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NEW THIS MONTH!
Downeth on the Farmeth (annotated)
By Billy Bob Shakesisbeer -- Page 6

April 2000 Vol. 7, Issue 4

P.O. Box 51, Middlebrook, Va. 24459



Buffalo Gap man taps
into history of frontier
settlement with
collection of vintage rifles

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Robin & Linda find
themselves welcome
'In the Company of Strangers'

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FFA members flex
their farm muscles
in Ag Olympics

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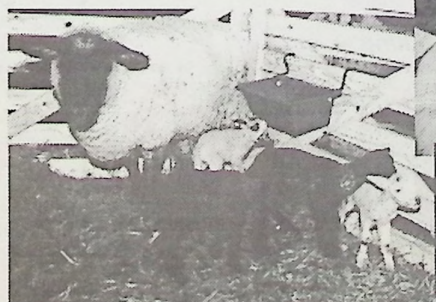
Down on
the Farm

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Local VFW posts
honor essay writers

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A face only a
mother or a
shepherd could
love

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Farmers' Market sees 25 vendors sign on for 2000

STAUNTON — Shenandoah Valley farmers, market gardeners and bakers are looking forward to a new year and are busily planning for the 2000 Farmers' Market season.

Staunton/Augusta Farmers' Market official Betty Hawpe reports that the market had a record year in 1999 with sales significantly higher than the previous season. "Our producers had a great season in 1999. We are now going into our eighth year, and have a core group of farmers participating in the market. We also have several new vendors scheduled to participate for the first time. But the most important factor in the market's success is that

we have a loyal throng of customers who shop almost every week," Ms. Hawpe said.

The Staunton/Augusta Farmers' Market is a fresh-air market and operates on Saturday mornings April through October at the Wharf parking area in downtown Staunton. Market Master Jeff Ishee reports that the market is, however, feeling growing pains.

"The layout of the market allows for 15 vendors on the front row, and the market had to expand around the corner to Johnson Street in 1999 to allow for 3 more spaces." With 25 vendors already signed on for the 2000 season, Ishee says it's important for mu-

nicipal officials and the market to work together on plans for expansion and a permanent structure.

"This market is growing rapidly. We have happy customers and we have happy farmers. That's a great combination. And the downtown merchants seem to be pleased with the increased traffic that the market creates on Saturday mornings," Ishee said. A permanent structure will allow the market to expand to accommodate up to 36 farmers.

The Staunton market is following a dramatic trend in farmers' market popularity nationwide. The USDA reports a 40 percent increase in the number of public farmers' markets since 1994.

Beef Expo 2000 set for April 14-15

LEXINGTON — The 2000 Virginia Beef Expo will kick off April 14 at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington. The timing and focus of Expo 2000 remains unchanged -- to showcase Virginia's beef industry. The two-day event will conclude on April 15.

Some 10,000 people attended last year's Expo representing 18 states. Buyers came from 20 states to view and purchase cattle offered and displayed. Included in this major mid-Atlantic area beef event will be exhibits and sales of purebred cattle of several breeds and a sale of commercial replacement heifers.

Lincoln, angus, simmental, red angus, and polled hereford sales will take place on Friday; multibreed and commercial heifer sales will be



conducted on Saturday. On both days, private treaty pen bulls will be available for viewing and purchasing and many other cattle will be on display.

All of the traditional events will return to Expo 2000 including the junior beef show. The trade show will be back with more than 100 exhibitors. On Friday night the Beef Bash, featur-

ing a gourmet beef dinner and live music, returns for an encore.

Youth breed shows will begin at 8 a.m. Saturday in Anderson Coliseum. The Youth All Breeds Steer Show will begin at 4:30 p.m. Saturday in Anderson Coliseum. Breed association, 4-H and FFA teams will compete in the cattle working contest in Moore Arena from 1-3 p.m. Saturday.

Admission to the expo is free however Beef Bash tickets must be purchased in advance by April 5. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children under 10.

For additional information or Beef Bash tickets, contact the Virginia Beef Expo Office at 540/992-1009. The Virginia Horse Center is located just off I-64, a half-mile west of I-81 in Lexington.

Hay ride to highlight opening day

Opening day of the 2000 season is Saturday, April 1.

- Opening bell sounds at 7 a.m.
- A Children's hay ride — There will be a free hay ride at the Wharf Parking Lot between 10 am and noon.
- Traditional music — Local artists will be playing traditional bluegrass music from 9 until 11 a.m.

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Middlebrook

New Robin & Linda release shows promise as one of the duo's best

By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK — For a couple without a real job between them, Robin and Linda Williams are about the "hard-workingest" duo around. Although Linda taught school for a couple of years early in her career, Robin readily admits with a sly grin that he's NEVER had a real job.

Instead what they have is a lifestyle. Not only are they married to each other, but they are married to music. They have worked hard at both for 27 years. The tireless efforts have paid off and they are currently riding the crest of a wave put in motion by the release of their 15th and most successful album yet.

"In the Company of Strangers" features a blend of what Robin and Linda are: bluegrass, country, and folk with just the right combination of sad and silly in this new set of tunes. Of the dozen songs, all but one is their own, with the other being Hank Williams' "Cold, Cold Heart."

"This album is really making a difference. There's a buzz going around; a little more excitement. Linda and I are noticing it," noted Robin as he relaxed at home after a grueling album release tour that took in 27 concerts in 44 days



Robin & Linda Williams recently released their 15th album, "In the Company of Strangers." Photo courtesy Sugar Hill records

across 11,000 miles in 10 states and Canada. "And that doesn't count the store and radio promo appearances," explained Linda. "And of course a day off means driving 500 miles," Robin chimed in.

When they say driving, they mean it very literally. The key to their successful lifestyle has been their great big white van. More like a mini-bus, the home on wheels holds Robin and Linda and their dog, Dixie, as well as both members of Their Fine Group, and all their equipment. It's home on wheels and it means that they can drive tag team a long haul through the night to another gig in yet another town.

"Everybody drives, that's how we do it," says Robin as the couple engages in an unresolved discussion about who's the better driver.

One claims to be a "better" driver, while the other claims to be a "smoother" driver.

"Everybody takes a shift. For instance when we finished up this tour we were in Rockford, Ill., which is 850 miles away. We finished up playing, packed up and were back here by 5 in the afternoon."

The van allows the luxury of lying down for a nap, standing up and stretching, or sitting and talking. "I couldn't imagine going out without it," says Linda.

And going out on the road is what they do best — it's how they stay in touch with their audiences in such far-flung places as South Dakota, Texas, California, Montana, Pennsylvania and New York. Their fame is truly a grassroots phenomenon

and they have enclaves of fans at every little venue they've played across the continent. "We're strongest where we've played the most: the Midwest, Virginia, the Northeast, but we are starting to build on the West Coast and starting to go out there more," Robin explained.

Some of the venues they play are familiar haunts, while others are new to their tour calendar. Through it all they've built up a loyal fan base. Way back in 1976 they started a mailing list just to keep in touch with folks along the way, maybe let them know when Robin and Linda would be in town and tip them off about new record releases. To say the list has grown over the years is an understatement. The most recent mailing topped 16,000 and that takes quite a chunk of change to send. Even though they've gone to the more economi-



cal e-mail newsletter, the paper mailing will continue as well.

"It's an important thing about what we do and a lot of people like it and want it," says Robin. "It's how we keep in touch with folks and it's helped us have a career away from Nashville."

"We're pretty darn lucky," said Linda in explaining the name recognition they now have all over the country. To explain further, she paraphrased a popular country song line about "having friends up and down the line." "We've got friends everywhere. We keep up with family and friends all over the country."

Robin has even (almost) out-See COUNTRY, page 11



Robin & Linda recently returned home from their album release tour of 27 concerts in 44 days across 11,000 miles in 10 states and Canada. The duo, members of Their Fine Group, and their Scottish terrier mascot "Dixie," travel in a big white van, a rolling home away from home.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

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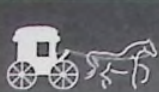
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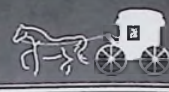
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Yesterday once more



Development of long rifle paralleled settling of frontier

By NANCY SORRELLS

BUFFALO GAP — Gordon Barlow reaches up, gently lifts a long-barreled rifle off the wall, and cradles it lightly. The 200-year-old piece is a thing of beauty with its tiger-striped maple wood and silver and brass inlay. To Barlow, this Kentucky long-rifle is more than just a rifle. To him the antique is a work of art and a symbol of America's frontier heritage all rolled into one.

Although many images evoke thoughts of the American frontier, nothing speaks of that era better than the long rifle. The rifle reflected what the frontier was: an American original created by the blending of the different European elements that came to the colonies. By all accounts the rifle began to emerge in the colonies where settlers from northern Ireland, Germany, and England mixed. The Germans brought with them a gun that was rifled (spiral grooves on the inside of the barrel improved the rifle's accuracy). This German Jaeger was also heavy and short barreled. From the British Isles came the longer, lighter smoothbore fowling guns.

American gunsmiths took the best of both types, tossed in some of their own ideas borne out of the necessity for having a dual purpose rifle needed for fighting and hunting. The result was a long, rifled barrel that allowed the user to fire a fast-spinning lead ball with greater accuracy from a longer distance than either of the European models.

What emerged came to be called the Kentucky long rifle but the name is really a misnomer for these rifles were perfected along earlier frontiers than Kentucky. The first long rifle gunsmiths lived in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, all posts on the western frontier. In the Valley there were gunsmithing centers in Winchester, Harrisonburg, Staunton, and Lexington and families who practiced there passed their skills down from generation to generation.

One of those frontier outposts was Staunton, the government seat for a county (Augusta) that stretched to the Mississippi and included a frontier outpost that came to be called Pittsburgh. Staunton was the jumping off spot for the western frontier. In Staunton is where land grants were issued, where settlers stocked up before heading to their new homesteads, and where militia units defending the frontier were mustered in, equipped, and sent west to fight the French and Indians. Could there have been a more likely place for the gunsmith business to thrive?

"Every able-bodied white male had to be a part of the militia," Gordon

explained. "They had regular meetings and a yearly muster. Augusta County men were involved in every conflict from the French and Indian War on and they built the roads out into the wilderness," he added.

As a result there were men in Augusta County from the earliest period who were skilled at making rifles. The Walker family down in present-day Rockbridge claimed several gunsmiths in its ranks from the days of the earliest settlement. When John Walker died in 1794 his estate inventory listed "a Raffle Guide," and "Plain for plaining Gun Barrels." The estate of William Lyle, also of Rockbridge, included a rifle, gunsmith's tools, and "a forged gun barrel" in 1782. By 1754 John Hanna was also working as a gunsmith in what became Rockbridge because he indentured John Mitchell to learn the art of blacksmith and gunsmith.

In Augusta County proper there was a rifle factory prior to the American Revolution run by Joshua Perry, Joshua Humphrys, Alexander Simpson and Jacob Gabbott. They repaired the "public arms" for the military at 10 shillings each.

Since 1955 when he was in high school, Gordon has pursued the frontier gunsmiths of the 18th and early 19th centuries and each year his respect for their craftsmanship has grown. "They not only had to be gunsmiths, but wood workers, engravers, and silversmiths. They practiced many trades and their estate inven-

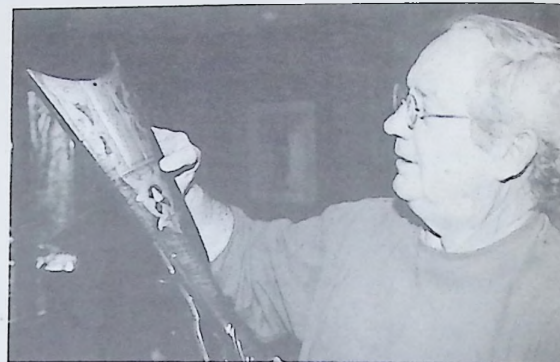
tories have all the other tools for those other trades. They had to know how to work with iron, silver, brass, and wood and understand the mechanics of a gun," he explained.

To study the evolution of the long rifle, is to study the history of the frontier as it unfolded, he noted. "There was definitely a transition from the utilitarian French and Indian War rifle to the Revolutionary War rifle and then to the golden age of the Kentucky rifle around 1800. The frontier rifle makers in the old days had to hand make every piece in their shop, but by 1800 areas like Staunton were becoming more metropolitan and you started seeing high art in rifles."

When the long rifle first emerged during the French and Indian War, they were utilitarian. There might have been a little relief carving on the stock or a brass plate on the patch box, but nothing too fancy. The butts of these rifles were 1 3/4 to 2 inches thick and the stocks were walnut, cherry or sometimes plain maple.

"Those first rifles were for survival and making those early rifles was a long process. The guys started with a tree and worked their way to a rifle. Later on in the golden age, the gunsmiths worked with some parts that were already made, but it still took up to two months to make a rifle, even in 1800," Gordon noted.

By 1800 the stocks were, more often than not, the eye-catching tiger striped maple, the butts were a



By 1800 long rifle stocks were made with eye-catching tiger striped maple adorned with elaborate silver and brass inlay, and relief carving decorated the rifles. The metal often included intricate engraving and was complemented with curled wire inlay.

slimmer, 1 1/2 inches, and elaborate silver and brass inlay, and relief carving decorated the rifles. The metal often included intricate engraving and was complemented with curled wire inlay.

It was during this period that the long rifle moved into the realm of art. And among the most talented artists was John Sheets who operated his shop in Staunton on the West Beverly lot that is now the Henry Funeral home.

"I see the rifles as the canvas for these artists," Gordon said as he invited the visitor to closely exam-

ine the metal inlay of a John Sheets rifle. To find a piece of art work like this that came out of Staunton around 1800 is unbelievable. John Sheets was among the best. Staunton got its start as an art center in the 18th century with men like him. I don't know of many other pieces of furniture or art that rival a John Sheets rifle," he said.

Sheets likely learned his craft in Winchester, but was in Staunton placing advertisements in the newspaper as early as 1798. He had a booming business as can be seen from his 1808 help wanted ad in the *Staunton Political Censor*:

Journeyman Rifle Smiths, 5 or 6 good steady Journeymen Gunsmiths will meet with constant employment at the Subscriber's Manufactory in Staunton, who has to make from one to three hundred Rifles. Liberal Wages will be given to such as can come well recommended.

Sheets was gone from Staunton by 1820; perhaps moving west to Ohio with his gunsmith son Henry

See RIFLES, page 5



Gordon Barlow of Buffalo Gap lifts a long-barreled rifle off the wall from where it is displayed in his home. The 200-year-old piece is made of tiger-striped maple wood

with a silver and brass inlay. This Kentucky long-rifle is a symbol of America's frontier heritage and as an antique is a work of art.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

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Performance to portray Kentucky frontiersman

The real Simon Kenton may have passed into the history books 164 years ago, but area residents will have the chance to meet this frontiersman from Virginia in an exciting living history presentation,



Actor Mel Hankla will portray a 72-year-old Kentucky frontiersman in "An Evening with Simon Kenton," 7:30 p.m., May 10 at the Stuart Hall auditorium. The evening is sponsored by the Augusta County Historical Society and is made possible by the Kentucky Humanities Council of the University of Kentucky.

"An Evening with Simon Kenton."

The show will be May 10 at the Stuart Hall auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

Actor Mel Hankla will portray a 72-year-old Kenton who recalls his life of adventure on the frontier. The evening is sponsored by the Augusta County Historical Society and made possible by the Kentucky Humanities Council of the University of Kentucky.

Although Kenton was one of Kentucky's greatest frontiersmen, his fame was often overshadowed by compatriots Daniel Boone and George Rogers Clark. It was an unfortunate twist of fate that sent this Fauquier, Va., native to the frontier wilderness in the 1770s. Thinking he had killed another boy in a fight over a girl, Kenton fled west at the age of 16. He was wrong — he had only knocked his rival unconscious — but the incident launched him on a life of high adventure.

By the time he was 20 Kenton had fetched up on the Kentucky shore of the Ohio River where he became a legendary frontier fighter and a self-appointed greeter to new arrivals in Kentucky. Hankla's portrayal of Kenton is a close second to meeting the frontiersman himself. The living history actor is a student of the frontier era and a flintlock gunsmith who makes several traditional long rifles every year.

The public is cordially invited to this special event. There is no charge for the evening's time travel performance, but donations to the Augusta County Historical Society will be accepted. —



Gordon Barlow holds two powder horns that are among the many items in his collection.

•Rifles

Continued from page 4

Sheets. Whether or not he physically accompanied his son west, his gunsmithing traits made the journey. An 1830s signed Henry Sheets rifle has distinctive Virginia and Ohio characteristics. Among the Sheets traits displayed on the rifle are a distinctive Sheets-type set-trigger screw, the trigger guard design, the elongated star inlay in the maple cheek rest, and the silver wire inlays. The edelweiss flower on the patchbox and the inlaid sil-

ver acorn on the stock are also Shenandoah Valley traits.

Rifles and their accouterments might have been pieces of art and prized household possessions, but they were also used by soldiers and hunters. As a result, not many survive and those that do command a hefty price among collectors. A signed John Sheets rifle could bring between \$100,000 and \$200,000 for instance.

Although his first collecting love is the long rifle, Gordon also en-

See **SHEETS**, page 20

Long-ago visitor to Middlebrook recalls charm of village

By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK — All of the recent focus on Middlebrook and its history has stirred up fond memories for people, including

Frances McCutchan Christian of Prescott, Ariz., who sent this writer a letter recalling her story.

Mrs. Christian's parents, Fannie and Earle McCutchan were from Middlebrook and, in fact, had met

at nearby Shemariah Presbyterian Church. The brick church is still standing, but it no longer holds services. Her father's ancestors, the McCutchans, had lived on 640 acres in the Borden Grant since 1742. "The last McCutchan to own part of that original grant was cousin Emily McCutchan Beard who died in 1982 in Staunton," she recalled.

The McCutchan family had moved to Arizona, but in the late summer of 1925 Fannie arrived home for a visit with her children, Eugene and Frances. They were staying with "Willie" Varanda Herbert Gabbert Liptrap, Fannie's mother. "Her home was next door to the Rusemises store, or perhaps the second house from the store. I remember being sent there occasionally for a spool of thread or some other small item," Frances recalled.

Frances remembers that her grandmother, a devout Presbyterian, was a stickler for propriety. "Grandmother kept a cow which Russell Weaver (a cousin who lived with

Grandmother) milked. I remember walking down an alley or small road to the creek where the cow stayed. Also, as we walked to the cow we whistled. That evening at dinner, Grandmother reminded us that a 'whistling woman and a crowing hen come to no good end!'"

Grandmother Liptrap attended Shemariah twice every Sunday, every Wednesday evening and made sure to say grace at every meal. While the McCutchans were in the village on their visit, Shemariah hosted a lawn party.

"Many people were interested in Earle and Fannie's family of Arizona. There were taffy pulling parties and apple butter made in huge copper kettles outdoors attended by many neighbors," Frances recalled.

The visit back east was long enough that Frances started the sixth grade at Middlebrook Elementary School. "I had to have a tutor to improve my arithmetic. I could use one today," she wrote. "Classes were held on Saturdays instead of

Mondays as the children stayed home to help with the family wash (on Mondays)," she added.

In the fall she remembers a chestnut hunt with her Aunt Icy Liptrap who also lived with Grandmother. That was the first time she had ever tasted chestnuts and she pronounced them delicious. A few years later the blight wiped the chestnut tree off the face of North America.

"While in school, our sixth grade teacher planned a trip for the class to go to Monticello, home of Thomas Jefferson, but by Christmas 1925 my mother, brother and I were back home in Arizona. It was not until 1969 that I was privileged to visit Monticello," she recalled of her 44-year wait to visit the Jefferson home.

Today, 75 years after her extended visit to Middlebrook, Frances still has fond memories for the village that holds her family heritage. "My parents loved Virginia, and events and stories of Virginia were a large part of my childhood," she concluded. ---

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Oh-so-much ado about everything

Downeth on the farmeth, we think, you see, of the time when from the farm we would like to flee. So hold onto your hats, all you ladies and gents, it's lambing season again, of this there is much consequence.

Much consequence is a mild way to put it, there's so much happening, there's no time to sit. With 110 ewes to lamb, there's no time to play and no time to sing. There's only the sheep, their young, and oh-so-much ado about everything.

A beautiful day today, but did any lambs come? No WAY!!
A beautiful night tonight, but there isn't nary a lamb in sight.

'Twins marked the tune up yesterday. Now the conductor's baton is raised to play. Waiting for the sweet notes to start flowing, I wish these ewes would hurry up and get GOING!!!!!!

What a beautiful day in Feb-ru-ary, the temp reached the mark of near 80-degree. Of course no new lambs were there any to see, until night stretched to the hours of the morning wee, when the mercury was no more than a degree of thirty-three.

'Back to the barn at the hour of 4, to check lambs that came and see were there more. The ewes all their work I saw they had done, and found a new arrival in the number of one.

'Then off to Frank's Mill, I flew like a flash, to pick up some ewes I'd paid for with cash. My absence, I thought, would cause 'nary a ripple. Lo and behold, I returned to find a single, twin and a triple!

The whole deal seemed surreal, all moms and their young, each one bright and healthy 'gainst the night with stars flung.

**Downeth on
the farmeth
BY
Billy Bob
Shakesisbeer**



At least this time in the course of nature's great scheme, all's well that ends well, in this midwinter night's dream.

'The seventh day the Lord made for rest and for church, so off I went and hoped I didn't leave the ewes in the lurch. Came home to find three ewes with lambs, but not all was well, while I'd been at church what broke loose was all hell.

In two sets of triplets, among each one was dead, In one set another was no more than breathing lead. I grabbed it up quick, to the house I did head, it might stand a chance if re-sus-ci-ta-ted.

'Another lamb I found late in the day, had crawled through the fence, astray. He found himself tiny among a great calf number, around him inquisitive, the big beasts did lumber.

The little lamb found himself in a fix soon enough, the calves didn't realize they were playing so rough. You see, a newborn lamb is fragile as an egg, and underfoot of the calves, the lamb broke a hind leg.

Off to the house I went, to gather the supplies, emergencies like this, to call the vet would cost a mint. I've learned through experience and now realize, what it takes to set a lamb's foot. So I fixed him a splint.

By midnight that Sabbath the shepherd was weary, the rain in the evening had made everything dreary.

Introducing...

Billy Bob Shakesisbeer

Augusta Country is pleased to present the recently-discovered literary works of Billy Bob Shakesisbeer. Scholars disagree on the exact identity of Shakesisbeer, although it is known that he lives somewhere in southwestern Augusta County. His sweeping, lyrical poetry portrays everyday farm life and he has come to be known as "The Bard of Brookside."

A complete, authoritative account of Shakesisbeer's life is lacking; much supposition surrounds relatively few facts. Some scholars believe Shakesisbeer's work to be a compilation of several authors rather than the work of a single individual.

Whatever the case, Shakesisbeer's writings bring us a fresh new look into modern-day farm life. His writings have been lauded as being "as thought-provoking as Descartes" and "as down to earth as Billy Carter."

The special insights of Shakesisbeer's works are highlighted here with annotations provided by Down on the Farm columnist Betty Jo Hamilton. Although she says she is at a loss to explain it, Hamilton noted that this selection by Shakesisbeer seems to parallel recent events which occurred during lambing season down on the farm. The text of Shakesisbeer's writing is cross-referenced numerically to Hamilton's annotations. ---

But even with some bad luck, I felt nearly fine. Ewes and lambs, respectively, numbered 15 and 29.

'One ewe out of the lot, showed a bad attitude. She's not very nice, wish she'd move to a new latitude. She took quite a disliking; the shepherd she would punch. But the shepherd was quick, and moved on a hunch.

The old ewe put her head down, and came mighty fast, the shepherd dodged one way, the ewe went flying past. It's not very often a ewe takes this kind of notion. New lambs make them protective, it figures in the quotient.

But the shepherd is not likely to appreciate the fuss, a ewe charging head first, might make someone cuss.

See CHARGE, page 7

Oh-so-much ado about everything (annotated)

Feb. 23, 2000

'First lambs arrived today. Set of twins. This is it. Lambs coming from now until at least early May.

Feb. 25, 2000

Another beautiful day and not a lamb in sight. It's calling for freezing temperatures tonight. That ought to get them started.

Feb. 26, 2000, 4 a.m.

'Back from checking ewes, two sets of twins. Hard time getting one ewe into stable. Typical Suffolk lambs. Only want to sleep. Not showing much interest in getting milk. Got bottle and fed one very big lamb.

Feb. 26, 2000

Got on the road shortly after 10. Went to ewe sale at Rockingham fairgrounds.

Good sale for the most part. Ended up buying two pens (total of 7) of bred replacement ewe lambs. From same farm in W.Va. that I'd bought five ewes from two years ago. Have been very good additions to the flock. Seven ewes I bought today are Dorset crossed with maybe Suffolk and Hampshire. I didn't even intend to buy any and hadn't



looked at the ewes before the sale. Having had no intention of buying anything at the sale, I didn't travel in anything to haul animals. So once I'd bought the ewes, I had to start thumbing around for a ride home for them. Found a ride for them as far as Frank's Mill which saved me making another trip to Harrisonburg.

'Got the feeding done and everything settled in then got the truck and trailer and headed down to Frank's Mill. All in all, the day spent at the sale was a good one.

Felt good to hob-nob with my fellow sheep herders. Always pick up some tidbit of information to ruminate on. Also gives me a little spark of enthusiasm about sheep production which helps me focus on what I'm trying to do here.

Feb. 26, 2000, 11:15 p.m.

Time to go to the barn. Checked ewes and found a single, set of twins and set of triplets. All in good shape and all pretty pert. The ewe with the single was trying to claim the triplets too, so had to get that broken up. Moved all ewes and

their lambs to jugs. Put the ewe with triplets back in the feed room because didn't have any place to put her. Got some milk out of the ewe that had lambs earlier in the day and gave some milk to each of the triplets to make sure they got a good start.

Feb. 27, 2000

Hard, so hard, to get awake and get out of bed at 6:30 alarm, especially after having been at the barn at 4. Days are running together now, because of lambing. Hard to tell one day from the next.

'Got back to the house about 10 after morning rounds at barn. Got ready for church. As I was leaving, noticed ewe in lot had two newborns, but both were up looking for milk. Figured they'd be o.k. until I got home. Would just be gone an hour or so. Saw another ewe stretched out looking like she was in labor. Figured she'd hold until I got back.

Got home about 1. Ewe I'd seen in



Stealing some milk from a ewe to supplement a set of triplets. Photo by Sue Simmons

labor had two lambs. Saw another ewe along fence looked like she was licking something. Also looked like a great blob of something white on the ground not moving. Rushed in house and threw off church clothes and pulled on work clothes. Found some good things, some bad things when I got to lambing lot. Ewe that had two lambs when I left for church had a

See LAMB, page 7

•Charge

Continued from page 6

A shepherd, her body, does not need a new dent.
The ewe will understand, it's time for attitude adjustment.

The shepherd grabbed the old girl, some wool 'neath the chin, looked her in the eye and fixed her with a stout grin.
"It's time to straighten thee out, this nonsense we can without do."

And that's what the shepherd calls, the taming of the ewe.

Only five days of lambing and the situation is serious, the shepherd is so tired, she's practically delirious. Lambs are coming one by one, slowing down some now. Quite big though they are, the ewes manage somehow.

⁷Another lamb did I find, it's leg broke in part, it's not an easy way to get a good start. But once the leg, it's injury has been tended, the lamb feels the spark. Soon it will be mended.

⁸The lamb that had such a tough go in the beginning, Shows signs in the race, she may come out winning. It's eyes are bright; it's feeling sparky and spunky, which is quite a leap, since it began as a flunky.

[In this context, Shakesibeer adheres to the low-country pronunciation of "ewe" as "yew:"]

⁹It happens sometimes when things are to be or not, there's naught to be done, a new life hath not got. But still there can be something there for to gain, when the drama is over, except for the pain.

The process of birth, to good end does not always work, and it's not for a reason, sometimes it's just a quirk. There's no consolation for creatures who can't know. It's only this shepherd who cries, "Sweet flower, oh woe."

A ewe lost her lamb. No one was there for her need. And so the old adage the shepherd did heed. Take the skin from the dead lamb and work awfully quick; But of fate, slight of hand and the ewe won't know the trick.

A new lamb she has, and she doesn't care, nor does she notice what the lamb doth wear. The skin from the dead lamb makes an unusual coat, but this lamb is not hers, the ewe takes no note.

¹⁰Another ewe was in a terrible fix, in these instances, we get no kicks. For shepherd and sheep it was a long ordeal, every moment did count, the lamb's fate to seal.

A little this way and a little that, oh, why did she have to be so fat? A last resort — What ho! — the shepherd did flip her. What the ewe really needs is a backside that opens with a zipper.

"Out d—— lamb! Out, I say!" the shepherd did plead. There's no more time, what we need is some speed. Finally, at last, when hope was near nil, the lamb's on the ground but terribly still.

Then a snit and a snort, a wee tiny puff, the shepherd herself let out a loud huff. A winking and blinking, the lamb its head did shake, the ewe looked around, no surprise could it fake.

And just as easy as that and before too much longer, the lamb and the ewe both looked all the stronger. A lot of work, but it's worth it to see such a sight, the ewe and her offspring, together in day's early light.

¹¹It's evening now, and folks are dressed to the nines. But wait. What light through yonder stable door shines? Can this be true? I'm not kidding you. Lambs numbering four are sprawled wet, shaking their heads, on the stable floor.

We shake our heads too, at such a sight do we wonder, It gives us cause on occasion, to pause and just ponder. It's a hard way to do it, but we must pay our debts; we can speed the whole process with the arrival of quadruplets.

Two white ones, two black ones, a comical sight, now there's plenty for the shepherd to do tonight.

See QUADS, page 8

•Lamb

Continued from page 6

third dead lamb. Ewe that had been in labor as I was leaving for church had two lambs that were o.k. Ewe with great blob of something white on ground not moving had one pretty good size lamb up and going. Great blob of white turned out to be two more lambs on the ground — one dead, the other alive but not showing much promise. Moved ewe to stable. Left her the big lamb to look after. Brought small, barely moving lamb to house.

Started revival measures in earnest. Lamb was not cold to the core, but had lost a lot of body heat. Used the immersion method — immersed lamb in comfortably warm water in utility sink to bring it around. About 10 minutes in water with rubbing, lamb showed some vigor. Removed it from water and gave it a good rubbing all over with dry towels. Had gotten some colostrum from the ewe. Couldn't get the lamb to nurse so had to tube it. Put about two and a half ounces of milk in the lamb.



Breaking a leg when only six hours old is a hard way to make a start. However with proper use of the always-abundant and ever-versatile duct tape and a couple paint stirrers, this lamb adapted quickly to the splint made for its broken leg.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

Dried it off some more and got some dry towels to wrap it up in. Got hot water bottle and fixed it hot but not too hot. Put the hot water bottle under the lamb and stretched it out to get as much contact with the heat source as possible. Lamb was sleeping and

breathing steadily. Left it that way for about a 45 minutes., then turned it over to warm the other side. Feb. 27, 2000 4 p.m.

While I was getting ready to go to barn, lamb started trying to get up. Mouth temperature felt o.k. Not too hot, not too cold. Surface body

temp o.k. and wool was mostly dry. Got some milk warmed but he wasn't too interested in it. Left him there to gather his bearings while I went to do feeding.

Approach of rain appeared imminent. Wanted to get sheep in before it hit. Knew I had two ewes with lambs to move. Didn't see ewe with lambs that had come as I was leaving for church. Looked around finally and saw her headed toward barn with one lamb. Didn't see the other one. Started looking around then heard a little bleat. It had crawled out through the fence into the pasture with the feeder calves. I collected it and luckily the ewe with twins was willing to walk her lambs to the barn lot so I didn't have to carry them.

²Got in the barn lot and put the lamb down I was carrying for the other ewe. I put the lamb down to stand up and it just toppled over. I picked it up and stood it up again and it toppled over again. I picked it up the third time and saw that its right rear leg was badly broken between the elbow and ankle joint. Obviously when the lamb crawled through the fence, the calves had been so curious about it they had mobbed it and something stepped on its leg. Not good for a lamb less than 6 hours old. Then I had to start scrambling to find something to set the leg with. Not good that it was a

rear leg either because lambs use their rear legs to brace up into the ewe to nurse.

Splint materials had to be light so lamb would be able to get up and down, but had to be strong enough so the lamb could support its weight on the splint. Settled on a paint stirrer cut in half and two pieces of thick pasteboard. Used foamy insulation tape for the padding. Put the sticks on front and back of leg, just to the elbow joint and extending just below the toes. Put the pasteboard strips on inside and outside of leg, again to elbow joint and extending just below the toes. Letting the splint stick out beyond the toes let's the lamb rest the foot on the ground without putting pressure on the break. Used the ever-versatile duct tape to wrap the splint and leg pretty tight. (Duct tape has so many uses it is astonishing. It can be used for anything from splinting a baby lamb's leg to repairing the blower pipe on a field chopper. Every farmer should keep a supply of duct tape hand.)

After splinting the lamb's leg, set the lamb down and this time he didn't topple over. Lamb put some pressure on the splint and was able to hold himself up. Put him back in the pen with the ewe and before I left the barn he was up having a go at nursing and doing a pretty

See SPLINT, page 8



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•Quads

Continued from page 7

She had her heart set on sleeping, for three hours or more, but there'll be little dreaming, she'll need to check up on the four.

An extra bottle she'll carry, in her fervent quest, a daunting challenge of survival, to calm the tempest. The lambs will need extra, especially in the beginning, if for the long term, their needs be met and bring winning.

"Ewe-me-o!" Ewe-me-o! Where for art there Ewe-me-o?" There's a lamb a bleating somewhere, feeling kind of low. It's lost and alone, nowhere can it find its maw. Now it's mine. Oh, joy. Two bottles a day and that's law.

The lambs are still coming, though verse has been terse, things are going pretty good, they're bound to get worse. The ewes have been moving along at a speed nearly nifty. A triplet and single today takes the number to 50!

"I had a very bad go this morning with one of the new ewes. Now I'm suffering from a severe case of the blues. It was a devilish mess with not much hope for success, in the end, the only consolation came in asking God to bless.

"But others made up for the flaw which ended fatal,

["In this context, Shakesisbeer embraces the high-country pronunciation of "ewe" as "yo."]

it's hard to understand these situations occurring prenatal. Four ewes did their jobs and with hardly any fuss, seven lambs they did render, causing me only a little to cuss.

"The past four days my age has been showing, 30 lambs have arrived, don't know if I'm coming or going. Yesterday, last night, and this morning 13 did come, any faster than that and I can't keep the sum.

My eyelids feel like they must be made of lead, they droop and I yawn, I'm nodding my head. The ewes chew their cuds and seem very content, they are completely oblivious to all the ex-cite-ment.

I hear in New Zealand they vacation during lambing season, they go far away, and for quite an excellent reason. When they return, what's left alive are all the best, they have no use for those that can't pass the survival test.

So I'm going to vacate, and let the sheep do their work, they'll make it or not, the best ones who start with a perk, and I'll be the better for it, my hair will be less gray and more brown. A vacation right now sounds great and it would alleviate this frown.

If you need me you'll know where to look, check it out on the web or maybe in a book. When I come back I'll be rested substantial-ly. You see there are no sheep on the beaches of Fiji.

Think of me often, or think of me not a lot.

I'm in the South Pacific where the days are long and hot. There's nothing to do and no schedule to keep. The only sheep I see are the ones I count in my sleep.

Oh, no! Say it ain't so. What a cruel twist of fate! I've fallen asleep. I'm dreaming. Oh, gosh, it's late. Grab my boots; get the flashlight; my coveralls, quick! To the barn, hurry. A ewe needs help. On time, just in the nick!

What day is it? Where am I? What's my name? Do you recognize me? I feel nearly as crazy as a chimpanzee swinging through a tree. Sleep deprivation does strange things, to the body and mind. I'm serious when I say I can't keep up with my behind.

"A set of triplets this morning, topped off the latest glut. There's lots more to come, I wish there was a shortcut. For 21 days, the lambs have been coming, and there will be more. Right now, at this minute, the total lamb count stands at 84.

So day to day we go, working our fingers down to the nub. For our work, we have much to show, but, ah, there's the rub. You see it's only half over, this business we call lambing. We've got 92 on the ground, that's no joke just yes ma'am-ing!

"Downeth on the farmeth, we've got a ways to go this year, Fifty and three more ewes left to lamb. Let's send up a cheer, for the shepherd in her labors, all the ewes and their offspring. Fifty and four more days are ahead with oh-so-much ado about everything! ---

•Splint

Continued from page 7

good job at it too. Started raining as I finished up with setting the lamb's leg. Took one last look at everything then headed to the house.

Lamb I'd been working on since middle of day showing signs of improvement. Was still on its feet when I came in from feeding. I brought a bottle of milk with me from barn, however the lamb didn't appear too hungry so I didn't force it. Aspiring some on fluids anyway. Worried he got a snoot full during lambing.

Got the big pet porter set up and put the lamb in it. Moved to unheated bedroom. Don't want the lamb to get overheated then get a chill. Lamb was able to get up and down on its own by this point and two puddles were proof its kidneys were working.

Got my dinner and sat down to watch television for awhile. Heated some milk for lamb in bedroom. It took about two ounces and nursed pretty good. Aspiring some.

February 28, 2000, 12:01 a.m.

2 ewes, two sets of twins. Both ewes wanting to claim all four lambs but neither ewe wanting to just claim two lambs. How many

different combinations of two are there in a set of four? Think I finally got the right two combinations of twos.

"One of the ewes copped a real attitude with me. Wanted to knock me around like a punching bag just because I was moving the lambs. She got pretty nasty about it. Rarely is there a ewe that won't comply with the program when we need to handle their lambs. But this old biddy was just plain nasty. Grabbed her up short under the chin to settle her down. She wasn't too thrilled with my intent on moving her and her lambs.

Lamb in house took a little milk but not much. He did pass first fecal and has urinated a couple more times. We have ignition. See in the morning if we get liftoff.

Now I have three hours of sleep coming.

Feb. 28, 4 a.m. barn check

No new lambs this time. Nothing in the throes of labor. Lamb with broken leg was trying to nurse. Ewe kept wanting to lie down. Stayed there long enough to make sure ewe stayed on her feet long enough to give both lambs a good opportunity to nurse. Both sets of twins from midnight check o.k. Ewes seem to be content with lambs I matched them up with. Back to bed

for maybe two hours.

Feb. 28, 2000, morning rounds

"Started moving some ewes with lambs out of jugs into hardening pen. Found a lamb in one of the pens with a broken leg. Ewe must have stepped on it. Got some stuff and fixed a splint. Lamb was standing without the splint anyway, but the splint will help protect the leg and give it a chance to heal.

Moved ewes with twins from last night into jugs. Bad ewe still showing her hind end. Put up a fight just for me to get the lambs so I could vaccinate and tag them. What an old battle ax.

"Lamb in the house looking and acting stronger this morning. Nursed o.k. but didn't take a lot of milk.

Feb. 29, 2000

Didn't make 4 a.m. check at barn. Got up at 6 and went down about 6:30.

"Found one ewe with a dead lamb.

"Found another ewe showing but not doing anything. Checked her and her water had broken but she wasn't dilated as she should have been. Seemed to take me forever to get the lamb. Turned the ewe in

just about every position imaginable to ease delivery of lamb. Could get the lamb's legs, but pulling the head forward was almost impossible. Finally had to use a string and make a noose. Slipped it over the back of the lamb's head and used it to help pull the head forward past the cervix. I was sure the lamb would be dead. Surprisingly, it was quite alive and not too worse for the wear. Quite a big lamb. I was tired before I went to the barn and by the time I finished delivering the lamb I was exhausted.

"After getting that ewe straightened out and her lamb going, turned my attentions back to the ewe with the dead lamb. Skinned the lamb. Took one of the triplets from 2/26 that I had been supplementing and put the skin on it. The ewe didn't even

fuss. She just started licking the skin and let the lamb nurse. Looks like that might work out o.k.

March 1, 2000

Started on afternoon feeding rounds. All lambs and ewes seem to be o.k. "Noticed ewe along the creek by herself starting labor. Left her alone while I was getting other feeding done and stuff moved around to night pens. Ewe was one I had been watching for some time thinking she would be the first to have her lambs because she seemed so big. Thought she might have triplets. She had one lamb on her own out in the lot before we got her in. Just a medium sized lamb so, because of her size, I figured she would have more.

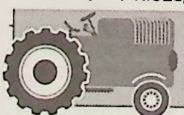
Carried the lamb in and she followed. See EWE, page 9

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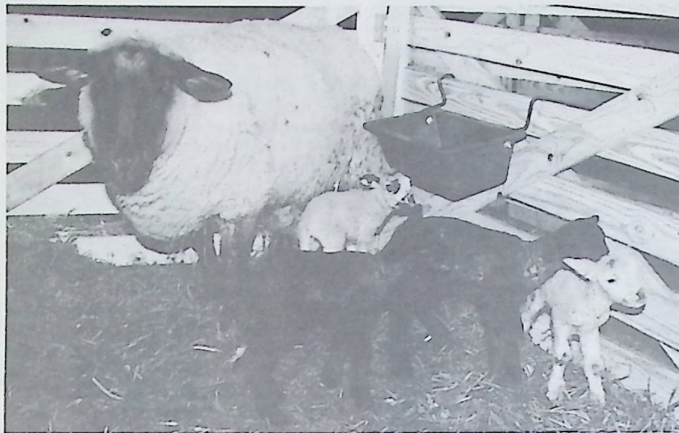
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Ewe

Continued from page 8

lowed. Got her in a pen. Checked the ewe and felt second lamb, seemed very small. Felt two legs and a head. Pulled it forward and when I got the legs exposed, one was black and one was white which told me I had hold of two different lambs. Then seeing a white head confirmed it, but the lamb popped right out, even with one leg back. Quite a small lamb. Maybe 3 pounds. But it was alive. Went back then for the third lamb, the black leg of which I'd already seen. Found two legs and a tail which meant it was coming backward. Stopped for just a minute to give myself room to get it out quickly and completely with one pull. Slipped it right on out and immediately wiped off its nose to clear the mucous and amniotic fluid before the lamb could suck any in. As is my usual procedure when I deliver lambs, I checked the ewe one more time to see if she was done. Was not completely surprised to find another set of feet and a head and in short order had a fourth lamb on the ground. That's the first time I've ever delivered quads. Two of them are black and two are white. Lambs range in weight from probably 3+ to 8+ pounds. Two of them are close to the same size, one is sort of a medium small, and the other is just plain little. But it's a Dorset, so that will work in his favor. Wiped the lambs off a little bit then



Multiple births in sheep are not uncommon, however twins occur more frequently than triplets and quadruplets. When a ewe has more than two lambs, supplemental bottle feeding is usually required to rear the lambs.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

left the ewe to the rest. Came back to the house to get a bottle. Got some milk out of quad ewe and gave to smallest lambs first. Then stole about a 1/2 bottle of milk from three other ewes with new lambs. Got maybe 2 ounces in the smallest

lamb. Maybe a little less than that in the next to the smallest lamb. Two bigger lambs got at least an ounce apiece. Got both of them to nurse ewe too. Smaller lambs nursed her some too, but not as much as bigger ones. Will go back to barn in a couple hours to check on them. Will need to supplement them to make sure they get a good start.

With the arrival of quads, that takes the number of ewes and lambs up to 28 and 46, respectively, which takes the lambing percentage up to 164 percent. Early on it had been just .07 short of 200 percent, then about 7 or 8 consecutive singles came along.

I'll have to go to the barn tonight to see about quads. Maybe I'll shoot for 10 and 3.

March 1, 11 p.m. check

Lamb in basement nursed strong. Seems to be perkier down there than he was up here in the pet porter. He took about half a bottle, which is a lot compared to what he had been taking. Quads look o.k. Stole some milk from a couple other ewes and got at least a couple ounces in each of the quads. Made pen a little bigger to give them more room.

March 2, 2000, 4:30 a.m.

No new lambs. Quads up and going, hungry. Took a bottle of homemade colostrum for them. Homemade colostrum is 1 can store-

bought goat milk, 1 can hot water, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1/2 tablespoon cod liver oil, 1 egg yolk. Got the original recipe from Raising Sheep the Modern Way by Paula Simmons. Cut back on amount of cod liver oil from original recipe. Mix yolk, sugar and oil thoroughly. Gradually add in goat milk, making sure egg yolk gets mixed into milk good. Then add water. May be stored in refrigerator and reheated as needed.

March 2, 2000

Thirty hours with no new lamb arrivals. What a welcome break.

Got to barn about 8 or a little after this morning. Had a bottle for quads. Three nursed. Big one seems to be getting his fill from the ewe. No new arrivals during the night and no fires to put out, so morning routine was about normal.

March 5, 2000, Sunday

¹²After I finished feeding this morning, found a newborn lamb in back, back section of barn underneath bridge. Couldn't find any ewe to which the lamb belonged. Judging by the navel cord the lamb could have been born two nights ago. Lucky to have found it. Kept hearing a bleating. Thought it was lambs in other stable or out back. Finally realized I was hearing the sound coming from some-

See **LOST**, page 10



Feeding time requires some extra help when there are so many mouths to feed.

Photo by Sue Simmons

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RURITAN CLUBS

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

•Lost

Continued from page 9 where it shouldn't be. That's when I checked to see what lamb had gotten back there and found this lamb unclaimed by whatever had produced it. Lamb was emaciated and looked like it hadn't nursed. Got some milk from a ewe and the lamb took it all. Let it nurse a ewe some too. Took the lamb out to the pasture hoping something would claim it but nothing did. Brought it to the house and put it in basement with Sophie, pups and other orphan lamb. It will be hard for this lamb to make it because it was so long getting milk after it had been born.

March 9, 2000

Sophie and her pups are doing wonders for the two orphan lambs in the basement. The pups are just over a week old now and the lambs pile up on top of them when they're nursing Sophie. The lamb I found wandering around under the barn bridge hasn't had much of an appetite. Today I found out why. Sophie is letting the lamb nurse her. These livestock guardian dogs are quite extraordinary, but I never thought one would let a lamb nurse it, but seeing



They're not quite "coyote patrol" material yet, but these livestock guardian pups will help some shepherds somewhere rest a little easier someday.

Photo by Sue Simmons



A livestock guardian dog with new pups makes a good surrogate mother for an orphan lamb.

Photo by Nancy Sorre's

is believing. I'll take all the help I can get raising orphan lambs.

March 12, 2000, Sunday

"What a miserable start to the day. Yuck. Got to barn to find one of the replacement ewes in a particular state of distress. Afterbirth was showing but no sign of lamb. Started working on her and immediately realized lamb was dead and had been for awhile. Ewe was dried out and it took forever to get legs and head of lamb exposed. Thought sure I could get the lamb once I got the head out but pulling resulted in very little progress. Further examination revealed a very large hind end which simply wouldn't come through the cervix. Had to cut the lamb behind rib cage then go in and get the hindfeet of the remaining half to pull it out. Ewe was going down hill and I was

just hoping for a little more time. While I was trying to get the back legs I felt a tear in the ewe's uterus and knew then it was a lost cause. She died within a matter of minutes. A draining experience. Even now it makes me just want to slump. "But, a ewe that had been thinking about having a lamb at midnight had delivered a lamb sometime in the early morning hours. Another ewe had a lamb on her own while I was working on the soon-to-be dead ewe.

Worked on feeding and got some of that out of the way. Checked ewe which had just had a lamb and she had another one coming but it was coming all legs first. It was a small lamb and I got the head and one front leg out and the rest followed suit. First lamb had been plenty big. Ewe got to work on the lambs, so I figured they'd be alright.

"It was past noon by the time I came to the house. Threw work clothes in the washer. Got some lunch then collapsed for a couple hours. Forgot to put work clothes in dryer before I took a nap. Then when I woke up at 3:30, realized I couldn't leave the house until I dried my work clothes.

March 15, 2000

"Set of twins and set of triplets when I got to barn this morning. Sheep behind barn gone (escaped) except for two. Gates got open "somehow" and all sheep behind barn went over to silo lot. I won't mention any names, but "someone" was at the barn before I got there this morning so some gates got open "somehow" and the sheep escaped.

Wasn't too worried about them. Had more pressing things to attend to at barn with many new arrivals.

March 25, 2000

No new lambs in past few days. No more really expected until at least Wednesday. Have about 50 ewes left to lamb. A lot of these are replacements, including the ones I

bought in February. Replacements are usually high-strung and it takes them awhile to get with the program. Have already had a few replacements lamb and they've done o.k. "But who can tell what the days ahead hold. One thing I can always count on in lambing season, if anything can happen, it usually will happen. —



A "three cylinder" human milk station for some hungry lambs. A friendly livestock guardian dog keeps order among the ranks.

Photo by Nancy Sorre's

Virginia's ag leaders play host to state legislators

By PENNY PLEMMONS

RICHMOND — The Virginia Agribusiness Council hosted their 29th appreciation banquet for state legislators at the Arthur Ashe Center in Richmond in January.

The event began with a Virginia's Finest reception with over 900 guests lured to taste wine, seafood, peanuts and other delectables produced in the state.

This year's "Distinguished Friend of Agriculture Award" went to U.S. Congressman Norman Sisisky for his support of the pork, dairy and peanut industries. Secretary of Natural Resources John Paul Woodley spoke on behalf of Gov. Jim Gilmore noting that the Virginia agriculture strategy is to develop strategies to increase access to national and international markets.

Keynote speaker, Lt. Gov. John H. Hager reminded the group that

the country's agriculture roots started in Virginia. "The founding fathers were farmers. Jefferson and Washington planted the seeds for a strong agriculture community," Hagar admitted that the agribusiness community would continue to be assaulted by those who "don't understand" the function or importance of

agriculture and forestry.

"I've never met a farmer yet," he stated, "who wouldn't take care of the land that he gets his livelihood on. Let's promote agribusiness through education. Together our future is unlimited."

The Agribusiness Council is encouraged that more than one out of every three legislators is commit-

ted to the Ag Initiative 2000 and recognizes the significance of agribusiness to Virginia. Agribusiness priorities for this session of the General Assembly include environmental stewardship issues, maintaining Building Code exemptions for farm buildings and structures, funding for resources in the Department of Forestry and

continued vigilance in keeping the Right to Farm Act intact.

The Virginia Agribusiness Council serves producers, marketers, suppliers, processors, and commodity associations in the agriculture and forestry industries. Information on the council may be found on the web at va.agribusiness@att.net. —

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Lance Hanger, son of Mark and Dee Hanger, fishes for trout at the Western Virginia Sport Show held recently in Fishersville at Augusta Expo.

Photo by Penny Plemmons

Western Va. Sport Show thrills crowd of outdoor enthusiasts

By PENNY PLEMMONS

FISHERSVILLE — Lions and cougars and bears, oh my! And elk and deer and a host of other big game were showcased at the 13th annual Western Virginia Sport Show held at Expoland in February.

Hosted by Hanger Enterprises, the event promotes endless hunting and fishing possibilities. The lure of adventure in the wilds of Canada, the plains of Africa, the backwoods of Montana, or the depths of the sea attract between 7,000 and 15,000 outdoorsmen each year.

The expo is truly a family affair

with Don Hanger and his son Mark being the show's producers and extended family pitching in to make the event a success. According to Don Hanger, this year's premier event drew people from "15 states and is the largest outfitter sport show in Virginia." Mark Hanger stated that the show "is dedicated to those who love and cherish the wonderful outdoors that God has created for us to enjoy."

The expo provided just about any information and supplies the sportsman needs. Book a personalized, guaranteed success safari or deep sea excursion just about any

place in the great out yonder or get the right equipment for an expedition to the mountain or stream closest to your back door.

Learn about training dogs or sit with the experts and practice a turkey call. Just the right outdoor equipment, including guns, tree stands, or toe warmers, also can be found at the show. And best of all you can swap your outdoor story with someone at the Western Virginia Sports Show. If you missed this year's show and just can't wait until next year to plan your outdoor adventure, you can call Hanger Enterprises at 540/337-7018. —

•11th

Continued from page 13

11th month to honor and recognize all veterans.

In addition to the parades and speeches that are given for the veterans on the 11th of November, veterans can be shown appreciation in many other ways. Thus, the Veterans Administration, a government agency, should continue to provide pensions, veterans' hospi-

tals, government insurance, loans for homes, farms and businesses, as well as money for educational and vocational training for men and women of the armed forces. The government has often given bonuses to these veterans to show gratitude for their sacrifice and, in a small way, to make up for the money they could have made in the jobs they left behind.

Possibly America could honor veterans with some type of memo-

rial to include veterans of all branches of the armed forces from all wars, much like the Vietnam Memorial. Although this is still a long way from being a reality, we can still respect and honor veterans of all wars. We can also learn correct ways to honor and respect veterans. Americans should never forget the sacrifices that so many people have made to keep our country free and to preserve our way of life. —

•Country

Continued from page 3

grown the confusion with a certain other Robin Williams (Hint: in case you've only heard of Robin Williams the country music singer, the other one has been in a few movies and television shows). Robin and Linda still get occasional hits on their website by people thinking they've stumbled across the other Robin Williams and there have been some amusing mix-ups in hotels where the size of the luxury suite obviously indicated that management was expecting the other guy.

Most of the confusion has evaporated in the wake of the duo's success (and the cancellation of Mork

and Mindy on TV). Besides, Middlebrook's Robin Williams holds the edge in years (he's 53) and so should be considered the elder statesman of the name. Others seem to agree. The Nashville newspaper runs a column of celebrity birthdays. A recent March issue listed "Robin Williams, country music singer," among its birthday kids that day.

Lately, the name recognition and the career have been very good. Their second album in two years (*Devil of a Dream*, 1998) comes on the heels of a 1998 Crossroads Music Award from the prestigious folk music organization, and a trip to the White House in the fall of 1999 as friends of "Prairie Home Companion's" Garrison Keillor.

Robin and Linda are not only regular performers on Keillor's NPR show, but sing with the Hopeful Gospel Quartet that includes Keillor and Kate MacKenzie.

Success breeds success they say, so it should be no surprise that "*In the Company of Strangers*" has pushed its way to number 9 on the Americana Music Chart, ahead of several big-time labels. Although "*Devil of a Dream*" peaked at number 7 on the chart, Americana has revamped during the interim and now draws from bigger record label companies. The resulting stiffer competition means that even if the fast-rising new album goes no further, it will have already proven itself even more popular than their 1998 album.

People obviously like what they are hearing from Robin and Linda's talents. As they have grown as a musical act, they have come to rely more and more on their own work. Prolific song writers, they have penned somewhere between 300

and 400 songs in their lives. If anything, the pace has now quickened.

"We are writing more songs than we've ever written before," explained Robin. The task takes dedication and certainly doesn't happen while they are cruising the country in their big white van.

"When we realize it's time to start writing, then we have to stop everything else in our life and just write. That's hard to do. We try to do it for weeks at a time, but definitely for four or five days in a row," he said.

For the newest album they wrote 13 songs. They then went to the studio and recorded those songs plus a few others. The merits of each tune were considered carefully before the final group was selected. "The others just didn't work out. We tried our best, but some worked and some didn't," Robin explained of the elimination process.

The opening number on the album is entitled "*The Hard Country*." When queried about the whereabouts of such a place, Robin replied: "It could be Nebraska in

the middle of the night and all of a sudden you hear tornado warnings. Or it could be talking to a guy in the Staunton mall who's bumming money because he's trying to hitch a ride to Atlanta."

Writing new songs can never consume their lives, however. In fact, they have a number of hard-working personas. There's the writer, the business person, and the performer, all of which vie for attention.

"I like playing music in front of people most of all," Robin said in explaining why he has forsaken a "regular job" for this life. "That's the most fun. It's challenging, it's hard, it takes concentration, yet when you do it right and the crowd's with you, you feel great."

It's something they have worked at, explains Linda as her energy spills over into folding the contents of a basket of laundry even as she is speaking. "I work at this and it shows. The most rewarding part is that people put faith in you. They plunk down their hard-earned cash,

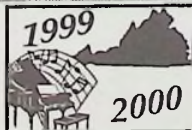
See FAITH, page 19

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Time to
renew?
See
page 2

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Honoring Our Veterans

VFW recognizes nine students for essay writing

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON - "We're here to honor the students tonight," said Don Hall of the Augusta Staunton Post 2216 at an awards ceremony and pizza party held recently. The students being recognized were at the post because they had, in 300-400 words, written winning essays answering the question, "How should we honor America's Veterans?"

Nine school and post winners were announced for the VFW Youth Essay Contest, open to 7th and 8th graders. The awards ceremony was hosted jointly by the Staunton post,

the ladies auxiliary, and Mt. Solon and Verona Post 10826.

Taking first place honors from the Verona post was Stewart Middle School 7th grader Lindsay Mohler. Lindsay also walked away with first-place honors in the district. "Americans should never forget the sacrifices that so many people have made to keep our country free and to preserve our way of life," wrote Lindsay in her essay.

Taking second place for the Mt. Solon/Verona post was Jennifer Hurre, while Molly Sheets was third. Both are students at Stewart Middle.

The first place winner for the

Augusta Staunton post was Grace Christian student Kathryn Rawley. The 8th grader also placed second in the district level of the competition. Kathryn wrote that "All of us should take time each day to thank or do a deed for one of the men or women who served our country."

Placing second for the post was Grace Christian 8th grader John Miller. John suggested writing thank you letters to veterans as well as praying for them and hosting a dinner in their honor.

Placing third in the Augusta Staunton post judging was Grace Christian 8th grader Erin Betlej.

One of Erin's ideas for honoring veterans was "Inviting veterans to schools for special assemblies to talk to students about the war they were in and to tell war stories..."

A number of school winners were also given awards at the gathering. The Beverly Manor Middle School winner was 8th grader Beth Huffer, who was also a winner last year. Beth suggested in her essay that Americans can honor vets by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, standing during the national anthem, respecting laws and living honorable lives.

Eighth grader Aine Norris turned in the best essay from Shelburne Middle School. Aine wrote that Americans should take the time to learn about the veterans and "continue to keep the struggles and victories of the veterans" in our "hearts and souls."

The school winner from Grace Christian was 8th grader Beth Weller. "The best way we can honor our veterans is in our prayers. We can thank God that these men and women served our country and that some lived to tell about it," she wrote. —

Honor veterans for preserving freedom

By JOHN MILLER

A veteran is a person who served their country in the armed forces and helped obtain the freedom that people have today. Many times Americans forget what their veterans did for them and how they faced death, and they take freedom for granted. We need to be respectful of our veterans and honor them however we can, whether as individuals, communities, or a nation.

There are several ways we can honor America's veterans individually. First of all, we can write thank you letters to veterans signifying to them how much we appreciate all they have done for us. Secondly, we can pray for them every day, asking God to supply all their needs. Inviting some veterans to dinner to share their stories is another thing Americans can do although it might be hard for some veterans. We can also rise to show honor to veterans if they would happen to pass by or be speaking at a ceremony. Visiting veteran's homes or hospitals and making friends with them honors them and makes them feel proud for what they have done.

Lastly, visiting some of the wid-

ows of veterans and encouraging them to stay strong in the Lord for what He has done is a good way to show respect for veterans because it shows that we appreciate and care for all those who tried their best and gave their lives for America and their families.

Local communities can honor veterans in several ways also. One thing they can do is have a Veteran's Day Parade and invite all of the veterans in the community to dress in uniform and ride on floats or march in formation. As they parade, the bystanders should applaud, salute, or do something in respect for their veterans. The community could also hold special assemblies at schools where a veteran or veterans would come and share their experiences and what serving America means to them. A community picnic could also be held to get to know the local veterans better.

All in all, veterans are not usually recognized or honored other than on Veteran's Day. Americans should honor veterans whenever they see one or whenever they forget about the freedom that veterans have bestowed upon us, and if it were not for veterans putting their lives on the line for America, we might not be the free country that we are today. —



MILLER

Find ways to say 'thank you'

By KATHRYN RAWLEY

Our veterans have done many things for our nation. Some dedicated years of their lives to serving our country. Others even gave their lives for our nation's freedom. We take for granted all the brave and generous deeds our veterans have done so we might have the freedom of speech or freedom of worship. All of us should take time each day to thank or do a deed for one of the men or women who served our country.

One event we could plan for them is a dinner in their honor. Someone could set a date and take a night to serve the veterans of their county. After the dinner, they could tell stories about when they did their great deed to our country.

A person could send them cards thanking them for the freedom they helped preserve for us. With it, one could send a special gift made especially for them; it could be a plaque or scrapbook. A town could set up a



RAWLEY

Veteran's Day Parade and allow veterans to ride on floats. They could give speeches and tell about their lives in and out of the army.

Another way to honor them would be to write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper describing how much you care for and respect your local veterans. You could specify certain peoples' names and say what makes them special to you.

Veteran's hospitals are full of men and women who need to be loved and to have someone to talk too. We should visit them out of love and respect for them. Most veterans don't get very many visitors except for family members and some might not even have families. It would brighten their day and they would never forget it.

Too frequently we forget to recognize and thank our veterans. People should talk to them and thank them every day for what they did for us. Without them, we might not be a free country right now. They fought for our freedom, and we need to make it a priority in our lives to make sure they feel like they made a difference. —

Veterans made sacrifices

By ERIN BETLEJ

Veterans have played a very important role in our lives and the life of our country. Without faithful men like these, our country could be run by communism or by a dictator. Because they have been faithful, they should be honored in a very special way.

Our generation has such a lack of the knowledge of the past; we take what our forefathers did for granted. To help us remember what they did those who are part of the older generation can remind the younger generation what the veterans did for us or visa versa.

See VETERANS, page 13



BETLEJ

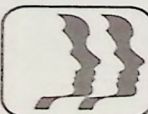
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VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Valley Community Services Board is seeking a volunteer to serve on the Local Human Rights Committee effective July 1, 2000. This Committee meets on a quarterly basis for approximately two hours and is responsible for ensuring that consumers receive fair and equitable treatment. If you would like to volunteer your time, please send a letter of interest to VCSB, 110 W. Johnson St., Staunton, Va. 24401. Attention: Mary Austin by April 14, 2000.





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Learn about veterans to honor them

By AINE NORRIS

How should we honor America's Veterans? Veterans that fought harsh wars for our country, until they attained for us or until they died for us. These people fought combats for America that most of us have never imagined in our wildest dreams. How do we go about honoring these veterans?

For starters we could have courses in school that tell the students of America of the conquests they faced. Sure, students learn

about wars and an occasional veteran here and there. We mostly study the veterans that our teachers consider "important." What about the other million lives that were taken for our country? Do we honor them in any way? Do we remember them? Sadly the answer to that would have to be "no." Students should learn about the triumphs and falls that the veterans had to go through. Then we would all appreciate them and keep them in mind when we saw clips of wars and battles on television. Not only would we take interest in learning about them, but we would care. Caring is the key to honoring them, don't you think?

What about the millions of adults and elderly that don't understand the meaning of honoring our veterans? There should be classes these people could take to learn

more about the veterans who died for our country. Then, once the classes were over, the adults would continue to keep the struggles and victories of the veterans in their hearts and in their souls. When they saw newspaper articles and television shows about these veterans, the people would listen and respond to what they saw. Their minds would be forever changed by these people who died for their country, as will the student's minds.

Knowing about the veterans is the first step to honoring them. Once you learn about them, your life will continue to focus on aspects of their lives and they will honor them forever. The veterans have already changed our country, now it's time for them to have affect on the people that live there. —



NORRIS

Know meaning of patriotism

By BETH HUFFER

As I place the wreath at the foot of the seemingly mountainous monument, my mind travels to the past. I imagine the unceasing gunfire, the screams of the wounded, and finally the thump as another body falls limply on the blood-streaked grass.

Men and women had to be so brave to face this tragedy we call war. They sacrificed their lives and fortunes for their beloved country. For decades we have

honored these sacrifices by flying the American flag on certain holidays and placing wreaths at memorial services. How could this possibly be enough?

This brings up another important question. How should we



HUFFER

honor our veterans? Ceremonies now and then are nice, but we should honor our heritage everyday. Each citizen can recite the Pledge of Allegiance, stand during the Star Spangled Banner, respect the laws, live their lives honorably and do what the country asks of them. This is what our veterans fought for. We must not take this freedom for granted.

We, the American people, need to be educated at an early age so that patriotism and respect for our veterans comes naturally. Every child should know the reason why placing their hands over their hearts conveys the message to those around them that we are all Americans, that we are united as a country, and that we all share common values and aspirations. Therefore, heritage and patriotism should be practiced everyday in all aspects of life. It is only through patriotic education that the leaders of tomorrow will learn respect for the past and demonstrate responsibility for the future.

Gratitude for our veterans needs to be something more than a holiday tradition. By knowing the meaning of the words to the Star Spangled Banner, stating the Pledge of Allegiance, and saluting the flag, we acknowledge the pain and suffering that our veterans endured in order that we may enjoy the freedom we have today. —

Honor veterans by praying for them

By KIMBERLY WELLER

America's veterans should be honored and noticed in a respectful way. They gave up their time, and some gave their lives for the freedom American's have today.

One way the entire community could honor veterans is to have a Veteran's Day parade. The Veterans of Foreign Wars could ride on floats made by schools, families, or even businesses in the community.

There are very many ways that America can honor veterans. A city or town could hold a banquet for them. A few men could tell "war stories" and their experiences. Children and adults could share their gratitude towards the veterans. On Veteran's Day, or any other day, schools, youth groups, or other organizations could visit the veterans in veteran homes or hospitals.

Schools could have assemblies honoring veterans. Some veterans could come and speak to the student body and teachers. They could also listen to what other people say about them and other war stories from other veterans. The school



WELLER

could then honor them with a plaque or letter thanking them for what they have done for America.

Since they gave us our freedom, we could give them theirs (for a day or two). Someone could buy them groceries, take them to the movies, or show them around a part of town. Maybe someone could just take them places that they would like to go or have never been to.

Sitting around and just listening to their stories is an honor to them. Most of their stories are very interesting, yet some are terrifying.

Memorial Day and Veteran's Day are not only to honor the living ones but to remember the ones that have passed on. Every year on both of these occasions my family places flowers on all of my relatives graves who have served our country in previous years. Some of my ancestors fought in the Civil War. My great-great grandfather and his brother served under General Lee as bodyguards, and were at the surrender at Appomattox. My grandfather served in World War II on an aircraft carrier, the USS Hancock, which was blown up. He survived though, and was a part of the Normandy and Italy invasion. He survived that also.

The best way we can honor our veterans is in our prayers. We can thank God that these men and women served our country and that some lived to tell about it. —

Pause silently in 11th hour to honor veterans

By LINDSAY MOHLER

America should honor its veterans to show appreciation to all of the brave men and women for their courage and patriotism while serving in the United States armed forces. Americans can accomplish this in many ways in addition to the annual observance of Veterans' Day.

President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed Nov. 11 originally as Armistice Day to remind America of the tragedies of war, and Congress later established Veterans' Day to

honor all of our country's veterans. To make this observance really meaningful, all schools, factories, government agencies, and businesses should pause for a minute of silence on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the

See 11th, page 11



MOHLER

Veterans

Continued from page 12

There are many ways to make veterans feel like they are still appreciated for what they did many years ago. As we all know, veterans have many stories to tell. Inviting veterans to schools for special assemblies to talk to students about the war they were in and to tell war stories is a great experience for the veteran and for the child. After the assembly, the kids should be given the chance to ask questions.

As a community, we can do a lot

also. People can write letters to the editor about how the veterans are not forgotten. Those that are sick and getting old and cannot come out are in the veteran hospitals and the veterans' homes so we as a community could go visit with them. As a state, we can organize banquets or special dinners in their honor and the money people pay for tickets can go toward maintenance of the veterans' hospitals and homes. The governor could come and give a speech then schools could make floats for a parade. As

the parade is under way and the veterans come by we should salute or stand up in respect.

Many people think that veterans did not have a large influence on our country's history and put them down or disrespect them. Instead of honoring veterans just one day we should do it year round out of habit — not just one day because the law says to. As we get older and the times change we should remember what the veterans did not take it for granted. Our easy way of life did not come without sacrifices. —

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Schoolhouse News

Advisory Committee promotes services for special needs students

By PENNY PLEMMONS

FISHERSVILLE — The future for special needs children can be uncertain. As the school years draw to a close parents ask, "Will my child find meaningful work? Will he or she be able to attend college?"

To help answer these questions the Local Advisory Committee for Special Education in Augusta County presented the program, "Post Secondary Opportunities for Disabled and Handicapped Students" at its quarterly meeting held at the Woodrow Wilson Media Center in Fishersville. Guest speakers were rehabilitation counselor Wanda Ayers from the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services and Blue Ridge Community College disabilities coordinator Suzanne Garrett.

According to Ms. Ayers the goal

of the state supported DRS is to enable people with disabilities to find work. To be eligible to receive the services, a student must be at least 16 years of age and possess a physical or mental disability that hinders employment or college attendance.

"We serve as a consultant," Ms. Ayers explained to the group. "Our goal is to help a student gain greater independence. Sometimes it takes someone outside the family to help (students) see their strengths and weaknesses."

A DRS counselor helps students develop a course of action built around their own special needs and personal interests. Ms. Ayers commented, "We meet with students before graduation and talk about job seeking skills, resumes, filling out applications, and we practice interviewing."

For those students interested in college Ms. Ayers stated that the DRS encourages "self advocacy" as well as providing assistance in filling out the necessary documentation that explains the disability or handicap. Students who enter Blue Ridge Community College must still meet regular admission criteria. But, according to Ms. Garrett, disability services are on the increase. "Now, we truly are handicapped accessible," she said.

The most common disabilities of special needs students at BRCC are visual impairments, deafness and hearing loss, mobility impairments, chronic health impairments, learning disabilities, and attention deficit disorder. To help overcome some of these obstacles the college provides interpreters for the deaf, print enlargers for the visually im-



Lindsey Werner, left, has a hearing impairment which requires an interpreter to accompany her throughout each school day. Mary Wilhelm, right, signs for Lindsey as she works in the bookstore at Beverley Manor Middle School. Lindsey is a sixth grader at BMMS and is the daughter of Trina Werner of Staunton.

Photo by Penny Plemmons

paired, extended exam time, student note takers, tape recordings of lectures, and orally administered examinations.

As Disabilities Coordinator Ms. Garrett sees her role as "providing

guidance and helping students make sound judgment about their future." New federal and state laws prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities and handicaps and what once seemed impossible for these students is now a reality.

The future for special needs students is indeed becoming brighter as more and more opportunities present themselves to help these high school graduates gain meaningful employment or further their education.

The Local Advisory Committee for Special Education in Augusta County convenes quarterly and its meetings are open to the public. —

RHS band competes at district festival

BY MEREDITH MCCOOL

The morning of Saturday, March 4 dawned bright and clear. At 9:30, 38 sleep-deprived Riverheads High School Gladiator Band members trudged to the band room. Rubbing sleep from our eyes, we plucked our instruments from the shelves and loaded the buses for the annual district band festival.

By the time the two buses reached Harrisonburg High School where the festival was held, we had

all awakened to extreme anticipation. This was the first time we would reveal our concert music to the public and we would be judged on our performance. We were performing a warm-up march and two grade IV pieces.

Grade IV music offers a reasonable challenge, as the composition range in difficulty was from grade I to grade VI. The judges, perched in the balcony of the auditorium, would judge the two-graded pieces. Having practiced the music since

our return from winter break, we left ready to give a moving concert.

We took seven minutes to look over the arrangement and then began to play. It is overwhelming how well a selection can sound, even if it has never been played before.

Once our concert was over, our dedicated parents greeted us in the hallway to congratulate us. Even our guides said they were surprised by how much sound could come out of such a tiny band. The judges must

have been impressed too. We received a rating of II, or "Excellent."

Though the score was great, knowing that you did your best and enjoyed joining 38 different people into one instrument is all the reward we really needed. —

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FFA members celebrate week with Ag Olympics



Buffalo Gap FFA members Rosalea Riley, Tina Wilson and Mandy Robinson pull in a winning effort in a tug of war against Riverheads FFA members during Ag Olympics held recently at Gap.

Photo by Penny Plemmons

By PENNY PLEMMONS

BUFFALO GAP — Strength and skill were the order of the day as area middle and high school students closed out a week-long promotion of Future Farmers of America in a competition called the "Ag Olympics."

Friendly rivalry encompassed events such as the egg toss, hay tossing, calf roping and tug of war. Stewart Middle School ag teacher Darla Miller commented that the event promotes the "building of team work and leadership skills."

The FFA chapter at Buffalo Gap High School celebrated the nationally designated week of Feb. 19-26 with daily events. The group sponsored a faculty breakfast, which according to FFA adviser Shirley Kaufman featured the "best food you can imagine."

Group members participated in a hay stacking contest, brought baby lambs, goats and calves onto the school campus and raised money for their chapter with a womanless beauty contest. Amanda Coiner, Gap's FFA historian, said, "Our activities are intended to promote agriculture and to get people involved — to show students that FFA goes beyond the classroom."

Speaking about the Ag Olympics the Gap junior said, "It's just a lot of fun." ---



Neal Buchanan, a member of the Riverheads FFA, lassos a "steer" that never stood much chance of eluding competitors from local FFA chapters during Ag Olympics held during National FFA Week, Feb. 19-26.

RHS forensic team, coach post excellent season

By KIM MCCRAY

GREENVILLE — The turnover from winter to spring is always a busy time at Riverheads. Spring sports seasons are beginning; clubs and organizations continue their yearly work and both students and teachers try to remain focused on the primary task at hand, academics. Many of these groups have had their usual successes this year, but one specific group, the forensics team, has had particularly good luck thus far in 2000.

The team traveled to Buffalo

Gap in January for its first meet. The result was a win for the Gladiators. Early in February, the Augusta County Meet, also hosted by Gap, was won by RHS as well.

Next in line was this year's district tournament, held at RHS. The Riverheads team dominated the six schools participating, and the winning streak continued. Individual winners for the Gladiators were as follows:

Extemporaneous Domestic - 1. Jessica Hill; 2. Adam Mulcahy; Extemporaneous Foreign - 1. Turner Pittkin; 2. James Gano;

Original Oratory - 1. Katie Caldwell; 2. Jonathan Everiss; Storytelling - 1. Rachel Howard; 2. Virginia Strickler; Prose Interpretation - 1. Kori Valz; 2. Kim McCray; Poetry Interpretation - 3. Vicky Brannock; Serious Dramatic Interpretation - 1. Lindsey Richardson; Duo Interpretation - 2. Julie Waltz Josh Howes; and Spelling - 2. Jessica Feher.

In addition to the hard work of the participants, the forensics coaches also put forth much effort. But none more so than Virginia Gano, Riverheads' head coach. Besides recruiting participants and assisting other coaches, she was

also responsible for organizing this year's district tournament. In preparation for this event, Mrs. Gano found judges, contacted other schools, organized awards, and purchased thank you gifts for volunteers. During the meet, she managed to keep everything running smoothly and on schedule.

Students from Riverheads who placed in district, went on to compete at the regional meet at Stone-wall Jackson High School on March 11. Competition was very intense at this level, and though a number of Riverheads' students made it to the final round, only Virginia Strickler, who won second

place in storytelling, will go on to the state tournament. Another bright spot for Riverheads was winning the regional coach of the year award by Mrs. Gano.

Indeed, the Riverheads forensics team of 2000 had success, but in a broader sense, much has been gained whether winning or losing. The confidence and public speaking skills are obviously important, but so is the participants' enjoyment. As sophomore Julie Waltz said, "Forensics is a fun and competitive way to hone your dramatic speaking skills." Julie's thoughts echo the feelings of most participants. —

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I was in a hunter show last year with my 5-year-old thoroughbred mare and after a jumping class a judge told me she lacked "impulsion." What does that mean and how do I improve her?

J. J.

Your mare is young and has some further training to look forward to. What the judge was referring to is the inability of your mare to "carry" herself. A lack of impulsion often means the horse will be heavy on the forehand. Let's explain heavy on the forehand, collection, impulsion, and then discuss exercises to improve your training.

First of all a horse that is heavy on the forehand is one that carries itself with most of the weight on the front legs. Horses that are heavy on the forehand often are not collected, do not perform lead changes well, and can seem clumsy. They "pull" themselves along. Young,

untrained horses will often carry themselves heavier on the forehand to compensate for the added weight of the rider. Thus, part of our training is for you to restore and improve our natural movements WITH the weight of the rider as part of our balance. Your horse is young and it is natural for her to carry itself heavy on the forehand until she gains strength, maturity, and balance through training.

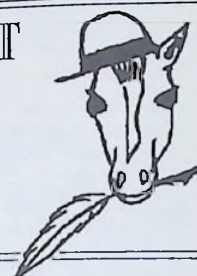
The next step toward impulsion is to understand the importance of "collection." Collection is the gathering of a horse's energy, shifting the weight more onto the haunches (rather than the forehand), and preparing the horse for obedience. In

a state of collection the horse is able to perform higher level movements, move off the rider's leg and hand with obedience, and to carry itself in harmony with its rider.

There are many books that go into the importance of collection in a horse's training. Most of them explain that collection is not "pulling" the horse into the proper frame, as is a common mistake! Actually collection is more like "compression." The horse becomes more compact in size, begins to bring its haunches under itself through a rounder back, and elevates in the forehand. All this and still remaining graceful, balanced and in harmony with the rider.

The next part of your problem is lack of impulsion. Collection is the first step in gathering your horse's energy to the haunches or hind end. Now that energy has to show itself. This energy is in the form of "thrusting" forward by USE OF the haunches or hind end. Impulsion is not to be mistaken for false "impressions" like speed, long strides, bouncing or floating movements. Impulsion comes from the horse's hindquarters. The horse should "push" itself forward fully using its entire hindquarters yet maintaining a soft flexible back. A soft flexible

I.B. HOOFINIT
From
the
Horse's Mouth



back means the horse is comfortable! Working, yes, but there is an energetic power to it.

There are exercises to help your mare with her problem. Trotting ground poles can help your horse balance and maintain rhythm in stride. They also help the horse slow down, remember speed is the false "impression" of impulsion. Spacing can help with stride length. Another exercise is walk-trot transitions which help the horse to become more obedient to your aids and half halts. Working with a trainer on collection will help your horse learn balance. I suggest a trainer on col-

lection exercises because of the problems associated with "false" collection. A trainer will help with proper use of aids and exercises that can prevent many mistakes. Common mistakes include "false" flexion, pulling the horse into collection, and too much too fast. Things take time in a horse's training. Patience is the biggest part of proper training. Impulsion is not something that is an overnight success. Take it From the Horse's Mouth, you can achieve most of your riding goals if you are willing to take the time to do it right, do it well, and finish what you start! —

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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Third Infantry upholds solemn tradition of military funerals

By CHRIS MARRS

ARLINGTON — I took a trip to Washington, D.C. where I visited a very special stable. The John C. McKinney Memorial Stables at Fort Myers is the home of the last official equine mounted defense unit. The 3rd United States Infantry (The Old Guard) is the only unit that does full time full honor burials for all military branches. The days of the

horse ridden cavalry may be over, but this beautiful tradition is kept alive through the dedicated hard work of 40 soldiers under the command of Chief Warrant Officer Four Charles J. Sowles Jr. These infantry's primary mission is the practice for the full state funeral at Arlington National Cemetery.

Chief Sowles explains that the men and the horses average 6 burials per day. The caisson is a six-

sponsibility for the entire mission.

Most of the soldiers are 18 to 22 years of age and volunteer for the assignment. The assignment lasts from 2 1/2 to 3 years and consists of 15 new recruits every year. Chief Sowles says that the soldiers love what they do and they work very hard. Their day starts at 4 a.m. and can end as late as 6:30 at night. The horses must be fed and made ready for each day. Monday is wash day and all horses are washed and bathed. The caisson hitchers are matched in color, either black or gray. All the soldiers have to be able to ride any given horse. They are assigned duties on a weekly basis in three teams which they rotate. The Primary Team does the first four missions or burials, the Back Up Team does the following missions, and the third team is Stable Duty.

The new recruits start with a 10-week training class in horsemanship and horseback riding. After completing the training, they have to qualify in the cemetery. They start as a section worker who prepares, cleans, and supplies the primary and back up teams. They haul water, food, and anything else needed by the team during the missions. The next step is to actually practice in the missions. After their first mission they receive silver spurs which



One of the Caisson horses, "Axiom," takes a rest on his day off.

Photos by Chris Marrs

shows they are qualified to do funerals. Brass spurs mean they have done over 500 funerals!

There are 40 soldiers in the platoon with two civilians, a farrier and a saddler. The stable is home to 36 horses and sometimes has as many as 50. The stable has a new veterinary facility that can take care of anything up to minor surgery. The horses are mostly Shires and draft crosses which are large enough for the artillery hitches. Chief Sowles says that in 1956 President Eisenhower made the decision to allow the use of both colors. Each team or hitch is the same color and never mixed. Most horses start their career at five years of age and work for 10 years. The horses are exercised 1 1/2 hours each morning

when not on missions. Horses ready for retirement are often placed with police departments and other state and federal organizations. The police departments appreciate their value because they are used to gun and canon fire.

The stable also remembers a very famous horse named "Black Jack." His memorial stall houses pictures and dedications to the Army's last real "cavalry" horse (called Quartermaster issued). He served in the army at Fort Myers as a caparisoned horse. This sacred duty as the "riderless" horse is reserved for colonels and higher ranks of the Marine Corps. Army, elected officials or soldiers who have been in rider service. The

See CAVALRY, page 20



Chief Warrant Officer Four Charles J. Sowles Jr. with his favorite riding partner, "Shot in the Dark."



The John C. McKinney Memorial Stables at Fort Myers is the home of the last official equine mounted defense unit. The 3rd

United States Infantry (The Old Guard) is the only unit that does full time full honor burials for all military branches.

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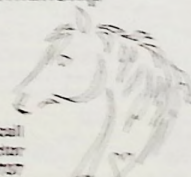
horse hitch. Riders are mounted on the "near" or left horse in the hitch. Horses on the "off" or right side are unmounted, but managed by the riders. There is no driver. The most experienced rider is in the "wheel" position in the rear. New riders are started in the middle or "swing" position, and then move to the front or "lead" position. The "wheel" position has the largest horses and is the "brakes" for the entire unit. The trail length is 42 feet. The "lead" position is responsible for keeping in the middle of the road, setting the pace, and keeping the proper distance from the chaplain. Beside the "lead" position is the "out rider," a section sergeant and liaison element with overall re-

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Country Crossroads

Reflecting pool reflections

March 2000

Dear Maude:

It was good news to hear that your garden is all plowed and tilled and ready for you to start planting. The warm weather we had early in the month got everyone in the mood to start thinking about gardens — even up here. This weekend I hope to get started preparing my garden pots — not plots — getting them ready to be filled with flowers and herbs. Like most people in the city, a pot is about all one can hope for.

With space at such a premium, not many people would dare sacrifice all those square feet or spend the time, not to mention the work involved, on a garden the size of yours. A piece of ground that size here would be big enough for two townhouses, with a little left over for a three-foot by two-foot patch of yard in front of each one. Or in the right area that much space could quickly be rented out for a fine amount each month as parking spaces for those people weary of having to search and search for a place to put their cars. Even when they do finally find some legal place they often have to walk a block or two back to their apartments. At least where I live, we have a little more space. Behind the apartment house there is an actual back yard that is about a third the size of your garden.

The house beside us has an even larger area — almost half the size of your garden! One next-door neighbor we had several years back was from the country and every year prepared a small garden. He would bring in a riding lawn mower with a plow attachment — I suspect he brought it all the way from his home town. He would ride that thing a few feet one way then a few feet another until

he managed to tear up the ground a little. Then he got out a nice big, heavy tiller and tilled and tilled until the ground was just perfect.

When he finished his yard he would go to the house on the other side of him and till a garden for the elderly gentleman who lived there. It was always a challenge, for Bill, the elderly gentleman, believed in putting nutrients into the soil. He could be seen out there almost any time when the garden was dormant, with his cane in one hand and a small shovel in the other, burying scraps or something. One spring Charlie was busy with the tilling and slung up a huge piece of rusty and heavy, and I mean very heavy, chain. There was a great length of it, and Charlie was thankful that he did not hurt himself or someone else as it came flying out of the ground on that tiller blade. When he said something about it to Bill, Bill replied, "well, I figured the garden could use a little iron in it."

Whatever else Bill put out there seemed to work, for every year it looked as if he had a real garden. It was green and lush.

Once Charlie finished tilling for Bill, then he would plant his own little garden in his yard. He said he did all of this every spring because it reminded him of home and it also kept him from having to mow any grass when it was hot! He would put in several tomato plants and a row of beans and we would all lean over the fence and watch the progress of the garden. It was never spectacular, since it was located almost under a huge maple tree and got little sun, but the dirt was there, all freshly dug, for us to enjoy and dream of home. However, a few years ago he left the city to go back to western Maryland and now we have a

metal shed and many broken children's toys for our scenic view across the fence. Without Charlie's garden to keep a path worn to the fence, the forsythia and shrub trees have about covered it and now our own back yard is mostly shrubs with a little grass that struggles to grow under another of those huge maples. It is not hard for the landlord to take care of — two or three turns with a lawn mower every now and then and he is done. Out front are two little patches with two more maple trees in them — here we have a healthy crop of moss and not much else. Even the crocus have a hard time beating their way through all those tree roots. So you can understand why a few pots for gardening are the only option I have.

As soon as the time to plant arrives, it will be fun to get the little bags of dirt and pick out the plants. Of course, I will have to get a new pair of gardening gloves, since the old ones, if I can find them, are all dirty and ugly. And perhaps I should buy myself a nice new sun hat also, just for the fun of it. In the days before Filene's closed, I probably would even have been seen in there looking for the perfect gardening dress. All this for three pots on a sunny ledge outside my apartment door. But the pots are there demanding to grow something! One I will fill with a few herb plants and another always gets its red petunias. The final big one will get its annual tomato plant and I will watch it with love, hoping to be rewarded with just one or two tomatoes before the end of the summer.

Happy digging, and love to all,
LuLu



By Roberta Hamlin

Yard or lawn — which do you prefer?

By STACEY BAKER

Spring is here! Well, at least the temperature has been warm enough to tempt some folks to get out in the yard to relax. Or is it "get out on the lawn?" Yard, lawn, which is it?

Lawns exist mostly in urban areas, housing subdivisions, and an occasional downtown residence. Yards predominate in rural areas. Yes, one will see a lawn once in awhile out in the country, and everyone has seen "yards" in town. But, mostly, yards are a rural phenomenon. Not that rural folks do not like or appreciate lawns. It's just that yards are so much more practical.

So, one might ask, what is a lawn? To answer that, just drive through any residential area in town on a summer evening. Sprinklers will be gushing as the sun sets, the owners unseen, they will be relaxing in front of the TV, secure in the thought that the timer will turn off the water. Now the grass, the grass will be a uniform deep green, not a brown blade anywhere. Thin and thick spots simply do not exist.

In the garage, the fertilizer applicator will be parked beside the 37 horsepower four-foot deck

riding mower. The lawn that this monster is used to trim will only be about 25 feet by 60 feet. String trimmers, usually electric, will be hanging neatly on the wall.

Out of sight will be the case of green spray paint. There just has to be a supply of green spray paint. That is the only way lawns can be so green. Someone must be painting them.

Weeds? That is what the backpack sprayer is for. Of course, the perfect lawn will only have one species of grass, carefully trimmed. Some lawns must be gone over with a ruler and scissors, they are so perfectly coifed.

Now yards, well, yards are not something to look at, they were put there to use. And they ARE used, as an extension of the driveway, (ever seen a car parked on a lawn in town?) clothes lines, automotive repairs, volleyball, football, horseshoes, and a storage area for forgotten toys and down tree limbs that never seem to get carted off. The list is endless.

Yards also contain a fair amount of history. Take the one here, for example. Over there is that scar from the blizzard of '93, where the neighbor opened the driveway with a front-end loader just a little too deep. In the lower

front corner, the moles have owned the mining rights for several years. Grass only grows in patches there, and the kids moved in their excavating equipment, thinking it was a natural sand box. Those two sunk in places along the side used to be horseshoe pits, but were too hard to mow around. That brown patch by the car is where gas was spilled, trying to add a little to the tank from the mower can 'cause someone forgot to stop at the gas station.

Now right there in the middle is the only place in the yard where the grass is lawn quality. It has that deep spray paint green color, and grows four times faster than anything else in the yard, grass or weed. By coincidence, that just happens to be the location of the septic field.

How does one keep the grass under control in a yard? Not with a lawn tractor. Any ole' mower will do, as long as it can cut the long and the short. Cut is an exaggeration. After a few seasons, a yard mower will no longer have those fine edged cutting blades. The mole hills, sticks, toys, lost gas caps and mysterious pieces of rusted metal that pop out of the ground now and then soon turn the blades into



A typical yard in Anywhere, U.S.A.

Photo by Stacey Baker

blunt instruments, best used to beat the weeds, thistles, and occasional grass blades into submission.

Speaking of weeds, with the exception of thistles, most yard owners welcome weeds. They can take abuse, grow where grass will not, and somehow stay green, even during a drought.

There was an incident a while back that illustrates this definition of "what is a yard." It was a chilly Saturday night

during the winter. Pepper the German shepherd is allowed inside on cold nights to snooze by the wood stove.

About eleven, she woke everyone with her "someone is coming up the driveway" bark. Looking out of the window, I was somewhat concerned to see a sheriff's department car just pulling up to the back door. Still half asleep, and stumbling down the steps, I shoved Pepper into another room and shut the door.

See YARD, page 19

Red-winged blackbirds herald arrival of spring

By MARK GATEWOOD

People got pretty attached to that spell of warm temperatures in late February. It wasn't long before motorcycles, convertibles and shorts started showing up. For our part, my Wife the Biology Teacher and I thought it was a good time to get out the bicycles and look for the first red-winged blackbirds.

In point of strict, ornithological fact, searching out the first red-winged blackbird may not be the right way to put it. Like American robins, a few red-wings may be present in the area during the winter. At some point in the advancing season, they become more visible and vocal, leading us to believe that we're seeing the "first" arriving birds of spring. Either way, it's a sign of spring we need to see, to assure ourselves that heating oil deliveries will end some day soon.

The male red-wing probably needs no introduction. He's an icon of sum-



mer on ponds and marshes, perched on a swaying cattail stem, wings outspread to display brilliant red shoulder patches and giving forth a rasping, gurgling "Conk-a-reel!" Red-wings may be viewed in a less rosy light in rice-growing areas of the South, where they can join with bobolinks to damage the mature

crop. Locally, they may do some damage to corn, but on the whole, they're regarded as good citizens.

Red-wings have strong sexual dimorphism: the female, in contrast to the strikingly marked male, is brownish and striped, like a big sparrow. This in turn reflects a strong "job dimorphism": males acquire and defend territories, and gather their harem of females. Females carry the entire burden of incubating eggs and rearing the young.

And that brings us to the red wing — actually, it's the red shoulder — of the red-wing. What's it there for? In the 1970s, researchers captured a number of male red-wings from established breeding territories, dyed their shoulder patches black, and returned them to their territories. Result: over 60 percent of the returned birds were unable to reclaim their territories. The red wing patch clearly func-

tions in territorial display, and with birds, the guy with the territory gets the girl. And, not too surprisingly, the bigger the territory, the more females. An aggressive male with a good patch of cattail marsh under his control may get as many as six females, while a lesser male may end up with one.

Now, if you've watched red-wings for a period of time, you may have noticed that you don't always see the red patch. It's what the bird guys of science call a "coverable badge," to be displayed when needed and hidden when not needed.

Why not show your red badge? Let's say you're a male without a territory, but you've still got to eat. You stray into an established male's territory looking for food and rather than get beaten up in an unintended territorial fight, you cover your badge — "Excuse me, just passing through, no problem" — and move on.

Differences between the sexes also

extend to migration patterns. Male red-wings move north from one to five weeks ahead of the females. This gives the males time to sort out and acquire their breeding territories.

In this area, you can expect to hear your first male red-wing song during the last week in February, without fail, good weather or bad. So our red-wing bike ride was right on target with the calendar. For our route, we chose a loop that goes around the airport. There are several farm ponds on the way, some with good stands of cattails, and it crosses pretty little Broad Run at the mid-point of the ride. The first farm pond we came to, at the intersection of Buttermilk and Westview School Roads, yielded the day's quarry, perched in the cattails and singing his brains out. There's surely more winter to follow this goofy warm spell, but it's good to know that the red-wing blackbirds are right on time in Augusta country. —

•Faith

Continued from page 11

so we want them to say they saw something special. Our responsibility as artists is to make them feel they saw something special and had a good time," she says.

As long as it's fun and they're nearby, the future will be more of the same although long-time fans will notice a few changes.

Kevin Maul, the tall, clean-cut dobro player has retired from Their Fine Group after a decade on the road. Although he will keep playing music, it will be closer to his New York home.

"Our loss will be someone else's gain," noted the Williamses.

However, as they say in the business, the show must go on, so a "youngster" in the form of 30-year-old Eric Lewis has been brought on board. A highly acclaimed musician, Eric can move from the dobro, to guitar, to fiddle, to mandolin, and pedal steel. Obviously, strings are his thing, and as long as he can pull his stint at the wheel of the big white van the new foursome should click.

And so the Williams duo heads off into the future doing what they do best. Perhaps the chorus of one of their new songs explains the chemistry that makes them a success:

Honey you've just got to allow

it Cause I can't help the way I am Honey you've just got to allow it I love you more than I can stand

Twenty-seven years ago, Robin says he "did have the sense to know what a good deal Linda Hill was," when he married her and they hit the road together as musicians.

"We are perfectly suited for one another," explains Linda. "The sum is greater than the parts. We complement each other. It's been a fun life. Hard work, yes, but fun, hard work. We are doing something that's fun. We are both into performing and if you are going to have that kind of life, it's so much better to do it with someone on the road together." —

•Yard

Continued from page 18

Turning on a light and opening the back door, the very polite deputy informed me that they had received a call about a disturbance at this house during a party. He paused after this statement, the only sound was the cattle bellowing across the road.

"Doesn't look like a party here, much less a disturbance," he said smiling. He was wrong on that last one. When Pepper, still confined behind a closed door, heard the stranger who by this time had stepped in, she was

creating a lot more than a disturbance. Ruckus would be about right.

The deputy and I quickly determined that the call was not accurate, and he apologized for bothering us. On the way out the door, I told him to back into the yard to turn around, as the driveway was straight, and tricky to back onto the road from.

"Are you sure that's alright?" "Yes, it's a yard, not a lawn."

The deputy paused for a second, then smiled before getting in the patrol car and, without any hesitation, turned around in the "yard." —

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Erin Brockovich dishes more of the same; passes taste test

One would think that Steven Soderbergh, the director of the provocative *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* and *Out of Sight*, and Susannah Grant, the writer who penned the delightful *Ever After*, could have come up with something more compelling than *Erin Brockovich*. Think again, for they have sadly dished what must be the fourth movie this year that combines earlier incarnations — in this case *A Civil Action* meets *Silkwood* and *Norma Rae*.

Played by Julia Roberts, Erin Brockovich is a woman with a heap of trouble. Poor judgement and extremely bad taste in men has brought her a pile of trouble and left her deep in debt. She tries to keep hearth and home together for her three young children but with \$72 in the bank and a \$17,000 medical bill and not enough food to feed her kids, it has become an impossible task.

Desperate for work, Erin talks her way into a clerical job at a small

law firm owned by Ed Masry, played by Albert Finney. But Erin doesn't quite fit in with the other women. She talks trash and dresses even worse. Why Masry puts up with her is incomprehensible, but Brockovich soon proves her worth.

While filing a pro bono case, Erin stumbles on information she doesn't understand. With her boss' blessing, she investigates what appears to be a real estate case only to discover that Pacific Gas and Electric has poisoned the drinking water of Hinkley, the small desert town near the power plant. Upon further investigation she learns that the plant and company knowingly covered up the fact with a web of misinformation and deceptions. Her detective work gradually earns her the trust of the townspeople, a trust that helps move the case through the courts to become the largest single class action lawsuit in U.S. legal history.

The whole story is predictably warm and fuzzy. Perhaps to its

credit, the movie avoids being overly dramatic and/or indulging in stereotypes. No one tries to do in Brockovich Silkwood-style as she drives alone down a lonely highway at midnight. George, the leather-clad Harley freak next door, turns out to be a natural with kids.

Based on a true story, the movie is not so much about the lawsuit as about the life and times of Erin Brockovich. Some of the best scenes in the movie revolve around Erin's dismal life — at one point she laments to George, "How did it all turn out so wrong? I mean I was Miss Wichita! I was a beauty queen!" — and her newfound self-respect. All that, however, seems to trivialize the story that an evil corporate giant that played fast and loose with people's lives.

Julia Roberts (*Pretty Woman*, *Notting Hill*, *Runaway Bride*) has gotten rave reviews for her "dramatic" portrayal but much of this praise is misplaced. All teeth, cleavage and legs, Roberts is fairly underwhelming.

Hers could have been a meatier role, perhaps with better direction, but it somehow misses the mark.

Marg Helgenberger (TV's *China Beach*) as Donna Jensen and Cherry Jones as Pamela Duncan (*Cradle Will Rock*, *The Horse Whisperer*) turn in the best performances as mothers trapped in the nightmare of a town whose water is slowly killing 600 people. Perhaps the story should have been about them rather than Brockovich.

Aaron Eckhart (*In the Company of Men*, *Any Given Sunday*) is attractive as the biker-with-a-heart-of-gold but there's no chemistry between him and Roberts. Even their fights are tepid. Albert Finney (*Tom Jones*, *Scrooge*, *Murder on the Orient Express*) gives a convincing performance as Masry, the aging, cautious, essentially honest lawyer who undertakes to represent the Hinkley families. (Having not seen Finney for years, it was startling to see a sagging, paunchy middle age actor who has for 35 years lived in my



memory as Tom Jones.)

This has been a dismal movie year. Perhaps that explains why many reviewers have heaped praise on *Erin Brockovich* for want of anything better. If you really want to see it, go. Be warned that the language is graphic and while there are no sex scenes in the movie, the language and dialogue are sexualized. Hannah's mom gives *Erin Brockovich* two-and-a-half bananas. Rated R for language. —

•Sheets

Continued from page 5

joys collecting the accouterments because they complete the picture of a frontiersman. A man out in the forest with nothing but his rifle was a man who was going to starve. Hunters needed to carry powder horns, hunting bags, and tomahawks. The powder horns, hollowed out and polished cows horns, kept the gunpowder dry. Some of these horns also became the can-

vas for the artists' touch. While many of the polished, curving horns are simple with perhaps only an owner's initial etched in the surface, others have maps and drawings of hunting scenes or battles that retold a frontier drama.

The first frontier collectible purchased by Gordon was a hunting bag. "I was still in high school and I bought the bag for a dollar and the man I was working for that day gave me the dollar as my pay for

the day," he remembered.

Although not flashy like the rifles or even the powder horns, the hunting bag was, nonetheless, essential to the hunter's survival in the woods.

"It was quite a process when you went out to hunt because of all that you had to carry with you in your hunting bag. There were balls, patches (pieces of cloth used to clean the barrel after firing), a bone or horn measure for the powder, a tinder box, patch knives, ball hold-

ers, a pick to clean the rifle, a bullet mold, and maybe a pipe, a mouth harp, and a turkey call. The hunting bag was like what we would think of as a backpack or a purse and in it were all your needs of the day," he explained.

One didn't mosey into the general store and buy ammunition either. There was black powder to be made, lead bullets to be made in a mold, and patches to be cut. After the rifle was fired, it had to be cleaned and reloaded. A practiced rifleman could complete that process in 20 seconds.

Collecting these remnants of the frontier and learning how they fit into the social life of the men who owned them has been a life-long passion for Gordon. It began with

novels such as *Last of the Mohicans* and movies like *The Northwest Passage*. "I latched onto those and felt like this was where history was in the making," he said.

As a result, moving to Augusta County from where he grew up in Virginia's Piedmont is a dream come true. "Where else can you walk into a courthouse and pick up a deed book and read a 1747 deed?" he asked.

"Learning about the frontier is a part of our heritage; a part of America. I love studying where we came from as Americans. Through that one can almost feel a part of it. I have respect for what those people went through and through that you can understand what our nation means and how it came to be," he concluded. —

•Cavalry

Continued from page 17

caparisoned horse walks with the scabbard, ammunition pouch, and riding boots reversed on the saddle to symbolize that the fallen comrade will never ride again. The caparisoned horse walker is a position of high honor within the platoon representing

the highest of Army standards.

Anyone who visits Arlington near Washington, D.C. and has a chance to visit the John C. McKinney Memorial Stables at Fort Myers will find themselves very welcome. Visitors may tour the stables between noon and 4 p.m. daily. Chief Sowles says that they sometimes have as many as 100 to 150 visitors per day. The

stable itself is named in honor of CW4 John C. McKinney, Caissson platoon leader of the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) June 1959 to May 1974. Chief Sowles is responsible for making sure the soldiers are trained for their missions, but when I asked what the favorite part of his job is, Chief Sowles didn't hesitate. It's to be able to ride the horses any time. —

Yesterday's weather

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

April 4, 1804 — A large tornado crossed six Georgia counties killing at least 11 persons near Augusta.

April 7, 1988 — High winds in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region gusted to 172 mph atop Grandfather Mountain, N.C. Twenty-



nine cities in the southwest and north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Yankton, S.D., with a reading of 91 degrees.

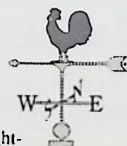
April 16, 1851 — The famous "Light-house Storm" raged near Boston Harbor.

Whole gales and gigantic waves destroyed Minot Light with its two keepers still inside. The storm resulted in great shipping losses and coastal erosion.

April 22, 1980 — A record April heat wave sent the mercury up to the 100-degree mark in Iowa.

April 25, 1898 — The temperature at Volcano Springs, Calif., hit 118 degrees to establish a U.S. record for the month of April.

April 28, 1928 — A coastal storm produced tremendous late season snows in the Central Appalachians, including 35 inches at Bayard, W.Va., 31 inches at Somerset, Pa., and 30 inches at Grantsville, Md. High winds accompanying the heavy wet snow uprooted trees and unroofed a number of homes. The storm caused great damage to fruit trees and wildlife. ---



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