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

Augusta Country

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Happy New Year!! Time to break out the champagne
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Meet the men of the 10th Mountain Division
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Groups preserve art of ballroom dancing
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Spend some time reminiscing in Middlebrook
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I Nearly Got in Hot Water in Middlebrook, Va.

Students preparing for spring adventures
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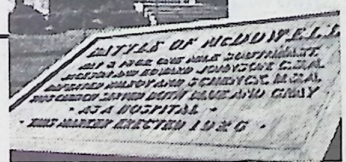

Join Jackson's forces at the Battle of McDowell
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Virginia Beef Expo, April 23-24, moving to new location
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VIRGINIA BEEF
BEEF SEEDSTOCK FOR TOMORROW
EXPOSITION

1999

Postmark commemorates Middlebrook's bicentennial

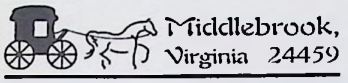
By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK — How do you celebrate a village's birthday? You certainly can't get a birthday cake or warble out a round of "Happy birthday to you."

So the community of Middlebrook has found a different way to celebrate the village's 200th anniversary. On April 28 the post office will be hand-canceling cards and letters with a special Middlebrook Bicentennial postmark.

"Because of the 200th birthday, the community wanted to a have a special cancellation," said Middlebrook postmaster Susan Treiber. On that day, anyone can bring in envelopes and postcards to be stamped with the design that includes a carriage - a reminder of the fact that the road that goes through the village was once a vital transportation link known as the Middlebrook-Brownsburg Turnpike.

Treiber submitted the design to the Richmond central office and they "took the ball and ran with it," she said. "This is a courtesy service to communities from the district office so that areas can celebrate special things," she added.



Middlebrook's bicentennial postmark will be issued April 28 at the Middlebrook Post Office.

The Richmond office unequivocally accepted the design but added the word station, as in Middlebrook Station. All special cancellations have to have either the word station or branch included in them Treiber explained.

The Richmond office also needed a date that the stamp was going to be used, so the community chose April 28. April was the logical choice because it was in April 1799 that William and Nancy Scott sold 27 lots to their German and Scots-Irish neighbors. Like other early Shenandoah Valley towns, Middlebrook was designed as a series of lots along either side of the road. After every three or four lots, an alley was laid out.

Within 100 years, Middlebrook's look was much like it is today. So little changed from its late 19th century heyday is the village that it has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. As such, it was the first historic district in Augusta County. (Today there are two, the other being Mt. Sidney).

Although the first lots were sold on April 6, the 28th was chosen as "Cancellation Day" in order to make sure the special stamp was in town and ready to ink its way into the philatelic hall of fame. News of the cancellation will be placed in the "Postal Bulletin," an internal postal service magazine that is distributed across the nation.

Those interested in getting the special postmark on their mail need to stop by the post office. April 28 will be the only day that walk-in customers can receive that cancellation. For 29 days after that, until May 28, people may send envelopes and cards to the Middlebook Postmaster who will stamp them and send them back. Treiber recommended that those using the mail-in method should send an extra SASE envelope in which to place to the newly canceled items for their return trip.

And what happens to those absent-minded people who don't get down to the post office between April 28 and May 28? Check in again in 2099 for the tercentennial. After 30 days the cancellation stamp goes back to Richmond where it will be destroyed.

So mark your calendar, get to Middlebrook and celebrate the birthday of one of Augusta County's most well preserved historic villages. —

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Habitat program to feature Al Hamilton Choir

BETHEL GREEN — The Al Hamilton Community Choir will perform at Bethel Presbyterian Church April 25.

The performance is being planned as part of a special Habitat for Humanity program which will include a report on the progress of Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Habitat's plans for the Johnson Street Resurrection Build.

The city of Staunton obtained a block grant to purchase condemned and abandoned properties in the Johnson Street area of Staunton. The city will install water and sewer lines as well as curbing and gutters. A cul de sac will be placed in the block entering off of Cochran Street. Habitat plans to build eight houses on lots around the cul de sac.

Representatives from Habitat will be on hand at the Bethel program to discuss the initiative required to undertake the project. It is anticipated that construction on some of the houses in the project will begin in April.

The public is invited to the program at Bethel which will begin at 7:30. The choir will be on hand to help celebrate the involvement of the community in Habitat's effort to build a neighborhood, "one house at a time." The Al Hamilton Choir is made up of as many as 40 individuals from numerous churches in the Staunton and Waynesboro area. The choir is well known in the area and performs at a variety of occasions throughout the year.

The program will conclude with a covered dish dessert buffet. The public is invited to bring a dessert and enjoy the program April 25 at the church. Bethel Presbyterian Church is located on Va. 701 (Howardsville Road), 1.2 miles east of Va. 252 (Middlebrook Road). For information about the program, call the church at 886-6041. —

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- Rosen's Garage
  - Middlebrook

Waynesboro couple makes most of 'golden' years

By PENNY PLEMMONS

WAYNESBORO— Their humor, strong faith and salutary lifestyle give 86-year-old August Ronay and his 82-year-old wife Margaret an offensive edge in the game of life.

Spry and fit, the Ronays are — in the words of a younger generation — "hip" seniors.

"Augie" — as Margaret calls him — is a wood carver and Margee — as August calls her — is a writer. Together they maintain healthy eating habits and, despite August's need for a cane, the couple regularly engages in energetic mile-long walks.

They keep up with doctor appointments and medications. The Ronays, to put it simply, take care of themselves.

Margaret declares that August is an optimist and she is a pessimist learning to look on the bright side of things. The two maintain a cheerful and enthusiastic outlook on mature living.

All tom foolery aside, Margaret seriously ponders their longevity and decidedly concludes, "God must not be through with us yet." With that in mind, the couple just keeps on keeping on.

Although age has forced the Ronays to scale back their activities and interests, they are nowhere near eating the bread of idleness. August, a retired builder and carpenter, has transferred his wood working skills to the creation of smaller projects. Their home is a showcase for his paintings, sculptures and carvings. Margaret brags on his eye for art and his expertise with shape, line, color and form.

At one time, the Ronays took their wares on the road, selling miniature carvings of boots, horses, mules, birds, nativity scenes and many other things at craft shows. Nowadays, August carves, or as he says, "whittles," for his own pleasure.

"Typically I get inspired by a picture that I like. I sketch it, use a lathe to rough it out, and fine tune the piece with a carving knife and file," August says. He likes to carve oak and walnut pieces and occasionally white pine, even though he says white pine doesn't cooperate very well.

August figures that he inherited his artistic abilities from his grandfather. He tells this story.

"My grandfather was a sculptor who always had a space in the house, a work bench, for his projects," August recalled. Following grandfather's example, the Ronays have one room of their apartment set aside as the bench area. On one side of the room August has his tools, desk, and projects neatly arranged. On the other side, Margaret has an organized writing area where she pens her essays, poems and spiritual devotions.

The similarities between grandfather and grandson end here as August explained, "Grandfather was the only one in his Hungarian village who had a Bible. He was atheist, but because he had the Bible he was made the town preacher. So he regularly preached and finally had a deathbed conversion."

While August is at his work area, Margaret faces the typewriter. Just within the last two years she has begun to pursue her journalistic efforts. "People always said I was such a good letter writer," Margaret commented. So she enrolled in a creative writing class at the senior center in Charlottesville. Margaret remembers the first lesson.

"I had a massive 'can't-do-anything' problem. My heart was beating fast, but when I finished reading what I had written, the class and the teacher were very encouraging," she said.

After this class ended Margaret continued with another class which eventually led to a regular writing group called TWIGS (The Writers Interest Group for Seniors). Margaret writes the devotional for Homespun, the group's publication. "The ladies in the group are very talented," Margaret said. "We write brief articles, get together and share them. Although I know my work needs editing, the ladies are so encouraging and make me feel so good. It really is very therapeutic."

Margaret writes about nature and God. She said, "My writings are never offensive or spiritually doctrinal. I try to build character, encourage and lift the reader. She also writes about her experiences as an immigrant from Hungary. She recapped some of the difficulties her family faced in Hungary.

"My, father, an architect, was unable to find work. Even a loaf of bread became difficult to get," she said. Sponsored by a family member, Margaret's father came to Cleveland, Ohio, and established himself as a brick and stone mason. In 1924 Margaret boarded the ocean liner, Majestic and sailed to Ellis Island where she and her family reunited with "Papa" and returned to Ohio. Although Margaret's essays about her growing up ends here, she verbally shared how she and August met.

August was American born. His parents were Hungarian immigrants who also resided in Cleveland. So, as destiny would have it, Margaret and August met at a Hungarian dance. Margaret recalled, "I danced with a very tall man that evening. And he decided to introduce me to his friend." Margaret explained that August stood behind his tall friend and was so much shorter that she was unable to see him. "The friend reached around his back side and pulled Augie out in front. It was love at first sight. He was dark, cute and the same height as myself."

The couple wed and will celebrate their 63rd wedding anniversary this July. According to Margaret, "It's not always easy having two Hungarian hotheads in the house. But we have learned to share. Sometimes I am the boss and sometimes Augie is. You know you can't be in your 80s and not have lived and lived and lived."

This couple whose gray hair belies their youthfulness, fully intends to add other adventures to their life's story. Margaret stated most matter of factly, "Augie has to live at least until he is 90, his driver's license doesn't expire until then." —

Margaret and August Ronay sit together in their Waynesboro home. On the table behind them are some of August's wood sculptures and carvings.

August Ronay at his work bench beginning a new hand-carved creation.

Photos by Penny Plemmons

> *"I don't get dressed in the mornings, I get assembled! After I brush my uppers and my bridge work I put in my hearing aids. I put my glasses on so I can see and then wrap the worn out cartilage in my knee in a brace."*
>
> *August Ronay, Waynesboro*

"I don't get dressed in the mornings," August says. "I get assembled! After I brush my uppers and my bridge work I put in my hearing aids. I put my glasses on so I can see and then wrap the worn out cartilage in my knee in a brace."

Yesterday once more

McDowell fought in defense of Staunton

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second in a series of articles about Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign of 1862.

By JOHN A. TAYLOR

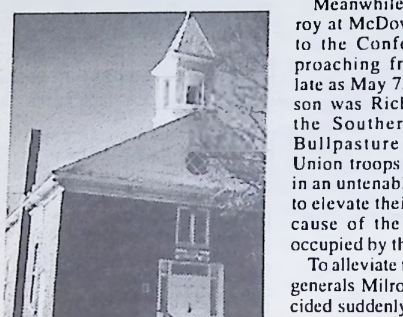
The Battle of Kernstown in March 1862 had ushered in the series of battles and military maneuvers over the spring that would eventually be called the Valley Campaign by Civil War historians.

At the end of April 1862, Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson's Confederate army was encamped in a strong defensive position near Harrisonburg on the western slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Jackson used the lull in military activities to plan the more aggressive phase of the Valley Campaign.

His ranks were swelled to about 8,000 from a steady flow of new recruits as well as men drafted under the Confederate Congress's new Conscription Act, the first such legislation in American history. In addition, Gen. Richard Ewell had moved his division across the Blue Ridge to support Jackson.

Jackson's concentration was undoubtedly fixed on Staunton — that city's position on the railroad was vital to connecting the Valley with Richmond. To the west of Staunton, Gen. Edward Johnson's small Confederate army had fallen back from Monterey to positions around McDowell in Highland County. He was reacting to pressure from the Union's Mountain Army under Gen. John C. Fremont and two of his brigade commanders, Generals Robert Milroy and Robert Schenck. Both Highland County towns were strategically placed along the Parkersburg Turnpike that connected Virginia to the Ohio River.

As he planned his next move, Jackson took into account the timidity of Union Gen. Nathaniel Banks who was stationed near Harrisonburg. A more aggressive general might have coordinated efforts with other Federal forces to crush the still comparatively small southern army. Jackson's biographer R.L. Dabney wrote, however, that the Confederate commander "foresaw the danger," but "calculated the timidity of his opponent."



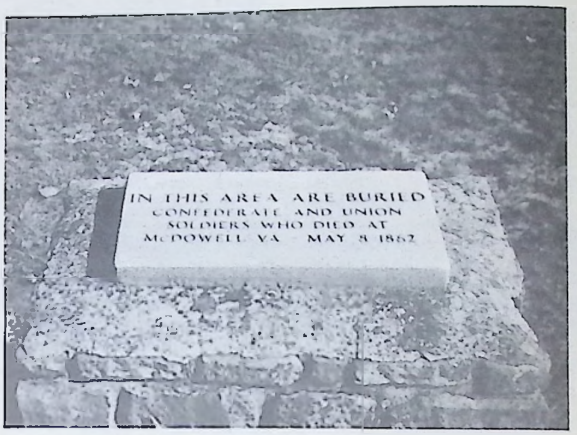
Stonewall assigned Gen. Ewell's 8,500-man army to watch Banks' force of 20,000, while he moved his own small army southward along the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge in a ruse designed to convince the Federals he was moving toward Richmond.

Jackson played his cards wisely. Once his eastward-moving army reached the Virginia Central Railroad near Charlottesville, he loaded the men aboard a westbound train for Staunton. The circuitous movement by Jackson was at least partially effective as Lincoln's War Department dropped its concern over Jackson in the Valley. Union Gen. Banks was ordered to withdraw northward from Harrisonburg and send half his forces to reinforce the Federals at Fredericksburg, thus effectively removing a threat to Jackson's flank and rear.

Meanwhile, Union Gen. Milroy at McDowell was oblivious to the Confederate army approaching from Staunton. As late as May 7, he believed Jackson was Richmond bound. As the Southerners formed on Bullpasture Mountain, the Union troops found themselves in an untenable position, unable to elevate their heavier guns because of the higher positions occupied by the Southern forces.

To alleviate the situation, Union generals Milroy and Schenck decided suddenly late in the day on May 8 to launch an uphill attack. Although the Confederates were in a stronger position, their commanders were confused by the unexpected attack, allowing the Union some limited success in the opening segment of the Battle of McDowell.

Gen. Johnson assumed field command of the Confederates until he was wounded and subsequently replaced by Gen. William Taliaferro, who "behaved most gallantly," according to Johnson. Jackson, meanwhile, was busy directing units to designated positions. Because he never reached the battle scene, some historians have assumed that the battle site near the crossroads village of McDowell was unplanned. However, because Jackson never shared his plans with anyone, the idea can not be proven.



Both Union and Confederate soldiers who fell during the Battle of McDowell are buried in a common grave.

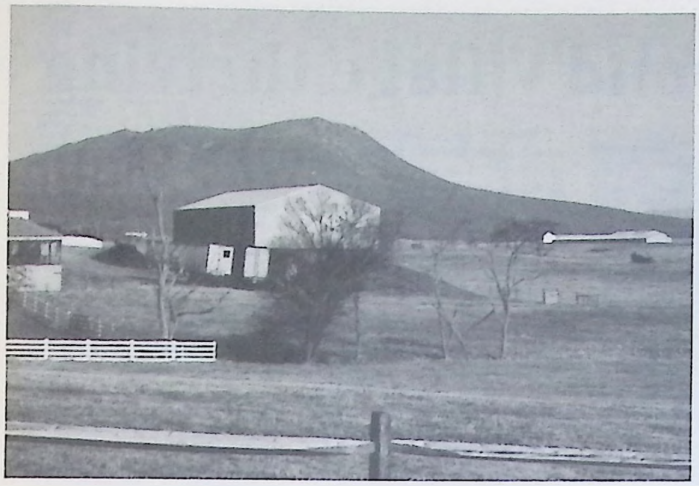
Photos by John A. Taylor

Adding credence to the idea, though, is the fact that several of his favorite units never reached the battle. In addition, a unit of Virginia Military Institute cadets was available but not put into action. The cadets would have to wait another two years, until May 1864 at New Market, to get into battle.

The Battle of McDowell raged on until darkness halted action and the Union forces fell back in good order. About 4,500 Confederate troops were engaged in the battle, and losses included 71 killed and 390 wounded. Union reports indicated that 2,500 of their troops were actively engaged with 28 killed and 228 wounded. The higher number of Rebel casualties is surprising considering their superior defensive position, but Union Gen. Milroy was able to control the tempo of the battle and did a commendable job with small numbers under difficult conditions.

Federal troops withdrew northward toward Franklin (now W.Va.) after the Battle of McDowell. Forest fires set by Milroy's troops kept Jackson's army at bay. Some criticism was directed toward Jackson because of his less-than-aggressive pursuit and failure to grab the opportunity to completely de-

See *McDOWELL*, page 5



Jackson skirted his troops around the end of Massanutten Mountain east of Harrisonburg in April 1862 shortly after Kernstown and took up a defensive position at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains while he planned the next phase of his Valley Campaign.

The Felix Hull House was used at different times during the Civil War by both Union (Brig. Gen. Robert H. Milroy) and Conderate (Maj. Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson) forces as a headquarters during and after the Battle of McDowell.

•McDowell

Continued from page 4

stroy Fremont. However, Jackson was satisfied that the purpose of the campaign — i.e. to temporarily neutralize Fremont's army — was a success. Moreover, Jackson still had Banks to contend with back in the Valley proper, and didn't feel it wise to lose valuable men who *would be needed later to fight the* enemy in the northern Valley.

Another factor of concern to Jackson was the temporary status of Ewell. The slightest change in circumstances around Richmond could result in an emergency recall of Ewell's troops east of the mountains. So, satisfied that Staunton's protection had been ensured by the Battle of McDowell and the withdrawal of Fremont's Union army, Jackson moved back into the Valley toward Harrisonburg. He successfully dispatched small groups of men to destroy bridges between Fremont and the Valley — the result of which would greatly assist him later.

An uncertainty regarding Confederate Gen. Ewell's presence (some strategy planners wanted him in the east to help protect Richmond, while others wanted to retain him in the Valley) gave Jackson the opportunity to pick and choose what orders he could follow. Some historian's have classified Jackson's choices among sometimes conflicting orders over the next few weeks as "disobedience without insubordination."

As he moved back into the Valley, Jackson telegraphed the Confederate Secretary of War asking for permission to attack Banks. He received a "go-ahead" provided he did not attack fortifications. This support caused Jackson to swing into high gear, ordering Ewell toward New Market and securing some vital roads. Further encouraging Jackson was a May 16, 1862 letter from Gen. Robert E. Lee stating that it was important that Banks not be allowed to move toward Fredericksburg or Richmond. "Whatever movement you make against Banks, do it speedily, and if successful, drive him back towards the Potomac."

By mid-May the Federal stage was set as follows: Fremont's army rested near Franklin about 30 miles west of Harrisonburg, Gen. Blenker's troops were sluggishly moving to reinforce Fremont, and Banks was dug in at Strasburg to defend several railroads, while sending part of his army eastward to join Union forces at Fredericksburg. It was a classic blunder, according to one historian who noted that the Federal armies were spread in an arc from Franklin to Fredericksburg.

Reacting to the Union positions, Jackson ordered Ewell's army to meet his own between New Market and Mt. Jackson on May 21. Their 21,000-man combined force was now the third largest in the Confederacy at the time. Rather than launch a direct attack on Banks at Strasburg, Jackson decided to move his men through the New Market gap in the Massanutten Mountain into the Luray (Page) Valley and launch an assault on Front Royal just 12 miles east of Banks.

Completely hidden by the 50-mile long Massanutten, Jackson was able to launch a successful surprise attack on the small Union garrison at Front Royal on May 23. Certain in his belief that Jackson would attack his forces at Strasburg, Banks was caught off guard. Even after hearing of the skirmish at Front Royal, Banks refused to believe that Jackson was there, choosing instead to believe that Jackson would never imperil his army by placing it between substantial Union forces to the east and west.

Much of the Southern success at the Battle of Front Royal was due to the gallant cavalry leader, Turner Ashby, whose movements helped disguise the whereabouts of the larger army. So crafty were the Confederates that Jackson reached Front Royal, routed and captured the Union force there before Banks had even heard a word about it. Even when a messenger in hot haste brought Banks the news, he refused to believe it.

And so the next phase of the Valley Campaign ended with a strong Jackson now standing between Banks' army of less than 10,000 and the doors of Washington, D.C. by way of Winchester and Harpers Ferry. —

***Next month:** The Battle of Winchester, Jackson's March to the Potomac, and his close call at Strasburg as he moves back toward Harrisonburg.*

The hills to the east of McDowell, where the battle was fought May 8, 1862, can be seen from U.S. 250 which passes through the town.

Middlebrook native:

Turn of the century found village thriving

By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK — On the surface, there are many similarities between the Middlebrook of his youth in the 1920s and the village today, explained Bill Hamilton. But, when he looks a little deeper, he realizes that his memories of pitching horseshoes in the village, riding to school in a horse-drawn surrey, and tuning in to the World Series on a radio at the general store, are all times that have been pushed aside by modern cars, highways and shopping malls.

"Middlebrook seems like the same place," explained the man who was born and raised about a mile outside the village but eventually went to work and live in Florida. But, he added, there were more people around then and the village was more than the row of buildings on main street. "They didn't have television and it was harder to get into Staunton. There was just more community spirit," he explained while describing a thriving business community that had seven stores, a blacksmith shop, a garage, a funeral home, and a doctor. A few years later, right after World War II, the village even had a government-run cannery that operated in the summer so local residents could preserve their produce.

Bill was born in 1919. His father and uncle farmed the land just west of Middlebrook under the business name Hamilton Brothers. "They did everything under that name; they even had one bank account," he recalled. "Everyone worked on the farm and all the work was done by horses. Normally we had 100 acres of wheat and that was our cash crop. We also raised livestock. We sold our wheat to Swoope Mill or the mill in Greenville or the White Star Mill (in Staunton). Both farms had barns with silos and we would fill them with corn ensilage."

For the Hamilton families, Middlebrook was the center of their community, and the center of Middlebrook — or at least the heart of it — was the school complex, two brick schools, a grammar school and the brand-new high school. In 1925 Bill, the youngest of three boys, started off to school in the village. "We drove a surrey with fringe on top. The surrey had one horse and it was me and my two older brothers and the oldest one did the driving. We would also pick up a cousin each morning," he said of his school transportation. "I believe we were the only ones who came in a surrey, which had two seats, but many came in buggies."

Upon their arrival in the village, the Hamilton boys parked their surrey and unhitched the horse. "We rented a stable in the village and would leave the horse in there. Most houses in Middlebrook had stables behind them in the alley. We carried corn and at lunch time we would feed the horse. In the afternoon we got her, hitched her up and off we'd go."

The school complex was the pride of the community. The high school had just been built, Bill explained, and Dr. Hyde was the community member who had gone out and solicited funds for it. "It was built by the community, not by the county. It had a nice gym. Middlebrook was one of the first schools in the county to have an inside basketball court. Most of the others had an outside dirt court," he said.

BILL HAMILTON

School events were community events in Middlebrook. "There was a Middlebrook Community League, which was like the PTA, and it met once a month. A lot of the classes would put on a skit for that," he remembered. The community also had an informal band made up of five or six of the community's musicians. "They would play at the community league meetings. They were a pretty good little band. They just did it for fun, but they made pretty good music!"

Usually the graduating class of the high school put on a senior class play and made money in order to leave a class gift to the school. There were also weekly school assemblies where the grade schoolers came over to the high school to listen to Bible readings, prayers, and songs.

In the 1930-31 school year, the community got together and moved an old frame school building from the Glebe Road area over to the school property. It became the agricultural building and the school hired its first ag teacher. Today the building still serves the community and has been converted into a doctor's office.

Once an agricultural program was in place, the idea for a fair was launched. "The agricultural class started the Middlebrook Fair when I was in high school. The fair was one day. There was a big meal served and there was a livestock show," Bill remembered.

Even though the new building with its inside basketball court solved the problem of space for the school's cagers, the school baseball teams had never had a real place to practice or play ball until the community parents got together and solved the problem. Bill remembered that the teams practiced in the field and on the hills next to the school, but for games they would ask around to various farmers and have to go about a mile outside the village to play games in a farmer's field. That all changed while Bill was in high school.

"I remember when they bought the field (the current baseball and softball diamond in Middlebrook). The creek ran right through the middle of it, so the parents of the school tiled it (ran the creek underground through drainage tiles). I played on that diamond and helped get it ready," he said.

Once such top-notch facilities were available right in the village, you couldn't keep the people away from the high school sports games. "The community really supported their basketball teams. We had good boys' and girls' teams and the basketball gym was packed all the time. The baseball games were in the afternoon and being a farming community there were not as many at the games, but after we got the baseball diamond, people right around Middlebrook came to watch."

The importance of sports to the community can't be overemphasized and, after more than 60 years, Bill still recalls the excitement of the championship 1936-37 school year. "There were right around 100 students in the high school and only 13 boys. But we won the county championship in basketball and baseball. Now that really was an accomplishment!" he said, adding that he was the center on the hardwood, and played first base on the diamond.

"I will never forget the baseball championship," he said explaining that the best three-out-of-five showdown with Fishersville was played on neutral ground at AMA. The final game went extra innings and the score remained knotted for 14 innings before Middlebrook could push across a run. "I remember that Fuzzy Hanger was our pitcher and he was a good one. His brother Bob was the catcher. The relief pitcher was Allen Arehart and he played shortstop. At the end of the 11th inning, Fuzzy was so tired that he and the shortstop switched. In the top of the 14th inning we broke the tie by one run. In the bottom of the 14th, there were two outs and a man on base. Allen threw the pitch and a slow ball was hit to Fuzzy at short. He threw the ball to me and I caught it and held

See *BALL GAME*, page 9

I Nearly Got in Hot Water in Middlebrook, Va.

Postcard courtesy Rosen family

The modern Middlebrook school complex was the center of the community. The building at far left originally housed all grade levels. The center building was constructed later for high school grades. The frame building far right was the agriculture classroom. Photo courtesy Rosen family

Former Staunton educator recalls changes of 20th century

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON — By all accounts, the 20th century has been one of landmark changes. Eighty-seven-year-old Arthur R. Ware, Jr. has been both a spectator and a participant in many of those changes right here in Staunton and Augusta County.

Ware, who was recently awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Augusta County Historical Society, was born in a home on the corner of Augusta and Prospect Streets in 1912. Staunton, he says, was a good place to grow up, but he cautioned that it was also a segregated city and a place full of restrictions for African Americans.

"I was born into it, so I didn't know any differently, but it would make me mad now," he says. "You couldn't go to certain restaurants, you had to sit at the back of the streetcar, schools were segregated and black women couldn't try on hats in stores. They could buy them, but they couldn't try them on!"

Nonetheless, he has fond memories of growing up as the only child of Arthur and Rheba Anderson Ware. Both his parents were college educated. His mother ran a beauty shop and his father was a music teacher. The streetcar ran right by their house just a few blocks from a vibrant downtown.

Ware, whose father was the organist and choir director at Augusta Street United Methodist Church, inherited none of his father's musical talent. "My father tried everything to get me to learn, but I didn't take to it," he says, adding that although he sang in the junior choir at church, he never even progressed to the senior level. He does, however, continue to be a life-long church member.

The young Arthur Ware was not the athletic type either. "We had a baseball team, that's how I got this tooth broken off," he said pointing to a chipped tooth. "I wasn't good. Someone threw the ball at me and it bounced on the ground and hit me in the mouth!"

Baseball was just one of the ways youngsters "made their own fun" in the early days of the 20th century. "You played at people's houses, you went to parties, went visiting, or took walks on Sundays. Once in a while a minstrel show or a stage play would come to town," he said.

Sundays were big visiting days. He remembers his mother cooking enormous meals on Saturdays and then warming them up on Sundays. "Oh, there was chicken, and ham and steaks," he said.

Although young Arthur didn't excel on the playing field or exhibit any leanings toward music, he soon found his niche in school. "I read a lot. I read everything I could get my hands on," he remembers.

He attended Booker T. Washington when it was located in Sunnyside and recalls some very good teachers in the 11 grades that constituted an elementary and high school education. Rachel Gaines taught him first and second grade, Bessie Monroe was third and fourth, Lucy Sims was 5th and 6th and T.C. Edmunds was 7th. Among his high school teachers were George White, Annabelle Clark and Teresa Evans.

Ware was a star student in the classroom. He was class valedictorian at Booker T. Washington High School. When he went off to Virginia State College in Petersburg he finished second in his class, salutatorian. Once he got to college, the bookworm was faced with the decision of declaring a major.

"I wasn't too interested in math in high school, but when I went to college they asked me what I wanted to major in. I said, 'I didn't know,' so they gave me one semester to try everything. At the end of that semester my best grade was in math and my next best was in history," he said in explaining how he earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics.

Despite concentrating in math, he acted on the advice of an aunt

See WARE, page 14

Katharine Brown presents the Augusta County Historical Society's Distinguished Service Award to Arthur R. Ware Jr. (photo at left above) and the Outstanding Educator Award to Earl "Buddy" Bosserman Jr. (photo at right above.) The awards were presented at the society's annual banquet held March 1.

AC staff photos

Ware, Bosserman receive ACHS honors

AC staff report

FISHERSVILLE — Arthur R. Ware Jr. of Staunton was presented the Distinguished Service Award by the Augusta County Historical Society at its fourth annual banquet held March 1. The society's Outstanding History Educator Award was presented to Earl "Buddy" Bosserman Jr. of Staunton.

Recognizing Ware for his "activities as an historian," ACHS president Katharine Brown presented Ware with a plaque and two books for his achievement.

"Long before the study of African-American history was fashionable, Mr. Ware made its study a part of his life," Dr. Brown said in making the presentation. "He has been saving stories that otherwise would have been lost."

Ware was among the first individuals to research Augusta County's African-American history. He has compiled histories and researched hundreds of African-American businesses in the area and has researched the history of Augusta Street United Methodist Church of which he is a member.

Ware is a native of Staunton and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School. He earned a bachelor of science degree in mathematics from Virginia State College and a master's degree in education administration from Columbia University Teachers College. For 45 years he worked in numerous levels as an educator including teacher, principal and administrator in public schools. He began his education career as a math teacher in Staunton in 1933. He served in the U.S. Army from 1942-1945 as a teacher and supervisor of basic education. Ware also served as a parole officer in New York City for a time. He returned to Staunton and his alma mater in 1951, this time as its principal.

Ware's career as a Staunton educator culminated with service as director of adult education. He administrated federal programs for Staunton City Schools from 1966-1978. For his service to the city school system, Westside Elementary School was renamed the Arthur R. Ware Jr. Elementary School in 1979 in his honor.

See AWARDS, page 14

Mr. & Mrs. Donald Plambeck of Staunton show off the quilt they won through the Augusta County Historical Society benefit.

Photo courtesy Augusta County Historical Society

Happy New Year!! Time to break out the champagne

By NANCY SORRELLS

Happy New Year to all *Augusta Country* readers! What's that you say? You are wondering, maybe, if I settled down for my long winter's nap on Christmas Eve, and, Rip-Van-Winkle-like I have just awakened three months later? Au contraire. Or, perhaps you think that I wrote this article in December and the absent-minded AC editor forgot about the story until she accidentally unearthed it in an unopened file. Wrong again.

No, I am wishing you Happy New Year because March 25, Lady Day, marks the new year, or at least it did until a couple of centuries ago. Okay, this explanation is going to be a little complicated and convoluted so hold onto to your hourglasses and get set for a trip into the past.

Think about what life was like long ago. If you lived on the land, raised crops for food, and depended on the earth for your well-being, when would you mark the new year? Why the beginning of a new growing season of course. Spring marks the beginning of new life, rebirth, hope for the future, so the ancients celebrated new year with the arrival of spring. In years past, people were more attuned to the changing of the seasons marked by the revolutions of the earth around the sun, tilt of the earth and, consequently, increasing and decreasing hours of daylight.

Four points in the year are significant in this celestial dance between the earth and the sun. Twice each year, once in the spring (around March 21) and once in the fall (around Sept. 21) there are exactly 12 hours of daylight and 12 of darkness. These dates are called equinoxes from the word equal. Solstices also occur twice a year — the winter solstice (Dec. 21) marks the shortest amount of daylight in the year and the summer solstice (June 21) is the longest.

The spring equinox, that point when the days begin to be longer than the nights, marks the rebirth of the earth and makes a very natural new year. For eons, then, ancient man celebrated these four points in the year with special feasts and ceremonies. Such rituals were already deeply ingrained in many cultures when Christianity entered the scene nearly 2,000 years ago. Rather than seeking to stamp out existing holidays, early Christian leaders began to merge special Christian days with traditional celebrations — conversion through incorporation so to speak.

Christmas was one of the first holidays to have a special calendar date pinned to it. Nothing in the Bible points to Dec. 25 as being the birth date of Christ. If anything, the circumstantial evidence makes it fairly certain that Jesus was not born anytime near December. But, Dec. 25 happened to conveniently fall near a winter solstice celebration, so, voila, Christmas was penciled in for late December.

If Christmas fell around the solstice, then the Annunciation had to be nine months earlier. The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38) is the date that the angel Gabriel visited the Virgin Mary and gave her the surprise news that she was with child. Although the conception was immaculate, it is assumed that the pregnancy was normal, pushing the Annunciation back to the spring equinox. How appropriate for Mary to have conceived at the new year when rebirth was the order of the day. Look at all the convenient symbolism here: the rebirth of the world and the rebirth of mankind through the birth of Christ. If you think that the early Christian leaders picked these special dates by accident, then think again!

So March 25 became known as the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virginia Mary, or B.V.M., or simply Lady Day. The first official references to Lady Day can be found in the 600s. During Lent, Lady Day and the Lord's Day were the only days that could be celebrated in what was otherwise a period of sacrifice and prayer. By the Middle Ages, Lady Day not only marked the beginning of the agricultural new year and the conception of Christ, but was also the legal new year in England. It was a time to pay rent, settle up legal matters, etc. As a consequence, April 1 became known unofficially as moving day because if a lease was up at the end of the year (March 24) then the first of April was an obvious time for a move.

Because America was an English colony, March 25 marked the beginning of the new year here as well. During most of America's colonial period, documents written in the first three months of a calendar year expressed dates with a slash mark like so: Feb. 12, 1692/93. Today we would call the date Feb. 12, 1693, but the colonists wrote the two years with a slash because the calendar said the year was 1693, but the legal year was still 1692.

Most people know what a lame duck is — someone who was not re-elected but who must continue to serve until the inauguration of the new office holder. Early in our history, the changing of the guard in political circles came in March. Talk about lame ducks! Presidents and congressmen faced the voters in November and remained in office until the following March. Such was the case with our first presidents and congressmen. This situation was not changed until the 20th Amendment, ratified in 1933. The amendment, nicknamed the Lame Duck Amendment, moved the Presidential inauguration from March 4 to Jan. 20, and the Congressional seatings from March to Jan. 3.

O.K., so now for the million dollar question — when did we start celebrating new year on Jan. 1? I'm glad you asked because this is really interesting and really confusing.

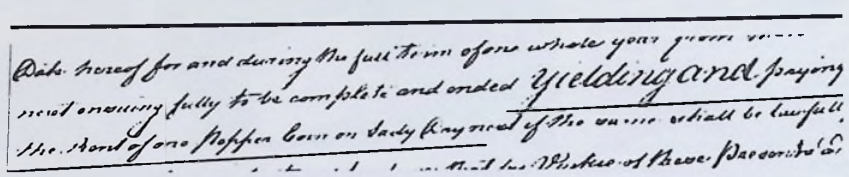
Ever since the year 46 B.C., Europe counted annual time with the Julian calendar, adopted under the rule of Julius Caesar. Superficially it resembled our calendar with all the right months and days in place. And those Romans did a pretty good job of figuring out how long a year was. The toga-clad gents figured a year had 365 1/4 days. Pretty darn good for guys without calculators. But Caesar and his advisors were off by 11 minutes and 14 seconds. That may not sound like much but by 1582 the calendar on paper and the calendar in the sky were no longer in sync. The spring equinox, for instance, fell on March 11.

In order to get everything back in shape and insure that the astrological calendar matched the printed calendar, Pope Gregory XIII lopped 10 days off the calendar. The Gregorian calendar, as it is called, was adopted immediately in most Catholic countries. England and her colonies, being Protestant, rebelled against interference from Rome. For 170 years, until 1752, Britain dragged her feet by which time even the Brits realized the situation was out of control.

On September 2, 1752, Britain adopted the Gregorian calendar. The English had held out so long that 11 days now needed to be eliminated. So, Englishmen went to sleep on Sept. 2 and woke up on Sept. 13. Many people felt cheated out of 11 days. Some began celebrating holidays twice, 11 days apart, like Old Christmas and New Christmas, Old May Day and New May Day.

New Year's day was different. The law that chopped 11 days out of the calendar also moved New Year's from March 25 to Jan. 1. Some traditionalists, still celebrated Old New Year on March 25 and New New Year on Jan. 1. To sort out the differences, people would write O.S. (Old Style) and N.S. (New Style) beside dates, particularly on tombstones. Thomas Jefferson's tombstone, for instance, is engraved "Born April 2, 1743 O.S."

Probably the last to change were the farmers, who knew when the new year started despite what the calendar said. Even 50 or more years after Jan. 1 became the legal new year, some almanacs had March 25 as the new year. Long after the rest of the world had forgotten about Lady Day, farmers everywhere continued to record in their March ledgers and diaries about the coming of the new year. So on Lady Day this month, go out and wish someone a Happy New Year and see how many strange looks you get. —



An excerpt from an Augusta County deed book shows a reference to Lady Day (underlined portion above). The deed reads "...yielding and paying the amount of one peppercorn on Lady Day..." "One peppercorn" was used as a symbolic means of deeding property to an individual without any money changing hands with the payment to be due on "Lady Day," or the beginning of the new year.

Groups preserve art of ballroom dancing

By STACEY BAKER

STAUNTON -- The sign over the door, "S.M.A. Mess Hall" was not very suggestive of a fancy Victorian Ball. Upon descending the few steps into the large room, that first impression soon vanished. Banners hung from the ceiling, four musicians were playing music from a festive stage at one end, and the center was full of ladies and gentlemen in formal attire, whirling and stepping through traditional ballroom dances from the last century.

James Madison University students take their positions on the dance floor during a ball held recently at Mary Baldwin College.

Photos by Stacey Baker

This was the Imperial Garden Ball, sponsored by "The Ladies of the Garden Terrace," members of the Mary Baldwin College Performing Dance Group. They were assisted by Dr. Earlynn Miller, and the James Madison University Folk Dance Ensemble. The event was open to the public, and was very well attended.

Ballroom dancing, long popular in Europe and Colonial America, has survived to the eve of the 21st century. From the looks on the faces of the folks attending this event, ballroom dancing will continue in its popularity well into the next century.

The ladies were attired in very elegant long dresses popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, and also the 20th, as this form of dance remains popular in the computer age. Some of the dresses were so long that ladies had decorative cords around their wrists, the other end attached to the long trail of the dress. By raising the wrist, the dress was raised as they walked. Even with this innovation, one had to be constantly watching one's step, so as not to tread on someone's silk dress.

Most of the gentlemen wore tails. Tails are similar to tuxedos, only they have, well, tails. The jackets have a long split back, almost to the knees, thus the name. Everyone, ladies and gentlemen, seemed to be wearing white gloves.

The dances were just as interesting as the dancers — Portland Fancy, Fisher's Hornpipe, Lancer's Quadrille, Hull's Victory, and Graziella Mazurka were just a few. If none of these sound familiar, how about a good ole' square dance? A quadrille is a forerunner of the square dance, using four groups of people, and dancing several figures. Needless to say, these dances can be fairly complicated. The students were very well rehearsed, but many folks were not, so a "walk through" preceded some of the more challenging dances. A person would tell the participants how to line up, then walk them through the steps of the dance. After a dry run or two, the Caledonian Quartet would strike up the music, smiles would displace confused expressions, the room would then fill with the sound of the piano, violin, bass, horns, swiftly moving feet and swishing dresses.

Many traditions have been handed down in ballroom dancing, as well as a considerable amount of etiquette. Irene Sarnelle, an associate professor of health and physical education at MBC and director of the Imperial Garden Ball, compiled quite a lot of information on the social etiquette.

Upon entering the ballroom, everyone was given a small booklet with an even smaller pencil attached. This contained vital information for the evening, such as a list of the dances, with a blank space beside each one. It was hoped that a lady would be able to write the name of a gentleman beside each dance, so she could refer to it as needed, and not lose track of who was her next partner. If she was not fortunate enough to fill up her book in advance, she would at least be able to keep up with what dance was next, and hope for some gentleman to request her presence on the dance floor. The gentlemen were permitted the run of the ballroom, but were always very polite when asking a lady to accompany them for a dance.

Lucille Salatin of Swoope consults her dance card to see if she has spot free for potential partner Gary Diver.

The ladies had just a few more restrictions placed upon them. Ladies never attended a dance alone. They came with a gentleman or a chaperone. Once there, they never left their seat without an escort, even to the restroom — or more politely — the dressing room. The escort would wait outside the door for the lady to return.

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◦Ball game

Continued from page 6

it up for the umpire and said 'I've got it.' And that ended the game. I'll never forget it!"

For their winning efforts the parents of the community took the boys out to eat at a restaurant in Staunton.

The schools, though, were just a part of the thriving community that was once Middlebrook. "There was a blacksmith shop and seven stores. You could get groceries, dry goods, everything you needed. There were chairs in all the stores and everybody sat on the porch in the summer and in the winter they were inside around a stove. If you got hungry, you got a bar of candy or a nickel or dime's worth of cheese and crackers," Bill remembered.

One character who was seen at the stores quite a bit was Charlie Bosserman. He would help out part-time in the stores and pitch horseshoes when things got slow. "He loved horseshoes and had his own set. He was good. He taught us how to pitch horseshoes over between the creek and Rosen's store (now the Middlebrook General Store).

"The stores were quite a gathering place. Before we had a radio, when the World Series came on, we would go up to the garage or the store and listen to the World Series on the radio. I remember in 1926, Rosen's garage was the first place in Middlebrook where you could drive in for gasoline. I think it was Sinclair gas and they had electric pumps at a nice new garage. It was really nice," he said.

In fact, the Rosen family had a sort of monopoly on businesses in the village. H.T. Rosen ran a funeral parlor. His son Guy was a mortician and helped out in the funeral business, but he also ran a general store. H.T.'s other son, Clark, ran a garage. Because he was handy with mechanics, he also took care of the hearse and drove it. "Some people joked that the Rosens would get your business one way or another," said Bill with a smile, adding that all of the Rosens were decent, kind people.

The Lutheran church in the middle of the village (now the Russian Orthodox Church) was also a gathering place every Sunday night. All of the youth from Mt. Tabor, St. John's and the Middlebrook church would meet there.

When it came time to improve things in the community, everybody pitched in. That's how, for instance, the 3 1/2-mile road from Middlebrook past the Hamiltons' farms got paved. "Everybody helped pave that road, even if they weren't property owners. The county supplied the gravel and rock crusher and tar and roller. The rock crusher was near Middlebrook. The farmers furnished the trucks and shoveled the gravel on and off the trucks. It was a hard job. I wasn't big enough to be of any help, but my father used his '25 Model T truck."

Bill added that the community members were still just learning to use their new mechanical vehicles and there was a lot more to know about running a car than turning a key. "Our first antifreeze was alcohol, but it boiled out pretty quick," he said. "So whenever we went out, we would stop down by the creek with a bucket and fill up the car with water. When we got home, we would drain it again."

Another example of community spirit came in the March 1932 blizzard when the snow drifted over tops of the telephone poles. "We didn't have electricity yet, but we had bought a battery radio in 1929. It took a big wet cell battery and two B batteries. After the blizzard we were able to walk to Middlebrook and everybody wanted to talk to us and hear about the news from outside. You see the power was out and all the radios in Middlebrook were electric!"

The highway department did not have a lot of heavy equipment to move snow in those days, so all the high school boys in the Middlebrook area got jobs shoveling snow. "When they came back to school you would have thought they had been to the beach. Their faces were all sunburned and blistered," Bill remembered.

When Bill talks about things like the big blizzard, playing ball in a farmer's field, and going to school in a fringe-topped surrey, he realizes that maybe a lot of things have changed in Middlebrook, just like they have everywhere. But he sure likes reflecting on those times when the village was the center of a thriving community of people. Those were the days when fellows like Fuzzy and Bob and Bill could out battle the Fishersville boys on the dirt ballfield and become the toast of the village, when a few community men could get together and make fine music for the rest of the neighborhood, when the mothers would whip up a big meal at the local fair, and when every farmer around would lend his shovel and muscles to get a road paved. Those were the days of yesteryear. —

Observations on a late winter storm

Down on the farm

by Betty Jo Hamilton

Down on the farm we're thinking about the winter storm that caught us looking.

There we were in mid-March — you can't get any more middle-er than March 15 — a mere five days — count 'em one, two, three, four, five days — away from spring, and we were looking hard past those five days. At long last spring was indeed just around the corner and all of the sudden a neat little winter storm snuck up behind us and yelled, "HA! Made ya' look!"

Even weather sages among us did a double-take when they looked out the window at the eight to 12 inches of snow that plunked itself down in the early hours of that pre-St. Patrick's Day Monday.

The storm had fizzled around on Sunday, taunting the valley with an unzealous mixture of snow, sleet and rain. By day's end it was suspected that the storm had about done itself in, but it was not to be for this late winter prankster.

The storm teetered between sleet and freezing rain in Sunday's evening hours. Around midnight anyone who stuck a head outside might have noticed that, although the precipitation had ceased, there was something distinctly different about the air and the sound of the wind.

Sometime after 1 a.m. and before 3 a.m. the storm began to take itself seriously. Realizing it was then or perhaps never, moisture began to fall in the form of heavy snowflakes and proceeded to accumulate at an alarming rate — more than an inch an hour. The timed event abated not long before 9 a.m. Within a couple hours' time the clouds broke open and lifted along the Allegheny Mountains as the storm pushed its way east leaving the valley tucked neatly beneath a blanket of heavy over-ripe snow.

But by winter storm standards, this one turned out to be not such a bad one. Sure, if you turned on the television to get the STORM SQUAD perspective on the situation, you might have thought it was snowing bullets. Those TV folks have a tendency to overdramatize things a bit.

And when they're not overdramatizing things, they spend much of their time underestimating their viewers' intelligence. I tuned in early enough to hear one STORM SQUAD reporter remind viewers who would be driving to work through the falling snow, "Be sure to use your windshield wipers." Gee, is that what they're for??? I just use them to clean off my windshield with the washer fluid. I thought they were just handy motorized squeegees. I never thought about turning them on to wipe the snow off my windshield. I guess they'd come in handy when it rains too. Now I know.

And then there was that other tidbit of information they provided during the ice storms in December. "Don't go near any downed power lines," a warning which they repeated again and again and again and again. Which generation of people missed this information in the course of their lives? Isn't that something you get by the fourth or fifth grade? Wasn't it in 4-H or Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts when we took that First Aid course that we learned about staying away from downed power lines?

And if you had still missed out on this life-saving information by the time you were in 10th grade, didn't a guidance counselor or trusted teacher take you aside and say, "You do know to stay away from downed power lines, don't you?" At which time a light bulb went off in your head suddenly filling the whole of your existence with the profound realization that *downed power lines* can bring a quick end to an otherwise promising life. But just in case we missed all of these opportunities to understand the danger associated with downed power lines, there were the STORM SQUAD reporters clueing us in to, "Stay away from downed power lines."

And during the "post-game wrap-up," so to speak, one STORM SQUAD newscaster asserted that circumstances during the pre-St. Paddy's Day storm "approached near whiteout conditions." PUH-LEEZE!!!!!!! Whiteout conditions in that storm?? Come on. You want whiteout conditions? Surely memories are not so short as to have forgotten the March 1993 snowstorm — excuse me, but THAT was the Blizzard of the Century, the standard by which all snowstorms shall be measured for the rest of my lifetime anyway — when you couldn't see three feet past your face for almost 24 hours. Now that's whiteout conditions. Those STORM SQUAD folks take a lot of liberties with their weather interpretations.

I said the late winter storm caught us looking. Well, I don't think it caught everybody looking. Most folks around this area know you can't count winter out until sometime in very late April. But if you're one of those gull-a-BULL folks who this year put all your faith in the groundhog's prediction of an early spring, then you were in for a shock with the late winter storm.

You remember the groundhog didn't see it's shadow on Groundhog Day which supposedly means spring is just around the corner. Folks, I'm hear to tell you (and if you missed the information about downed power lines somewhere along the way, you might still believe in groundhogs as credible weather forecasters) groundhogs don't know beans about the weather.

Groundhog Day is the mid-point of winter and that's all. If you're a beast for whom a night is four months long, you'd probably wake up and stretch your legs at the midway point too. How many of us sleep straight through the night without waking up, maybe going to the bathroom or getting a glass of water, then look out the window and observe, "hmmm, still dark," turn around and go back to bed?

The folks up in Punxsatawney, Pa., have done a remarkable job of glamorizing and romanticizing the groundhog's existence — and it's not a simple task to elevate a buck-toothed, overfed varmint to a level which draws paparazzi from around the globe. But then, I think these are probably the same folks who are perpetuating the Y2K crisis myth.

Even if you believe the groundhog can give an accurate prediction of spring's proximity, why wait until the first of February to find out how much of winter is left? If you want an accurate forecast of winter weather to come, you should be looking for signs in the fall. There is perhaps no better prognosticator of winter than the woolly worm. Now there's an invertebrate you can trust.

You know what woolly worms are — they're those cute little fluffy worms that ripple around amid the fall foliage and if you touch one it curls up in a tight knot playing opossum. Some folks call them woolly bears. Anybody who saw a woolly worm last fall noted that they were black on both ends and red in the middle which means — DUH!! harsh weather at the beginning of winter, mild weather in the middle and harsh weather again at the end of winter. Sound like any weather we've been having lately?

And did you ever notice how a winter storm changes people's outlook on life in general? Snowstorms which confine us to our dwellings for any length of time seem to bring out a kind of critical, if not brutal, honesty we might otherwise never share with our significant others. Odds are you were stuck inside your house on March 15 long enough to hear someone say something like: "When's the last time you got a haircut? Look how shaggy you're getting in back," OR "Have you put on a few pounds this winter? Looks like your love handles have sprouted love handles," OR "Have you noticed recently how gray you're getting?" But then, once the snow begins to melt and we get back into our normal routines, anything that was said or done during the snowstorm seems never really to have happened and we no longer notice our significant others' shaggy coifs, spreading middles, or graying temples.

A good remedy for many of the ills associated with winter storms — a late winter storm being no exception — is to No. 1 — turn off the television and No. 2 — get out of the house. If you happen to live down on a farm, you have no choice in the matter. Farm work is never canceled due to weather. It's sometimes delayed a little, but it's never canceled.

So after having my intelligence insulted by the television STORM SQUAD reporters and before insulting any of my significant others with observations about their personal appearances, I launched out into the great white way to see how many pieces needed picking up around the farm following the eight hours of late winter snowfall. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad, I convinced myself. Then just as sharply I answered back, "Who do you think you're kidding?" But it turned out not to be so bad -- inconvenient, but not so bad.

To the storm's credit, it wasn't very cold which meant water began dripping from eaves and downspouts almost as soon as the snow stopped falling. Underneath the snow was a gloppy, sloppy muck, created by rain from the day before, which had not frozen overnight. This made vehicular travel

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A calf born the day before the March 15 snow storm sought shelter beneath the overhang of an old feeder pushed into a pile of "trash" near the barn lot. Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton

•Storm

Continued from page 10

difficult, even with tractors. This was not particularly conducive to getting work done, but we took it as a sign perhaps the snow wouldn't be around too long.

It's calving season down on the farm, so our immediate concern was for which cows might have had calves during the night, where they might be, and how they might have managed during the storm.

I didn't need to look any further than some 20 yards from the barn gate to see a cow off to herself amid piles of things which end up piled around barn lots. My mother calls these piles of things "all that trash." My father saves "all that trash" because he says, "it might come in handy some day." Trash though it may be, it came in particularly handy for that cow who decided to have her calf during the early morning hours of March 15.

Cows are not as feckless as they might appear to the un-cow-informed. In most circumstances, nature has a way of holding out a guiding hand to ensure that animals can survive, even during bad weather. The cow had found her way in among "all that trash" seeking a wind break during the storm. She had her calf in what might best be described as a poor man's three-sided lean-to made of three huge rolls of old fence wire. The calf was fine although a bit dazed after its snowstorm birth. The cow stood vigil providing the closest thing to a fourth side and a roof for the enclosure where she'd given birth to her calf.

Just around the corner of another pile of trash, a cow which had delivered a calf the day before had maneuvered her baby up beneath an old feeder. This calf had been born out in the open during the previous day's snow and sleet but had managed the night and early morning part of the storm in the shelter of the old feeder. And, again, the cow stood close at hand, her body providing a wind break and some shelter for her calf.

It's also lambing season down on the farm. But, due to having synchronized the ewes' heat cycles in the fall, lambing was on hold during the pre-St. Paddy's Day storm. Thank heavens for small miracles. That's not to say we didn't have lambs coming the previous week when we had that couple-incher snow. But by the time of the late winter storm, those 30 or so newborns were fairly solid and not too concerned about the snow.

Down in the village, Middlebrook Public Works crews were on the job early. The main thoroughfares were open to all four borders and most of the driveways were clear by 11 a.m. No flies on those folks. They learned long ago not to wait for highway department plows to come through. The Post Office, hardware store and garage were open promptly on time and it was business as usual the rest of the day. They're a hardy bunch down there in Middlebrook.

We found conditions a bit different at the farms east of Middlebrook. Here it seemed there had been more ice and less snow during the night than at home. You could sense a distinctive firmness and crunch beneath foot and it seemed the snow didn't come up quite as high on my boots. Here, too, were cows just ready to have calves. And, again, one had admirably found her way into an open-ended shed to deliver her calf safely and protected from the storm.

So, all in all, it wasn't such a bad winter storm. It could only be so bleak with temperatures predicted to be in the 60s within just a few days. We've had some nasty storms in March. The Blizzard of the Century is certainly memorable among the many which have left their mark on March. This year's pre-St. Paddy's Day winter storm caught us looking toward spring. But, down on the farm at least, we know spring will come when it gets here. And not a moment sooner. —

This cow made use of some old rolled up fence wire for shelter when she took a notion to deliver her calf during the pre-St. Paddy's Day snowstorm. The wire provided enough of a windbreak to give the calf a chance to make the right start after it was born in the pre-dawn hours of March 15.

Beef Expo moves to Virginia Horse Center

LEXINGTON — The more things change the more they stay the same. That could be the theme for the 1999 Virginia Beef Expo. Although the timing and focus of the '99 Expo will remain unchanged, the location will be brand new.

The Expo will take place Friday and Saturday, April 23-24. As usual, the main attraction is cattle sales. The big change is the Expo's move to a new location at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington.

"Moving to the Horse Center means the Beef Expo will be an all-weather event, with everything under roof," says Jim Johnson, expo manager. "It also means that the junior Beef Roundup will once again be held in conjunction with the Beef Expo."

This year's cattle sales will feature nine breeds with more than 600 head expected.

Limousin, angus, simmental, red angus, tarentaise and polled hereford sales will take place on Friday, while the charolais, Texasl Longhorn, shorthorn and commercial heifer sales will be conducted on Saturday. On both days, private treaty pen bulls will be available for viewing and purchasing and many other cattle will be on display.

All of the traditional events will return to the '99 Expo including the Junior Beef Roundup. Some new events are joining the line-up. Look for the addition of the stock dog contest and sale. Stock dogs will be worked, judged and ranked on Friday and then sold at auction on Saturday. The trade show will be back with more than 100 exhibitors. On Friday night the Barn Party, featuring a gourmet steak dinner and live music, returns for an encore.

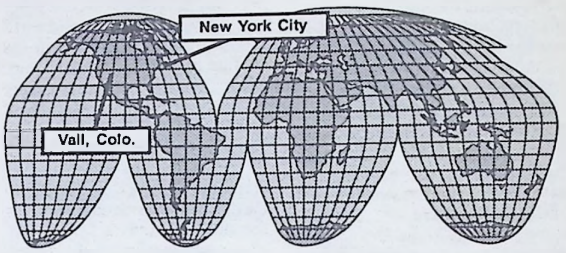
Youth breed shows will begin at 10 a.m. Saturday in Moore Arena. The Youth All Breeds Steer Show will begin at 5 p.m. Saturday in Moore Arena. Breed association, 4-H and FFA teams will compete in the cattle working contest in Anderson Coliseum from 1-3 p.m. Saturday.

Admission to the expo is free however Barn Party tickets must be purchased in advance. For additional information or Barn Party tickets, contact the Virginia Beef Expo Office at 540/992-1009. The Virginia Horse Center is located just of I-64, a half-mile west of I-81 in Lexington. —

Information for this article was taken from the Spring 1999 BULLETIN, a publication of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Notes from the road

Recent travels have taken *Augusta Country* staff writers Deborah Sensabaugh and Katharine Brown to New York City and Vail, Colo., respectively. In this issue we are treated to a glimpse of the Big Apple and one of America's premier ski resort communities.



New York's Manhattan worlds apart from Virginia's mountains

By DEBORAH SENSABAUGH

NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. — At Fiorelo's Italian Restaurant in Manhattan's Little Italy, the coat check lady looked at my worn Outback Duster like she might a roach or a water bug. But at Fiorelo's, one never asks questions. Besides, we were with "The Judge," so we must be all right. She gingerly dragged my duster over the counter into her little sanctum with its coat rack where the coat shrugged its way between fine *woolen overcoats like a poor relative at a funeral. A Hank Williams* song ran through my head, but I didn't think it likely that this silver-haired Italian mama listened to country music or needed to look tough when riding the subways.

I liked Fiorelo's. It was like a scene from the "Godfather" — booths and tables scattered about, the walls sported 60s photos of long-dead Italians hugging and drinking fine wine.

By my second day in New York City I had learned that one is expected to ask about how one's prospective dinner is prepared and even if the waiter likes that particular dish. But mindful of my food allergies, I stuck with the salad with chicken strips and cheesecake for desert.

Amy Lowenthal of N.Y.C., and Candy Fitzgerald of Buena Vista, take in the sights of Manhatten.

Manhatten's "mountains and hollows" consist of skyscrapers and asphalt thoroughfares. Photos by Deborah Sensabaugh

Fiorelo's, the only alternative to Wong's fortune cookie factory where Little Italy rubs neon with Chinatown, had been booked. But when "The Judge" himself called, they found a table had magically opened. In Little Italy favors go a long way. And although I've interviewed plenty of judges, I'd never lunched with one before. They're much more delightful when they're not being interviewed.

As we filed past the cash register, an Italian waiter gave each of us a bottle of fine red 1995 wine imported from... you guessed it. "The Judge" loaded his pockets with bottles we could retrieve later and hoped no one important saw him walking back to his office.

After lunch, we proceeded several blocks on broken sidewalks past shops sporting Italian flags and every type of food, drink and imported Italian item imaginable. Wailing violin music swirled from windows and doorways and more Italian than English conversation floated by. Dark overweight men, wearing long overcoats and fedoras, stared straight ahead.

In New York City, stairwells are cut into the sidewalks. Covered with iron doors with treads, those doors open on a dark and narrow world. If one were to be snatched down one of those doors...

We finally found the right shop. Fresh pasta, cut to order, folded in loops in plastic containers — pink, green and egg noodle yellow. Boxes of biscotti made high rises of their own on coolers in which every kind of pasta ever created stared smugly at the pasta shop cat. After inspecting us as thoroughly as cats can, the calico reported to the back room, stopping to arch her back to the curtains. Little Italy was a fine place indeed.

I hadn't thought on my own to go to New York City. I never go anywhere for fun, so when a trip is suggested by someone else, I throw impracticality to the winds. This trip came courtesy of Amy Lowenthal. Amy boards a horse at our barn and drives from New York and Philadelphia nearly every weekend to ride. So she wanted to treat my daughter, Candy, and me to a visit to the magical city. Off we went in our boots and jeans. I left my cowboy hat at home.

Amy keeps one apartment in Philadelphia near her sales territory. She's a publisher's representative for a college textbook division. Her other apartment, now inhabited by her fiancé Donald and her four cats, peers down onto Manhattan's Broadway and, a few blocks west, the Hudson River, from the 12th floor of a towering building. Donald is an assistant district attorney for New York City, and Judge Rettinger is his boss.

The city must have looked about as different to me as the top of Whetstone Ridge does to Amy. When they ran out of room on Manhattan Island, they built up. And up. And then up some more, creating man-made mountains of buildings lined with one-way windows, and deep hollows of streets and gutters where vehicles flow like whitewater through Goshen Pass. Under the streets, trains rumble like ore cars in the old iron holes on South Mountain.

New York City's noise is as rich and thick as plum pudding. Horns blare, boom boxes chug, bells ring, tires hiss on wet pavement. Even at 3 a.m., new taxi drivers whiz along in practice, and overnight delivery truck drivers spin tires just to say they can.

Against the brown and gray of skyscrapers and the black pavement, colors shine brighter, especially in winter — fruits glow jewel-like on both the street and storeside of neighborhood markets, cheap clothing spills out doorways and flaps on hangers caught in iron grillwork that locks at night. More exclusive shops, like those near Times Square, show off glittering treasures through enormous windows.

We did all the tourist things like bright stitches in an embroidery — the Empire State Building, Battery Park, the Ferry ride to Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty, a Broadway play, Times Square, Rockefeller Center, Radio City Music Hall,

See *N.Y.C.*, page 13

Blue Ridge snow bunnies meet the Rockies

By KATHARINE BROWN

VAIL, Colo. — The very mention of snow shoes brings to mind images of fearless trappers and mountain men like Augusta County's native son, John Colter, clad in buckskin and bearskin to ward off the chill of ice and snow, making their way through Rocky Mountain passes on rawhide-laced, bentwood snowshoes.

The mention of snowshoes would not bring to your mind Augusta Country correspondent Katharine Brown, whose half-century birthday celebration is ancient history, and who is more likely seen wading through deed books in the Augusta County courthouse than tramping mountain trails in the crisp clean Colorado air.

This winter, my husband and I set out to prove that you can teach a couple of old dogs a new trick or two. My approach to the Rockies in the winter was similar to my approach to the Austrian Alps in summer: the great outdoors is great if the weary trekker can enjoy creature comforts like a sauna and gourmet meal at the end of a strenuous day.

We picked the right place to enjoy creature comforts — Vail, Colo. This seemed mysterious and foreign as we listened over the years to well-heeled friends around the country recount adventures on the slopes of this Colorado ski resort. Not for one minute did we fancy ourselves running with that fitter, richer, younger crowd.

What lured us to Vail? The simple fact that our son and his wife invited us. Adam is a ski patroller at Beaver Creek, Vail's upmarket younger sibling, and Becky is a children's ski instructor there. They spend 40 hours a week on skis at work, and ski on their days off for play.

Katharine Brown, on snowshoes, joins others on an outing near Vail, Colo.

Photos by Madison Brown

We wanted to see where they work and play. We wanted to see their new home, their "condo-minimum" as Adam aptly named it — 260 square feet with a living room-kitchen, one bedroom and one bath. They are proud first-time homeowners, even if they are on the very bottom rung of the Vail property ladder. That little place cost them as much as our three-story, 3,000 square-foot brick house in Staunton cost us! More on Vail property later.

Adam wisely organized us to alternate sightseeing with sports. We spent a wonderful day in Leadville, a mining town of broad streets on a plateau surrounded by mountains. Leadville's heyday, like Staunton's, was the Victorian Gilded Age. The colorful characters who walked its streets — mine owners, miners, railroad builders, saloon keepers, opera house entertainers, ministers and missionaries — left behind a superb legacy of Victorian architecture. This is found in commercial buildings, public buildings, churches, mansions and miners cottages, many carefully and colorfully restored.

Aspen was another great day. It has a mining heritage, but unlike Leadville, was transformed into a fashionable ski resort between 1930 and 1950. Shops like Gucci and Dior alternate storefronts with art galleries and chic restaurants.

For rugged outdoor activities, we first tried our hand — or our feet? — at cross-country skiing. Togged out in miracle-fiber wicking long underwear and assorted layers of borrowed ski clothing on top, I felt like a stuffed animal on parade. My pockets held chocolate chip power bars. The mystery ingredients, held together with honey and artfully sprinkled with chocolate chips not only would give me energy, but

See *SKIING*, page 17

Once a military training ground, now a chic resort

By KATHARINE BROWN

You might question that there could be a connection between heroic action in the European theater in World War II and luxurious Colorado ski resorts at the end of the 20th century. Rest assured, there is a close link. It is the returning veterans of the remarkable 10th Mountain Division.

A memorial site to members of the 10th Mountain Division near Vail, Colo.

The United States got trained mountain troops because Charles Minot "Minnie" Dole (1899-1976), who founded the National Ski Patrol system in 1938, talked the War Department into creating a mountaineer division. The National Ski Patrol was charged with recruiting men for the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment. Many of the original recruits came from the ranks of America's few pre-World War II skiers.

The Pando Valley, 9,250 feet above sea level in the Rockies, was the site of Camp Hale. This was a town of more than 1,000 buildings built in a few months in 1942 to house the 14,000 troops who trained there. The men learned technical climbing on the nearby rock cliffs and skiing in the surrounding mountains. They became experts at snowshoeing, skiing, and high altitude survival. They tested all kinds of pioneering winter gear that would later become routine in the ski industry.

The 85th and 86th Regiments were activated at Camp Hale also. These three regiments combined to form the 10th Mountain Division. In the fall of 1944, German troops had dug into a defensive position in the Apennine mountains in northern Italy. There they held the high positions that blocked Allied

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N.Y.C.

Continued from page 12

Macy's department store, window shopping at Lord and Taylor's. And we ate at Sarah Beth's Kitchen and at Zabar's we shopped for fancy imported food, which is about all you can get in Manhattan.

And we rode the subway. I suppose, in a city of people who greet the world with empty eyes, I was an oddity. I smiled and nodded and talked to a grandmother whose grandchild fingered the horse buttons on my coat. I looked folks in the eye and said good morning. People weren't impolite or even rude or pushy, but they were distant as though living in close proximity with that many human beings makes one close up inside. Here on the farm, where people aren't common everyday commodities, everyone is a unique treasure. I guess if you have a poultry farm, you don't know the 50,000 or so birds like you do the laying hens in the chicken house out back.

Apartment buildings in Manhattan have doormen. Those in Amy's and Donald's building spoke Spanish, as did the workmen who arrived in panel trucks whose signage informs the world their drivers also fix phones, or electric wiring, or plumbing or furnaces. I would not have minded talking some to the doormen, but they all seemed busy running to and fro and accomplishing very little. They looked us over, however. They didn't miss anything and seemed to take pride in the security of their buildings.

The best taxi drivers in New York City are named Mohammed. I have ridden public transportation in their countries of origin, and I know they can drive. To flag a taxi, Amy walks toward the traffic lane and waves her hand. Eventually, an empty taxi screeches up and slams to a stop in the parking lane. We pile in the uncomfortable, dark, evil-smelling interior and whisk around town. Flagging and entering a taxi is a little like a rider pick-up race in a horse show. You don't waste time; you just hop in and out like a rabbit. I didn't tip a taxi driver named Juan. His bad attitude seemed to be reflected in his slow driving.

People ask how I liked New York City. "It's a different place altogether," I confess.

"And would you go back?"

I shrug. "Sure," I answer. "There's all that stuff I didn't see." —

•Ware

Continued from page 7

from New Jersey who told him to take everything he could in the way of courses. "And so I did," he remembers. That advice paid off when he came back to Staunton as an educator in 1933.

"I came back as a fifth grade teacher and I hated it. I couldn't relate to the students," he remembers of those first two years teaching elementary school.

Then a high school teaching job opened up. "They were looking for a French teacher and also a math teacher. I had taken some French and so I qualified for the job," he says explaining how his aunt's advice paid off. He admits that today, more than 60 years later, he can't remember a word of French.

He never forgot that advice and went on to take more training whenever the opportunity arose. He earned a master's degree in education administration from Teachers College Columbia University and did additional course work at such places as the University of Pennsylvania, City College of New York, Virginia State College, Cornell University and Hampton Institute.

For a decade he was away from the area, teaching and working in such diverse places as Newport News and New York City. From 1949 until 1951 he was even a parole office for New York.

It took a vacation home to his birthplace to bring him back for good. In 1951 Ware and his wife, Gladys, came to Staunton for a visit. Somebody told him that the principal of the African-American school had left and so he stopped in the superintendent's office to confirm that information.

"I never will forget it. I went in his office and he said, 'Hi Ware, you want a job?' I said, 'Yes,' and he said, 'Okay, you've got it.'" For the next 15 years, from 1951 until 1966, Ware was the leading educator in Staunton's black community. Eventually that meant he was actually principal at three schools — two elementary and one high school. "That meant that they could never find me because if they were looking for me at one, then I was at one of the other two," he says with a chuckle.

The years were nothing if not fulfilling. "You see so many kids and you help a lot of them. You push some of them who are about to drop out and they appreciate later what you did," he says.

Finally in the 1960s the segregated world he had grown up in came crashing down. With it came the end of separate schools for blacks and whites. "The way they integrated in Staunton was a good way to do it," he explained of the change that occurred in 1966. "They simply closed all the black schools and distributed the black teachers in all the schools that were left. Then they got to me and the state said that I couldn't be demoted; I either had to be pushed up or kept on the same level, so they put me in the central office," he explained.

Ware proved more than up to the newest employment challenges. From 1967 until 1970 he was the director of adult education in the city schools. From 1966 until 1978 he also administered all federal programs in the school system.

After 45 years as an educator, Ware decided to retire in 1978. Retirement brought a shift in focus away from education and toward that subject area, history, that he did "second best" in during his first semester in college.

It all began when he started to research African-American businesses in the area. "It started with the black businesses and then that would take me in a different direction and then that would take me somewhere else," he explained of the layers of history that he uncovered. Eventually he surprised everyone, including himself, when he documented over 300 African-American 19th and 20th century businesses in the area.

He would go on to look at an even broader picture of African-American history in the region, writing articles and speaking about what he found. "Much of what I found had never been recorded. I think everybody should know about their ancestors and there was no place people could go and look," he said.

Although the research has slowed these days, he continues to read and learn and loves to travel the world. He has visited Portugal, Spain, the Scandinavian countries, Bermuda, Panama, Mexico, Alaska and Hawaii. Nearly four years ago, he remarried after being a widower for a number of years. Now he and Martha look forward to their trips together.

Things have certainly changed since 1912 when A.R. Ware, Jr. was born into a segregated Staunton society. Today there is an elementary school in Staunton named in his honor and attended by children of all races and religions.

Of all the changes, technological and otherwise, that he has seen in the last 87 years, Ware points to integration as being the best and most important.

"People are people. You should know other people and should associate with them and become familiar with the various cultures, all the cultures whether they are black cultures or white cultures," he said. —

•Awards

Continued from page 7

Bosserman is the first individual to receive the society's Outstanding History Educator Award. Dr. Brown noted that this award was established by the society to recognize individuals who "nurture a love of history and an appreciation for our local heritage among the very young." The Outstanding History Educator Award is to recognize those who have "devoted a professional career to the creative and exciting teaching of history in a way that sets young hearts on fire," Dr. Brown said. *Bosserman was given a certificate and two books have been placed in the Augusta County Library in his honor.*

Bosserman is a native of Augusta County and earned his bachelor of arts degree from Bridgewater College and master's degree in education from the University of Virginia. He has taught at all grade levels in the Stuarts Draft community, later serving as assistant principal at both the middle and high schools. In 1984 he became the social studies curriculum supervisor for Augusta County Schools. Bosserman has been a driving force behind the Model General Assembly and initiated numerous programs in the county including the Social Studies Fair held annually at Staunton Mall, the Geo Bee, and the History Trivia Dinner. He also has served as a lecturer on the teaching of history at Bridgewater and Mary Baldwin College.

"It takes a great deal to stimulate students' interest in social studies," Dr. Brown noted, and applauded Bosserman's efforts in the county to establish programs which encourage the study of history and social studies.

"He (Bossserman) has found many creative ways to make history stimulating, exciting and fun," Dr. Brown said.

The society capped the preliminary portion of its annual banquet with a drawing for a quilt, handmade locally, for which tickets were sold to benefit the society. The quilt was won by Donald Plambeck of Staunton.

Proceeds from the quilt raffle will be used to refurbish an office for the society which will be located at the Augusta County Government Complex in Verona. Dr. Brown said having an office with a staff person in place will help to increase the society's profile in the area.

The society's spring meeting will be held May 23 at Augusta Stone Presbyterian Church in Fort Defiance. Mark Cowl, editor of the Lewis family history, and Katie Leitcher

See *ACHS*, page 20

1999 Augusta County Spring Clean-Up

April 10-April 17, 1999

SPECIAL LANDFILL HOURS: MON.-SAT., 8 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

TIRES

Free tire disposal at landfill only -- 25 tire limit per home/farm. Tires mounted on split rims and tires from businesses will not be accepted.

AUTOMOTIVE WASTE

During Spring Clean-Up, the following wastes will be collected at the Landfill: motor oil, transmission oil, hydraulic oil, diesel fuel, lead-acid batteries, antifreeze, (ethylene glycol-green color only.)

Gasoline will not be accepted.

HOUSEHOLD WASTES

The following household wastes will be collected at Kate Collins School in Waynesboro on April 17, 1999 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.: Oil-based paint, spent fuel, gasoline, solvents, antifreeze & lubrication oil.

SCRAP & JUNK DEALERS YOU CAN CONTACT

For free pickup of abandoned vehicles

Bobby's Towing Service	885-8450
Bill Sipe	886-0234
Byrd's Wrecking	885-1445
Staunton Wrecking Yd.	886-5970
Shields Auto Salvage	949-5922

APPLIANCES

No fees for appliances delivered to these sites: Augusta-Staunton Landfill, Deerfield Community Center, Dumpsters in New Hope, Crimora, Mt. Solon, Craigsville & Greenville.

RURITAN CLUBS

Ruritan Clubs will be leading the clean-up efforts in their communities of interest. Please offer your help or let them know of an area needing attention.

Schoolhouse News

Middle schoolers prepare for spring adventures

By BETTY GATEWOOD

CEDAR GREEN — The students of the seventh grade outdoor adventure club, Project Adventure, have been involved in a variety of science and environmental activities this year and are now planning for their "ultimate adventure" for the year — a three-day trip on an island in the Chesapeake Bay.

In keeping with the seventh grade science Standards of Learning, Project Adventure students have participated in the all-grade level environmental field day to Rick Shiflet's farm in Westview where they learned methods of biomonitoring field, forest, fish and wildlife. They also participated in a Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Virginia Watershed Education Program at Elkhorn Lake in October 1998.

Teaching from canoes, staff members from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation led a discussion of the wise use of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. After canoeing the length of the lake, the students conducted biomonitoring of the North River to determine its health as a tributary to the Bay. It was a fun, educational and glorious way to spend an autumn afternoon in Augusta County.

The video, Chesapeake Horizons, was shown in November to introduce the spring field trip experience. On Feb. 2, Dr. Larry Evans from Valley Animal Hospital, did a veterinary anatomy lesson after school, and on Feb. 25, students traveled to Cros-B-Crest greenhouse to learn about the business and mechanics of horticulture.

Other fall and early winter activities concentrated on planning for the spring field trip. Informational slides of the upcoming trip were shown by Betty Gatewood, club sponsor, in January. The spring field trip to the Chesapeake Bay is scheduled for April 8-10.

Mrs. Gatewood and several teachers from Augusta County Middle and High Schools participated in the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's teacher field trip in August 1998. The teachers' trip was made possible by a grant written by Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service. This is the same agency that sponsors Beverley Manor Middle School's environmental field day at Shiflet's farm each fall.

The focus of the up-coming three-day adventure on an island (near Tangier Island) in the Chesapeake Bay, is the study of and the wise use of our precious resource, the Chesapeake Bay. Students will spend most of their time in a canoe or on a workboat, setting crab pots, scraping for crabs and oysters, visiting Tangier Island and its inhabitants, and participating in an oyster study on the island of Port Isobel.

Students will learn about the importance of the Bay by total immersion in the natural and human history on the islands. By participating in this trip, the importance of wise use of resources in Augusta County will connect with their studies on the island. They will be active participants in various activities conducted by Chesapeake Bay Foundation staff and will become environmentally friendly campers by living for three days on a "closed ecosystem," an island in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay.

Up-coming events for the spring other than the April Chesapeake Bay trip are a March visit by Billy Kingsley, fly-fisherman and owner of "The Blue Ridge Angler" fly fishing shop in Harrisonburg and a May 2 field trip for mountain bik-

See *PROJECT*, page 18

Student members of Project Adventure visited Cros-B-Crest greenhouse and nursery to learn about transplanting seedlings. Harry Crosby shows the students a tray of seedlings ready to be transplanted. Photo by Betty Gatewood

Forensics builds confidence in public speaking

By BECKY McMANNES

GREENVILLE -- At the end of the first semester, Riverheads High School students engage in what is known as forensics. Forensics is a competitive form of public speaking. It has many different categories from which to choose. There is humorous interpretation, extemporaneous interpretation, duo interpretation, prose (where a person speaks on parts of stories), poetry, spelling, story telling, dramatic interpretation, and oratory (a written and practiced speech).

Rachel Howard, the third place winner in story telling in the regional competition this year, is a junior at Riverheads. "Forensics is a way for me to express myself," she said. "I feel like I can really get inside the story and make it mine! It's a way to be extremely creative because you can mold the story to fit your personality. I don't get nervous anymore when speaking publicly."

Senior Matt Caldwell has participated in humorous interpretation. He is famous for his funny stories. "Forensics is a lot of fun. It gives you an opportunity to explore drama and acting in a unique new way by bringing together people with similar interests," he said. "I prefer humorous interpretation because it's fun to watch. Plus it gets you out of school early."

The very spontaneous Jessica Hill can really think on her feet about domestic social topics. She does extemporaneous interpretation, which is speaking on a topic that is given to you at the time of the competition. "Public Speaking is always important because it prepares you for interacting with people," Jessica said. "I choose to do extemporaneous interpretation because it makes you practice thinking on your feet in tough situations and you can express your own opinions."

This year everyone from the Riverheads Forensics group went on to the regional competition. Three people made third place or higher that made them eligible for the state competition. They were Morgan Pitkin, Rachel Howard and David Arehart. Morgan won first place in spelling, Rachel won third place for story telling and David won third place in foreign extemporaneous interpretation.

Forensics is excellent for people who are good at acting or for people who are shy when it comes to speaking in public. It gives them an opportunity to speak publicly so those in college or in a job situation already have experience. It is recommended that people get into some kind of public speaking because it is needed for every aspect of life. ---

The Hitching Post

Conditioning, attitude key to preparing for competition

Q: I need to prepare my horse for competition this summer. I want to work him hard, but at the same time keep his attitude good. Any suggestions?
D.C. -Staunton

There are a couple things to consider when looking at competitive training. First of all, the overall condition of your horse, and second, your own attitude.

Let's look at conditioning first. In competition I was expected to perform at my peak and at the same time maintain the pace. Being in good physical condition was no accident. My trainer made sure I was brought up to proper conditioning over time. The better condition I was in, the easier it was to keep up the competitive spirit. Conditioning took into consideration nutrition, muscle building, cardiovascular workouts, endurance, and proper rest. My exercise program included all these parts in order to increase my performance.

Nutrition was important to my physical upkeep. Exercise that builds muscle needs a balanced diet that includes protein. Cardiovascular workouts and endurance training need a high energy source food product. You will find that you will have to make adjustments to your horse's feed program to include these. Whoever supplies your grain and vitamin supplements can direct you to the proper nutritional requirements. Remember that the feed is an important part of your horse's health. Good health is the foundation of a competitive spirit.

A balanced riding program would be next. It is possible that focusing on one aspect of your sport can leave your horse a little "sour" over time. I like variety for two reasons. First, it gives me different conditioning advantages, and second it keeps me looking forward to what's "new." Different riding routines will keep your horse's attitude fresh and keen.

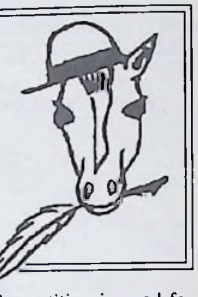
The next important part of your competitive training is YOUR attitude. How important is this competition to you? Remember, you win "through" your horse's efforts. I have worked under some very selfish riders. They did not care about me at all. Winning was the most important thing to them regardless of my health, conditioning, and attitude. Two things can happen to a horse under a selfish rider. The horse will either lose "spirit" completely or will develop a poor attitude towards competition and possibly even toward being ridden at all. You are right to worry about your horse's attitude. Keeping a good attitude toward work is part of the winning "spirit."

One thing that I can suggest to keep YOUR attitude in proper condition is to keep in mind your objectives, but also work a plan that includes your horse's abilities, limitations, and physical condition. Take the time to build a solid foundation. Encourage and support ALL good behavior. Sometimes you will have to take a loss to gain something in the long run. Many of the best riders I have ever worked with let a blue ribbon go on a bad day to keep me in good health. We came back better for the experience. We also came back working together.

Working WITH your horse is another part of maintaining an attitude. A horse can sense the difference between a rider who really cares about them and a rider who is just "using" them. If you find that in the heat of competition you are expecting too much of your horse or your desire to win becomes the center of your decisions, then I suggest you step back and take a deep breath. You may win a few battles, but you'll end up losing the war — and we horses have been military partners for most of history. Competition is good for giving one a sense of accomplishment, winning the prize, and even reaching some goals, but remember to think long term, too.

The most important and final advice I can offer is to enjoy what you do. Enthusiasm is the most contagious emotion I know and I have worked my hardest for riders who love what they do and enjoy every minute. If you can keep your own attitude in great shape, then your horse reflects the positive nature of YOU. —

I.B. HOOFINIT From the Horse's Mouth



I.B. Hoofinit is a fictitious horse character developed by Chris Marrs as a service to teach horse care. Questions to I.B. Hoofinit may be submitted to P.O. Box 2955, Staunton, Va. 24402. Questions become the property of Chris Marrs, and answers are subject to editor approval. Information provided in this column is meant to be taken as general advice. Each horse, rider, owner, and situation reflects different problems. I.B.'s answers are meant to be informative and enjoyable, but not binding. Common sense in any situation is a must.

I. B. Hoofinit's 'Horses in History'

Can you identify the horse described in the following vignette? If so, simply write your answer down and mail it with your name and address to I. B. Hoofinit's Horses in History, P. O. Box 2955, Staunton, Va. 24402 or call 540/885-0266. The first correct answer received will be sent a free gift! The answer will appear in the next issue of *Augusta Country*!

WHO AM I? In the year 1876 I was owned by a cavalry officer who was ordered to find an Indian Village in the Montana Territory. On June 25, we found the village in a valley along the Little Big Horn River. My officer, thinking the village contained only 1,000 or so Indians ordered an immediate attack. The actual number of Indians was between 2,500 and 5,000. It was the largest gathering of hostile tribes in western history. In one of the bloodiest Indians fights in history, my officer and his entire column were wiped out. Can you identify my rider and me?

Last month's rider was Paul Revere. Paul Revere rode a borrowed horse on his famous ride from Boston to Lexington. Although Paul was captured by the British cavalry patrol and released, the horse became British property. (reference: *World Book Encyclopedia*, Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, Chicago 54, IL) ---

◦10th

Continued from page 13

advance into the Po Valley, the route into the Alps of Hitler's Austria. By January 1945, the 10th Mountain Division, the last American division to enter the war in Europe, arrived at this front.

Their most important task was to take Mount Belvedere, the cornerstone of the German defense of the Po Valley. This first required scaling the 1,500-foot sheer rock cliffs of Riva Ridge during the night of Feb. 18, 1945. The fighting was heavy and the casualties high, but the division took Mount Belvedere.

In the following two months, the 10th continued the efforts to push the Germans back past Modena and Bologna. On April 20, 1945, the 10th led the American 5th Army's successful push into the Po Valley. This opened the way to the Alps. The 10th advanced past Mantua and Verona and on to Lake Garda surrounded by Alps. They were ready to attack in the Alps and the Brenner pass when Germany surrendered on May 2, 1945.

The 992 men of the 10th who gave their lives in this struggle to free Europe from Nazi rule were well remembered by their buddies. They built monuments to them at Camp Hale, in Vail, and in northern Italy, and hold annual Memorial services for them.

The fortunate survivors of this terrible mountain combat returned *to America to put their skills to work* in the creation of the ski industry. Pete Seibert, veteran of the 10th, for example was the man who discovered Vail's Back Bowls, knew how to find financial and political backing, and created there the remarkable resort city of Vail.

The men of the 10th provided the developers, managers, and instructors at the new ski resorts springing up all over America. They also provided designers and manufacturers of the resort equipment, of individual ski equipment, and of ski clothing and accessories. The contemporary industry that they created employs tens of thousands of people, and provides recreation and pleasure for millions of Americans of all ages every year.

Other men of the 10th have made significant contributions in related areas of outdoor life in America. These include the founder of NOLS, the National Outdoor Leadership School, and the executive director of the Sierra Club. —

◦Skiing

Continued from page 13

taste delicious, proclaimed the wrapper. I know sawdust when I taste it. That's what makes termites and beavers strong.

If success as a cross-country skier depended on power bar consumption, I was doomed to failure. I've loved ice-skating since I was 15, but I had never put on skis. It was an odd sensation. I finally got the hang of it, but could see that it would take several more days' practice to give me the illusion that I resembled a tall, blonde Norwegian gliding across the landscape. Madison went back two more days to improve his performance.

I wimped out and spent one day painting ceramics in a studio, and another visiting a museum and window shopping in Vail. The ski museum was excellent. Window shopping was the only kind I could afford in that town. Ski suits cost $400-$800. I didn't bother to price skis! I found a great Vail sweatshirt as a souvenir of the trip. But wait! It cost $60! Could I wear it to church? To Rotary? To a banquet? That's where I wear the "big ticket" clothes in my closet. No. Would the dog appreciate my $60 sweatshirt as we hung out in my basement office at home? Not likely. The sweatshirt stayed on the store rack in Vail.

This brings me back to the cost of property. Vail fills a narrow valley eight miles long. It is "wall-to-wall condominiums" interspersed with large homes. The condos range from about $120,000 to more than $700,000. The houses run from about $350,000 to more than $5,000,000. It was just plain hard for me to take in that much wealth concentrated in one place!

Snowshoeing was much more fun than cross-country skiing to this beginner. Adam picked a great place for it: Camp Hale, on a pass between Vail and Leadville. This is the site of the training camp for the famous 10th Mountain Division in World War II. Scarcely a trace remained of the 1940s barracks city of 10,000 soldiers, yet we could imagine those young men venturing into surrounding mountains to learn skills that enabled them to help defeat the Nazis in the Italian Alps.

The air was crisp and clear, the sky was blue, the snow was deep and powdery. John Colter would surely have enjoyed our modern snowshoes with aluminum frames and miracle fabric and lacing. They were easy to maneuver, and made tromping along in the snow across miles of open space great fun. We shed some layers of clothes as we warmed to the task. The sun shining on our faces the first half of the day gave us a nice tan, and the wind at our backs as we headed home pushed us toward our goal. A beautiful drive back to Vail through mountain passes, and a hot tub awaiting us at home made a perfect end to a wonderful expedition.

I'm ready to go back for more next year! —

Country Crossroads

Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin
March 1999

Dear Maude,

How wonderful it was to have been able to come home for that nice little visit. It made me realize how much I miss everyone.

The trip back with Mama was fun — we took several side roads instead of spending so much time on the interstate and she seemed to enjoy it. The visit to Washington, I am not as sure about. It is so quiet here — things are beginning to smooth out. One would almost think we were in the middle of the summer doldrums. What can I say? Monica left town. So what is there to talk about?

At least lately, it seems as if spring has arrived. The temperatures are so nice and warm and the many small city parks are beginning to sprout all sorts of foliage and buds. But earlier, it was a different matter. We have not had much winter weather in the Nation's capital for such a long time — a little wind, a few cold days or perhaps a dusting of snow here or there has been it. But with the arrival of March we were reminded just what it is like here when the snows arrive.

We had snow; there was slush; there was ice. In the suburbs, it was not so bad, but in the city, things were a mess! When the first snow arrived, in true government fashion, as the inches began to pile up, it was announced that everyone could leave two hours early. What that really means is that the workers are to leave two hours *before their regular quitting time, and with flex schedules, that could be anytime* between 2:00 and 7:00 PM. Most workers however only heard the first part of that: ".....everyone can leave....," and coats were grabbed, desk drawers slammed shut, papers scattered as they all dashed out at 2:01. They were like lemmings headed to the sea.

Our boss, as well as many others in the downtown area, decided that we might as well go home also. So out we went by 2:05. There was total gridlock on the city streets as those with cars (not at all accustomed to driving in the snow) headed out of town.

At the subway there were long lines of workers trying to buy tickets or get through the gates. The subway cars were completely packed. After several packed trains would go by, those (who probably never left work until 6:30 as a rule,) would become so impatient that they would begin pushing on the subway car doors, and breaking them. Then everyone already on the train would have to come off onto the platform and wait for the next (unbroken) train. It was total madness.

Once I made it to Union Station and off to catch one of the MARC commuter trains (I had chosen this method of commute in the morning, knowing that the roads would probably not be so great in the afternoon,) things were not much better. The early trains were so full that they would not let anyone else on. The next one that I was able to board left the station and then sat somewhere on the tracks for about an hour. The trip that usually takes me a little over an hour was a full three hours!

One friend who decided to stay around for a while, left about his normal time but fell asleep on the subway and when it stopped, jumped up and got off. He waltzed through the gates, looked around and thought to himself, "this doesn't look like my stop." Sure enough, it wasn't, so back in, back on the next subway car — which by then was not as crowded — and off to Union Station. He took the later train, and even with that, got home only 10 minutes later than I did! I might as well have stayed at the office and caught up on some work!!

Thank goodness that Mama was not with me that day. She would have thought the whole world had gone insane. She was a little tired, for we had been joined by AnnaLea and the boys for some sightseeing over the weekend, and then the day before we had visited several of the museums ourselves. Of course, she would never be seen in a pair of sneakers, so her feet were complaining.

She soon recovered, however, and just this week we went to the Woodrow Wilson House to see an exhibition on Wilson's vision for the 20h Century. It was quite interesting, dealing with the ways he influenced education, foreign policy and trade and commerce. His Nobel Peace Prize was on display as well as his doctoral diploma from Johns Hopkins University. There were lots of books, but I am afraid that Mama was a little bored after a few minutes. She was in search of something more exciting, and with the recent lull in exciting gossip, about the only thing I could think of was shopping.

After we left the museum, we walked along Embassy Row and she seemed to revive a bit as she looked at all of the wonderful old mansions that are now used as foreign embassies. Then, on the way down Connecticut Avenue, we stopped in a small shoe store that really excited her. Three pairs of dressy Italian shoes, later, we were on our way down to Filene's where they were having a sale, and for which I also had a coupon they had sent through the mail for another 15 percent off. Mama went crazy. I never saw anything like it. How we managed to carry everything, I'll never know. I guess that must be where I get my shopping habits!!

I think she is now a little weary of the city, so I plan to drive her back home this weekend. Tell everyone we both look forward to being there and seeing the fields turning green.

Love,
LuLu

Augusta County sponsoring Spring Clean Up April 10-17

VERONA — Augusta County's sixth annual Spring Clean Up is designated for the week of April 10-17. During the week the county will be sponsoring a number of initiatives to help residents clean up their properties and communities.

The hours at the county landfill in Jollivue will be extended from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. each day of the clean up week. During Spring Clean-Up Week, any resident of Augusta County may take their junk vehicles, white goods, litter and tires to the landfill at no charge.

Augusta County Spring Clean Up
April 10-17
Landfill hours:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
No charge to dispose of tires, appliances. Junk vehicles towed away free of charge.
Call 245-5610 for information.

White goods include household appliances and hot water heaters. These may be taken to the landfill or they may be left at dumpster sites in Crimora, New Hope, Mt. Solon, Craigsville, Deerfield, and Greenville. The Deerfield Community Center also is a drop-off point for white goods. Furniture will not be accepted at the white goods collection sites.

The normal charge for tire disposal is $1.50 per car or small truck tire. There will be no charge for tires taken to the landfill during Spring Clean-Up Week. There is a limit of 25 tires per household or farm. Tires on split rims or from businesses will not be accepted.

During the last four of five previous clean-up weeks, 191,000 tires and 21,500 appliances have been brought to the landfill for disposal.

Special arrangements have been made to have junk vehicles hauled away for free. Call the Government Center at 245-5610 for information on who to contact to have junk vehicles picked up. Removal of junk vehicles from property may be arranged at any time of the year at no cost. Businesses arranging transport of junk vehicles include Bobby's Towing Service, 885-8450; Bill Sipe, 886-0234; Byrd's Wrecking Yard, 885-1445; Staunton Wrecking, 886-5970; and Shield's Auto Salvage, 949-5922.

Junk vehicles and appliances brought in for disposal are recycled. The material is compacted and transported to an automobile shredder to begin the recycling process. Tires are shredded and are either used for fuel in boilers or are converted to "crumb rubber" which is used to make a modified asphalt.

The landfill also will serve as a collection site for automotive waste including motor oil, transmission oil, hydraulic oil, diesel fuel, lead-acid batteries and antifreeze (green color only). Gasoline will not be collected at the landfill. The receipt of oil-based paint, spent fuel, gasoline, solvents, antifreeze and lubrication oil will take place in Waynesboro at Kate Collins School on April 17 from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. A date in the fall will be announced for the receipt of these items at the Augusta County Government Center in Verona.

During Spring Clean Up, individuals and organizations will be joining together to eliminate spot illegal dump sites and roadside litter. *Ruritan clubs will be leading clean-up efforts in their communities of interest. Persons who participate in the Virginia Adopt-A-Highway Program will pick up litter on their roads during the clean-up week. If you can assist in a clean-up effort or have identified an illegal dump or heavily littered roadside, call a Ruritan club member or the government center at 245-5610.*

The county also is looking for assistance with litter clean up from school organizations, church groups or any service organizations willing to help. To find out how to help with the county's Spring Clean Up, call 245-5610. —

°Project

Continued from page 15

ing and fly-fishing day at Braley Pond. To tie in with the water quality and fishing focus for the spring, an after school field trip to Castaline Trout farm is being planned for March. As you can see, students are really busy getting involved in the environment at Beverley Manor Middle School!

Students are SOOOO excited about their adventures and have been planning for quite some time for the expenses. Most of the local programs for Project Adventurers are free, but the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's trips do have a cost — for the Foundation's educational program and lodging, for food, and for commercial bus transportation via Quick's Transit to the Bay twice. Students have sold environmental T-shirts, and pizzas and they will have to come up with some of their own money for the trip. They definitely are committed to going. These programs are so beneficial to the environmental health of Augusta County AND to its precious human resource, our future decision makers. If you would like to help reach the monetary goal for the trip, contact Betty Gatewood, Beverley Manor Middle School, Rt. 10, Box 2, Staunton, VA 24401; 540/886-5806; FAX 540/886-4019. —

Roll up your sleeves and head to the garden

Lawn & Landscape

By Jeff Flint

Hurray! It's finally here. April, that is. The month of showers (hopefully, we need the moisture) bringing May flowers. The time changes on April 4 and gardeners can once again enjoy their garden. With extended daylight hours and warming temperatures, gardening after five is alive.

Soil preparation is a very important part of good planting techniques. The healthiest plants in the world cannot tolerate poor compacted soil or soil that lacks in nutrients. Some things to do to improve your success are:

Make sure planting beds are dug to a depth of 18 inches. This reduces soil compaction in most of the rooting zone for plants. Pedestrian and vehicular soil compaction is usually limited to the top 6 inches of soil so 18 inches is sufficient. Ideally this is done when the soil is somewhat dry to avoid re-compaction.

Soil amendments are anything organic or mineral that may add to the aeration, tilth or fertility of an existing soil. Mineral amendments such as pumice, perlite, and vermiculite are fairly permanent in the soil if they are not compacted. Organic matter (peat moss, bark, aged sawdust, manure, compost) which is more commonly used, tends to decompose with time. Organics are most effective when they constitute 25 to 50 percent of the soil volume. Be careful when using sand as a soil amendment for clay soils. Not until sand constitutes 45 percent of the volume of the soil will it become effective. Any less than that and well; you have made a very nice mixture for the creation of a brick.

Another important step in soil preparation is to make sure the soil contains the right mixture of macronutrients (nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sulfur). Most important of which for gardeners are nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium labeled as N-P-K in most fertilizer breakdowns. N-P-K represent the three numbers found on any gardening label such as 10-10-10 or 15-30-15. Understanding how each of these affect your particular gardening situation may determine how many tomatoes you produce this year or how green your lawn stays in July and August.

Nitrogen (the first number in any label) is responsible for green growth or foliar production in plants. You know those people with the incredibly green lawns all year? Nitrogen is probably their secret.

Phosphorus (the second number) is most responsible for bloom production on plants. Look on the label of a box of Miracle-Gro and the breakdown may read 15-30-15. The 30 means 30 percent phosphorus found in this formulation. As you know, Miracle-Gro will keep those annuals blooming all summer long. Also more bloom production on tomato plants means more fruit.

Potassium (the third number) will affect the rooting system of plants. This is an important component when planting in the fall. Fall lawn fertilizers will typically have a high third number giving grass a strong root system heading into the winter months.

Keep your soil conditions in mind when preparing your plantings. Both you and your plants will "harvest" the rewards.

I would appreciate your comments that may be helpful. Any questions you have about your garden or plants would also be appreciated. I will try to address those in the following months' issues. ---

Hager addresses annual Va. Ag Council celebration

By PENNY PLEMMONS

RICHMOND — Lt. Gov. John Hager addressed more than 900 guests at the 28th annual Agri-Celebration Banquet hosted by the Virginia Agribusiness Council at the Arthur Ashe Center in Richmond recently.

"Virginia farms and forests are the finest in the nation," Hager lauded. "Farmers help make the *Commonwealth strong. Thank you* for serving our state."

Hager commented that the current administration is working toward bridging the gap between farmers and government policies that flow out of Richmond. He stressed a "common sense approach" between legislative regulations and agribusiness. Pledging to uphold the state's economic development plan, "The Virginia Strategy," Hager stressed the administration's intention to remain focused on strengthening and supporting the agribusiness community. Hager commended the Virginia's Finest Program which is celebrating its 10th year in operation.

This year's "Distinguished Friend of Agriculture Award" went to Sen. John C. Watkins. According to Virginia Agribusiness Board Chairman Tom Kirkpatrick, Sen. Watkins has been an influential voice of reason on agriculture issues.

In policy issues, the Agribusiness Council reaffirmed its support for the 1994 Right to Farm Act. This act, which removes conditional or special use permitting for agriculture and forestry operations in agriculture zones locations, came under fire during the 1999 assembly session. Sen. Madison Marye, D-Shawsville, attempted to re-define "farm." Marye's amendment bill would remove the protection provided by the Right to Farm Act from farms operating above a 300-animal unit limit. The bill, SB 733, has since been defeated.

Other council issues included continued support for: the current Virginia Pollution Abatement Permit, the Agricultural Stewardship Act, and Best Management Practices utilizing non-regulatory implementation. The council opposed amending or abolishing the "Dillon Rule" (this rule gives the General Assembly the sole right to authorize local government policy on all major issues, i.e. taxation, environmental and other government regulations, land use and public sector collective bargaining.) and any policies which would result in a reduction of the rights of private property owners.

The Virginia Agribusiness Council works to achieve regulations which display a prudent balance between environmental concerns and practical economic realities. For more information about the Virginia Agribusiness Council, visit its website at va.agribusiness@worldnet.att.net —

Rachel Graves of Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria provides some samples of Virginia's Finest products during the Virginia Agribusiness Celebration.

Photo by Penny Plemmons

RHS brings French back to its students

By BECKY McMANNES

GREENVILLE -- In many of Augusta County's schools there are only two languages taught, Spanish and Latin. Having these two courses as the only language choices, students are not exposed to any other cultures. The French program was offered to Riverheads High School students this year to introduce students to other cultures besides the one they have lived with all their lives.

Brian Shirley, who is the English and foreign languages administrator for the Augusta County school system, chose to present students with more of a choice involving languages. He decided on the French language.

"I feel that French is important because it is one the more modern languages and it would be useful for the students to have as many foreign languages as possible for international as well as local businesses," Shirley said. "I would like to start an Asian program in addition to the French program so the students will be more adapted to foreign cultures. It's harder to support languages in smaller schools because you don't have enough people to enroll in the class." Shirley believes the program will be successful because people will realize that to be in any sort of business you may need to be able to communicate in many different languages.

One reason Riverheads High School had a problem with beginning the French program was due to the fact that they did not have a teacher who was fluent enough to teach the students. Jennifer Coleman is one of the foreign language teachers at Riverheads. Her main class is Spanish but her love is French.

"I enjoy teaching French because I have had extensive academic preparation in the language and culture, but even more because I lived in a French-speaking country, which was Belgium, as a youth exchange student," Ms. Coleman said. "I am able to share many aspects of the culture as a result of this experience. It gives me great enthusiasm and desire to excite the students about their own possibilities for travel and making friends in other countries."

Ms. Coleman has been able to teach her French class well because of her knowledge of other cultures. "The French-speaking cultures seem to be totally unknown to students here," she said. "Students and people in this area are accustomed to seeing and hearing Spanish on a regular basis, but French seems to be more of a novelty. Although we do not have as much exposure to the French, there are many French-speaking Canadian tourists who often stop in this area. I hope that students, administrators, and parents will support the program, as it is important to offer more than one modern language. The students have really shown an interest in it."

It is good to have a variety of languages to choose from in high school. Many of the students who are taking French at Riverheads have learned a lot about the language and the culture. They also have met with a French-speaking person who was in the United

See *FRENCH*, page 20

Analyze This turns Mafia don into couch potato

A movie review by Hannah's mom, Sue Simmons

"This is not the family I had in mind when I went into family practice!" shouts Benny Sobal as he tries to disengage himself from the clutches of a stressed-out Mafia don named Paul Vitti in *Analyze This*, a comedy now playing at the Bijou.

Vitti (Robert DeNiro) has "issues." He has lost his will to kill. Seized with panic attacks at bad times — like when he is trying to beat information out of another wiseguy — he finds himself crying during Kodak commercials.

Sobal (Billy Crystal) finds himself pressed into service as the shrink to the don — sort of like psychic to the stars. Vitti follows his shrink everywhere and never hesitates to call him whenever he feels the need, disrupts his wedding and ultimately involves Sobal in deeper than the psychiatrist cares to be. As Sobal, Crystal delivers the deadpan, priggish humor that is his trademark in movies like *When Harry Met Sally* and *City Slickers*. Unfortunately, this is not Crystal at his best. He plays it a little too ho-hum although he has moments of brilliance — like when he turns a big meeting of the Mafia into a group therapy session.

DeNiro is the real surprise. Ranked among America's best film actors, it is delightful to see DeNiro's comic side. Better known for his complex, violent roles, he delights the audience with a timing and sensibility that can't help but elicit a good laugh.

Other familiar faces pop up throughout the movie — even a cameo performance by Tony Bennett. Lisa Kudrow (Phoebe on TV's hit show Friends) does a nice job as Laura Macnamara, Sobal's bride-to-be and Chazz Palmetti as Preimo, Vitti's archenemy. The casting directors must have found every actor who ever played a wiseguy and put him in this movie. Joe Viterelli, one you'll recognize from every gangster movie and television show ever made since the 1950s, does a great job as Jelly, Vitti's right-hand-man and self-described "moron."

Kenneth Lonergan's and Harold Ramis' script is very predictable but it pokes great fun at therapy and every imaginable Italian stereotype. Ramis' direction doesn't flow always and at times you're left with the feeling an entire scene was chopped out. Although you won't be rolling in the aisles, the movie did have the audience laughing out loud more than expected; the humor is very adult and a little over the heads of the Gen X crowd. The one real downside was the excessive use of a certain expletive.

If you're a Billy Crystal fan or if you're just looking for something to wile away about 90 minutes, you might give *Analyze This* a look-see. Hannah's mom gives *Analyze This* two-and-a-half bananas. The movie is rated R for language, some violence, and adult content. —

•ACHS

Continued from page 14

Lyle, a historian and novelist from Lexington, will present the program, "Will the real John Lewis please stand up?"

In the banquet's evening program, noted local author and historian John Heatwole spoke to the group about folklore of the Shenandoah Valley. A popular speaker and radio personality, Heatwole's ties to the Shenandoah Valley stretch back to the 18th century when his family moved to Virginia from Pennsylvania around 1760. Some of his ancestors settled in Shenandoah, Rockingham, Augusta, Highland and Bath counties. Throughout those years, the family was noted for its craftsmen who included cabinetmakers, potters, weavers, long rifle makers, silversmiths and blacksmiths.

Heatwole followed family tradition and has pursued a career as a woodcarver and sculptor for almost three decades. In 1991 he became the first Virginia artist to be invited by the United States Senate to mount a solo exhibition of his work in the Senate Rotunda on Capitol Hill.

Heatwole has written two books: *Shenandoah Voices: Legends and Traditions of the Valley*, and *The Burning: Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley*. In his presentation to the Augusta County Historical Society, he noted that lore and legends of the area are rich and diverse. Heatwole has spent many years researching the tales, customs, superstitions and rituals of the area.

He included the following legends and lore in his presentation to the group.

Because it was necessary to have answers for inexplicable occurrences, the climate for witch lore flourished. Numerous stories circulate in the valley about witches, warlocks and wizards. One story told involved "witch dances" that were held each Friday at 1 a.m. at Seawright Springs in Mt. Sidney.

Heatwole also told of individuals who could "take the fire" out of a burn. Using incantations such as "Three little angels came down in fire and went back in frost," or "Fire won't burn, water won't quench, God's word never fails," people with the gift of "taking the fire" out could stop a burn from hurting.

He also told a story of a woman in Deerfield who was cured of skin cancer. A stranger traveling through the area used a mysterious ritual to cure the woman, according to legend.

It also was believed that dousing a child in the hog water trough would prevent fleas from biting for life.

At corn husking time, incentive to get the work done was prompted by the search for the red ear of corn. The person who found the red ear of corn during husking could kiss anyone he wanted to.

In concluding his "tale of tales," Heatwole said, "As the tadpole said when it became a frog, 'This is the end of my tail.'" —

•Dancing

Continued from page 9

In the 18th century many balls included a very formal meal. The dance would start around eight in the evening with the meal following a round of dances. This was the only time people could remove their white gloves. After the meal, the dance would continue into the wee hours of the morning for some. The less vigorous folks would have departed somewhat earlier.

The Imperial Garden Ball kept with many traditions, starting with a grand march as the first dance. Waltzes, polkas, the quadrilles followed, with the Last Waltz ending the evening. At the mid point, the Mary Baldwin College Performing Dance Group did a Scotch Reel, and the James Madison University Folk Dance Ensemble performed the Fledermaus Quadrille and the Viennese Waltz.

Toward the end of the evening, Gail and Leland Ticknor were honored for their efforts in helping to preserve and keep popular many traditional dances. Gail, who studied music at the New England Conservatory of Music, reworked traditional music for this ball, so the Caledonian Quartet would be able to play authentic songs. Leland met Gail at a traditional dance in Boston in 1950, they have been very active in promoting dancing ever since.

One of the most amazing things about this form of dance, is the grace with which everyone moves, especially the ladies in their long attire. Ms. Sarnelle discovered at least one woman who did not agree with how the ladies dressed for these affairs. In 1888, Florence Hall wrote, "It is the correct thing to remember that a woman who is pinched in at the waist with tight corsets, throttled around the neck with a tight collar, and cramped as to her feet with tight, high-heeled shoes, will walk about as gracefully as a swan on a turnpike road."

One thing is certain, people have FUN at these balls. Soon after the Imperial Garden Ball began, there was a "walk through," then a long dance with the participants gradually getting the hang of things. Near the end, it seemed they had been doing this many years. When the musicians finally stopped, a collective "Aaawwww," went up from the crowd!

A certain Lord Chesterfield once said, "Dancing is, in itself, a very trifling and silly thing: but it is one of those established follies to which people of sense are sometimes obliged to conform." All of the folks at the Imperial Garden Ball would beg to disagree.

If anyone is interested in attending a traditional ball, the Staunton Victorian Ball will be held 8 p.m. March 27 at McCormick's Ballroom. Call 332-3867 for more information. —

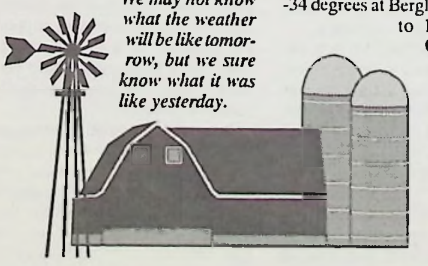
•French

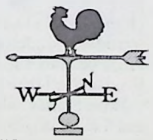
Continued from page 19

States as a student of agriculture, as well as one of Riverheads exchange students to learn more about the culture in Europe. With the support from the school board and the community, French is being offered next year to those who are interested in continuing their studies or those who want to begin. If the French program is utilized by people in our area, then this culture and language will be shared with students for many years to come. ---

Yesterday's weather

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





April 1, 1923 — Residents in the eastern U.S. awoke on "April Fool's Day" to bitterly cold temperatures. The mercury plunged to -34 degrees at Bergland, Mich., and to 16 degrees in Georgia.

April 9, 1877 — Oregon Inlet, N.C., was widened three-quarters-of-a-mile by a nor'easter.

April 18, 1944 — California experienced its worst hailstorm of record. Damage mounted to $2 million dollars as two consecutive storms devastated the Sacramento Valley destroying the fruit crop.

April 23, 1910 — The temperature at the Civic Center in Los Angeles, Calif., hit 100 degrees to establish an April record for the city.

April 29, 1905 — The town of Taylor, in southeastern Texas, was deluged with 2.4 inches of rain in 15 minutes. ---

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