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Augusta Country



Down on the Farm
Page 12

March 2000 Vol. 7, Issue 3

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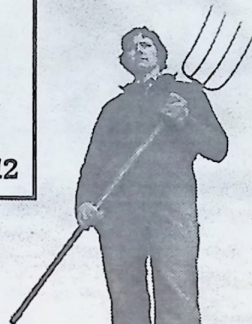


A voice from the past tells
about life in the
mountains near Sherando

Page 14

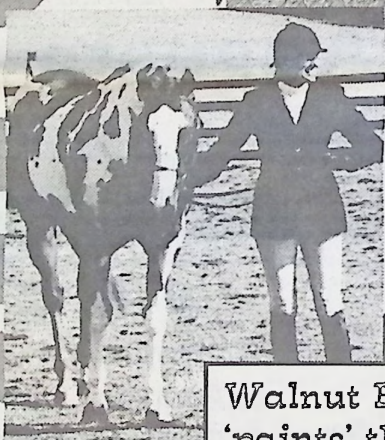
A view from the top
of the world --
conquering the heights
of Mt. Manure

Page 12



Robots encourage
BME students
to focus on reading

Page 15

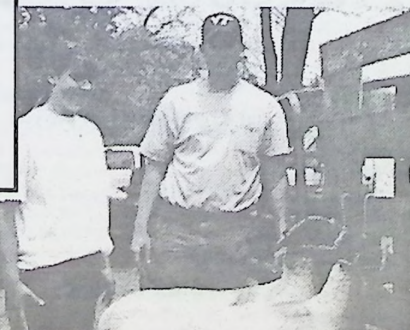


Walnut Bluff Farm
'paints' the town
with 'Invader'

Page 17

National
FFA Week,
Feb. 19-26

Page 4

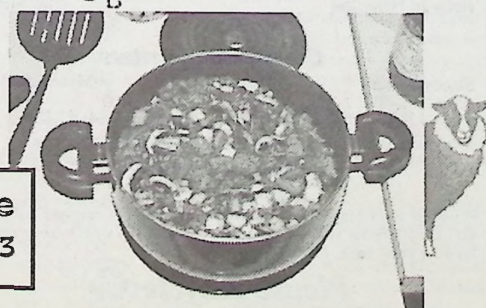


To Muckle Flugga
and back

Page 8



In the sauce
Page 13



2000

ACHS banquet to feature Lincoln family program

STAUNTON — Abraham Lincoln's roots in the Shenandoah Valley will be the topic of the program presented at the Augusta County Historical Society's annual banquet to be held April 4 at the Staunton Holiday Inn.

Dr. Phillip Stone, the president of Bridgewater College, is the evening's featured speaker. His presentation, "The Lincolns of Augusta / Rockingham County," looks at Abraham Lincoln's heritage long before he became associated with Illinois. It is a topic that is near to Dr. Stone's heart after researching the 16th president's family history for the last 24 years. His interest was sparked when he learned that his wife's family owned the original Lincoln family farm in Rockingham County. Dr. Stone and his wife built a house on the same farm and they lived there for 20 years before moving onto the campus of Bridgewater College.

"Among the visitors to the farm over the years have been Robert Todd Lincoln, Carl Sandburg, and most of the major Lincoln biographers. President Lincoln knew of

his roots here and exchanged correspondence with his cousin about genealogy," said Dr. Stone.

Dr. Stone, an eloquent speaker, will tell the audience how the Lincolns arrived in the area from Pennsylvania about 1768 when Rockingham County was still part of Augusta. Those first Lincolns were Abraham's great grandparents. They brought with them their nine children. Their migration into Virginia was probably influenced by Daniel Boone's family, also from Pennsylvania.

Most of the Lincolns were farmers. "Several fought in the Revolution as part of the Augusta militia. Later, some became business people including one physician. They were prominent in local leadership," said Dr. Stone.

Abraham Lincoln's grandparents and father did not linger in the area long after the American Revolution — they departed about 1782 — but many members of the Lincoln family remained. The Lincoln heritage is remembered in an annual ceremony to commemorate the birth of Abraham Lincoln which is held at the Lincoln Cemetery in Rockingham County. Dr. Stone has participated in that ceremony for more than two decades.

Dr. Stone, who is a native of Bassett, Va., graduated from Bridgewater College. In 1970 he received his law degree from the University of Virginia and prac-

ticed law in Harrisonburg from then until 1994 when he was invited to become president of Bridgewater College.

Dr. Stone's presentation on the Lincolns will follow a banquet meal and short business and awards program. The dinner begins at 7 p.m. with a social hour starting at 6 with a cash bar. Banquet tickets are \$20 and may be purchased at Terry Court Drug and The Bookstack in Staunton, the Purple Foot and the Waynesboro Heritage Foundation in Waynesboro and in Dayton at the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society. Tickets also may be purchased from the banquet committee chair, Barbara Wright, by calling 540/885-1315 or writing her at 9 Bagby Street, Staunton, VA 24401. No tickets will be sold after March 27 and there will be no tickets available at the door. —



STONE



David Beyeler, Augusta County Fair board member, stands with the poster that won first place in state competition.

and Elizabeth and Audrey Fuller, daughters of Aubrey and Barbara Fuller of Mt. Solon, participated in the Fair Association Youth Leadership contest.

The Augusta County Fair was recognized for communication awards in the following categories: photographic essay of the county's most recent fair, first place; media coverage, print media, third place; fair advertisements print media, third place.

The 2000 Augusta County Fair will be held Aug. 8-12 at Augusta Expoland in Fishersville. —

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Augusta representatives attend fair board meeting

WILLIAMSBURG — The Virginia Association of Fairs held its annual meeting and trade show on Jan. 7-8 in Williamsburg. The Augusta County Fair Board had five representatives in attendance. Fair board members who attended were David Beyeler, Tom Begoon, Susie Shiflett, Bill Hughes and Maxine Arey.

The meeting included workshops by fair professionals, a trade show, entertainment showcase, youth leadership presentations, and the Miss Virginia Association of Fairs Pageant.

Several county youth attended the conference and participated in various contests. Representing Augusta County in the Miss Virginia Association of Fairs Pageant was Rosalea Riley, daughter of Doug and Donna Riley of Staunton. There were 25 entries in the pageant and Miss Riley advanced to the top ten. This contest involved a day of interviews and public speaking, as well as a casual dress and evening dress competition.

Aaron Shiflett, son of Larry and Susie Shiflett of Grottoes,

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Members of Army's 605 recall job of troop support

By STACEY BAKER

SALISBURY, N.C. — The 605th Ordinance Battalion recently held a reunion in Salisbury, N.C. The 605th was a World War II United States Army battalion. The two-day event brought together about 30 or so veterans for catching up with each other, and to reminisce over events that occurred more than half a century in the past. Most of the veterans were in their 70s, a few in their 90s, but memories were as vivid as the events that created them.

The 605th had its beginnings as the 302nd Ordinance Regiment in April of 1942. It was an all-volunteer regiment, made up of men with special skills needed to keep an army in the field. Mechanics, carpenters, machinists, welders, and construction workers were needed and recruited for the war effort overseas.

The newly created unit began its career rather boringly, in the pine woods of North Carolina, at a place called Camp Sutton. It was located near the town of Monroe, south of Charlotte, near the South Carolina line. This was May 1942, just one month after the formation of the unit. Camp Sutton was a basic training camp, but the new volunteers

were to be there just a short while.

From there, it was on to Camp Forrest, Tenn. More training ensued, followed by another move in October to Camp Pickett, Va.

By this time the outfit had been well trained, and the men knew their jobs. They knew they would soon be headed overseas, but no one knew where.

On Dec. 7, 1942, the one-year anniversary of Pearl Harbor, the 302nd moved again to Fort Dix, N.J. In just a few weeks, they entered New York, boarded a former Swedish luxury liner and off they sailed, still not knowing where they were bound. It was not until after they had been at sea for several days that they were informed of their destination: North Africa.

On Jan. 27, 1943, the 302nd disembarked at Casablanca, in what was then French Morocco. They wasted no time hiking through the city to their bivouac area just a few miles away. Soon after that their work began in earnest.

Just what were the duties of an ordinance regiment? Front line troops could not carry on the war without a lot of support. They needed food, clothing, ammunition, jeeps, trucks, medical supplies, tanks, artillery — the list goes on and on. All of these things and more had to be unloaded from ships, uncrated, assembled, sorted, and transported to the front lines.

This was the main function of an ordinance regiment. The first concern in North Africa was to establish transportation. For this trucks were needed, a lot of them and big ones. Cranes were unloaded and an assembly line was set up. This became known as the "TUP" assembly line. TUP stood for "Two Pack Unit." Two trucks were disassembled in the States, and crated

together. This allowed ships to carry a much greater quantity. Upon arrival, the trucks were unpacked and re-assembled.

When a convoy arrived at Casablanca, the crates were unloaded and stacked in a holding area. The idea was to have everything in the holding area assembled before the arrival of the next convoy.

There was also a "SUP" line. This stood for "Single Pack Unit" and was used to assemble smaller trucks, jeeps, motorcycles and gasoline powered generators. The generators provided electricity for lighting, very necessary as the two assembly lines ran 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Production came to a halt only a few times, during air raids. Trenches had been dug in various locations around the work area. When the siren sounded, the trenches were soon occupied.

Both of these assembly lines soon became known as "Little Detroit," an accurate nickname, as 34,635 units were assembled during a 10-month period. In addition to assembly, the 302nd also repaired almost anything. If something was damaged in battle or simply broke down on the road, be it a bicycle, jeep or tank, American, French, British, or even a "liberated" German motorcycle, it was hauled in and repaired.

By October 1943, changes were in the air. The 302nd became the 605th Ordinance Base Armament Maintenance Battalion. That same month preparations were made to move to a new theater of operations. Tools and machinery were packed and crated and by November the newly renamed 605th was headed across the Mediterranean to Naples, Italy to support the operations of the Fifth Army.

The harbor of Naples was beautiful but still dangerous. One of the ships carrying members of the 605th hit a mine, resulting in the loss of 75 lives.



Members of the 605th Battalion work on the heavy truck assembly line in Casablanca, North Africa.

Despite the terrible beginning, the work had to go on. The men disembarked and began work to move to their new base north of Naples. What they encountered was some of the worst devastation they had yet witnessed. Hardly a part of Naples was untouched by war. Allied bombs had done much and the retreating Germans had destroyed more. The residents were ragged, dirty, and hungry. Fires were kindled in the streets for warmth. Children followed the G.I.s as they passed, begging for food, candy, and cigarettes.

When the destination was finally reached, no time was wasted in setting up shop. The German air force wasted no time either, welcoming the men of the 605th with two air raids the first day. Their shop was so close to the front, the flash of artillery could be seen at night, followed by the rumbling boom. The air raids soon settled into a routine — several a week, many times, several in one night. Again, trenches had been dug in handy locations and were frequently made use of.

It was in Italy that the 605th had as much repair work as new equipment assembly work. Another holding area was established, this one for damaged equipment. It was not unusual for a tank to be brought in with a hole cleanly drilled in one side. It was exactly 88 millimeters across, the diameter of a German artillery shell.

As the amount of operations increased, so did the labor force. Local Italians were recruited as well as a group of German prisoners. This group of Germans was very good at woodworking, so one of their projects was to build a mahogany bar for the officers club, complete with a brass foot rail!

Scavenging also occurred and was sometimes necessary to get the job done. One member of the 605th was down at the docks in Naples

one night. He found a perfectly good Ford tractor painted Navy gray. Upon inquiring of some sailors, he found it had some steering and front end problems and they had no use for it. Two days later, the tractor was painted olive drab, and was busy towing a wagon of gas and oil around the camp of the 605th, keeping the generators serviced. The front end problem had been solved using Jeep parts!

The men did have some entertainment. A theater of sorts was put together in a bombed building with a scavenged Italian movie projector. When found, it had been in pieces and abandoned. Somewhere in the 605th, the knowledge and skill was found to get it operational. Indeed, there was an unofficial saying among the outfit. They could repair anything from a G.I. watch to a multi-ton tank.

Even after hostilities had ended in Europe, the services of the 605th were needed. There was a shortage in southern Italy of baby bottle nipples. The problem was turned over to the tire recapping department of the 605th. In a short time new bottle nipples were being distributed to those in need.

Even decades after hostilities had ended, the experiences of the 605th lived on and helped in another war. At a reunion in Fort Knox, Tenn., recently, an Army officer said that techniques of packing, shipping, unpacking and assembling equipment developed by the 605th during World War II were used again. This time in the Persian Gulf War, when massive amounts of men and equipment had to be moved a great distance in a short span of time.

As one veteran reminisced, they had a few moments of fun, but for three years it was mostly work, seven days a week. He summed it up simply and to the point. "We had a job to do, and we did it."



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When middle and high school students sign up and become FFA members, they take the first step toward a commitment that can lead to future personal and professional success. Agricultural education, a supervised agricultural experience and FFA form a solid foundation for students to develop leadership skills, global agricultural knowledge and practical experience needed to succeed in their careers and everyday life.

National FFA adviser Dr. Larry D. Case, says that "FFA takes classroom knowledge and brings it to life and provides many opportunities for members to develop self-confidence, leadership skills and positive values."

Dressed in their familiar blue and

gold jackets, FFA members are popularly associated with raising animals or growing crops. From this proud heritage, many people are surprised to discover there are more than 300 careers in the business, science and industry of agriculture. FFA members — from urban, suburban and rural areas — are preparing for careers in such diverse fields as genetic engineering, marketing, law and communications. The number of agriculture positions is anticipated to expand as countries depend more on the United States for their food, fiber and natural resource requirements.

FFA members

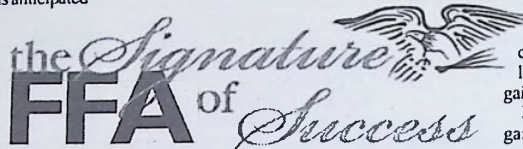
from the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam will organize events and activities to build awareness of agricultural education and support during National FFA Week, Feb. 19-26. National FFA Week is held each year during the week of George Washington's birthday to recognize his leadership and commitment to American agriculture.

Financial support for National FFA Week promotional materials is provided by Case Corp. as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

This year's theme, "FFA the Signature of Success," illustrates how FFA's programs allow students the opportunity to apply classroom information to real-life situations. Even if students decide not to pursue one of the hundreds of agricultural careers, they benefit from public speaking skills, career experience and leadership skills gained from the FFA.

FFA is a national organization of 450,752

members preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture. Local, state and national programs provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. The organization has 7,240 local chapters located throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands. FFA's mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. National FFA Online, www.ffa.org, FFA's internet website, can provide information about the National FFA. —



FFA keeps members busy at Buffalo Gap

BUFFALO GAP — Buffalo Gap FFA has gotten off to a great start for the 1999-2000 school year. The officers for the year are Rosalea Riley, president; Mandy Robinson and Danielle Gayhart, vice presidents; Emily Curry and Thomas Lail, secretaries; James Ramsey and Hock Jones, treasurers; Katie Killingsworth and Tina Wilson, reporters; Ryan Hewitt and Jon Shipe, sentinels; Matt Nettles, student adviser; and Amanda Coyner and Allen Rawley, historians.

The year started off with the freshman picnic. The next activity that the FFA sponsored was making food for a foster home in Verona. The meal was cooked and delivered to the local family which had five children. The FFA also built a soccer goal for this family. At Christmas, FFA members went



The FFA tractor operators' contest is held in October. This contest allows students to show their abilities in backing both two- and four-wheeled wagon/implements through a prescribed course.

Christmas caroling at Oak Hill Nursing Home and King's Daughters' Nursing Home. This year a total of 1,200 boxes of fruit were sold. The local public speaking contest was held Feb. 2.

Currently members of the FFA officer team are practicing hard for the parliamentary procedure contest. Future events in the making for the FFA department are FFA week. Monday will kick off with

an FFA day. Tuesday members will cook the annual faculty breakfast. Wednesday is the mini animal fair held at Buffalo Gap. Thursday is ag Olympics where schools within the federation come to Gap to compete in a field day relating to farming. Friday is the manless and womanless beauty contest. Other events coming up in the spring are Food for America and the Market Animal Show. —

Fort FFA top in state

FORT DEFIANCE — This Year's Virginia Association of Agricultural Educators selected Fort Defiance High School's FFA program as Virginia's Outstanding FFA Program. The chapter advisers were presented with a plaque at the State Agriculture Teachers Conference in June. Fort Defiance was then selected as the National Association of Agriculture Educators Region VI outstanding program. The advisers were sent to Orlando by the Case Tractor Company for winning the national award.

The Fort Defiance chapter is fortunate to have one of its former students back as the new agriculture teacher. Kate Morris graduated from Virginia Tech and taught at North Fork Middle School before coming back to Fort.

The chapter earned numerous awards during the 1999 state convention. The agricultural marketing, junior mechanics, horse judging, and agricultural sales teams placed first in the state. The chapter was recognized in the National Chapter Contest in all three divisions. The chapter received a silver in public relations and received an area plaque for winning the Northern Area junior forestry contest, Northern Area tractor troubleshooting contest, and junior and senior soils

contests. The chapter also placed second in the junior dairy judging contest and sixth in the livestock judging contest. In the junior public speaking contest Wendy Slusher placed second. Thirteen members received their State FFA degree. Two members were state proficiency award winners.

Fourteen members attended the National FFA convention. The ag sales team received a gold rating, the horse judging team received a silver and the marketing team received a bronze rating. The chapter was recognized as a two star chapter and five members received their American degrees.

On Feb. 24 during National FFA Week, we will be holding our annual venison feast. Last year we prepared and served 25 deer hams for chapter members. The chapter will also hold a faculty lunch, have radio programs, and numerous other local activities.

The chapter banquet will be held March 27. Our local PALS program will be held March through May and our Food for America program will be held in May.

Two new classes will be added for the 2000-01 school year. One will be in equine science the other will be a class that will combine biology and agriculture. —

Draft FFA members enjoy success

STUARTS DRAFT — The Stuarts Draft FFA is enjoying a fulfilling and exciting year. We began the year on a positive note. Forestry contest team members practiced hard and achieved their goal of winning the federation contest. They moved on and placed fourth in the area contests. During October, our chapter sent eight members to the National FFA Convention in Louisville, Ky. Our Environmental and Natural Resources contest team represented Virginia and placed ninth in national competition. Our FFA activities have been very successful thus far.

The agricultural education department at SDHS offers two program options in agriculture. Our natural resources management op-

tion has been busy involving students in managing our natural resources. One of our chapter's biggest projects this year has been renovating the nature trail at Guy K. Stump Elementary School which was reopened in the fall of 1999. The trail, originally constructed in 1980, had begun to deteriorate and was in need of many improvements. The natural resources classes have taken on this project and expect completion in the spring of 2000.

Our agricultural machinery service option area has been busy building and repairing projects in

our laboratory. In October, we exhibited projects at the State Fair of Virginia. During the course of the year, we have built and repaired trailers, lawn mowers, truck bodies, and many other engineering projects. Students will use the skills they are learning to gain employment or maintain equipment around their homes or farms.

We are planning a busy FFA week for our members at SDHS. We are currently planning a faculty chili feast, a womanless beauty contest, and many fun activities for members. We are looking forward to the remainder of our school year. —

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Cole Helzer, a freshman member of the RHS FFA chapter, delivers a speech during the public speaking contest held recently. He placed first in the chapter and second in the federation.

RHS chapter helps members build skills

GREENVILLE — The Riverheads FFA Chapter has an enrollment of 80 members for the 1999-00 school year.

In the fall, contests such as forestry judging and tractor driving provided many opportunities for students. Bryan Shomo won the chapter tractor driving contest and placed third in the federation. In September the chapter received the outstanding mechanics Exhibit award at the Virginia State Fair and sold ads for the FFA calendar. Neal Buchanan was selected as president of the Augusta Federation and Drew Glenn was selected as director for the 1999-2000 year.

During October the chapter conducted the annual citrus fruit sale. Top salesmen were Timmy

Simmons, Neal Buchanan, and Philip Miller. Chapter members Neal Buchanan, Drew Glenn, Timmy Simmons, Adam Glenn, Sarah Huntley, and Jessica Hayes represented Riverheads in Louisville Ky., at the national FFA convention.

In December 1,400 boxes of citrus fruit arrived and were delivered to the customers to complete the fund-raising program for the year.

During February the public speaking contest was held with competitions in prepared and extemporaneous public speaking. Drew Glenn represented the chapter in senior extemporaneous, Jonathan Coleman in senior prepared, and Cole Heizer in junior prepared. The week Feb. 21-

25 is National FFA Week during which time the chapter joins in the celebration by conducting numerous activities including a tractor day, toy farm show, farm animal show, hay stacking contest, and much more. The parliamentary procedure contest is held at the end of the month.

A program called "Food For America" was presented at Riverheads Elementary School career day during the month of April. This gives youth a hands-on look at agriculture in today's world.

A dairy judging contest, the market animal show and a livestock judging contest dominate the month of May. The chapter also holds its annual parent-member awards banquet in May. During

June, a selected group of members will attend the state FFA convention held at Virginia Tech.

The many activities sponsored by the Riverheads FFA chapter make the year very busy and exciting.

Officers for the year are Neal Buchanan, president; Drew Glenn and Jason McIlwee, co-vice presidents; Amanda Hemp and Bryan Shomo, co-secretaries; Carrie Brown and Aaron Root, co-treasurers; Sarah Huntley and Timmy Simmons, co-reporters; Jonathan Coleman and Erin Lowry, co-sentinel; Stephanie Branch and Jessica Hayes, co-historians; Justin Fravel, student adviser; Frank Dull and Adam Glenn, directors; and Gene McIlwee, adviser. —

Stewart Middle meets challenges in FFA

FORT DEFIANCE — The 120 members of the Stewart Middle FFA chapter have been very active this year in working to make its members successful through the FFA. The chapter's year started in early August, with 15 members participating in a three-day leadership workshop with the Beverley Manor FFA Chapter.

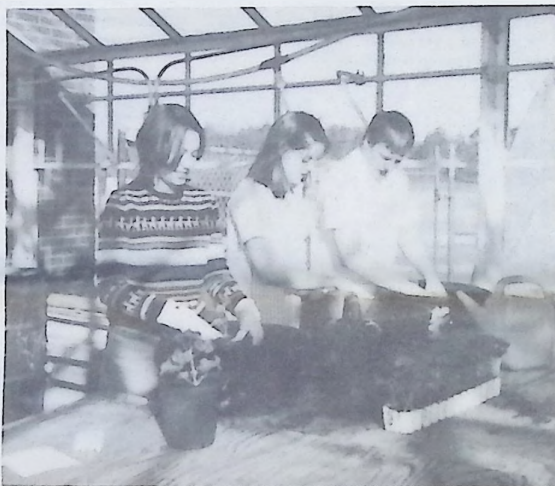
Other activities participated in by chapter members thus far include: 22 members to the Virginia State Fair, 20 members participating in the AES/FFA Leadership Conference at Virginia Tech, 10 members

attending the Augusta County FFA Federation Leadership Conference, one team competing in the Federation Small/Companion Animal Career Development Event and two teams in the FFA Quiz Bowl, partnering with the Stewart Middle FFA and TSA chapters in the Virginia adopt-a-highway program, 46 members and parents traveling to the Pennsylvania State Farm Show and 10 members participating in WVPT's Young Environmentalist Contest. The chapter also had a participant in the Federation Creed speaking event.

Upcoming FFA activities include, participation in the spring, middle school FFA events, the Augusta 4-H & FFA Market Animal Show and Augusta FFA Federation dairy and livestock judging events. The chapter's year will conclude with a parent-member banquet in May and attendance at Virginia's State FFA Convention in June.

Chapter officers are: Grace Guishall, president; Jason Alford, vice president; Christy Huffman, secretary and federation sentinel; Ashleigh Harris, treasurer; Tori Crandall, reporter; Tyler Urgo, sentinel; Jenna McAllister, student adviser; Rachael Morris and Alaina Knotts, historians; and Chad Wilkins, sergeant-at-arms.

During FFA Week, members have planned ag skills contests, a faculty breakfast, giveaways, trivia competitions, and assisting with Stewart Middle's 20th birthday. Click on our web page at www.augusta.k12.va.us/sms/ffa to see photos of our members in action. —



Rhonda Brown, Michele Cash and Jeremy Glass, horticulture students at Stewart Middle School, pot a few of the 2,200 geraniums FFA members will sell May 1.

BMMS FFA sponsors many events

CEDAR GREEN — The Beverley Manor Middle School FFA Chapter is 97 members strong. Chapter members participate in a variety of events and activities including chapter meetings, citrus fruit and flower sales, community service projects, career development events (contests) and recreational activities. Chapter officers are selected each semester to co-

ordinate monthly activities. The 1999-2000 school year will come to a close in June with the State FFA Convention where members will use their skills and knowledge gained in AgriScience classes and practices and compete with other FFA members in activities on the campus of Virginia Tech.

This year the FFA chapter is dedicating its time helping to serve the community in various ways. FFA members raised \$1,000 to send to FFA members in hurricane/flood damaged Windsor, Va. Eighth grade FFA members will be participating in the FFA sponsored "PALS" program with the first grade at Beverley Manor Elementary School. Twice a month, FFA members will be sponsoring various activities for the first graders

to participate in.

Agricultural awareness is also a major project for the FFA. AG DAY 2000 is a program for the sixth grade students at Beverley Manor Middle School to enhance their awareness about agriculture.

For recreational activities, the FFA will hold several open gyms for members and their families, as well as their fourth annual FFA BUCKS Auction where FFA members participate in an auction, spending play money that they earn by participating in FFA activities.

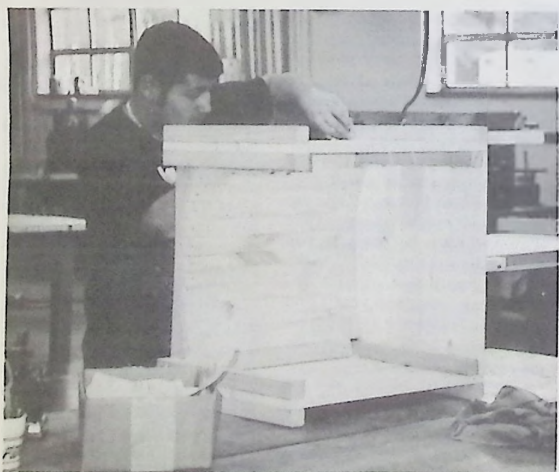
The FFA at Beverley Manor Middle School strives to challenge each member to develop his or her potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Sally W. Shomo serves as the chapter adviser. —

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National FFA Week, Feb. 19-26



Mike Emerson puts the final touches on a firewood caddy constructed by the agriculture mechanics classes.

Staunton man recruits top Fantasy Football team

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON — The NFL playoffs and the Super Bowl are over, Kurt Warner and his fellow Rams have been to Disney World and are back home, but weren't those four weeks great? Who will forget the Tennessee Titans, the St. Louis Rams, and the Peanut Dudes? Wait a minute...the Peanut Dudes??

Yep, even as the football strategists were plotting and planning for the championship race in the NFL, about 4,000 fantasy football competitors across the U.S. and Canada were doing the same thing in the USA Today Football Playoff Challenge. And right here in Staunton, George Taylor's Peanut Dudes were going for the gold. With only the big game yet to play, George's team was ranked first in the nation with a shot to make the USA Today Football Fantasy Hall of Fame. Unfortunately, No. 1 was just out of his grasp this year. When the game clock on the Super Bowl ran down and the final statistics were crunched, the Peanut Dudes were fourth, still in the money and with a more-than-respectable finish against about 4,000 other "team owners" but without the championship crown.

Interest in fantasy football, and all fantasy sports competitions, has skyrocketed as more and more people have access to the internet. For many sports fans, these fantasy competitions serve to further their interest in professional athletic competitions as they research and closely follow the performances of their "chosen players." As a result, there is no such thing as a casual fan among fantasy sports competitors.

For a retired accountant and long-time NFL fan like George, fantasy football is just up his alley because it offers the opportunity to couple his number crunching ability with his interest in sports.

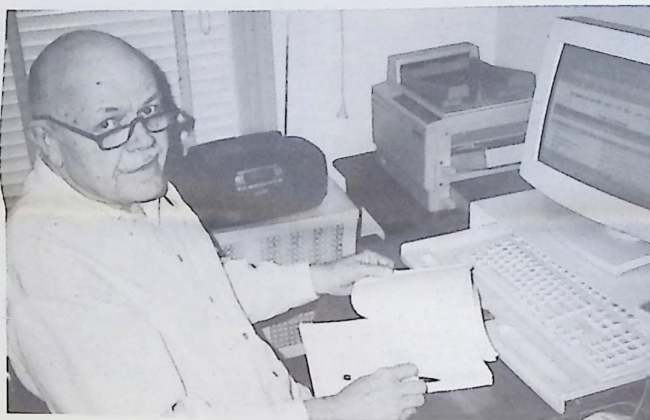
George is the first to admit that baseball is probably his top sports love, but interest in the NFL is a close, and long-time, second. He can even pinpoint exactly when he became an NFL fan, or more specifically a Washington Redskins fan. "It was in 1950 or 1951 the year Mom bought our first television. We could get Washington

Redskins games on the television and I remember watching their running back named Charlie "Choo Choo" Justice," he said.

Through good times and bad, he has remained staunchly loyal to the Skins. But he is also a fan of the game. His interest in fantasy football, where people build imaginary teams using real life players and then create "competitions" based on the statistical performances of the real life players, was sparked back in 1995. "I was invited to join a fantasy league in Elkton — this was a bunch of guys who had organized this league and had run it for several years. Their game was organized around a Strat-O-Matic football game so we actually played a season with our teams and the NFL players were rated accord-

There is the Football Challenge, Internet Football, and the Football Playoff Challenge.

The Football Challenge is basically set up for making changes through a toll-free phone number, while Internet Football is set up for making changes on the internet. These two leagues are played the same way and run during the 17-week regular season. The other difference in the two is the expense incurred to the competitors with the Football Challenge costing more (about \$250 per year), but returning more prize money (the top winner could take home more than \$27,000). Internet Football, on the other hand, costs only \$25 a year to play because there are no transaction fees, but has a top prize of just over \$5,000.



NFL "team owner" George Taylor of Staunton studies his "team roster" for his Fantasy Football team. Just before the Super Bowl in January, one of Taylor's teams was ranked No. 1 in USA Today's nationwide fantasy gridiron competition.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

ing to the prior year stats. Once you were in the league you kept the same team year to year, but a big deal was the draft they had every year which gave you a chance to improve your team," he explained.

He eventually tired of the weekly drives to Elkton and began casting about for something similar but closer to home. When his eyes landed on an ad in USA Today for Fantasy Football games played on the internet, he was hooked. In reality, USA Today runs three different Fantasy Football competitions and George has dabbled in each.

The Playoff Challenge is basically run the same way as the other two leagues except the season is only four weeks long because it starts with the wildcard weekend and ends with the Super Bowl. There is also no salary cap during the Playoff Challenge, transactions can be made by phone or internet, and the cost to the participant is about \$75.

The games and the scoring are all worked out by a company called CDM Fantasy whose only business is to run fantasy games. According to George, the whole thing is a smooth-running operation. "I have yet to experience the first glitch," he said.

Briefly, here is how all the leagues work. Around June, USA Today publishes a list of NFL players for the year, along with an imaginary salary figure which is determined by how each player performed the previous year. For

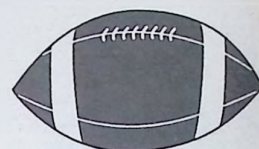
example, Super Bowl MVP Kurt Warner was very cheap in June of 1999 because he had no track record. His Fantasy Football salary was \$750,000. Since the Super Bowl, his stock has obviously gone up, and the June 2000 list will probably have his salary in the \$2-3 million range.

Fantasy Football owners pick their players from the newspaper list. Everyone picks a 20-man starting team consisting of three kickers, three quarterbacks, six running backs, two tight ends, and six wide receivers. During the regular season the 20-man starting team must at all times remain at or below a \$30 million salary cap. Owners also pick a 10-man taxi squad with no constraints of position or salary on these players. During the week you can switch freely between starting and taxi squads but the starting squad always has to have the right number of positions represented and be under the salary cap.

There are no defensive players chosen in Fantasy Football because the standings within the 25-team leagues are based on offensive statistics in eight categories: passing yards, passing average, rushing yards, rushing average, receiving yards, receiving average, kicker total scoring, and total scoring. Owners have to carefully track injuries and place non-competing players on the taxi squad. Players who are in a bye week must also be removed from the starting squad. Nothing will make a ranking plummet faster than a zero stat week which is what an injured or bye-week player would have.

"Even one mistake here can ruin your season," George explained of the player shuffling that goes on throughout the year. "You are allowed 10 purchases during the season which is not many so you have to use them carefully. As the season progresses, injuries become a big factor and you'll find yourself scrambling all the time just to keep healthy players on your starting team."

George's first venture into the USA Today games took place in 1997 when he played in the Football Challenge and the Playoff Challenge. It was a learning year and his overall standings against the approximately 10,000 other players reflected that. "I did lousy



my first year — kinda started out in 20th place in my league and something like 8,000th overall and just kinda stayed there all year. I played the Playoff Challenge that year and finished seventh in my league so the apparent improvement gave me encouragement for next year."

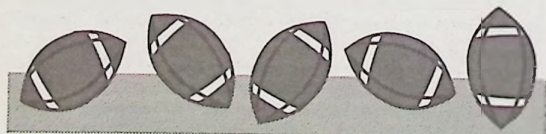
Buoyed by his playoff success, he played again in 1998 and finished fifth in his league and 150th overall, putting him into the prize money bracket. "I think I won \$50 that year, while it cost me \$250 to play, still a milestone since it was the first time I had won anything!" he said with a touch of humor.

In 1999 he decided to scale back the financial outlay, but compete more, so he switched to the Internet Football league and played two teams. "It cost me \$40 to play the whole season (for the two teams). One team did lousy; I think I finished 12th in my league and 2,500th overall. But the other team finished fifth in my league and I think 250th overall. I won \$10, but then it only cost me \$40 to play and it was actually an exciting finish. With three weeks before the end of the season I think I was in 12th place with seven teams and 16th with the other, so I made a big run at the end to get into fifth and 12th. Lesson learned — "Never Give Up!" he said.

Just like any hobby, Fantasy Football can be very time consuming. So much so that George's wife, Sandy, jokes that she is a "Fantasy Football widow" for six months of the year. Not only does George have to watch all of his players on Sunday and Monday night when they play, but then he has to spend time during the week researching players, mentally pitting some of his players against the defenses they will face in the upcoming week, etc.

"I guess you are looking at about 25 hours a week," George confessed. "Wow, if I put that into something constructive, I'd be dynamite wouldn't I? Guess if you average that over my six months off, it is not too bad. Oh well, everybody does something for entertainment," he added.

See FANTASY, page 7



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•Fantasy

Continued from page 6

One of the best things about Fantasy Football as compared to fantasy baseball and basketball for instance is that a fantasy football owner can actually watch all of his players perform because NFL teams play just once a week. A fantasy baseball owner would be hard pressed to watch ALL the games in baseball for any given week.

However, George is quick to add that his passion for the Redskins has not dimmed in the slightest and watching Washington is still his top priority even if one of his fantasy players is up against the Skins. "I can watch them just like I used to and root for them totally. In fact, when I watch the Skins I don't even switch back and forth between other games, so a Redskin win is still number one!"

Of course, some of the Redskins were actually on his fantasy teams meaning he could double his fun. Four Washington players, Brad Johnson, Stephen Davis, Albert Connell, and Stephen Alexander, were on his Fantasy Football teams and all had pretty good years.

"Unfortunately, for several years the Redskins have had a bad rushing defense which makes them a prime target using a Fantasy Football running back against them. Every week you look for those matchups — good running back against a weak rushing defense or a good quarterback or wide receiver against a weak pass defense. When the Skins played the 49ers late in the season, I just knew that the 49ers running back, Charlie Garner, would have a dynamite night against the Skins so I purchased him and put him in my starting lineup for the game. Sure enough he had a huge night, but in an example of having my cake and eating it too, the Skins pulled out a win," he said.

Obviously success in Fantasy Football involves a lot of strategy plus just the right amount of luck, exactly as in the real games. "Your overall strategy and team management have to be great, but in the final analysis, luck will probably determine whether you win or lose. I strive to do a perfect job (but haven't gotten there

yet) of managing those things in my control so as to get my team in a good position if Lady Luck comes to call," he said.

The hardest part of the planning involves managing injuries. "It is crucial that you not leave a player on your starting team if he is unable to play because of an injury. That would mean a zero in the stats. So you have to be constantly alert to any of your players who may sustain an injury and assess that injury to determine how serious it is. Will he be out for the season? Out for a few weeks? Or day to day with the possibility he might play the following week."

The NFL requires that every team publish injury reports that classify injuries as: Out (won't play that week), Doubtful (less than a 25 percent chance to play), Questionable (50-50 chance) or Probable (75 percent chance to play). George has identified a number of websites that do a good job of tracking injuries, but, citing "trade secrets," he is tight lipped about exactly which sites he uses.

One of George's better picks this year was Washington's Stephen Davis, who had a heroic performance in the playoffs when he turned in a terrific game despite a hairline fracture of the ankle. Davis turned in winning performances all season for George's Fantasy Football teams and was a real bargain as far as salary at just \$400,000.

Because of his deep interest in the Redskins and because he can pick up the *Washington Post* and follow the players through local television and radio stations, he probably has an advantage over Fantasy Football competitors in other sections of the country when it comes to Washington picks.

"I saw the developing competition between Stephen Davis and Skip Hicks for the starting running back spot. Before the season started I decided it was going to be Davis and decided to take a chance on him. I also knew that the

Redskins still love to pound the ball so knew Davis was going to get a lot of carries. Of course the gamble paid off handsomely. I was hoping that he would have a good season; little did I expect he would have a great season. The down side on the Stephen Davis thing is I hate to think what his salary will be next season!"

Throughout the season, of course, Davis had no idea that he was putting in such a stellar effort for the Sand Schnauzers and the Peanut Dudes, the names of George's two teams. Every team in the Fantasy Football league has to have a unique name and those two certainly are different. When he first entered the league he was asked to give his team's name. He said Schnauzers.

Turns out there already was a team by that name so he said, "How about Staunton Schnauzers?" That worked, so the first year he played as the Staunton Schnauzers. Well the next year rolled around and he decided to use the same name. "Of course the guy asks me to spell Schnauzers, but not Staunton. When I get my first report I see my team name is Sand Schnauzers. 'Okay, this is kinda neat,' I thought. 'I'll go with that,'" he explained of the evolution of his team's name.

This past year when he decided to enter a second team he was forced to come up with another unique name. The inspiration came from his visiting grandson, Jason, who was telling his grandfather about a professional baseball game he had attended. "He kept making a reference to the peanut dude, so I said, 'Wait a minute Jason, just who is the peanut dude?' He said, 'You know Granddaddy, the guy who sells peanuts at the stadium! Well Sandy and I got such a laugh out of that, that when it came time to name my second team, it came to me in a flash — of course, the Peanut Dudes!"

After the regular season, it was the Peanut Dudes who went on to such glory in the four-week Playoff Challenge. Suddenly all the preparation and research began to pay off and Lady Luck came by for a visit as well.

"After the first week of the playoffs I checked the standings and I was in second place in my league and 40th overall. Needless to say I got excited because this was the best I had ever ranked at any time in three years of playing!"

Things would get better yet. After week two of the competition he was in second place in his league and third place overall, among the four-thousand or so competitors. "I instantly caught the wonderful fragrance of the \$5,200 prize," he said.

"I started looking at the teams right around me, say first through 10th overall. At this point I had four of my five allowed purchases left. All the teams around me looked very similar in terms of having the same players, so I was looking for a strategy that would make a difference in the standings. I noticed that the category I was weakest in was rushing yards and I also noticed that there were only about 30 yards separating me from the top scorers. I made the decision to go for an extra running back instead of a wide receiver and picked Jacksonville running back James Stewart. As things turned out Stewart only got three carries in the game, but on one of them he popped a 33-yard touchdown run. That not only gave me the yardage I needed but a rushing touchdown to boot."

That gamble of going with a back-up running back paid off. After week three George was first in his league AND first in the entire country! "Now I am starting to think about spending the \$5,200," he joked of his thoughts at the time.

His enthusiasm was quickly dashed when he looked at the other teams breathing down his neck and realized that the rosters were almost identical except they had an extra wide receiver which he did not have — Rams wide receiver Torry Holt.

Watching the Super Bowl was agonizing for George. "I felt if the Titans could keep Holt contained

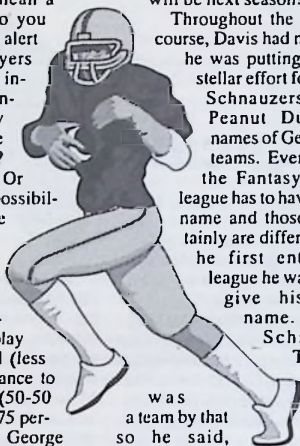
that I would probably win, but alas it was not to be. He had a big day, over 100 receiving yards and when he caught the touchdown pass I knew that was the final nail in my coffin. It was PAINFUL watching that," he noted.

The end result for the Peanut Dudes was still quite admirable: first in the league, fourth overall and \$700 in prize money. The most disappointing thing about not finishing on top, though, was not the money, but the fact that only the first place finisher gets inducted into the *USA Today* Fantasy Football Hall of Fame.

Oh well, there's always next year. Although he would like to shoot for the Hall of Fame again next season, George said that realistically he would like to learn from his mistakes, modify his techniques and try to win the regular season league championship. "Oh yea, one other goal for next year — you can bet Torry Holt will be on my team!" he added.

As he heads into his off season and gets over the disappointment of not being in the Hall of Fame, George has been able to sit back and reflect on why he has enjoyed Fantasy Football so much. "It provides an outlet for my competitive nature and it is fun to match wits with others which can also be a humbling experience. Just when you think you have been exceptionally clever you can always find some folks out there who have been a half step ahead of you all along. Also, it is just plain fun to win or to try to win."

"As you can see from the scoring system and salary cap that this is very much a numbers game and so it provides some of the things I used to enjoy about my accounting profession. I have even developed some Lotus spreadsheets which help me manage the salary cap. But I can tell you this — fantasy football is a lot more fun than doing tax returns. You know there are about a zillion different fantasy games out there, but I have no interest in any of those other games. I believe fantasy football is the only thing that uniquely combines all the elements I enjoy. This stuff provides me six months of pretty intensive entertainment value, but then gives me six months off to do other things."





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Notes from the road

In this issue, *Augusta Country* writer Nancy Sorrells completes her report on a recent visit to the British Isles, this time treating us to the many splendors of the Shetland Isles. We'll even spend a few moments visiting with one of Shetland's "crofters."

Shetland Islands: Mythical, mystical, magical

By NANCY SORRELLS

SHETLAND ISLANDS — We wanted to finish up the birthday celebration with something a little different. While reading our guidebooks about Scotland we chanced upon a brief account of the Shetland Islands, an archipelago off the northern coast of Scotland. Although the run-of-the-mill travel books usually dismiss these Scottish islands as too remote for the average visitor, we knew instantly that we had found our grand finale.

So, after dropping Roberta Hamlin off at the conclusion of our whirlwind Scottish mainland tour, Sarah and I navigated ourselves back to a nice B&B under the bridge that spans the Firth of Forth and takes one to the Edinburgh Airport where we were to fly to Shetland. As my friend from Northern Ireland kept

saying about the islands, "It's a long way up there." She was right. Our flight departed Edinburgh and made a hop to Wick, still in Scotland proper, and then we took off and headed north out over the ocean.

A glance around the plane confirmed that, especially this time of the year (late September), we were not going to a tourist hotspot. There were 18 hardy souls on board and the flight crew. With the exception of the flight attendant, we were the only women.

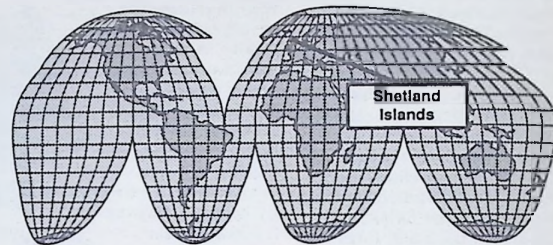
Once we were 93 miles north of the Scottish mainland, the islands arose in the line of our vision. We had arrived. We landed at Sumburgh airport, the biggest airstrip on the islands, but still small enough that the runway crosses the only road to that end of the island. When planes take off or land, a blinking red light halts automobiles

so that the two types of traffic don't inadvertently mix. Landing requires some precision on the pilot's part and a miscalculation of a few yards could easily send the plane hurtling into the ocean.

As Britain's northernmost land, Shetland is far away from the rest of Scotland, but is a mere 60 miles from Norway. The 60-degree line of latitude passes through the middle of the biggest island, placing these islands on the same latitude as Anchorage, Alaska; the tip of Greenland; Oslo, Norway; and Leningrad, Russia. To give one better perspective as to how far Shetland is from anything else British, think about this: Lerwick, the capital of Shetland, and Milan, Italy are both the same distance from London!

The overall defining feature of the islands is the ocean, both the Atlantic and the North Sea wash the shores. There are actually 109 separate islands, ranging in size from the biggest, called Mainland, which is 351 square miles, to the smallest which are just hunks of rock jutting out of the ocean. Only nine of the islands are inhabited by humans. Some interesting statistics: 22,000 people are scattered across all the islands, there are 906 miles of coastline, and nowhere in the islands is one more than three miles from the ocean.

The islands have a fascinating story to tell with a dramatic scenery shaped by the Ice Age 10,000 years ago and by humans for the last 5,000 years. Within a stone's throw of our hotel (a converted laird's manor house) was Jarlshof,



an archaeological treasure-trove. The site has, sandwiched layer on top of layer, more than 4,000 years of history. At the bottom is a stone age site, then a bronze age farm, an iron age forge, a Pict settlement, a Viking settlement, a Middle Ages site, and finally a 17th-century manor house. The archaeological detective work required to unravel the stories told in the crumbling rock walls and artifacts is extraordinary.

The more "recent" history of the islands is much easier to document and can be summed up as "500 years of Norse (Viking) rule followed by 500 years of Scottish rule." The Vikings who came here were farmers who established agricultural settlements. In 827 the King of Norway set up an earldom here. The parliament met on a circular island of earth built in the middle of a loch and connected to the shore by an earthen causeway. This topographical feature, called Tingwell, can still be seen.

In the late 14th century, Norway, Denmark and Sweden were ruled by Denmark. As part of a marriage dowry when the king of Denmark's daughter married the Scottish king's son, the islands changed

hands from Norway to Scotland. Five hundred years later, however, the Norse influence remains strong. Most Shetland placenames, for instance, have Norse roots and the English language of the islanders is interspersed with many dialect words called Norm. Some of the placenames with roots in Norway are: Gloup, Unst, Fladdabister, and Fetlar.

We were immediately charmed by Shetland's remoteness and uniqueness. We also immediately regretted the fact that we had less than four full days in the islands. After picking up our rental car on the first day and navigating the traffic-less roads for a full five minutes we arrived at our hotel. We then took off on an exploratory bent. We found the capital city of Lerwick (population 7,600) to be a charming port city. The public parking lot was actually an extension of the dock. At the outskirts of the city was Clickimin Broch, the 2,700-year-old stone ruins of a farmstead.

We left Lerwick (after stocking up on tea biscuits at the grocery store) and explored the countryside. We found the roads narrow — with pull-offs to accommodate

See **RUINS**, page 10



Sumburgh Hotel, where we stayed during part of our stay in the Shetland Islands, was once the home of the laird of Sumburgh. This was the home for his estate. Jarlshof archaeological ruins can be seen in the foreground.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

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Crofters scramble for a living on Scotland's Shetland Islands

By NANCY SORRELLS

WESTER QUARFF, SHETLAND ISLANDS, Scotland — Hard doesn't come close to describing the life of a crofter in the Shetland Islands. But if you've known no other life and you are 76 years old like Davey Manson, it's not so bad. And there's some room for a little bit of pride in making a living off the land in the northernmost part of Britain.

The Shetland Islands are as far north in the British Isles as one can go. In fact, these islands are a whole lot closer to Norway than they are to the Scottish mainland. It is a land of extremes — the summers have nearly 24 hours of daylight, the winters are encased in darkness. The gales of winter drive saltwater into every crack and crevice possible.

No point on the islands is more than three miles from the ocean; thus life on the land and the sea are intricately intertwined. Many

crofters, or small farmers, are also fishermen. One hundred years ago that was always the case and much of the farmwork was actually left to the old men and women while the young men took to the sea.

Davey's house is at the end of the road just before the cobbled path rolls down into the sea. Wester Quarff, now just a cluster of houses splattered on the green hills, was once a thriving community with a post office and grocery. It has always been Davey's home. Here he farms and fiddles and years ago he also delivered mail, by boat, to the smaller island just off the coast from Wester Quarff. Except for a few fiddling trips, Davey has never left Shetland.

Dressed in the earth tones of a wool sweater and wool pants, Davey looked the part of a crofter. His wispy silver hair and penetrating blue eyes didn't miss a trick and as he chased three errant sheep down the rocky hillside,



Davey Manson is a life-long crofter on the Shetland Islands.

his jumping jack movements belied his age.

His initial reticence faded after we helped him return his mischievous sheep and he began to tell us about himself and his farm. It was a conversation spiced with deep, rolling "r's" that seemed to make words hang on forever, and we had to listen closely to catch everything.

He owned his own land, he said proudly, all six acres. As we stood on the bluff he pointed out his land and then other rectangles of green that belonged to other crofters. "There's a croft, there's a croft, there's another. Most crofters here own their own land. I own me own land. I grows hay and enough potatoes to last the whole year. I used to grow cabbages," he said.

"A lot of people used to grow cabbages. Started them in a little square wall area, called plantiecrubs, and then moved them out into the field," he explained.

Mostly though, Davey has sheep, 30 Shetland sheep. "They are small. Me and me brother used to shear them in the grass right here. And we used to dip them, wash them for the bugs. We had to manhandle each one," he said. At the edge of some of the fields were low stone buildings, which Davey explained were lambing sheds so that ewes

and their newborns could gain some protection from the elements.

Davey is particularly proud of his new fence. "See my fence? It's me own fence. The government gives a grant to put it up. I have to pay for the work. The sturdy wire and the wood have to be shipped in — we have no trees. They come and inspect it to see if it keeps the stock in and then they'll pay me a little," he said in explaining the government incentive to enclose free-ranging livestock.

Despite the harshness of life back in the 1930s when he was young, Davey laments the changing times. He points out the houses on the hillside and tells about the crofters who once inhabited them. "There was a woman in her 90s who lived over there. She died on Christmas Day. Now she was a sturdy crofter."

"Back in the 30s was a hard life. It was hard for the crofters, but these days people are not as friendly as they once were. Nowadays they are more reserved," he said with a tinge of sadness.

Even those farmers with more land and livestock than Davey, work hard at extracting a living from the Shetland Islands. On the island of Yell we saw a prosperous farm that dropped off into the pounding sea. Here the farmers had about 300 sheep, mostly of

See SHEEP, page 11

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These are Davey Manson's Shetland sheep. He raises about 30 sheep on a small croft, or farm, by the sea.

•Ruins

Continued from page 8

a vehicle when two meet — but well maintained. In fact, from tip to tip we found the islands exuded an air of prosperity and cleanliness, partly because of the flush financial state of the region. The economic prosperity is due in large measure to the North Sea oil which is processed here. Tourism is the second reason. During the long days of summer, seabirds flock to the islands by the millions, particularly puffins. With the birds come the naturalists and the tourist dollars which is why a small town like Lerwick has more stores that sell binoculars and cameras and develop film than Staunton and Waynesboro combined!

Our explorations took us to several of the smaller islands which are connected to Mainland island by bridges. As the sun set over the ocean, we stood on the shores of Mainland and listened to the birds screeching overhead.

We had scheduled the next day for our push north — we were heading to the end of Britain and nothing was going to stop us. Our destination was the island of Unst and a glimpse of Muckle Flugga. With that in mind we drove as far north on Mainland as the road would take us. Then we had to board a ferry for the island of Yell.

After 20 minutes on the ferry, we were in Yell, an island 17 miles long and 5 miles wide with a population of 1,000. This is remote, sheep farming area. Think of Highland County, Virginia but remove the trees and you have Yell. Lots of sheep, few people. We found a wonderful little sheltered beach that had beautiful limpet shells scattered across the sands, but our main goal on this island was the Gloop Memorial.

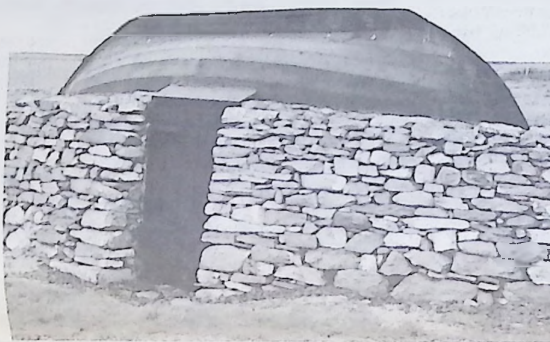
A winding farm lane and a path behind a farmhouse and past a chicken coop took us to a cliff overlooking the sea. There, perched on



The famous and diminutive ponies of the Shetland Islands.

the cliff with the chicken house a few feet away, stood a statue of a woman holding a child. The pair were standing, windtossed, with an eternal eye to the sea hoping against hope that their loved ones would return. Unfortunately, this touching statue is here because in July 1881, 58 of the islands' men did not return after a violent storm wrecked six fishing boats.

We left Gloop and Yell and headed to the ferry. Our destination was now Unst. Unst, the third largest island, is still tiny at 47 square miles. Yell is the second largest at 83, and Mainland is first at 378. Unst is just 12 miles by 5 miles with a population of about 1,000. It is thought that Unst comes from the Norse word, Onest, which means the island nearest. Indeed, Unst is the island closest to Norway.



Because there are no trees on the Shetland Islands and therefore no source of wood building materials, the resourceful island inhabitants scavenged shipwrecks for any scrap of wood obtainable. This shed at the Crofter Museum shows how a roof would have been made from a ship's life boat.

As we sat in the coffee house waiting for the ferry to arrive, we ran into one of our fellow passengers from the plane trip to the islands. He was a merchant and was traveling from island to island delivering his wares, which were jellies and jams. He took great pride in the fact that his jams were in the northern-most, southern-most, eastern-most and western-most points in all of Scotland. As we talked, he finally worked up the courage to ask us a question that had been on his mind ever since he saw us on the plane.

"How the hell did you find out about this place?" he said. We explained that we were looking for something different and this was it. The explanation seemed to satisfy him.



The ferry ride from Yell to Unst was just 10 minutes. Soon we had arrived at our first destination, Haroldswick. There is little to distinguish this tiny cluster of houses from any other island community, but Haroldswick has one claim to fame. The bright red frame build-

and Scraw without glimpsing Muckle Flugga would have been a sore disappointment. We knew we must see Muckle Flugga.

The words "Muckle Flugga," for those who are wondering, are Norse for Big Bird Rock. Just off the northern coast of Unst is a huge rock jutting out of the ocean. This is the big bird rock, Muckle Flugga. Just beyond that is another rock, called Outstack. Here is where Britain ends. There is more to the story than that. Are you ready for a bit of literary trivia?

Perched atop Muckle Flugga is a lighthouse, built in 1854 for the magnificent sum of about 32,000 pounds. The lighthouse was designed by a man named Thomas Stevenson. As part of his official government duties, Stevenson settled his family in Unst for a time. His family included a son, Robert Louis Stevenson, who went on to write "Treasure Island." The map of Treasure Island that appears in this classic pirate adventure is remarkably similar to Unst.

The lighthouse, the northernmost lighthouse in Britain (this is getting old isn't it), is no longer manned. Keepers there would have had a thankless job. There is record of the raging sea once breaking open the lighthouse door at 195 feet above sea level. In the years just before the lighthouse was automated, keepers were dropped off and picked up by helicopter.

Finding Muckle Flugga, even in the relatively small expanse of Unst, did not prove an easy task. Despite the fact that the island is virtually treeless, the rough, sculpted terrain does not give one a clear view of the ocean for more than a short distance. From the postmaster at Haroldswick, we received directions to a spot for the best view but we still went awry.

One road took us to a farm, another led to a beautiful loch and a hillside moor. Thirty minutes of hiking through the moor brought us no closer to our goal so we turned back and tried the last possible route. The road dead-ended at the Hermaness Reserve and a sign indicated that Muckle Flugga required a hike of a couple of kilometers.

So we set off to find the end of Britain. What an experience. Hermaness, by the way, is named for a mythological Norse giant, Herman, who lived here. There was another giant, Saxa, near by. Saxa was rough and loud and enjoyed eating and fighting. Herman, however, was a gentle giant who enjoyed poetry. Both giants fell in love with a mermaid, Ustia (Outstack) who loved neither but flirted with both. The men began fighting and as they did a witch became so mad at the fighting giants that she flung a shroud of green turf over Saxa so that he was buried. The witch turned Herman into a cloud a mist. Regardless of the myth, we were faced with tackling the two "giant hills" of Herma Ness (675 feet high) and Saxa Vord (935 feet).

Climbing these hills was truly a surreal experience. Although the way did not look particularly steep, we soon realized that we were steadily climbing. We had not gone too far when a drizzle turned into a steady rain that made the hike miserable. Just as we felt the most miserable, however, the sun came out and gave us a double rainbow that stretched across the sky, ending in clumps of heather on one side and dropping down into the ocean on the other. The rainbow above the ocean cliffs behind us instantly made the rain worthwhile.

The hike through the perspectiveless landscape continued un-

See HIKE, page 11



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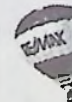
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Continued from page 9

the Shetland variety, which they worked with eight sheepdogs.

Sheep are so numerous on the islands as to be pests. Although many farmers enclose their sheep, there are also feral sheep of the true Shetland unimproved scrub variety. These are community sheep and when they are rounded



up and sold, the money is divvied up among the local people.

As tough as it is to extract a living from the land today, a century ago it was even more of a challenge, we learned at the Croft House Museum. Here we toured a long low stone farmhouse being interpreted to the 1870s or 1880s. At that time the crofters leased the land from the landlord, or laird.

Every day the men of the house would head off to sea to fish. Every night the women would stay up late to untangle their nets and lines and bait the hooks so that the husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons could leave early the next morning to try and wrest a living from the sea.

Back on land crofters grew potatoes, turnips and small grains, particularly oats. They raised

sheep, cattle, and had ponies for beasts of burden. All of the Shetland breeds of livestock were small and sturdy, like the ponies everyone is familiar with today. The small cattle could be kept in the tiny byre that was attached to the farmhouse. The sheep provided wool in an amazing array of natural colors from white to gray to brown to black. Mutton supplemented fish in the crofters' diets.

A glance around the croft house and its attached byre and corn kiln is startling. Not one piece of wood, either in the cattle stalls or on the threshing floor, is uniform. Nothing matches and it all looks quite weathered. The guide in the museum explained that the old men of the household would comb the beaches every day in

search of wood. The byre walls were paneled in driftwood.

"A ship wreck was scavenged immediately," he explained. "The lifeboat off a ship was the prize." Indeed, the shed in the farmyard did not have a traditional roof — rather it was covered with an upside down boat. This was not unique — we saw many sheds scattered across the islands that were roofed in the same manner.

Crofters no longer scavenge the beaches, but their legacy remains in the miniature ponies and sheep that roam the islands. The tumble-down plantiecrubs also pock mark the fields. These days, however, the agriculture that makes money is salmon and mussel farming. The floating cages can be seen in many of the bays

around the islands.

In 1992 there were 52 floating farms in the islands. The fish are kept in floating cages and are fed a carefully prepared diet for two years. Once they mature, the fish are removed, processed and sold all over Europe.

From subsistence farming with sheep to high-tech salmon farming, Davey was certainly correct when he said that times have changed. —



•Hike

Continued from page 10

abated. We picked our way through the peat bogs and moved from hummock to hummock. Without trees or other topographical markers we had trouble

distinguishing east from west, north from south. Because the trail was decided by the stability of the peat, it naturally meandered. Occasionally a few feet of boardwalk had been placed in the bog and posts had

been driven into the ground to serve as trail guides.

The ground underneath our feet proved hard to read. Sometimes what looked like solid footing squished down two or three inches under our boots. Then again, the black and sticky places often surprised us and were surprisingly stable.

As we worked our way through the heather, we spooked the feral sheep that were omnipresent. One portion of the walk went through a series of small potholes filled with dark, dark water. So on we walked through the alien landscape and up our final ascent of Hermaness. Although from a distance the hill looked nearly flat, we still could not see the ocean in front of us. As we continued, the ocean was visible on our right and on our left.

An hour and 15 minutes after we began our journey we emerged on the top of the Hermaness and there before us was the mystical Muckle Flugga. We had reached the end of Britain. It looked, by the way, like the end of the earth as well.

After snapping a few pics and showing the proper respect, we hustled back to our car in just 45 minutes. We had not seen another person the whole time. Knowing that we had to backtrack across Unst and Yell and catch two ferries put haste in our journey. Darkness fell before we had completely traversed Yell. Needless to say the nights are void of light pollution



Clickimin Broch is on the outskirts of the Islands' biggest city of Lerwick. The site was occupied from 700 B.C. to around the 5th or 6th century A.D. It was a Bronze Age farm, an Iron Age fort and a settlement.

in the islands. Even other vehicles were few and far between.

As we sped along the cliffside road in the inky night we put the pedal to the metal. Then all of a sudden we saw bobbing green orbs of light ahead of us and we began to scream. The green orbs belonged to a flock of sheep which had settled down for a night's sleep on the warm asphalt. Our headlights reflected green in their eyes. Thankfully the flock scattered in the opposite direction from the way we swerved and all emerged from the encounter unscathed.

By the time we rolled through Lerwick, greasy fish and chips were the only food we could find. We arrived back at our hotel after 11.

The next day was equally as full. We spent the day touring with a

local wildlife expert who filled us in on the natural history of the islands. Our final evening was spent in the community center listening to the Shetland Fiddlers practice. Local fiddlers from 12 to over 70 worked on a number of local tunes. We were the only audience that night, so when they stopped for a tea break we were the center of attention. It was a fitting end to a great birthday party.

We departed the next morning, reversing our flight path to go Sumburgh, Wick, Edinburgh, Dublin. We spent the night in Dublin and then headed back to the States. We arrived home with the best kind of presents — heads full of memories and hundreds of photos to remind us of a most wonderful 40th birthday party. —



Nancy Sorrells and Sarah Tuck stand on Hermaness Hill and look at Muckle Flugga and Out Stack. Reaching the northern-most tip of Britain was the culmination of their traveling birthday party.

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Time to
renew?
See
page 2

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Don't mess with my epiphany

Down on the farm we're thinking about getting ready.

Maybe you've heard the phrase "ah, those lazy, hazy days of summer," referring to time spent luxuriating in the warmth and splendor of beautiful summer days. Well, down on the farm, we don't have much time for luxuriating of any kind in the summer months what with all the field chores to be accomplished. But ever since we switched to a restricted breeding season with the cowherd — eliminating the arrival of newborns December through February — and began timing lambing not to occur before either the very end of February or the first week in March, January and February have become, if not hazy, at least a little lazy for us.

Down on the farm, lazy means not having to do much of anything except the essentials, which in January and February means the daily feeding routine. As long as the weather stays reasonable and we don't have major winter storms to deal with, January and February now almost give us a sense of what it means to luxuriate in a kind of winter stasis. And a bonus for this time of year has been that if the weather is fairly moderate, we might have time to get a few things done that we wouldn't if we were busy with calves and lambs arriving.

Also, having a break from calving and lambing gives us time to regroup from the last batch of arrivals and get ready for the next group to start arriving. The fall- and winter-born calves and lambs stopped arriving just after the first of December. This gave us some actual time to devote to holiday celebrations. Once we'd made it successfully past Y2K, there was time in January to begin the all-important but tedious task of preparing financial records for tax preparation. (YUCK!)

Yet, there was still some time taken for herd health management. Most of a day in January was spent with the vet on the farm, pregnancy checking heifers and vaccinating replacement heifers. The same day — a very cold and sunny but at least not windy day — the vet did ultrasounds on 117 ewes to determine which ones were bred and their approximate due dates. Of that group, 110 were determined to be bred with 52 due beginning Feb. 23 and 58 due beginning March 28.

We also had time in January to wean the fall born lambs and get them started toward their eventual market-ready date of mid-March. A few more than 100 lambs were weaned and started on feed, their mamas rotated away from the epicenter of lamb production at the barn. Ewes due to start lambing in February were brought in and started on grain and good hay at least 30 days prior to the first lambing date. Those not due until March were rotated to another pasture to be ready to start their late gestation feed regimen when the time arrived.

DOWN ON THE FARM

BY
BETTY JO
HAMILTON



And, happily, the first week in January was mild enough that we put into motion Phase 1 of my lambing shed epiphany. I had the lambing shed epiphany back in the fall after I had carried the umpteenth 10-gallon bucket of water to the umpteenth ewe with baby lambs in pens strung out haphazardly among three stables at the barn. The lower level of our barn originally was designed for work horses and the odd milk cow. One stable was separated into four bays — three for horses, one for cow milking. When we began intensively managing the sheep operation and long after the

electrical connections at the barn is a good idea if not an outright epiphany. Also, it won't hurt to have a little extra light on nights when I need to pay attention to what the sheep are doing instead of having to battle the darkness.

Flying effortlessly on the wings of my epiphany, I went to my father virtually floating several feet off the ground to reveal the many shapes, textures and colors of my lambing shed epiphany. Something about the snort he made when I told him of my vision brought me back to earth with a thud and led me to believe he didn't share the same

e·piph·a·ny (noun) -- a sudden flash of recognition

work horses and milk cows were gone, the old horse and cow bays were adapted to be used as individual pens (or jugs) for ewes with newborns. In this fashion we managed very well for almost 15 years.

Then, as I said, I had a lambing shed epiphany. One day as I was looking into the stable with the old horse stalls, each occupied by a ewe and her lambs, I thought, "If we took all these stanchions out and pulled out the old mangers and feed boxes, there would be room in here for more sheep than we can pen individually now." Once that thought occurred to me, the vision began to take on truly epiphany-like proportions. "And by golly, we could hook to the waterline right on the other side of that wall and run a waterline right into this stable and I wouldn't have to carry a bucket of water any further than four paces in either direction." Then I burst forth into a state of absolute rapture. "And if we enlarged this door, we could get a skid loader in here to clean the old bedding out and I'll never have to heave another fork full of manure in my life." And as if to cap off the perfect state of my bliss, the last thought came to me: "And I'm going to get this barn rewired with conduit and plenty of light fixtures and sockets and then I won't have to be worried so much about the barn burning down because of faulty wiring." We never leave the electricity on at the barn as it is. And I certainly don't want to risk the chance of having a spark cause a fire. So updating the

vision, especially the part about rewiring the barn. To this — which I saved to reveal until the very last — he responded with a huffing "chuff," which I knew to mean the rewiring of the barn would be a prohibitively expensive undertaking. But, I persevered.



Fearlessly In February I conquered the breathtaking heights of Mt. Manure. Watch for the National Geographic documentary soon to be broadcast on obscure cable networks.

Photo by Nancy Sorensen

Lucky for me and my epiphany, the carpenter called and said he could come to start work the first week in January. The mild weather that week helped matters all around. In short order the old stanchions were ripped out. In a matter of a couple days one of the stable doors was enlarged to accommodate a skid loader. Access to a large stable was made possible with the creation inside the barn of an entry which a skid loader could go through.

My father and I never got on the same page as far as the lambing shed epiphany was concerned. This didn't matter too much to me. But it didn't make things any easier for the carpenter. I would come into the work area and tell the carpenter what I wanted done. After I had left, my father would come to the work area and tell the carpenter what he wanted done, which was never the same thing I told the carpenter to do.

In addition to the changes necessary for the lambing shed epiphany to become reality, there were many basic repairs to the barn which had gone untended for years. I hadn't considered getting the carpenter to take on these chores while he was there. Then one day I went to the barn and found him fixing something that had nothing to do with the lambing shed epiphany. He volunteered that my father had told him to fix whatever it was. I reasoned if he was fixing whatever that was then he might as well fix this, this, and this.

The carpenter lasted five whole days swinging back and forth on the pendulum between my father and me. And that was five days longer than many would have lasted. Even though he departed after five days, much had been accomplished to convert the old horse stalls to a workable lambing facility. And there was no more to be accomplished until the bedding and manure could be cleaned out of the stables. This had to be done before work on the waterline could begin.

And then it got really cold, too, so it was not weather conducive to much of anything, including getting the stables cleaned out. I watched the days slip by on the calendar, the first date for lamb arrivals growing ever closer. When there was less than a week left before lambs would begin arriving, I began to do my own sort of chuffing in fear that the substantial pile of bedding and manure in the stables would, if not removed, eliminate all available space for the lambing jugs.

I tried to occupy myself with other things involved with getting ready for the arrival of lambs. I ordered a few supplies I would need. I stocked up on latex exam gloves, spray paint, and other supplies. I spent a day making a humongous batch of spaghetti sauce to freeze for the ever weary and always hungry shepherd. I worked on tax records. I rested up, anticipating the long pull ahead. Day

after day I walked past the stable hoping for a break in the weather so that the area might be cleared out for the final preparations before lambing. I all but gave up on the notion of getting the waterline installed. Rewiring the barn became a dream relegated to the back burner.

Fortunately a dandy day in February came along and the skid loader and a fellow to operate it arrived. Unfortunately (or fortunately for the skid loader operator) my father had to make an emergency trip to the dentist that morning which left me behind to supervise the barn cleaning. This was fortunate for the skid loader operator in that he didn't have to put up with trying to follow two different sets of directions about how to go about cleaning out the stables.

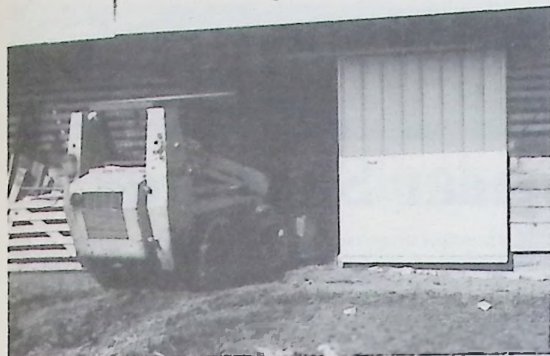
I wasn't especially particular about getting the old bedding and manure out of the stables. My primary directive to the skid loader operator when he told me how he would accomplish the task was simply, "I don't care how you get it out, just as long as I don't have to fork it out."

It was simply dreamy to watch the skid loader work inside the barn, scooping and gathering up the bedding and manure and depositing it in an ever-expanding pile in the barnyard. And the greatest part of the whole thing was that through the three hours of hauling the bedding out of the stables, I didn't have to do much more than lean on the pitchfork. Talk about rapture. I did fork a little manure just to help the skid loader operator be able to see where the bases of the beams were and to keep the bedding away from the foundation. Other than that though, I was mostly leaning. And sometimes even sitting. I think I even yawned a couple times.

Three hours later, an impressive pile of bedding and manure had accumulated in the barnyard. The pile is so large, in fact, we may have to conduct an environmental impact study before spreading it. This does not concern me. The important thing to me is that the manure is out of the barn and I didn't have to fork it out. Mission accomplished. And now, instead of putting off and putting off getting the bedding out of the barn because it's one of those chores I just can't face, from now on we can just pick up the phone and call a skid loader man to do the job.

It's a shame my father had the dentist appointment the day the skid loader was in use. He would have enjoyed seeing the man and machine at work. And I'm still not sure my father is convinced of the worthiness of my lambing shed epiphany. A comment he made the other day leads me to believe he is not in whole-hearted support of my lambing shed pursuit. A visitor was in the barnyard one day this week and my father's comment to the visitor was, "Have you seen the Holiday Inn?" yanking his thumb toward the newly cleaned out and refurbished stables of the barn. Holiday Inn, indeed. I don't know where he gets off drawing that

See BARN, page 13



See the skid loader go through the new barn door. (photo above) See the skid loader scoop up heaps of bedding and manure. (photo far right) DON'T SEE anybody forking bedding and manure out of the stable by hand. Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton

Barn

Continued from page 12

comparison. Everybody knows the Holiday Inn has cable television. Compared to the way the stables were, however, I'm tempted to put a sign over the door that says, "Hamilton Hilton." We do offer 24-hour room service, you know.

We are now just days — perhaps moments — away from the onslaught of lambing time. Hope for completion of the lambing shed epiphany is temporarily on hold. But I'm operating in a "Don't-mess-with-my-epiphany" sphere these days. The waterline WILL BE (I hope my father is reading this.) installed sometime before the fall lambing season. The barn WILL BE (I really hope my father is read-

ing this.) rewired sometime before the fall lambing season. If you see my father somewhere along the

way, be sure to ask him how that lambing shed epiphany is coming along down on the farm. —



Super Supreme All-American Southern-Style Betty-Spaghetti Sauce

Once lambs and calves start arriving down on the farm, there's very little time for anything other than tending to these newborns. Ordinary days on the farm include little time for routine matters like cooking or, for that matter, eating.

Almost any shepherd will tell you that during lambing season, lambs are top priority. Everything else falls way down the list. Even newborn calves, to a certain extent, because calves require less intensive attention upon arrival than lambs do, for the most part.

Because of all the time spent at the barn during lambing season, it's a good idea to make some advance preparations to have easy-access food on hand while lambs are coming. And so recently I spent most of an afternoon cooking up a batch of my secret recipe spaghetti sauce. I've taste-tested this on a number of different individuals and it's gotten pretty good reviews, so I've decided to go public with the recipe and share it with *Augusta Country's* readers.

This recipe yields about 4 1/2 quarts of real rib-sticking sauce. If you eat some of this, you will not

be hungry for at least three days. That's why it's good to have on hand for shepherds because they only get to eat about every three days during lambing season. Also, it freezes very well. Once preserved, it's easy enough to get some out and thaw in the microwave when you're too tired to think about real cooking.

So here is my recipe. I'm going to include a few explanations about how I make it and the ingredients I use while I provide the directions for making it.

Super Supreme

All-American

Southern-Style

Betty Spaghetti Sauce

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 1/4 lb. mild Italian sausage links
- 2 large green peppers, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 8 oz. small white cap mushrooms, cut into slices
- 1 large yellow onion, cut into half-inch pieces
- basil, salt and pepper to taste

1 48-oz. jar Prego

Traditional pasta sauce

1 28-oz. can canned tomatoes in juice

barbecue sauce
brown sugar
white sugar
pasta

O.K. I know the first thing you're thinking is that if I'm using Prego pasta sauce, this is not really homemade sauce and I can't take credit for the recipe. Well, I think I can. The pasta sauce just prevents me from having to start boiling down canned tomatoes three days in advance before I can actually get to the point where I've got pasta sauce. Also, I reason that because I add all this other stuff, the Prego sauce is fundamentally changed from its original out-of-the-jar state. If you taste my final product, then sample some of the unadulterated Prego, you'll see there's no comparison.

A bit more about the name of this recipe. As you can see, it's quite a long name. But I feel as if it needed a name which reflects its true character. I started with Super Supreme because, as you can see, this recipe has just about everything imaginable in it. It is All-American because barbecue sauce — which is about as All-American as hot dogs, baseball and apple pie — is one of the ingredients. I don't know how I ever came to put barbecue sauce in it, I just like the flavor. I love barbecue. I think I could eat boot laces if they were dipped in the right kind of barbecue sauce.

There are a few ingredients which make any recipe Southern-Style. These are butter, brown sugar or pecans, in any combination or individually. I use brown sugar to sweeten this recipe because I find canned tomatoes sometimes to be on the sour side. If you have home-grown canned tomatoes, this may not be the case. But I still suggest you use some brown sugar in any event. Again, I love brown sugar. I

think I could drink old motor oil if it was sweetened with brown sugar.

I think the Betty Spaghetti part of the name is clearly evident. This is my recipe. I've spent painstaking hours perfecting it. I feel I'm due some of the credit. The Sauce part? Well, that's a no brainer. It's sauce.

You may notice that I have omitted an ingredient which many folks would expect as standard for any spaghetti sauce. The recipe does not call for garlic in any form or quantity. I like garlic quite a lot, however for days after I've eaten garlic I feel like it's coming out the pores in my skin. Not that I can smell it, mind you. It just gives me an odd feeling, sort of like I've applied some sort of insect repellent. If you like garlic, add what you will. But my advice is that unless you're trying to ward off vampires, weasels, IRS auditors or other blood suckers, you should leave the garlic out.

With these explanations in mind, let's get to the business at hand.

Cut sausage links into 1- to 1 1/2-inch sections. I've been using Johnsonville sausage but there are a number of popular brands available in your grocery meat case. I use the large bun-size links, not the small breakfast links. In a large (really LARGE)

Dutch oven, crumble the ground beef and add the sausage sections. Shake on some crushed basil leaves, some salt and black pepper. I leave the quantities of these ingredients to your particular taste. Turn heat on medium high and brown meat. This will take about 20 minutes.

While the meat is browning, start cleaning and chopping the vegetables. There may be some of you who live in homes where members of your household don't like things like cooked green peppers, onions, or mushrooms. These are key ingredients to this recipe, really to any spaghetti sauce recipe. You have to wonder about people who don't like green peppers, onions or

mushrooms — what sad and unimaginative lives they must lead. Let's pause for a moment of silence for these folks. O.K., that's long enough. And if they refuse to eat this sauce because of the green peppers, onions and mushrooms? All the better for you because you'll get extra helpings!! Open them a can of Vienna Sausage and give them some soda crackers for their dinner — a feast fitting the scope of their limited digestive imaginations.

I like my sauce extra chunky so I cut the vegetables into chunks rather than dicing them. With vegetables plainly visible in the finished product, it seems like you get more of a complete meal in the sauce instead of just sauce and pasta.

After the meat has finished browning, drain off the drippings and discard. A common mistake when making spaghetti sauce is to skip this part. However, if you don't drain off the drippings the end product will be greasy which will mask the overall texture and flavor of the sauce. And nobody needs that extra fat in this spaghetti sauce.

Add the chopped vegetables to the browned meat. Cook on medium heat until the green peppers aren't bright green anymore. The peppers take longer to cook than the onions or mushrooms. Sometimes I add the peppers first and let them cook for five minutes or so to give them a headstart on the onions and mushrooms.

Depending on the size of your Dutch oven, you may need to transfer some of the meat and vegetable mixture to another pot before proceeding to the next stage. I have a 5-quart Dutch oven which is big enough to brown the meat and sauté the vegetables, but when it comes time to add the remainder of the ingredients, I transfer about 1/3 of the meat and vegetable mixture to a separate 2-quart pot. (If you're working with two pots from here on out, you'll have to divide

See SAUCE, page 19

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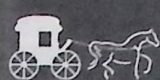
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Yesterday once more



Growing up in the mountains near Sherando

EDITOR'S NOTE: Part of the following was included in the *Augusta Heritage Book*, published by the *Augusta Genealogical Society* in 1998. It gives a glimpse of life in rural Virginia in the early 1900s taken from journal entries recorded by Bessie Brydge Hailey.

By VERA HAILEY

Bessie Brydge Hailey attended Stuarts Draft High School, State Normal School in Harrisonburg and Dunsmore Business College in Staunton. She was a teacher at Laurel Hill School (within sight of her homeplace, near Sherando), Snead School (on Meadow Mountain), Cotopaxi (near Vesuvius), Rankin's School (near Rankin's Creek), Lyndhurst School (Lyndhurst) and Augusta Mennonite School (near Springdale Mennonite Church).

Excerpted from the 1977 journal reminisces of Bessie Brydge Hailey:

"I was born near Sherando, Augusta County ... on the cold, frosty morning of October 17, 1900 to Edward R. and Isabelle Henderson Brydge, without a doctor. I was the fourth child living in this home now. My daddy owned a small mountain tract of land, with plenty of running water and springs, plenty of fire wood and some cleared land. He had horses, hogs, cows and some other stock. He raised vegetables, grain and some hay.

There was, nearby, a one-room school house, which no doubt the older children were attending at this time. I don't know what my thoughts were centered on at this time, but am sure there was plenty of wood to carry in, water to be brought in, fires to be made, cooking three meals a day, washing on a scrub board, ironing and patching. I'm sure there was not much time for play.

Our daddy owned a saw mill and he would cut timber and saw lumber and sell it to some firm in Waynesboro, Virginia, which was about twelve miles away. The older boys, Oscar and George, would get up around four o'clock in the morning, feed, groom and harness horses and hitch them to a wagon, which had been loaded the night before, and leave for the town, returning late in the evening. This was done year after year.

Mama did the sewing for the whole family, made all the quilts for the beds and sheets and pillow cases. There was one job I hated to do. My daddy had sheep and they were sheared once in the summer time, so Mama took this wool, washed it and dried it, ready for it to be picked. All the loose dirt and burrs had to be picked out so the wool was ready to be carded ... I would pick wool until I could hardly see. Got so sleepy and sometimes



Bessie Brydge Hailey, 1921

the wool had so much dirt in it to be picked out that I would throw some of it away. It was too bad when I was caught doing this by Mama.

We had no refrigeration, so all vegetables and fruits had to be dried or canned, which was some job in the summer. In the fall we would try to

A voice from the past

make at least fifty-two gallons of apple butter for the year. We always made a barrel of sauerkraut and lots of kegs of cucumber salt-brine pickles. Daddy was also a butcher, so we would have plenty of beef, as the winters seemed to be cold and it would keep in the smoke house, just hanging up by the quarters. Also had pork, as we butchered hogs every fall.

As far as medicine was concerned, our remedies mostly were chamomile, worm seed oil, wild cherry bark tea, poultice, catnip tea, Yeager's liniment and castor oil. We had no pain medicine. Teeth were extracted by the neighbors and a medical doctor, if one came along. If babies cried with the colic, relief was given them by blowing smoke from a pipe under their clothes. Turpentine was used for all cuts and bruises.

Our herd of cattle would just roam the hills and open fields about two miles from home all day and, in the evening, we would have to go and hunt for them and bring them home and milk again ... All the neighbors had their gardens and fields fenced in, so the cattle would not eat their crops ... A large cow bell was hung around one of the cow's neck all the time, so we could hear it ring and find the herd of cattle. Once, while my brother, Amos, and I were bringing the cows home to be milked, about five o'clock one evening, about one mile from home a panther let out a yell, right near us, and we started to run, grabbing onto one of the

cow's tail. Away we traveled at a high rate of speed, with the panther still yelling and following close upon us for some distance. We really outran the cows and got home before the cows did. Some scared experience.

After thrashing the grain in the summer, we always had a large straw stack near the barn, to be used for bedding during the winter. In early childhood days, we slept on straw ticks for our beds in the winter months. When our parents were away, we children would sometimes get upon this straw stack and play (strictly against orders from our parents). We would climb to the top of the stack and see who could walk nearest the edge and not fall off, but one round, brother Paul got too close and fell off and was knocked unconscious and we were all in distress and did not know what to do with him, as our parents were due back shortly. So we decided to hide him in an old spring wagon and watch to see what would happen. Finally, our parents returned and asked where Paul was and we hesitated to tell, so I said I would hunt for him and to my surprise, when I got to the spring wagon, he had come to and seemed to be all right. We never told what happened until years later.

As children, we always looked forward to going to Grandma's house for Christmas dinner. Grandma always expected her six children with all the grandchildren to attend this feast. It was always deep snow on the ground and the big fireplace was going full blast, as this was the only system she had. Regardless of the cold, the front door of the house was hardly shut on Christmas Day, as there were so many going in and out to play in the snow. Mama knitted our stockings and gloves to wear in the cold. The twelve o'clock meal was most wonderful, with ham meat, potatoes, beans, pies, cakes, hot bread and plenty of milk to drink, plus sauerkraut.

After the noon meal, one of our uncles, Junie, would hitch up two work horses to the sled and load it up with us children and we would travel for five miles one way to Mount Torry Furnace and return with horses running fast and snow flying in our faces, with fifteen or twenty children holding fast to each other. This really topped off our Christmas celebration. This continued year after year, until 1925. There would be approximately fifty attending the dinner every year.

My early school teachers were Miss Mae Houff, Miss Bessie Austin, Mrs. Inez Brydge and Miss Bedie Henderson. I finished the sixth grade at Laurel Hill about

1916. The school term was rather short, lasting five to seven months. World War I was progressing and my oldest brother, Oscar, was drafted in the army. My first trip to Staunton was when he left by train from Staunton for Camp Lee.

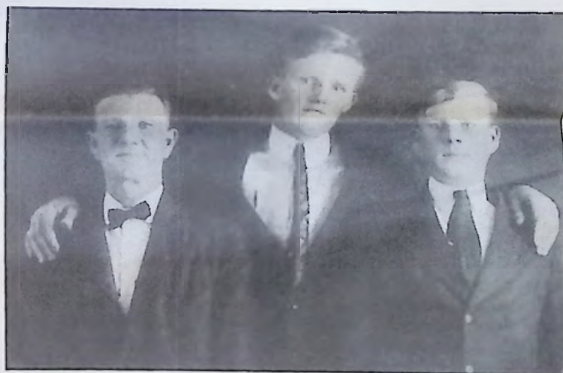
At this time, if you had an elementary education with a Certificate of Distinction, you could teach elementary school for a term of five or seven months. I received this Certificate at the end of the school term on April 7, 1918, but you were not allowed to teach until you were age eighteen ... I got me my first job in September of 1918 at the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind working as a waitress in the dining room for ten dollars a month and board.

By the end of September, I had been with a lady, Miss Dell Dodd, who had the influenza and, of course, I had to leave and go home,

for it was very dangerous. A few days after I was home, one of the older brothers took this flu and the whole family got it, all in bed at one time, with no one to wait on us. Everyone was scared of it and some neighbors brought food to the door and left it. Herbert, Lum and Carl Hatter, who lived about five miles away, heard of our need and they came and did what they could for us, as they had already had it.

On September 6, 1920, another brother Oscar was married to Miss Emma Coffey. In the fall of 1920, I opened Snead School, up on Meadow Mountain again. This was a one-room school with no conveniences. I built my own fires, cleaned the building, helped to get the wood in. I had seven grades ...

Watch for more Voices from the past in future issues of Augusta Country.



Bessie Hailey's father and brothers, from left, Edward Brydge, George Bridge and Oscar Brydge.

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Schoolhouse News

Area high schools compete in county-wide forensics meet

By PENNY PLEMMONS

BUFFALO GAP — All five Augusta County high schools came together in February to participate in the county's forensic meet hosted by Buffalo Gap High School. Riverheads High School won the meet clinching four first place spots. Stuarts Draft, Fort Defiance, Gap and Wilson, respectively, followed. This year's students competed in the following public speaking categories: poetry and prose interpretation, duo interpretation, serious dramatic and humorous dramatic interpretation, storytelling, oratory, extemporaneous speaking both foreign and domestic, and spelling.

Each category has a set of rules which demand strict adherence. Judges use these guidelines to determine performance outcomes. Students earn individual honors and acquire points which contribute to an overall team rating and hopefully land their school a first, second or third place spot.

Interpretive events, or "inters,"

are short orations such as plays, poems, stories or famous speeches that directly reflect an actor's personal style. They can be funny or serious or a smattering of both as in the one act play, *"A Pair of Lunatics."* This scene opens with Buffalo Gap High School senior Amber Clements playing the part of "She" who is thinking aloud. "I knew it, he's a lunatic! I must humor him and get away." "He," played by Gap sophomore Cory Buckles, thinking about "She" exclaims, "Poor thing! Mad as a hatter."

And so begins the humorous twisting and turning of dialog between two sane people each of whom thinks the other is crazy. The interesting quirk in this type of duo interpretation is that the actors cannot make eye contact. So they are forced to stand back to back but must use facial expressions and bodily gestures as if they are face to face.

Original oratory is a persuasive speech. Gestures and facial expressions coupled with passion and

supporting facts are used to engage and motivate audiences toward a specific action or thought.

Competitors in extemporaneous speaking have the additional challenge of not knowing the topic they will speak about. They choose a topic when the meet begins, are given 30 minutes to assimilate ideas and then must speak about the issue in a coherent and knowledgeable fashion. The topics in extemp are divided into foreign and domestic affairs.

Approximately 80 students participated in this year's forensics meet.

The winners were as follows:

Extemporaneous Domestic — 1. Adam Mulcahy, RHS; 2. Jessica Hill, RHS; 3. Seamus Gentz, SDHS

Extemporaneous Foreign — 1. Alison Eliot, FDHS; 2. Turner Pittkin, RHS; 3. James Gano, RHS

Oratory — 1. Katherine Caldwell, RHS; 2. Sarah Payne, RHS; 3. Michael Harmon, SDHS

Storytelling — 1. Rachel Howard, RHS; 2. Amanda Willey,



Cory Buckles, a sophomore, and Amber Clements, a senior, both Buffalo Gap High School students, prepare to compete in the Augusta County Forensics meet.

Photo by Penny Plemmons

SDHS; 3. Virginia Strickler, RHS
Poetry — 1. Crystal Heatwole, SDHS; 2. Jaclyn Bennett, BGHS; 3. Ian Sterrett, FDHS

Prose — 1. Tara Wilkinson, FDHS; 2. Jeannette Heatwole, SDHS; 3. Kim McCray, RHS

Humorous Dramatic Interpretation — 1. Randy Terry, FDHS; 2. Will Martz, BGHS; 3. Amy Walge, BGHS

Serious Dramatic Interpretation — 1. Eliel Ogzewalla, SDHS; 2. Jessica Hammond, WMHS; 3. Lindsey Richardson, RHS

Duo Interpretation — 1. Julie Waltz & Josh Howes, RHS; 2. Nik Bowman & Katie Props, FDHS; 3. Leigh Ellis & Matt Campbell, SDHS

Spelling — 1. Rebecca Schneider, BGHS; 2. Rachel Swartzel, SDHS; 3. Tracy Holmes, FDHS

Beverly Manor students reading like robots

By NANCY SORRELLS

CEDAR GREEN — There's been an invasion at Beverly Manor Elementary School. Since the new year an army of robots has arrived and taken over the library. As of late January, at least 75 of the machines crowded in among the books and shelves, and more arrived everyday. But it's alright because these are special robots — called Book Bots.

The arrival of the Book Bots, all crafted by the kids in the school, is

part of Read 2000, a school-wide program to promote reading. Brainchild of school librarian Judy Reynolds, the reading program was a huge success. Ms. Reynolds indicated that the school holds a reading incentive campaign every year, usually in February, but that this year's program has taken off in a phenomenal way.

"The idea of launching a new century or a new millennium with reading was interesting. We started right before Christmas when we

announced that when everyone returned in the new year we would be reading 2,000 seconds on the first day," said Ms. Reynolds.

True to her word, on Jan. 4 when the students returned, the entire student body of 375 children spent 2,000 seconds or about 33 minutes reading silently all at the same time.

From there, the librarian challenged the students to keep going and try to read 2,000 minutes (about 33 hours) by Feb. 4. "Not every child will be able to do that, but at least they will be reading. The youngest ones will have their parents reading to them," said Ms. Reynolds. More than half of the student body surpassed the 2,000-minute mark by the Feb. 4 closing date.

On Feb. 4 those students who read for 2,000 minutes came to the library and spun the dial on a huge wheel. All around the wheels were prizes. The spinning wheel hand stopped at the winning prize. "This has been a school-wide effort. Everyone has been so supportive. Even the principal, Al Costa, contributed some of the prizes," explained the librarian.

Throughout the month, several contests were held as part of the Read 2000 promotion. There was a poster contest and a book review contest, but by far the most popular contest

has been the robot building contest. "We wanted them to build a reading robot. They could build it by themselves, with another person, with their parents or with their whole classroom," said Ms. Reynolds.

The popularity of the contest has surpassed Ms. Reynolds' wildest expectations. "This has been so good. Some children have been able to express themselves in ways they have never been able to do before," she noted.

The uniqueness and creativity of the children have been reflected in the robots crowding the library. No two robots are even remotely similar. The supplies used to create the Bots are as equally varied. There

See **ROBOTS**, page 17



Cody Frost, 7, sits next to the robot he built for the Read 2000 program at Beverly Manor Elementary School. Cody's robot came complete with a holder to carry book out of the library.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

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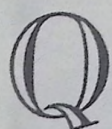
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References provided upon request.



The Hitching Post

Owner may or may not welcome offer to ride horse



There is a horse boarded at the stables where we ride (not one of the lesson horses). I would love to ride him. Should I ask? Or are these horses normally exercised by the stable personnel, if not by the owner.

S.A.S.

The horse you are asking about is probably privately owned. If it is not a lesson horse, then it is kept there as a boarder. This means the owner pays the stable to care for the horse because for various reasons he cannot keep it himself. If you would like to ride someone's horse, you should first find out if the horse is safe for you. Ask the stable what the horse is like. If it is not a lesson horse then it does not have to meet certain standards of safety.

Privately-owned horses are not usually exercised by the stable per-

sonnel as part of board. Horses that are boarded are just there because the stable provides housing, turn out, feeding, and sometimes vet and farrier visits, all at a cost to the owner. Exercising privately-owned horses is not normally part of boarding costs. This is why it seems like many privately-boarded horses do not get ridden very much and can seem like a great possibility to lesson students. The irony of boarding horses is that often owners have to "find time" to ride, which in today's hectic world, can

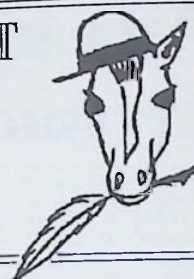
seem minimal. The boarding situation insures quality care for the horse, but owners still must find the time to ride and spend time with the animal.

Most people can relate to this if they consider the situation with a dog. Picture a family dog in a kennel getting proper care. Now imagine finding the time to spend with it. I have been in stables where owners came after work, sometimes as late as 10 p.m. to brush and spend time with their horse. Owners are usually possessive of their pets and sometimes the thought of another rider getting "close" to their animal can cause them to decline an invitation to help out.

If the horse you're interested in seems like a "safe" bet and you feel you would like to pursue the idea of exercising it for the owner then go ahead and ask. If the owner feels you are qualified and have enough experience he might say yes. Horses that are ridden on a regular basis often perform better and stay in shape. This makes them more manageable and easier to work with. Horses that are "soft" are usually on the stubborn side, too, when it comes to work.

One of the qualifications that a private owner might look for in your riding skills is the ability to

I.B. HOOFINIT
From
the
Horse's Mouth



handle problems with behavior. Unfortunately, accidents can happen and they sometimes do. How do you handle them? The old saying, "if you fall off, get right back on," is very true in horsemanship. This is because addressing accidents immediately is important to preventing behavior problems later. Accidents are "set backs" in training. These "set backs," if caused by you, can upset a private owner. If the owner is making progress in the training of his horse, then make sure you are working together toward the same goals.

Communication is also a big part

of sharing horses. If riders are discussing problems openly and deciding on the best way of handling them, they will find positive solutions. Sometimes people see things differently and by discussing the horse's training you can offer each other important insights.

Most of the time owners who board wish they could spend more time with their horses. If you keep in mind the problems and solutions I suggested, you might find owners are willing to share the responsibility. Take it "From the Horse's Mouth," it doesn't hurt to ask, and you might just make a new friend!

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 136, Greenville, Va. 24440. 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.

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'Vader' brings color to Walnut Bluff Farm

By CHRIS MARRS

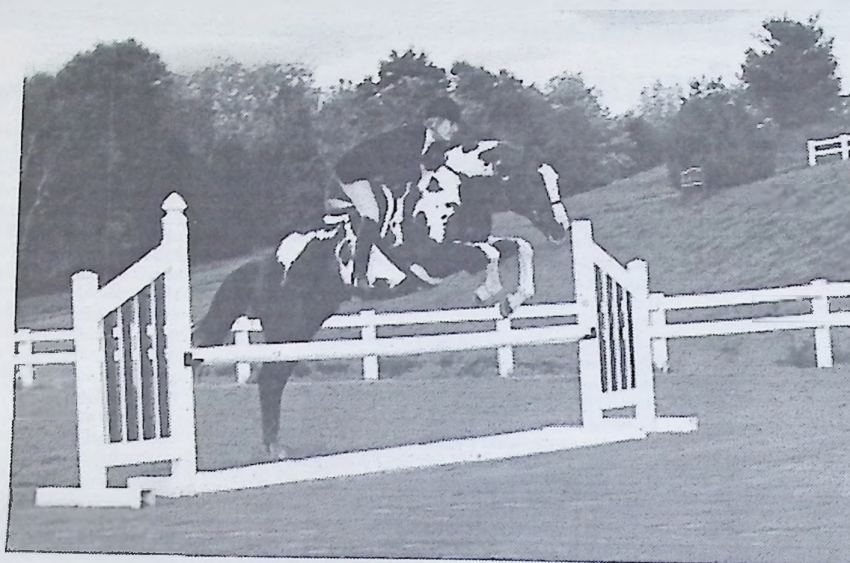
STAUNTON — There is a horse in town that stands out, not because of competition or winning lots of awards, but because he is a sorrel Overo. This stallion's value lies in his beautiful color. Bold Invader is a striking 16-hand, 7-year-old registered paint horse owned by Roger and Kay Hartman of Walnut Bluff Farm in Staunton.

Paint horses come in three different types: Overo, Tobiano, and Tovero. The Overo coloring has the following features: white markings usually will not cross the back of the horse between its withers and its tail, are irregular and rather scattered or splashy. An Overo may be either predominantly dark or white with the tail usually one color. Generally, at least one and often all four legs are dark. Head markings are distinctive, often bald-faced, or bonnet-faced.

The Tobiano color is different in that the dark color usually covers one or both flanks often with all four legs white, at least below the hocks and knees. Generally, the spots are regular and distinct as ovals or round patterns that extend down over the neck and chest, giving the appearance of a shield. Head markings are like those of a solid-colored horse, solid, or with a blaze, strip, star or snip. A Tobiano may be either predominantly dark or white and the tail is often two colors.

The Tovero-colored horse combines the characteristics of both Overos and Tobianos.

'Vader's' story starts in Texas



"Bold Invader" and trainer Sue Macauley at the Lexington Shenandoah Horse Club Fu-

turity in October 1999. "Vader" is owned by Walnut Bluff Farm in Staunton.

Photo courtesy Walnut Bluff Farm

where he was born. Kay and Roger were looking for a black and white stallion for breeding. A lady in Texas had him and originally wanted to keep him. Although he is a sorrel Overo, his bloodline is full of black and white color. They took a chance on him because, he was only four-months-old, and untested as a sire. And they had only seen him through a videotape. Kay says that he has far exceeded their expectations. "He gives us as much color with solid colored horses as with paint horses," she explained.

In his new home this colorful horse has quite a personality. Stallions are kept in paddocks by themselves unless they are pasture

breeding. Kay and Roger do not pasture breed, so Vader has to amuse himself most of the time. He loves to play with a big rubber inner tube and two rubber boots in his field. The neighbors have commented to Kay that he is very entertaining to watch. They use these "unique" toys because the common rubber balls bounce out of the pasture. "That shows a lot of intelligence because he will entertain himself," Kay says, "and he has a sweet disposition for a stallion."

Besides his status as an American Paint Horse stallion, Vader has some quality bloodlines. His sire was a black and white Overo named Chief McCue who sired

Superior Halter horses and two World Champion sires. His dam was an appendix Quarter Horse/Thoroughbred cross with Bold Ruler and Top Deck in her lineage.

Vader is no stranger to the show ring either. Although he is primarily a breeding stallion for Walnut Bluff Farm, his trainer Sue Macauley has shown him locally. He has accumulated points with the American Paint Horse Association in Working Hunter and Bridle Path Hack. For three years he was one of the horses that represented the American Paint Horse Association and The Shenandoah Paint Horse Club at the Horse Festival in Lexington.

Kay says that they've been very successful in the sale of their foals. "We've found the Overos popular in this area." This year's crop will include five early foals in March and a late one in August. They have four quarter horse mares that are solid colors and two paints. As a breeder of paint horses, the Hartmans are hoping to produce foals that have the most "color" which can bring a higher price when sold. Breeding for color is a gamble, but the Hartmans have been lucky. "We have one quarter horse mare that has had six foals by three different paint stallions. All have been paint babies except one," she explains.

How do you breed a horse? First of all you set the date. But which month? To get the mare to cycle a shot may be administered by a veterinarian. The mare comes to the stable for 3 to 10 days. The Hartmans breed her to their stallion every other day. If she is an out-of-state mare they will hold her for around 31 days until the veterinarian does an ultrasound. If she's local they'll send her home after the breeding. Mares are kept separate from the other horses and have their own paddock and stall until they leave. Eleven months later the mare is due to foal. If the mare is bred in April then expect a March baby.

Vader can boast the uniqueness of his kind. No two-colored paint horses are alike. Each one has individual patterns and colors. With a playful personality, a sweet disposition and a strong record of success in breeding paints, the future looks "colorful" for Vader and Walnut Bluff Farm. ---

(Color descriptions from the American Paint Horse Association, "The colors and patterns of the American Paint Horse.")

•Robots

Continued from page 15

is dryer vent hose, surgical gloves, cereal boxes, chicken salad containers, tin foil, paper cups, paper plates, doilies, and construction paper to name a few of the items used to create the creatures.

Two classrooms teamed up and built their own robots. Connie Underwood's class built a larger-than-life Bot named Rexanna the Reading Robot. Several other robots also arrived at the library complete with names including Millennium William and Roy Ro Ro Reader.

Many of the robots turned into family projects and arrived with sophisticated systems. "Having whole

families helping make the robots really pleased me. So many times parents and kids go off in different directions," explained Ms. Reynolds.

One such family effort was twin robots turned in by third grader Denee Kincaid and kindergartner Meda Kincaid. Their robots even had flashing lights. Nine-year-old Denee said the family worked on the Bots together. "My mom put the lights on and my dad did the spray painting. I did the hair and the hands and made the sign. It was pretty fun," she said.

Zack Hackett, a 5-year-old kindergartner, and his 9-year-old sister Amanda, who is in the fourth grade, created a very lifelike robot named Bob Robo Reader. Bob is

dressed in a blue suit and is carrying a book. "We got cereal boxes for his body and we both did it together," said Amanda. It took the pair a about day to make the robot.

Second grader Cody Frost, who is 7, built a very tall robot out of boxes. The Bot sports a yellow hardhat, has the word "Read" coming from his mouth, and even has wheels made of chicken salad containers.

"My mom helped me just a little. I did most of it by myself," said Cody. Even the bookholder attached to the robot was his own idea. Cody added that the robot building took "about one day."

Of course the best thing to come out of the robot invasion has been the increased excitement by the children from preschool all the way up to fifth grade about reading. "Our checkout has almost doubled. The parents tell me that they can't get the kids to go to bed because they are reading," said the smiling school librarian.

The robot builders confirmed the reading craze that has struck the school. "I have been reading more," said Denee. She is shooting for the 2,000 minutes award and is on her second Babysitters Club book for the month.

Zack noted that he is also into reading. He said he had "so many favorite books I can't know which one is my favorite." His sister Amanda pointed to Little House on the Prairie and Babysitters Club as among her top picks. When asked when she read, she said, "After school, at school, about the whole time."

Cody is also shooting for the 2,000-minute mark. He likes reading scary ghost stories, especially those of the Goosebumps series.

Cody simply summed up the whole purpose behind the Read 2000 campaign at the school. When asked why he read, he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Reading is Fun." —

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Reflecting pool reflections

February 2000

Dear Maude:

It was so good to get your letter and hear that Spring is stirring in Middlebrook. How I wish I were there to see those first bright patches of color in the wildflower garden. About the only signs I have discovered up here are a few maple trees opening their reddish blooms and one small patch of snowdrops.

One would think that all the hot air created by the upcoming — or perhaps I should say, the ever-present — elections would warm the area enough that we should be in full bloom. However, the candidates have to reach people all over the country, so we are being spared much speech making here. I must not complain, for the election fever certainly is better than last year's obsession with the President's behavior.

This year, here in our office, we have had other things to think about. The long-threatened office move finally occurred. One would think that in a city like Washington where people are always setting up new offices, moving to bigger or smaller spaces, leaving town or coming into town, that the process would have been honed to a fine degree of professionalism. I suspect that all the firms and services involved in such endeavors simply exercise their control over the situation to get back at all those IMPOR-TANT people they have to deal with.

"What do you mean I can't keep my old telephone number! We are only moving six blocks!"

The boss was not particularly happy about that. He has had the same telephone number for years. But he finally agreed to the change — what choice did he have? After many calls with many long periods of being put on hold, I managed to get the telephone company to agree to a particular day on which to change over the service. (Yes, you guessed it; it fell my lot to be the one to have to deal

with this.) The young lady who helped me was just as nice as she could be, but then when I had to call back to confirm everything, there was someone else who had to be talked to, and that person could not seem to find the paper work for the change of service. The boss became agitated.

"Call them back," he said. I wanted to tell him that every time I called, that file got moved to another person's desk, and if I kept it up we might be lost forever, but decided to keep my mouth shut. He did not seem in the best of moods.

Finally we were given a day for installation of the new service and I was able to get them to commit to a time slot of between 8 a.m. and noon. I went early to the new, still empty, office to wait for them. The boss showed up mid morning, not too excited about the fact that no one had arrived to do the work. He sent me back to the old office and stayed around himself. Back at the old place, around noon, the telephone rang.

"No one is here yet. Call them again."

There go the papers off to still another desk in the offices of the telephone company.

Not much later, in through the door of the old office rushed the boss obviously in a very bad mood. He had been trying to call me again only to be told that the old telephone number had been changed to a new one which "probably was not in service yet." Can you imagine a boss with no telephone!

Back to my desk I went to try and call the phone company again, but then who was I kidding? The phones no longer worked. The boss got into an even worse state. Off to the office next door I dashed in order to call from there. I got another very nice person who promised that the old service would be restored (the original orders, which seemed to have gotten lost, specified that the old service was to run for a week after the new phones were

connected.) I was assured that it would all be taken care of. (I guess the person on the other end of the line could hear the stomp of feet around my desk,) and, finally, mid-afternoon, things were back to normal — in the old office that is. The next morning I had to go again to the still-empty new office and wait. All of this was just to change the telephones. You do not want to hear about the movers, the chaos, the packing of everything for archives or for current moving. There was the selling of items we no longer needed to other tenants in the building. There were calls from friends of the boss, after something was gone, saying he had promised them they could buy that table, that office furniture.

After it was all over, I realized that several good things came out of all that crazy activity. There was so much to do that lunchtime was little more than grabbing a sandwich from the carry-out across the street but no little walks down Connecticut Avenue where one is tempted into the candy store. I was so tired when I got home in the evenings that I heated some supper in the microwave and fell into bed. I did not have time or energy to turn on the television, so did not have to listen to all the news about the primaries. No political speeches and no weight gain — perhaps it was worth all that work! We were soon settled into the new space with most of the files back where we could find them. The boss, realizing that he had been, shall we say "rather difficult," came in one morning to tell us how much he appreciated all we had done and brought us all a lovely red velvet heart-shaped box filled with Godiva chocolates. Oh well, so much for the weight — but at least I missed all of those political speeches!

Take some pictures for me of the garden as it bursts into bloom and give everyone my love.

LuLu



By Roberta Hamlin

Snow days bring respite from 'February blahs'

By MEREDITH McCOOL

It's that time of year again. First semester exams are no more than a memory. Spring break is merely a mirage glimmering in the future. There is no vacation in sight during the "February blahs." That is, of course, unless it snows.

If one person hears of a chance of the majestic wintry precipitation, count on the halls to buzz with anticipation. Teachers nearly have to chain students to their desks to combat the excitement. Heads pivot toward the windows in hopes that they might spy a stray flake wafting from the heavens.

It is almost certain that no homework will be done this night. "Why do today what I can put off until tomorrow?" a friend assures me. Everyone is too busy anyway — watching weather forecasts, doing private little snow dances, and crossing their fingers.

Few will rise of their own accord early the next morning. Those who

do will steal a glance into the yard to see if the world has been coated in powdered sugar. Then they will stand in front of the radio or television rubbing sleep from tired eyes and impatiently await the cancellation list. Others fast asleep and dreaming of the Snow Queen, will be awakened by quiet mothers bearing news.

At last! The snow gods are on our side today!

Children, and those of us who try to hide that we are still children at heart, burrow down into the safety of the counterpane. The extra time to sleep is the most blessed gift of a snow day. After we pull ourselves from between the covers halfway through the day, there are many other activities to occupy our time.

Time is a sacred commodity we may claim solely for ourselves on this snow-bitten day. There is the old chore of shoveling snow. Some head for the slopes, or maybe just a nice hill, to ski, snowboard, or sled. My neighbor's snowy lawn is laced with 4-wheeler tracks. Some stay bundled

up indoors, talking on the phone or watching videos. I, personally, have seen my fair share of movies lately.

These days that I sit lounging in my sweats and sipping hot chocolate, I can't help but remember earlier beautiful days when the world was washed clean with pure, white snow. I recall the snow-dinosaur my father made in the backyard. My sister and I climbed on his back, as if he would transport us to his world of millions of years ago.

One morning, my sister and I were tickled to find an albino Care Bear standing taller than my father in the drifting snow. I remember the first snowman I ever made on my own. I can taste our concoctions of fresh snow and orange juice or maple syrup. I smile to myself as I think about my first experience with snowshoes. I laid in the snow staring into the cold blue of the sky wishing that I could work the shoes well enough to stand back up again.

Lately, my favorite wintry weather pastime is "Snow Day at



Riverheads High School students make some memories on a recent snow day.

RHS staff photo

Josh's." A number of us gather in a friend's basement to chat, tease, and play pool. I have no talent at pool, but these days are among the fondest of my memories.

Every snowflake is unique, so I'm told, much like memories. Perhaps

snowflakes are millions of crystallized angel memories, shaken off with tinkling laughter. Little perfect memories drift from above to sprinkle trees, ground, and outstretched arms so that we may have them to treasure long after they melt. —

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Rose River Falls boasts two falls, lush evergreens

Hidden in the mountain hollows of the Shenandoah National Park, many of Virginia's natural treasures may be found by hikers. The park's 500 miles of trails wind through majestic groves of hemlocks and tulip poplars leading the hiker through wild gorges and deep canyons to crisp streams and rivers.

The park is home to over 200 species of birds, including many brightly plumed warblers. Wildflowers are another attraction in the park, with around 200 varieties blooming from April to October. While many are quite common, growing in abundance along the roadside, others, like orchids, lady's slipper and the vanilla scented Ladies Tresses, are a rare and special find. Ancient lava flows have created many interesting greenstone

formations as well as the parks many beautiful waterfalls.

Of all the native riches in the Shenandoah, none is more captivating than the waterfalls. There are 15 major falls and many more less visited ones. Each fall is distinctly unique. Some cascade gently over the rocks and splash into crystal pools. Others are roaring and powerful as they crash into gorges below.

One of my favorite trails is the hike to Rose River Falls. This easy hike rewards the hiker with two waterfalls deep in a lush forest of evergreens. Spring is especially beautiful here. The warm rains and melting snow create larger, more impressive falls. The birds have returned to the trees and the wildflowers make this pleasant

hike even more enjoyable.

TO GET THERE: Take 340 North to Elkton. In Elkton, take 33 South to the Swift Run Gap entrance station. Here there is a \$10 fee per car to get on the drive. After passing through the station, take a left onto the Skyline Drive. From here it is a scenic drive to Fishers Gap Overlook, at mile 49.4. Park at the overlook area on the west side of the Drive.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION: Cross the Skyline Drive at the north entrance of the parking area, and head 100 feet down a fire road. At the first trailpost, take a left onto a horse trail. Follow the horse trail a half mile to the second trailpost. Here the horse trail turns left and the Rose River trail goes straight.

After one mile the trail turns to the right and descends into a shady forest of evergreens. The bright green moss that grows on the rocks and fallen trees here is beautiful to see, but it can be slippery under foot, so you'll need to watch your footing from here on. Soon the Rose River appears on the left and parallels the trail, forming a dazzling line of cascades and mini falls. After another quarter mile, you'll reach the first of the two falls. It cascades into a beautiful pool deep enough swim in. Several hundred feet further, past huge cliffs and boulders, the main fall crashes 67 feet into a deep ravine. This is a perfect spot to have a picnic lunch before retracing your steps to your car.

Trail Bound

By
Stacey Lea



Camping is available from May through October at the nearby Big Meadows Campground, mile 51.2. Backcountry camping permits are available free of charge at any ranger station. —

The woodcock — 'crepuscular' and majorly cool

By MARK GATEWOOD

There was about three inches of old, settled snow up on the hill under the trees. I was walking on the trail around our property, my brain pretty much in neutral, when I saw bird tracks under some cedars. I was alert enough to note that the tracks were kind of large for songbird tracks and they were walking, not hopping as songbirds do.

About 20 feet down the trail, a brown bird flushed from the fencerow with a peculiar whistling sound. That woke me up! I went back to the tracks: two inches long from end of middle toe to end of back toe; walking, not hopping; and this: associated with the tracks was a series of round, muddy holes in the snow, as if someone had been sticking a knitting needle into the mud beneath the snow cover. That was all I needed to see to know that my little piece of land was hosting its first — to my knowl-



edge — American Woodcock.

The American Woodcock is an oddity all the way around. It is a member of the shorebird order, along with killdeer and sandpipers and plovers, but it doesn't visit the shore. It lives instead in low, boggy wooded areas where it feeds by probing in damp soil for earthworms. It's a migratory bird and a gamebird. It's also one of the few creatures which gives us the opportunity to use the word "crepuscular" in a sentence. It's not 90s teenspeak ("Your mom was, like, majorly crepuscular about the whole thing!"); crepuscular simply describes an animal which is active at dawn and dusk, which the woodcock is and which is why most normal people have never heard of the bird.

Appearance-wise, the woodcock is a chunky, mottled brown bird about 10 inches in overall length

— and four inches of that is bill. The woodcock bill is slender and flexible, so that when it is plunged full length in the forest floor, the tip still has flexibility to feel around for its earthworm prey. Speaking of woodcock and earthworms, the literature of natural history is richer for this passage from Peter Matthiessen's superb essay in *The Shorebirds of North America*: "...in more Epicurean times these wholesome worms from the woodcock's stomach were prized as a delicacy called 'trail.'" I don't know about you, but I can't get past thinking about what that would look like on a plate.

On a more acceptable line of thought, the woodcock has attracted a following among birders and naturalists for its unusual courtship ritual. In March and April, a male will select a displaying ground, an open area with short grass. At dusk, he begins his display on the ground, strutting about and uttering what the bird books describe as a nasal "peent." He then takes to the air, with a twittering which soon gives way to a series of "liquid chips" as he towers into the evening sky. The chips reach a crescendo as he plummets to earth to begin again with the ground display.

The "peent" is a vocal sound and it was once thought that the twittering and chipping were also produced vocally. Now it is known that the flight sounds are produced by the peculiarly narrowed tips of the woodcock's wing feathers.

Now, if this is all a bit much to believe, you don't have to take my word for it. The area around Humpback Rocks has proven to be a reliable display ground for woodcock. Sometime in early spring, the Augusta Bird Club runs a field trip up there to hear (and occasionally see — lighting conditions at dusk are usually against good viewing) the action. Link up with them, go listen and draw your own conclusions.

A few days after my sighting up on the hill, I stepped out back at dusk, hoping, but not really expecting, to hear a woodcock display. It was a still evening, seasonably cool for March, and I only stood listening half a minute before I heard the call: one bird up on the trail, where it goes through open field, and a second bird somewhere down the road, on someone else's land.

I went out again every evening for a week, but I never heard the woodcock again. They are not a rare bird, just secretive, crepuscular and not well known. Go out in March and April and tune your ears to the night; you might be hosting a woodcock too. —

Sauce

Continued from page 13

the remaining ingredients accordingly between the two pots. I will continue on as if I'm working with one pot of sauce.)

Next add the pasta sauce and canned tomatoes. I like to use tomatoes of the pear-shaped variety because they have more pulp and fewer seeds than regular tomatoes. These tomatoes come whole and they should be chopped up some before adding in with the pasta sauce. Like the other vegetables, I leave the tomatoes in fairly large pieces. I add some water

at this point in the fashion of rinsing remnant pasta sauce out of the jar, adding as much as a half-cup of water to get the sauce left in the jar.

Once you get the sauce and tomatoes added in, give the whole thing a good stir to get everything mixed together well. Turn the heat up to bring the mixture back to cooking temperature. This will result in something which appears to all the world like molten lava

with considerable blooming and blipping coming from the sauce. Once you have achieved the mol-

See MIXED, page 20



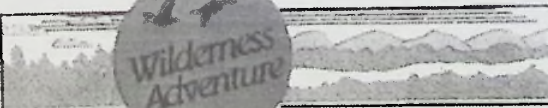
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Doing the laundry more entertaining than *Hanging Up*

If you really don't have something better to do, like staying home on a Saturday night and playing Monopoly, go see *Hanging Up*... but only if there's REALLY nothing better to do. Really. For instance, if you have a choice between staying home and doing the laundry or going to see this movie, stay home and do the laundry. Watching the spin cycle will be more entertaining than this movie.

Hanging Up is about three sisters (Lisa Kudrow, Meg Ryan, and Diane Keaton) whose irascible screenwriter Dad (Lou, played by Walter Matthau) is old, ill and facing death. The screenplay was written by two sisters, Delia (who first wrote the book) and Nora Ephron, about their own father Henry Ephron, a successful writer. *Hanging Up* is supposed to be about sisterhood and the death of a parent.

The key words here are "supposed to be."

Care for Dad has fallen to

middle-sister Eve (Ryan: *Sleepless in Seattle*, *You've Got Mail*, *When Harry Met Sally*). She's a professional party planner who desperately tries to fulfill all her responsibilities as a wife, mother, working woman, and daughter. Lou is a handful, and is increasingly unlikely as the plot unfolds. She gets little help from her oldest sister Georgia (Keaton: *Annie Hall*, *Marvin's Room*, *First Wives Club*), who publishes a high-powered woman's magazine bearing her name, or from her youngest sister Maddie (Kudrow: *Romy and Michele's High School Reunion*, *Analyze This*), a vacuous soap-opera actress, both of whom are ambivalent about their father's approaching death.

The wonder isn't why Georgia and Maddie virtually ignore their father but why Eve is so devoted to him. The three stay in touch via telephone — not the kind of phone hanging in the kitchen but the kind everybody seems to be carrying in

the palms of their hands. The film wants to be heartwarming and heartbreaking and occasionally it succeeds. But it's more about the lifestyles of the rich and busy than about three sisters and their father.

Ryan must have faxed in her performance as the perky, quirky Eve. She's always falling out of bed, crawling over something, stomping her feet or screaming. Most of the time you want to slap her and tell her to get a grip; Kudrow proves once again she belongs on the small screen; and Keaton, who also directed and proved long ago she has talent, probably should have read the script first. Her age stretches credulity that she was raised in the same house with Kudrow at the same time.

Cloris Leachman turns in a small, chilly performance as Mom. When a younger Meg begs her to return home, she exasperatedly explains how "motherhood just didn't take" for her.

The only one who appears to have

read and understood the script is Matthau (*The Odd Couple*, *Cactus Flower* and 75 other movies) and he turns in the best performance. He just delivers his one-liners and doesn't attempt to be heartwarming.

Come to think of it, the real star of the movie is the telephone. Everyone in the movie has one plugged into their ear. Buck, the dog, devours them. When Eve finally gets a grip, she shoves every last telephone she's on into the closet. This is as deep as the movie gets.

Hanging Up is more a comedy of manners than anything it purports to be. The writers and actors all probably live lives — in a frenetic, facile world where the show must go on and legend is more important than reality — similar to those of their characters. The movie is sharper when observing this existence. More is the shame that the two Ephron sisters didn't realize this in the first 30 minutes of the movie.



Hannah's mom, Sue Simmons

Hannah's mom gives *Hanging Up* two bananas. She admits that she went to the movie without a hanky and ended up needing one. But she was tired, her emotional threshold low and she cries over Kodak commercials! Wait for the video and a night you have nothing to do.

Hanging Up is rated PG-13. Language and some sexual references. —

•Mixed

Continued from page 19

ten lava status, turn the heat back some and bring the cooking temperature of the sauce down to more of a steady simmer.

Now you're ready for the All-American and Southern-Style steps. You're on your own as far as quantities go at this stage because I never measure these ingredients. First add the barbecue sauce. I use Kraft Slow Simmered Original Barbecue Sauce. I add perhaps as much as a 1/2-cup of this. Next comes the brown sugar. I pull tightly packed pieces of brown sugar right out of the bag

and crumble them into the sauce — use an amount of brown sugar in pieces equivalent to about the size of 2 1/2 golf balls. Stir well to mix in the barbecue sauce and brown sugar.

Bring the sauce mixture to a steady but low simmer. Cover the Dutch oven with a lid but tilt the lid so steam can escape from the mixture. You'll need to cook this down some to get the correct thickness. In addition to being chunky, I also like my sauce thick — THICK — and rich. And this recipe has the potential for being exactly that — THICK and RICH.

The sauce will need to cook at a

steady simmer for at least an hour to an hour-and-a-half. It requires little attention during this time other than the occasional stir. After it's cooked for about an hour, taste it to see which direction, if any, you want to sway the taste. You may want to add a little white sugar at this point if it needs to be a little sweeter. You may want to add a little salt or pepper to suit your taste. Let the sauce cook at least a half-hour longer if you add any more ingredients at this point.

About cooking and preparation time: This will vary from one cook to the next. I usually start the process about 2 p.m. and get to the

steady, slow simmering stage before 3 o'clock. Then I leave it cooking on top of the stove until at least 4:15. That's when I go to the barn for afternoon feeding so I cut off the heat under the sauce and leave it sitting on the stove burner. The internal heat will continue to help the flavors mingle for some time after the heat is turned off. Sometimes, once I return to the house from feeding, I turn the sauce back on and let it cook awhile longer. Obviously the more time the sauce spends simmering the better the many flavors will mingle into one succulent mouth-watering sumptuous feast.

My pasta of choice for this sauce recipe is San Giorgio Florentine Fettuccine which is not actually

"plain" spaghetti at all. This Florentine fettuccine is a combination of regular pasta and spinach-based pasta. The cream- and green-colored pasta makes for an appealing presentation with this particular sauce. Martha Stewart would be proud.

Of course, you don't have to make this large quantity of sauce unless you want to. It's a great recipe if you want to freeze some or if you'd like to share some with friends or if you're married to a man named Cox and he has an army to be fed. The ingredients can be cut back to make a quantity that best suits your needs. Whatever quantity you make, I hope you enjoy this Super Supreme All-American Southern-Style Betty Spaghetti Sauce. Bon appetite. —

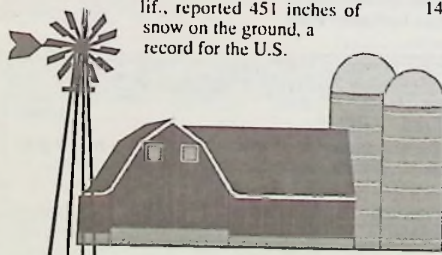
Yesterday's weather

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.

March 2, 1927 — Raleigh, N.C., was buried under 17.8 inches of snow in 24 hours, a record for that location. Nashville, N.C., received 31 inches of snow. The average snow depth in the state of Carolina was 14 inches.

March 8, 1717 — On Fishers Island in Long Island Sound, 1,200 sheep were discovered to have been buried under a snow drift for four weeks. When finally uncovered, 100 sheep were still alive.

March 11, 1911 — Tamarack, Calif., reported 451 inches of snow on the ground, a record for the U.S.



March 14, 1870 — The term "blizzard" was first applied to a storm which produced heavy snow and high winds in Minnesota and Iowa.

March 17, 1906 — The temperature at Snake River, Wyo., dipped to 50 degrees below zero, a record for the U.S. for the month of March.

March 18, 1989 — A storm in the western U.S. produced heavy rain in California, with heavy snow in the Sierra Nevada Range. Venado, CA was drenched with 5.40 inches of rain in 24 hours. A dozen cities in the eastern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date, including Baltimore, Md., with a reading of 82 degrees.

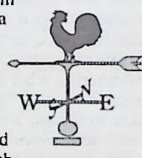
March 23, 1916 — Pocatello, Idaho, received a record 14.6 inches of snow in 24 hours.

March 25, 1975 — The town of Sandberg reported a wind gust to 101 mph, a record for the state of California.

March 26, 1954 — The temperature at Allaket, Alaska, plunged to 69 degrees below zero.

March 29, 1920 — Clear Spring, Md., received 31 inches of snow in 24 hours to establish a state record.

March 31, 1990 — The month of March went out just as it came in, like a lamb. Marquette, Mich., which started the month with a record high of 52 degrees, equaled their record for the date with a reading of 62 degrees. —



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