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Down on the Farm
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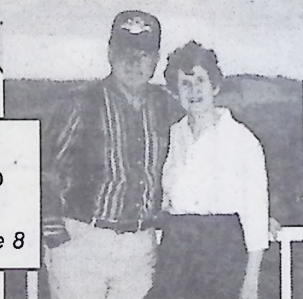


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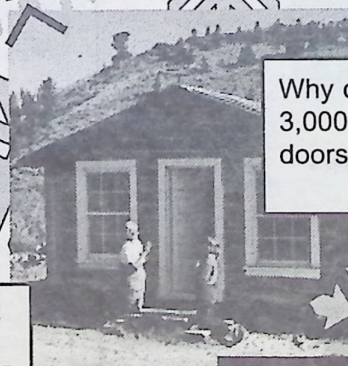


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FB members urged to derail 'train of hysteria'

AC staff report

ROANOKE—So much false information about global warming has been distributed that it will take multiple repetitions of the facts to stop the "train of hysteria" about global warming.

This was the sentiment expressed by Pat Michaels, Virginia's state climatologist, during the keynote speech on the opening day of the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention held recently in Roanoke.

The "train of hysteria," Michaels said, "is rolling down the tracks so rapidly the facts can't stop it."

Michaels' audience, made up mostly of farmers, learned that global warming does exist, but not nearly on the scale which the national media reports it. The planet's mean temperature has increased by only one-tenth of one degree over the past decade, not the two degrees that global warming researchers had predicted. Michaels called the one-tenth degree increase in global temperature "statistically insignificant."

However, based on computer models which predicted that the earth's temperature would increase by two degrees because of global warming, member nations of the United Nations have signed a global climate treaty. This requires that emissions of greenhouse gases be reduced by 40 percent before 2010.

"Power and money are two of the driving forces behind this [global warming] hysteria."

Pat Michaels
State climatologist

Michaels says there is no way to achieve this goal without dramatically increasing the cost of energy.

Because all countries were not compelled to sign the treaty, those which did — including the United States — will be responsible for enacting legislation limiting greenhouse emissions. Michaels said this will create an anti-competitive aspect to American agriculture in the global economy.

The climatologist emphasized that the climate change treaty put together in Japan in December 1997 is not necessary and will only hurt America's ability to compete in the world market because two of its biggest competitors, China and Brazil, are exempt from adherence to treaty stipulations.

Michaels noted that global warming is only making the coldest air masses over the planet a little less cold in the winter, especially in Siberia and the northwest U.S. The slight global warming is making the growing season longer, which Michaels pointed to as a positive aspect of global warming. He also pointed out that the number of weather related deaths in winter drop when con-

ditions are less severe.

Michaels noted that 250 of America's state climatologists and their assistants have been polled and they all said predictions of global warming are not accurate. State climatologists "have their hands on the data every day," he said, and have access to computer models. The climatologists still don't believe the predictions that global warming is as bad as is popularly reported by global warming researchers.

"The data isn't supporting what the computer says," Michaels said.

Michaels accused the news media of feeding into the hysteria concerning global warming. He showed data which illustrated that while there has been little significant change in the earth's temperature over the last 10 years, the number of news stories reported about global warming have increased dramatically.

"I'm convinced there are no more than 57 repeating news stories," Michaels said, pointing out that the news media reports on the same topics again and again. This repetition of information is what feeds the hysteria of fears

concerning global warming, according to Michaels.

Last winter's El Niño is a good example of Michaels' point. He noted that the El Niño phenomenon, when warm Pacific Ocean temperatures create global weather disturbances, is nothing new. El Niños occur every seven to 10 years, Michaels said. It runs in cycles and people and nature adapt to it. He also noted that while the news media spent considerable time reporting the negative effects of El Niño, the unusually mild winter temperatures saved \$50 billion

in energy costs in 1998.

Michaels also said he feels there is a political factor influencing the global warming issue. He quoted author and editor H.L. Menken saying, "The art of politics is scaring people into believing you have to save them." Michaels noted that the U.S. is spending \$2 billion annually to research global warming.

"Power and money are two of the driving forces behind this [global warming] hysteria," Michaels said.

Some information included in this article was provided by the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation.

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Show proves cats think well of themselves



By NANCY SORRELLS

HARRISONBURG — It didn't take long to figure out who was in charge at the Shenandoah Valley Cat Fanciers Show held recently at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds — and it was not the two-legged creatures running around. No, on this weekend the felines were the star attraction, and they knew it.

Granted it was tough work for the cats at the championship and household pet show. There was, after all, the bath and grooming that one had to endure. Then there were the rigors of looking beautiful (or handsome as the case may be) in front of the two-legged judges and the crowds. And always acting friendly despite the stress of stardom is not easy. The work requires putting in extra sleep to regenerate between showtimes. And then to be awakened and carried by the two-legs back and fourth the 10

yards between cage and ring four times a day, two days in a row. Why, all this requires a bit of getting used to for the ordinary feline.

"Cat shows are quieter type environments, not as fast paced as dog shows," noted Harley, a large white Manx-type cat competing in the household pets category. Harley's two-legged caretaker, Mary Smoker, is the treasurer of SVCF and one of the event's directors. Being so close to the action and able to observe the event from a behind-the-scenes angle gave Harley a unique perspective. "Cat shows are more laid back and easier going (than dog shows) and, after all, when the hoopla is over, everyone goes home to become household pets," added Harley with a slow blink.

Harley explained that his two-legged, Mary, runs a dog and cat grooming service and that's how he wound up at cat shows. "Well, I am three and when I was small and real scrawny, I was brought in to be defleeced. Naturally she fell in love with me. Not just me, I come from a big family. There are 17 other cats and four dogs in my house. Mary is always bringing pets home. She pulled one out of a dumpster and all but three of my brothers and sisters were rescued and adopted. Except for our two latest family members — two oriental short hairs with red points — we are all just household pets. Those two 'pedigrees' would be here today but they were just four days short of the required age of four months for showing. They will have to wait until the next show for me to show them the ropes!" explained Harley.

Harley and a number of other contestants explained that although points are given out and ribbons awarded, the judging standards at cat shows are strictly on breed confirmations in the case of purebreds or on healthiness and friendliness in the household pet category. Several of the felines, who asked not to be identified, al-

(but then, what else is new?)

lowed that the more limited intelligence of canines created the unfortunate obedience classes in dog shows. "I like dogs, I really do," noted one demure tabby who asked not to be named, "but, oh how should I say this, their lack of intellect makes it easy for two-legs to force them into those wretched displays of sit, down, and stay. And all that annoying yapping makes it hard to sleep at such shows."

More than 100 cats, representing 30 different breeds and 39 household pets allowed themselves to be displayed at this year's Rockingham show. The SVCF, which has sponsored the event for the past 20 years, uses profits from the show to help out other animals and animal interest groups, particularly those which promote neuter/spay programs.

One group raising money at the show was Humanitarians of Pet Education, or H.O.P.E., an Augusta County-based group chartered this past January. "We keep a running list of adoptable cats and dogs, trap feral cats and take in kittens, network to find foster families and offer financial

help for spaying and shots," explained Susan Acord, one of the group's three directors.

In the group's short existence, they have already sponsored the altering of more than 30 animals and have established a program with the SPCA whereby that group selects adoptable animals for spaying or neutering and H.O.P.E. pays to have them altered.

"We have been having yard sales non-stop since March; we sponsored a Furry Friends events, and just try to attend every animal event we can," added Susan.

Groups like H.O.P.E. are supported by most felines noted Simba, a big orange cat from Boothwyn, Pa. Simba's two-legged, Janice Krolick, has opened her home to nine rescued felines, several of whom were allowing themselves to be shown at the Harrisonburg show. "Take that long-haired tuxedo-marked cat over there," said Simba, pointing a paw to a black and white feline a few cages down. "That's Bosti, she's my 9-year-old sister from Boston. Janice Krolick took her in when a mean two-legged female tried to kill her! We all have stories. Some of us were wild and caught in traps; some were attacked by our own mothers. Me? My mother was hit by a car," he explained with a sleepy yawn.

Mixed in among the rows of common cats, were several blue bloods including the big, long haired Maine Coon Cats and Ragdolls. One interesting long-haired lady, Kawai, agreed to point out a few of the breeds and explain her own unique heredity. "I am a Munchkin cat. Our breed has been around since at least the 1930s. We have been found in isolated colonies

in Russia, Canada, France and two places in the U.S.," she said amid the rumble of purrs. "Look at me closely, I am a dwarf. The scientists say it

Kawai, a Munchkin cat, plays with a feather during a break at the SVCF Show held recently. Carolyn Vella, Kawai's two-legged, wiggles the feather.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

comes from genetic defects in the long bones of my legs. Everything else about me is normal. I have a long tail, a long spine, but I just have short legs," she said.

Although she is only 5 months old, Kawai (whose name means cuteness in Japanese) said she had already seen some bigotry among cat associations which were trying to keep her Munchkin breed from being recognized. "My two-legs, Carolyn Vella and John McGonagle, are writing a book

about cat genetics. And they say that Munchkins are the most studied breed of cats because everyone is sure they will find something wrong with us, but there is nothing wrong with us. I can tell you that I am really fast and a good climber. The other cats who live with us are Japanese Bobtails, who are the street cats in Japan. Well, when we get to playing real hard, I have an advantage because I can duck right under their stomachs and get away. And I can shoot straight under the furniture before my two-legs can get their hands on me! We are just like other cats but with short legs. We come in all colors and can be long haired or short haired."

Kawai pointed out that her cage mate was a Japanese Bobtail and then noted that it was time for her to compete and she needed to get a two-legged to comb her just a

See CATS, page 4



Harley, a large white Manx-type cat, competed in the household pets category with his two-legged caretaker, Mary Smoker, who is treasurer of the Shenandoah Valley Cat Fanciers.



Bosti, a 9-year-old feline from Boston, was rescued by her two-legged, Janice Krolick, after another two-legged tried to harm Bosti.

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Craigsville's David Carroll is state's best banjo picker

By PENNY PLEMMONS

CRAIGSVILLE — David Carroll, Jr., was completely surprised to hear his name announced as the winner of the 1998 Virginia State Banjo Picking Contest. He left his home in Craigsville in September with no intentions of competing in the Chace City folk music competition.

"I never cared much for contests," David commented. "I get real nervous playing in front of judges. I mainly went along for the ride and to jam with all the other musicians."

But David's friends convinced him to enter the banjo contest, and the rest is history. With his knees knocking, heart racing, and only three practices under his belt, David took a deep breath and cut loose on Bill Monroe's break-neck speed Bluegrass instrumental, Shenandoah Breakdown. According to a bystander, the judges perked up and broke into applause for the 29-year-old contestant. Carroll was crowned the winner, having beat out 49 other pickers.

"Former Country Gentlemen banjo picker and contest judge James Bailey told me that 10 seconds into playing he knew I had the stuff. I was and still am overwhelmed," David said.

Carroll, a native of Bath County,

comes from musical stock. His father, David Sr. is a rhythm guitarist and his mother sings. David Sr. and friends played locally and on the Deerfield radio station. They played so often at a little store called the Buckhorn, near Douthat State Park, that folks started calling them the Buckhorn Gang.

"Our home was always filled with music," David said. "Mandolin player Jesse Morris would come over and he'd play all night and never pick the same tune twice."

As a boy, David loved to hear the banjo, and his father told him that one day he'd be a banjo picker. Helping bring that to pass, David's father gave him a banjo for his 17th birthday.

"It was just a cheap banjo, but after two weeks I had already taught myself 10 or 12 tunes and my daddy told me that it was time to get a better banjo," David recalled.

So that same year David took a job on a farm and spent his earnings on a \$1,100 banjo.

As the years passed by, David upgraded his instrument twice more and currently picks a Mastertone Limited Edition Gibson. Only 12 of these Gibson's were made and David especially likes it because of its mellow tone.

"I don't like the sound of a

crisp, tenory banjo. I prefer a deep sound and many people comment on the quality sound that comes from this banjo," the musician said.

Although David reads music, he also has the natural gift to play by ear. He mimics the tunes and styles of his idols: his father, local banjo talent Lee Dunbar and professional picker Scott Vestal.

"I listen to Lee every chance I get," David said. "Vestal blows my mind by throwing in fancy stuff."

Carroll doesn't limit himself just to one style of banjo playing, but incorporates the melodic, single-string and three finger Scruggs method into his music.

"Sometimes I get teased about the metric or fancy way I pick. But I can't just pick straight banjo, I've got to put metric into it," David noted.

The champion picker says he practices four to five hours a day and a "minimum of two or three." David has his own music room in his home, complete with more than 100 CDs, a stereo and other musical equipment. Jokingly, he commented that when Misty, his wife of four years, has had enough pickin' for one night, she literally sends him to "his room."

At the moment, David travels regularly to Roanoke to pick for the



Misty Carroll looks on as her husband, David, plays a Mastertone Limited Edition Gibson banjo. David is the 1998 Virginia state banjo picking contest winner. The banjo is one in a series of 12 of a kind made by Gibson.

Photo by Penny Plemons

band, Common Ground. But there are professional offers on the horizon. And as talented and energetic as David is, it will be no surprise to hear him announced as one of the finest up and coming banjo pick-

ers to break into the bluegrass music industry in a number of years. For the time being, however, you can hear David play from 6-11 p.m. the first Saturday of every month at the Roanoke Civic Center. —

Cats

Continued from page 3

little. "Stroll up that aisle there and you will see some other breeds. I know there are some Persians, Turkish Angoras, Himalayans and Tonkinese here today. And I saw an American Curl. Now there's another genetic oddity — their ears curl backwards on their head! Me personally, I think those Oriental Shorthairs have attractive features, kind of lean and chiseled. Someone told me that they are like Siamese but they come in designer colors instead of those points. They certainly have the yowling voice of the

Siamese I can tell you that. That black one up there, Mojo, is a conversationalist that beats all."

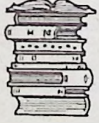
Harley, back from his 60 tough seconds of ring work under the strict eye of a judge, finished out the tour of the cat show. "I know that my two-legged, Mary, would tell you everything you need to know, but all these cats and their two-legs have her running ragged. She has hardly had time to give me the attention that I deserve. But, anyway, she would tell you that the show is sanctioned by the American Cat Fanciers Association and sponsored by Nutro Products. Those folks at Nutro

make a food that is out of this world. There are also bunches and bunches of businesses and individuals who make all this possible.

"I guess the last thing I would like to do is give a plug for us felines. All in all we are a good species. We treat our two-legs with respect and kindness. Allowing them to make over us and take care of us teaches them responsibility and takes the stress out of their lives. We would like to thank all those two-legs who came out to see us and invite them to come back next year," summed up the white Manx with a final meow before he turned away to give himself a bath and doze in the corner of his cage. —

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Country tunes and atmosphere find home at sawmill, old barn

By STACEY BAKER

By day the noises around the sawmill near Raphine are what you would expect to hear. The whine of a large saw blade cutting through logs, the growl of loaders and trucks, and the sounds of voices as people work at their profession. By Friday evening, the sawmill is silent, and noises of a different variety can be heard.

Along about seven o'clock, the twang of guitars, fiddles, the banjo and mandolin can be heard through the log walls of the office building near the sawmill. The parking lot slowly fills, and folks enter through the side door carrying food and musical instruments.

Bruce and James Clark, who own the business, have graciously opened this beautifully rustic building to friends, family, and their friends and family. All of these folks have one thing in common — appreciation of mountain and bluegrass music, and good old-fashioned country dancing.

It seems the building was constructed with this purpose in mind. There are several small rooms dedicated to the day-to-day business of running the sawmill. The main part of this log building consists of one big room, with a beautiful stone fireplace at one end, a loft at the other.

Under this loft The Sawmill Gang warms up. The Sawmill Gang is a group of musicians who can have a different look every Friday night. There may be only two, or as many as 15. On this night, the Gang has gathered a banjo, two guitars, a fiddle, stand up bass, piano, and an occasional harmonica.

Off of the main room, there are chairs set up for folks to watch and listen. Once the musicians start playing, it is not long before about half the chairs empty, and the dance floor fills. There are square dances, big circle, flatfooting, and other combinations.

After several dances, one might be a bit thirsty and hungry. No alcohol is allowed here, but no matter, there are plenty of soft drinks and snack foods spread out on several tables. About halfway through the evening, a hat is passed around the crowd. Those who want to contribute a dollar or two can do so, to help cover expenses.

All of these down home good times have not gone unnoticed in the community. Folks travel here from Lexington, Buena Vista, and even further. Word has also spread among musicians. The sawmill has attracted groups such as the Heaven Mountain Band, Mountain Shades of Grass, and Blue Mountain Sunrise. Mike Seegler,

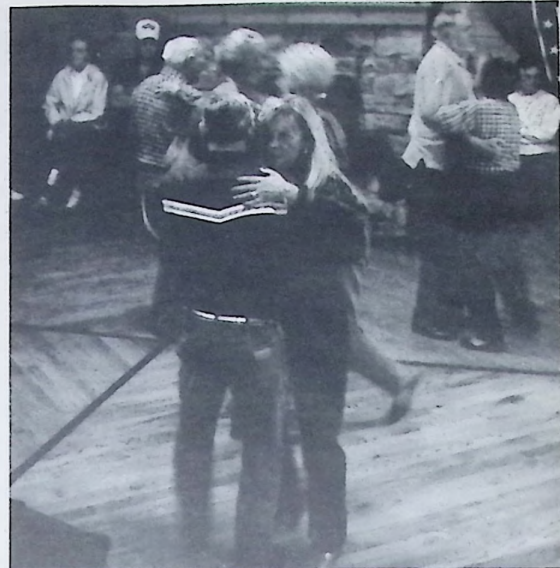
who is the author of several books on Appalachian music and dancing, and also plays the banjo, has made several appearances.

About ten o'clock, things start to wind down, good-byes are said, and people start heading home. There is always the next Friday night, or, if you cannot wait another week, just head to Staunton on Saturday evening.

Out on Buttermilk Spring Road there stands a vintage dairy barn which was built around 1920. When Bill Ruleman first acquired the property, the only plan he had for the long unused barn was to store a few vehicles out of the weather.

To do this, he had to remove all of the old milking stalls and level the floor. The floor had been sloped to make it easier to clean out the barn after milking. This floor had about a 22-inch drop over its length of 90 feet. In came 250 tons of rock, and 40 yards of concrete. The floor was now level, and Ruleman began to see other possibilities for the barn. Although leaving the hayloft in its original condition, Ruleman's efforts began to create a different look for the barn's lower part. The interior was framed in. New windows were installed. Restrooms and a kitchen area with appliances were built. Tables, chairs, a stereo and television completed this section. What of the remaining space? The walls and ceiling were refurbished and the floor was refinished with a beautiful wood floor in the center near the far end. Tables and chairs were placed around the outside, and the barn was ready.

The first event at The Buttermilk Spring Barn was held this past July. About 150 people came out to en-



Folks swing their partners around the dance floor at the sawmill.

Photos by Stacey Baker

joy the bluegrass music, and to break in the new dance floor. Just like the sawmill, no alcohol or smoking is allowed, but again, no matter, there is always plenty of food and soft drinks.

If things get a little too crowded inside, just go out on the deck. A large deck, constructed off one end, gives a good view of the pasture and woods around the newly sided barn.

The music inside is just as good as at the sawmill. Through the efforts of Gary Dunlap, musicians and groups are lined up to play. On this particular Saturday night, the Sawmill Gang opens the evening. The first couple tunes find the dance floor sparsely populated, so Joe Fitzgerald steps up to entertain the crowd with some of his well told jokes. When the Gang resumes play-

ing, the dance floor fills up.

As at the sawmill, the dances here are varied. A few times during both evenings, Roscoe Hanger will get folks in step by expertly calling a few dances. Meanwhile, Lee Highway Express, another bluegrass group, is warming up in the kitchen area, preparing to play the second half of the evening.

Ruleman said he had no idea the barn would end up being used like this. It has come a long way from an abandoned, trash-cluttered building. Bill says he and his wife Millie are simply happy to have other folks enjoy the old barn. Perhaps the sign above the entrance door to the dance area says it best: "Make New Friends, But Cherish the Old Ones."

For information on gatherings at the Sawmill or Dairy Barn, call 885-2215. —



The Sawmill Gang -- Dolly Fridley, piano; Gary Dunlap, guitar; Bruce Clark, fiddle; Henry McNeal, banjo; Hank Helmick, guitar; Richard Humphries, bass -- perform at the Sawmill near Raphine during a recent evening of country music and dancing.

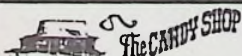


A venture to convert an old dairy barn into storage space for vehicles became the momentum which then turned the barn into a gathering place for folks who

love hearing and dancing to country music. The barn is located on Buttermilk Spring Road near Staunton.

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Research on church life reveals history of community

By NANCY SORRELLS

BUENA VISTA — The world has changed a lot since Mayme Rhoene Smith Fravel was born on a farm between Steeles Tavern and Raphine in 1907. Church has changed, farms have changed, communities have changed, but Rhoene's memories of those times are the threads that connect the past to the present. Ask her the name of her Sunday school teacher in 1915 and she can tell you; ask her about the area's social life and she can explain quaint customs and activities of which most people have never heard, much less experienced.

Some of her earliest and dearest memories are about Old Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Spottswood where she has been a life-long member. "We had to walk a long way to church," she remembers, but adds that "most everybody went

"In Sunday school we did a lot of memory work and had to recite individually," she said of the rigorous education associated with Old Providence. "We had to learn so many questions a Sunday and they would ask them to you. If you didn't get it right, you had to go back and do it over. I had to memorize scripture and know the long and short catechism. I got my Testament for knowing the Child's Catechism."

"We also had Bible school and two older ladies who were real good and strict would give you scripture to memorize."

Years later, Rhoene put those Sunday lessons into practice and became a Sabbath school teacher in her own right. "I taught Sunday school in the regular church. I'd take a certain section and read it and ask questions and let the children answer," she explained of the practice of taking weekly lessons from the journal

The history and heritage of Old Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Spottswood began with the earliest settlements in Augusta County. It is a history of which to be proud and one that should be researched and saved.

Recently the history committee of Old Providence began working with Lot's Wife Publishing Co. to research, write, and publish a book of the church's history. As a launching point in the project, it was important to talk to some of the oldest members of the church and learn what life in the church and community was like nearly 100 years ago.

The following articles, taken from interviews with Old Providence's two oldest

members, Regina Kesterson and Rhoene Fravel, mark the beginning of an exciting and enriching history project. Lot's Wife would encourage anyone who has memories, materials or photographs of Old Providence to contact Katharine Brown at 540/886-5979 or Nancy Sorrells at 377-6390.



family brought food. There was always fried chicken, and we had to wait and have the picnic when the chickens were big enough to fry. We also had ham. The boys played a lot of ball."

Spiritual life at Old Providence was, of course, led by the ministers. Each one brought something special to the church. "Mr. (S.W.) Haddon was the first minister I remember. He was real nice," she said. "Sometimes his sermons were long, but he was good," she added. Another preacher stuck in her memory because of his lengthy prayers. "You could never let him start praying because he could pray all day!" she said with a hint of a smile.

The church had no organ in those days and members only sang psalms, never hymns. "They did what was called throwing a tune," she said in explaining how the psalms were lined out to the congregation. The church did have a choir, members wore robes most of the time and sat in a loft. "We had a choir before we had an organ," she remembered.

For as long as she can remember, church organizations were strong. "There were four women's circles, 50 or 60 women total. We had a book from which we got our programs each month. We read scriptures. We made our money by serving meals, like to the Ruritans. We would go to auction sales and individual sales and sell sandwiches. We turned all our money in

to the deacons and elders."

Life when she was young was not all church related, noted Rhoene. There was grade school and high school five miles away in Spottswood. "We walked through the fields over top of rail fences because of the high snow drifts. I always walked to school. They put in buses the year after I finished," she remembers, adding that the "buses" were horse-drawn wagons.

It was while she was in high school that she first got her taste of a modern, new world. "I was 16 years old before I ever rode in a car. I thought it was wonderful!" she exclaimed.

In rural communities like those in southern Augusta County and northern Rockbridge, there were many activities that brought people together and some which disciplined those same people. "I know a guy that was tarred and feathered for adultery. And I can remember one man was turned out of the church for drinking," she recalled.

She remembers barn raisings and quilting bees, but admits to never being too interested in the latter. "I'm not one to cut up a big piece of cloth and sew it back together," she said of quilting.

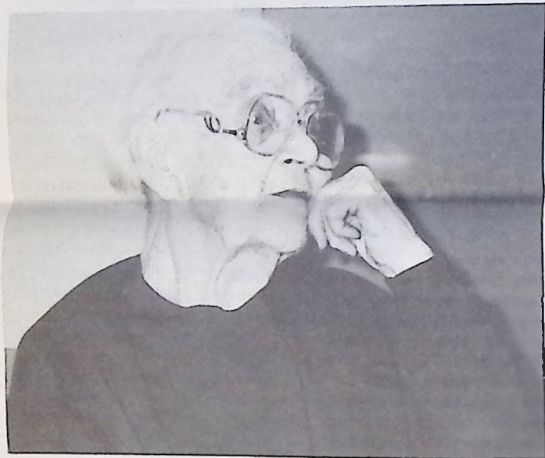
There were many weddings in the community, some at the church and some at home, but more than a few were elopements to Hagerstown, Md., where it was easy to obtain a license and get hitched quickly. Wherever the

wedding was, the newlyweds could expect a serenading if they lived in the Old Providence community.

"You would wait until they went to bed and then all this noise turns loose at one time and scares you to death. You've never heard such a noise in your life! Sometimes they rode them (newlyweds) on a rail and dumped them in a creek. Usually they kind of knew that they were going to get serenaded and were prepared (with refreshments)," Rhoene explained.

Christmas was important in the community, but was not much of a deal in the church. At Old Providence, the extent of Christmas was usually a

See RHOENE, page 7



Mayme Rhoene Smith Fravel was born on a farm between Steeles Tavern and Raphine in 1907. Some of her earliest and dearest memories are about Old Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Spottswood.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

to church and looked forward to it." Most people walked in the early years of the century and then switched to buggies and finally cars. "One family walked barefoot five miles and carried their good shoes and socks until they got there. They filled up a whole pew," she recalls with a smile.

Religious life took up more than an hour or two on Sundays. For Rhoene there was Sunday school, often at an outpost school in the Spottswood school house, and additional church services in the afternoons at outpost chapels, particularly Davis Chapel. Groups from the church used to go to the convict camp in Greenville and hold services. There were also Wednesday night prayer meetings and as far back as Rhoene can remember Old Providence sponsored summer revivals.

issued by the denominational headquarters.

Teaching the children was rewarding she recalled and made for many memorable moments. "You had to listen to what the kids had to say. They had to get their stories out of their system before you could start the lesson. I had one class of little boys and one little boy was so excited because his aunt had a little baby during the week. I asked him if it was a boy or a girl. He said, 'I don't remember, but if it wasn't a boy, then it was a girl!'"

The tradition at Old Providence was that there be an all-day Sunday school picnic in the middle of the summer. The Saturday gathering was held at the church in Rhoene's youth, but was later moved to parks in Staunton and Waynesboro. "Each

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Spottswood's 'Aunt' Regina Kesterson reveals treasures of community's history

By KATHARINE BROWN

SPOTTSWOOD — Words that came to my mind as soon as Regina Kesterson came out to greet us were "sprightly," "chipper," "twinkly," and "elfin." This diminutive woman ushered us into her immaculate little house near Spottswood one sunny November afternoon, to share her memories of Old Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church at Spottswood in the early years of the 20th century.

Regina Kesterson is one of the few persons who can do that. She came into the world on Aug. 6, 1906 in a farmhouse near the village of Newport, in southern Augusta County. She has lived in the vicinity most of her life. The Rev. Mr. S.W. Haddon of Old Providence baptized Regina when she was nine months old. She still has the christening dress she wore. Throughout the years since then, the church has been an important focus of her life. My partners and I are researching and writing the history of this grand old church and its people. In professional historian's jargon, Mrs. Kesterson is a "primary source," for she has experienced more than one-third of the long history of this congregation.

We quickly learned that she is far more than a source of historical information. She is a person with a wealth of current interests, who gardens, cooks, cans, does volunteer work, reports the weather for a television station, has wonderful collections of dolls and of quilts, keeps up with a network of friends and relatives, studies scripture, and remains active in her congregation. And why not — she is only 92!

Regina's roots sink deep into the soil of Augusta County. Her father, John Hutchen, the youngest of seven children, grew up in a fine brick house at Newport that is now being restored. A photograph taken about 1890 shows her father as a boy in front of the house with his mother, several siblings, and a horse.

As a girl, Regina heard tales from her father of the Confederate soldiers that the family hid in the double attic of that house so that the invading Yankees would not find them. Several daguerreotypes that Regina prizes show young men of the family including her great-grandfather, John Lotts, in Confederate uniform and the pretty young women they left behind as they marched off to that tragic war.

Regina remembers another generation of young men from the church and community marching off to World War I. She, her parents, and her younger siblings lived on the Wallace farm then, where her father was the farm manager. She was in grade school at the time, and recalls making bandages in school for the soldiers. Later, in 1926, she was in

the third class to graduate from Valley High School in Spottswood.

Sunday school memories are bountiful. She remembers walking to Sunday school with her younger sisters and brothers — in the Sunday clothes made by their mother — and with little Robert, the son of the black cook at the Wallaces. Sunday school met in the old brick church built in the mid-19th century, that stood on the site of the modern cemetery across the road from the present Old Providence church building.

Sunday school was no picnic in those days. It was hard work and lots of memorization. Regina remembers studying the Child's Catechism until she could recite it perfectly, for which she received a New Testament. Then she graduated to the Shorter Catechism. For reciting that, she was awarded a Bible. Next, she set to work on the Longer Catechism. She also began to teach in the summer Bible school, which involved scripture memorization and Psalm-singing. She started her long career as a Sunday school teacher at the age of 19 and continued the work for 40 years.

Today, Regina continues her good works in the community at Kingsway every Tuesday, preparing food for families in need. She keeps a large garden each summer, and just this past year canned 40 quarts of grape juice from her own grapes. We sampled some and can testify to its excellence. Regina has loved reading and scripture study all her life, and actually wore out several Bibles. Macular degeneration has made reading almost impossible



Regina Kesterson is what research historians call a "primary source." Born in 1906, "Aunt Regina" — as she is known to many folks — is among a group of individuals who can tell researchers about history because during their lives they have been "eyewitnesses" to historical events.

Photo by Nancy Sanelis

for her in recent years, but that has not made her mind any less active. She listens to books on tape and sermons on tape.

Among her beautiful quilts, some heirloom and some new, are two that testify to the great affection with which so many friends and relatives hold this lovely, petite lady. One is a friendship quilt wall hanging which many friends made and signed for her on her 90th birthday. Another is a magnificent

quilt with photographs which have been transferred to fabric squares to tell the story of her life.

Regina's energy and charm are infectious. We were full of smiles, and felt quite twinkly ourselves by the time we bid her farewell. Her memories of the church and its ministers decades ago are a valuable resource graciously shared. Meeting her reminded us what a rare and rich treasure are the memories of the elders in our communities. It is a treasure well worth hunting! —

•Rhoene

Continued from page 6
children's program. Even at home, the holiday was low key. The family Christmas tree was not decorated until after the children went to bed on Christmas Eve. Decorations included "string popcorn, painted sycamore balls and paper things." As a child, she

remembers getting a nickel writing tablet and pencil, an orange or a bit of hard candy for presents. The tradition in her family was to set out a pan for the presents from Santa rather than a stocking.

Some holiday memories would be lost but for the memories of people like Rhoene. Shanghaing

is one such Christmas custom. It involved costumed merry-makers who traveled at night to visit neighbors, often shut-ins. "We would dress differently and go around to different houses. We would be quiet and then all at once we would make noise, mostly with pots and pans. We would also sing Christmas songs," she said.

"We would celebrate Christmas from the day before Christmas until the day after New Year. That's how long we had the tree up."

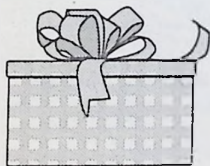
Even as she was maturing into an adult, changes were coming to the rural community around Spottswood. For Rhoene, the automobile ride was just the beginning. Soon she married Robert Roland Fravel. Rhoene's family, the Smiths, had been in the Spottswood area since the early 1800s, while her husband's

family came from Luray. "My husband graduated from Dunsmore (Business College, in Staunton) but he was the kind of person who went to school one day and stayed home three!"

Fravel went to work for American Oil Company and the couple moved to Staunton for a number of years. They had two boys and a girl. Today, the widowed Rhoene, lives at a retirement home in Buena Vista where she particularly enjoys visits from family (she has eight grandchildren, several great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild on the way).

Her memories are the thread that links the past to the present. It is the thread that will give that soon-to-be great-great grandchild a heritage to treasure and a sense of place in this world. —

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Pastor builds natural beauty into retirement home

By NANCY SORRELLS

MCKINLEY — When the Rev. Ben Sanders saw the trees being cut from his church's ballfield in Fairfax, he knew there was something better to do with those stately poplars and mighty oaks than turn them into firewood.

Today if one walks through Ben and Wilma Sanders' retirement home perched on the high slopes of Little North Mountain 150 miles away from northern Virginia, they will see "something better." Although the trees were removed from the playing fields, the timber's beauty remains. Long after the trees came down to make way for children's games, the tans, browns and golds of wood grain are seen in the floors, doors, and molding inside the 2,900-square foot home called Chapel Hill.

The story of how the Sanders and the wood came to McKinley is a story about a labor of love. For 40 years, Ben has been a pastor, and the last 22 1/2 years were spent at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Fairfax. Although the couple originally hails from Oklahoma, they fell in love with the Shenandoah Valley several years ago and earmarked it as their "retirement spot."

After looking at a number of properties with buildings in various stages of disrepair, they decided to buy a piece of land and build their own house. When a 70-acre tract came up for sale in 1994, they became hooked. "We were the first and last to look at it," Ben said of their "love at first sight" decision to buy the land and build a house with the best view in the Valley. "I like mountain land; I'm not a beach person. I love the view — sometimes we see birds flying below us," he added.

In 1996 they broke ground on the house. On the outside, the house



Ben and Wilma Sanders stand along a porch rail on their house which overlooks the valley just past Dividing Ridge near McKinley. Ben is a retired pastor. The couple moved to Augusta County from Fairfax.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

is a nice, but not unique, American Standard Home — Benjamin Harrison model. But on the inside...



Ben Sanders stands in front of the mounds of sawdust he has generated during his house building project.

that's where Ben's woodworking hobby came into play.

When those white and red oaks and poplars were cut from the church ballfield, Ben hired a man to bring in a sawmill and rough saw the wood into boards. He then built a solar kiln on his McKinley property and began to cure the lumber. "It takes three to four months in the summer to cure the wood, according to the weather," he said.

Ben is the first to admit that what he did next was a giant leap of faith — far beyond anything he had ever done before. Prior to finishing off the interior of the house, his biggest woodworking projects were furniture for the grandkids and jewelry boxes. Now he has hardwood floors throughout the house, 4 1/2-inch fluted molding around the doors, 26 solid oak raised panel doors, baseboards, trim and moldings. There is no such thing as pressed board or plastic in the Sanders' house!

"I'd never done any of this before. I read up on how to make your own floors and then experimented,"

he said. The experiment paid off and now there are 2,200 board feet of hardwood floors in the house, poplar upstairs and the oak downstairs.

The random width tongue-and-groove boards range from 10 inches to 4 1/2 inches. "They are nailed, glued and screwed, sanded, the knots are filled, sanded again and given a total of four coats of polyurethane," Ben said even as he was on his knees sanding.

"All the wood is natural. There is no stain. It is just like the way God made it in the tree," he explained.

The 26 raised panel doors represent a lesson for Ben. "They took me probably three months to make. I would drive from Fairfax, a 300-mile round trip, just to put in one day's work here. I had never built a door in my life, and putting the first one together I almost threw in the towel. Putting all those pieces together was so complicated, but by the 26th one I had developed a technique," he explained.

The fluted molding around the doors was copied from a magazine picture Ben saw. "It is all solid oak, three quarters of an inch thick," he said, pointing to an example of his work.

Complementing the beauty of the hardwood floors is a massive chimney made with stone found on the property. The chimney, which divides the great room and the kitchen, is the work of local craftsman Eric Earhart. Some of the rocks have a hint of purple in them and one is even heart shaped.

Putting out from the kitchen and almost butting the chimney is a big brass bed, a temporary arrangement until the interior is finished. The couple moved into their new home in August, following Ben's retirement, but the interior work is still a few months from completion. "We have camped out since we moved here," Wilma said. "It's okay, we're kinda country people anyway."

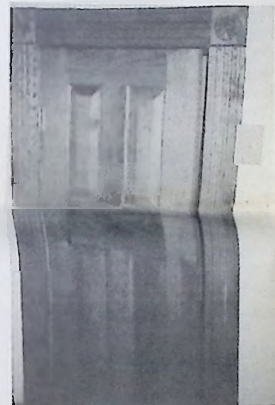
The wait and short inconvenience

will be worth it they both say. "It's a peaceful place here, you can meditate up here," Ben said.

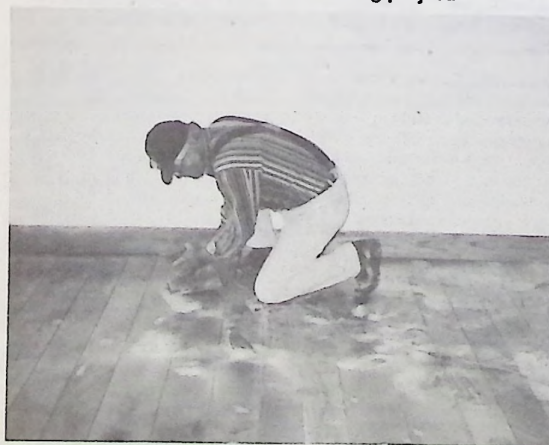
Which is exactly what they plan to have happen at Chapel Hill, so named because Ben married his son and his wife on the site of the new house. Although he has retired as a pastor, Ben plans to continue his ministry. To that end he has established a non-profit organization called Chapel Hill ministries. "I want to provide things like a pulpit supply, mission counseling, marriage and pre-marital counseling," said the pastor who has an earned doctorate in counseling.

He and Wilma also plan to make their house an oasis for visiting clergy. That explains why the home has 5 1/2 baths, one to go with each bedroom and thus provide privacy to visitors. "I hope to be open to God's men like pastors and missionaries. Sometimes they need a place to rest, counsel, pray and move on. We will be an oasis for

See *HOUSE*, page 13



Details in the Sanders' home include handmade oak doors trimmed with fluted molding.



Ben Sanders works on sanding one of the many hardwood floors in the house which he built near McKinley. The house features oak hardwood floors downstairs and poplar floors upstairs.



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Yesterday once more

Middlebrook's Rosen family keeps track of village's history

By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK — The quiet village of Middlebrook is celebrating its 200th birthday in 1999. Many people who drive slowly through this southern Augusta County hamlet assume that what they see in the modern village is just as it was in the past.

Not so, say accounts from a century or more ago when the village was described as a beehive of activity! Back then the road that ran through the middle of Middlebrook was a toll road and businesses

dotted either side of the turnpike.

Not so, say Ruby Rosen and her son Gary who can both recall a time earlier this century when Middlebrook still bustled with the commerce of an agricultural community.

"Middlebrook is a lot different now. For one thing there were more stores back then," recalls Mrs. Rosen who settled in her neat little house at the edge of the village in 1943. Having grown up a few miles away, Mrs. Rosen first became acquainted with Middlebrook when she came there to school as a sev-

enth grader. She graduated in 1942, married in '43 and has been intertwined with the village ever since.

Her husband, George, had an even more powerful connection with Middlebrook. In fact, once the Rosens migrated from Pennsylvania to Middlebrook in the 19th century, their names became synonymous with commercial activity there. There was Rosen Funeral Home (opened in 1880), Rosen's garage, and Rosen's store.

"George and his dad, Guy, opened a store in '44, but Guy had a store before that. It had closed, however, and they used it to store caskets (for the funeral home)," recalled Mrs. Rosen.

Gary, her son, recalls helping in the last store which eventually closed in the spring of 1972. "There were mostly groceries, feeds, salt blocks, a little hardware, spring seeds, a few Christmas toys, and men's workshoes," recalls Gary.

"Rosen's Grocery was a very visible store for 28 years," recalled Mrs. Rosen. "But the one thing we never had was an ABC license." The 1972 closing was a sad reflection on the changes in rural Augusta County. "When we closed I missed the people, but I didn't miss the awful hours," she added.

Both Rosens felt that the change wrought in the village's commercial activity is due, in part, to the closing of the village's elementary and high schools when Augusta County consolidated. "When the schools closed, that was the heart of the community," remembered Mrs. Rosen.

Schools have been linked to Middlebrook for many years. Prior to the 20th century there was a two-room school with one teacher and an enrollment of about 30 pupils. Two new state-of-the-art brick



Gary Rosen of Middlebrook shows two items which are among memorabilia he has collected documenting the village's history.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

school buildings came to the village in the early 20th century. William Fauntleroy Hyde led a community movement to get the buildings constructed. Dr. Hyde's tragic death from a heart attack at the age of 45 left the Middlebrook community in shock. The Rockbridge native had practiced medicine in the village for 20 years when he died. According to his obituary, he "had been president of the Middlebrook community league, (and) was instrumental in the establishment of the organization, and a leader in the erection of the Middlebrook High school buildings."

Dr. Hyde's residence in the village, brings up an important point made by Mrs. Rosen. "There have always been stores here and a doctor's office most of the time. Doctors here go way back," she said.

She's absolutely right. In 1836, for instance, there were three miscellaneous stores, while late in the 1800s there were more than 30 businesses including three doctors and several stores.

Despite the loss of much of its commercial activity (the last grocery

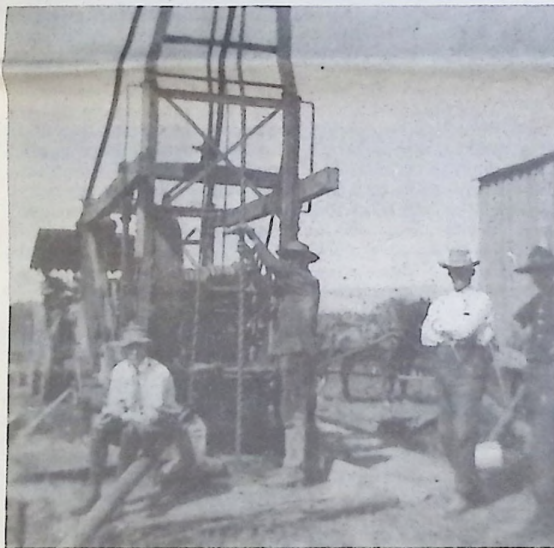
closed in September 1998), Gary Rosen is determined that the history of his home area will not be lost. He has collected memorabilia ranging from postcards and pictures to souvenir items once given away as promotional gifts by many of the businesses. A tiny ruby-red coal scuttle and a pitcher, for instance, are hand lettered with the words "Souvenir of H.G. McGary & Co.," once a grocery in the hamlet.

According to an article in the Augusta County Historical Society *Bulletin*, written by Elizabeth Webb, H.G. McGary was rather short, with a large round bald head and a jovial disposition.

McGary's store evolved from that of McCorkle Brothers, owned by brothers John and James. Their late 19th century establishment was considered the largest in Augusta County. One of the items in Gary's collection is from that business and is dated 1888. Other items among his Middlebrook memorabilia are an 1890 almanac given compliments of J.B. Fauver's business, and a white candleholder and box that say simply, "Souvenir Middlebrook Va." There are also some items from Rosen's grocery of course.

Perhaps the biggest "artifact" in Gary's collection is the red brick house on main street that was built by a John Randolph of Stafford County in the 1820s.

All in all, the Rosens have worked hard to preserve the history that is their family's and their home town's all at once. Middlebrook may have changed in the last 200 years, but some people are making sure that the past is not forgotten. —



This photo is among those which the Rosen family has held onto through the years. It shows a well near the village being drilled under the direction of some residents of Middlebrook.

Photo courtesy Rosen family

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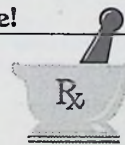
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A village, a brook -- a kindly place to know

Down on the farm we're thinking about Middlebrook and Christmases past. Very often people ask me what's so special about Middlebrook. I say, "Nothing much."

But the fact that there's nothing much particularly special about it makes it special in its own way.

It's difficult to put into words what's special about Middlebrook. Different folks feel different ways about this little village with a brook running through its middle.

What's that you say? You hadn't figured that out? Well, yeah, sure, the village is called Middlebrook because there's this little brook that runs through the middle.

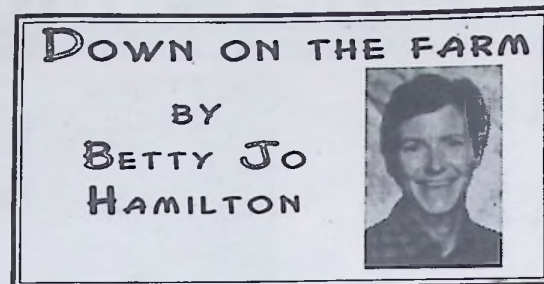
Pretty simple, right? Pretty simple in what today has become a very complicated world.

Since the grand old village is celebrating its 200th birthday — which actually straddles the years 1998 and 1999 because the village's plots were mapped out in November 1798 and the first ones sold in April 1799 — it seems appropriate to take time for a glimpse of what makes Middlebrook a special place. I'm not going to give you a recitation about "dear old Middlebrook," but I would like to offer you a story about two ladies who once lived in the greater metropolitan area known as Middlebrook and then I'll let you decide what's so special about Middlebrook.

Lelia and Neta Ellinger, addressed familiarly as Miss Lelia and Miss Neta, lived about two miles east of Middlebrook. Their farm bordered the two my parents own there. When the Ellingers' father died, the sisters took over the farm which he owned and operated. These women had never worked or lived anywhere else and neither had ever married.

The sisters' physical appearances were similar. Both wore glasses and both braided and pulled their long hair up into buns on the backs of their heads. Miss Neta's face was round while Miss Lelia's was long. Of the two, Miss Neta was the heavier set and Miss Lelia was the oldest.

They lived in a stucco house just down over a steep bank along a sharp curve in the road. Even though the house is just a few paces from the edge of the asphalt, it is easily overlooked by those unfamiliar with the area. A driver, unseasoned on the twisting, bumpy road and traveling at a high rate of speed, would be too preoccupied with keeping the vehicle in the road as it rounded this curve. As the car skidded in the gravel off the road's shoulder, the driver would fail to notice the Ellingers' house shrouded from view by ancient shrubs and trees which en-



circle it. Of these drivers, Miss Lelia would say: "We could tell by the way they came 'round that curve they weren't from 'round here." She was insulted by the squeal of tires as the passing of the vehicle disrupted the usual peace of her existence.

To the rear of the house was a woodshed, spring house and chicken house. A short walk beyond was the barn. The chicken house was used for all the farm fowl of which Miss Neta had the primary responsibility. There were chickens — regular and bantam. Those of the feisty and diminutive variety were always referred to as "banty." There were ducks, geese, guineas and a couple of peacocks and peahens.

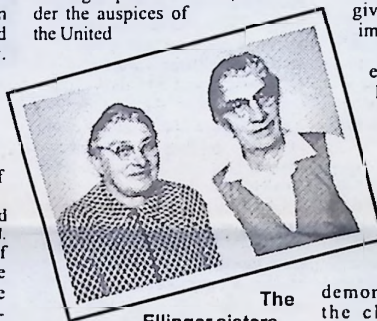
The practicality of this varied assortment was never explained. Most days a cacophony of honking and squawking could be heard as the ducks and geese waddled about the barnyard. Chickens scratched and pecked busily around the yard, gobbling up any unwary insects they might find. Anyone within a mile of the sisters' farm would often hear the shrill wail of the peacocks as the birds strutted about the yard with tails fanned out showing full plumage. The women had the birds, I thought, because it pleased them to.

At the barn were kept a couple sows whose litters of pigs could be seen scurrying through the wooded lot located just off the farm's vegetable garden. Miss Lelia's and Miss Neta's farm was broken up by the intersection of three state roads leaving the only available water found on the farm at the barn. Evening would come and Miss Lelia would walk to the pasture across the road to bring their few cows, which would be waiting for her at the gate, to the barn for water after a day's grazing. In the morning, she would escort the cows back to pasture. With the cows was a bull which Miss Lelia never referred to as such. In her vernacular, he was the male cow.

Miss Lelia did the majority of the work outside the house while Miss Neta tended things inside. But most any day you could find both of them wearing worn out house dresses and going about the farm work. In cold weather they would

wear old knit slacks or cotton stockings under their dresses, donning buttonless cardigans and faded wool dress coats once worn to town or church. The women sought the help of neighboring farmers with the few chores they could not manage themselves.

Miss Lelia and Miss Neta were charter members of the Middlebrook Home Demonstration Club. These groups were formed, under the auspices of the United



The Ellinger sisters — Neta, left, and Lelia

States Department of Agriculture, by states' Cooperative Extension services in communities across the nation. In so doing, a network of country women could be kept up to date on the modern homemaker's agenda.

Each month ladies of the

Middlebrook H.D. Club would assemble at a member's home and await the arrival of one of the county's Extension agents. She would arrive, her hair in a perfect bouffant, and proceed to educate the ladies about some timely subject — canning and freezing fresh vegetables and fruits, nutrition, home furnishings or proper use of makeup — topics about which the federal government thought the ladies should be informed.

Miss Lelia served as president of the group for many terms. Her frank diplomacy, dry wit and humor made her a popular candidate. At each meeting over which she presided Miss Lelia would bring a lengthy discussion which had deteriorated into random chatter to a close by making a decision for the club. Having used her presidential powers to quell the din of the ladies' conversations and solve the problem at hand, Miss Lelia would then give the club permission to impeach her.

In later years the club evolved into the Extension Homemakers. The Extension service changed the name hoping to update the club's image and attract new young members. The effort failed, in Middlebrook anyway, and the club disbanded having been "home-demonstrated" to as much as the club's members could bear, I suppose.

In her later years, Miss Lelia drew the attentions of a man who would come visiting. Willie Carr courted Miss Lelia but was companionable with both women. When the suggestion of marriage was mentioned to Miss Lelia by some folks in the community, she scoffed at the idea.

"Now why'd I wanna' go

and do somethin' like that for," she would say. "I couldn't do Neta that 'a way."

After Willie retired from his job at a local chemical plant, he developed crippling arthritis. Having no other family to care for him, he moved in with the sisters and they saw to his needs. The Ellinger sisters' collective reputation in the community was such that this living situation was never thought of in any terms other than two Christian women caring for a dear friend.

My family enjoyed a long, neighborly relationship with the two women and their male companion. On some occasions when their chickens had outdone themselves, Miss Lelia would call us to "come get some eggs." My mother would dispatch one of us for the eggs, sending a jar of her homemade wild strawberry preserves to give the ladies. They would never accept any money for the eggs. The neighborly association was inclusive of our respective farm operations. Miss Lelia would call to tell us our cows were out but never fussed if our "male cow" got in with her cattle.

When I graduated from high school, Miss Lelia and Miss Neta brought me a dozen giant red peonies which they cut from a bush in their yard. An envelope attached held five shiny Liberty Head silver dollars dated 1885. When my sister married, Miss Lelia presented the newlyweds with a red and green patchwork pine tree quilt handmade by the sisters' grandmother. More than 100 years old, the quilt was in mint condition having been wrapped and carefully kept by the ladies.

Even though we saw and spoke with the sisters regularly at church or otherwise, we rarely took time to really visit with Miss Lelia and Miss Neta. Country folks don't often

See SISTERS, page 11

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Appearing Nightly

Sisters

Continued from page 10

have the luxury of a "sit-down" visit with neighbors. However, falling into the disgrace of having abandoned the common courtesy of a proper visit with Miss Lelia and Miss Neta was rectified with an annual one which usually occurred around the Christmas holidays.

We didn't exchange gifts but we would always take a tray full of my mother's homemade cookies and candies — the baking of which was a yearly holiday ritual — to offer our hostesses. When flour and sugar started flying in my mother's kitchen in late November of each year, I knew our Christmas visit with the Ellinger sisters wasn't far away.

We planned our arrival at the ladies' house when we knew they would be finished with their evening chores and meal, always phoning ahead to announce our intentions to "come up for awhile after supper." Upon arrival, we ascended the back steps of the house to its balcony-style porch. Chickens roosted on the banister and a tail's thud-thump-thud told us the ladies' dog was lying somewhere nearby in the darkness.

The ladies greeted our delegation of four at the back door. (No one but Jehovah's Witnesses and travelling salesmen ever uses the front door in the country.)

Upon our arrival, the sisters' choruses of "hellos," "come-on-ins," and "take-ya-coats," welcomed us to their home. The air inside was lightly scented with wood smoke. A country ham and applesauce cake sat cooling on a kitchen sideboard. I don't even have to try hard to conjure up the aromatic

memory of cinnamon, baked ham and wood smoke swirling a tantalizing lure throughout the ladies' house.

Miss Lelia would take our coats and Miss Neta would graciously accept our tray of baked goods, scurrying off into an adjoining room with them. The two ladies would quickly reappear and usher us through the kitchen to the parlor where Willie would be sitting near the Ziegler heater. Common then, these large oil heaters became the costly and inefficient dinosaurs of the energy crisis of the 70s.

My father would sit down next to Willie and begin talking. My mother would take a seat between the sisters, the three of them well warmed to conversation before they sat down. My sister and I would sit listening, occasionally drawn into the conversation by one of the sisters.

All subjects were covered during these visits. From the woes caused by whatever presidential administration the country happened to be under then to the recently heard of but publicly unconfirmed engagement of some young couple in the community. The weather and how it had affected the summer's crops was good for at least a 30-minute rumination.

"I'll tell you, we're lucky we got rain when we did."

"Yes indeed."

"Those poor farmers out West... I do declare... everything they planted just dried up and blowed away."

"Have ya'll seen those pictures on the TV? Neta, what was that we was watchin' t'other night?"

"One of those news programs I think."

"Lordy, yes, I tell you we were

lucky."

Prices of livestock and "I'll-tell-you-I-don't-see-how-farmers-are-gonna'-make-it" were good for an hour's consideration.

"I'll tell you now, the rest of this country might be havin' a recession but the farmers are in a depression."

"Ain't it the truth. Ain't it the truth."

"Deed, I don't know how we get by sometimes."

The ultimate consensus and conclusion of such conversation being, "The good Lord'll provide."

The blame for all of society's ills was aptly identified by Miss Lelia who would slap her knee and affirm, "I'll tell you now, the ruination of young people today is the schools and the churches." She would close a subject of particular disgust to her by saying: "Now don't 'dat jus' split your pants?"

"Lelia!" Miss Neta would say sharply, looking daggers at her sister and glancing at the two innocents seated closeby.

"Oh hush, Neta," Miss Lelia would say to her sometimes stern sister. "I didn't say anything."

While my father sat and talked with Willie, whose condition rendered him barely able to rise from a chair under his own power, the sisters would invite my mother, my sister and me into the next room. There, in a sitting room which was not heated in winter, they would show us an old hand-drawn map of Middlebrook. And then they would point to an old pump organ their father had given them when they were girls.

"I reckon he thought it was something 'a couple spindly little ol' girls would like," Miss Lelia would say. Then she would let my sister and me play the organ until our legs were worn out from pumping the bellows. It usually didn't take long.

In addition to the map and organ, the room was filled with plants — Miss Neta's special interest. Christmas cactuses burgeoning with blooms, ferns, piggy back plants, Swedish ivy and geraniums — to be set out in spring — were all kept in the room away from winter's cold. Their usual spot was the back porch in summer. I thought

it a good thing the ladies didn't seem to need this room for living space because, with every table and chair occupied by a potted plant, there was no room to sit. The perennial tour complete and satisfied with our expressions of admiration, Miss Lelia would say, "Ya'll come on in the kitchen."

When we had entered the house, the kitchen table was covered with a large white cloth — held aloft in places by objects sitting on the table beneath the cloth. The sisters would pick up the corners of the cloth, raise it and then fold it between themselves revealing a table spread full with cakes, cookies and candies of all varieties. I am convinced there were no less than 20 different things from which to select something to eat.

Miss Neta had earlier slipped from us as we played the organ. Her absence was explained by the ham which had been sliced and was generously portioned among a dozen or so homemade rolls. Raisins and walnuts lay exposed amid dark-rich slabs of applesauce cake. Included among the assortment was a plate of baked goods which we had brought signaling the women's approval of our seasonal home-baked offering.

By this time my father would have helped Willie to the kitchen and a rocking chair. We would all pick up plates — Miss Lelia would fix one for Willie — and then we would sit around the kitchen's pot-bellied stove which warmed the room and we would eat and talk until late in the night.

"Well, we better get goin'," my mother would say. "Ya'll have school tomorrow."

"Oh don't rush off," Miss Lelia and Miss Neta would chime, despite us having been there for almost five hours.

"Ya'll come down," my mother would say.

"Ya'll come back," the sisters would say. We would not visit them again in such a manner until the next year's holiday season.

As the years passed, Willie's condition worsened. He passed away in his sleep one night, finally released from the pains of arthritis which had gripped him for so many years. Miss Lelia and Miss Neta helped make the funeral arrangements for the friend whom they had cared for well into their 70s.

"No sense havin' a Christmas tree," Miss Neta had said when the holiday approached the year following Willie's death.

"Nonsense," Miss Lelia said, rebuffing her sister for clinging to thoughts of remorse she felt over the death of their friend. "Of course we'll have a tree."

Not long after Willie's death, Miss Neta suffered a stroke. Miss Lelia stayed at her side at the hospital, leaving only to eat or go home to tend things on the farm, until

Miss Neta died. Miss Lelia returned to the farm house after that, content to be there alone despite the protestations of neighbors and friends. But the years caught up with her and it distressed me when I learned she had been moved to a local nursing home.

The front doors of the nursing home slid noiselessly open as I walked up the front walk. The electric eye, which had been installed during recent renovations to the home, responded to my approach. Inside, the smell of new carpet and recently applied paint mingled with the scent of a not-so-aromatic disinfectant. The halls were narrow and the heat seemed stifling in the nursing home as I wound my way to Miss Lelia's room. A die-cut Santa's face, which was of the same genre as other Christmas decorations throughout the home, hung just above the door's room number.

I entered, the room brightened only by light which poured in from the hall's fluorescent bulbs. There were two beds in the room. In the one against the opposite wall was a woman with white curls who I immediately determined was not Miss Lelia. I turned to the bed just inside the door. On the meal table at the foot of the bed was a tray of half-eaten indistinguishable food. A miniature Christmas tree was pushed off to one side. I approached the bed and paused, unsure the woman there — who appeared to be asleep — was Miss Lelia.

"Miss Lelia?" I said softly. I could not recognize her as the Miss Lelia I knew and had just seen the week before at her farm house. The woman roused slightly and managed a weak "yes."

"Miss Lelia, it's Betty Jo," I said, reaching out to touch her gently on the arm. I do not know that she recognized me but I could tell she was aware someone was there.

Without opening her eyes, Miss Lelia said wearily, "I wanna' go home."

I knew I should have stayed there with her, but I could not make myself. I squeezed Miss Lelia's hand and left, unable to speak even to say good-bye.

A few days later my mother told me Miss Lelia had passed away. I was sorry to have lost our friend but I could not despair. Miss Lelia had gone home. She was there with Miss Neta and Willie, sitting in the kitchen around the pot-bellied stove. I was glad I had not said good-bye.

There are so many folks who have lived and are living in Middlebrook who make this little village with its little brook a kindly place to know. So what's so special about Middlebrook? Well, like I said, nothing much. —

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Renowned horse trainer demonstrates gentle training techniques at Virginia Horse Center

By DEBORAH SENSABAUGH

LEXINGTON — If horses have a patron saint — someone to take their part in the sorrows and misunderstandings of this life — that person must be Monty Roberts.

People up and down the Shenandoah Valley got a chance to sit at the great trainer's feet last month when Roberts gave two demonstrations at the Virginia Horse Center.

And they got to watch as the quiet man played interpreter, teacher, and yes, evangelist with his gospel of kindness for all God's creatures.

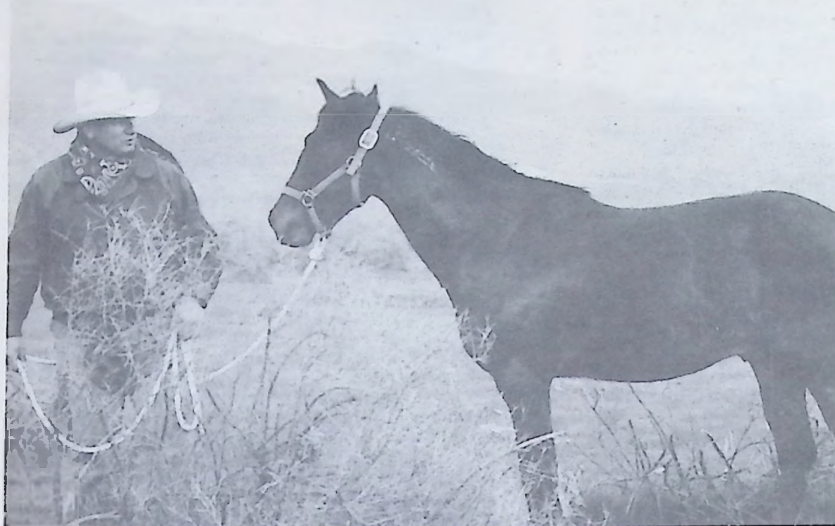
Roberts, author of the best selling *"The Man Who Listens to Horses,"* is a Californian who travels thousands of miles annually showing people how to communicate with horses, start colts and how to better react to one another using nonviolent means. Roberts is well-known in Europe, and has worked with the queen's horses in England.

His second book, *"Conversations with a Mustang,"* about his experiences joining up with mustang "Sonny Boy" in the wild, already is a bestseller in Germany. "I know I'm not going to change the world overnight, but somebody is listening," he says.

Although Roberts' claims of an abusive childhood have come under fire recently, Roberts certainly perceived his father as an abusive parent. He says that abuse, to both him and the ranch horses, spurred him to experiment with a different training method other than beating and frightening the horses into submission.

"Pain is never the answer; violence doesn't solve the problems. No one has the right to say, 'You must or I will hurt you,'" Roberts explained before his helpers led a big, brown gelding into the ring for him to watch. This interview/preview gave reporters a chance to ask questions, take photographs and get TV cameras rolling without the bustle of the upcoming demonstration.

Before his demonstrations, Roberts always previews several horses selected by a committee that represent the charity that profits from each demonstration helps.



Monty Roberts, author of the best selling *"The Man Who Listens to Horses,"* is shown with Shy Boy, the mustang which Roberts trained in the wild using his "join up" technique.

The author and horse trainer recently presented a seminar at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington.

Photo courtesy Monty Roberts

This weekend, the funds went to the Hobby Horse Therapeutic Riding Program. A committee from the program selected several horses, had them veterinarian checked and brought the horses to the Center for Roberts to watch.

Roberts' non-profit organization will give more than \$800,000 to charities this year alone.

Each horse was brought into the round pen while Roberts ascertained from each owner that, other than halter breaking and routine handling, the horses had not been started under saddle.

"I try to choose horses that are the norm from breeds popular in the area. This way, those watching will get the most from the demonstration," Roberts explained.

What Roberts demonstrates during his two-and-a-half-hour program revolves around "join up," Roberts' patented terminology that describes how he "talks to horses" using body language he calls "Equus."

Using hand and body signals he likens to sign language, Roberts

first gains the horse's trust.

"Trust is a clear necessity. If we start by causing harm to the horse, we violate that trust. Instead, we have to create and learn about that trust, and in the meantime, we fall in love with the horse."

Based on the trust he communicates to the horse, he then introduces a bridle, simple reining techniques, a saddle and a rider — all in the space of a half hour or less.

"Tradition runs deep in our industry," Roberts explained, saying he doesn't mind the traditions. "But I do mind if people have a closed mind and if they don't want to change just because they don't want it."

Roberts says his methods have sparked the biggest change in horse handling in the 8,000 years since the horse was first domesti-

ated and spoil the child, but it means a fishing rod, not a whipping rod."

After his explanation of the principles, Roberts put his mouth where the hoof is.

His first subject was a quarter Hanoverian, three-quarters Thoroughbred colt, 18 months old and a little crazy.

"I'm not suggesting to you amateurs to start this. When you do, you should be watched over by a professional while you learn. If you want to take a week to do what I do in 30 minutes, it's fine. But if I took a week, you'd have to have sleeping bags and a bit of fried chicken to stay... the concepts are sound enough so I can do this in 30 minutes."

And he did.

He explained that he was going to use the horse's own communication system to gain its trust. For the horse, looking at the human, fingers open means predator, eyes on eyes means keep away, as to square shoulders.

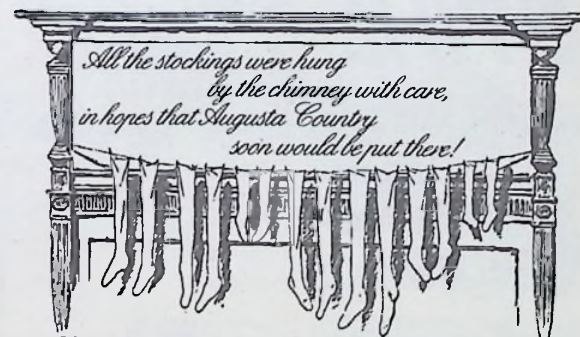
Roberts interpreted the horse's movements in relation to his own. He also predicted what the horse would do as he closed his fingers, dropped a shoulder and lowered his eyes. Within minutes, the young horse followed Roberts, now his herd leader and protector, around the pen.

Using the same signals, Roberts took the colt through the bridling, long-lining and saddling. Like most horses with their first saddles, the colt bucked and kicked around the pen until he realized nothing was hurting him and

See ROBERTS, page 13

cated. "We've suggested the horse do what we tell him or we will hurt him. I come along and say, 'Stop, let's reason with them, negotiate with them instead...'; 100,000 horses will be started by my methods in the next 12 months."

Roberts stresses that "punishment is not a good idea for horses or children, but discipline is. But it shouldn't have pain connected with it. The Bible says spare the



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men with whom he is
pleased."* Luke 2:14

Even mustangs respond to Roberts' techniques

By DEBORAH SENSABAUGH

RAPHINE— Candace Fitzgerald thought she might have to put the training of Carol Shendel's little mustangs on hold until she could talk to Monty Roberts.

But in the end, she figured out what to do herself, using "Equus" principles of communication with horses, just like Roberts teaches.

Actually, Fitzgerald became interested in resistance-free training just after she majored in horsemanship at old Southern Virginia College. Before deciding where to go for her bachelor's degree, Fitzgerald worked for several months for trainer Red Revelle in Orange.

Revelle has spent years using the non-violent methods to retrain problem horses ranging from grand prix competition mounts to mountain mules. Fitzgerald helped most with the mule training, and came back to Rockbridge County to train her own nearly 17-hand gaited mule, Gus.

While teaching in the Rockbridge 4-H Horse and Mule Adventure Club's Learn to Ride Program at Lost Creek Farm, Fitzgerald began using the methods to help the students in communicating with and training their horses, and in keeping the farm's school horses tuned up for the young people to ride.

"I've worked with horses all my life, but this method of horse training beats anything I've ever seen. It doesn't mean a horse will be perfectly trained overnight, but it establishes a method by which the horse can understand what you want him to do, and gives you a way to tell the horse he isn't doing something right without causing him any pain or confusion," Fitzgerald says.

Back to the mustangs.

Shendel, owner of Willow Pond



Candace Fitzgerald spends some time with the little bay mustang mare which she trained at Willow Pond Farm incorporating Monty Roberts' nonviolent methods.

Photo by Deborah Sensabaugh

Farm Bed and Breakfast north of Brownsburg, heard that Fitzgerald was training horses with the non-violent method that gets fast results. When she obtained the mustangs last summer, she says she suspected they might need professional help. "So I called Candy and asked if she would give it a try."

Fitzgerald adds, "I had never worked with mustangs before; in fact Monty Roberts' instructions in his book begin with 'Lead the horse into the round pen.' Well, you don't halter and lead a wild horse anywhere, so I've had to combine Roberts' techniques with what I have learned on the job with horses."

Both Fitzgerald and Shendel have been amazed with the results.

The little bay mustang has readily trusted Fitzgerald, and after about five hours of work in a makeshift round pen, will stand for haltering, leading, grooming and

picking up all her feet. She has progressed to a bridle and long-lining also, and is about ready to try a saddle and rider.

But the black mustang, the dominant mare in the "herd" of two, has been so shy and unresponsive, Fitzgerald was at a loss as to how to persuade her to respond.

"Sometimes you get a horse with that kind of aloof personality that it feels it doesn't need to 'join up' with anyone for any reason. These types of horses are very self suffi-

cient and often dominate members of their herd. I just didn't know what to do," Fitzgerald said.

Using the principle of making what you want the horse to do easy and natural for it, Fitzgerald held the mare's halter over the grain bucket. In order to reach the grain, the little mare had to make up her own mind to put her head into the halter. It worked. Haltered quietly, the little mare has progressed to leading and some grooming.

"Sometimes you get a real breakthrough like that, but it usually only comes after a lot of patience. While Roberts' and other trainers' resistance-free methods work wonders, the trainer still needs to use her head to find solutions to the behavior that underlie the horse's rea-

sons for doing what seems perfectly logical to it. And patience is on top of any trainer's bag of tricks," she says.

Fitzgerald, who went on to earn her bachelor's in psychology from Liberty University last spring, also is a certified chaplain with Equestrian Ministries International. In addition to training horses, Fitzgerald teaches riding through the 4-H and puts on horse training clinics and demonstrations for young people.

"Anytime people can be made aware of and learn about better, more effective ways of communicating with and training their horses, and in the bargain learn something about themselves, the world becomes a better place," Fitzgerald says. —

•Roberts

Continued from page 12

that he needed to "join up" with Roberts in the center of the pen. Next, Roberts eased one of his assistants into the saddle, who rode the horse around the pen.

"I'm working on a book called *Horse Sense for People*," Roberts said, laughing congenially as the young horse reasoned out what was happening to it.

"Traditional horse books say if the horse bucks, you've got to whip him. If you stop and think about it, if you whip him, he thinks he has two things to worry about now, the saddle and the human... When he comes to me, he says I need help... Horses

don't want to buck; they want to stop bucking," Roberts said.

Roberts' second horse, a young thoroughbred named Ben, had never been off the farm before that day.

"If you make trouble, you'll have trouble; if you aren't trouble, you won't have any," he explained as the fractious colt didn't want to yield. "You never get your adrenaline involved," he advised.

When saddled, this colt crowhopped and bucked violently, but in the end, the colt was so glued to Roberts, the trainer couldn't take a step without the colt being underfoot.

Roberts' work with the horses brought the audience to its feet. —

•House

Continued from page 8

tired preachers," he explained.

And what better place to rejuvenate than high on the slopes of North Mountain in a home filled with the very elements, like wood and stone, which grace God's natural world? The Sanders plan to plant a large garden, acquire several horses and raise enough cattle for meat for friends and family.

"There is a lot of wildlife up here and you won't find better stars. My grandson walked up on a bear right behind us. I have seen turkey, fox and coyotes," Ben said.

"Sometimes the sky up here is so blue you can hardly believe it," Wilma added.

The couple has started acquainting themselves with the neighbors as well. Ben was asked to bring the Thanksgiving message to McKinley United Methodist Church, which he can see from an upstairs window of his new house. "There are good, solid people here," he said of the community spread out before his gaze as he stood on the porch.

Very soon Ben will complete his woodworking labor of love. Activity in his garage shop, filled with

industrial woodworking equipment, will soon slow. But the results of the last several years are evident everywhere one looks. Outside the garage is a hay wagon of sawdust filled to overflowing and piled up high on either side are waist-high mounds of more sawdust.

"I love woodworking. It's my golf. I don't consider myself an experienced craftsman; I'm just learning. It is the pleasure of doing something. It's lots of work, but I don't mind doing it," he said. But quickly added that, when you get right down to it he is still "a full-time preacher and a part-time woodworker." —

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Notes from the road

This summer, *Augusta Country* staff writer Sue Simmons traveled with family and friends to points in the western United States. In this issue, she gives us a glimpse into her travels.

Wild, wonderful Wyoming, and other points west

By SUE SIMMONS

The great American west beckoned the Simmons family once again this year. Wyoming, it was decided, would be the destination. It had been a long time since we had visited the state and it seemed like a good place to noodle around. This year's trip, however, had a twist.

For the first time since 1974, the vacation was child free.

For a number of years, three families have traveled together to the far corners of the contiguous 48 states. The six kids always had someone with whom to hang-out and the six parents always could banish complaining kids to another vehicle — a solution far more acceptable than leaving them by the road in Dimebock, Texas. This year we found ourselves with the all too familiar itch to head west and no kids to haul along. Not to be undone, the Simmons and Sayers decided to forge ahead.

We not only found adventure and fun, but we learned there is life after children. Money went further, bedtime came earlier, and the Skiptik (the affectionate name for our travel plans) changed daily.

As a matter-of-fact, we had driven as far as the mall on the southern edge of Staunton when the entire Skiptik was reversed and it was decided we would head for Yellowstone National



Travelers pay homage at the Esther Hobart Morris House in South Pass City, Wy. Morris co-authored legislation giving women the right to vote in Wyoming in 1869.

Park first rather than last.

We had already determined to travel the "blue highways" and stay off the Interstate as much as possible. Hence at Huntington, W.Va., we bid farewell to I-64 and traveled U.S. 52 along the Ohio River and to points west.

We also decided that we would stop whenever we pleased and took a solemn oath never to go backwards (an oath we broke in Kansas, when we made a U-turn to see the

biggest ball of twine in the world.)

There's lot to see in the country if you're willing to take the time. The Rankin House in Ripley, Ohio is a case in point.

This home of a Presbyterian minister served as an Underground Railroad stop for slaves escaping across the Ohio River to freedom. Harriet Beecher Stowe stayed at the house for several weeks; the house shows up in her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as

the place Eliza escapes to after her escape across the Ohio River.

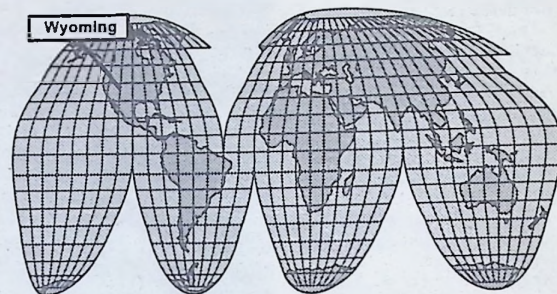
Not far from Ripley is the birthplace of Ulysses S. Grant and his boyhood home. This humble and unassuming home stands in stark contrast to the mansion birthplace of Robert E. Lee, Grant's worthy opponent on the field of battle.

Blue highways pass a number of other obscure sights and sites. We made a pilgrimage to the water tower

in Milan, Ind., the small town whose high school basketball team miraculously and against all odds won the Indiana State Championship in 1954. For the whole story, check out the video *Hoosiers*.

Headed toward the Mississippi River via Illinois, we stumbled upon Nauvoo, a Mormon "Williamsburg." Owned and restored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,

See TOWN, page 15



Sue's Five Star Cafes

According to Sue Simmons when choosing a place to dine, "Always look for places where the local people eat." Here are a few she found during her western expedition this summer.

Joan and Bill's — Cooke City, Mont. Homecooking at great prices. Check out the chicken fried steak served with white gravy on the bottom. Specials each night cost about \$7.95. If you get there in time, you might get a piece of their famous boysenberry pie.

Diamond Horse Shoe Cafe — Cheyenne, Wy. This hole in the wall cafe on the outskirts of Cheyenne serves up a dynamite breakfast for about \$2.50.

Atlantic City Mercantile, Atlantic City, Wy. -- Steaks are served Wednesday through Saturday. If you can't make it one of those nights, you select from the lunch menu the rest of the time. I recommend the Mother Lode — one big hamburger for \$4.95. The French fries are homemade and memorable. Traditional Basque meals are served homestyle five times a summer. Call ahead for reservations.



A traveler relaxes in a hot spring on the banks of the Platte River in Saratoga, Wy.



The world's largest ball of twine is Cawker City, Kansas' claim to fame. The ball was

started in 1953 by Frank Stoeber whose motto was "Thrift + Patience = Success."

Town

Continued from page 14

the site and visitor's center interprets the Mormon migration west. It was from Nauvoo that Brigham Young directed his flock to Utah and the Great Salt Lake following persecution by local townspeople. An impressive visitor's center staffed by warm, friendly guides orients the visitor to the story. Most impressive of all is that no admission fee is charged.

Leaving Nauvoo, we crossed the Mississippi River — throwing a penny into the water to ensure our return — and into Iowa.

The Heartland. We had little time to linger but were determined to visit the Bridges of Madison County — but only two of them. The Rosemon Bridge featured in the movie by the same name is fairly underwhelming.

Located on a dirt road miles from nowhere, the bridge proved less in-

teresting than the remainder of the trip through the Iowa landscape. Neat farms dotted the countryside. Recent heavy rain and flooding that ruined crops was the only blot on a picture perfect ride. And we did blunder onto yet another obscure site. Nestled on a little corner in Winterset, the county seat of Madison County, is the birthplace of Marion Morrison. You know — John Wayne — The Duke.

Nebraska is one big state and

Try these three hikes

Mt. Washburn

The old fire tower atop Mt. Washburn in Yellowstone park can be accessed from two directions: Dunraven Pass or the Mt. Washburn fire road. While the road isn't as romantic as the trail, far fewer people take the road which climbs gently toward the tower through wooded groves (burned over but coming back since the 1988 fire) and mountain meadows. Big horn sheep can sometimes be seen along with marmots, ravens and the occasional coyote. This relatively short, three-mile hike rewards with spectacular views of Yellowstone Park, the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, Yellowstone Lake and the distant Grand Tetons. Bears can be a problem in the park, but warnings of recent bear sighting are promptly and regularly posted.

Cascade Canyon

The most popular hike in Grand Teton National Park is also a long one. A boat ride across Jenny Lake cuts two miles off the front end of the hike; two miles you'll appreciate at day's end. A steep climb to hidden falls at the beginning is perhaps the most difficult part of the hike. The trail follows Cascade Creek for five miles to a fork in the trail where Cascade and another creek converge. The north fork snakes three miles through rocky moraines as it steadily climbs up toward Lake Solitude. The aptly named lake lies at the base of a cliff and offers a place to rest up for the return. Moose, marmot, pika, and deer can be seen along the way. The end of July is the peak season for

every bit as beautiful as my favorite state of Kansas. Its rolling eastern farms give way to the western Sand Hills. The Old Lincoln Highway — U.S. 30 and State Route 91 is the recommended route. It passes yet another obscure place, the Nebraska National Forest. The only cultivated forest in the National Forest system. Planted in the 1930s as a Civilian Conservation Corp project, the forest offers

swimming, hiking and camping.

With our eyes on the prize — Wyoming — we lingered little in Nebraska. After spending the first night in a tent in a campground in downtown Casper (and making an emergency trip to the mall because a certain family forgot to pack a critical piece for their tent) we headed for Cooke City via Thermopolis — for a soak in the hot springs — and Cody — for groceries. —



Travelers stand next to some of the "small" snow fences in Wyoming. The region receives an average of 200 inches of snow annually. In certain areas the fences are 12 rails high.

Rocky Mountain wildflowers and Cascade Canyon does not disappoint.

Death Canyon

Walking through Death Canyon begs the question "Why did it get such a terrible name?" By the time the five-mile hike is done, you realize that probably it was one person's effort to keep the place all to himself — or as Bert, the trail crew boss we met along the way said, "It's a western thing." Death Canyon Trail gently rises to the Phelps Lake overlook, then descends to a substantial aspen grove before a long as-

cent along a rushing mountain stream to the portals. The portals are a rocky gateway to a high mountain valley. We stopped two miles further in a backcountry campground for lunch but the trail traverses the park. Moose, deer, marmot, and pika abound. Bears are also a problem in this part of the park. Two young men we met on the return told us of waking up that morning in the camping area where we had stopped to find a mama bear and two cubs ripping their backpacks out of the tree and eating all their food.



Sightseers walk along ruts made by wagons which traveled the Oregon Trail when settlers were flocking westward.



The majesty of the Tetons is seen from a distance in this photo taken near Jackson Lake, Wy.

Wild and wonderful sometimes hard to find

By SUE SIMMONS

Just as its motto says, Wyoming is Wild and Wonderful. But sometimes you have to work to find it.

Like half of America, we wanted to visit Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Predictably we found the parks crowded and traffic formidable. Traffic jams occur frequently along Yellowstone's only road because of road repairs or animal sightings. It's a challenge to find a parking place and we heard that the crowds and parking lot at Old Faithful were indescribable.

That's why we limited our time in Yellowstone and spent that hiking rather than sightseeing.

Campgrounds, all of them, fill up by noon and nary a room can

be found. Getting a campsite often means staying outside the park and getting up at the crack of dawn to arrive at a campground as other campers leave. This method secured us a primo site at Colter Bay in the Tetons.

The Tetons were just as crowded and again we spent a great deal of time on trails rather than roads. Battery trouble necessitated a trip to Jackson, a once picturesque western town now choked with designer traffic and "beautiful" people who go there to be seen.

While these parks are spectacular and should be visited, there are other places in Wyoming that offer local color and splendid scenery with far less hassle — the Wind

See TETONS, page 20



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Carriage service offers potential equine career

By CHRIS MARRS

LExINGTON — There is a career in horsemanship that uses horses in a special way. Just ask Kent McMichael, owner of the Lexington Carriage Company which provides transportation that brings a bit of the past back into the future.

Kent explains that the carriage business has three major markets — historical tours (historical area, tourism), weddings, and special events (parades, festivals, private charters). His company provides service in each of the three areas.

Kent's career in horsemanship

actually started during his high school days.

"I bought a stage coach, but no horses," he said. "About one and a half months after the stage coach I bought the team of horses."

Having a stage coach gave him his start in this recreational career. Film makers sought him out to perform extra parts in movies and films. This unusual start for a high school entrepreneur eventually led him to purchase the Lexington Carriage Company in 1996. Owner of the company for two years now, Kent offers some good advice to anyone considering this type of business.

Equipment that can get your

company from point A to point B is important. Kent does many weddings as far away as Roanoke as well as carriage tours in the heart of downtown Lexington. With a stable of 22 horses and carriages to move, his equipment includes flat bed trailers, goosenecks, and trucks.



Another consideration is the time involved in each event. "Know your time in front of and back of events," he said. This means preparation and clean up. Workdays may last as long as 12 to 14 hours.

Horse care is another important factor. His horses are bathed twice a day. This helps for appearance, but also to keep sweat build up from causing abrasions and sores underneath the heavy collars and harnesses.

The most important asset to a person pursuing this type of career is knowledge of horses. Kent suggests participating in an ongoing

business of this type before considering ownership. Learn how to drive properly. Learn how the horses react and the responsibilities involved, he noted.

Horsemanship is a big part of the carriage business. Driving involves "rules of the road." Kent also spends time training his drivers and even helps others get started in the business. There is one question that he presents to all parties interested in his business. "Does the horse actually push or pull the carriage?" For the answer you might have to head to Lexington, enjoy a quiet carriage ride through the city, and ask the driver. —

Older horses, lesson programs may be good match



I have an older mare that I would like to donate to a lesson program. She is steady, reliable, and great with kids. She does have some health problems because of her age. Should I retire her to pasture or would a lesson program be a good option?

B.D., Staunton

Lesson programs are great options for older horses that can still offer some service. If the lesson stable offers a handicapped program and your horse is sensible, sound, and able to tolerate a lot of petting and loving from the students, then that is a great opportunity for your mare to semi-retire. Another possibility is a beginner riding program that works with students who are just starting to ride. Any way that you look at it, a lesson stable can be a great place for a horse to still be considered useful, keep in shape, and maintain positive contact with people.

Sometimes lesson programs consider leases. This means that you still own your horse and the stable leases the animal for the program. Some leases might be long term like one to two years, others might be for six months or so. If your mare likes people and does not have any dangerous habits such as bolting, kicking, biting, or other aggressive behavior, then I would suggest donating her to a lesson program with a good reputation.

I am a lesson horse. This means

that in my old age (I am 17 years old) I have turned all my training and skill into the field of teaching. I am no longer working competitively, but find that my value lies more in what I know and giving that to my students. I love people and also like the attention I receive from my students. My manners are kept up and I am also still in pretty good shape from being ridden on a regular basis. Since I am a working horse I receive good care in farmer service, feed, and grooming. These can sometimes be neglected in pasture kept horses.

Since you are considering your options why not check into the special riding programs for the handicapped. These programs are gentle on horses and the students receive the therapeutic value of the horse. The programs use horses to provide exercise and sometimes freedom to students often bound with disabilities. Riding a horse provides emotional and spiritual supports, too. Horses are tested for their safety and if your mare can pass the tests she could be used in a very positive and pro-

ductive way for many more years. I know some lesson horses past 25 years who are still going strong and love what they do! The handicapped programs give them a chance to receive lots of love and attention and the demands are not stressful for the horse.

Remember to check into any stable to which you consider donating your mare. Make sure they offer regular farrier service, a responsible feeding program, and their lesson program stresses safety and proper horse care. One way to determine this is to take a look at the horses there. Are they well groomed? Horses can get dirty, but basically their coats should not have sores or rough patches on them. Their manes and tails should look healthy. Are the horses in good shape? A horse in good shape will show himself. He will play, be alert to his surroundings, and take a keen interest in what's going on. Are they happy? A happy horse has a bright, alert eye that trusts. Happy horses have been treated good and show a fair amount of confidence. Look for these signs in the lesson horses and you will be on the right track in letting your mare go. Think of it this way. If there are happy horses at any given stable, then remember that your horse has a good chance of becoming one, too! —

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

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

Schoolhouse News

Progress shows in construction at Craigsville School

By PENNY PLEMMONS

CRAIGSVILLE — Renovations and construction at Craigsville Elementary School are ahead of schedule according to principal Kirk Johnson.

Johnson credits the dry weather for contributing to the time advantage and assuaging the problem of moving students from building to building in inclement weather.

"The biggest problem we had anticipated was exchanging children from the mobile units to the buildings during heavy downpours. We've only had to deal with a few showers and the children were prepared with umbrellas and raincoats," he said.

A major overhaul of the cafeteria and classrooms closest to the ball field began in the spring of 1998 and was completed in time for the

opening of school in August. Five mobile units are providing temporary classrooms while construction of the additional buildings and other renovations are under way.

Johnson commented that the relocation and adjustments have gone "fairly smooth."

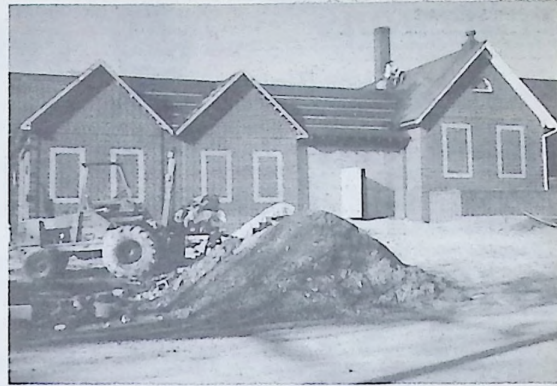
"The staff has been great in working with the situation and continuing to make the children our number one priority," he said.

The two original buildings, which were previously separated by an outdoor courtyard, are now linked by the addition of two kindergarten rooms, teacher work rooms and bathroom facilities.

"Once this area is completely finished a newcomer to the school will never realize that there are actually two buildings here," Johnson said. The former gym has undergone remodeling and now exists as a me-

dia center and computer lab. The new gymnasium is under roof and wall structures and drywall have been fleshed out in all constructed areas. The brick work is complete and has preserved the same architectural design and structure of the older buildings.

The most notable physical change is the relocation of the school's main entrance. Parents and visitors will find access to the school's administrative offices at the right of the new gym. The new gymnasium should be ready for use by the spring of 1999 and will definitely be in the new facility for the 1999-2000 school year, according to Johnson. "Now that we can see the layout of the school we are getting excited," Johnson said. "The community is welcome to drop by for a tour. I think people will stand in awe when it is completed." —



The new front of Craigsville Elementary School begins to emerge as progress continues on construction at the school. The project is scheduled for completion by fall 1999.

Photo by Penny Plemmons

RHS class offers students chance to study as trainers

By JULIE GRIMM

GREENVILLE — This year at Riverheads High School a new class, Athletic Training, is being offered to the students. The course goes through the Red Cross class for Adult and Child CPR as well as Sports Safety Training.

After they become certified, class members go into a recognition, evaluation, and management process as it relates to injury. The students do hands-on work such as wrapping ankles and knees. The class teaches the students the major bones, the muscles, ligaments, and tendons in the body.

Students who participate in this class are given the opportunity

to be student athletic trainers. They go with teams to games and are with them during practice. The students that stick with the program have the opportunity to become red shirt trainers and then white shirt trainers.

Red shirt trainers are the first step in the program. The student must have a basic knowledge of principles of first aid and show an understanding of basic sports medicine practices. The white shirts will have participated in the program for one year and completed the competence exams in sports medicine, first aid, and rehabilitation. They will have gained experiences of sports medicine outside of the school environment.

The person responsible for teaching this class and helping it to get the Riverheads is Mike Conner. He has been working for the last seven or eight years to get this class into the high school. He had to show how it would benefit the school and define a need for the program.

When Conner was asked how he felt the program was going he said, "very, very well. This group of students is genuinely interested in the material, and interested in the material for various reasons, for profession or applying knowledge to their own lifestyle."

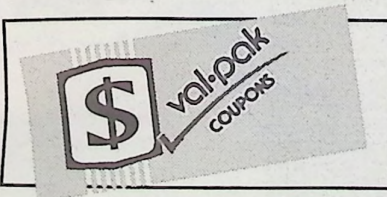
He also said that he thought "people were progressing in knowledge." See CLASS, page 18



Julie Grimm tapes Carla McAlister's ankle for practice with instruction offered by Mike Conner. Some Riverheads High School students are enrolled in an athletic training class to help them learn how to treat sports injuries.

RHS staff photo

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*The true miracle of Christmas
is hope and faith and love.
These gifts the Christ Child brought
to all from heaven high above.
May peace and joy
be yours this season,*

**Dr. H. Lynn Moore
and Staff**

Country Crossroads

Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin
December 1998



Dear Maude,
After spending such a wonderful visit at home the end of last month, it was terribly difficult to get excited about all this front-page news and get back in the swing of things in our nation's capitol. Even more difficult is writing to you about anything new or interesting here. Anything and everything has already been said and is hitting the front pages of the newspapers these days almost daily. It certainly is not possible to say that nothing is going on. Rather, I should think, far too much is going on!

One would think that this would be a good time to get caught up on a few things that made their way to the "I'll-do-it-when-I-can" pile on my desk, but with all that is happening, the telephone lines are so busy here that it is impossible to get past that buzz-buzz-buzz of jammed switchboards. So what does one do? Go shopping, I say. And that is what I did; and found a couple of nice little outfits for myself while looking for Christmas presents.

The consultant I met at lunch last month — his name is Paul — actually did send an invitation to his firm's holiday party and I got a chance to wear one of my new outfits. The party was a lot of fun — not too large or too small and there were people attending whom I had not met before. My social life could use a few new faces! Then a few days later, in spite of all the busy telephone lines, Paul telephoned and invited me to have lunch with him and a couple of his friends. Of course I said "yes."

We went to a wonderful restaurant at Union Station and what a treat that was! The food, of course, was very good and the conversation very interesting (different from that topic we have heard so much of.) But the most enjoyable part for me was the exhibit in the train station itself.

The first thing you see as you walk in is a huge spruce tree in the Main Hall, decorated all in white lights and great long streamers of Norwegian and American flags. It is so simple and pretty. The tree was a gift to our Capitol city from the city of Oslo, the capital of Norway, as a symbol of friendship between the two nations.

The Christmas tree is only one of many exhibits centered around a Norwegian holiday that are scattered throughout the main area of the station. Each year there is a large model train that is put up in the west hall of the station. In the past, when I can remember and have time, I go to see it. It is supposed to be one of the largest model train displays in the country with several train tracks and animated displays (skaters on a pond, etc.) This year it has been transformed into a Norwegian landscape, with models of typical buildings from Norway, and trains that are representative as well. There are little gnomes scattered all about.

At the other end of the station, just outside the east hall is a replica of the Viking ship "Gyrfalcon." This ship is a copy of a small, one-sail vessel which was used as we might use a dingy, as well as a means of transportation for a small number of people. Just past the ship there is a room containing reproductions of traditional Norwegian furniture. There are beautiful painted cabinets — dark blues, greens and reds, with landscapes painted in the panels, a small bed, all enclosed in a wooden frame, sturdy dark chairs and tables with polished, light wooden tops. My favorite was a wonderful cradle painted a dusty green. I looked at all of it and wanted to go home and throw out all of my furniture and start over. One must be practical, however — the credit card would explode if I ordered much of that handmade furniture!

One exhibit that I found particularly interesting is one on the homes of Norwegian immigrants in this country. The exhibit consists mostly of photographs. There are

First Night Augusta promises celebration of arts, New Year

Downtown Staunton will open its streets on New Year's Eve to the annual First Night Augusta celebration. The event, which is an alcohol free celebration of the arts ushering in the New Year, will be free to the public this year. First Night Augusta organizers report that corporate sponsorship of the event is sufficient to offer the evening of entertainment to area residents at no charge. The organization also is hosting the event to thank the community for its support in previous years.

In year's past, participants have worn buttons which were purchased to gain admission to events. Even though there is no charge for First Night this year, participants will still be required to wear buttons.

**First Night
Augusta '99**
New Year's Eve
Downtown Staunton
Programs and
buttons available
at Emmanuel
Episcopal Church
on Frederick Street.

Buttons from previous years' celebrations may be used or new ones may be picked up at Emmanuel Episcopal Church on Frederick Street which is serving as First Night headquarters this year. The church is located across the street from Stuart Hall's Old Main Hall.

First Night's New Year's Eve celebration will be filled with activities and performances and will conclude with a church service and bonfire. Included in the evening's events will be a swing/Latin band, Caron's Gathering, which will perform a variety of dance tunes from the 40s through the 70s. Whiskey Creek will also be on hand playing rhythm and blues and rock and roll tunes. Musical groups which feature folk and gospel music also will be on hand. There will be sing-alongs, magic shows, story telling and dramatic readings.

Eric Spahr, a musician, will be featured at the Beverley Street Galleries. Beverley Street will be only one of the many downtown strolling destinations where the visual arts can be enjoyed. There will be a sculpture garden and food and drink will be available at streetside eateries.

Young and old alike will be able to enjoy the festivities. A



Caron's Gathering, a Latin/swing dance band will be performing during First Night Augusta '99 in downtown Staunton New Year's Eve.

special event for children at this year's celebration will be quilt square painting. Each child will be given a 12-inch square of fabric on which to paint a design. The squares will be collected, pieced together and quilted into a millenium quilt which will be used to promote next year's First Night 2000 celebration.

First Night Augusta '99 will begin at 4 p.m. with a children's bike parade which will form in the Community Bank parking lot. From 4:30 to 6:30 arts and crafts and entertainment for children will be featured as a warm up to the night's events. Arts and crafts events will be held at Faith Lutheran Church on Lewis Street. The evening's events will get under way at 7 p.m. in a variety of locations throughout downtown. The closing church service will begin at 11:45 at Central United Methodist Church on the corner of Beverley and Lewis streets.

First Night Augusta is in its ninth year of celebrating the arts, community and family spirit to welcome the coming year. It offers an alternative celebration of the New Year in an alcohol and drug free environment, emphasizing family togetherness in celebration of the New Year. Information about First Night Augusta '99 is posted in downtown businesses. Programs for the evening's events will be available at Emmanuel Church. —

Class

Continued from page 17

ledge at a rate that's surprising to them." His goals for this class are to keep the interest level high so that maybe they will find a career or allied health profession interesting to them.

Riverheads is helping to provide the basic curriculum for the class so that other schools may also participate in the program.

areas in Norway and in North Dakota, Iowa and Wisconsin that look almost identical. It is this similarity of geography in the American northwest that made that the area to which those who immigrated from Norway feel most at home. The weather with its harsh winters and snows is also similar to the Norwegian climate. Even though the structure of many of the American homes is different from the Norwegian ones, (here they are often two stories, while those in Norway are most often all on one floor,) the interiors are very like those from the home country.

Until I saw this exhibit, and its accompanying literature, I did not realize that almost one third of the population of Norway immigrated to the United States during the 50 years after our Civil War. There is a museum in Iowa (the Vesterheim Museum) which is dedicated to these immigrants. Many of the articles in the exhibit came from this museum. It reminded me of our Museum of American Frontier Culture and its displays of the ways the immigrants to the Virginia valley brought with them so many of their native customs.

Also on display were artifacts from the early Viking

"I hope the excitement we've had here will be spread to other high schools that don't have trainers on staff, that they too will be able to gain from the benefits of having a trainer on staff," Conner said.

This class has just begun. Next year's following class will be geared for people wanting to go into allied health professions. It will delve into anatomy, biomechanics, rehabilitation, and nutrition as it applies to sports. —

days, a wonderful art exhibit of paintings on Norse mythology and history painted by a prominent contemporary Norwegian artist. There is a large video display and information desk and down in the food court a Norwegian menu. (Thank goodness I had already eaten my lunch!!)

All during December there were special programs as well — a craft bazaar sponsored by the Sons of Norway, re-enactments of the lives and history of the country, music and children's activities. What a pity I did not get to the exhibit any sooner!!

Needless to say it was such a refreshing day — almost no discussions on the morals of politicians and no opinions on the exercise of military might (we went before the bombing began.) There is something very therapeutic about seeing a little gnome peeping from beneath a Christmas tree and hearing the sound of holiday music. One needs that kind of relief these days!

My bags are packed for the quick trip home for the holidays.

My love to everyone,
LuLu

Understanding crop rotation

Musical chairs for vegetable plots

Nothing much happened in Middlebrook this week, except every single newspaper got delivered on time and to the correct house. Lately, our delivery person has come to be known as "old reliable." Dependability is nice, wouldn't you agree?

Most tried and true gardening practices are very dependable also. One good example of this is crop rotation. Elliot Coleman, Vermont master gardener and author, says in his book *The New Organic Grower*, "A well-thought-out crop rotation is worth 75 percent of everything else that might be done, including fertilization, tillage, and pest control."

In fact, Coleman states that this may be a

conservative estimate and crop rotation should be considered the "single most important practice" in a multiple crop vegetable garden. Once the importance of rotating crops is understood, you'd probably agree.

Annual crop rotation should be practiced whether you are gardening 40 square feet in your backyard or working a multi-acre market garden for a part-time income. It is simply essential that tillers of the soil change the crop growing on a given piece of ground periodically. Ideally, these two crops should not be botanically related.

The benefits of crop rotation are numerous. Different crops don't make the same demands for soil nutrients year af-

ter year. Diseases and pests are not allowed to establish themselves, but rather have their natural cycles broken by the rotation of host plants.

There are dozens of rules in crop rotation, but here are a few basics I've learned to rely on year after year.

1) Potatoes do well after conversion of new ground from turf. Potatoes also perform very well after corn.

2) Corn does well after a leguminous crop such as green beans and peas.

3) Almost every vegetable does well after garlic. (If you were a bug, would you want to hang around in that smelly soil?)

4) Squash is generally beneficial pre-



The Garden Path

By Jeff Ishee

ceding root crops.

5) Beans do well when they follow root crops.

6) Even though old-timers might disagree, I never follow tomatoes or potatoes with either potatoes or tomatoes. These cousins go on different soil every year. —

Sample crop rotation for a three veggie garden using a three-year cycle

FIRST YEAR	SECOND YEAR	THIRD YEAR
<i>Plot A</i> sweet corn	<i>Plot A</i> potatoes	<i>Plot A</i> green beans
<i>Plot B</i> green beans	<i>Plot B</i> sweet corn	<i>Plot B</i> potatoes
<i>Plot C</i> potatoes	<i>Plot C</i> green beans	<i>Plot C</i> sweet corn

Grouping vegetables into familial groups aids in crop rotation.

Root Crops:

Radish
Potato
Beet
Carrot
Onion

Legumes:

Beans
Peas

Vine Crops:

Cucumbers
Squash
Melons

Fruit Crops:

Tomato
Pepper

Brassica Crops:

Broccoli
Cabbage
Cauliflower

Grain Crops:

Corn

Greens:

Lettuce
Spinach

Middlebrook-Brownsburg acreage earns ag status

By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK — Several years of hard work and planning finally paid off when more than 5,000 acres of land in southern Augusta County were placed in the Middlebrook-Brownsburg Agricultural/Forestral District recently. It is only the second such district in the county, the first being the

Middle River District in the northern part of the county.

Such districts are rural zones reserved for the production of agricultural products and timber. They are established according to state guidelines with the approval of the local governing body, in this case the Augusta County Board of Supervisors. A district constitutes a voluntary agreement between

landowners and the government that no new, non-agricultural uses will take place in the district. It provides stronger protection for farmers and farmland than does traditional zoning.

The county's second, and newest ag/forestral district consists of 5,620 acres and has been put into place for eight years, at which time it can be renewed. Approxi-

mately 25 landowners representing land on both sides of the Middlebrook Road corridor (Va. 252) from Middlebrook south to the county line are voluntarily included in the district.

The district was the result of the area's landowners working together to form the protected district. During the organizational process, they received help and advice from the Valley Conservation Council, a group working to promote land use that sustains the farms, forests, open space, and cultural heritage of the Shenandoah Valley region.

VCC helped with the technical aspects of the planning including

doing land research, submitting information that included, tax assessment and map making.

"The VCC is very excited about this ag district because it complements the conservation work we have been doing along the Rt. 252 corridor. With districts such as this we can protect a large land base that supports agriculture. It is a way to raise a consciousness and awareness of agriculture in a community. It publicly allows farmers to commit to this use and their properties are given consideration in instances like planning, nuisance ordinances, and eminent domain cases," noted VCC Executive Director Faye Cooper. —

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in Middlebrook

**Augusta
Cooperative
Farm Bureau**
Staunton, Waynesboro,
Weyers Cave

Exchange students experience pros and cons of American culture

By JENNIFER ISHEE

GREENVILLE — Nadine Greiter and Michaela Rother, exchange students from Germany, are attending Riverheads High School for the 1998-99 school year.

When asked why they wanted to be exchange students, Nadine, 18, replied, "to graduate in America, and get to know the culture." Michaela, 17, responded, "I wanted to see another land, learn to speak the English language, and experience new things."

Nadine is staying with the Turner family and Michaela is staying with the Ishee family. The Turners live near Arbor Hill and the Ishees live near Middlebrook.

What are the best and worst qualities about America which the two students have encountered? Both Nadine and Michaela agreed that the food and style of life here is a plus. And the worst part? They also both agree that there are just "too many rules here for teenagers." They also quote that "every homework is graded and there are too many tests."

Nadine's favorite class this year is athletic training. "It's a new experience for me that I would not have at school in Germany," she said. Michaela said she enjoys her art class.

"I love to draw, and I really enjoy the projects that we do," she noted. —

You should renew. You know you want to.

You've Got Mail delivers the goods

If you're looking for a wholesome, entertaining movie for your holiday viewing, *You've Got Mail*, now playing at the Bijou, fits the bill.

This romantic comedy, written and directed by Nora Ephron (*Crazy Salad*, *Sleepless in Seattle*), is a boy-meets-girl, boy — oh, you get the picture — with a 21st century twist.

Kathleen Kelly, played by Meg Ryan, runs The Shop Around the Corner, a children's book store started decades ago by her mother. Add to the mix a nice-looking, if somewhat self-absorbed, boyfriend — played by Greg Kinnear — and Kathleen's life seems nearly story-book perfect.

We quickly learn that she yearns for something more and it looks as if she has found it, or him, on the Internet.

Kathleen corresponds daily with a man she has met only in an electronic chat room. The two share philosophies, experiences, insights, observations but nothing

personally specific. As we eavesdrop on their electronic messages, the two become endeared to each other. The movie cleverly uses icons and cursors and words typed across the screen to introduce the characters and advance the plot.

Their virtual friendship deepens. Kathleen is unaware, however, that she has met her electronic friend.

And she hates him. Joe Fox — that's F-O-X — played by the incomparable Tom Hanks, has opened a mega discount bookstore in the neighborhood and is cheerfully putting all the small, independent businesses out of business. Joe is a decent guy, it turns out, despite the fact that he subscribes to the philosophy that business is business and, "Hey, it's nothing personal." The viewer is aware that the two are virtually in love but Kathleen and Joe are oblivious to the fact as they discover the real person before the virtual one.

Ephron has once again dished up a good movie. The story is

wholesome without being saccharine. She has even managed to incorporate a mall-versus-main street subtext into the romance. Ephron has a stand-up comic's sense of the ordinary which she both celebrates and denigrates. As a result, she has become to romantic comedy what George Lucas is to action-adventure.

Ryan, who has played this part a bazillion times, is at once very good and a caricature of herself, especially when she mugs for the camera rather than acts. Hanks (*Sleepless in Seattle*, *Saving Private Ryan*) makes it all better, however. It's hard to believe that the guy who dressed in drag for TV sitcom *Bosom Buddies* has turned into America's most unlikely and uncommon leading man. He too has played the part before, but, by not overacting, he manages to keep his performance fresh.

A small cast of characters does a terrific job supporting Hanks and Ryan. Dabney Coleman is his wicked

yet lovable self as Joe's unlucky-in-love father and Jean Stapleton turns in a tidy performance as Birdie, Kathleen's somewhat eccentric bookkeeper and friend. Parky Posey puts in a high energy performance playing opposite Hanks as his high-strung -- "she makes coffee nervous" -- girlfriend.

Of course, the big question is: Can Ephron, Ryan, and Hanks recreate the magic that made *Sleepless in Seattle* a box office hit? *You've Got Mail* isn't a laugh-a-minute riot. But it is a light romantic comedy which should please most audiences. And the movie certainly sets a lighter tone than some of the other offerings (*Jack Frost*, *Stepmom*) which take on the not-too-cheery theme of the death

FLICK



FLAK

A movie review by

Hannah's mom, Sue Simmons

of a parent as holiday fare.

There are movies galore to see over the holidays as major studios vie for your dollar. By all means see *You've Got Mail*. It's like getting a long letter from a dear friend.

You've Got Mail is rated PG. There are three "bad" words and some sexual innuendo. Hannah's mom gives it three bananas. —

•Tetons

Continued from page 15

Rivers near Lander and the Medicine Bows between Saratoga and Laramie are must sees.

But the best place, the most magical place in all of Wyoming is Atlantic City.

We discovered Atlantic City in 1991 when we passed through after visiting South Pass City, a nearby historic ghost town on the Oregon trail. This town of 50 is nestled on a wide dirt road on Wyoming's high plains. The sight of three cowboys ambling down

the middle of the road is forever etched in my mind.

We had stopped only for directions, but I promised myself that one day I would return for a steak dinner at the Mercantile.

It took seven years, but return we did. Although we missed steak night by two nights, we ate the biggest hamburgers grilled on the face of the earth. It was late but from the looks of the place, they had been busy earlier. Three cowboys (maybe the same ones I saw seven years ago?) sat at the bar nursing beer and whiskey.

We fed the juke box coins and

played an eclectic mix of music from Willie and Waylon to Garth Brooks and Patsy Cline to Merle Haggard, Jim Morrison and Janis Joplin. And oh, did those boys at the bar sing — everything from Break on Through to the Other Side to All my Ex's Live in Texas. That night and that place — I spent three of the best hours of my life. As an extra treat, Mother Nature provided the biggest fullest moon that ever shined on Wild Wonderful Wyoming.

Oh, those Blue Highways.

They're magical. —

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.

Jan. 1, 1949 — A six-day blizzard began over the Northern Rockies and the Great Plains. The storm produced the most adverse weather conditions in the history of the west.

Jan. 5, 1835 — It was a record cold morning in the eastern U.S. The mercury at the Yale Campus in New Haven, Conn., plunged to 23 degrees below zero, and reached 40 below in the Berk-

shire Hills of Connecticut.

Jan. 11, 1972 — Downslope winds hit the eastern slopes of the Rockies in northern Colorado and southeastern Wyoming. Boulder, Colo., reported wind gusts to 143 mph and \$25 million property damage.

Jan. 12, 1912 — The morning low of 47 degrees below zero at Washta, Iowa, established a state record.

Jan. 18, 1973 — A baby was carried 300 to 400 yards by the strong winds of a tornado at Corey, La., yet received only minor injuries.

Jan. 20, 1954 — The temperature at Rogers Pass, Mont., plunged to 70 degrees below zero to establish a new record for the continental U.S.

Jan. 21, 1990 — Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across the state of Florida. Eight cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including West Palm Beach

with a reading of 86

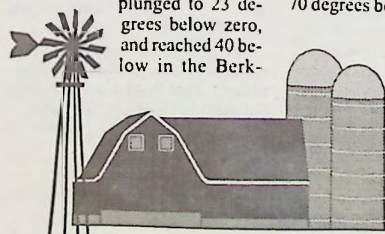
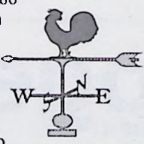
degrees. Rain in southern New England changed to freezing rain, then to sleet, and then to heavy snow during the late morning. Most of Massachusetts was blanketed with 6 to 10 inches of snow.

Jan. 23, 1971 — The temperature at Prospect Creek, Alaska, plunged to 80 degrees below zero, the coldest reading of record for the United States.

Jan. 27, 1966 — Oswego, N.Y., was in the midst of a five-day lake effect storm which left the town buried under 102 inches of snow.

Jan. 29, 1983 — A series of Pacific coast storms finally came to an end. The storms, attributed in part to the ocean current, "El Niño", produced ocean swells 15 to 20 feet high which ravaged the beaches of southern California.

Jan. 31, 1966 — A blizzard struck the northeastern U.S. When the storm came to an end, 20 inches of snow covered the ground at Washington D.C. —



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

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