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"Relax -- it's just good news."

# Augusta Country

April 1998
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Return of the roof people
Down on the farm
Pages 12-13


## Let's go 'sengin'!

*If you've lost your zip, zing and sizzle, ginseng might help you get them back!*

Stories begin on page 4

# North, South, East, and West...

# There's plenty going on in Augusta Country!!!

## Hey gals, he's tall, dark and handsome...

*Who's the new guy down at the Staunton P.D.?*

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## They're still pickin', they're still grinnin'... But do they still have all their own teeth?

*Robin & Linda celebrate the BIG 5-0 with a brand new album*

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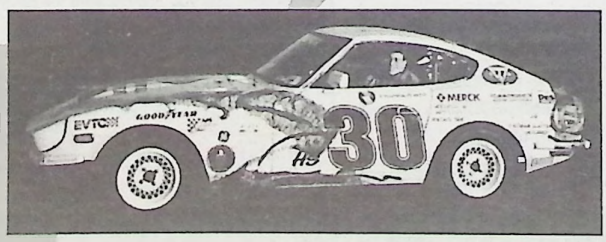


## That must be one lo-o-ong extension cord!

*Governor's school students' electric car wins in Phoenix, Ariz.*

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Big trouble in little Brownsburg – the Walker-Miller feud, Stories begin on page 6

# Va. Beef Expo slated for April 24-25 in Rockingham

HARRISONBURG — One of the East Coast's biggest "beef parties" will get under way April 24 when the Virginia Beef Expo comes to the Rockingham County Fairgrounds.

This year's edition of the show will mark the ninth time the event has been held. Beef cattle producers from all over the East Coast will convene at the fairgrounds for two days of contests and programs highlighting Virginia's beef industry.

Purebred seedstock producers will promote their respective breeds at sales throughout the two days. Sales on the first day of the event will include Simmental, Limousin, Angus, red Angus, Tarentaise, and polled Herefords. On the second day, Shorthorns, Charolais, and Texas Longhorns will be offered for sale. There also will be a commercial replacement heifer sale on the event's second day. Bulls for sale by private treaty also will be available. Cattle will be on display throughout the event.

Numerous contests will be featured during Beef Expo. An adult cattle judging contest, a forage judging contest, and youth and adult hay stacking contests will be held on April 24. On April 25 youth and adult stockman's contests will be held as well as a youth cattle working contest.

A variety of educational and public information displays and seminars will be held during Beef Expo. A trade show in the fairgrounds' exhibit hall will feature numerous products and services pertinent to the beef cattle industry. The displays and educational exhibits will appeal to cattle breeders and producers, as well as beef consumers.

And, of course, there will be plenty of palate-pleasing beef served at the concessions with ribeye steak and beef barbecue sandwiches available both days. There also will be an opportunity to sample a $25,000 prize-winning beef recipe during a presentation in the food pavilion. A roast beef tenderloin dinner will be served at the Barn Party April 24 with live country music for entertainment.

There is no admission fee to attend Virginia Beef Expo, however, tickets for the Barn Party must be purchased. A limited number of tickets are available and must be ordered by April 10. The cost for the party is adults, $15; children under 12, $7.50.

For information about Virginia Beef Expo, call Jim Johnson at 540/992-1009. Barn Party tickets may be ordered by sending a personal check or money order to the Virginia Beef Exposition, P.O. Box 9, Daleville, Va. 24083-0009. Barn Party tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. —

## AARP to meet

MT. CRAWFORD -- AARP Chapter 129 of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County will meet at noon, April 4 at Evers Family Restaurant.

The program will be presented by the Elkton Community Chorus with Cynthia James.

All persons 50 or older are welcome. For information, call 896-8239. –

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# German settlers credited with establishing Mt. Tabor Church

By BONNIE LIVICK-MOSES

MIDDELBROOK — On top of a quiet hill, nestled between mountains and overlooking a glassy pond, sits Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church. If the church and its graves could talk, what a lovely story they could tell. But, because they cannot speak, I will try to do my best to tell their story.

No one really knows the true beginnings of Mt. Tabor, but reliable tradition says that before there was ever a true church building, German settlers came together to worship. After a mission journey with Paul Henkel, Adolph Spindler decided to begin a church in Augusta County. Spindler bought a tract of land near Sugar Loaf, later known as Spitler Farm. The area is still known as "Spindler's Hills."

*"It seems to grow out of the limestone as it sits on the wind swept hill."*

The original Mt. Tabor building was constructed in 1838.

Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church

Spindler began services in his home and also taught English on his front porch. By 1785, some say, these people decided to build a church constructed of logs, which they christened St. John's. St. John's served for 54 years.

By 1839, the congregation had been spilt into two groups the German Reformed and the Lutherans. The Reformed group kept the St. John's site, located west of Riverheads High School, while the Lutherans decided to build a church of their own. But where would they build it? Tradition says that the site was selected by two people, one who lived the furthermost north and the other who lived the furthermost south. At a certain time they both left their homes and traveled until they met each other at Tabor Hill, and so the church was named Mt. Tabor.

One of the crowning achievements of the Mt. Tabor congregation was the construction of Roanoke College, now located in Roanoke, but started in Augusta County. The school's history began in the fall of 1842 when David F. Bittle, a minister of Mt. Tabor, decided to educate young men in the parsonage, one mile west of the church.

When they had sufficient funds, the school moved to two log buildings in 1843. Two years later it was named Virginia Collegiate Institute. By 1847 it moved for the last time to Salem, and was renamed Roanoke College on March 14, 1853.

The second and current Mt. Tabor church was erected in 1898 under G.W. Spiggle's pastorate. On Feb. 23 the dedication of the new church was celebrated by weeks of revivals attended by hundreds of people, even in the rain, cold, and snow!

Some things have changed since the horse and buggy days. The church now has lights, and central heat has been added. But one thing has not changed. The spirit of worship goes on, in full force. My favorite saying about this grand church is this, "It seems to grow out of the limestone as it sits on the wind swept hill." —

# Staunton woman reveals life's formula for success

By BONNIE LIVICK-MOSES

STAUNTON — When I first heard Louise Swink's voice, I automatically knew she was filled with a zest for life. Maybe it's her Scots-Irish background and a good head on her shoulders. When I met her, it confirmed my suppositions. Interviewing her for the Mt. Tabor story, I found out that she has a wonderful history of her own.

"Growing up along Middlebrook Road was hard, but I had many good times," the woman remembers with a twinkle in her eye.

Louise did not have any brothers, sisters or friends until she got older, so she had to imagine and play. Perhaps that is why she has such an active mind today. She would often travel the area around Spindler's Hills and visit her aunts who lived nearby.

But her life was not all play. Because she lived on a farm, she had to work hard! "From the time I could work even a little bit I picked berries and pulled weeds," she laughs. "Work is all I've been doing since!"

Days began for her at 6:30 when she milked the cows, fed the animals, picked berries, helped with the garden and sewed. Sometimes the work seemed confining, but at times the work brought people together.

"Everyone, it seemed, went to my aunts' home. We would all sit around and peel apples and nearly talk our heads off!" she said.

When Louise was 6 she went to Middlebrook school, and loved it from the beginning. "It was the first time I had any friends other than my mother," she recalled.

In first grade Louise showed her spirit when she wore lipstick to school. "The teacher called me a 'flapper' and told me to go wipe it off."

With her band of friends she played basketball, went to socials, went on picnics, and went to have ice cream and Cokes. With her family she went to Hot springs in a Model A, canoed, sang and had parties. During the Depression and World War II Louise says that she did not feel their effects, "because we lived on a farm we had everything that we needed."

In 1948 Louise met her soon-to-be husband, Thomas. "My friends and I would go to get Cokes and ice cream, because Thomas worked two doors down we would see him often."

The two married soon after and moved to Baltimore. Soon Louise became terribly homesick. "I loved being there for awhile, but there is no place like Virginia," she explains, reminding one of a certain movie starring Judy Garland.

The tide of homesickness did not last long, for soon Thomas and Louise decided to ride a motorcycle from Virginia to Nova Scotia! Together, or without Thomas, Louise traveled to all the eastern states, as well as Tennessee, Indiana, and Niagara Falls.

But, as with everyone, with the play must come work. Her last professional job was when she worked at King's Daughters' Hospital and the rest of her life she has contributed to many organizations. Louise has worked for the Staunton and Augusta Cancer Society, was a member of the Business and Professional Woman's Club, and has been certified for the National Wildlife Habitat Program.

Even though she now resides in a retirement center, she is still doing volunteer work. With her orange kitty, "Cuddles," at her side she explains her success in life. "God gave me the faith and hope to be creative, adventurous in exciting undertakings and experiences. Success has a simple formula: do your best and people will be happy." —

**Louise Swink of Staunton looks through one of the albums filled with mementos of her young life growing up near Middlebrook. Many of the items she has kept pertain to the history of Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church.**

Photo by Bonnie Livick-Moses

# Let's go 'sengin'!!

**Has the zippity gone out of your do-dah? Has the zing gone out of your heart strings? Has your sizzle fizzled? If so, it might be time to try some ginseng to restore your zippity, zing and sizzle. Come along as Augusta Country staff writer Penny Plemmons heads to the woods on a 'sengin' expedition.**

## Ginseng hunter combs mountains for profitable plant

By PENNY PLEMMONS

*Armed only with a keen pair of eyes, Junior Campbell of Rt. 1, Goshen, used June's spring days to track treasure buried beneath the forest floor. Virginia creeper, mayapples, and hardwood trees guided the outdoorsman up and down the hills and slopes of Virginia's Alleghenny mountains in solitary pursuit of a wild, lucrative root bearing the name ginseng.*

*Having recorded the location of each spring seedling in his incredible memory, Campbell revisited the sites in early October. This time bearing a small crowbar for digging mature roots.*

Back at home, the freshly dug roots were scrupulously cleaned and allowed to air dry for weeks before being traded to a dealer for money.

Ginseng is a perennial herb whose root is highly sought after for its medicinal powers. The name ginseng literally means the "root of man" because the root resembles the shape of the human body. It is touted as a "wonder remedy" that improves concentration and increases energy levels by bringing the body into balance.

Wild American ginseng is a highly profitable cash crop that last year brought as much as $375 for a pound of dried root. Campbell has hunted the valuable root on and off for a long as he can remember.

"I remember hunting 'seng (the name commonly used by ginseng hunters) with my daddy and brother," the 51-year-old Campbell explained about his interest in the plant. "I was just a little boy, though, and didn't pay much attention to what we were doing. It wasn't until the late 70s that I started digging for myself. My brother took me 'sengin', handed me a plant and told me to find one on my own. It took me several hours before I found one."

*Experience has given Campbell the ability to recognize a wild ginseng plant at each stage of its life cycle.* Wild turnip plants, Virginia creeper and something Campbell calls "fools ginseng," all impersonate the true plant. But Campbell's perceptive eyes maneuver around these impostors and he is easily able to lift out the clandestine ginseng from among the seemingly zillions of similar looking plants.

Concerning his expertise, Campbell humbly stated, "My eyes are just set for it. It's like hunting for mushrooms (morels)." Moving his finger in an ever widening circle, Campbell continued, "Once you find one mushroom, you'll find others all around it. Find one 'seng plant and there will be more nearby."

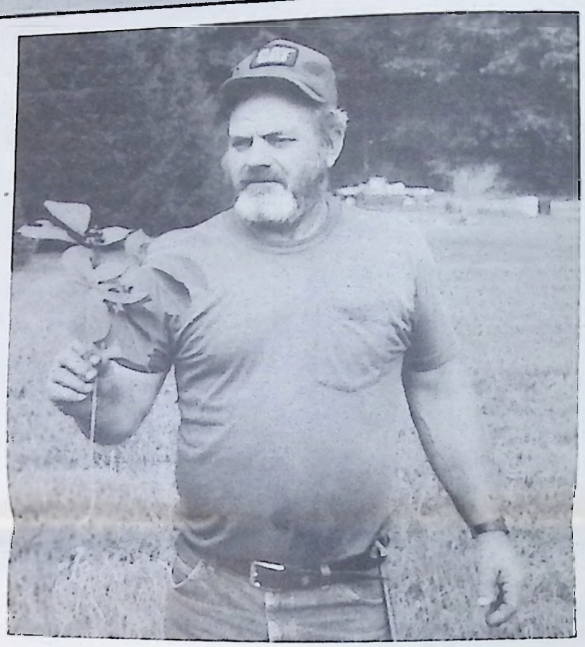
But don't think Campbell will reveal his hunting grounds to just anybody. Like most ginseng gatherers, Campbell combs the woods alone and keeps plant locations secret. He related that more than once he had been following the growth of a plant for several years, only to return the next season and discover someone else got away with the prized root.

The hunt also requires the patience of Job, of which Campbell has a lavish dose. He doesn't seem to mind walking for hours and turning up empty handed or waiting the necessary six to 10 years for a plant to reach maturity. He simply enjoys the pursuit.

Unless you live in the mountains, you probably won't find ginseng growing in your backyard. Particular requirements must be met before 'seng will put down roots. Wild ginseng prefers growing under a dense canopy of shade trees. In order to get the best sunlight and water drainage, the plant grows on hillsides facing south or west.

Campbell's tell-tell signs of the presence of ginseng include, black soil, rotting tree limbs, walnut or birch trees, leaf litter, goldenseal, ferns and a variety of other weeds. Campbell explained that he identifies the plant by its leaf arrangement, color and shape. A young ginseng sprout begins much like a bean sprout bearing two primary leaves. The foliage dies with the first frost while the small root

See ROOT, page 9



'Seng hunter Junior Campbell of Craigsville holds a freshly dug wild ginseng plant. The "green gold" is the root.
Photo by Penny Plemmons

## Virginia program protects ginseng

In an effort to insure that wild ginseng is not overharvested, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has established the Virginia Ginseng Management Program for ginseng collection and sale.

The collecting season begins Aug. 15 and ends Dec. 31, except when wild ginseng is dug from one's own land.

It is a crime punishable with fines or imprisonment to dig on another person's land without permission.

A landowner's seller declaration form must be completed when wild ginseng is dug from one's own land and sold prior to Aug. 15 for green wild ginseng and Sept. 1 for dried wild ginseng.

The Jefferson and Washington National Forest digging season begins Sept. 15 and ends Nov. 30 and limits digging to 4-prong or larger plants. A permit is required.

Purchasing ginseng for resale requires licensing annually.

To receive the complete management program or for more information on the collecting, buying and selling of ginseng, contact VDACS, Office of Plant Protection, Endangered Species Coordinator, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, Va. 23209.—

# Ginseng said to 'revitalize, energize;' uses vary among world cultures

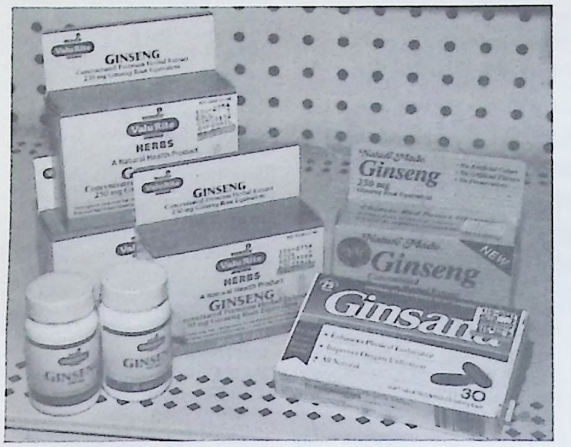
By PENNY PLEMMONS

Recently there has been a renewed focus on the benefits of using the herb ginseng to revitalize and energize the body.

Advertisements promise increased energy, mental alertness and greater stamina. But before you run off and purchase your extract of vitality, there are a few things you ought to know. Such as which ginseng will you buy? Will it be Korean red or Korean white, American or Siberian? Do you want a ginseng beer, gum, tea, tablet or would you prefer nibbling on a dried root? Are you willing to pay $5 or $35 for a month's supply? All of this may cause confusion.

And to make matters worse, there is little documented research on the effects and usage of the wonder herb. Most literature on the subject is in accordance with the findings of Soviet scientist I.I. Berkhman in 1969 who was the first to call ginseng an adaptogen implying that its medical value lies in the roots' ability to normalize body functions. For example, if your blood pressure goes too high, an adaptogen will bring it back to normal levels.

Controversy arises when attempting to establish the curative powers of ginseng. Some herbalists attest that ginseng promotes the healing of everything from acne to whooping cough. And though most concur that you shouldn't take ginseng everyday for the rest of your life, the dosage and length of time vary from one naturalist to the next.




**Ginseng comes in a variety of commercial brands. It has come to be known in various cultures for its therapeutic benefits.** Photo courtesy Gypsy Hill Pharmacy

But overall, ginseng does appear to offer some sort of positive mental and physical stimulation for those who use it. Even though the healing power of ginseng is somewhat of an enigma, the United States Food and Drug Administration generally recognizes ginseng as safe. Literature cautions against using ginseng for pregnant or nursing women or if there is a medical history of heart disease or high blood pressure. As with any self-medication practice, it is best to follow the advice of a doctor.

There are three noteworthy herbs which fall under the general label "ginseng" — *Panax* ginseng (grown in China and Korea), *Panax quinquefolius* (the American variety) and *Eleutherococcus senticosus* (not really ginseng, but a cousin variety grown in Siberia). Historical records indicate that the Chinese have been using the *Panax* variety as a revitalizing tonic for at least 5,000 years.

*Panax* is the Greek word for panacea. Because the shape of the ginseng root resembles a human body, ginseng is translated by the Chinese to mean "man-root." Thus, you have an herb that is touted by the Chinese as a "cure-all for man."

The Chinese hold to the belief that the more the ginseng root looks like a man, the greater the benefits of the herb's medicinal qualities. The Chinese are the largest consumers of all *Panax* types, mostly because ginseng is tied in with their philosophy that existence is balanced by two opposite forces, yin (dark) and yang (light) with ginseng providing the optimum equilibrium for life.

Chinese healers maintain that not only does the herb stimulate the body, it also increases physical and mental endurance, reduces cholesterol levels, inhibits cancerous tumors, and normalizes body functions.

Although Korea has little wild ginseng available, it is the world's largest producer of cultivated *Panax* ginseng. Two types are marketed, a red Korean ginseng and a white Korean ginseng. White ginseng is prepared naturally, using the sun and air to dry the roots, while red ginseng brings a higher price for being steam dried. Botanically, cultivated Korean ginseng is the same as wild *Panax* ginseng. On American soil, Native Americans used the *Panax quinquefolium* ginseng root to soothe nausea and vomiting. By the late 1700s, colonists such as the famed Daniel Boone, were making a sizable profit exporting American ginseng to China.

Today that foreign market is still thriving. Wisconsin is the largest producer and exporter of cultivated American ginseng, but wild ginseng hunted by mountain people is still in huge demand in the Orient and commands the greater price. Although effective as a body rejuvenator, American ginseng appears to be less stimulating than its Chinese relative. It is used to bring the body back into balance after a period of trauma caused by illness, surgery, or severe stress.

Ginseng grown in Russia, called Siberian ginseng, is not true ginseng. However the herbal effects closely resemble that of the *Panax* plants as it increases stamina, normalizes blood pressure and cholesterol. This affordable ginseng, sold primarily in the United States and Europe, is also noted for providing relief for colds, bronchial infections and curing insomnia.

Occasionally the words saponin or ginsenosides, are used in the marketing of *Panax* ginseng. These are the active molecular ingredients that give ginseng its stimulating pizzazz. When buying a packaged store product, look for ginseng with the highest concentration of active ingredients processed from mature roots.

Typically ginseng is taken in capsule or tablet form, powder or root. But methods of use vary. Some folks enjoy a cup of warm ginseng tea brewed the way the Chinese do it, in a silver pot. Others simply gnaw on a ginseng root or slip a sliver of dried ginseng into chicken soup. Be creative. The health effects will be the same. —

# *Ginseng cultivation can be profitable investment*

By PENNY PLEMMONS

Ginseng cultivation might just be the perfect small-scale cash crop for the farmer looking to diversify his business.

The popularity of ginseng as a curative herb that rejuvenates and energizes the body has produced world-wide overharvesting of the wild root. Continued demand for the product, especially in the Orient, has created a market for farmed-raised ginseng.

For farmers living in Virginia's mountainous regions, simulating the wild ginseng environment is not difficult. Mix the right location with a little bit of work and a whole heap of patience, and a ginseng grower can build a sweet little nest egg for retirement, college tuition, or a special vacation.

According to Andy Hankins, Agriculture Extension Specialist at Virginia State University, a 10-pound ginseng seed investment of $800, plus 20 days of labor spent cultivating wild simulated ginseng on a half-acre plot can yield 200 pounds of dried roots. Although the value of ginseng fluctuates annually, wild ginseng sold for $475 a pound in 1995, with wild simulated ginseng bringing a slightly lower price. Keep in mind though, even in an ideal situation it takes as many as 10 years before the "green gold" reaches maturity.

Because ginseng requires dense shade, farmers who have wooded areas on their property are prime candidates for raising American ginseng. A canopy of deciduous trees, such as walnut, poplar and beech, shading the ground flora of mayapples, ferns, and Solomon's seal indicate choice growing conditions. For optimum warmth, ginseng thrives best on hillsides facing south or west and requires rich moist soil that drains well.

Of course, the perfect proof that an area will sustain ginseng production is to find a wild plant already growing. Site preparation is minimal for ginseng. A serious grower will clear undergrowth and weeds from the bed to reduce competition and allow for proper air circulation. In the early autumn,

See *PLANT*, page 9

# History remains alive in Brownsburg

By DEBORAH SENSABAUGH

**Brownsburg lies just beyond Augusta County's southern boundary. It's a quiet place now. But like many of the villages which served as stagecoach stops between Staunton and Lexington, Brownsburg was once a center of bustling commerce. *Augusta Country* staff writer Deborah Sensabaugh provides us with a glimpse of days gone by in the Rockbridge community of Brownsburg.**

BROWNSBURG — About halfway between Staunton and Lexington, Va. 252 leans gently left. Scattered farmhouses cluster, growing a village, a bank, a post office, a church, an antique shop. Unmistakably old, the mostly two-story Victorian houses remember yesterday with little sentimentality, like smug soldiers who don't mourn fallen comrades.

And in today's Brownsburg, they have fallen, building by building until little more than the houses remain. Everyone drives to Lexington now. Folks no longer need the general stores, the barber shops, the barns, the doctor's office, the schools.

But just enough old timers remain to bridge the gap. With stiff sienna photos and saffron clippings, they stir knurled fingers in pots of memory. They refurnish the glory of old Brownsburg. They take everyone back to the hub days when rural northern Rockbridge revolved around a bustling village alive with buggies and riders, farm wagons loaded with harvest, ladies in long skirts with matching hats perched atop upswept hair.

Jen Wade Heffelfinger wrote in the Rockbridge Historical Society "Proceedings" that Robert Wardlaw and Samuel McChesney conceived Brownsburg on land they donated in 1793. The Lexington-Staunton stage already changed horses there. Named for New Providence Presbyterian minister, the Rev. John Brown, the village became northern Rockbridge County's center.

The Department of Historic Resources recognizes 13 remaining old buildings, including an 1820s house used as a saloon and later bought by a Quaker woman who held meetings and opened a health clinic and hospital, as an historic district.

By the early 1800s, an atlas styles the town "a hub of activity" with 20 houses, three stores, two shoe factories, three wheelwrights, two blacksmith shops, a tavern, a hatter, tan yard, saddlery, cabinet maker, two tailors, carpenter, a gristmill, a mercantile flour mill and three doctors among the 120 residents.

Mary Moore Montgomery Mason is the Walker family historian. She has a diary written by a third generation Walker at the home farm, "Walkerlands" on nearby Walkers Creek. John Walker wrote about 1812 when the chief topic on the Brownsburg boardwalks was the war. He wrote about haymaking, threshing, running a mill, floods, fires, and batches of brandy and whiskey, singing school for the girls, New Providence Church services and socials, and "frolicks" at nearby farms.

*In his mid-1800s diary, Henry Boswell Jones wrote about improving his soil by applying lime to his fields, keeping the roads up, counting calves and celebrating a new son on his farm Whitehall, near Brownsburg.*

In the Eggleston family, old pictures remain, weaving a story for those treasuring dusty Wilbourn plantation saddles. The first Wilbourn, William Robert, moved to Brownsburg from North Carolina. His apprenticeship resulted in a saddle and harness company. Family legend credits his son, Samuel, with the invention of the saddle that later made a family fortune, took the company to Buena Vista, and then around the world.

Brownsburg even escaped the Civil War. Well, almost. When Gen. Hunter's men were enroute to Virginia Military Institute to shell the arsenal, they encamped in Brownsburg, enlisting the Brownsburg women to cook their dinner. Legend says the women mixed biscuit dough in their washtubs, presumably without scrubbing out the soap scum.

Today, the best human bridge to the Brownsburg of yore, however, is Ed Patterson. In his upstairs office, he perks an historical brew that dissolves pavement and electric lines like cappuccino devouring a chill. The concrete bridge into Brownsburg disappears, and the spidery framework of the iron bridge reappears. The gristmill turns upstream from the tannery yard's fragrant litter. Buggy wheels stir up dust. The blacksmith's hammer rings on his anvil. A farm wagon, wheat kernels spilling from a crack in the tailgate, rattles to the flour mill, toward Hays Creek.

"There were two saloons, or taverns, then, as folks liked to stop for food or drink. But not too many stayed the night. Ten feet from the old filling station..." Patterson stops to think. "That's gone now." He waves an arm down the street, toward Lexington. "was the old stagecoach barn where I played as a child. The coaches were kept at street level and the horses underneath. They changed horses here from Staunton to Lexington."

He remembers the Quaker, Mrs. Morris, who had a church in front of today's black church. "I went to Bible school there. She was always taking people in. She didn't have a car, but she managed to travel a lot. She'd find somebody who was down and out or homeless; I don't know how she supported her operation.

"She even started a little hospital in a log building out back. I remember her in the late 20s, small, white-haired and very kind."

Patterson himself spans ancestry that goes to John Patterson, an agent for Benjamin Borden whose 1740 grant settled Rockbridge County. Ed's grandfather owned both the grist mill and Dunlap's flour mill. (A third mill, Gisimers, was on the present McManama property.)

Patterson presides over scores of Brownsburg stories.

By1910 or 20, the 1850 school building (earlier educational efforts were at the church 2 1/2 miles north and at Bellevue, the home of Rev. Samuel and Mary Moore Brown), at the corner of the road to Fairfield, had become the post office.

At the present Still Alley, used to be a stillhouse run by George Day.

Patterson's father corralled anyone with a camera to photograph the pride of his life — his livestock. *Today Ed has albums bulging with* long-gone cattle and horses.

The white house at the corner of academy road was built by Dr. Zachariah Walker, of the Walker-Miller feud fame. (See story, page 7)

Patterson's father heard all seven of the shots that made turn of the century Brownsburg a perilous place. Three in the Walker-Miller shootout during which the late Patterson hid under a schoolroom desk, the Wade-Blackwell shootings (by a McCormick), the Whipple relative and a non-resident black man shot at a party.

"During the Depression, men who had worked away all came home. When we needed help with the threshing, Dad could go downtown and come back with as many hands as we needed."

On Saturday evenings, everyone came to town to trade chickens, eggs and farm produce for groceries. Patterson remembers proprietor Teddy Supinger (now the Old South Antique Shop). "He didn't keep real good records. He was real easygoing. He'd take a chicken, weigh it and throw it down the back steps to the chickenhouse. Candy was loose in big jars then. He would take it out by the piece and put it in a bag. Of course, there was no spigot to wash his hands. Everybody liked him. He probably lost a lot of money, but he ever worried about it."

Patterson remembers the undertakers, above Whitesell's general store, was the last to close.

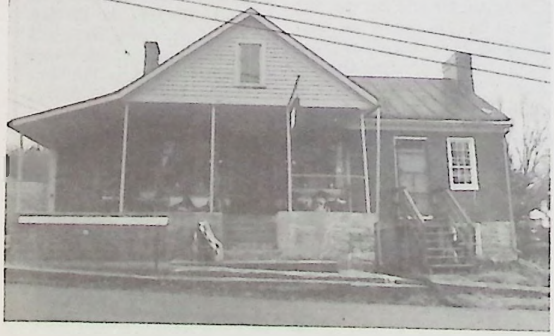
"John L. Whitesell's dad was undertaker here for years. When he died, John L. was a junior in high school, so he and his mother ran the business. His uncle, a Miley in Lexington, did the embalming. You had to go through the store to the upstairs where the caskets were kept.

"There were two barber shops, but that was before my time. Tom Wilbourn kept on the saddle *company after his family moved to Lexington. It was across the* road from here where that old barn is trying to fall down."

Patterson digs in his old papers and comes up with more. One tells about the grist mill with the water-powered wool carding machine. Farmers for miles brought the raw wool to be worked, cleaned, and carded.

William Houston, Sam Houston's brother, caused a stir when he got off the stage at New Providence Church and killed himself. Not permitted churchyard burial, he later was included when the cemetery fence was moved.

See ***HOUSTON***, page 9



**One of the remaining structures from Brownsburg of years gone is the former home of Dr. Zachariah J. Walker.**
Photos by Deborah Sensabaugh

# African Americans recall early history in Brownsburg

By DEBORAH SENSABAUGH

BROWNSBURG — Growing up African American in Brownsburg this century was a mixed blessing, a Dickensian best of times and worst of times.

The worst of times, in the 40s, meant segregated education. "They had a school in the academy up here, but not for us. Even our books were different." Frances Porterfield isn't bitter, but regret lines her face when her memories reach back.

"If I could have one thing different about my childhood, that's what it would be. I would have liked to see the education equal, where children could go to schools and get a good education. That should have been equal."

A small one-roomer, the black school perched on land Ed Patterson's father donated at the north edge of town. All the pupils walked, in good weather and bad.

One student recollects that passersby in automobiles often picked the children up, unless the roads were wet or slushy. Shy of muddy feet on their floorboards, the cars whizzed by on those days. The kids walked for miles, and many received perfect attendance.

"The teacher was Miss Carrie Peters. She had at least 25 to 30 students," Porterfield remembers. "The Brownsburg kids went home for lunch; the others carried. And it was fun. If the teacher called the sixth grade up to work on a lesson, you would be trying to get your lessons completed and the noise would mix you up sometimes.

"And if we misbehaved, we had to stand in the corner. Miss Peters always said she had eyes in the back of her head. We carried our drinking water from the spring up the road here. The girls carried one day and the boys the next."

When the Brownsburg students graduated their one-room school, they boarded a bus for Lylburn Downing High School in Lexington.

Elizabeth "Betty" Brown grew up nearby in Fairfield. Her father drove a school bus, so she finished at the one-room school in Jonestown. "It was on a hill and we carried our water from Miss Amanda Jones'."

Other students, now gray-haired and nearing retirement from jobs they've faithfully pursued for years, recollect growing up in large, warm families on farms, in tenant houses, or in the small villages in the 30s and 40s.

One reminisces about helping his father, a self-taught farm veterinarian, and digging thistles for farmers (20 cents per hour work), and saving to buy shoes or overalls, as he built a sense of family, honor and pride.

Both Porterfield and Brown say things in the villages were easier than in larger cities, but segregation still hung over the heads of African Americans whose grandparents remembered the Civil War.

"As children, we didn't notice the segregation much. We didn't know any different. The stores here served everyone, but in Lexington, at the bus station, the Blacks had a waiting room downstairs, and they had to go to the back of the bus to sit down. And in some stores in Lexington, they would shove a sign that said, 'We don't serve Blacks' right in your face," Porterfield says.

Brown agrees that in Fairfield, everyone was served, too. "And on Saturday nights, everyone would come to town to get groceries."

Recreational opportunities were homemade, too.

Brown remembers stickball games. "I remember one day the principal's son, Danny Berger, was the pitcher and the ball hit him in the head. Knocked him out. Well,

See *BROWN*, page 21

# Violence breeds feud among two Brownsburg families

By DEBORAH SENSABAUGH

BROWNSBURG — On a windy hillside behind New Providence Presbyterian Church, two gravestones bear the same date. The small, lichen-covered stone of farmer Henry Miller reads Nov. 8, 1889. Behind his stone and to its left, the marble monument points an eternal finger. Zachariah J. Walker and his wife, Bettie B., died the same day.

Miller, 70, was patriarch of a hard-working family at Belleview farm, two miles west of Brownsburg. Walker, Brownsburg's physician of 30 years, lived on the corner of the Staunton-Lexington Pike and the dirt lane leading to the Academy. His big white house, which also contained his office, boasted a huge porch fronting the busy dirt turnpike.

One fall day, Miller stopped by Dr. Walker's to pay a bill. The doctor wasn't in, but wife Bettie said she'd take the payment. As she stooped over the desk to write a receipt, Miller's hands gripped her arms. Bettie was an attractive woman; Miller an earthy farmer.

Later, Bettie claimed he had taken liberties with her, on that occasion and another time when she was seated on the porch with Miller in the chair next to hers. That time, she claimed, he had placed his hand on her leg. She was not eager to tell her husband of Miller's "indecent liberties."

For unknown reasons, Walker was spoiling for any kind of fight. An earlier newspaper account says Walker, in preventing a fight in which a black acquaintance was involved, was stabbed in the hand. For a physician, such a wound could have festered a deep bitterness. Perhaps Walker turned to drugs to ease his pain. Perhaps his unforgiving nature overtook his mental soundness.

No longer a church member, Walker once had attended New Providence. What began as an "unhappy difficulty" many years previous, grew with time. "No negotiation could heal it, though attempted often and with great solicitude," the pastor had written. Walker had said he did not want to be buried out of the church, but rather by a Masonic ceremony at home.

Two to three weeks before Walker's and Miller's disagreement erupted in violence, Walker visited his brother-in-law Col. William Sitlington at his home on Big River north of Goshen and confessed to a deep hatred of his mother, "the meanest woman that ever drew breath." He told Mrs. Sitlington that he "had the greatest thirst for blood for a long time and can't be satisfied until he had killed somebody."

That somebody would be Henry Miller.

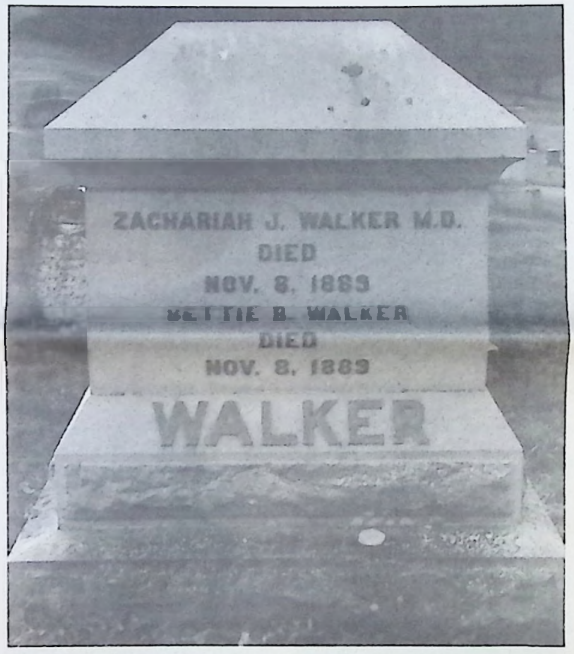
During the next two weeks, Walker's hatred devoured his reasoning. After discovering Miller's insults to his wife, he plotted and schemed. He urged townspeople to take sides. He borrowed a gun and kept his loaded pistol in his pocket. He stormed to Miller's house, turned back by Miller's family, which he threatened. One day he threatened murder, the next he planned to leave town. When Bettie offered to accept Miller's apology, Walker pulled a Bowie knife and threatened suicide.

Finally the local magistrate, E.B. Bosworth, served papers for a peace bond hearing for Walker. Walker, compliant, told Bosworth, "Arrest me. Do your duty in this regard."

Meanwhile, Walker bragged to his friends he'd kill Miller.

Town court was held in the upstairs of the Brownsburg Academy where the students met for assemblies and programs. Reached by an outside staircase, the room was crowded with chairs and benches. Bosworth occupied the podium. Walker and Miller sat before the podium, facing one another.

See *MILLER*, page 9

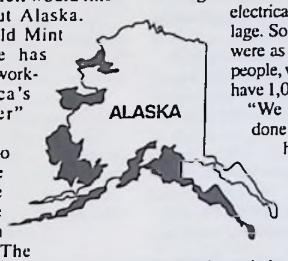



**A tombstone in New Providence Presbyterian Church cemetery shows the date of Nov. 8, 1889, the day husband and wife Zachariah and Bettie Walker died as the result of violence which broke out between two feuding Brownsburg families.**

# Mint Spring native living the good life in Alaska

By NANCY SORRELLS

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Right off the bat, there are a few myths that Harry Moffett would like to dispel about Alaska. The 34-year-old Mint Spring native has been living and working in America's "Last Frontier" since 1991.




"Contrary to what people think, there are no igloos," he says of myth number one. "The Eskimos who lived in igloos were from northern Canada."

The second misconception is about winter. "Winters aren't as unbearable as people think. And you don't have to walk around all winter in a Himalayan mountain suit," he said jokingly.

Moffett, a Riverheads High School and Emory and Henry graduate, wound up in Alaska in 1991 compliments of Uncle Sam. From July of that year until February of 1995 he served in the Air Force on a base just outside of Anchorage.

During his years in Anchorage, he made a number of friends and *came to love the great outdoors that is Alaska. One of his memorable thrills while still in uniform* was flying an F-15 up in the wild blue yonder above Alaska for an hour. That opportunity was a reward for being named the Airman of the Year for his post.

Within a month of his departure from the Air Force, Moffett found himself under the employ of Alaska Village Electric Co-op. His job as a maintenance lineman would eventually take him across much of the state of Alaska and to remote outposts that most people never visit.

"We served over 50 villages spread out all over western Alaska. From 150-200 miles north of the Arctic Circle to as far south as Kodiak Island. It is the largest (electric) co-op, area-wise, in the world," he explained.

His job included small scale construction projects as well as maintaining the individual diesel-powered electrical plants at each village. Some of the villages were as small as 80 or 90 people, while others might have 1,000 residents.

"We got more work done in the summers," he explained of the projects that the co-op carried out. In the winter the ground is like concrete, so we just tried to hold things together in the winter."

Although nobody wears Himalayan Mountain suits, you do have to dress for the weather when you are outside in minus-zero weather trying to "hold things together." For Harry that meant insulated work boots, insulated coveralls, mittens for traveling to and from the work site and gloves while working. Most importantly, for him, however, was his beaver skin hat complete with ear flaps and ties. "It saved me more than once," he said of the furry brown pelt he was holding in his hands.

*Outdoor work in Alaskan winters* can take on a whole other look and present some unique challenges according to Harry. The work was often of an emergency nature, he added, like the time he was called to the aid of the tiny native village of Shungnak many miles north of the Arctic Circle.

"It was New Year's Eve at 4:25 in the afternoon when the call came through. Our office was supposed to close at 4:30," he recalled. "I was told I needed to be on a plane to the village. The problem was that the airfield lights were out. That far north of the Arctic Circle the sun never really comes up over the horizon that time of year; it just teeters along the horizon and goes down. That meant that without airfield lights there was just a tiny window of light when planes could take off and land."

Without an airfield, the village couldn't get supplies, so Harry was sent up to fix the problem. "When I got off the plane it was 34 degrees below zero and I thought that was cold enough, but three days later it was 60 below without the wind chill," he remembered.

Unfortunately, the problem in Shungnak was underground and the ground was frozen solid to the depth of many feet. "We had to get dead spruce trees from the tundra and lay them on the ground where we thought the lines were, then we lit them and let them burn to thaw the ground. After they had burned a little while we would pull them back and scratch the ground a little. Then we put them back, burned a little more, pulled them away, scratched the ground a little more and kept doing that. It took two weeks," he said of the winter ordeal.

The weather during that two weeks soon took a turn for the better. Almost overnight the temperature went from minus 60 to plus 30. "I felt like I had fallen into a microwave," he exclaimed. "It was really weird, though, to think that it was 90 degrees warmer than the day before and it was still below freezing!"

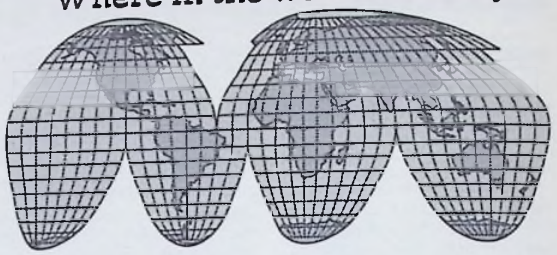
Although not all of his trips into the Alaskan bush were as harsh, traveling to the villages meant living the simple life for several days. "Ninety-five percent of the time we stayed in metal utility trailers at the power plant. It was nothing lavish. A lot of times I'd sleep in a sleeping bag on a plywood box. I would carry 40 or 50 pounds of canned goods with me and cook on a hot plate," he said. Only one of the villages he visited had running water in the power plant trailer, he added. And more than once he walked into a building only to see an inch of frost on the inside walls. "You learn how to dress and undress pretty quickly," he said with a laugh.

Most of the villages were Native American, usually Eskimo along the coast and Indian in the interior. "I saw a lot of villages that you couldn't imagine why anybody would live there. Usually they were near an important fishing area. But it was nothing but flat tundra. The houses were on pilings and there were walkways between the buildings. Food is very expensive up there and many of the people still subsistence hunt and fish," he said. A can of soup in the villages retailed for two to three times what it would be in Anchorage, he explained. Some items like bleach, which is considered a hazardous material, sold for $12 for $13 a gallon. In the villages he saw sled dogs as well as snow machines, went ice fishing, and even saw some tribal dancers. The future for many of the villages is not particularly rosy, he added. "Many of the villagers are really struggling with the new win-

See *ALASKA*, page 21

Harry Moffett shows off the beaver pelt hat he wears when working outside in the Alaskan winters.
Photo by Nancy Sorrells

## Where in the world are they?



**Whether near or far, Augusta County natives make their mark in the world. Join us as we travel the four corners of the globe to track down Augustans wherever they may be.**

Mint Spring native Harry Moffett's face covered in frost from working out in the subzero Alaskan winter. Moffett works for a utility company in Alaska.
Photo courtesy Harry Moffett

## •Plant

Continued from page 5

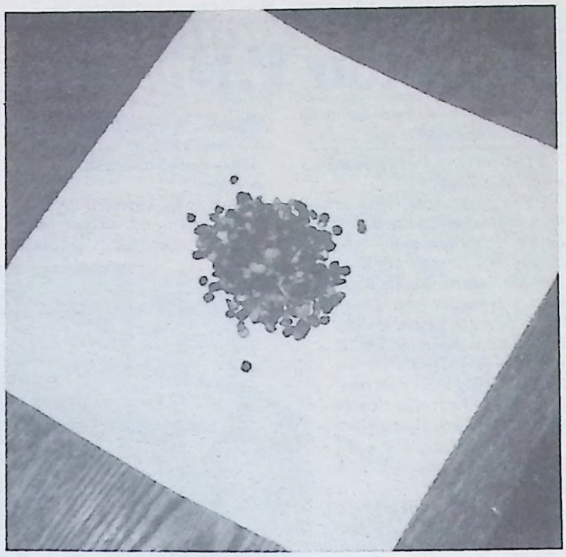
seeds or rootlets are planted and then blanketed with mulch. The hobbyist can get away with poking the seeds into the ground and smoothing the leaves back over the hole. Then you wait and wait and wait some more.

The ginseng bed may require additional weeding or re-mulching over the years, but for the most part it is best to leave the site alone. If all goes well, third year plants will produce seeds for continuing plant generations. Somewhere between six and 10 years, the roots will be ready for digging. Roots can be sold green (freshly dug) but command a higher price if allowed several weeks to dry and shrivel up naturally. A grower has the option of selling directly to the Oriental market or selling to a local dealer.

The greatest hindrance in seeing a ginseng crop reach fruition are two-legged pests. During late summer and early fall when ginseng collection is legal, it might be best to keep a close eye on the patch. It always helps to keep quiet about a prosperous ginseng garden and having a watchdog (or two) roam the property definitely doesn't hurt.

With a little more capital investment, farmers who lack appropriate growing sites can raise ginseng in an open field under a specially designed wood lathe shade system. The advantage of this intense cultivation method is that the plants reach maturity within four years. However, the roots, which lack those extra years of gnarly growth will not bring as great a price as the wild simulated version. Other drawbacks include greater problems with rodents, disease and theft.

Ginseng, as a side line crop, has great potential for farmers with the right growing conditions. To learn more about ginseng cultivation write Andy Hankins, Virginia State University, Box 9081, Petersburg, Va. 23806. —



**Each ginseng berry has two or three seeds inside. This handful of dried seeds totals about 400 for planting.**

**Photo by Penny Plemmons**

## •Root

Continued from page 4

freezes with the ground.

The next spring, the second year of growth produces a two-pronged stem with each prong bearing five leaflets. With each growing season the number of prongs, the height of the plant and the girth and length of the man-root increases. The leaves have a broad base that narrows toward a pinched tip and each leaf is edged with fine teeth. Campbell described the shade of the green leaves as being, "lighter than a leaf on a tree, but darker than the weeds surrounding the plant."

In early summer a greenish flower cluster arises from the center of a two- or three-year-old plant. As the flowers give way to a pot of crimson red berries, the identity of the ginseng plant becomes unmistakable. The autumn chill brings even easier recognition of the plant as the leaves turn a bright yellow-ocher. As Campbell said, "The plant sticks out like a sore thumb."

Campbell's greatest find was a five-pronged plant that "had a pot of berries as big as a golf ball." After digging the root, Campbell was careful to continue plant propagation by replanting the berries. He is frustrated by greedy hunters who dig the root before the plant is fully matured.

"Some folks will dig it (ginseng) today and sell it tomorrow," he said. "Because they won't wait and let the root dry they won't get the full price."

In fact, according to a dealer in Augusta County, green roots go for almost one-quarter the price of a dried one.

Campbell's reason for taking to the woods each fall is unaffected by the possible financial gain.

"I don't really dig 'seng for the money. I enjoy the challenge of finding it," he said. "I like the peacefulness of the woods and for me, if I find a plant it is exciting. But if I don't, it's just fun." —

## •Miller

Continued from page 7

During the proceedings, Walker refused to pay a $500 surety bond for good behavior and volunteered to be jailed in Lexington. But first, he said, he wanted to slap Miller in the mouth for insulting his wife. At Bosworth's refusal, Walker stood, walked toward Miller and pulled a double-action, long range Smith and Wesson .38 from his pocket.

Miller, likewise, stood and turned toward the door as his son, David, rushed to Walker, grabbed the gun and shot the doctor in the side. Deputy Henry Terrill grabbed David

See ANSWERS, page 21

## •Houston

Continued from page 6

Hodges Mann, Virginia's future governor, and his brother Edward grew up to become judges. When Hodges went on to the governor's mansion, he applied incidents from his Brownsburg childhood to manage the state.

In 1850, the iron school bell called students to the opening of the new Brownsburg Academy. The 30 by 80-foot two-story brick building offered classes for locals and boarded sons from near and far. The community had purchased land for a school in 1824 and was pleased to see a dream come true.

One of the students wrote home, "I am very much pleased with my place of boarding. I couldn't have bettered myself within reach of the school. I find Major and Mrs. Brooks to be clever indeed, and Miss Harriet is a perfect angel. I can scarcely keep from falling in love with her, but you know that would not do as it would interfere with my studies — but I swear I cannot help but love her a little anyhow...

"We had some fun the other morning at the Academy. When we went up there, behold, there was an old ram tied to the bell rope, and another tied to the stove, and such a devil of a stinking house I've never seen; it is useless to add that we got a powerful lecture for it, but you never saw a more innocent looking set of fellows in your life."

The school was advertised near and far with $50 for five months' board, $20 for Latin, Greek and higher mathematics; $15 more for advanced English and philosophy and $12.50 additional for reading, writing, arithmetic and grammar.

Interrupted by the Civil War, the private school joined the state educational system in 1870. Patterson's class was last to graduate there.

He remembers the lady principal, the fiery and demanding Miss Osie Trimmer. "She controlled the school; she had her methods, and she didn't believe in sparing the rod. She wasn't very popular. But she was there before I started first grade and still there when I graduated from high school.

"We were afraid of her, but in later years everyone agreed she was the best teacher. She taught two Latin classes and four years of English. She loved dramatics and we did three or four plays a year. She supported athletics and was the coach for basketball and baseball."

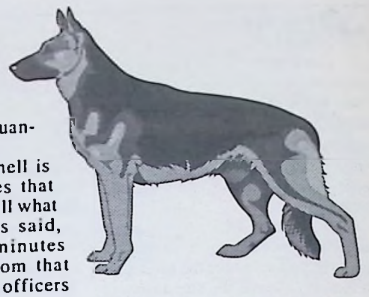
Patterson watched the new Brownsburg school rise on the hill behind the old academy. It opened in 1938 and the old academy was demolished. And he watched that new school deteriorate and be demolished, too, after a local committee failed to find a new tenant for the neglected building that once housed the high school and later a middle school.

"We couldn't even give it away," Mollie Sue Whipple, retired teacher and member of the committee, explained.

And now, Brownsburg is slumbering peacefully into the 21st century, the village little more than a crossroads with memories. Its historic houses are little more than markers along a timeline. But among its people are the stories that bring yesterday to life. —

*Tall, dark and handsome*

# Staunton P.D. welcomes new officer



By SUE SIMMONS

STAUNTON — Hey gals, there's a new guy in town.

He's a good looking foreigner with thick brown hair and brown eyes to die for. He's a take-charge type of guy, but he isn't afraid to show his sensitive side. He'll mix it up with anyone who messes with him, but he loves to cuddle. His name is Kally and he is the newest officer in the Staunton City Police Department where he works closely with Officer Dale Harris.

Kally's a real dog. No, really, he is a dog. A canine. A K-9. A police dog.

Weighing in at 90 pounds, Kally is a two-and-a-half year old German shepherd born in the Czech Republic and trained in Denmark.

By happy coincidence, the dog had been imported by Ken Mathias, a Raleigh, N.C., policeman who runs Orchard Knoll Kennels, when local resident Joanie Eiland offered to buy a canine for the Staunton Police Department. Police Chief G.L. Wells jumped at the chance. Twenty years had passed since the department had retired its last K-9 and he felt it was time to resurrect this area of the department.

*Ms. Eiland, Chief Wells, and Capt. Lacy King traveled to Orchard Knolls Kennel to select a dog.*

"You look for several things in a police dog," Officer Harris explains. "You want a social dog that has a good ball drive."

He goes on to explain that ball drive is a good indication of the dog's focus. "If a dog endlessly retrieves this throw toy, if he constantly goes after it without tiring, it is a good indication of the dog's energy — something that is extremely important in a drug dog."

Not only did Kally show boundless energy but he showed great courage. "There is a patrol aspect that is just as important," Harris continues. "To determine this, a person hides somewhere behind a high chain link fence. The dog is turned loose on the other side of the fence. At some point the person jumps out and beats on the fence and yells to test the dog's reaction. If the dog continuously goes after the person through the fence, it is good sign. The person then pulls and fires a gun. If the dog cowers or runs away, he's eliminated."

Kally passed both tests with flying colors.

While some imported dogs are "green dogs," ones with no training, Kally came to the United States as a titled dog in the Czech Republic.

**Staunton police officer Dale Harris with his new K-9 partner "Kally"**
**Photos by Sue Simmons**

"The Czech's have a type of dog competition sport." Harris explains. "A dog that has done well in obedience, heel work, tracking and bite work is given a title and is worth about $4,000."

Selected from among a number of officers who expressed interest in working with Kally, Harris spent the month of May bonding with Kally at Harris' home before their three-and-a-half month training program began. Harris, a 1978 Buffalo Gap High School graduate and a 12-year veteran of the Staunton Police Department, had never really worked with dogs before, yet he seems especially suited to the work.

The training took place in Angier, N.C., at Mid-Atlantic Canine run by retired Washington, D.C. police officer R.O. Rodgers. There Harris and Kally joined seven other police officers and dogs for intensive training in tracking and bite work. Kally is trained to apprehend, detect narcotic drugs, track, and search buildings.

Given Kally's European heritage, it should come as no surprise that Kally responds only to Dutch commands.

"I didn't have to learn Dutch," Harris laughs, "only about 12 one and two word commands. Some are familiar sounds — like 'af' for lie and 'zit' for sit. The ones for pursue and bite are more complicated and unfamiliar."

Officer Harris is quick to point out that Kally is NOT an attack dog.

"He is technically a 'bite-and-hold dog. He has been taught to bite one time and hold on until commanded to release. Kally must be commanded to bite," he reiterates. "The only non-command time he will bite is when a gun is brandished or some one would assault me."

Officer Harris anticipates that Kally probably won't bite more than two or three times in his career simply because of the character of the area. "If he worked in D.C. he might bite once a week," Harris noted.

Interestingly, the opportunity presented itself recently when Kally and Harris were called to pursue a suspect one night.

"It was the shortest track in history," Harris related. "I gave (Kally) the command to pursue and bite. Kally went about 30 feet and stopped in front of a fuel tank. I called to him, but he stayed stock still. When I got to him, I turned on my flashlight only to see his nose about this far (Harris measures the space of about an inch with his thumb and forefinger) from the suspect's face. The suspect had curled up in a fetal position with his hands covering his face. If he had moved the dog would have bitten, but because he stayed perfectly still the dog did too."

Harris is quick to say that Kally's bite is serious. Although dogs never bite their handlers at the training center — it would only confuse the animal — Harris had to take bites from the other dogs. "If one of these dogs sinks his teeth into you, it would probably go down to the bone," the police officer said.

Most of Kally's work so far has been in tracking and drug searches. Kally can sniff out drugs of any type and quantity in any hiding place.

"A dog's sense of smell is about a thousand times that of human. They can smell what humans can't," Harris said, adding that in four minutes Kally can search a room that would take four police officers 30 minutes to search.

Sometimes Kally sniffs out more than just drugs.

"One of the first calls we went on, we had a suspect in a car that was just filled with papers and trash," Harris said. "Kally got real interested in the papers between the seats. He just kept sniffing and going deeper. I thought for sure he was on to something when his head popped up with a chocolate doughnut in his mouth."

Even on days off, Harris has to work Kally to keep him sharp. Often with his father's help, they work on tracking and sniffing at his father's home in Churchville.

Complete with his own badge, Kally is a police officer. It's a Class Five felony to assault, attempt to or to kill a police dog. That means any attempt against Kally could get the perpetrator two to 10 years in the penitentiary. A mutual aid agreement between Staunton, Augusta County, and Waynesboro allows Harris and Kally to operate as special enforcement officers beyond the city limits. If you happen to pass Officer Harris and Kally on the streets of Staunton or Waynesboro, or some other place for that matter, don't hesitate to stop for a brief chat. These officers -- and gentlemen -- will simply charm you. —

**Officer Dale Harris puts "Kally" through his paces during a simulated drug search.**

# Robin & Linda's new album moving up charts

By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK — The recent fax that Robin Williams showed me was exciting. There in the No. 7 spot and moving up on the Americana Chart of country music albums was Robin and Linda's newest compact disc, "Devil of a Dream." The spot marked their best ever on the charts, surpassing their personal best logged back in late February when "Devil of a Dream," jumped to No. 10. The Williams' last album, "Sugar for Sugar," made it to No. 11 before slipping back down.

Cracking the top 10 on the charts is just one facet of their career that has been sparkling as of late. Already arguably the most popular musical act in the region, Robin and Linda have been on a roll since the release of their "Good News" gospel CD a few years back. Hot on the heels of "Good News" was "Sugar for Sugar," and now "Devil of a Dream."

"Starting with the gospel album, things have opened up for us and we have been getting some attention. The sound of the CDs is a spin-off of what our band sounds like and people like that," said Linda. The couple had just returned from a six-week road tour across the country. After hitting points in Oregon, California and Colorado, they and band members Kevin Maul and Jim Watson piloted the Robin and Linda "touring van" home while dodging the intense storms that have blasted much of the west and mid-west.

Now that they are settled back in their Middlebrook farmhouse, they can relax... for about five minutes. Not only do they have to sort through six weeks' worth of mail that the Middlebrook post master was probably more than happy to see them haul away, but they must promote their album. With success comes more work, so they call radio stations, campaign for playing time, and talk to pesky journalists. It is all part of what makes Robin and Linda tick. Music and the rest of their lives is so tightly woven together that it is hard to separate the "making a living" from plain old "living."

Robin & Linda Williams

AC file photo

"It is all encompassing," said Robin, who added that he was getting ready to go out and get some wood. Even while carrying out the regular household chores, however, he explained that ideas always have the chance to sneak in unaware. In fact it's the re-telling of those normal everyday things in their music to which people relate. Things like being holed up in a blizzard, speeding through a traffic light, watching couples break up, or having friends die.

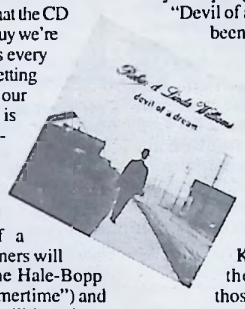
More so than any of their previous albums that's the stuff of which "Devil of a Dream" is made. "I think what makes this album special is the quality of and the variety in the material. We wrote all the songs but one and we wrote the tunes rather quickly. In January (1997) we didn't have any and by May we had 11 new ones. And even now, a year later, I think they all are really good songs," said Robin.

Linda continued with Robin's train of thought. "Because all the songs were written really close together, the album is like a postcard or a record of what was going on in those days in our thought processes. It is a record of what was going on in our lives, in the news and with the people we came into contact with," she explained.

A key in the writing process was long-time friend Jerry Clark who came to their house in January and April (1997) and together the trio brainstormed the songs into reality. "Jerry is an amazing fellow and he loves music. I met him while I was traveling as a solo performer in 1970," said Robin. "He's not a musician, but he knows more about roots music than any other person I know. We wrote our first song together in 1979 and have been writing with each other ever since.

"We had a great time writing these songs. We'd just sit around and talk about things that were happening in the news and in our lives and before long we'd be writing. It was great fun. Jerry's influence on our former CD's has never been as strong as it is on this one," Robin added.

Linda confirmed the evolution of this new CD. "It just bubbled out of conversation. It is a few days in our lives. It is current material. It is all real fresh and real new and exciting," she said. "Now that the CD is out for the public to buy we're playing the new songs every night. The songs are getting great response from our audiences and the CD is getting good radio airplay as well," Robin said.




There is certainly plenty to enjoy on "Devil of a Dream." Astute listeners will find references to the Hale-Bopp comet ("Green Summertime") and to the scary news of militia activity ("Men with guns"). Everyone can identify with songs about relationships gone sour and lives moving away from each other ("I Wonder if I Care as Much"; "Five Rooms"). And, we have all watched sadly as friends with so much more potential than we have wandered the wrong path ("The Genius"). Long-time Robin and Linda fans will also enjoy hearing a crowd favorite, "Rolling and Rambling." But the old song about Hank Williams has a new Cajun-sound to it on this album — enhanced by friends Rose Sinclair on the accordion and Stuart Duncan on the fiddle. Sammy Shelor on the banjo and electric guitar also adds to the group's sound for which Robin and Linda and Their Fine Group of Jim Watson and Kevin Maul are already almost famous.

The CD's talking blues song, "So, It's Like This Man" just makes you laugh as you visualize one man's life spinning out of control after his car breaks down and he decides to await rescue in a bar. According to Robin, the song is not technically talking blues because the refrain is sung.

The song that inspired the title, "At the Crossroads Again," is one that just makes you sit back and go "hmmm" as the group strums out a tale of a man who entered into an unfinished pact with the devil and gets caught in a time loop. Star Trek fans would call that a temporal distortion, but whatever the case, the man lives his rags to riches to rags life again and again.

The song and the album title are also the reasons for the mysterious ghost-like black and white photographs on the cover. "It is just an eerie photograph of a mystical man. It works from the framework of who is this mystical specter?" explained Robin.

By the spring of 1997, all of the "Devil of a Dream" songs had been written. From May until November the music team worked on the recording whenever they were home from a road trip. Here the Williamses point to Kevin McNoldy as the man who made those snapshots of real life into an album. "He's a talented fellow and his input into this project was immense. He was able to take these new, raw songs and give them just the right feel. He really helped shape them up. Usually we get the tunes shaped up on stage with the band, but we didn't have time to do that this time around. Kevin's input was quite valuable. And we also need to say thanks to Bobby Reid in Charlottesville who helped us at the end of the project with some recording and mixing," noted Robin.

Unlike previous albums, this CD featured almost all new material, never before performed for an audience. They unveiled their masterpiece to the local crowd in Staunton at their annual McCormick's homecoming earlier this year. True to form, the local Robin and Linda fan club loved everything that was played. And, also true to form, Robin and Linda enjoyed the opportunity to taste-test their new work in front of their friends and neighbors. So big is their local following that the back-to-back McCormick's performances always sell out.

"It is great to play around here and our name recognition in Augusta County is probably as good as anywhere in the country," said Linda of the people in their community. "It's great playing for our neighbors, except maybe that you've heard all our jokes," added Robin.

The fact that they have made their home in the Middlebrook area all these years and refused the lure of living in Nashville speaks well for them and their music. "If it isn't broken, don't try to fix it. This is a great place to live and we can't imagine giving this up," said Robin.

They have deliberately chosen a style of music that leaves them "on the fringe of the music business." By this they don't mean the fringe talent wise because that is certainly not the case. Rather, they mean that they don't depend on the whims of the big-time record companies and

See *TALENT*, page 21

# Return of the roof people

## Down on the farm

by Betty Jo Hamilton

Down on the farm we're seeing ourselves through someone else's eyes. Ordinarily we wouldn't step back and consider what we must look like going about our everyday routine. But now and again someone comes to the farm who unknowingly gives us a glimpse of ourselves from their vantage point.

You may recall in my column in the March 1998 issue of *Augusta Country* a reference to the barn roof being peeled off by the winter storm the first week in February. When I noticed the barn roof peeling off, it was not so much the destruction of the roof which distressed me but the thought that if the roof came off it would mean only one thing — the return of the roof people.

The story of the roof people goes back quite a number of years. The roof people are the repairmen sent to the farm by the insurance company any time it is responsible for repairing a damaged roof. It would be nice if I could simplify the explanation of this arrangement, but there isn't a simple way to explain it. But I'll try.

We have insurance which covers buildings on the farm. When a building is damaged by some force *of nature — for example, wind tearing the roof off a barn* — we call the insurance company and report the damage. The insurance company has a standing contractual agreement with a roofing company — which for our purposes will simply be known as The Amazingly Inexpensive Roofing Co. — which has agreed to provide roof repairs for a set amount of money. This allows the insurance company to get the best value for their dollar and prevents them from having to pay the going rate for a roofing company that we might choose to repair a damaged roof.

Does this make any sense? I suppose it does. But, ultimately, the result is we have no control over who comes to repair the barn roof. So that every time the roof comes off, it means the return of the roof people from The Amazingly Inexpensive Roofing Co.

My first encounter with the roof people from AIR (now there's an interesting acronym) occurred several years ago. The wind had torn off a section of roof. We called the insurance company. They dispatched the roof people. It would seem the object here would be to repair the roof of the barn. But the roof people, on the many occasions which they have come to the farm, don't seem to have a true sense of purpose in achieving an expeditious repair of the roof.

As I was saying, my first encounter with the roof people occurred several years ago. I went to the barn one morning and got the holy bejeebers scared out of me when I looked up and someone was sitting on top of the barn. I got the holy bejeebers scared out of me because when I went to the barn, everything looked as usual. I didn't know that the roof people were on the opposite side of the barn — *hidden from my view* — so that the next time I came out of the barn and looked up, there was this guy, who seemingly had appeared out of nowhere, up on the roof. Then I realized it was the AIR roof people, having been duly dispatched by the insurance company, who had come to fix the roof. They had arrived with no advance warning and had made no effort to announce themselves upon arrival.

So the presence of the roof people annoyed me from the start. I mean wouldn't you get annoyed if you saw someone climbing around on your roof and you didn't know anything about that person? If somebody is going to be climbing around on my roof, I just think it's good policy to know something about that person.

But because I didn't know the roof people who the insurance company had sent to repair the roof, I tried to adopt the attitude that maybe I didn't need to know the roof people. So I went about ignoring the roof people. It's hard to ignore people climbing around on a roof, but I did my best. On the first occasion when they came to the farm, it was about this same time of year, so I was at the barn tending the sheep and seeing to the general welfare of newborn lambs.

For all the energy I put into ignoring the roof people, it was impossible to ignore the nagging suspicion that my movements and actions were being monitored from the height of the roof ridge pole. I had not spoken to the roof people nor acknowledged their presence. I was content to let them go about their work without interruption. There was no need for me to interrupt. The barn roof needed fixing. They were the roof people sent to fix it. Roof repair holds no interest for me. There was no need for interaction. Besides, I had plenty of work to keep me busy with the sheep and lambs.

So there I was just going about my business when someone from on top of the barn whistled at me. It was a whistle which was meant to annoy me. I know it was meant to annoy me because just as I was whistled at, the roof people began laughing among themselves. I continued to ignore them and wondered at what point in the evolutionary process they had ceased to develop.

One of the roof people seemed intent on not being ignored. He was a robust fellow with a beard and long hair, and was rather large around the middle. I didn't hear too much out of his fellow roof people, but this man's voice could be heard from almost anywhere near the barn. He had been watching me from his rooftop perch. Curiosity eventually got the better of him and, although I was ignoring him and the rest of his crew, he took an opportunity to question me on the goings on he had observed.

He'd seen a man on a tractor and he wanted to know who that was. I told him the man was my father. He'd seen me taking care of the lambs and sheep and he wanted to know what I was doing. He wanted to know what my father was doing — he was feeding hay to the cattle, I told him. He eventually asked for whom we were taking care of the farm. I suppose our appearance and actions didn't fit his preconceived notion of what a landowner and his daughter might look and act like. I assured him that the farm did indeed belong to us. My major responsibility at that time of year was taking care of the sheep, while my father was busy feeding the cattle.

Needless to say, there wasn't much progress being made on the roof repair what with one of the

See *ROOF*, page 13

**Although it's unusual to actually find the roof people at work, their occasional forays toward roof repair are evidenced by sheets of metal left piled up in the barn.**

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

# •Roof

*Continued from page 12*

roof people spending a lot of the time on the ground wanting to know what I was doing. Oh sure, every now and then he'd holler something up to the guys on the roof, giving them some instruction or the other about what they were doing. The roof repair would take a protracted length of time and was not nearly complete by the end of that day.

When I went to the barn that afternoon, I walked to the side of the barn where the roof people had been working. Scattered all over the ground were roofing nails and small pieces of metal which the roof people had pulled out of the damaged roof then just thrown to the ground. This is an area where we drive trucks and tractors, so I began to pick up the nails and metal and wondered how many I would miss and how many would find their way into tires. This sloppiness on the part of the roof people annoyed me further.

Then I got up in the mow to get some bales of hay for the sheep. Scattered over the hay were more nails and more small pieces of metal. They were everywhere — countless roofing nails and countless metal strips. They weren't too hard to see, because the AIR roof people had left that day without replacing the roof so there was plenty of light (and air, hence the company's clever acronym) streaming in through the *hole in the roof left by the roof* people for me to see all the nails and metal they had carelessly dropped down on the hay.

Having not enough to do that afternoon, I went directly and got five-gallon buckets to pick up the nails and pieces of metal. I collected a bucketful off the ground and another bucketful out of the mow. I was no longer simply annoyed by the roof people. Their slap-happy roof repair methods were causing me considerable ire, not to mention work.

The next day the roof people were back. I waited until they were settled in to their work before I brought up the issue of the nails and metal roof trash thrown on the ground and in the hay mow. I showed them the two buckets I had collected and asked them not to throw any more of same on the ground or in the hay mow. I reviewed the possible perils of this course of action reminding them that nails on the ground have a tendency of finding their way into tires and that nails in feed have a way of finding their way into the stomachs of animals, neither condition being desirable. The roof people didn't seem to care one way or the other about our tires or the animals' stomachs.

On another occasion, the roof people came to repair yet another damaged section of roof. I arrived at the barn to find the roof people had cleared a space on the barn floor to roll out the tin and do whatever it is they do with it before they put it up on the roof. There had been quite a bit of hay on the barn floor at the time. It was loose hay which I had spent considerable time the day before forking toward the door so I could fork it onto a truck the next day. The roof people had wasted no time in pushing this loose hay back into the barn and off to the sides to make room for their work of unrolling the tin.

Loose hay is difficult to move and the more it is moved the more voluminous it becomes. I had managed to keep the loose hay in a fairly compact pile in preparing to move it out of the barn. In pushing it back into the barn and off to the sides, the roof people had created something equivocal to the parting of the Red Sea. Loose hay was waist deep and ran the width of the barn on either side of the work area cleared out by the roof people.

"LOOK HERE," the bearded, robust fellow bawled, as if one or both of us suffered from a hearing impairment. "WE CLEARED OUT YOUR BARN FLOOR."

"I see you did," was my only reply. It would be useless for me to try to explain they had completely undone an entire afternoon's work which I had accomplished the day before.

The first visit by the roof people was probably more than 10 years ago. Since that time, the roof people have returned at least twice to make repairs to the roof. And each time the fellow with the beard and long hair (who I assume to be the AIRhead guy) has been among the crew. The other members of the crew seem to change from one trip to the next. But the fellow with the beard and long hair is always on the crew sent to our farm. Of course, he's not the kind of fellow you'd forget easily.

So when I saw the barn roof peeling off during that February storm, it wasn't so much the roof coming off which distressed me. It was knowing that if the barn roof came off, the roof people would return. It made me cringe.

And so, the roof people did return, again, and in the middle of lambing season, again. This makes at least the third time they've been to the farm to repair the roof when newborn lambs are arriving. Their truck pulled up to the barn on this occasion just as I was moving a newborn lamb from the lambing shed where it had arrived during the night to a stall where it would be kept with its ewe for a day or two. The bearded, long-haired fellow rolled out of the pickup and opened the gate for the truck to come through the barnyard.

"I SEE YOU'RE STILL TAKING CARE OF SHEEP," he said loudly, again assuming deafness.

"Yes," I replied, "I guess I never had the good sense to do anything else."

He snorted and cackled, evidently entertained at my meager attempt at sarcasm.

The roof people proceeded to their work at hand. A few minutes later, I climbed the ladder to the barn floor and the workers were clearing a place to roll out the tin.

"You all aren't going to throw nails down in my feed are you?" I asked randomly.

"NOOOOOOOO!!!" the bearded fellow boomed back at me. "WHY WOULD WE DO THAT????"

"Because you've done it before," I said back casually and laughed.

I left the roof people to their task which, needless to say, did not get accomplished. So about two weeks passed before the roof people returned again. They were late arriving on this occasion, so I had already turned out ewes and baby lambs behind the barn. The arrival of the roof people meant these animals had to be herded back into a stable to keep them out of the traffic area traveled by the roof people.

At this point you need to consider that throughout this enduring, albeit reluctant, relationship with the roof people — in particular, the bearded, long haired fellow — they have come to know me in my barn apparel. This means the gum boots, coveralls, hooded sweatshirt, and gloves which I wear to the barn without fail during the winter months. I'm not sure at what point the roof people determined that under all the gum boots and coveralls and gloves there was someone of the feminine persuasion. I think the whistle on their original visit to the farm was a test which proved inconclusive, therefore the direct approach of sending an emissary to quiz me about all the whys and wherefores of my existence netted the roof people a qualitative discovery of my actual gender.

So after herding the sheep and lambs back into the barn and out of the way of the roof people, I left them to their work and went about my own. I had an appointment in town that morning, so I returned to the house, shed my work clothes and put on attire appropriate for the polite society of town — corduroy slacks, turtleneck, down parka — just, in general, scrubbed up a bit and smoothed out a few of the wrinkles. It's not like I was stylin' or anything, I just put some mild effort into my appearance.

It was thusly appointed that I returned home about midday and saw the roof people pulling through the barnyard gate in their truck. I wanted to find out if they were leaving for the day (I think I knew the answer to this question before I asked but, just the same, wanted to make sure) so I could turn the sheep and lambs out of the barn.

As the roof people's truck was heading toward my house, I stepped out into the lane and flagged them down. As the truck window rolled down, I heard the bearded fellow yelling, "WITHOUT THOSE COVERALLS, YOU'RE A WHOOOOOLE DIFFERENT WO--MAN!"

I don't often consider how I appear to others and most other people wouldn't venture to tell me how I appear to them, whether I'm wearing coveralls or sport clothes. But then, the roof people aren't "most other people." The roof people are a breed unto themselves.

And so, I await the return of the roof people. I await yet another stroll along life's rollercoaster of interpersonal relationships with complete strangers. I await yet another adventure at the hands of the roof people. I await and await and await the repair of the barn roof. I await yet another thrilling chapter of self-discovery through the eyes of the roof people. While we may not have much perspective on how we appear down on the farm, we're ever so fortunate to have the roof people to provide more perspective than we really want to have. —

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# Arbor Hill youths honored by cattle producers

AC staff report

STUARTS DRAFT — The Augusta County Feeder Calf Association honored two area youths during an awards presentation at its annual meeting held recently.

Carrie Heizer and Jennifer Smith, both of Arbor Hill, were presented the organization's Outstanding Youth Beef Awards for 1997. Miss Heizer received the award for a Future Farmers of America member and Miss Smith was honored for her 4-H achievements.

Miss Heizer was nominated for the award by Riverheads FFA adviser Eugene McIlwee.

"She takes an interest in helping out on the family farm and is very involved in caring for her animals that she shows in the Market Livestock Show," McIlwee noted in his nomination. Miss Heizer has been an FFA member for three years and has served as sentinel and reporter for her chapter. In addition to exhibiting steers in the annual 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show, she also has been active in livestock judging and is an accomplished equestrian.

Miss Heizer is a junior at Riverheads High School and is the daughter of R.G. and Nancy Heizer.

As winner of the 4-H award, Miss Smith was nominated by Augusta County 4-H Extension agent Jennifer Mercer.

"Jennifer has shown tremendous leadership abilities by serving as a resource person and mentor to younger club members. She is always willing to give her time to help others," Ms. Mercer noted in her nomination. Miss Smith has served as president of the Middlebrook 4-H Livestock Club and has exhibited steers and lambs in the Market Animal Show. She also has participated in the Virginia Beef Expo and Virginia State Fair.

Miss Smith is a 1997 graduate of Riverheads High School and attends Blue Ridge Community College. She is the daughter of Claude and Peggy Smith.

In the evening's program, Reggie Reynolds, executive director of the Virginia Cattlemen's Association, gave Augusta cow-calf producers a glimpse into the future of the beef industry. Some of the future market trends which will influence the cattle market include retained ownership programs, alliances, and grid pricing. These trends will provide different vehicles through which producers can market cattle.

Cattle marketed through state-graded VCA sales in 1997 totaled 139,000 head. These sales include teleauctions, state-graded special sales, and state-graded through regular market sales. Reynolds noted a significant difference between the midwestern and northeastern cattle markets.

"Five midwestern states feed 90 percent of the slaughter cattle in the United States," he noted. While these states are geared toward a quantity market, Reynolds pointed out that the northeastern trade is for "high quality" slaughter cattle. Packers in the northeast are looking for cattle which can be retailed to "white table cloth restaurants" or be exported to Pacific rim countries.

In other business, the association elected Mike Hemp of Middlebrook, Doug Riley of Hebron, and Lee Hereford of Staunton to its board of directors. Retiring board members included Jerry Shultz and Woody Dull, both of Middlebrook, and Don Benner of Deerfield. —

Carrie Heizer, far left, and Jennifer Smith are congratulated by Jerry Shultz, president of the Augusta County Feeder Calf Association for being selected to receive the organization's 1997 Outstanding Youth Beef Awards. AC staff photo

## Augusta Farm Bureau sponsoring programs

*STAUNTON — The Women's Committee of the Augusta County Farm Bureau Federation has three farm finance programs planned for the month of April.*

Larry Powell of Staunton Farm Credit will speak at the first seminar to be held April 15 at the Augusta County Government Center in Verona. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. and Powell will discuss what records lenders expect or need to see when farmers apply for loans.

A hands-on computer class on farm record keeping will be held at 7 p.m. April 22 at the Extension Office. Jack Dunford, Augusta County Extension agent, will be the instructor. The program will provide information to help farm families improve their record-keeping skills — whether with computer or manually — and financial management ability. There is a $10 registration fee for non-Farm Bureau members for this seminar.

"Farm Financial Management for the 21st Century" will be the topic for discussion during the month's third program to be held at 7 p.m. April 29 at the Government Center. David Kohl, professor of agricultural economics at Virginia Tech, will present the program. Dr. Kohl is nationally recognized for his expertise in farm business management.

Dates and times for the programs are tentative. Call the Augusta County Farm Bureau at 886-2353 for complete details. —

## Producers debate issues facing pork industry

By JEFF ISHEE

NEW MARKET — Shenandoah Valley pork producers packed a conference room here recently to address several key issues facing the pork industry.

John Parker, executive director of the Virginia Pork Industry Board, addressed the group concerning environmental regulations and legislation that pertain to producers.

"The enemies of the pork industry are the enemies of confined animal feeding operations," said Parker, who went on to enumerate several of the organizations which he characterized as "on a political bandwagon with too much time on their hands and too many lawyers on their payroll." Parker advised pork producers to stay abreast of political movements and activities that could influence their profitability as farmers. He praised both the Virginia Farm Bureau and the Virginia Agribusiness Council for their positive involvement in recent legislative issues that could have been detrimental to farmers.

On the issue of farm management, Cindy Wood of Virginia Tech told pork producers, "Details, details, details! That's what it takes to make it in swine production these days." She advised farmers to maintain accurate records on feed costs, sorting loss, and reproduction efficiency to get the "big picture on production finances." Dr. Wood also stressed that genetics plays a vital role in the swine herd. "Quality on both the maternal and paternal sides will increase the desirable traits in your pig litters," she said.

Harrisonburg's Dan Hadacek told swine producers, "We need to get back to basics. If we can increase the immunity to disease in our pigs by keeping a clean, sanitary environment, then we will have made a lot of headway." The veterinarian advised farmers, "Keep hog housing as free of manure as possible, because E. Coli can survive in hog manure for up to 11 weeks. Always wash down the facilities with a high pressure sprayer using hot water between groups. Do anything you can to tip the scale toward animal health." —

## Shiflett to compete in national dairy bowl contest

FORT DEFIANCE — Aaron Shiflett of Fort Defiance will be the among members of the Virginia Junior Holstein Association Dairy Bowl team when it travels to compete in the national contest this summer.

SHIFLETT

Shiflett is the only Augusta County youth on the team. Other members are Melissa Hope of Clark County, Sara Leonard of Loudon, and Taylor Lee of Richmond. The contest will be held June 27 in Kentucky at the Louisville National Holstein Convention.

The dairy bowl contest is structured in a round robin double elimination format and begins with a 25-question written exam. Additional rounds consist of question-and-answer sessions with individual teams and toss-up rounds between competing teams.

Shiflett, 12, is the son of Susie and Larry Shiflett. He is a participant in the Augusta County 4-H program and is a seventh-grade student at Clymore Elementary School. —

# Here, there, & everywhere

## Beverley Manor DAR honors students, teacher

**AC staff report**

STAUNTON — Two students and a teacher, all from the Augusta County school system, have been honored by the Beverley Manor chapter of the Daughters of American Revolution.

Abigail Barker, Stephanie Rathburn and Linda Petzke received the honors during a special awards ceremony held Feb. 24 at the Staunton Public Library. Miss Barker was presented the Patriots' Scholarship, Miss Rathburn was the History Essay medal winner, and Ms. Petzke was named History Teacher of the Year.

In presenting the Patriots' Scholarship to Miss Barker, DAR member Elizabeth Harman remarked that the award is presented to an individual with outstanding performance in scholastic achievement and possessing the qualities of

BARKER

RATHBURN

moral integrity, motivation, leadership, and citizenship. She noted that these qualities "set the character standards for greatness in men and women (who were) the patriots of revolutionary times." In following these criteria for the chapter's selection, Mrs. Harman said that Miss Barker was "a natural choice" to receive the honor.

"She is an excellent student with outstanding qualities of leadership, service, and citizenship — all qualities that will secure her success into the 21st century," Mrs. Harman said. "We congratulate her for all she is, and all that we know, with confidence, she shall become." Miss Barker is a senior at Riverheads High School.

To earn the History Essay medal, Miss Rathburn wrote an essay about "Forts in American History" and concentrated on the story of Fort Snelling which is located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. The fort was completed in 1825 and was named for Col. Josiah Snelling. Fort Snelling was the center of the first permanent settlement in Minneapolis. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 by the U.S. Department of Interior. It is now operated as a state park. Presentation of the History Essay medal was made by DAR member Ruth Bailey. Miss Rathburn is a seventh grade student at Beverley Manor Middle School.

Mrs. Bailey also made the presentation of the History Teacher of the Year award to Ms. Petzke, a sixth grade teacher at Stewart Middle School in Fort Defiance. It marked the first time the chapter has recognized a teacher for this accomplishment.

"(Ms. Petzke) is an outstanding teacher, role model and mentor," Mrs. Bailey said, quoting Donald Curtis, Stewart principal. "Her love of her country, her patriotic beliefs and her ability to instill in young people the values upon which the United States was built will transcend her teaching into the lives of all those she touches."

Mrs. Bailey noted that Ms. Petzke also has been a history teacher outside the classroom. She formerly served as director of mu-

PETZKE

seum programs at the Museum of American Frontier Culture in Staunton during which time she developed educational and interpretative activities. She earned an international fellowship and was an exchange scholar in history in Northern Ireland where she helped establish educational and interpretive programming and helped set up a link between school children in Northern Ireland and the United States.

Miss Barker is the daughter of Danny and Pamela Barker of Spottswood. Miss Rathburn is the daughter of Philip and Kimberly Rathburn of Rt. 10, Staunton. —

## Area churches plan Holy Week services

*BETHEL GREEN — The con*gregation of Bethel Presbyterian Church will observe Holy Week and Easter through a variety of worship and fellowship events. The public is invited to join Bethel in worshipping God and celebrating the good news of the resurrection.

April 4 at Bethel Church from 10 to 12 o'clock on Saturday morn*ing, there will be an Easter egg hunt* for "young" children.

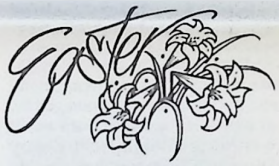
April 5 at 11 a.m. — Palm Sunday — worship will include special music from our children, youth and adult choirs, and a dramatic reading of 'The Ragman.'

April 9 at 6:30 p.m., the Maundy Thursday worship will be held in the fellowship hall, including scripture, prayer and hymns as well as *dinner and the celebration of the* Lord's Supper in a manner resembling the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples. Call the church office at 886-6041 by March 31 to make reservations for this dinner.

April 10 at 7:30 p.m., the Good Friday worship will be an ecumenical community service at Greenville United Methodist Church. The worship will include a community choir from members of area congregations.

April 12 at 11 a.m., the Easter worship service will include special choir and instrumental music, sermon and the celebration of Holy Communion. A community sunrise service will be held at Mint Spring United Methodist Church at 6:30 a.m.)

Bethel Presbyterian Church is located on Va. 701, 1.3 miles west of Riverheads High School. The congregation of Bethel welcomes everyone to experience anew the news that came to Mary early one morning: "He is not dead, he is alive. Go tell the others." —







**Habitat dedication**

**Marney Gibbs, far right, congratulates Karen and Elizabeth Brent at the March 1 dedication of their new house at 20 E. Peabody St. in Staunton. Gibbs was a project director for the house which was the first women's build sponsored by the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Habitat for Humanity.** AC staff photo

# Notes from the road

**Augusta Country staff writer Nancy Sorrells is preparing to embark on a five-week trip to Japan as part of a Rotary International exchange team. This month she gives us a preview of the trip as she bids us, "Sayonara," until June.**

# 'Konnichiwa' — Hi, good afternoon

By NANCY SORRELLS

Those of you who just finished watching the Winter Olympics may recognize this Japanese phrase. In just a few weeks I will have the opportunity to use it and many other equally exotic-sounding phrases hundreds of times. I am going to Japan as part of a Rotary cultural exchange between this area and Hokkaido, Japan.

I am not a member of Rotary — in fact, only non-Rotarians are selected as team members in this cultural exchange of business and professional people. The Group Study Exchange, which was launched by Rotary International in 1965, is one way in which this international service organization works to improve understanding between cultures. About 32,000 people and 6,000 teams from more than 100 countries *have participated in the Rotary-funded program since its inception.*

*My personal journey toward Japan* began in the fall when a friend and Rotary member encouraged me to apply for a spot on a team which was being chosen from Rotary District 7570, an area that stretches from Winchester, through the Valley and over the border into Tennessee. I filled out my application, wrote an essay explaining how I would benefit professionally from such an exchange, and faced an interview panel in Blacksburg.

I had not been home from my interview more than a few hours when I received a phone call from Joe Ferguson, the Rotary team leader of the Japan trip, telling me that I had been selected. In addition to our leader Joe, who is a very active Rotarian, my fellow team members are Ben Flora, Jr., an artist and college faculty member from Boones Mill; Debbie Garrett, a florist and vice mayor from Buena Vista; Linda Holsinger, a public relations practitioner from Roanoke; and Jill Smeltzer, a social worker and Radford University faculty member, from Abingdon. We are all sponsored by local Rotary clubs within the larger district. My sponsoring organization, to which I am incredibly grateful, is the Staunton-Augusta County Rotary Club. And, guess what? Except for Joe, I am the oldest of the group... but only by a few months.

Back in October, the date of April 24, 1998 seemed a long time away. In retrospect, I don't know how I (and my four teammates and team leader) am going to get everything done! We have been meeting once a month, communicating back and forth constantly, learning about Rotary, learning about Japan, trying to learn Japanese, preparing a group presentation, and generally squeezing a whole lot of work into our already busy lives.

It will be worth the effort! Soon I will be departing for five weeks in Japan. Our time will be spent on Hokkaido, the northern-most of Japan's four large islands. Just as different regions of America have their own cultural flavors, so, too, does Hokkaido. In many ways it is Japan's Wild West, an area that was settled and incorporated into the mainstream Japanese culture much later than the more southern islands.

*The island is more scenic, less populated, and much cooler as well. We are told that the climate is similar in temperature to* Montreal. When we arrive, the people will be anxiously awaiting their big sign of spring — the blooming of the cherry trees. We will also be arriving during Golden Week, a period filled with several national holidays.

Much of our time on Hokkaido will be spent in and around Sapporo, a city of 1.7 million. As guests of the Japanese we will be taken to points of cultural interest, museums, craft areas, scenic areas, and to civic institutions like schools and hospitals. Also on our agenda are visits to almost 15 Rotary clubs where we will show a slide presentation about ourselves, our lives and our part of America. And (don't laugh) each of us will do this by means of a short speech in Japanese!

We will be staying in the homes of Japanese families, each team member with a different family, and moving to a new family each week. We will also have the opportunity to meet with our professional counterparts in Japan. I may meet with museum people or writers, for instance, to see how they do their job.

As part of our exchange, we have been gathering gifts from various organizations representative of our region. Museums, agencies and organizations large and small have been very generous in helping us. As a result we have many, many

See *JAPAN*, page 24

**Preparing to set out on a five-week Rotary Exchange trip to Japan are, back row, left to right, Joe Ferguson, Linda Holsinger, Debbie Garrett, and Nancy Sorrells; front row, left to right, Ben Flora and Jill Smeltzer.**
Photo courtesy Rotary International

# Yesterday once more

## Waynesboro's Bowman receives ACHS honor

**AC staff report**

STAUNTON — Curtis Bowman of Waynesboro was presented the Distinguished Service Award by the Augusta County Historical Society at its third annual banquet held March 2. Recognizing Bowman for his "exceptional contributions to historic preservation," ACHS president Katharine Brown presented Bowman with a plaque and pen desk set for his achievement.

"Curtis Bowman's life and work in the field of history is a testimony to the importance of constant, steady, thoughtful dedication to research and writing the history of a locale," Dr. Brown said. "His years of articles bringing to life hundreds of people, places, and incidents of Waynesboro's past in his 'Days of Yore' have kept his readers interested and informed on the history of their community. That is a public service of great merit."

Bowman is a native of Waynesboro and for 45 years worked at Du Pont. He has served as a volunteer at *Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center and the Afton Visitors' Center.* For a number of years his popular "Days of Yore" column was published by the *Waynesboro News-Virginian.*

During the society's evening program, James Madison University professors Clarence Geier and Raymond Hyser presented the results of their research into the history associated with Stokesville which is located in northwestern Augusta County.

Although there were people living in the Stokesville area before the 1900s, the original inhabitants of the area had little connection with the industry which created Stokesville as a boom town from around 1901 until 1913, according to the professors' research.

"The local people were not closely involved (with the industry)," said Geier. "It's as if the industrial enterprise did not exist for them." It is estimated that some 1,500 people worked in the town at its lumber mill, barrel stave mill, and extract plant at the height of its prosperity. But few of these workers were natives of the area, according to the professors' findings.

The research gathered through the professors' studies reveals that Stokesville was a "company" *town. Not long after the end of the Civil War, northern entrepreneurs began looking* for ways to invest capital in southern ventures. One such enterprise was, as Geier described it, "the grand scheme of breaching the Shenandoah Mountains to gain access to the coal fields of West Virginia." New Yorker Thomas Stokes and a "murky Philadelphia connection" provided the finances to bring the railroad as far as what would become known as Stokesville.

*It was believed that through* Augusta's western mountain boundary a direct route might be established which could tap the then-lucrative West Virginia coal industry. However, when it was determined the extension of the rail lines through the mountains was not feasible, the fate of Stokesville was sealed. Investors pulled out of the venture and the short-lived industry in the town came to a halt and with it, the prosperity of the town.

For all the industry that went on in Stokesville at the turn of the century, there are precious few documents which can be used to trace its history. "There are no maps, no legal documents, no business records," Geier said. "It's like the town never existed."

Piecing together the history of Stokesville was a monumental task, according to the historians. "This is not history that came from books," Geier said. "People in the community kept these things which helped us discover this history. It brings home the fragile character of what history is all about."

ACHS members applauded the research efforts of the JMU professors. Among those present for the program were a number of present-day Stokesville residents, many of whom had recollections of some of the history associated with the area.

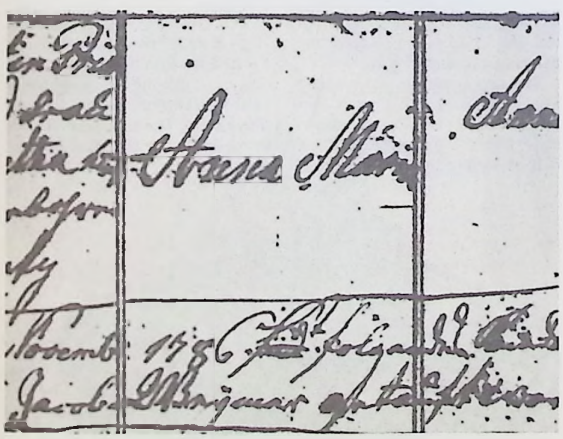
"The historical research and archaeology project carried out under the direction of Professors Geier and Hyser has great significance for Augusta County history," Dr. Brown noted. "Because so little remains of the once-thriving community, and because most of those who once populated the town left behind few traces, few in Augusta County today are aware of it. *Without Hyser's and Geier's work, we were in danger of losing* an entire chunk of our economic and industrial history." —

**Katharine Brown, president of the Augusta County Historical Society, presents the group's Distinguished Service Award for 1997 to Curtis Bowman of Waynesboro. Bowman's wife, Myrlinne, holds the pen desk set which was part of the award.** AC staff photo

## German family names topic of ACHS meeting

STAUNTON — Family names and naming patterns of 18th-century Shenandoah Valley Germans will be the topic of the Augusta County Historical Society's Spring Meeting to be held May 3 at 3 p.m. at the Museum of American Frontier Culture.

Dorothy Boyd-Rush, dean of the graduate school at James Madison University and a prominent family historian, will present the topic, "Eighteenth-Century Germans in the Valley as revealed in the pages of their church registers."



**Barely decipherable to most eyes, these German records found at churches in the Shenandoah Valley have been analyzed and interpreted by historian Dorothy Boyd-Rush. She will present her findings on Early Shenandoah Valley German family history at the Augusta County Historical Society's spring meeting on May 3 at 3 p.m. at the Museum of American Frontier Culture.**

Dr. Boyd-Rush will look first at naming patterns brought to the Valley by Germans from their homeland in the Palatinate region of Germany. She will then explain how many of the most prominent family names evolved and became Anglicized.

"It is in church registers as well as in the public records kept by English speaking writers that we can most readily document the naming patterns and surname shifts that characterized the 18th-century German experience in the Valley," she said.

"While English was the language that characterized the courthouse; German dominated in the home and rang out from the pulpit until the early decades of the 19th century," she explained. However, she added, a shift toward English in all aspects of their lives was well under way by the 1820s and 1830s.

She cites an example of a family plot in Friedens Cemetery in Rockingham County. There, side-by-side, are a sister, Anna Zimmerman, who died young and was buried in 1817, and her brother, Jacob Carpenter, who died and was buried in 1831. Although it may not be apparent at first glance, the brother and sister shared the same last name. Carpenter is the English translation of the German word, Zimmerman.

Other common name shifts which will be examined in the talk are Ermentraut to Armentrout, Preisch to Price, Berke to Pirkey, Geiger to Kyger, Hain to Haynes, Müller to Miller, Schaeffer to Shaver, Bente to Pence, Schwartz to Black, Herrman to Harmon, and Wilhelm to Williams.

"The elaborate baptismal records maintained by the members of the Lutheran and Reformed churches proclaim the endurance of the old naming patterns, which had come from Europe, until well into the 19th century," added Dr. Boyd-Rush. One example of this is the fact that well into the 1800s, all sons were given the first name of Johan and the daughters were given the first name of Anna or Maria. Therefore, a family's first son might be Johan Peter and the second son was Johan Jacob, but they were called Peter and Jacob.

By the middle of the 1800s, most German families had shifted away from the use of the German language and the use of traditional naming patterns like the ones just described. It is only through looking at the pages of the old church registers and other public documents that the lives of these Germans who blended the cultures of the Old World and the New World can be revealed.

The meeting will be held in the Museum of American Frontier Culture's dairy barn lecture hall. The public is welcome to attend free of charge. There is ample parking and handicapped access. Refreshments will be served at the conclusion of the meeting.

The Augusta County Historical Society is a local organization interested in the history and preservation of Augusta County, Staunton and Waynesboro. Memberships are currently available for $15 per year. Two newsletters and two journals are included in the membership fee. The society hosts two historical programs and a banquet each year and sponsors other occasional workshops and programs. Oral history and architectural projects are currently active in the society. For more information about the society or the spring meeting, call president Katharine Brown at 540-885-5979 (home) or vice-president Nancy Sorrells at 540-377-6390 (home). —

# Schoolhouse News

## Governor's School offers unique opportunity

By BILL CLICK

FISHERSVILLE — Started in the fall of 1993, the Central Shenandoah Regional Governor's School is a unique educational opportunity in the Augusta Country area. The school, located in the Valley Vocational Technical Center in Fishersville, offers many challenging programs to area high school juniors and seniors, as well as training in the math, science and computer fields to area teachers.

Students from Waynesboro, Augusta County, and Staunton high schools are eligible to apply to the school, which has a total enrollment of 110. The curriculum at the school exclusively revolves around math, science and technology; offered are three math courses, five science courses, and two technology courses.

Because of the emphasis on technology, the school has a state-of-the-art computer network. There are over 60 computers available to use, and there are also over 15 laptops that are available for students to check out overnight. Each student and faculty member has an account on the network where they can access their own personal e-mail account and the Internet. The Governor's School was the first school in the area to be connected to the Internet through CFW Telephone Company's Educational Computer Network.

Being housed in the VVTC building makes it easy for Governor's School students to work with the VVTC students on some projects. Some Governor's School students used the VVTC body shop to improve their electric vehicle, a 1970 Datsun 280Z. This year, the electric vehicle team began to convert a 1984 Dodge Conquest from a gasoline-powered vehicle to a fully electric vehicle. The team competes in races several times each school year; the 1997-98 school year saw the team racing near Disney World in Orlando, Fla., in mid-December, and the team also traveled to a national race in Phoenix, Ariz., March 4-9. The team finds funding to transport the car and to cover basic expenses through sponsorship from local companies.

While this school may seem like utopia to many students, it only lasts half a day. CSRGS students arrive at the school by 7:45 a.m. for the first class to begin, and the last class ends at 10:30 am. After the end of the last class, students can stay after to work on assignments, but they must return to their home school for afternoon classes.

The Outreach Program is a program that allows area elementary, middle and high school students to gain hands-on experience with science, mathematics, and computers. Governor's School students volunteer to assist the teachers in making science, mathematics and technology fun for the children. Between 1,500 and 2,000 area students participate in the program each school year. The school also offers workshops for area teachers in these areas, with the faculty teaching as many as 200 teachers more math, science and technology skills each year.

When asked what made this school so special, the director of the school, Linda Cauley, said: "We are lucky to have such great facilities to support our students. However, it's really the students who make this such a great school!" —

*Bill Click is a junior at Fort Defiance High School. He also attends the Central Shenandoah Regional Governor's School.*

**Central Shenandoah Regional Governor's School students, from left, Diana Larkin, Allison Sterrett, and Bill Click, work on a project at the school in Fishersville. All three attend Fort Defiance High School.**

**Photo by Chris Collins**

## Students transform gas-powered car to electric

By BILL CLICK

FISHERSVILLE — As the 21st century approaches, it seems that electric vehicles are deemed the transportation of the future. There's still a long way to go in perfecting these vehicles, but students at the Central Shenandoah Valley Regional Governor's School have a working model.

Students at the school have transformed a gasoline-powered 1970 Datsun 240Z from gas to an electric vehicle through many hours of student labor while acquiring engineering experience. This year, the students also began to transform a 1984 Dodge Conquest to an electric vehicle.

But how is this conversion done? And why would anyone want to do this? The students use a bay in the Valley Vocational Technical Center's auto body shop to store their cars during repairs. To convert the car it must first be stripped down to the bare metal cage. The car is then repainted, and electrical components like batteries, converters, and electric motors are added in the place of the gas engine components.

The top speed of the electric Datsun 240Z is about 65 mph. Students volunteer to be on the team to acquire hands-on knowledge in this field of engineering, but also to participate in the races in which the car competes. So far this year the team has been to Orlando, Fla., in mid-December and returned the second week in March from Phoenix, Ariz., where they placed fourth overall.

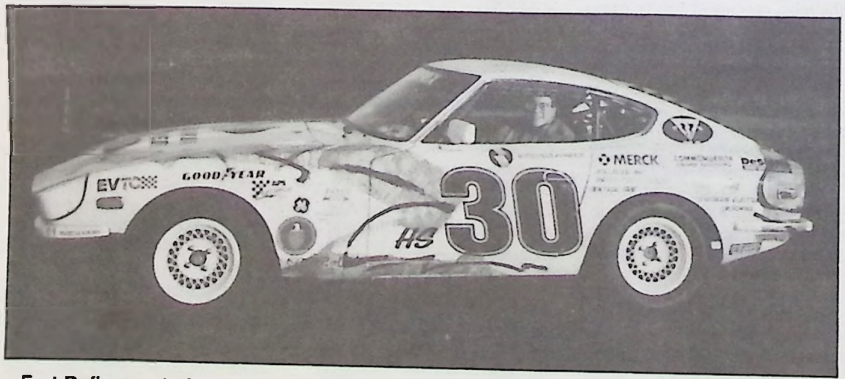
The students are also allowed to drive the car in competitions. At one event last year, team captain Robert Hoffman of Fort Defiance High School drove in a slalom event and won first place. The chance of driving the car is available to everybody on the team, if they desire. The car is rumored to be the only car with a manual transmission that will never stall. —

### CSRGS car takes checkered flag

PHOENIX, Ariz. -- The electric conversion vehicle engineered by students at the Central Shenandoah Regional Governor's School placed fourth overall in competition held recently in Phoenix.

The team's design netted the car third place honors, their first-ever trophy for design. The car also took sixth place in the contest's feature race.

The team won prize money of about $1,500 which will be used to support future activities. ---




**Fort Defiance student Robert Hoffman sits behind the wheel of the electric car which was engineered by students at the Central Shenandoah Regional Governor's School. The car won numerous awards at a competition held recently in Phoenix, Ariz.**

**Photo courtesy Governor's School**

# BMMS students host state ag commissioner

## *Program salutes American farmer*

By PENNY PLEMMONS

CEDAR GREEN — Agri-science students at Beverley Manor Middle School honored the American farmer during National Agriculture Week, March 15-21, hosting an Agricultural Producers Career Day at the school March 19. The school's approximately 300-member sixth grade class participated in the day-long event which focused on the theme, "The Hands that Feed Us."

According to Sally Shomo, BMMS agriscience teacher, the event materialized as a result of a letter sent to State Agriculture Commissioner, J. Carlton Courter. The letter, composed and signed by several sixth grade agriscience classes, requested that the state of Virginia designate a day to honor farmers. Courter's positive response to the letter was the spark that ignited Shomo and her students to develop the first annual BMMS Farmer Appreciation Day.

**Sally Shomo, agriscience instructor at Beverley Manor Middle School, accepts a proclamation from Va. Ag Commissioner J. Carlton Courter, on behalf of Va. Gov. Jim Gilmore, recognizing and thanking state producers for their agricultural contributions. Students at BMMS petitioned the governor to designate March 19 as Farmer Appreciation Day.**

Courter attended the event and, on behalf of Va. Gov. Jim Gilmore and the Commonwealth of Virginia, presented the school with a framed document recognizing and thanking state producers for their agricultural contributions.

"Food begins on a farm. It takes one farmer to provide food for 127 people," Courter said. To enable students to grasp this concept further, Courter continued, "that would be like three sixth grade students doing all the homework for this entire group of three hundred. Today's farmer has the tremendous ability to produce an abundance of safe, wholesome and tasty food."

Farmers from Augusta, Bath, Rockingham and Rockbridge Counties hauled in their livestock and fiber products to create a hands-on expo and mini petting zoo for student exploration. Producers also shared their farming expertise to the sixth graders in 10-minute mini lectures with individual presenters covering the agricultural livelihoods of beef, dairy, poultry, swine, sheep, trout, llama, bee, fallow deer, horse, fruit and vegetable and forage productions.

**J. Carlton Courter, Virginia's agriculture commissioner, joins Beverley Manor Middle School students at a Percheron horse display during "The Hands That Feed Us" program held recently at the school. The event was held during National Agriculture Week to salute the work of the American farmer.**

Photos by Penny Plemmons

The class not only learned about modern farming technology but, with the help of David Stahl from the Museum of American Frontier Culture, they journeyed back to farm life in the 1850s where food production was dependent on a few crude tools and many hands.

Shomo's goal in promoting agriculture with a commemorative event was designed to develop student appreciation for farmers and their contributions to the quality of daily life.

"Maybe the next time we say the blessing at the dinner table, we should not only give thanks for the hands that prepared the food, but also for the farmer who made it all possible," Shomo said. —

# Governor's school team wins in oceanography contest

By BILL CLICK

FISHERSVILLE — Students from the Central Shenandoah Regional Governor's School applied what they learned about oceanography at a regional competition held recently in Virginia Beach. A total of 11 students and three chaperones attended the event. Students attending were: Robert E. Lee High School students Maura Buehner, Michael Garrison, Sarah Rexrode, and Wyatt Hollar; Buffalo Gap High School student Cosby Harmon; Wilson Memorial High School students Kim Porter and Ali Quarforth; and Riverheads High School students Brandon Flint, Emma Law, Jackie Norris, and Morgan Sproul.

The format of the competition was similar to Jeopardy; students are on teams and are asked questions. Each team has a set of buzzers, and the first one to get a correct response gets points. The team competed against 16 other teams at this event.

"The competition was very educational and was a lot of fun," commented Lee student Maura Beuhner. "It was fun because we took it so lightly and weren't really worried about winning or losing. We just tried our hardest, and it paid off in the end."

The team now moves on to the national competition in Washington, D.C. next month. —

# The Hitching Post

## Stress commitment to promote lesson program

**Q: I had a lesson program and found that many parents were not very respectful of my time or commitment. Many did not show up on time or called at the last minute to cancel. Could you say something about his problem with lesson programs?**

*VS, Augusta County*

I have found that people are not very good at commitments. Commitments are like promises. I know I am a horse and my commitments are a great deal different from yours. Although in a lesson program I HAVE to be there whether or not the student shows up. Sometimes I have stood on cross ties waiting and ready for 20 minutes until it was decided I was not needed either because a student did not show up or called in late.

Many times students do not have control over their own transportation or even commitments. It is difficult for a child to be somewhere if a parent is heading in a different direction. OVER-commitment is another problem. Many times trying to do too many things within a limited amount of times causes commitment problems.

My suggestion to lesson programs that have a difficulty with attendance is to develop a better communication system with parents. Parents are often trying to accommodate many of their children's interests and need to make the stable aware of this situation. You might have to ask them what their other commitments are in order to choose a suitable time for the lesson.

Another suggestion is to promote your program to the PARENTS rather than the students. You might be talking to the wrong audience. Yeah, students think horsemanship is great, but parents need to know about the therapeutic value of it, too. Helping the parent understand that horsemanship builds important values in their children can help them feel that the trip to the barn is worth it.

The values associated with horsemanship include self confidence, responsibility, discipline, goal setting/achievement, communication skills, and respect. Make sure your program puts these skills first through proper horsemanship and horse care and parents will see how important it is to be there on time.

When there is a lack of respect, then sometimes it starts with communication and then promotion. Finally, if the respect you feel you deserve still doesn't seem to be forthcoming, then it might be time to enforce final ground rules. Failure to be on time might result in a partial lesson payment. Or no-shows might result in no longer participating in the lesson program. Sometimes it is better to let a customer go and wait for another to fill that spot than to have horses on cross ties because of inconsistent attendance.

You will not always be able to control what parents and students are up to when it comes to your lesson program. The idea is to control what YOU can do to make your business a satisfying situation for you, your horse, and your stable. —

## I.B.HOOFINIT From the Horse's Mouth



### INSTRUCTORS WANTED

Chris Marrs is looking for instructors interested in trying a new program called:

**Independent Horsemanship**

It is an educational course to assist instructors teaching horseback riding to beginners. The only cost associated with the program is the cost of the books. For more information call Chris at 540/886-4415.



### ADDRESS CHANGE?

If your address has changed for any reason or if you are planning to move, you must notify *Augusta Country* of the change. Call 885-0266 or 1-800-884-8248 or write *Augusta Country*, P.O. Box 51, Middlebrook, Va. 24459. Please help us keep our records up to date.

*Thank you*

# Seminar provides tips on equine businesses

By CHRIS MARRS

CHARLOTTESVILLE — The Virginia Horse Industry Board, the Virginia Horse Journal, and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services sponsored an Equine Business Seminar Feb. 21 at Morven Stud in Charlottesville.

Five main areas of business were covered at the well-attended seminar — legal entities for businesses, accounting and tax issues, liability issues, and advertising on the Internet.

Legal entities for businesses included a presentation by April R. Fletcher, a lawyer, who discussed the options available to equine businesses in the forms of corporations, partnerships, and proprietorships. She also discussed a limited liability company as a positive alternative for many businesses. Other legal issues included a discussion of the Virginia Equine Activity Statute and the importance of waivers in offering horse-related activities to customers.

Connie Collier offered a presentation on tax issues and the importance of record keeping, profit making, and having a solid business plan. Ms. Collier was also informative on the difference between determining an equine activity as a business or as a hobby.

Insurance and liability is important to any equine business and Patrick Mullin, director of agency development for Markel Insurance Co., spoke about many concerns and situations facing horse owners and businesspeople. Mullins discussed ways to reduce the cost of insurance by determining exposure to risk. He also advised the audience to seek out insurance professionals who KNOW horses and the special needs of the industry.

Reginald Hubley and Arlene Anns, representatives of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), discussed the opportunity SCORE offers to many businesses in need of professional counseling. The services SCORE provides include workshops and seminars on starting, planning, financing, and marketing your business, accounting and advertising. For the location of the chapter nearest you call 1-800-634-0245.

The final presentation offered by Dean Jacobsen, publisher of *The Virginia Horse Journal* and president of the Virginia Horse Council, looked at advertising on the Internet. The Internet is one of the fastest growing advertising mediums today and has the potential for national marketing.

The Equine Business Seminar addressed important issues relating to the special needs of the horse industry. For information concerning future seminars, contact the Virginia Horse Industry Board and Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in Richmond. —

## •Alaska

*Continued from page 8*

doors to the outside world. The elders are struggling with the youth losing touch with their culture."

Even though he was traveling to the villages to provide a service, Harry noted that outsiders often had a difficult time being accepted by the natives. "Fortunately most of the villages had gyms and I played basketball with them. That not only saved my sanity, but meant that I could meet people. It sort of got me on the inside with them," said the former high school and college hoops player.

Even when he was on the job, *actual life was not* all work and no play. But when he was off the clock *in Alaska, that's* when the real benefits of the state began to kick in.

"You have real outdoors opportunities: hiking, fishing and hunting. I go at least one day a week in the summer. In the Anchorage area there is a lot of salmon and halibut fishing," he said. He added that bicycling and running were also listed among his leisure activities.

Just as people have misconceptions about the Alaskan winters, the summers, too, are misunderstood he noted. "The summers are warmer than people think. It gets in the 90s in Fairbanks regularly, but in Anchorage 85 is scorching. Nice days are 70 to 75 with a bit of a breeze. On June 21 you have 18 plus hours of sunlight. It really doesn't get dark, just kind of twilight. You can go fishing all night in late June and early July."

This summer Harry changed jobs and is now a journeyman lineman for Chugach Electric in Anchorage. *The change means not having to* go out into the bush in the dead of winter, something with which he says he has had his fill. His home base in Anchorage, a city of 250,000 people, is much like a medium size city anywhere in the country, he notes. Winters mean an average of 24 to 30 inches of snow on the ground from December to March, but the city life takes some of the sharp edges off the winter.

Despite its urban appearance, however, there are still differences between living in Anchorage, Alaska and living in the Lower 48, he said. "To go anywhere else in the real world means you have to go 1,500-1,800 miles to get out of the wilderness of Alaska," he said. He has awakened to small earthquakes although nothing strong enough to "knock things off shelves," and marveled at the surreal experience of volcanic ash raining down from a volcanic eruption several hundred miles away.

All-in-all it has been a learning experience for the Augusta County native. "Alaska is a wonderful place to see. It's impressive to look at on a post card, but to see it in person is something else. In the summertime I can be sitting alongside a salmon stream living the good life and know that I didn't have to pay thousands of dollars to get there," he said. —

## •Talent

*Continued from page 11*

the big-time contracts.

"We depend on an independent label and are more in contact with real, honest American music. We are rooted in the traditional music of our country," explained Linda.

Robin added: "Personal contact is important to us and our music. We don't play in front of thousands. We might play in front of hundreds. We have a personal connection with our audience and our promoters."

For Robin and Linda, however, there is no such thing as overnight success. Their current success is the culmination of 5-10 years of hard work, explained Linda. In reality the work has been going on a lot longer. The pair recently notched a few milestones, they have been married 25 years (and performing together even longer) and they both turned 50. But, now that they are really coming into their own, there is no slowing down.

"Turning 50 is great," said Robin with a laugh. "It means that we are free not to be shackled by the bondage of youth. We will keep going as long as we are having fun at what we are doing. It all goes so fast," he said.

"At our level we work as hard as anybody," explained Linda. "We spend a lot of time making a living," Robin added, ticking off the long road trips, songwriting, recording and promoting that all factor into their success. But, they both admit, it is a living that they love. "I don't understand about people who complain about being on the road. Almost every night is fun," said Robin. —

*Graphics from the* Devil of a Dream *album were reproduced in* Augusta Country *without permission. We sure hope they don't mind.*



## °Answers

*Continued from page 9*

Miller as he shot Walker again. Walker staggered to the post where Henry Miller had his back to the struggle. Walker repeatedly knifed him in the side and chest until the knife broke off in Miller's back.

As Miller fell at the post, Walker stumbled to a bench at the front of the room. A free-for-all melee of guns, knives and buggy whips occupied the courtroom. The Miller boys met at the post above their dead father. Jim Miller fired wildly. William Miller fired at Walker, hitting him three times. Bettie sank to the floor, head bowed. Soon, a bystander determined the hole behind her left ear was the fatal wound, likely a wild shot from Jim Miller's gun aimed at Walker.

Later that night, Walker died railing at "the cowardly dogs who shot me three times after I was down."

Henry Miller's son David, after a long recuperation, is acquitted in the courtroom killing. So are the others after a long jury trial. Though no certain answers were ever offered for Walker's inclination to fight, his animosity launched a feud of legendary proportions, a legend which lives on today in the history of Brownsburg. —

## °Brown

*Continued from page 7*

we all ran for home as fast as we could. He went down and suddenly there wasn't a soul in that field. Oh, he was all right. But that ended our ball game."

Porterfield remembers that everyone played baseball in fields with no lights. And the kids watched baseball and basketball games at the Academy on the hill.

And there were the Fibber McGee and Molly radio shows, and Lum and Abner and Amos and Andy. "The streets were dirt then, and we had oil lamps," Porterfield said.

His mother, Agnes Gilmore Craney, took in washing. Frances and her sister Ruth delivered it. "I remember her telling me when I delivered the washing to always go to the back doors, to never go to the front doors," Porterfield recalled. "Lots of folks wouldn't even invite you in. You would stand outside and they would bring the money out to you. Some girls were lucky. They got jobs in the White's houses."

For Black Brownsburg, times stayed harder longer. "We didn't have everything we wanted," Porterfield said. "We had to take hand-me-down clothes the white people would give us and that Daddy would bring home."

Porterfield, who moved to Richmond and married, found herself answering Brownsburg's call. She raised Gwendolyn, Charles, Frances, Kenneth and Agnes in the big, warm log house in which she was born in 1923. *Between she and her husband, Charles, they enjoy five grandchildren and three great-grandsons.*

Brown, married to Louis O. Brown, didn't go far, either. She works at Fairfield Post Office. Her five children, William, Elizabeth, Gary, Rebecca and Jennifer, have given her 10 grandchildren.

"My children came up in an integrated school and knew they were equal. My daughter, Jennifer, was an A student at Rockbridge, and I feel I struggled through college with the two girls."

Both Brown and Porterfield grew up believing they were first class citizens, and taught their children that pride comes from inside, where strength comes from who you are, not whom others think you might be. Both also discovered young that God plays no favorites, that all His children look the same.

"My parents never taught me there was a difference between black and white," Brown says.

On Frances Porterfield's coffee table, her worn Bible and open devotional book hint at struggles within preceding the peace and joy without. She and Brown talk about a Bible study they attend. Faith, like a golden thread, interweaves their lives with that of a greater vision.

Services at Asbury United Methodist Church still reflect the best of Christianity — a strong salvation message, a sense of proud community, joy reflected on the faces of young and old.

See *ASBURY*, page 23

# Country Crossroads

## *Reflecting pool reflections*

*By Roberta Hamlin*
March 1998

Dear Maude,

What a crazy place to live and work is this city of Washington!! We are supposed to be here as servants of the people, working hard to maintain the form of government on which the nation was founded. It is often hard to find any evidence of this among our everyday activities. But at least the legislature is in session, and things are being done in the hallowed halls of Congress. What things these are we might not like to know, for it is that time of year again when most of the issues that will eventually be made into law are being worked out behind closed doors. Or, at least we are told that is what is going on the hill, but we suspect that they are simply chuckling about each others problems and telling the latest Washington inspired jokes.

We had quite an exciting time here at the office just as I started to write to you last month. The word flew around the office that Kenneth Starr had just come in — you should have seen us. Everyone putting on a quick layer of lipstick, just in case there was anyone with a camera following him.

Those of us toward the back of the suite had not witnessed "The Arrival," but speculation was flying. Was it really him? Why was he here? Was there someone in the office about whom we did not know everything? *Could it have something to do with the new woman who was hired to help in our bookkeeping department? We decided that must be what it was all about.*

*She had arrived, unannounced, as an assistant.* Everyone assumed that she was the daughter, or niece, or some relative of one of the partners. As best as we could all tell, she did not seem to know much about the calculator or the computer, and even less about balance sheets. In less than three-minutes time, speculation was flying. She always takes long lunch hours and not at the carry-out across the street, either. The things she does and gets away with would get anyone of us fired. We just knew she must be someone who had known (or had done) something that was of interest to those in charge of "The Investigation."

Those of us on the back side of the office took turns going to the copy machine with anything we could find to copy. (The machines are in a room near the bookkeeping department and the office of the boss.) But there the new assistant sat, puzzling over a column of figures and not at all concerned about the goings on. We found out, however, from the receptionist, whose desk was nearest to the boss' office, that it was not Mr. Starr who had arrived, but instead someone from his office.

Whomever the person was, he was in there with the boss, and they were having a spirited discussion.

We could occasionally hear a "What do you mean you don't remember?" or "... surely, you were at that function where..."

Then things would become quiet. But soon someone would come close to the wall again with a "...you owe me one, Tom, and I want you to try hard and think about..."

Silence.

Then, "...that golf junket we all went on last year in..."

More silence.

A few mumbled words.

"I am certain she was at that meeting. You remember what she looks like. She..."

(The least they could have done was to stand still so we could hear what they were saying.)

Then the door finally opened, and this man we recognized as someone with whom the boss occasionally has lunch walked out, and the boss said, "Sorry I couldn't help you Dick, but I simply don't remember a thing about it." Then off the man went and suddenly the office was as quiet and boring as ever. The new bookkeeping assistant was still in a puzzle over that page full of numbers. What a disappointment. We had hoped for a little excitement, a few cameras. There was nothing else to do but go back to work.

With so much news devoted to gossip, life is even more boring than it was in January, if that can be possible. My standard remedy for such boredom is shopping, but things have gotten so bad lately that I am even bored with shopping! To make things worse than they already are, all of the new spring clothes seem to be in grays and beiges. The gloominess of the weather does not help matters either.

One bright spot however — there is to be a wonderful Van Gogh exhibit of masterpieces from the Van Gogh Museum coming to the National Gallery this fall. Everyone is excited about it. If only it were opening now! We certainly could use a bit of his sunflowers and bright colors. I was ready to dash across town for a pass, but they will not be available until the end of August. At least we finally have something really exciting to look forward to. I called AnnaLee and we plan to take the boys.

Lately, Dylan has come through with a few nice dinners and parties. What all this attention from him is about I cannot guess, but I decided to enjoy it as much as possible. The best of it all was that only one of the functions he has taken me to recently was a fundraiser! Things are looking up. Now if the shops would only stock some bright, pretty spring party clothes...

Mama called last week and gave me all the news about the family. She says your young ones are making wonderful grades in school. Tell them I am so proud of them, (but don't encourage them to become politicians.)

Love,
LuLu

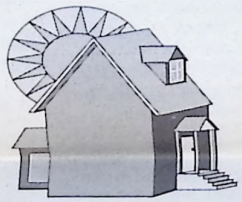
## Group provides assistance to homeowners

*Food for thought*

**By Randy Harlow**

Christmas in April—Staunton/Augusta County is a local affiliate of a national program. It is the leading volunteer organization that, in partnership with the community, rehabilitates houses of low-income homeowners, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities so that they may continue to live in warmth, safety and independence. Some programs also include non-profit facilities for repair.

The origins of Christmas in April go back to 1972 and Midland, Texas. An oil scout by the name of Bobby Trimble looked around his community at the decaying houses and decided to do something about what he saw. He began with a challenge to his Baptist Sunday School class. Accepting his challenge, this group sought others in the community to join their effort. Their first project was quite successful. One of the recipients exclaimed, "Why this is like Christmas, Christmas in April!" While this organization is non-sectarian, its name reflects the words of that recipient.



Eventually, Trevor Armbrister, a writer for *Reader's Digest*, would be asked to visit Midland and investigate this program for an article. Although Armbrister was not very enthused over his assignment, his visit to the Midland program provided inspiration for an article that appeared in his magazine and commanded the attention of others around the nation. Soon thereafter, programs began forming in Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia and elsewhere.

In 1988, the national program Christmas in April—USA was established and is headquartered in Washington, D.C. Local affiliates now exist in all 50 states and inquiries have been received from Ghana. Virginia ranks near the top with number of affiliates.

Christmas in April—Staunton/Augusta County came into existence in 1993 with assistance from the national program and the Amherst/Nelson County affiliate. Having witnessed the workings of Christmas in April in Amherst County, members of Jollivue United Methodist Church began a dialogue with representatives of various entities in Staunton and Augusta County regarding formation of an affiliate for this area. Incorporation was received from the State Corporation Commission in 1994 with completion of the first two projects that same year. To date, 27 homeowners in Staunton and Augusta County have been assisted.

A board of directors and advisory board give oversight to this program. Pending the award of a $25,000 grant, the hiring of a full-time director is expected in the near future.

Prior to 1997, the local affiliate operated out of the facilities at Jollivue United Methodist Church. Through the generosity of Staunton businessman John Zinn, an office has been opened at 826 N. Augusta St. Furnishings for the office have been donated by Augusta Mutual Insurance Co., Circuit City, Community Bank, First Virginia Bank, Lowe's, Shenandoah Valley Office Equipment, and Staples. An official opening of the office is scheduled for April 8 at 1 p.m.

Funding for the projects and for office expenses come totally from local sources including churches, clubs, organizations, and individuals. As the program continues to develop, a more concerted effort will be made to involve business and industry.

While there is no charge to the recipients, we do ask that able-bodied family members participate in the repairs. Most of our volunteers are from Staunton and Augusta County. However, we have been joined by persons from other communities who wanted to support our effort, We welcome participation by skilled and unskilled workers and encourage older youth to participate.

At present, we have 22 applicants with needs of various kinds. Most of these homes will require new roofs. We welcome groups that wish to adopt one of our projects. We also form teams of individuals.

Referrals to Christmas in April come from churches, clubs, organizations, agencies, and self referrals. Application forms for services or to volunteer may be obtained by stopping at our office at 826 N. Augusta St., by calling 885-7894 or by writing Christmas in April Staunton/Augusta County, P.O. Box 3152, Staunton, Va. 24402-3152. —

*Randy Harlow is the minister at Jollivue United Methodist Church. Those desiring may make monetary donations to Christmas in April at the above address.*

*Grecian stalks of delicacy*

# Planting asparagus for a generation

*The Garden Path*

By Jeff Ishee

Nothing much happened in Middlebrook this week except the tree trimming service made a bee-line through the village lopping broken limbs away from power lines. After that ice storm back in February, the trimmers filled truck after truck with wood chips, which they promptly hauled down to the "chip pile" on Va. 701. If you are a gardener, you know the value of this free source of mulch and go there often to fill your pickup truck. Next time you run across a tree trimming crew down at the chip pile, tell them "thanks" for keeping you supplied with this excellent gardener's resource.

Well, spring has finally arrived and it's time to get back out and scratch around in the garden a bit. This month, let's take a look at establishing a new bed of one of our favorite vegetables — asparagus.

Many of you may know that asparagus is a member of the lily family. But you might not know that it originated near the Mediterranean Sea and was considered a delicacy by the ancient Greeks. Methods were described for growing this vegetable in 200 B.C. It was cultivated in England by the time of Christ and brought to America by the early colonists. Highly prized for its delicate flavor, "asparagus" is the Greek word for "stalk" or "shoot." It has been grown in Virginia gardens since the earliest settlements were established at Jamestown and Williamsburg.

The productive life of an asparagus planting is rather long in the Shenandoah Valley and mid-Atlantic region. Many beds last 20 years or more. That's because we usually have long, cold winters and the plant is allowed to "hibernate" several months before renewing itself in the spring. In Georgia or Florida, an asparagus planting would burn itself out it just a few years.

Asparagus grows and yields best in a deep, well-drained sandy loam soil, but will tolerate heavy clay soils as long as there is good internal drainage and the water table does not come within four feet of the surface. Never plant asparagus where you have a history of standing water. This would certainly interfere with the extensive and deep root system.

We have discovered that it is vitally important to eliminate all perennial weed problems at least one year before planting. This can be done in three different ways. Here at Bittersweet Farmstead, we ran our portable hog pen through a future asparagus bed one year, and the hogs rooted up the sod, and ate all the weeds and roots present in the top eight inches of soil. At the same time, the oinkers aerated the soil efficiently and applied fertilizer rather liberally.

In your own garden, you might want to eliminate weeds by treating the bed with a non-selective herbicide. Yet another way to reduce weed populations and help build soil organic matter is to prepare the asparagus bed at least one year in advance. This can be done by planting a thick cover crop such as clover, annual ryegrass, or rape (sometimes called canola). The cover crop can be plowed under the next spring to increase soil organic matter content before planting your asparagus. This might seem like a lot of trouble, but your patience and thorough soil preparation efforts will be worth the one-year wait.

Soil test to determine pH and fertilizer requirements. The ideal pH range for asparagus is between 6.7 and 7.0. Asparagus does not tolerate acid soils and will not grow well at a pH of less than 6.0. Broadcast a fertilizer high in phosphorous and turn it under when preparing the bed. Soil test every year for the first three years to determine if fertility and pH adjustments are necessary.

Crowns can be planted from mid-April through the entire month of May. Before planting, separate any crowns that are tangled and grown together. The planting depth should be no more than six inches deep in a sandy soil and only about five inches deep on a heavy textured soil. We used to think that asparagus needed a foot-deep trench, but not so. As a matter of fact, total yield per row foot was reduced when planting depth was increased. Five to six inches is just fine.

After spading or tilling, use a snow shovel to scoop out a wide furrow and place a one inch layer of compost or well-rotted manure in the bottom. The crowns are then placed into the furrow right-side up on top of the compost. Cover the crowns with a few inches of soil and fill in the furrow gradually. With good soil moisture, the new spears will break through the soil in 2-3 weeks.

Gardeners assumed for many years that harvesting asparagus the year after planting would severely reduce future yields by reducing the food reserves in the crown. However, research done by Master Gardeners in California found that harvesting one year after planting caused no reduction in subsequent yield. The researchers concluded that the plants were not weakened when spears were harvested one year after planting as compared with non-harvested plants the first year after planting. The question of how many spears should be harvested the year following planting is not an easy one to answer, but you should probably limit your harvest to three or four weeks. Sufficient growth to build crown reserves is necessary, especially during the latter part of the first season following planting.

Asparagus is very deep rooted and draws water from a large volume of soil, allowing it to withstand periods of dry weather. However, it is beneficial to avoid drought stress during fern development in the planting year and after harvest during the second year. Water deeply, but infrequently. The objective during the first two years after planting crowns is to develop maximum fern growth in order to build an extensive storage root system.

The most critical time in the life of an asparagus bed is the first two to three growing seasons, especially the period from mid-August until frost. Competition with weeds for light, nutrients, and moisture will greatly reduce vigor the following year. A significant amount of food is stored in the crowns during the latter part of the growing season.

Remember that soil preparation is the key to a healthy and productive asparagus bed. If you do this correctly, you will be harvesting these Grecian stalks of delicacy for many years to come. —

## Sources for asparagus crowns

1) Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau
2) Jersey Asparagus Farms /1-800-499-0013
3) Brittingham Plant Farms / (410) 749-5153

# Farmers' Market preparing to open for season

*Hayride to highlight opening day April 11*

By JEFF ISHEE

STAUNTON — Shenandoah Valley farmers and market gardeners are looking forward to a new year and busily planning for the 1998 Farmers' Market season.

Staunton/Augusta Farmers' Market chairperson Betty Hawpe reports that the market had a record year in 1997 with sales slightly above the previous season.

"Our group of vendors ended the year grossing more than $77,000. Going into our sixth year now, we have a good core group of farmers participating in the market and a very loyal throng of customers who shop almost every week," said Hawpe.

The Staunton/Augusta Farmers' Market is a fresh-air market and operates on Saturdays mid-April through October at the Wharf parking area in downtown Staunton.

The figures provided by Hawpe indicate that the Staunton market is following a trend in dramatic farmers' market growth nationwide. In a survey released in 1997, the USDA reports a 40 percent increase in the number of public farmers' markets since 1994. The report also indicates that more than 20,000 farmers sell their agricultural products via farmers' markets, and that one-third of these use farmers' markets as their sole marketing outlet. —

## Staunton-Augusta Farmers' Market opening day activities

Opening day of the 1998 season is April 11. Since this is the day before Easter, farmers are planning to celebrate the season by providing fun activities for area youngsters. A free hayride and several other special activities will take place at the Wharf parking lot between 9:30 a.m. and noon. Opening Day activities include:

***An Easter Bunny Hayride*** — Kids can come join the Easter Bunny to enjoy a real hay ride pulled by a real tractor driven by a real local farmer.

***Complimentary Easter baskets*** — In cooperation with downtown merchants, the market will provide free Easter baskets for children.

***Face painting*** — Children can have their faces painted with rabbits, flowers, Easter eggs and more!

Free balloons and surprise Easter eggs. —



## •Asbury

*Continued from page 21*

"Oh, I can remember my mama making me a dress for church, always for Easter," Brown said. Her mother had a machine with only one spool of thread, no bobbin. Brown sews, too, and did for her children.

"Mine was always white organdy or dotted Swiss. And starched, with a long sash, tied in a bow in back. You could feel that knot in your back for a week." Porterfield says she can still feel those new white shoes, too. The kind that pinch your toes.

Brown's ensemble always included a hat "with flowers and a rolled brim, and we always sang 'How Great Thou Art'."

The church infused the families with community pride. Plays and pageants, children's day, homecoming, revival, special services and music, music, music. In those days, attendance topped at 75.

Porterfield's eyes stray to her Bible. "We really had a good time in church; we really knew what it was all about."

Brown talks about William Haliburton. "He'd walk and shout.

See ***CHURCH***, page 24

# Middle-aged musketeers shine in *Iron Mask*


*A movie review by Hannah's mom, Sue Simmons*

I'm coming out of the closet. I'm a sucker for a good historical romance, the more bodice ripped the better. And I'm here to tell you that all the pros — those big name movie critic types, you know who I mean — Siskel and Ebert, Elvis Mitchell, Tom Shales, Rita Kempley — they don't know their D'Artagnan from a hole in the ground. *The Man in the Iron Mask* is a good movie. Granted it is potato chip pleasure, but we're not talking the store brand.

This particular screenplay written by Randall Wallace (*Braveheart*) brings together *The Man in the Iron Mask* with Alexandre Dumas' other enduring characters, The Three Musketeers, with a little bit of *Dave* meets *The Prince and the Pauper*. But really, it's fun.

Set in France circa 1662, King Louis XIV has ascended the throne and dashed everyone's hopes that he will be a good king. He is absolutely callow and cruel as French monarchs absolutely were wont to be. The true extent of his cruelty is unknown even to those who serve him closely, for unbeknownst to everyone save the Queen Mother, he has had his innocent, unwitting identical twin brother Philippe imprisoned in an iron mask lest his true identity become known.

Louis doesn't realize, however, the extent of his people's displeasure with him. Even his legendary and loyal Musketeers now retired and middle-aged — Aramis, Porthos, and Athos played with panache by Jeremy Irons, Gerard Depardieu and John Malkovich — are conspiring to undo him with his good twin. And, of course, they do not know that a deep, dark secret between the Queen Mother and their cohort D'Artagnan (Gabriel Byrne) may prove their ultimate undoing.

This movie is reminiscent of those old Errol Flynn swashbucklers. The horses are dashing, the costumes are elegant, the palace even has secret passages. To its discredit, the story is slow to start. Too much time is spent trying to show just what motivates the musketeers and just how bad a king is Louis. Only when the identity of the Man in the Iron Mask is revealed does the movie pick up its pace and realize its delightful potential. I know he will be devastated when he finds out I said so, but Leonardo DiCaprio's acting as the good prince and the bad king pales in comparison to his castmates. Since DiCaprio has proven his talent in earlier films, Jack Dawson meets the Titanic of monarchs is something of a disappointment. Some really vacuous dialogue he delivers in a flat western accent doesn't help much either.

Still, the others, working with Randall Wallace's all-too-modern dialogue acquit themselves well. Classically trained Irons and Byrne act circles around both DiCaprio and Malkovich, who at times has difficulty playing a tortured yet sensitive role. As France's aging heartthrob, Depardieu, is perhaps the most at ease in his role and gets the most laughs with some bawdy and scatological humor. His jokes are difficult to understand through his rather thick French accent, unfortunately.

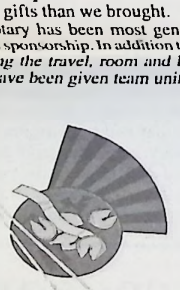
This movie is simply a good romantic, action-packed movie. There's not too much hugging and kissing and there's a lot of clanking swords. There is no hidden meaning — the good guys wear the funny hats. It's all for fun and fun for all. (I'm sorry, I couldn't resist!) Hannah's mom gives it 3 bananas. *The Man in the Iron Mask* is rated PG-13 for violence, coarse language, and adult situations. —

## •Japan

*Continued from page 16*

key rings, buttons, T-shirts, ornaments, rulers, balloons, and much, much more to give to the Japanese. Despite our best efforts, however, we have been told that it is impossible to outgive the Japanese. We should expect to come back with more gifts than we brought.

Rotary has been most generous in its sponsorship. In addition to providing the travel, room and board, we have been given team uniforms and business cards printed in Japanese, just to name a few items.



We have been preparing in other ways as well. A Japanese graduate student from Virginia Tech, Miss Yasue Ohguro, has been giving us language lessons and cultural pointers. She taught us how to bow properly and told us never to leave our chopsticks sticking upright in a bowl of rice (a sign of death). Under her coaching we have practiced the correct way to exchange business cards.

And so the time draws near. Everyday I think of something else I must pack or some item to which I must attend. Thanks to the Bank of Rockbridge in Greenville for arranging a monetary exchange, I have 190,000 yen for my spending money. I can hardly wait.

I still find it hard to believe that I will be traveling 11,000 miles and crossing the international dateline (Japan is14 hours ahead). There are a few things that I am leery of as well as some which I eagerly anticipate. I will close with three of each.

Things I am slightly worried about:

1. Catching a cold in Japan. In Japanese society it is considered highly rude to blow your nose in public. It is truly admirable to be stoic about the whole thing, snuffling and keeping a stiff upper lip. Wait until you are in private to blow your nose.

2. Sushi. I am a little worried about this raw fish thing. I have tried it and having done so, I have determined that it is an acquired taste. I think that I have not fully acquired it yet, but maybe after five weeks I will be better.

3. Squat toilets. And you face the back of the toilet! I'll let you know more about this dilemma in a few weeks, but I am still wondering how a woman maneuvers the panty hose and the skirt while in this position.

Things I am looking forward to

1. Becoming part of five new families.

2. Gaining a better understanding of another culture

3. Soaking in the steamy hot water of a Japanese bath.

For now, then, this is Nancy-san saying sayonara (good-bye). —

## •Church

*Continued from page 23*

He just seemed to float around that church, praising and shouting."

Summers, young people from the White churches taught Bible school. "We played games and got diplomas at the end."

Today, both women attend some services at New Providence, but both are excited about renovations at Asbury. About 15 locals attend regularly on Sunday afternoons.

Porterfield is pleased with the direction of the old church. "We can use the basement now, and we've had two weddings recently."

Brown agrees. "I think the new windows brought back a closeness with what we had there. I feel those old folks are patting us on the shoulder and telling us we're doing a good job. I can just about see William Haliburton walking and shouting."

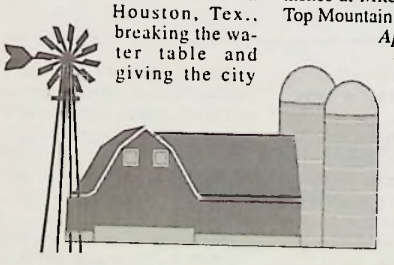
Both appreciate the legacy of Asbury U.M. "I think we should have our own church and worship the way we want. It's like our church is our identity."

And both look forward with the hope that has changed a nation, and a people. "We're going to make the future even better." —

## 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.***

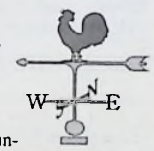
***April 1, 1912*** — A tornado with incredible velocity ripped into downtown Houston, Tex., breaking the water table and giving the city its first natural waterspout.



***April 7, 1857*** — A late season freeze brought snow to every state in the Union. Even as far south as Houston, Tex., the mercury plunged to 21 degrees.

***April 12, 1988*** — Snow blanketed the Southern Appalachians. Totals in North Carolina ranged up to 17 inches at Mitchell. Winds at Flat Top Mountain gusted to 80 mph.

***April 18, 1957*** — A dust devil near Dracut, Mass., lifted a small child three feet into the air, and rolled two other children on the ground. Fortunately none of the three were hurt. The dust devil was accompanied by a loud whistling sound as it moved westward.




***April 26, 1978*** — An unusually strong occluded front swept out of the Gulf of Alaska and produced the first April thunderstorm of record at Fairbanks. Pea size hail fell northeast of Fairbanks from thunderstorms whose tops were less than 8,000 feet in altitude.

***April 29, 1987*** — A storm off the southeast coast of Massachusetts blanketed southern New England with heavy snow. Totals of three inches at Boston, 11 inches at Milton, and 17 inches at Worcester, were records for so late in the season. Princeton was buried under 25 inches of snow. —

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