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Augusta Country

May 2000 Vol. 7, Issue 5

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milk mustache in June



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Hard work, and lots
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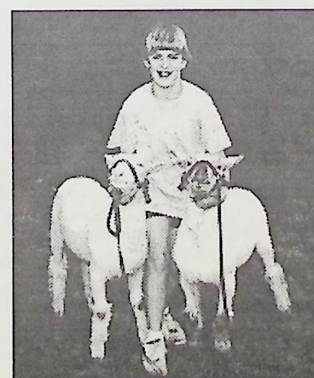
4-H, FFA members
prepare for annual
Market Animal Show

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hosts
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event

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DAR honors area residents with awards

By DONNA HUFFER

STAUNTON — The Colonel Thomas Hughart Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution met at Central United Methodist Church on April 1 for its annual awards banquet.

Nancy Gum, National Vice Chairman of the Conservation Committee, spoke about the historical background and significance of the N S D A R Conservation award. Dorothy Rosen presented the award to this year's recipient, William T. Patterson.

Patterson is the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service's District conservationist for Page and Shenandoah counties as well as the city of Harrisonburg. He oversees soil and water protection programs and projects in the area.

A graduate of Virginia Tech, Patterson received a degree in forest management. He was assigned to the SCS office in Staunton in 1980 and was transferred to Harrisonburg in 1985.

Patterson received the award because of his outstanding work in the field of conservation and interest in plant identification.

Also at the banquet were four Good Citizen Essay winners. Reed Petit Foster is the son of Mr. and Mrs. F.E. Foster of Staunton. Reed, winner from Riverheads High School, participates in varsity wrestling, soccer, track, and cross country. He is class president, SCA reporter, and reporter of the National Honor Society. He has attended Regional Governor's School, Regional Governor's Summer School of Math, Science and Technology, and Summer Seminar at the United States Naval Academy. He plans to become a Navy SEAL.

Tracey Anne Holmes, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. John Holmes, received the Good Citizen Essay award from Fort Defiance High School. Tracey is a member of the Spanish Club, National Honor Society, and Student Council. She is an officer of her class, a Model Judicial Program Attorney, and member of the Shenandoah Society, Children of the American Revolution. She has attended the Bridgewater College Youth Leadership Conference, Girls' State, and Regional Governor's School. She won the Voice of Democracy Essay award, American Legion

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New Hope FCE holds March meeting

By JUDY GROVE

The New Hope FCE Club held its March meeting at the home of Nellie Flora. President Flora called the meeting to order by having members recite The Homemakers Creed followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and devotions. Members responded to roll call by telling about their most memorable school teacher. Members welcomed new members Sue Bendall and Lena Mahone.

Family issue chair Linda Howdyshell had members sign a Family ChoiceE-TV pledge sheet in which each member pledged a conscious effort to avoid watching or listening to violent television, music, movies, videos or radio programming on April 5. This yearly project was started by the National FCE to introduce parents to the viewing alternatives available to them and their children. Television, computers and music can be beneficial if they are used wisely. FCE members follow the philosophy that it is up to adults to help children discover the wonders of media instead of being influenced by violence and other potentially harmful programming.

Members were made aware of a Family Community Leadership training to be held at the Verona Extension Office in late April and early May. This 30-hour workshop will help make FCE stronger. The VAFCE Spring Board Meeting 2000 was April 26 at Ingleside Resort in Staunton.

Members made table favors for the spring (Area VI) meeting held April 13 at the South River Fire Department in Fairfield. Area VI includes Rockingham, Rockbridge and Augusta counties. Guest speakers will be Dr. Barrett and Dr. Dooley from Virginia Tech. Kelly

Coggsdale, 4-H leader, will have the program on the theme of "Character Counts: Caring & Citizenship."

The study of the month was Augusta Springs located on Va. 42, 3 1/2 miles south of Craigsville and southwest of Staunton in Augusta County. Location of this little-known resort is an overgrown field across from the Stillwater Mill at Augusta Springs. It was reported that at one time in its history a two-story hotel with an observation tower, a barn, chapel and employees' quarters were built here. The remains of a bottling plant can be seen in the field and the spring nearby issues at 750 gallons per minute. A tall rock structure, perhaps a smokehouse, stands west of the old bottling plant. At one time a hunt club was established here. The entire property is now owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

Cristin Campbell, FCS Extension Agent, presented a program on "Indoor Air Quality." Ms. Campbell stated that most people

spend 90 percent of their time indoors. There are three skills a consumer needs — pollutant identification, source control and mitigation. Some signs of possible home indoor air quality problems are unusual odors, stale or stuffy air, excessive humidity, presence of molds and mildew, and feeling noticeably healthier outside the home. Ms. Campbell listed the types of pollutants: biological contaminants (mold), radon (gas), combustion products (carbon monoxide), volatile organic compounds (paints), formaldehyde (pressed woods), lead and asbestos. Using an overhead projector, explanations and handouts, Ms. Campbell showed how a consumer can find the source of an unwanted pollutant and how to eliminate it or control it. For more information on indoor air quality, a consumer may contact the local Extension Office or State Department of Health.

For information about FCE, contact Mrs. Flora at 363-5204. —

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Hard work propelled woman through 20th century

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON — So many things have changed since Lona Gilmer Kesterson was born in Augusta County in April 1905 that it's hard to know where to begin the story. Even the circumstances of her birthplace would be confusing to youngsters. She was born near Brookwood (Mint Spring area) in the tenant house on the Churchman farm. Her father, Cornelius Thomas Gilmer, ran the Churchman Mill and the Gilmer family lived in the house close by.

The memories that Mrs. Kesterson has are fast becoming unique as the 20th century slips into the 21st. This petite woman, who stands less than 5 feet tall, has an indomitable spirit and work ethic that have seen her through nearly a century of change.

In the days when the 20th century was brand new, most Augusta County farmers grew wheat and took it to any one of dozens of mills that dotted the rural landscape. Today, mills have faded from the scene and few Valley farmers grow wheat as their cash crop anymore.

Thomas and Katherine Weaver Gilmer soon moved their family to her homeplace between Greenville and Middlebrook. There they raised their five children (Lona was the second to the youngest and the only girl) in the old Weaver log house. Thomas ran the farm, growing wheat and

corn, and raising livestock.

"My mother was always frail, so I helped her around the house, but I also helped to shock wheat and haul hay and I did the milking," Mrs. Kesterson recalls. "I loved to milk and we always kept two family cows."

The children all attended Stover School which was about two miles away. "It was a three-room school, first through eighth grade, but way back when I went to school they didn't say first grade, they called it primers when you started," she explained.

The children walked to school regardless of the weather. "We had no holidays, except you might get a week for Christmas. The big snows would commence along in the fall and pile up one on top of the other. When we'd walk to school, my brothers would walk ahead and I would walk in their tracks."

On the hill above the schoolhouse was a thriving church, Oakdale Methodist. The Gilmers all attended and Mrs. Kesterson's parents are buried in the accompanying cemetery. When Lona was 13 or 14, Oakdale closed and the family started attending Bethel Presbyterian where one can still find Lona today, although she no longer arrives by horse and buggy. Oakdale was torn down many years ago and would be totally forgotten if not for the cemetery and stories such as the ones Mrs. Kesterson tells.

Life on a farm was hard work, but "we never thought anything of it," Mrs. Kesterson recalled. It was just a way of life for everybody. Because they were a good bit younger than the three older boys, Lona and her baby brother were just called "the kids" and some of the smaller farm tasks fell to them. "Back then thunderstorms would come up in the summertime about one o'clock in the afternoon. Mama would holler out to us, 'You kids, go get the turkey hens in,' and my brother and I would get the hens and chickens in before it rained."

For the farm family, young hens and turkeys were valuable trading items. The Gilmers took theirs to McGary's General Store in Middlebrook to sell. Eggs, too, went into the store for trade.

Often times Lona and her brother Wallace had to carry a basket of eggs five miles into the Middlebrook store. Their father rigged up a means for them to do this by running a stick through the big basket handle and giving each child one end of the stick to carry. With the egg basket hanging safely between them, the pair would head off to the village.

"We'd carry them eggs, then set down and rest. Then we'd walk some more, then set down and rest. Mama wrote down a grocery list, but always told us if there was any money left over to get some candy or chewing gum. Mostly we got those big long sticks of chewing gum."

Sometimes the children would just play, especially on Sundays, although Lona was at a disadvantage because she was the only girl in the community. On Sundays, church and Sunday school were in the mornings which left the afternoon free for playing down in the creek. "My brothers and me made waterwheels out of cornstalks," she recalls. All the kids also played Andyover, which is throwing a ball over a building, and they see-sawed.

Lona finished up all eight years at Stover and then did what a lot of young people do when they finish school — she got married. Roy Kesterson lived on an adjoining farm, although Lona never saw much of him growing up because he was five years older.

"I was kinda shy then," Lona recalls. "He called me one evening and wanted to know if I had a date. We got married in 1921 when I was 17."

The newlyweds moved into the tenant house on the Kesterson farm, which put her a little closer to Greenville. Although she already knew a lot about running a household, Mrs. Kesterson admits that she was a novice at making yeast bread. "I had made biscuits and pies, but I hadn't made light bread. I knew how it was done because I'd seen my mother do it, but I didn't get it to do very good for a while," she says with a smile.

In those days communities would often welcome newlyweds by belling them — a raucous group of neighbors arrived after bedtime and made noise until the newlyweds came outside to be greeted.

"They belled us twice!" remembers Mrs. Kesterson. "Great day did they make a fuss! They had big circular saws and rung bells and they kept going until you came out. We had a big crowd the first time, but it wasn't such a big one the second time, but they still made a lot of fuss."

With the exception of fine-tuning her cooking skills, Mrs. Kesterson had very few adjustments to make as a farmwife. She just kept doing the same hard work that she had learned at home. She and Roy had six milk cows and they got up at 4:30 every morning to milk. Lona scalded the milk bottles every morning, filled the bottles with fresh milk that was then delivered to



Lona Kesterson of Staunton celebrated her 95th birthday April 27. Friends from the AARP chapter of which Mrs. Kesterson is a member showered her with cards for the occasion.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

Greenville every day. "I think we got 10 cents a quart and five cents a pint," Mrs. Kesterson remembers.

Roy Kesterson grew wheat just like all the other farmers around and he started with horse-drawn equipment just like most of the others as well. "My husband sold wheat, I think for a \$1 a bushel and great big shoats for \$1 each," she said.

About the time she was married, a new-fangled invention was creeping into the Augusta County countryside. "Mr. Reuben Fitzgerald had the first automobile in our neighborhood and Mr. Jim Callison had one that you had to get out and crank. The horses weren't used to them, you know, and they got scared. Several horses in the neighborhood did run off. If we were going into town and we met an automobile, then we had to get out and hold the horses," she remembers.

And then there were those flying machines. Mrs. Kesterson recalls that the first airplane she ever saw was at the Staunton Fair, held the first week each September. "Everybody all around looked forward to going to the Staunton Fair. We took our lunches and something to feed the horses," she said.

It was great excitement for a pilot in an airplane to buzz the crowd. "People would wave their handkerchiefs and holler and some would take their hats off."

There was always plenty to do at the fair in addition to seeing flying machines. "They had all kinds of performances and horse races in the afternoon and motorcycle races. I liked to ride the hobby horses that went around. There was cotton candy, and games and a livestock show."

The fair was a time for farmers to forget about the hard work of the farm. There were few other opportunities to do that. The Fourth of July, for instance, was right in the middle of harvest and so was not celebrated.

The family did hide eggs for Easter and Lona's mother always pickled eggs with beets, a tradition that Lona continues. Christmas was a little more extravagant. "Mama baked a good many cakes and we had a toy apiece and candy and oranges. We always had a little Christmas tree, mostly always cedar and decorated it with little homemade things, some covered with foil," Mrs. Kesterson said.

When asked if there were any rowdier activities at Christmas, the tiny 95-year-old answered: "My land, my land yes. The boys in the neighborhood would go shanghaiing. They would go around to peoples' homes in the neighborhood and be all dressed up in false faces and stuff and you had to guess who they was.

See SHANGHAI, page 20

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Miller Kaylor Kyger: The man with three last names

By NANCY SORRELLS

WEYERS CAVE — Next time you are in Weyers Cave watch for a man chugging past on a blue tractor or maybe you will see him walking along the road with some landscaping tools over his shoulder. That's the man with three last names, the one who is the area's self-appointed cemetery and lawn caretaker.

Miller Kaylor Kyger, 78, has been a resident of the area all of his life. He was born and raised on a farm between Lynnwood and Port Republic in Rockingham County, but has resided in Weyers Cave for a number of years. He was the eighth of 10 children born in the Kyger household. Miller received his first name after Dr. Frank Miller who delivered him, while his middle name, Kaylor, was his mother's maiden name.

All of the surviving Kyger children helped on the family farm where "some of everything" was raised. Miller has many a fond memory of accompanying his father to the train depot at Weyers Cave to sell livestock.

"Starting when I was 5 or 6 years old I came with my dad on a wagon with sheep and hogs for sale. We had a two-horse team. The front end of the sideboard was fixed at an angle so the hogs and lambs couldn't jump out. The back was likewise," he explained.

On an average load the family could haul a dozen 60-80-pound lambs and 12 to 14 hogs weighing 210 pounds apiece. Once the animals were sold at the stockyard next to the depot, they bought feed and loaded it on the wagon. Twenty barrels of corn fit nicely on the wagon bed.

Just as clearly -- as if it were yesterday -- Miller remembers the prices brought by the family's livestock. "Hogs brought 3.5 cents a pound and lambs 4.5 to 5 cents a pound in the 1920s and 1930s. Prices held till the end of the Depression.

"Weyers Cave had two or three

stores right down before the depot. They had a little slaughtering house at the store. My brother Warren and I brought our beef to sell. I had a little brindle mixed with Jersey and my older brother Warren had a straight red animal with a white head, mostly Hereford. They were 900 to 1,000 pounds and were two years old."

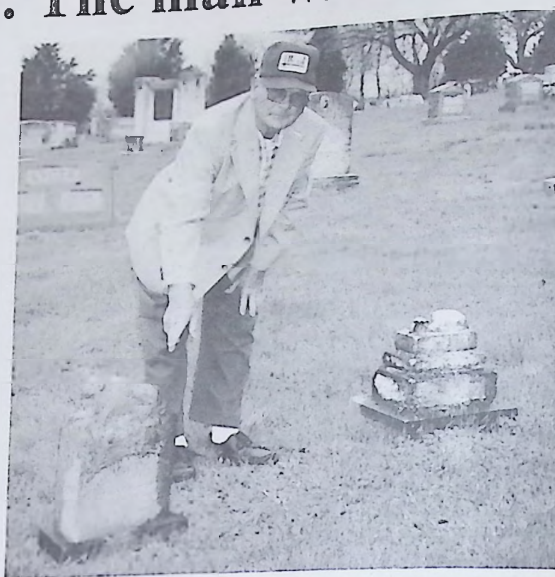
The brothers had a little friendly competition to see whose animal would command a higher price. "Warren beat me by half a cent. His brought \$60 and mine brought \$56, mostly because mine was a mixture. Oh, they was particular. Some animals were cat hammed, meaning the hips were not quite square and they brought a little less," he said.

Trips into Weyers Cave were a real treat for the boys. "Everyone had a little something to sell if the weather was open to get there. Sometimes we had to wait in line to get unloaded. It would be nothing to have 12 or 15 teams standing there, and buggies too. We came up eight or nine times a year. Everybody knew everybody and we couldn't wait to get there every time," Miller recalled.

Back home on the other side of the county line, things were just as exciting for the boys. "Sunday night we went to the Methodist Church in Port. Then we'd come back Monday night and help count out the nickels and dimes that came in."

Times were hard for the area people in those days. The year 1930 was particularly hard, he remembered. "We made it but it was tough in 1930. We had what I call a 'double Herschel' in the drought AND the Depression."

The hard luck of the times even claimed the Port rural delivery postman. "Herman Hudlow was a young man when he passed away on his mail route in 1936. He just flumped over on the North River bridge. They took him to the hospital and he passed away the next day. Herman's route was 66 miles long and he had 66 boxes on it, only five of those



Miller Kaylor Kyger of Weyers Cave points to a stone which marks the graves in Port Republic Cemetery of his sisters who died in 1912. Kyger has been helping care for cemeteries for many years.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

being businesses. He used his own car and gas. Gas was 18 cents a gallon and \$35 a week was his pay. Still, he made a good living."

From all around him, Miller absorbed a sturdy work ethic. When he saw his dad care for and appreciate cemeteries, he learned to do the same.

"Daddy brought me up from 8-years-old and took me to where my two sisters are buried. He would lime the graves, pick litter and straighten up the stones. The older I get the more I appreciate my parents and the wonderful people who are now deceased."

The two sisters, buried side by side in the Port Republic Cemetery, were twins. They died within a few weeks of each other in 1912 of a disease

called scarlatina. Their graves are marked by stones with lambs on them, a common way to remember young children in cemeteries. Also buried in the cemetery is Miller's 7-year-old brother John, who died in 1932 of double pneumonia.

If anything, Miller's love for cemeteries has increased over the years. He regularly helps maintain a number of area cemeteries in both Augusta and Rockingham. He is on a committee for the Shady Grove Cemetery. He orders lime and fertilizer which he spreads himself, and he cares for the stone markers.

"I give my time free. I know that you've got just as many lovely people inside a cemetery as outside the fence. I enjoyed them, knowing them, talking to them, being in their homes and meeting their wonderful parents, grandparents, and children," he said while searching for the reason that he braves the weather to go about his task.

Although not a tombstone, there is one other stone that has sparked his curiosity since he was a young child. That stone is found alongside LeRoy Road which begins in Augusta and ends in Rockingham. LeRoy Road is the very route that Miller and his family would take when they visited Weyers Cave on Saturdays. When their wagon passed by the stone -- partially hidden under some overgrown weeds at the side of the road -- it piqued his curiosity.

"I've noticed that stone ever since I was 5 or 6 years old," he said. What he saw when he stopped and uncovered the stone was a white obelisk 18 or so inches in height. On the south side of the stone is a big "A" while the north side has an "R." The side of the stone facing the road has 1893 carved in it. Turns out that this almost forgotten stone marks the Augusta-Rockingham line. It was placed along the road in 1893 by officials from both counties.

In his usual way, Miller has adopted that stone as well. It took him two seasons of working to win a victory over the vines and weeds, but now the stone is visible for all to see. He makes sure the grass and weeds around it are kept trimmed, and he has contacted the highway department about sealing some cracks in the stone.

As the weather warms you might see Miller at the county stone or in one of the area cemeteries helping to clean the landscape. If you stop and chat with him, you are likely to learn a lot about the local history of the area, but be prepared because Miller has a lot to tell. He is even fond of telling a joke on himself about his long-windedness. "My mother always used to say that if you want a doc quick, don't send Miller 'cause you'll pass away before he gets back cause he likes to talk too much!"

When he's quit talking, though, he'll get back to the business at hand, which is the cemeteries. "I help to keep up ones that no one else takes much interest in. Sometimes everybody else gives up on them," he said. —

Art in the Park set for May 20

STAUNTON — Art in the Park is May 20, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Gypsy Hill Park. This day-long festival is loaded with art, crafts, music, food, kids' activities, and fun for young and old. Admission is free and Staunton Augusta Art Center staff and volunteers are busy pulling it all together.

Artists and craftspeople from across the region have signed up to participate. Exhibitors will offer works for sale in a variety of media including watercolor, oils, ceramics, photography, jewelry, stained glass, and fiber arts. The artists will compete for more than \$3,000 in prize money. Deborah McLeod, art critic for Richmond's Style Weekly will judge. Deadline for artist registration is April 30. Art in the Park is a wonderful opportunity to see what

the artists in the area are up to in their studios.

This year the musical lineup includes the Stonewall Brigade Band, Global Drum Call, Robert E. Lee Jazz Band, Rhythm Road, and Orenda. The bands will present 90-minute concerts in the park's gazebo and the music will range from native drums to blues/rock. There will be something for everyone. Once you've perused the art, grab a bite to eat from one of the food vendors and laze under the trees while you listen to the free concerts and enjoy your lunch.

And, Art in the Park isn't just for grown-ups! The Children's Activities Tent will host a slew of activities for kids including Spin Art, Button Making, Dino Art, Tile Magnets,

Critter Art, and Pinwheel Art! Children can also win prizes when they enter artwork in the Youth Art Show, judged by Laura Gilliland, owner of White Swan Gallery in Staunton. Deadline for the Youth Art Show registration is May 10.

"Art in the Park is a community institution. We hope that folks will come out, bring their families, and celebrate the arts. The local talent that this area boasts -- artists, craftspeople, and musicians -- is remarkable. Art in the Park gives the community a chance to relish our bounty," said Margo McGirr, Art Center executive director.

The Art Center will be open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. during Art in the Park. Call the Center at 540/885-2028 for details or directions. —

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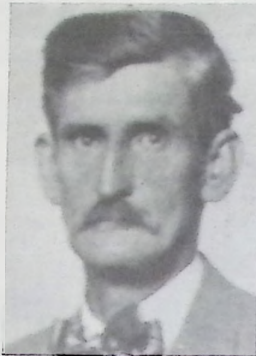
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Railroad brought Baptists to Stuarts Draft

By VERA HAILEY

In the 18th century the Shenandoah Valley was largely populated by Scots Irish Presbyterians and Germans who were either Lutheran, Reformed, or members of one of the smaller sects like Brethren. It was not until about 1835 that the Baptist General Association of Virginia directed its attention to Augusta County. From that point onward, the denomination grew. The association mission slogan for the period 1865-1900 was, "Virginia for Jesus: in every neighborhood a Baptist Church."

According to "The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary History of Stuarts Draft Baptist Church 1894-1969," the coming of the railroad indirectly prompted the beginning of a Baptist church in Stuarts Draft. The railroad brought Cohron family members, who were loyal Baptists from Mississippi. Cornelius H. Cohron came to the area as a traveling salesman selling fruit trees for Stark Brothers Nursery. He later



C.H. COHRON

built the Stuarts Draft Mill.

Cohron donated property for a church building on Main Street, across from High Street. Ground was broken for the foundation by Edmund F. Coffey and Joseph McCray using a team of horses and a scoop. The building, a white weath-

erboard structure, was begun in 1895 and completed in 1896. It would house the congregation for 67 years.

The minutes of the Augusta Baptist Association in 1894 tell of the church's beginning: "A new church has been organized and house of worship built, dedicated, and paid for at Stuarts Draft in Augusta County on the N&W Railroad..."

The newspapers also reported on the new congregation in the July 12, 1895 *Staunton Vindicator*: "The Baptist church at Stuarts Draft was dedicated on Sunday, June 30. Rev. Mr. Corr, the pastor, Rev. Mr. Hugh Goodwin of Greenville, Rev. Mr. Kindig of Mt. Vernon church, and Rev. Mr. Ross of the Methodist church, preaching."

The article alluded to heavy rainfall in this footnote: "Returning from the dedication, Misses Nellie Robinson and Alice Tewalt of Mint Spring narrowly escaped being washed away by the rise in Christians Creek."

Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Brand, Elizabeth

Campbell, Annie Chapman, Kate Chapman, Nancy Clark, Nellie Clark, Ada Clark, E.F. Coffey, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Coffey, Oney Coffey, Robert Carter, C.H. Cohron, Jane Cohron, Cordehlia Cohron, Lottie Cohron, David Garber, Molly Garber, Fannie Garber, Mr. and Mrs. W.P.

Humphries, Mr. and Mrs. E. Lovegrove, Joe McCray, Lilie Moyer, Sallie Snead, Nannie Thomas and Martha Thomas.

The charter members had their memberships transferred from established Baptist congregations such as Greenville, Luray, Laurel Hill, Waynesboro and Neriah. —



The original Stuarts Draft Baptist Church building was built in 1895-96 on Main Street on property donated by C.H. Cohron. It housed the congregation for 67 years.

Brethren preparing for Disaster Relief Auction

AC staff report

STAUNTON — "We hope to break the million-dollar mark this year," Al Cline remarks calmly.

Cline, the disaster relief coordinator from the Staunton Church of the Brethren, is talking about the eighth annual Shenandoah District Church of the Brethren Disaster Response Auction to be held at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds May 19-20. Proceeds from past auctions now total \$890,000. These funds have been used to send volunteers from the

Shenandoah District to projects in Biloxi, Miss.; Franklin, Va.; Vanceboro, N.C.; and Puerto Rico.

"The emergency disaster fund allocations list is too long to include in an article," Cline added, "but money goes to ship beef to El Salvador, secure food in the Sudan, as well as help fund a violence mitigation team in Littleton, Colo. The Brethren respond to tornadoes, hurricanes, and freezes across the United States."

This year's auction begins on Friday morning at 9 a.m. with a quilt display for Saturday's auction. Rubbermaid products, arts and crafts, baked goods and plants will be sold throughout the day beginning at noon. An oyster/country ham buffet begins at 3 p.m. A livestock auction at 6:15 is followed by an art and furniture auction beginning at 7 p.m.

Saturday's pancake/omelet breakfast at 7 is followed by an 8:45 worship service. The quilt auction begins at 9. Anyone who is still hungry can take home a chicken barbecue available just before noon.

"The Bible tells us 'What you did for the least of these who were members of my family, you did it to me,'" Cline comments. "These words inspire the disaster relief volunteers — the ones who work hard to pull the auction together and those who go and serve." —



60-year mark

The Middlebrook Ruritan Club celebrated its 60th birthday April 11. In the photo at left, founding member Frank Hanger is presented a certificate for 60 years of perfect attendance by Ruritan National president Jim LaFollette. In the photo above, Tom Nelson, Middlebrook president, greets LaFollette. The club received its charter on April 16, 1940 and was the seventh such group formed in Augusta County.

Photos by Charles N. Beard

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Staunton's town clock keeps time 19th-century style

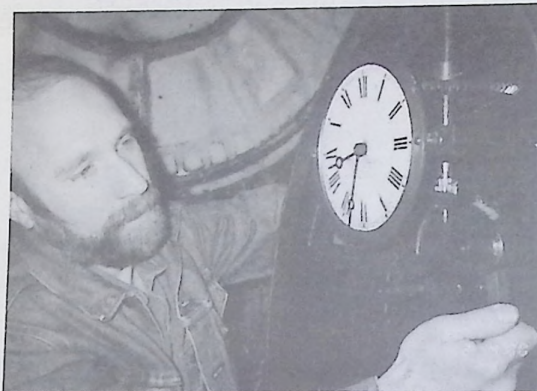
By STACEY BAKER

Just another Sunday morning? Not this past April 2. It was one of those Sunday mornings that many of us dread twice each year — the time change! Each of us has to go through the ritual of resetting every time-keeping device in the house, vehicles, and of course, ourselves! Some of the newer electronic devices will do it automatically, but some folks may take weeks to adjust to the one-hour shift in time.

Even with the new battery powered preprogrammed modern wonders, chances are there will be at least one clock or watch that will require our attention on these dates. So, we have to do the mental calculation, "is it spring forward or fall back?" and make the necessary adjustments.

Nothing symbolizes this twice yearly drudgery better than the ceremony performed on the roof of the old YMCA building on the corner of Beverley and Central in downtown Staunton. One will find either Dean Sarnelle of Once Upon a Time Clock Shop, or Tom Rosen, of Rosen's Clock Shop, or sometimes both, preparing to change the time setting on the old Town Clock.

These two gentlemen have been the caretakers of the Howard clock for the past several



Staunton "sprang ahead" into Daylight Savings Time this year when Dean Sarnelle set the time on the clock in downtown. The hands on the small clock face correspond to the hands on the tower clock face. By releasing a lever and turning a wheel on the small clock, the hands are changed on the tower clock.

Photos by Stacey Baker

years. The clock, once powered by weights that slowly descended through wood shafts, and regulated by a four-foot pendulum, now keeps track of time by two electric motors, one to power the hands, the other to move the large hammer that strikes the bell.

The original clock movement is still there, though a bit less of it, several of the wheels and pulleys were removed when the clock was electrified. Many people who have strolled through downtown Staunton have noticed the clock, maybe not by looking up when near it, but certainly when the gonging bell sounds the hour. It is very hard not to notice that.

Many have noticed, probably, but only a few have wondered how and when the clock arrived in Staunton. Herein lies a small historical mystery. No one seems to know exactly when.

Construction on the YMCA building was completed by July 16, 1890, the date the building was dedicated. The construction cost was just over \$23,000. Not a bad price, considering the building was four stories. The ground floor

housed retail space. A 250-seat auditorium occupied the second floor. The third floor contained a gymnasium, and the fourth a bowling alley and running track. Crowning this magnificent building was the tower for the town clock, for which the City was to pay \$1,000 a year rent.

The clock however, may have been watching over the city for many years prior to this occasion. According to information contained in the files of the Historic Staunton Foundation, the clock had resided in the bell tower of Central Evangelical Lutheran Church, which at that time stood behind the YMCA building. It supposedly was moved to the new tower just prior to the dedication.

When the church was built in the 1850s, money had been allocated for the purchase of a clock for the bell tower in the new church. Could the clock that now dependably strikes the hour have been around that long? It is possible.

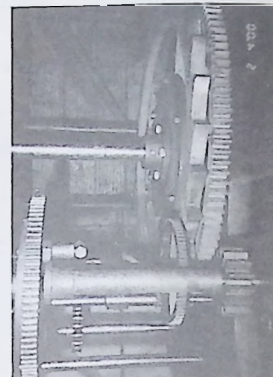
The frame of the movement measures about three feet in length and about a foot or so high. A central shaft rises vertically, from which

four shafts radiate to drive the hands simultaneously on the five-foot leaded glass dials. The frame of the movement is clearly marked E. Howard and Company, Boston, Massachusetts.

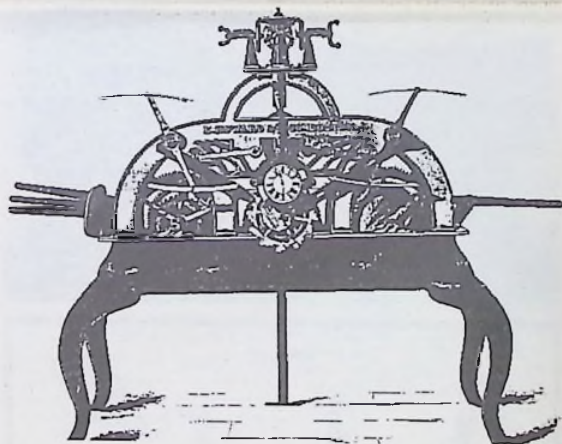
Just beneath the movement platform, the massive cast bronze bell is suspended. A hammer is mounted to one side, connected to the clock movement by a series of steel rods. On the hour, the hammer strikes the bell the required number of times. The bell is marked "McShane Bell Foundry, Henry McShane and Co., Baltimore, Md. 1885." This date may be an indication of the age of the clock movement itself.

The Howard clock company began production in 1842 as Howard and Davis, manufacturers of sewing machines, fire engines, and precision balances. In 1843, the company decided to add tower clocks to this varied lineup of products. Edward Howard left in 1857 and formed his own company, the E. Howard Company, which built

See CLOCK, page 7



This photo shows the movement of the town clock, which is powered by electric motors, as it exists today. The E. Howard clock movement closely resembled the one shown in the drawing below before the town clock was motorized.



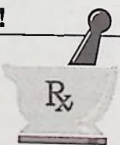
Staunton's clock tower on the corner of Central and Beverley streets in downtown has become an icon of the Shenandoah Valley's Queen City.

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Coffman, Swift honored with ACHS awards

AC staff report

STAUNTON — Ralph Coffman of Mt. Sidney was presented the Distinguished Service Award by the Augusta County Historical Society at its fifth annual banquet held April 4. The society's Outstanding History Educator Award was presented to Mack Swift of Staunton.

Recognizing Coffman for the role he played in helping to move Mt. Sidney forward in its quest to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, ACHS president Nancy Sorrells presented Coffman with a plaque in his honor.

Coffman is an Augusta County native who went to school in Mt. Sidney. He served as postmaster in Mt. Sidney for 19 years until his retirement. Coffman has been a member of the Augusta County Historical Society for 30 years. During those years he served as chair of the society's cemetery committee. The process of listing Mt. Sidney as an historic district was aided by Coffman who provided an oral history recording and loaned the society family photos of the village. Coffman is a member of Salem Lutheran Church. He and his wife Gertrude have two daughters and four grandchildren.

Swift, the society's Outstanding Educator Award recipient, has been teaching history to high schoolers for almost 30 years. He graduated from East Tennessee State University with



Nancy Sorrells, president of the Augusta County Historical Society, congratulates Mack Swift, center, and Ralph Coffman on the awards presented to them recently at the society's annual spring banquet.

AC staff photo

a bachelor's degree in education and history and a minor in speech and drama. He earned a master's degree in education from James Madison University and for 17 years taught at Riverheads High School in Augusta County. He has taught at Lee High in Staunton since 1988.

In making the presentation, Mrs. Sorrells noted that Swift successfully combines his love of history and drama in and outside the classroom. As a former student of Swift, Mrs. Sorrells noted that it was through his "colorful" presentation of history lectures that he managed to keep even the most bored students interested in

their history lessons.

Swift has participated in living history interpretation at the Museum of American Frontier Culture since 1989 as a storyteller and costumed interpreter. He is an accomplished storyteller with a specialty in Appalachian stories called Jack Tales. Swift is a member of Covenant Presbyterian Church. He and his wife Joan have two children.

The society's spring meeting will be held 2 p.m. May 21 at Greenville United Methodist Church. Keith Hall will present a program about his father, J.E. Hall who was a cabinetmaker in Greenville during the Great Depression. From 1933 until 1945 he created fine furniture, mostly reproductions of colonial furniture, in his shop. Hall has tracked down many of his father's works of art and will tell the story of the shop in Greenville.

In the banquet's evening program, Phillip Stone, president of Bridgewater College, spoke about the Lincolns of Augusta and Rockingham counties.

Stone told the more than 150 people present that the Lincoln family moved to what is now Rockingham County — then it was Augusta County — in 1768 before the American Revolution. John and Rebecca Lincoln, who were Abraham Lincoln's great grandparents, followed the Boone family invitation to come to the Shenandoah Valley and then moved to Kentucky.

John and Rebecca Lincoln had nine children, one of these being Capt. Abraham Lincoln who married Bathsheba Herring of Dayton. Capt. Abe died in 1788 and is buried in the Lincoln family cemetery in Rockingham County. Thomas Lincoln, one of Capt. Abraham and Bathsheba's children, was born near Linville Creek. He was the father of President Abe Lincoln.

Stone noted that the Lincoln family had many connections with Virginia.

"A lot of people didn't want to talk about the Lincolns being from Virginia," Stone said. Union soldiers burned the valley during the Civil War, however, few people may know that Lincoln had cousins in the valley who fought for the Confederacy.

Abe Lincoln's branch of the family moved on to Kentucky where Capt. Abraham was killed in 1786 during an Indian attack. Abe's father, Tom, was 7 years old at the time and was almost scalped in the same attack. Tom married Nancy

Hanks who died when their son, Abe, was 9 years old. By this time the family had moved to Indiana. Abe was 21 years old when he ended up in Illinois.

Stone said that as a young man in New Salem, Abraham Lincoln was recognized as a leader and elected to the state legislature where he served for eight years. He practiced law and became very prominent in his profession. In 1848, Lincoln was elected to Congress and immediately found himself thrown into controversy when he voted to abolish slavery and opposed the war against Mexico. One of the interesting ironies of Lincoln's life, which Stone pointed out, was that just as Lincoln was working to free slaves, the Lincoln family in Virginia owned slaves.

Stone noted that Lincoln is "particularly worth" remembering for a number of reasons. He is credited with saving the Union and abolishing slavery which brought forth a concept of national civil rights. He proved that the pursuit of civil rights is a legitimate role for government. Ultimately, Stone said, Lincoln set a model for the presidency.

"At his core [Abraham Lincoln] was an honest, just, and compassionate man," Stone said. "Why do you think they called him 'Honest Abe'?"

Lincoln was no stranger to personal tragedy, Stone said. He lost two children and his wife's poor health was an emotional drain for the president. The duration of his term as president was littered with both personal and professional upheaval.

"He put up with so many things because he thought it was the right thing to do," Stone concluded. —

•Clock

Continued from page 6

clocks of all types, and watches. The watch making division was sold in 1903, but the clock building company exists to this day. The last tower clock movement was produced in 1964.

As the movement in Staunton's clock is marked E. Howard and Company, it cannot be any older

than 1857, which would put it in the right time frame. If it is indeed that old, it has stood sentinel over many events, such as the various armies that occupied the town during the Civil War.

In any 19th century town that was fortunate to have one, the town clock was the time standard for every citizen. Shelf clocks, grandfather clocks and watches were set by the striking bell. And

no, daylight savings time did not exist during the 19th century and a good part of the 20th.

Until more research is completed, the exact age of the present clock will not be known. We can be reasonably sure there was a tower clock in Stanton by 1860, and we know this one existed in its present location since 1890. Hopefully, we may know more in the near future. In the mean TIME, the old Howard tower clock will continue to be cared for by Rosen and Sarnelle. Through their efforts, other folks many years from now may look up at the gonging clock and wonder just how long it has been there. —

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Notes from the road

In this issue, *Augusta Country* writer Madison Brown takes us on a journey along Otter Creek in West Virginia's Monongahela National Forest. And leave it to the affable Madison to make friends with every tree along the creek's bank!

West Virginia's highlands holds beautiful spring surprises

By MADISON BROWN

OTTER CREEK, W.Va. — You remember that first full week in March when the weather got out of hand and turned spring-like? And you remember the next week with lower temperatures, rain and the threat of snow? Well, I spent those weeks in the West Virginia Highlands and enjoyed all of those weather conditions.

My trusty and excellent guide to the Highlands was Allen de Hart and Bruce Sundquist's *Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide* published by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, my favorite regional environmental organization (www.wvhighlands.org). I studied up on de Hart and Sundquist's highest enthusiasms and picked out two areas for my trip. Neither the authors nor the weather disappointed me in the slightest.

Otter Creek Wilderness was my first choice. The Guide calls it "an isolated drainage basin of 28.1 sq. mi." It offers a compact woodland area easy to grasp — 11 miles of creek most of which runs south to north with ridges to the east, west, and south. There are about 50 miles of trails in Otter Creek Wilderness; I hiked about half. Wilderness trails are neither signed nor blazed and receive only minimal maintenance,



The embouchure of West Virginia's Otter Creek into the Dry Fork, seen to the right, of the Cheat River

but I found them well enough trod to follow without difficulty. Hikers had helped the first time visitors by also marking each of the junctions with slender rock pile cairns.

My hiking instinct inclines me to start at the bottom and hike upwards, so I began at Otter Creek's embouchure into the Dry Fork of the Cheat River (altitude 1,870 feet). This entry is approximately three hours' West Virginia driving from Staunton and graciously provided with a fine suspension bridge over the Dry Fork. As I hiked the bridge looking down at the rocky bottom through the clear, fast running waters, I was not burdened by thoughts about entering a "wilderness" where there would be a creek but no bridges. Such is the innocence induced by glorious early spring weather.

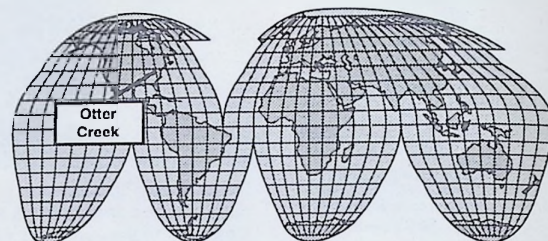
"Where did you sleep?" asked my sister who lives in Florida. "In my tent," I replied. Tenting next to a fulsome creek is a thoroughly pleasant experience for the ears and the soul. Otter Creek presents numerous opportunities for this and I took it up on this generous offer three times in three different sites. Much to my surprise there are two three-sided shelters in Otter Creek Wilderness. I spent one night in the slightly dilapidated one (altitude

In the photo at left, Madison Brown pauses along the Dry Fork trail. Mild weather in early March proved just right for hitting the trail. (Nice hat, Madison.)

3,720 feet) directly on the rim of Shavers Mountain, the ridge to the east. The view from here extends over half a dozen West Virginia and Virginia ranges. Two ravens unflinchingly shared the site, their flutterings, glidings and croakings with me.

The source of the Otter (altitude 3,200 feet) is a spring down a bit from Shavers' southernmost crest. After three-quarters of a mile this fast-running stream enters the relatively flat upper reaches of the drainage. For more than the next mile the Otter is smooth running.

On my next-to-the-last day I came face-to-face with the realities of wilderness: Otter Creek Trail crosses the Creek three times. Number one crossing was in that flatish, upper section, so there were no dry stones to hop but no mud either. There comes a point in stream crossing when the hiker needs to wear boots to make a safe crossing. Here, the waters were gentle enough and the weather mild enough that I would be safe wading. I bravely pulled off my boots and socks, took



This is the view looking east from the shelter on Shavers Mountain in West Virginia. Somewhere beyond the ridges in the background of the photo is the western mountain border of Virginia.

a doughty plunge in the creek, and staggered successfully across. At crossings two and three there were plenty of rocks and boulders for me to rock-hop dry-shod across.

The next week I returned to the Highlands in the midst of the weather turn. I met snow showers at the higher elevations and flocks of robins down along Gandy Creek. As best I can tell, the Spruce Knob Unit of the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area includes the ridges of Allegheny and Spruce Mountains and the Seneca Creek drainage area which lies in between.

Late evening I hiked in a short distance from Gandy Creek (altitude 2,840 feet). Snow accumulation that first night was only two or so inches. That was my first night tenting on snow and I fully appreciated the comfort of my foam mattresses. Next day I con-

tinued up and over Allegheny Mountain (altitude 3,960 feet) and down to Seneca Creek (altitude 3,120 feet). The snow was mostly gone by the time I reached Seneca Creek the next afternoon. I came dry shod across the creek over a simple but helpful two-log "bridge" — the lower log for feet and the higher for hands. The creek is slightly bigger than Otter and just as much a joy to spend the night next to.

There are several large open patches of what used to be grazing

See OTTER, page 9

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•Otter

Continued from page 8

lands on the western flank of Spruce Mountain. These are quite a shift from hardwood forests and offer welcome openness and vistas as well as a complete change in flora. The crest of Spruce Mountain, which is actually topped with a band of spruce running its length, still had snow on the ground under the trees. Hiking through this growth is dark and eerily closed in. The trail breaks out now and then into open grassy sections with gnarled hawthorn and huckleberry.

As a recreation area the Knob itself is developed with paved road and parking lots, picnic tables, a privy with two commodious uni-sex stalls, a small rain shelter, a short interpretative trail and a 25-foot observation tower presenting a magnificent 360-degree panorama. I welcome this kind of development for two main reasons: it makes this spectacular place easily available and at the same time subtly manages visitors.

The sunset from Spruce Mountain was the most spectacular of the trip and I found sleeping in a ridge-top, huckleberry-hawthorn glade among whispering spruce another kind of extraordinary treat, especially after I began to filter out the evening and morning jet plane noises.

I set off next for Allegheny Mountain diagonally southwest down one of the grazing

fields to Seneca Creek at Judy Springs where the three springs are less than 25 yards from the creek. The largest is the biggest spring I have ever seen. Seneca Creek upstream is broad and shallow. Just before I left it (altitude 3,680 feet), there were signs of beaver at work, but no beaver were sighted.

In these upper reaches, the drainage basin slopes leading up to the ridge are pleasantly gentle. Allegheny Mountain (altitude 4,000-4,280 feet) rises and falls gently through a beautiful forest of beech and black cherry with an occasional birch. I felt I was in the "northern" hardwood habitat with the northern coniferous forest of spruce in view on the neighboring Spruce Mountain ridge — so unlike our "southern" habitat with its oaks and hickories. This trail follows the road on the mountain crest, which serves the half dozen grassy fields maintained for wildlife. It gave me an unmistakable "highland" sense.

Of the Knob, de Hart and Sundquist write, "The Spruce Knob area is an excellent place to explore." I would add only that it is also a beautiful place. —

Special thanks to Ranger Larry de Haven of the Potomac Ranger District, Monongahela National Forest, for generously sharing his dendrological expertise with the writer. (Dendrological means the botanical study of trees. The editor had to look it up in the dictionary — twice.)



Photo above, Otter Creek's grand waterfall. Photo below, the largest of Judy Springs.



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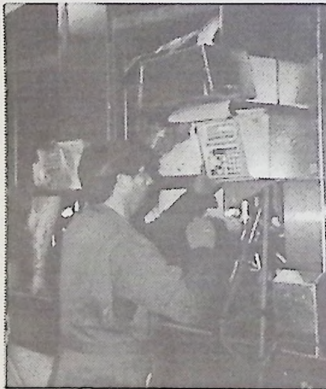
By NANCY SORRELLS

WEYERS CAVE — There's a new stainless steel palace on the landscape in Weyers Cave. The interior is decorated with a futuristic theme that speaks of order and technology and catches the eye with its gleam of cold, silver steel complemented by a systematic use of bright blue boxes. The 300 ladies of the harem for whom the new palace was built are all dressed simply, choosing to wear nothing but simple ankle bracelets.

You might have guessed that this palace is not for humans. Instead of a swimming pool outside there is a lagoon full of manure, and instead of fine furniture inside there is a cement floor, gates that rise and fall, and hoses and pipes that do a little bit of everything. Welcome ladies and gentleman to the dairy farm of the future. And at Cave View Farm in Weyers Cave, the future is now.

As of March 1, the 1,500-acre farm with 300 milking cows has entered the new millennium with a high-tech computerized milking parlor that accommodates 32 cows at once, 100 an hour, twice a day, every day. Cave View, owned by Gerald Garber, his 84-year-old father Calvin, and Keith and Paul Wilson, is now better prepared to stay competitive in a the tough business of dairy farming.

"In the dairy business, you have to get with it or get out," said Gerald. "If you stay in it, you'd better figure out how to stay competitive."



Information about cows being milked at Cave View Farm is collected in each of the 32 milking bays.

Two 500-foot dairy barns, one a milking parlor and one a free stall barn for special needs cows, is Gerald's answer to staying competitive. The milking parlor is so high-tech it needs its own computer control room which will be run by a "farmer" with a master's degree in livestock nutrition.

The key to the computerization will be the ankle bracelet on every cow's leg. The computer chip in the bracelet will be downloaded by the computers in the milking stalls twice each day when the cow is milked.

"The computer chip on the ankle bracelet tracks everything that cow has done in 12 hours. If her movement changes from normal, an alarm will sound. If her movement has been slower, that might be a sign she is getting sick and we will be able to treat her before her signs become obvious enough for us to see. If her movement is faster, she may be coming into heat," Gerald explained.

Every time the cows come into the barn they are tracked and analyzed on an individual basis. Each cow's milk weight will be analyzed twice daily and an alarm will let the herdsman know if there is any variation. There will also be a beeping sound while the milking is taking place to alert the milkers to potential problems.

"Before this, you hoped that whoever was milking could catch a big difference in the milk production, but this will catch even the smallest different and tell us that something is wrong," said Gerald.

And the technology gets even better. As the cows march into the milking parlor, the herdsman monitors the situation from the office computer. If he gets a warning about problems with a particular cow, he will punch that cow's number into the computer. "As the cows leave the barn they go through a series of gates that will automatically sort out the cows who have been entered into the computer," he said.

This high tech system was developed in Israel and is fairly new in the states. "This computer

does more stuff than I can even understand," added Gerald.

All this new-fangled equipment has taken the farm a long way from

where it was a half century ago when family patriarch Calvin Garber purchased his first milking machine for his farm two miles up the road. In 1962 he too went "high tech" when he purchased the current farm and marched his 21 milk cows two miles down the back roads until they arrived at the new place. This farm had a pipeline milker and a three-cow milking parlor.

The Garbers have been keeping up with progress ever since. Eight silos tower over the new parlor, the largest being one of the tallest in the country at 132 feet. "Our smallest silo, which was big when it was built, is 40 feet tall and the tallest is 30 feet wide," Gerald said in explaining how times have changed.

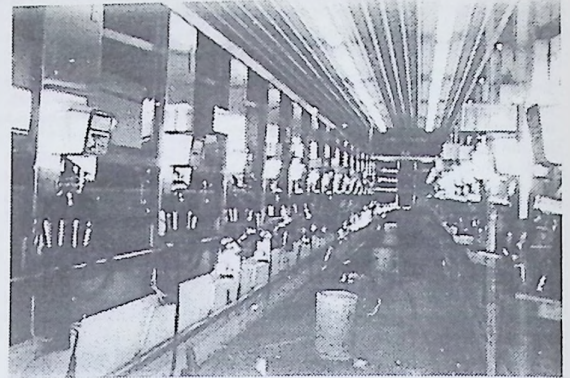
Since 1962, the farm has changed from a three-cow parlor to an 8 to a 16 and finally to this 32-cow parlor. The current 32-cow barn houses 16 ladies on each side. They march down each side and stand while they are milked, scanned and analyzed in one fell swoop. Then the long, air-powered restraining bar is raised and, their work done, the cows move on out. Within moments the bar is back down and the next set of cows moves in.

After using the new system for less than a week, the milking time for the herd dropped from five



Dairy cattle such as these pictured on a farm near Middlebrook were once a common sight throughout Augusta County and the Shenandoah Valley. Family dairy operations face many pressures in today's modern farm economy.

AC file photo



The new dairy parlor at Cave View Farm in Weyers Cave milks 32 cows at one time. Computers at each milk station provide information about the cow and how much milk she is producing. The increased capacity of the dairy parlor will allow Gerald Garber to increase his dairy herd from 300 to 500 cows.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

hours twice a day to three hours twice daily, and Gerald predicts it will be dropped to two-and-a-half hours or less once the farmers and cows adapt to the new system.

Being creatures of habit, the cows were a bit leery of the system. "They came over, took one look and turned around and left," he said of the cows' first reaction to the new barn. Some didn't want to move all the way to the end of the milking slots, while others preferred to just leap the restraining bar.

Luckily, the cows quickly adjusted to their new digs, which was reflected in their steady milk production. "By the third milking they were stopping and gawking rather than looking for a place to run," he said. "The milk production dropped less than 10 percent, then started immediately back up and now is back close to where it was before. And that was just after five days in the new barn," Gerald explained.

The system usurped by the stainless steel palace was "not even in the same century" as this one, he noted. "It was a standard 250-cow dairy barn with a double 8 herringbone (16 cows could be milked at once). The parlor was like this except half as big and the cow traffic was horrendous. The cows had to file in one at a time and file out one at a time."

And what do the four partners and three other full-time employ-

ees plan to do now that they have so much "extra" time on their hands? It's quite simple, Gerald notes. They will double the milking herd. They have already added 50 cows to bring the number up to 300. In a short time the herd should skyrocket to 500 head.

That should keep all the farmers busy, but, thanks to the new computer system, the task should not be overwhelming. "There were some people who could keep track of 500 cows with pencil and paper no matter how good we were, but we can now. And the computer will be watching all the time, even when we are asleep." ---

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Dairy farmers faces pressures of changing industry

By NANCY SORRELLS

Making a living down on the farm just ain't what it used to be, especially in the dairy business. Today's farmer is no country bumpkin. No sir, the modern farmer has to be high tech and computer savvy AND someone willing to lay out a silo full of dollars to not only keep up, but to compete.

Gerald Garber's new state-of-the-art milking barn is a fine example of going high tech in order to compete. "In the dairy business, you have to get with it or get out," said Gerald. "If you stay in it, you'd better figure out how to stay competitive."

Garber's computer-controlled system will allow him to double his herd while keeping the number of man-hours spent milking about the same. That's twice as much white gold going through the pipes and twice as much money in the monthly milk check.

Even Garber can't rest on his laurels however. Four years ago, the Phillips dairy farm near Hermitage had a cutting edge technological milking parlor built. That parallel double 12 parlor (24 cows can be milked at once compared to 32 at Garber's) has now been eclipsed technologically by Garber's but it still allows the Phillips to maintain a high level of production.

Kevin Phillips, whose father, Harper, began milking on the farm in the 1940s, explained the constant upgrading that takes place. "In

1965, Dad started milking Grade A with an original double four parlor. Then we expanded to a double eight and then four years ago to a double 12," he said, indicating that it won't be too many years before they have to think about upgrading again.

There's a good living still to be made from dairy farms said Kevin. Nearby, his brother, Wilmer, who was dismantling the milking machines for scrubbing, agreed. They noted that the key to success is planning, planning, planning as farmers battle gradually increasing prices, labor costs, and government regulations.

The Phillips owe a lot of their success to exceptionally good planning by their father back in the 1960s. The farm's milk room is the same one designed by Harper in 1965, for instance. They were also one of the first to computerize their bookkeeping, way back in 1964!

"We try to operate on two theories," explained Kevin. "The first is the KISS theory — Keep it simple stupid. The second is to act and not react. If we act we can solve some problems before they become problems."

"We take care of our act to keep everything cleaned up," he said of the potential nutrient run-off into the Chesapeake Bay watershed. "We've had nutrient management plans since they first came out and we make sure we obey all the rules."

In today's agricultural world, however, keeping up is not enough. The Phillips family also makes sure they not only keep up, but stay

ahead. Kevin explains that, for many farmers, it becomes necessary to invest in the high tech, enormously expensive equipment in order to save on labor costs. These days their field chopper and tractors come equipped with computers in the cab. They know, for instance, how many rows of corn have been planted, the distance between rows, and the miles per hour of the vehicle (down to a tenth of a mph). If a chopper goes ka-floocy in the field, its sophisticated diagnostic system will tell the farmer exactly what the problem is.

The drawback to all that is that one chopper could set the farmer back more money than the price of two houses!

Therein lies the problem according to Middlebrook's Sam Heizer whose family shut the doors in March 1999 on a family operation that had been milking cows since 1917.

Sam's farm had, at one time, milked as many as 160 cows but was down to about 60 in a double six parlor when they stopped milking.

"The labor situation was bad and so was trying to get insurance. And there are a lot of rules and regulations. We live on a creek, so what do you do? You either shut the door or invest a million dollars and move the facility up on a hill away from the creek," he said.

Sam cited the price of milk and competition from western farmers as two problems faced by the Valley's dairymen. "For the last 18



Brothers Wilmer and Kevin Phillips stand in the pit of the dairy parlor on their farm near Hermitage. The farm's dairy herd numbers 200.

or 20 years milk prices have held steady except for two or three months of the year. The light bill wasn't cut, the machine bill wasn't cut, so the only place to take a cut was our own bread off our table. If the price of milk had gone up like everything else we might have been alright," he said.

The competition from western farms is also an issue. Out west farmers aren't faced with the same drainage problems and labor is cheap. Work is also being done to perfect condense milk which is trucked east, rehydrated and sold.

Kevin Phillips acknowledges that the western competition is a very real threat, but insists that Virginia's farmers have one advantage. "The population is on the East Coast, so we don't have to ship the milk as far. We are right in the right place."

So what does it take to make a living at dairying these days? "An extension agent told me a couple of years ago that you would have to milk 200 cows. I reckon you could make a living if you work hard enough and long enough with that many," said Sam.

Sam is still running a beef cattle operation with his son David. His other son, Lee, took 30 of the milk cows and 15 heifers and is working on a dairy in Maryland. The new lifestyle has taken some adjusting for Sam. "It is different. I miss the milk check, but the bills are still coming in. I don't have to

get up as early, I used to get up at 4:45 a.m. and now I get up at 6:30 or 7. And I don't have to worry about the milk truck getting here if it snows. I reckon I'll get used to it one of these days."

The Phillips are taking the opposite tact — their 200-milk cow operation currently supports four families. Twice a day, starting at 5 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., two people spend 2 to 2 1/2 hours milking.

"Every year we have to increase five percent to stay even. Basically we are running on the same amount of labor that we had 20 years ago, but we've put the money in equipment. There's no standing still. Either you're going ahead or you're going backwards," Kevin said.

Farmers today have to look around them and make a choice when faced with the potential of making staggering financial outlays, he added. "There are all different ways to make a living. You have to figure out how you are going to do it. Not all the choices are the same, but that's what makes the world go round."

And, there's still a good living to be had on the family farm, Kevin summed up, because, after all, "People still have to eat."

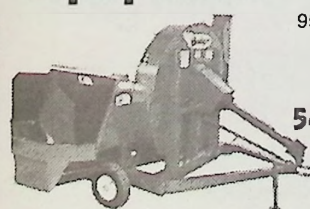
"Yes, you can make a very good living," Kevin said. "It gets tight sometimes and you really have to manage and stay ahead of it, but it can be done." —



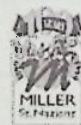
The Phillips family began milking on their farm near Hermitage in the 1940s. In 1965, the dairy started milking Grade A with an original double four parlor, then expanded

to a double eight and then four years ago to a double 12. Farmers face pressure from the economics of continually trying to upgrade facilities and remain competitive.

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55th Market Animal Show slated for May 3 and 4



STAUNTON — The 55th annual 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show will be held May 3 and 4 at Staunton Union Stockyard on New Hope Road.

4-Hers and FFA members from across Augusta County will be exhibiting lambs, hogs and steers during the event which is spon-

sored each year by Augusta County Ruritan clubs and the Staunton-Augusta and Waynesboro Chambers of Commerce.

Wednesday's events open with the show dedication at 3:30 p.m. Each year the show is dedicated to an individual who has been a long-time supporter of the event. The

lamb show will begin immediately following the dedication.

Thursday's events will begin with the market hog show at 8 a.m. Following the conclusion of the hog show, the steer show will begin at approximately 9:30.

Grand Champions and Reserve Grand Champions will be selected

from the lambs, hogs, and the steers. Exhibitors will also compete for \$100 U.S. Savings Bonds for the top junior and senior showmanship effort in each species. Showmanship Savings Bonds are sponsored by *Augusta Country*.

The Market Animal Show culminates Thursday evening with the Pa-

rade of Champions beginning at 6 p.m. Sale of livestock will follow the parade. Area businesses and individuals support 4-H and FFA members by bidding on animals for sale. For information about participating as a buyer at this year's Market Animal Show, call the Augusta County Extension office at 245-5750. —

McKinley 4-Her rolls with punches of sheep production

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

MCKINLEY — Emily Giles, 11, of McKinley is learning what it means to be a rookie. In her first year out as a 4-Her and raising lambs for this year's 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show, she's learned a lot of lessons even veterans would hope to skip.

The Riverheads Elementary School fifth grader purchased two lambs at \$90 apiece the first week of March. The lambs each weighed about 70 pounds then. Things went along fairly well and with the lambs eating a pelleted 16 percent protein ration, they had gained up to about 95 pounds each by the end of the month. Then disaster struck.

One night near the end of March, Emily's father heard a commotion outside and stepped out on the deck to see what was happening. The dog was barking frantically. The pen where Emily keeps her lambs is just down the hill from the house. Looking in that direction, Emily's dad saw a large dark form thrashing around on the fence at the front of the lambs' pen. A bear had wandered into the yard and, perhaps attracted to the lambs' pen by their feed, had gotten in the pen with the lambs. The pen is about five feet wide and seven feet deep — plenty of room for a couple feeder lambs, but not a space in which a 200-pound bear would find any comfort.

Although the black bear that visited Emily's lambs would probably not find lamb chops to be particu-

larly palatable, getting inside the pen with the lambs and not being able to get out immediately was enough to make the bear strike out at the lambs. Almost three weeks later, two large incisor wounds on the back of one lamb's neck and distinct claw marks over the lambs' backs and on their sides were plainly visible.

The confrontation with the bear left the lambs not only wounded physically but extremely stressed.

"It took a week to 10 days after the bear before they started eating again," Emily said. A week after the bear visited, the lambs' weights had dropped to 83 pounds each.

The morning after the bear created its havoc, Emily and her mom took the lamb which was hurt the worst to a local veterinarian, an expense that Emily can look up in her recordbook to be \$62.35. The lamb required antibiotic treatment for several days. But the shepherd rookie learned that medicine is not always all it takes to convince sheep to get well.

"They went off grain completely for a week after the bear attack," said Emily's mom, Faye. "We just went into survival mode. We just wanted them to make it."

Although the lambs wouldn't eat any grain after their round with the bear, they would eat hay. But still, the lambs showed little interest in life in general.

"They were moping," Faye said. "It's almost like they went into a depression."

The lambs — dubbed Dolly and Daisy — would need to make a quick turn around in order to have any chance of making the May 3 show date. Of the two, Daisy sustained the greater injuries from the bear and was the one that had been taken to the veterinarian. Dolly showed some promise of rebounding, while Daisy — even with the antibiotic treatment — was slow to show any signs of recovery. And the lambs still needed to be worked with in order to get them ready for the show. Emily said she would get Dolly out of the pen to work her on the halter and turn Daisy loose to wander around the yard.

"She wasn't any problem to catch," Emily said. "She would just stand there."

Getting the lambs started back on their feed ration was important. Even though they continued to eat hay, they still wouldn't touch the feed pellets. Adding a little molasses to top dress the pellets proved the proper stimulant to get the lambs interested in their feed trough again.

It has taken the entire Giles family working in a concerted effort to raise Emily's club lambs. Her dad and 14-year-old brother built the pen for the lambs. Her mom, a laboratory technician at Stonewall Jackson Hospital in Lexington, has drawn from her medical expertise to assist with animal health. And while everyone else has been helping out, Emily has been learning a lot about raising lambs for her 4-H project.

"It's hard work," she said. "You



Emily Giles of McKinley stands with the two lambs, Dolly (left) and Daisy, which she will exhibit in the 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show to be held May 3-4 at Staunton Union Stockyard in Staunton.

Photos by Betty Jo Hamilton

have to feed them on a daily basis, the same time every day. They take a lot of care. You have to work with them, even when you're mad at them like when they step on your toe."

Emily said she joined 4-H and took on her lamb project work because she "wanted to try something new." A school friend told her about the annual Market Animal Show and the local 4-H club — the Middlebrook 4-H Livestock Club

— and because of Emily's interest in animals, she decided to join the club and pursue club lamb project work. She attended a clinic in April hosted by the club to learn how to exhibit her lambs in the show ring.

"I hope to do a good job in showmanship," Emily said. "I've learned how to get them (the lambs) set up. They have to be slick sheared and I work with them a lot."

See LAMBS, page 14

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RHS FFA member learns from show experience

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

STAUNTON — At Rolling Hills Farm just west of Staunton on the Middlebrook Road, you'll likely see the lights on in the barn early in the morning and late in the evening. While other high school students burn the midnight oil in other pursuits, Bryan Shomo, 16, is burning the midnight oil to get ready for the annual 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show.

Bryan has two steers and two lambs which he is raising for the event. He purchased his steers for about \$700 each in mid-October and at the weigh-in on Nov. 3, each weighed 715 pounds. One steer is 3/4 Angus-1/4 Maine Anjou cross, the other is 1/4 Angus-3/4 Maine Anjou cross. One came from a Mt. Solon beef cattle producer, the other from a northern Rockingham County producer.

To look at the two animals, despite their identical starting weights, is like the difference between night and day. The animals have grown differently. They have different frame sizes which has resulted in different muscle development. All the changes that the steers have gone through have not been too much of a surprise to the Riverheads High School junior who has been exhibiting steers in the Market Animal Show for five years. Each year he has faced the task of picking out steers which, after six months on feed growing and changing, will either perform or fail to perform in the show ring. Bryan has a pretty good record at selecting steers, having finished near the top of his classes each year he has exhibited.

"I look at how the calf's done with its mom," the Riverheads FFA mem-



Bryan Shomo, a member of the Riverheads High School FFA chapter, will exhibit two steers and two lambs in the 55th annual 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show.

ber said. "I look at the parents, if they're on the farm, to get an idea of size and how the animal will turn out."

The steers he will exhibit this year have done a good job of living up to their potential based on the traits exhibited by their dams and sires. The Angus steer tipped the scales at 1,165 in early April and the Maine-Anjou surpassed the 1,210-mark. The calves boast an impressive 3.5 pound average daily gain on a feed ration that began as a corn/barley/mineral custom mix and was later changed to just corn and molasses. They eat about three to four pounds of orchard grass hay each

day and are consuming 24 pounds each of the corn/molasses ration.

In between school activities and working with his FFA project animals, Bryan helps out on his grandparents' Rolling Hills Farm where 450 steers are backgrounded annually. Raising two show steers is quite different from a large volume backgrounding operation, but Bryan said some of the lessons he has learned with the club steers are applicable to the family beef cattle operation.

"When feeding 150 versus two, it's different," he said. "but you still stay with consistent feed and feeding time."

Bryan is at the barn at 5:45 a.m. each morning before school to feed his show animals and then he's back again between 5 and 6 p.m. every evening. Whether feeding two animals or 200 animals, sticking to a consistent feed schedule has been an important part of Bryan's equation for success.

This year Bryan decided to branch out in his project work by taking on two lambs to raise for the show. The Suffolk-cross lambs were

purchased from a Mt. Solon producer for \$125 each and weighed 65 and 75 pounds. The lambs are eating a pelleted 21 percent protein ration and get a little bit of orchard grass hay daily. Although it is his first year to have lambs, Bryan has been getting some help and guidance from his across-the-hill neighbor Jimmie Crosby.

"I helped him when he first got steers, so he offered to help me when I got the lambs which helps a lot," Bryan said. Jimmie is an FFA member at Buffalo Gap High School, but any sense of rivalry that might exist between students from two different school districts is bridged by the camaraderie generated by the Market Animal Show. Jimmie sheared Bryan's lambs and has been helping him by giving him some pointers on showing the lambs.

As with steers, Bryan has learned that sheep need a consistent feed regimen.

"They are especially sensitive to feed change," he said. A mix up at the feed store where Bryan purchases his lamb feed proved this. When a different feed was introduced, the lambs didn't want to eat it. Once the mix up was corrected and the original feed ration was returned to the

lambs, they started eating again. The lambs weighed 90 and 95 pounds the third week in April.

"It's easier to work with lambs than steers," Bryan said. "I can lead them around with no problem. They've done real well except for that little bit when their feed changed."

As with the steers, the process of raising the lambs has been a learning experience for Bryan.

"This is my learning year," he said. "I have to learn how to show them and feed them. Actually every year is a learning year as far as new and different things you can do."

Although Bryan would like to raise hogs for the show, he admits that the four animals he's caring for this year are keeping him busy.

"With two lambs and two steers it takes right much time to do everything," he said.

Beyond the work involved in having the animals ready to exhibit when May 3 and 4 roll around, Bryan also has to work the financial end of the situation.

"I like to get a steer that's priced where I can make money," Bryan said. "A lot of people are just in it to win, but I like to make money but still be competitive. I can't pay \$2,000 or \$3,000 for a calf and make anything."

Bryan also has to line up buyers for his animals so bidders will be there to help him out when the animals are auctioned at the sale on the night of May 4.

"I usually send out 15 letters. So far this year I've sent 13. You never know how much that helps you out until you get into the sale ring," he said. "Usually the same people buy my steers from year to year."

Bryan, son and stepson of Scott and Sally Shomo of Rt. 10, Staunton, says that what he enjoys most about the experience of participating in the Market Animal Show is actually exhibiting the animal. As a junior showmanship champion from a previous year, Bryan has proven that he knows what it takes to bring an animal into the show ring.

"Showmanship is one of my favorite parts of the show," he said. "I pick up showmanship tips each year. Competing in showmanship shows how well I'm doing showing the steer." —



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Knack, knowledge prove to be winning combination

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

SPRINGHILL — It's hard to predict how something with small, unassuming beginnings will turn out. Even a mighty oak tree began as a tiny acorn. The same might be said of 4-Hers who, as wispy nine-years-olds, begin exhibiting animals in the 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show.

Three years ago, Meagan Carpenter of Springhill was among the "acorn" 4-Hers showing for the first time in the Market Animal Show. Even though she was exhibiting lambs as were some of her counterparts, the size of the exhibitor compared to the size of the animal looked a little off balance. For some first-time youngsters who exhibit in the show, it's hard to tell if the child is leading the animal or if the animal is leading the child. But Meagan, 12, who will be exhibiting in her fourth outing this year, has demonstrated a knack for handling lambs and exhibiting them in shows.

If we're going to litter this story with pithy metaphors, we might also include, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." Meagan's adeptness with sheep is not too surprising because her father is a state grader with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Al-

though it hasn't been proven, there is some indication that the ability to successfully work with sheep may transferred genetically from one shepherd generation to the next.

Another characteristic of her personality which Meagan uses to her advantage in exhibiting sheep is her quiet, soft-spoken nature. If you notice Meagan's lambs standing quietly and composed in the showing, you can bet it's because the person who has worked with them on a day-to-day basis knows what it means to handle sheep in a quiet and composed manner.

Meagan is a member of the Augusta County Dairy 4-H Club but will exhibit her lambs this year for the first time as an FFA member. She is a seventh-grade student at Stewart Middle School and is a member of its FFA chapter. She is the daughter of Mike and Mandy Carpenter of Springhill.

At the Carpenters' 30-acre Cedar Glade Farm, the family has a flock of 40 Dorset, Suffolk, and Dorset/Suffolk cross ewes. Ten of these belong to Meagan, some of which were show lambs she kept from previous years exhibiting at county fairs.

"I started building the flock the first year I showed," Meagan explained. "Every year since then I kept the ewes I show and brought them home."

The two lambs Meagan will show in this year's Market Animal Show were born at Cedar Glade around Thanksgiving. One is out

of a ewe which Meagan exhibited two years ago at the county fair. She started getting her ewe and wether lambs ready for the Market Animal Show in early March when they weighed about 75 pounds each. The third week in April each lamb had just surpassed the 110-pound weight mark. Even with her family's interest in sheep production, the process of raising lambs for the Market Animal Show has proved to be an important learning experience for Meagan.

"I learned how to vaccinate them and keep them healthy and the amount to feed them," Meagan said. "We weigh them a lot to be sure they're where we want them and adjust the feed to that." Meagan is using a commercial feed ration as the base for her lamb feed. To this she adds corn and oats.

Beyond the realm of getting the lambs to the proper weight by showtime, Meagan must also have them ready to be handled while they're being exhibited. She's proven to be an outstanding sheep showman, winning the junior sheep showmanship award at last year's show.

"In order to show without the halter you have to work with them a lot. It takes a lot of patience and a lot of hard work," she said.

Meagan has taken the knowledge she has gained through her club project work and applied it to a larger scale. About half of the family's ewes lamb in the fall. From this lamb crop Meagan raises



Meagan Carpenter shows the two lambs she will exhibit in the Market Animal Show. The lambs were born at the Carpenter's Cedar Glade Farm in Springhill.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

lambs to sell to other club members at the Shenandoah Valley Club Lamb Sale held annually the last week in February or the first week in March. The Carpenters' record in the show ring — last year Meagan's lamb placed at the top of its class and sister Stephanie's pair of lambs won reserve champion honors — have served as good advertisement for their club lamb sales. In this year's sale Meagan consigned 10 lambs which brought from \$120 to \$190 per head. She said the extra work she puts into getting the lambs ready for the special sale is worth

the increased return over the average \$90 per head the lambs would bring at a regular sale.

"There's a good demand for club lambs," she said. The lambs Meagan sells at the special sale have already spent some time being put through their paces before the sale.

"It's really good to already have [the lambs] started so they don't have to halter break them from scratch," she said. "The extra work and effort is worth the money."

Meagan said there are a couple See EFFORT, page 19

•Lambs

Continued from page 12

Emily also has been learning about the financial end of raising sheep. As the cost of the project has mounted (let's see... that was \$90 apiece for the lambs — ka-CHING — \$62.35 for that trip to the vet — ka-CHING — cost of feed — ka-CHING — materials for the pen — but we understand the labor costs for building the pen were very reasonable — halters and other supplies — ka-CHING) it hasn't hurt one bit that Emily's dad, Jerry, is chief financial officer at Community Bank in Staunton. Emily has learned another important part of sheep production — it never hurts to be on a first-name basis with a good banker. And if the banker is your dad, even better.

So while Dad maintained the cash flow, constructed the lamb pen, and chased the bear, Mom has helped out giving medicine and providing a little extra "TLC" common sense. And brother Joseph has provided some comic relief in the process teasing Emily about the lambs' eventual destiny as lamb chops. But the network of support hasn't been limited only to family members.

"Everyone has been so helpful and guiding," Faye said. "It's so nice to see so many adults helping with this. There are as many adults as kids working on this."

What was that somebody said about it taking a village to raise a child? As Emily has found out, it takes a village — and then some — to raise two lambs.

Buyers reap benefits of supporting club projects

By BETTY JO HAMILTON

Supporting an Augusta County 4-H or FFA member is as easy as raising your hand or nodding your head. Because that's all it takes to place a bid on market animals which will be auctioned May 4 at Staunton Union Stockyard as the culmination of the 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show and Sale.

Area businesses and organizations have always been supportive of the county-wide event in which 4-Hers and FFA members raise and

then sell livestock for their projects. But there's always room for additional businesses or organizations to become involved.

For those who are unfamiliar with the sale of livestock, the process can be a little confusing because bids are made in cents per pound. In an effort to simplify things, here are a few examples. A 100-pound lamb that brings a final bid of 85 cents a pound is bought for a total of \$85. A 1,000-pound steer that brings a closing bid of 85 cents a pound is bought for a

total of \$850. A 250-pound hog that brings 50 cents a pound is bought for a total of \$125.

Businesses which support 4-Hers and FFA members by buying their animals at the Market Animal Sale may declare part of this expense as advertising. Afterall, what better way to advertise a business than to

have its name called out before several hundred parents, members and supporters of the two youth organizations at the livestock sale? And organizations don't have to take responsibility for the animal once it's bought if they don't want to.

SEE BIDDING, page 17

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Schoolhouse News



Rudy Proffitt, a VSDB student, pets a lamb held by Rosalea Riley during Buffalo Gap's Food for America event.

Buffalo Gap FFA hosts 1,500 visitors during annual Food for America event

By PENNY PLEMMONS

BUFFALO GAP — Preschool and elementary school children scampered excitedly across the Buffalo Gap High School football field to see and touch every farm animal in the school's "Food for America" expo. According to Gap FFA president Rosalea Riley this is exactly what is intended.

"The purpose is to let these students get a hands-on experience with farm animals, farming and agriculture," she said. "This event gives the students a chance to see what they might not walk out their back door and find."

New additions to this year's event included a bee display, pigs, a team of oxen, long-horn cattle and a wider array of farm equipment and machinery. Many of the children had never petted a sheep, seen a fish up close and never milked a cow. Even adult Danielle

Boykin admitted that she was learning and seeing new things.

It takes four months and team effort to plan the annual Food for America event. Gap's FFA officers and agriculture teacher and FFA adviser Shirley Kaufman start by reaching into area classrooms with agriculture programs that educate young children about the many facets of farming. The students are then invited to the event where their classroom knowledge becomes live experiential knowledge.

Food for America is one of the largest events the school's FFA sponsors. The students and local farmers work together to provide the exhibits. Children came from as far away as Jackson Via Elementary school in Charlottesville to the event and by day's end a grand total of 1,500 would-be-farmers took home some valuable lessons from the farm. —



Hersey Lane, 3, from Ridgeview Christian Daycare, helps Audrey Fuller, a Buffalo Gap High School freshman, milk a cow during the school's Food for America program.

Photos by Penny Plemmons

RHS mural shows school careers of children



Michael Yeary, Hana Machac, Rick Gilstrap, Tina Arehart, Brian Strickler, Daniel Gerber and Jared Turner stand in front of the mural which they painted on a classroom wall at Riverheads High School. The mural was designed by Emily Brown.

RHS staff photo

BY BECKY McMANNES

GREENVILLE — Since the beginning of the semester, the Riverheads High School advanced art students have been designing a mural in one of the English classrooms.

The mural was created to show the lives of children throughout their school careers. The left side of the mural starts off with preschool, then to elementary school, middle school and ends on the right side with them graduating from high school.

The idea of painting a mural at RHS originated with Chris Rockwell, a teacher and basketball coach who was killed in a car crash

two years ago. Cherie Taylor, RHS photojournalism instructor, took it upon herself to carry out Rockwell's dream by asking the art students if they would like to participate with the mural. Emily Brown came up with the idea of the theme of the mural.

The students who worked on the mural were Rick Gilstrap, Peet Karaffa, Steven Taetzsch, Jared Turner, Tina Arehart, Patrick Wilkins, Michael Yeary, Daniel Gerber, Brian Strickler, Hana Machac, Carla Kennedy and Mandy Scarborough.

"I think that it was a really good idea to use the stages of kids through

school. It was a new way to show other students the art talent, in which this school has," said Tina Arehart, a member of the RHS art staff, who worked on the mural.

The mural was very successful. It turned out beautiful with bright colors and very talented drawings. "I believe it was a success. Everyone was satisfied," said Michael Yeary another member and painter of the mural. "I believe the mural will be a way to light up the room and brighten people's day."

"I'm glad that I was able to take part in the legacy of the mural that will be left for future Riverheads students to see," Arehart said. —

Fine Arts Festival held at RHS

By KIM McCRAY

GREENVILLE — It is rare for a school parking lot to be completely filled for nearly two days unless some sort of sporting event is the attraction. But that was the case on March 31 and April 1. On these two days, the fourth Augusta County Fine Arts Festival (held biannually), took place at Riverheads High School.

The festival showcased the works of students from 21 Augusta County public schools through visual art displays and entertainment

provided by nearly 40 performing groups. Nearly 6,000 Augusta County elementary, middle, and high school students contributed to or participated in the event, as did numerous teachers and volunteers. The hardest workers were members of the Fine Arts Festival Committee, who planned the event schedule and made other arrangements so the event flowed smoothly. From the hosting school, Jean Dillon, Bill Dillon, and June Bosserman were the committee workers.

Though the student participants' talents and interests var-

ied, all felt that being involved with the festival was a great honor, as well as an enjoyable, exciting experience. Said Juli-Anna Hendricks, a RHS select-choir singer, "It was fun to hear other chorus groups, as well as being able to perform ourselves."

Of course the festival was not just enjoyment for the students who contributed, it also took a lot of hard work and practice. Sarah Bernier, an RHS band member, mentioned that it wasn't that much fun practicing all day, but it was

See **FESTIVAL**, page 19

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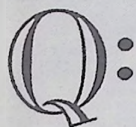


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The Hitching Post

Riding lessons may prove to be sound investment



Q: Why are riding lessons so expensive? Wouldn't it be cheaper to just own a horse?

—sign me "just wanting to ride"

You've really given me two questions to answer. Most local riding lessons cost between \$15 and \$40 per hour. Some professional trainers like Olympic rider George Morris can ask up to \$150 per hour! To answer your questions I will explain what goes into a lesson program and its cost to help you understand the expense involved in riding lessons. Then I will give you some ideas of the cost of ownership to help you compare.

Horseback riding lesson programs have some major business expenses. Horses, tack, stable facilities, instructors fee, and insurance. In order for a horseback riding lesson program to be successful, it must provide these things in order to offer quality service. The horse and tack are one time investments. Their care and upkeep are ongoing expenses. The stable facility must provide a safe riding environment.

The instructor will also require a fee and no program can operate without a hefty insurance payment. Let's say the average program asks for \$30 per lesson. At four lessons per month your payments would run \$120. If you are a serious rider and ask for two lessons per week your monthly total would run \$240.

What do you get for the price? If you ride twice a week with instruction you will be exposed to more than one horse. This allows you to learn more about the different personalities of horses and to develop better riding skills. You have the help of an instructor. An instructor is a trained professional who has the ability to give you access to tons of information. This information includes everything from basic horse care to problems in horse behavior. In other words, if you have a problem, you have part of the solution standing before you!

Instructors are also important in accident prevention. Many instructors can see an accident ready to happen and will step in to prevent injury. This can be priceless in horsemanship.

You asked if owning a horse would be cheaper. Let's look at the cost involved. Boarding facilities can charge anywhere from \$150 to \$200 per month. This allows you freedom of feeding and turnout which is comparable to a riding lesson program. You also have vet and farrier care as part of the cost of ownership. I teach an "education before ownership" philosophy which means if you decide to own a horse before having the skills necessary to prevent accidents you still might need an instructor to help you. This should be part of your expense picture. The one drawback to ownership too soon is that riders often develop the skill to ride one horse. Anyone who has taken riding lessons will tell you that different horses have different problems. Learning to ride many different horses, dealing with different behavior problems, and learning proper training techniques is not always possible with ownership.

I am a firm believer in riding les-

I.B. HOOFINIT
From
the
Horse's Mouth



sons as the proper route to ownership. Ownership is a goal and riding lessons are one way to achieve that goal. Considering the expense of each, and comparing the two, it is possible that both choices are financially equal. However, the most expensive part of your choice would be the initial investment. Purchase of a horse and tack can be very expensive. Quality horse and tack for the recreational rider can average around \$5,000. My advice to potential horse owners who can't make the initial investment is to take riding lessons. For the price of a horse you can take a lot of riding lessons!

Are horseback riding lessons really expensive? Maybe not, when you consider the added benefits that have been documented as therapeutic. It is a physical sport like no other with the added element of animal contact. It relieves stress, builds confidence and communication skills, develops self respect and discipline, and is fun, too! Students who are not good at team sports have the benefit of excelling in a sport that works with a single partner. Take it "from the horse's mouth," horsemanship is one of the best investments you can make in YOU! —

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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Horse Day in Draft provides education and fun

By CHRIS MARRS

STUARTS DRAFT — Stuart's Draft Feed hosted its seventh annual Horse Day April 8. Among the activities was a foaling clinic by local veterinarian John Wise, an educational talk on nutrition by Blue Seal feed specialist Joe Stowers, lots of food, product demonstrations, and even trailer (and car!) pressure washing!

Another feature of the day was a colt for sale by owner Delores Balsley. This colt was part of last year's activities which included five months of feed free of charge from Draft Feed which Balsley won in a drawing. The colt was 11 months old and a healthy testimony to Draft's feeding program.

"We let Dr. Wise choose his own clinic topic," explained Jon Almarode, owner of Draft Feed. Jon says that this year foaling was a big part of his schedule and Dr. Wise wanted to offer the clinic to help horse owners with everyday questions. After a demonstration video Dr. Wise answered questions and spoke about problems associated with foaling. One of the biggest? A horse owner deter-

mined to witness the miracle of birth slips out for a quick "coffee break" and the foal is born while the owner has gone for coffee.

Dr. Wise recommended some after-birth care: the foal's umbilical cord should be soaked completely with a betadine solution, and make sure the foal gets the mare's "first milk" or colostrum within the first few hours of life. This is necessary for the antibiotics and laxative which the foal absorbs into its body during this time period. This "passive immunity" taken within the first two hours can protect the foal for over three months.

Another topic discussed by Dr. Wise was the value of imprint training. In the first few days and weeks after birth the foal is small enough to be "touched" and exposed to different stimuli that will be part of his life later on. Such touching includes ears (a sensitive area!), eyes, nostrils (tube worming), feet (farrier care), and other sensitive areas. Some horse owners even expose the horse to clippers to habituate them to the noise. Dr. Wise explained that exposing the foal to the stimuli only works if it is con-

tinued until the foal accepts it. For example, tapping gently on a tiny hoof will make the foal try to pull away. The training is complete only when the foal relaxes and accepts the tapping. To stop too soon only conditions the horse to "get away" with the pulling and avoidance.

Dr. Wise's presentation also included questions and answers on nutritional supplements, older horse care, Monty Robert's training techniques, and watching out for founder (new spring grass!). The clinic had a great turnout and many horse owners enjoyed the presentation which has been an annual attraction for horse day.

A nutritional presentation was given by Stowers who demonstrated different products that can help horse owners monitor their horse's weight and health. Among them were weight tapes, proper measuring equipment, and a device for taking hay samples. Horses receive some of their protein from hay. Taking hay samples helps the horse owner know how much protein is in the diet before adding more through the grain products. "There are too many overfed horses," says Stowers.



John Wise, a local veterinarian, answers questions during a foaling clinic he presented at Draft Feed's Horse Day.

Photo by Chris Marrs

One of the most important things for a horse's health is fresh clean water, and lots of it! Too little water is one of the major causes of choking especially when feeding pellets. Horses that do not have enough water in their diet have dry mouths which causes choking problems when feeding. In the winter, water is most critical. The horse's increased need for food for heat energy means more water nec-

essary for digestion.

Product demonstrations included different feed types, sprays, ointments, and equipment for horse care. "This is our customer appreciation day," explained Jon.

Horse enthusiasts are invited to put Draft's Annual Horse Day on their agenda for next year. This spring time customer appreciation day hosts lots of fun, food, and educational presentations. —

•Bidding

Continued from page 14

Here's how it works. Before the sale begins, the auctioneer sells the "floor" on the lambs, hogs, and steers. This "floor" price is established by packers who bid just as they would if the sale were any other regular livestock sale. The "floor" price reflects the current slaughter market on livestock being sold.

Most of the animals at the Market Animal Sale are then sold individually. Buyers, most of whom have been solicited by the 4-H and FFA members to bid on their animals, place bids on the animals. When bidding is complete, the buyer has two options -- take responsibility for ownership of the animal or the buyer may "floor" the animal.

In the first of these two options, the buyer is responsible for taking the animal away from the stockyard or having it sent to a local packing house for processing. The buyer is responsible for making these arrangements, although some area meat processors offer to haul livestock to their facilities if the buyers choose to do this. Also, in the first option, the buyer is responsible for the full purchase price of the animal.

For instance, if a buyer purchases a 100-pound lamb for \$2.20 a pound, then he pays \$220 for that lamb. However, the buyer may

claim as advertising expense the amount in excess of the "floor" price on the lamb. So if the "floor" price on lambs is 85 cents a pound, the difference between \$85 and \$220, or \$135, is what the buyer may claim as an advertising expense. But the buyer pays the whole \$220 to the stockyard for the lamb.

In the second option where the buyer chooses to "floor" the animal, the buyer has no further responsibility for the animal. By "flooring" an animal, the buyer automatically turns responsibility for removing that animal from the stockyard to whichever packing company bought the "floor" on the livestock.

For instance, a buyer purchases a 1,000-pound steer for 92 cents a pound. This makes the total purchase price of the steer \$920. However, the buyer decides he wants to "floor" the steer which turns it over to the packing company which bought the "floor" on the steers.

The "floor" price established at the beginning was 64 cents a pound. The buyer who chooses to "floor" an animal only pays the difference between the "floor" price on the animal and the amount he bid -- in this case, the difference between \$640 and \$920 or \$280. The buyer may declare this \$280 as advertising expense for his business and does not have to be concerned with taking responsibility for livestock once it has been sold.

The second option also relieves the buyer of the out-of-pocket expense for the entire purchase price of the animal. The buyer only pays the portion in excess of the "floor" price. The packer pays the balance on the animal, in this case, the additional \$640.

There is a third way for area businesses and organizations to be involved in supporting the 4-H and FFA members' projects. The Market Animal Sale Buyers' Committee accepts donations from area businesses and organizations in any amount. Then, come sale time, this money is pooled and used to make bids on livestock at the sale.

Members of the Buyers' Committee place these bids and relieve businesses and organizations of the need to have a representative present at the auction. When the Buyers' Committee buys animals,

the names of businesses and organizations which made contributions to the Buyers' Committee fund are announced. This gives recognition to businesses who choose to participate in this manner regardless of the amount they donate to the Buyers' fund.

If all of this is still too complicated, just try to keep in mind that it's all for a good cause -- supporting Augusta County 4-H and FFA members in their efforts with their livestock. These young people put in many long, hard hours preparing animals for the show and sale. It is a worthy endeavor for each of them and the experiences they gain in these projects stay with them throughout their lives. Many local business and community leaders claim some of their earliest lessons in responsibility and perseverance from raising livestock for 4-H and FFA project work. As many will testify, these lessons last a lifetime.

Any member of the Market Animal Sale Buyers' Committee will be glad to assist a business or organization which wishes to support the sale of livestock. Call the Augusta County Extension Office at 245-5750 for information about buying livestock at the Market Animal Sale. ---

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Country Crossroads

Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin



April 2000

Dear Maude:

April in Washington began with lots of Cherry Blossom Festival activities, even though by the time the festival was over, most of the cherry blossoms were long gone. Two of my friends and I went down on the second Saturday of the month to have lunch with an old friend who was in town visiting and got a chance to watch the parade. It was a lot of fun to see all the young women representing their individual states. Driving downtown is always a headache, but we went anyway, knowing that weekends are easier driving than work days. However, the weekend before was another experience indeed!

I guess you could say it was certainly more exciting. It always takes time to get an office back into some kind of normalcy after a move, and ours was no different. The first time we tried to use the binder to prepare reports for an important client, we found that it had been badly treated somewhere in its journey from the old place to the new place and was missing a few of the binding teeth and was jammed as well. The reports had to be stapled — oh, how the boss hated that! Not very professional, he fumed.

There was nothing to do but go buy a new binder. And you can guess whose job it turned out to be! Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it, there is a very large office supply store quite near my apartment. I stopped by after work that Friday and purchased the required state-of-the-art machine, guaranteed to make those reports as professional as possible. The machine was heavy, and I was not about (or able) to carry it in the next Monday on the subway, so I decided to drive down with it over the weekend. There would not be so much traffic and I could park right in front of the building and carry it upstairs.

In the meantime, my girlfriend Sandy had talked her boyfriend and one of my neighbors into helping her paint

the kitchen of her apartment. Somehow it ended up that the two men decided that they would ride along with me, and that I could drop them off at Sandy's apartment on my way home. Now you have to understand that I have a rather small automobile. Nothing like the big fancy one her boyfriend owns. The neighbor also has a station wagon. But, no, they wanted to ride with me. I suspected that they did not want to use any of their gas, prices being what they are!

There was considerable grumbling and complaining as they managed to squeeze themselves into the car. The neighbor in the back seat kept bumping his head on the roof.

"You could have bought a bigger car," he grumbled.

"You could drive your own," I answered.

Sandy's boyfriend was even more uncomfortable. He has long — very long — legs which were up under his chin as he sat in the front seat. The two of them mumbled quietly as I drove down to the new office, however, their complaints got louder and louder as we entered the downtown area. Thank goodness by then they were busy complaining about the condition of the streets and not my car.

It is true that everything they said about those streets was accurate, for at the present time work crews are busy digging trenches in every street they can find to lay down all these fiber optic cables. Little 18-inch troughs suddenly appear and drop first one side, then the other, of the car down a couple of inches. This is not comfortable for one fellow who insists on hitting his head on my roof, and another whose knees are far too close to his chin. By the time I arrived at our building, I insisted on carrying the binder up to the office all by myself, just to get away from the two of them for a moment. It was very plain to me that I did not want to have to give them a ride anywhere anytime soon again!

Since I felt I really did not want a repeat of the "mess-the-streets-are-in" conversation on the way to Sandy's

apartment, I decided to change my planned route and drive up Connecticut Avenue.

Everything went fine until I came along to the area where our office used to be. There ahead was the now empty Filene's store. Just as I entered the intersection I spotted a big blue sign on the main door. I slammed on the brakes!

"What are you trying to do to us! Kill us?" came out of the mouth of one of the men. I did not notice which one, for the sign announced the reopening of Filene's!

The grumbling was not so quiet any more but I was so excited I hardly heard them. Filene's open again! I can still go buy myself a cute little gardening dress! I can go see about a spring suit!

I finally took my foot off the brake and drove the two men quickly up to 16th Street and let them out, while they complained all the time.

"You nearly threw me out of the windshield!" Sandy's boyfriend mumbled.

"If you hadn't been too cheap to drive your own vehicle," I thought to myself, "I could have parked and run back to read the entire sign."

I could not see the reopening date, as someone was standing there in front of the sign. But the nice designer handbags were going back into the window where they always were before. It can't be long!

I waved to the fussing men, on their way into Sandy's and some good hard work, and drove home as quickly as I dared, to check the balance on my credit card!

Hope everyone at home had a wonderful Easter, and I hope to be there for a visit soon with lots of nice new clothes.

Love to all,
LuLu

Bath County's Hidden Valley full of hidden treasures

By MARK GATEWOOD

It all happens in May — fish, birds, flowers. Time to hit the road, but where? West Virginia is always enticing, but I wanted something a little closer that didn't require a \$40 non-resident fishing license. I remembered a day trip I'd made to fish the special regulation section of the Jackson River at Hidden Valley in Bath County. It seemed to have everything — a river, a campground, mountains and trails. The plan was made!

Now, I've done this for years, spring and fall, midweek, while normal people are at work and in school. My Wife the Biology Teacher calls these excursions "Boy and Dog Trips." The format never varies: find a good campground, centrally located within a cluster of good things to do so that I need never turn the ignition key again until time to go home. This trip would be special because it would be the first camping trip for The Dog. That's The New Dog, a beagle-Lab cross that we got from the local SPCA shelter a year ago. She's a real sweet puppy and I knew she'd love camping just as

much as her predecessor had.

It was raining early Monday morning and thunderstorms were predicted for the afternoon, but in May you have to hope for the best and go anyway. After a two-hour drive — including a dog de-watering stop at the Augusta Springs wetland — we pulled into the Forest Service campground at Hidden Valley. The campground has 30 sites, but it doesn't seem that big. The sites are mostly well screened from each other and spaced well apart. Only a handful of sites were occupied — I'm guessing by turkey hunters and fishermen.

We chose a site and set up the tent. Then, to shake off the rigor of sitting and driving, I took off on my bicycle. According to Randy Porter's *Mountain Bike! Virginia*, there's a 12-mile loop going up the river, climbing Little Mountain and returning on a low-water bridge to the special regulation parking area.

The ride gave me my first view of Hidden Valley. It's a broad, flat valley, flanked by Back Creek, Cobbler and Warwick Mountains. The valley floor is still farmed and the open fields, backed by wooded mountains, made for some sweet

scenery on a sunny May afternoon. The valley was settled in 1788 by the Warwick family. They built a home, Warwickton, in 1848 with slaves making bricks from clay quarried behind the house. The Warwickton mansion still stands, now operating under a Forest Service Special Use Permit as a bed and breakfast. You may recall that the Civil War film *Sommersby*, with Richard Gere and Jodie Foster, was filmed here.

I pedaled on past the turn-off to the mansion, through the fishermen's parking area to my next point of interest, a swinging bridge over the Jackson River. I'd never ridden a mountain bike on a swinging bridge and since this one was only a bit wider than my handlebars, I judiciously walked the bike across, picking up the trail on the other side. From there, it was more sweet scenery and lush riparian vegetation on an old road along the river.

My hope for a 12-mile loop ended when the trail went into a beaver pond. The water wasn't that deep, but the bottom looked soft and I had visions of getting partway across — carrying my bike — and sinking knee-deep into the mud. It was a

good place to turn around.

On Tuesday morning, I decided to see that 12-mile loop from the other end. But what a difference: the afternoon before, I'd ridden in shorts and a T-shirt; today it was tights, sleeves and a windbreaker. This time, I rode across the low-water bridge, past the Warwick mansion and up the Forest Service road which would have been the return leg of yesterday's ride. The road went up, up, up on Little Mountain. It wasn't nearly as aesthetic as the river trail but it was good exercise. I explored the top of Little Mountain for a few miles, turning around at a gate and returning to enjoy the down, down, down back to the mansion. I had to be a bit careful with the downhill, though, as I'd seen signs that I might be sharing the trail with horseback riders. I always yield to riders because I don't know how the horses will react to me and the bike and I'd hate to come ripping around a bend and into a group of horseback riders. Turns out I had the place to myself and the ride was chilly but uneventful.

When I wasn't on the bike, I spent quality time with The New

Dog. Since it was her first camping trip and I didn't know how she'd react to everything, I kept her on a lead most of the time, walking around the campground and on the trails. We soon worked up to walking down to the river off-lead. In the evenings, she went into the tent and went to sleep before I did. I'm really glad, though, that she didn't see the wild turkey in the field behind our campsite.

With all this, I didn't get around to fishing until the morning of the day we left. This stretch of the Jackson, the three miles upstream from the swinging bridge, is a special regulation trout stream. Single-hook artificial lures are mandated and only two trout over 16 inches may be kept. I imagine on weekends the parking area is clogged with SUVs with Trout Unlimited stickers in the windows, but today it was deserted. Since we had to leave our campsite at noon, I didn't even go into the special regulation area. I rigged my fly rod on my bike and rode up the river to the first big pool and started fishing. The water was still cool, about 58 degrees, and I waded in shorts and canvas shoes. Funny, but

See *HIDDEN*, page 19

South River trail offers abundant spring flora and fauna

SOUTH RIVER FALLS
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 Roundtrip hike 2.6 miles
 Moderately difficult

South River Falls trail is a perfect way to get a taste of spring in the Blue Ridge Mountains. This moderate hike of 2.6 miles traverses a lush woodland habitat, to a deep canyon and a breathtaking 81-foot waterfall. The habitat supports the highest percentage of breeding birds, per acre, in the Shenandoah National Park.

Some of the birds which nest here are year-round residents, but

many are neotropical visitors that travel hundreds of miles to nest and raise their young in these insect rich woodlands. The first of the May warblers to arrive, is the American Redstart. These handsome birds begin their journey from the tropics in mid-March. They can be seen abundantly along the trail by the first week in May. The male and female are quite different in appearance. The adult male is black above, white below, and has bright orange and yellow wing and tail patches. Females and immature males are olive gray above, white below with yellow wing and tail

patches. Their song is a musical, high pitched, "Chewy chewy chewy chew chew!"

Also along the trail are a number of early blooming wildflowers. The first bloomers are the spice bush and the coltsfoot. The dainty white petals of the bloodroot can also be found here. My favorite violet, the bird's foot violet, with its deep lavender color grows among bright green natural ferns near the base of the falls. Also found here in later spring is the wild crimson geranium.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION:

This trail is steep but overall re-

quires only modest effort. There are two stream crossings, which are usually fairly easy, but may be troublesome after a heavy rain.

- Park at the South River Falls picnic area on the east side of the drive.
- Blue blazed trail begins at the trailhead map in rear of parking area.
- Almost immediately, pass a trail marker at the intersection of the Appalachian Trail.
- After several switchbacks, the trail straightens out and the stream comes in from the right. Look for pileated woodpeckers and warblers here in the spring.

Trail Bound

By
 Stacey Lea



- Continue straight on to the observation area for a view of the falls. —

•Hidden

Continued from page 18

after your feet go numb, it doesn't matter any more.

My first catch, as it often is in water like this, was a fallfish, all of four inches long. For those of you unacquainted with the fallfish, it's a minnow relative with coarse scales and a large mouth. It doesn't sound that great, but get one 12 to 14 inches in length on a light rod and it'll show you a pretty good time. Moving on, I got a solid strike in the tail of a long pool — a very "trout" lie, but this catch was a lovely 10-inch smallmouth bass. Not being a trout chauvinist, I was quite pleased with this little fighter, which I quickly released to the river. Fact is, were it not for

the political necessity of stocking every damp spot in the mountains with trout, the Jackson would stand on its own merits as a small-mouth stream. But I had fun, and that's what counts.

That was it, time to go. Riding back into the campground, I exchanged greetings with a man just setting up in the site next to ours. I bragged — modestly — on my morning and wished him luck. A week or so later, in the Small World Department, The Biology Teacher discovered that this was Tom Groh, husband of the county schools science supervisor Ginny Groh, setting up for a weekend in one of their favorite campgrounds. I hope they had as good a time as we did.

The trip produced many highlights: flame azalea blooming in the woods, a barred owl and whip-poor-wills calling and a fox barking evenings in the campground; "summer" birds including red-eyed vireos, a scarlet tanager and a willow flycatcher; a kingfisher coming out of its nest

cavity in an eroded riverbank; watching The New Dog enjoy new sights and smells. But it was time for us to leave and let someone else enjoy the hidden pleasures of Hidden Valley.

If you wish to go, take U.S. 250 west to Va. 39/42. Take Va. 39 just past Warm Springs to Va. 621 and then Forest Road 241 to Hidden Valley. These are good mountain roads, but they're not the interstate; expect about one and one-half hour's drive time.

The Forest Service campground was clean and well-maintained; forest personnel came through at least once each day we were there. There are fire circle/grills, picnic tables and dumpsters. I think there is a potty dump for RVs. Campsites are \$6 a night with vault toilets and drinking water. If vault toilets aren't your thing, try the Warwick mansion bed and breakfast; call 540/839-3178. For more information, call the U. S Forest Service Warm Springs Ranger District at 540/389-2521. —

•Festival

Continued from page 15

great to see how much everyone who listened enjoyed it.

Of course, this event was not only for the pleasure of the students. Many adults also came out to see the various exhibits and shows. Many were parents, who traveled to the school to view their child's work or performance, and

many others came out simply to admire the vast skills of the local youth. One could not walk through the halls filled with art displays, nor hear a musical concert, without being amazed at the talents which so many students possess.

Of course for those of you who did not get the chance to come to the Fine Arts Festival this year, you should really plan to attend the next festival in 2002! —

•Effort

Continued from page 14

things she particularly likes about sheep production.

"I like to work outside. I really like the small baby lambs," she said. However, she admitted that working with club lambs does have a couple pitfalls.

"I don't like it at the very beginning when they won't walk and won't do anything right," she said. "I don't like to sell the lambs but in the end I know the money is better."

Meagan has found that it pays off to spend some extra time in soliciting buyers for the lambs she will sell at the Market Animal Sale. Two weeks before the show she writes buyer letters to six to eight people and hand delivers each letter. She said the personal contact with buyers pays off.

Looking ahead to the future, Meagan said she would like to try her hand at showing steers. She wants to continue showing lambs, she said, but she's "not all that interested in pigs."

For the time being, however, Meagan still has a lot of work ahead of her to get ready for this year's show.

"I have to get [the lambs] more used to standing still," she said. "Especially the ewe. She's very fidgety and doesn't like to stand still."

With all the work that goes into getting ready for the Market Animal Show, there's not a lot of time to do other things. As any exhibitor can testify, raising animals — whether they are steers, lambs or hogs — for the show is a big responsibility.

"You have to make it your top priority to get these lambs ready for the show," Meagan said. —

Time to renew?
 See page 2

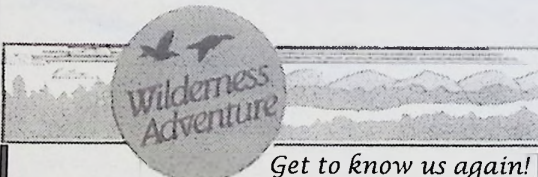
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Swank's performance in *Boys* worthy of Oscar

Boys Don't Cry is a disturbing yet powerful film for open-minded people who like leaving the theater troubled and uncomfortable.

Based on real-life events, this is the story of a girl named Teena Brandon who has a gender-identity problem. Feeling trapped in her female body and in trouble with the law, she cuts her hair, dons a pair of jeans and a plaid shirt, leaves home in Lincoln, Neb., for Fall City, a town a mere 75 miles down the road. There she becomes he, Brandon Teena, the male within.

Brandon isn't a very smart or savvy person; he rarely considers the consequences of his actions; and he lies and steals. Not

unsurprisingly Brandon falls in with a set of friends with little or no redeeming value. Lana, Candace, John, and Tom live in a wasteland of trailer parks, bars, and soul-crushing jobs.

Brandon wins the acceptance of John and Tom, drinking beer and bumper-surfing with them. That is until he falls in love with Lana, John's ex-girlfriend. Thrilled at being accepted by his new friends, Brandon becomes both complacent about and deluded by his deception. The truth, when it comes out, completely unravels John and Tom. These two men at whom you wouldn't look twice in the 7-Eleven make the shock-

ing journey from misfits to killers, instruments of hate and ignorance.

Peter Sarsgaard (*Dead Man Walking*) and Brendon Sexton (*Desert Blue*) as John and Tom fly off the screen as the enraged social misfits that commit what has become the too-familiar hate crime. Hillary Swank (*Heartwood, The Next Karate Kid*) deserved the Oscar she won for this year's Best Actress. She not only made Brandon believable but she gets under Brandon's complicated skin. Chloe Sevigny (*Kids, The Last Days of Disco*) as Lana deserves as much credit. A composite of the women the real Brandon dated, her character is Brandon's entrance into the

story. Brandon lives an illusion but so does Lana. You are never sure when Lana really knows the truth about Brandon but chooses the illusion over reality.

Kudos must go to director and co-writer Kimberly Pierce (*The Last Good Breath*). She managed to avoid the pitfalls that could have turned the film into a piece-of-trash Jerry Springer show. Instead she delivers a riveting story and film that looks at love, deception, misery, intolerance and hate on many levels.

Boys Don't Cry is NOT for the tenderhearted. It contains scenes that are unbearably explicit. It is sad and depressing in Greek drama proportions. But it is a masterpiece

The Hannah
Banana

Movie Review



comparable to "*In Cold Blood*" or "*Badlands*." Rated R for language, nudity, sex, and violence. Hannah gives *Boys Don't Cry* four-and-a-half bananas. —

Shanghai

Continued from page 3

They went on into Middlebrook and went to peoples' houses."

There were also a few firecrackers set off Christmas night. "My brothers got all kinds of firecrackers. The Roman candles were all kinds of color and they had some great big ones that made an awful fuss, sounded like a gun going off."

Much of the social activity in the countryside was work-related and varied according to the season. "My Daddy grew all kinds of cherries and sold them in Greenville for 10 cents a gallon and Mama canned about 100 half gallons every year. Daddy always made 75 gallons of apple butter too."

"And we churned and made but-

ter and cottage cheese. Dad always had hogs and butchered. My husband and I always butchered five hogs every year. But neighbors helped each other. After we got married there were five families in the neighborhood and we would help them when they butchered and they helped us. My husband would go help with the meat and I helped with the dinner while the butchering was going on," she explained.

All that was done without electricity. "We used kerosene lights for years and years and we had a great big spring and had to carry water from it."

Her parents did have "one of those wall telephones" and after a while she and Roy got one as well. Those early phone systems were all party lines with each household having a

distinctive series of long and short rings. "Seems to me like our first one was five longs and two shorts. There were at least six on one line and they knew everybody's business!"

Life in those days, before electricity, running water, automobiles and antibiotics was certainly more chancy. Just a few years into their marriage, Roy and Lona were faced with the double whammy of the 1930 drought and the Great Depression. "We had a hard time making ends meet. In 1930 we got just enough out of the garden to do us, but not anything extra."

The Kestersons had two girls while living on the farm, Helen and Jesse. Both were delivered by Greenville's Doctor John Thomas. Today Mrs. Kesterson has three grandchildren,

five great-grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren.

In 1941-1942, Dr. Thomas' son, Dr. Hansford Thomas, saved Lona's life. "I come near to dying then. There was poison in my system, but nobody could figure out from what. Finally Dr. Thomas sent me to get my teeth x-rayed and he said it was bad teeth." Even after most of her teeth were removed, it still took a long time for her health to return to normal.

Mrs. Kesterson moved off the farm 33 years ago after the death of Roy. She doesn't often have time to reflect back on 95 years of life, but when she does, she is amazed at the changes in the world, some bad and some good.

"People don't visit anymore. We always had a lot of company back then. Sometimes the preacher would go home with you for dinner," she said.

"Land, yes, times have changed something awful. There wasn't so much meanness in the world and people were stricter on their children then. If they misbehaved in

school, they whipped 'em with a big long switch."

Through all those years, it has been work that has kept Mrs. Kesterson busy and going. Until last year she enjoyed mowing her own lawn, but she has regrettably given that up.

"I've always worked hard and I keep busy working. We never did think anything about it; we just went out and done it."

These days she keeps active working around her house and in her yard, but says she now "sleeps in" until about 7 a.m.!

Plans for her 95th birthday celebration were low key, although her AARP group surprised her with a basketful of 60 birthday cards. Because four family members have April birthdays, Mrs. Kesterson and the others will go out to eat and celebrate all the birthdays together.

As for any secrets about living such a long life, she demurs, citing little except keeping active by working. "I just thank the Lord for sparing me this long," she exclaimed. —

DAR

Continued from page 2

Oratorical Contest and become a National Merit Commended Scholar. She plans to become a prosecuting attorney.

Kevin Kennedy, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Kennedy of Staunton, received the Good Citizen Award from Grace Christian School. He serves as captain of the varsity bas-

ketball and soccer teams. He is also a member of varsity track and swimming. He is the president of student government and plans on attending college to major in political science or economics.

Winner of the Buffalo Gap High School Good Citizen Essay Award was Roselea Riley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Doug Riley of Staunton. She is the president of the FFA. She

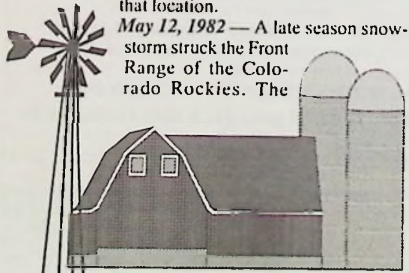
has placed in public speaking, livestock judging, and meat judging competitions. She received the Star Greenhand Award, Star Farmer Award, Mary F. Houff Citizenship Award, and the Outstanding Young Agriculturist Award. She is currently vice president of the National Honor Society, a Ruriteen, and a representative of the SCA. She plans to attend Virginia Tech and major in agricultural education. —

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.

May 6, 1933 — Charleston, S.C., was deluged with 10.57 inches of rain, an all-time 24 hour record for that location.

May 12, 1982 — A late season snowstorm struck the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies. The



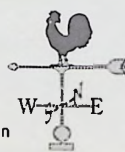
storm produced 46 inches of snow at Coal Creek Canyon, located near Boulder.

May 19, 1955 — Lake Maloya, N.M., received 11.28 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record.

May 23, 1990 — A cold front crossing the western U.S. produced snow over parts of Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho and Utah, with five inches reported at Austin, Nev., and four inches at Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. Strong winds behind the cold front sharply reduced visibility by blowing dust over central California, and two multi-vehicle accidents resulted in one death and eighteen injuries. In northern Idaho, a cloud-burst washed tons of topsoil, and rocks as large as footballs, into the valley town of Culasac.

May 26, 1771 — A famous Virginia flood occurred as heavy rains in the mountains brought all rivers in the state to record high levels.

May 30, 1948 — Twenty carloads of glass were needed in Denver, Colo., to replace that destroyed by a severe hailstorm. —



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