. Savings Bonds to each 4-Her in recognition of their accomplishments.

Recognizing the spirit of volunteerism among 4-H members, Maxine Arey, women's committee chairman of the Augusta County Farm Bureau Federation, presented \$100 in scholarship money to the Augusta County 4-H camp counselors. The money will be used to help counselors fund their expenses to assist with 4-H camp activities.

Council officers installed at the event included Salatin, president; Heather Rockwell, first vice president; Ashlie Kiracofe, second vice president; Ellen Murray, secretary; and Jonathan Coleman, reporter. At-large members of the council are Erin Murray, Tamara Rohrbaugh, Denny Showalter, and Zachary Williams.

Clubs earning their charters this year were the Middlebrook 4-H Livestock Club and the Galloping 4-Hers. Both the Willing Workers Junior and Senior 4-H Clubs earned Gold Seals for their clubs' work during the past year.

Jennifer Mercer, Augusta County 4-H Extension agent, presented "I Dare You" awards to Smith and Rockwell.

Individuals inducted into the Augusta County 4-H Honor Club included Greg Holsinger, Byron Phillips, Crystal Hatkevich, Courtney Williams, Carrie Brown, Carrie Heizer, Amanda Hemp, Jennifer Smith, Beth Blackwell, Annie Davis, Bryan Glass, Ashley Gutshall, Justin Via, Jennifer Young, and Amy Swope.

In other presentations made during the evening, 4-H club leaders were recognized for years of service and members received achievement awards for completing project work in a variety of areas including dairy, horse, outdoor sports, judging competitions, presentations, Share the Fun, and Fashion Review.

## Yesterday's weather

Most newspapers include a weather forecast in each edition. But we try to be a little different at Augusta Country. We may not know what the weather will be like tomorrow, but we sure know what it was like yesterday.

**Dec. 1, 1831** — The coldest December of record in the northeastern U.S. commenced. Temperatures in New York City averaged 22 degrees, with just four days above freezing, and at Burlington VT the temperature never did get above freezing. The Erie

Canal was closed the first day of December, and remained closed the entire month.

**Dec. 12, 1989** — A winter storm produced snow from northern Mississippi to the Middle Atlantic Coast, with 10.5 inches reported at Powhatan, Va. Heavy snow whitened the Black Hills of South Dakota, with 36 inches reported at Deer Mountain. Thirteen cities in the north central U.S., from Minnesota to Texas, reported record low temperatures for the date, including

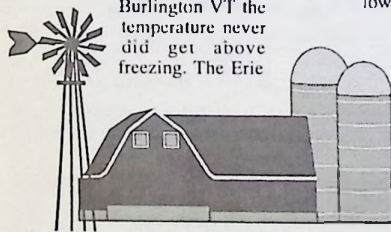
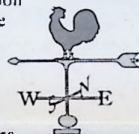
Duluth, Minn., and Yankton, S.D., with morning lows of 22 degrees below zero.

**Dec. 20, 1836** — A famous cold wave occurred in central Illinois. A cold front with 70 mph winds swept

through at Noon dropping the temperature from 40 degrees to near zero in a matter of minutes. Many settlers froze to death. Folklore told of chickens frozen in their tracks and men frozen to saddles. Ice in streams reportedly froze to six inches in a few hours.

**Dec. 25, 1989** — It was a record cold Christmas Day for parts of the southeastern U.S. Morning lows of zero degrees at Wilmington, N.C., and five degrees below zero at Jacksonville, N.C., established all-time records for those two locations. Miami Beach, Fla., equalled a December record established the previous morning with a low of 33 degrees.

**Dec. 31, 1929** — Greenland Ranch, in Death Valley, California, went the entire year without measurable precipitation.



Information for this report was taken from the World Wide Web homepage of the U.S. Storm Data Center.

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