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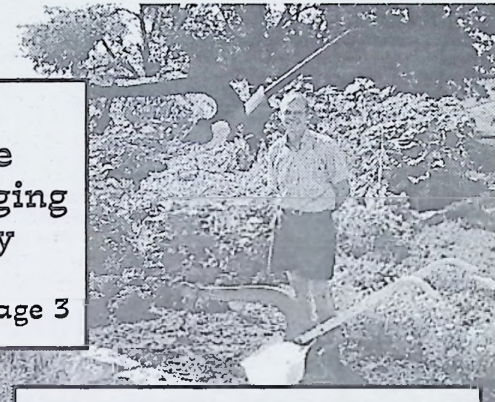
Summer 2000 Vol. 7, Issue 8

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These ladies made themselves at home in the city by bringing some of the country with them

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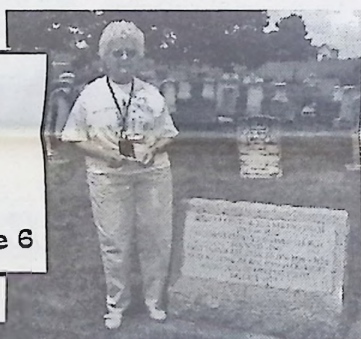


Staunton businessman brings country charm to a corner of the city

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Spindler family members pay tribute to their ancestor

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Potter uses Japanese technique to create works of art

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Augusta County Fair swings into action, Aug. 8-12

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Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the garden...

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Here, there, & everywhere

Middlebrook Ruritan Club honors Brubeck

AC staff report

MIDDLEBROOK — Bill Brubeck of Middlebrook was honored by the Middlebrook Ruritans with the club's Outstanding Service Award.

Tom Nelson, club president, assisted by R.A. Baldwin, made the presentation during the club's July meeting. Brubeck's years of outstanding service to the club and community include 44 years as a Middlebrook Ruritan having served the club in various capacities including president and committee chairman. His volunteer service over the years has included service with the Middlebrook Volunteer Fire Department as a firefighter and First Responder.

Brubeck's activities as a Ruritan

include participation in fund-raising events including the club's annual horse show and apple butter sales. Brubeck is a member and elder at Bethel Presbyterian Church. He currently serves as the church's clerk of the session. Brubeck's other church service includes serving as deacon, trustee, treasurer and Sunday school superintendent.

The award also saluted Brubeck for his service to the community through his business, Brubeck Hardware, which he has owned and operated since 1965. The club cited Brubeck for his willingness "to open his store in time of need." Many household and farm emergencies have been made less stressful due to Brubeck's response when asked to open the store for supplies beyond routine

hours of operation.

Additional aspects of Brubeck's service to the community were summed up in the award's closing statement which said, "...many other acts of kindness and community service including serving on the Augusta County Recreation Committee, coaching Little League baseball and football and helping obtain Middlebrook's Historic Marker... for not only this achievement, but for the outstanding example he creates for others to emulate."

Brubeck and his wife Sally have been married for 45 years. They have two sons and daughters-in-law, Doug and Audrey of Richmond, and John and Karen of Pugot Sound, Wash.; and a granddaughter, Hannah Frances, also of Pugot Sound. —



Tom Nelson, far right, congratulates Bill Brubeck, far left, on the Outstanding Service Award presented him by the Middlebrook Ruritans. Brubeck's wife, Sally, and son, Doug, also were on hand for the presentation. AC staff photo

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Jazz in the Park continues in August

STAUNTON — Jazz in the Park concerts continue through the month of August each Thursday night at the Gypsy Hill Bandstand. The concerts are held rain or shine and begin at 8 p.m. Scheduled performers for upcoming performances include:

Aug. 3 — The USAF Airmen of Note: This world famous big band is the direct musical descendent of

the Glenn Miller Orchestra.

Aug. 10 — Robert Jospe and Innerhythm: This seven-piece contemporary band has been receiving airplay all over the U.S. with its hot new album "Blue Blaze."

Aug. 17 — Barbara Martin Quartet: This fine local singer/songwriter is backed up by her terrific trio of Washington area musicians.

Aug. 24 — Jeff Decker Quartet: Top notch tenor saxophonist featuring Internationally acclaimed pianist Hod O'Brien.

Aug. 31 — Joe Estock and Friends: Veteran Sax/flutist's friends include Heritage Guitar Co., recording artist Vince Lewis and vocalist Becky Grandy.

For information about Jazz in the Park call 885-6712 or 885-5854. —

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Apartment residents' efforts to clean up and beautify yield colorful results

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON — Ten years ago Ruth Kesner looked with dismay out of her apartment window in Staunton. After living in the country for most of her years, she had scaled back her lifestyle and moved into the city.

The one thing she really missed from her country life was a flower garden. When she looked out her window at the tangle of brush and trash which separated the apart-

ment complex from Staunton Colonial Mall, she felt the need to do something. So she went out back and began picking up trash. At first she was alone in her mission, but not for long. First one neighbor, Adgil McCauley, and then another, Lucille Sprouse, joined her.

Within a short time the group had so much trash piled up that they had to arrange for a pick-up truck to take it all off to the landfill — six or seven truck loads in all. "We tackled a little jungle. We did it for

fun and didn't charge naught," said 85-year-old Adgile with a smile. "Within a week, we had the main part cleaned up," explained Lucille, who is 78.

The ladies didn't stop there. They began eyeing the newly cleared slope with its rocks jutting out and were soon imagining a flower garden. Nearly a decade later, that eyesore of brush and trash has been transformed into a beautiful flower garden that takes up most of the slope. Annuals and perennials of all sorts flourish in a display of color that bursts forth from spring to fall. In fact, the three women have been joined by a fourth, Evelyn Weller, who claims to be the "baby of the bunch" at 71. Together and separately they have placed flowerbeds and vegetables all the way around the apartment building, along walks, in the side yards and in the front.

"We do it all. We turn up the soil and everything. It's lots of fun," says 84-year-old Ruth of the "community" garden. They never do anything without consulting the landlord, who is more than willing to have them beautify the community. And so the women have watered, turned soil with a shovel and hoe, carried rocks for borders and planted and pruned.

Not only do they take care of all the weeding and watering, but they have arranged the tranquil setting with a touch of humor and ingenuity. Worn-out chairs and plastic bags have been turned into flower containers and every inch of space has some living plant thriving under their watchful eye. Lucille, who



Making themselves feel at home in the city took a little work, but apartment neighbors (from left) Evelyn Weller, Adgil McCauley, Ruth Kesner, and Lucille Sprouse brought together their energies in a collective green thumb to beautify the landscape behind their apartment complex which borders the parking area behind Staunton Colonial Mall.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

is 78, has added her own little section at the top of the flowered slope. Figurines and a hummingbird feeder are included in her plot. Adgile maintains an entire bed of her own in the front of the apartment complex.

The plants have come from a variety of places — some are brought from their former homes, some were given to them and some were purchased. Every year they also create a special annual flower garden to add a splash of color on the bank next to the mall parking lot behind JC Penney. This year's annual bed is a red, white and blue American flag with the year 2000 written in flowers above the flag. The stars, stripes and numerals are created with red and white bego-

nias and blue ageratum. All told there are 147 plants in the flag and 13 more in the numerals.

As the garden has expanded and filled with color, it has attracted attention. Many people find that a parking space near the garden makes a peaceful place to eat lunch.

"A lot of cars slow up when they go by," Ruth said.

For Ruth, the flower bed has given her the opportunity to continue the gardening hobby she has loved all her life and has helped ease the homesickness of moving into the city. And as for all the hard work that has gone with the project, she dismisses that thought very quickly.

"We have a lot of fun and I don't call that work," she said. —



The apartment neighbors' theme bed this year is a red, white and blue American flag with the year 2000 written in flowers above it. The stars, stripes and numerals are created with red and white begonias and blue ageratum. All told there are 147 plants in the flag and 13 more in the numerals.

Staunton festival promises musical adventure

STAUNTON -- The third annual Staunton Music Festival will kick-off this season July 30 with an "Afternoon of Baroque Music" held at the Beverley Street Galleries. This first concert heralds a series promising to expand on its reputation for adventurous programming and an unusual breadth of repertoire, performed by international caliber musicians. The concerts will be held at historical and cultural en-

claves throughout Staunton.

"Many concert series tend to focus on one kind of music. The Staunton Music Festival is unique in that we do some traditional classical, along with a variety of other forms, like contemporary compositions from Virginia musicians," says Carsten Schmidt, who, along with Kirsten Hadden Lipkens, and Masayuki Yasuhara, directs the festival.

The range of music — chamber,

Baroque, traditional Japanese, and Marimba — is one quality unique to the festival. The setting of the individual events will also add to the experience; Mary Baldwin College, Stuart Hall, the gardens of historic Merrilatt House, Beverley Street Galleries, and the gardens at Woodrow Wilson Birthplace will provide the backdrops for the concerts. The Birthplace is a cooperative partner in the festival.

Schmidt says the festival has been embraced quickly by the community. In the festival's first year, three concerts were offered — last year, it was five, and this year, the count is up to seven.

"The community support here is incredible. There is a long-standing tradition in Staunton of community involvement in the arts, which is quite unique," says Schmidt.

One important mainstay of the festival, says Schmidt, is to keep the price of admission affordable.

Tickets are \$8; \$7 for seniors and students; and a season pass is available for \$44; \$35 for students and seniors. Tickets are available at the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace, The Bookstack, and Blue Mountain Coffees. For information, call 540/885-6544 or the Birthplace at 540/885-0897.

About the Concerts

The first concert, "Afternoon of Baroque Music," features Robert Turner, playing the Baroque flute and recorder and Carsten Schmidt

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Augusta County potter strives for peace and tranquility in her art

By MOLLIE BRYAN

"Life beats down and crushes the soul and art reminds you that you have one."

Stella Adler

Walking into the doors of the newly opened Virginia Artisan Center in Waynesboro sweeps away the debris of daily life. Its mix of lighting and modern metal shelving, along with traditional and not-so traditional crafts, is a lofty, ethereal experience. Like the center itself, one of the many talented artists exhibited at the center blends an ancient art form with a contemporary sense of purpose, style, and creativity — and she just happens to live in Augusta County.

Noreen Stiso is a new potter and is relatively new to the area.

"I moved here about 10 years ago. I tell everybody that creativity is in the air here; I have never lived in a community that is this creative," she says. Stiso's creativity came through in many other forms before having found its artistic voice in pottery. She helped with First Night, has designed sets for the Waynesboro

Players, and has also designed additions to her home.

She began pottery lessons in 1996 and was invited to a pottery party in 1997. By then she had purchased her first pottery wheel. She has been taking classes, reading, practicing, and learning ever since.

Stiso's pottery has a unique, crackling look to it, which is because of the technique she uses in glazing and firing. It is a practice of pottery making called "raku" — first developed in 16th-century Japan for the Japanese tea ceremony. The unique method of making raku makes it highly suitable for the Zen Buddhist concept of directness — the direct and honest approach one should have toward the external as well as the "slicing through the mind" in order to reach enlightenment.

"The method strives for humility and simplicity and I hope people feel that when they see my work," says Stiso.

Raku is a low-fired, soft pottery with a thick and heavy glaze. It is formed, glazed, and placed directly into a kiln already fired to the desired heat. A clay body that is highly resistant to stress under ex-

treme variations of temperature must be used. When the glaze has fluxed and fused to a glasslike state, the piece is removed.

Originally, the Japanese plunged the raku directly into water when it was taken from the kiln. This "froze" the glaze colors and produced fine cracks in the glaze called "craze lines" that later would become dark with tea stains, producing beautiful designs.

In addition, sometimes, before the water plunge, the vessel would be smothered in organic material such as rice straw, leaves or sawdust, which causes oxygen in the clay and glaze to be pulled into the combustion process thereby "reducing" the oxygen in the surface of the vessel, resulting in exciting and subtle color changes. Known as the "secondary reduction," this step is the one that intrigues most American raku artists.

In the United States, raku is not so much known for the spiritual expression that it is, or has been, in Japan. Rather, it is the beautiful and exciting qualities of glaze and clay appearance resulting from the secondary reduction that excite the potter and act as a vehicle for individual expression.

Yet, according to Stiso, there is an undeniable spiritual aspect to it.

"You know, sometimes, you almost design the piece in your mind ahead of time. Other times are very special. There are times when the piece absolutely says what's going through my mind," she notes.

She relates a story about her sister, who is also a very spiritual person, but in a different way than she. "My sister asked me, 'How will you show glory to God?' and I said I hope that I do that through every piece that I make."

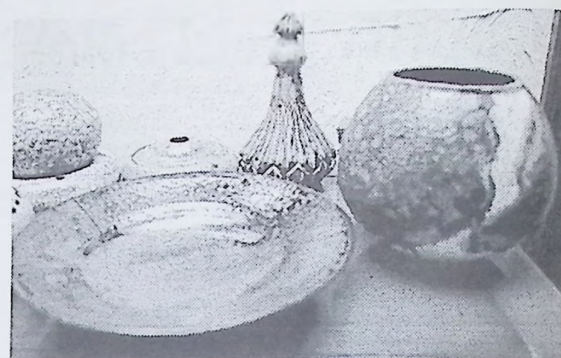
Still, all artists have challenges in their work. For Stiso, it is overcoming technical aspects. "I can't throw a bowl in three minutes like someone who has been studying for 20 years can. The fact that I am so new to it is a weakness and a benefit. I have to figure everything out for myself and because I do that, I take risks."

And those risks sometimes lead her into new territory — like painting a scene on a piece, or creating a new mixture of glaze.

"Every piece is unique because of the raku process. It can not be duplicated. A small factor like throwing sawdust into the reduction pit can make something very exciting happen," she says.

Stiso has, for the most part, taught herself, but she has studied with some local teachers, such as Phil Unger, a vo-tech teacher who teaches pottery classes in Harrisonburg and

See POTTERY, page 5



Pottery made by Noreen Stiso is created using a 16th-century Japanese technique. This kind of pottery is called "raku," which is a low-fired soft pottery with a thick and heavy glaze.

Photos by Amanda West



The final appearance of pottery is affected by how the surface is prepared. Here, Stiso uses fire as a step in making one of her pottery creations.



Noreen Stiso is a relative newcomer to the Augusta County area and to the art of making pottery. Her work can be seen on display at the recently-opened Virginia Artisan Center which is located on the western outskirts of Waynesboro.

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Nutt plows ahead with beautification effort

By NANCY SORRELLS

STAUNTON — It's the Land of Lilliput in reverse when Willy Ferguson creates one of his metal sculptures.

There's the circle of children at DeJarnette, there's the giant book at the Staunton Public Library, there's the giant watering can at the city's underpass, and, of course, there are the larger-than-life ballet slippers, flower pots and Pinocchio figure at the entrance to Ferguson's shop on Middlebrook Avenue. Anyone traveling along Statler Boulevard recently has probably also seen the giant plow at the corner of New Hope Road.

The iron plow, which is 21 feet in length, six feet high at the beam 11 feet high at the handles, and weighs about half a ton. Two men can easily sit on the moldboard of the plow that could have cultivated around Jack's giant beanstalks with no difficulty. In fact, Paul Bunyon and his blue ox, Babe, would be the perfect candidates for operating this giant piece of farm equipment.

The plow was commissioned by Bob Nutt, director of Valley Feed Company. He sees the piece of art as a way to beautify a corner of Staunton and welcome people to the road which is home to Staunton Union Stock Yard, Valley Feed, Moffett Paving, and Augusta Block.

"I have always admired Willy's work and always wondered if maybe he could do something for me. Finally it all came together when I saw the watering can at the underpass. I looked at the watering can and at my collection of plows and I began to get an idea," said Nutt.

Nutt has 25 plows as well as other pieces of agricultural equipment from the past. He chose a John Deere-Syracuse plow from his collection to serve as the model for the giant plow mostly because of its flat silhouette. Since the placement of Ferguson's plow, Nutt has painted the normal-size plow green and yellow and placed it below the behemoth plow in order to provide some perspective.

He has also arranged for the landscaping of the plot of land around the plow by professional gardener Susan Blackley. She created a design to complement the plow's utilitarian purpose in a farming world. In addition to some of the more traditional ornamental flowers, she added things like corn, sunflowers, peppers, tobacco, and sage, but all with a twist. Instead of regular corn, however, she planted Japanese striped maize that has a unique purple variegation in the leaf, and the tobacco is really nicotiana, a variety of the plant which has been developed as a landscape flower.

The plow and the garden surrounding it seem a fitting tribute to the area's agriculture heritage. A present-day corner of the city occupied by a feed mill and stock yard provides the perfect backdrop for the ironwork art reminiscent of another day and age.



Bob Nutt of Valley Feed stands in front of the plow he recently commissioned through the help of Staunton metalsmith Willy Ferguson. The larger-than-life plow

created by Ferguson is patterned after a John Deere-Syracuse plow, foreground, which is part of a collection of plows owned by Nutt.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

Nutt also contracted with Menno Kinsinger to create the stone wall around the garden. "Menno said, 'That's a big plow, you've got to have big rocks.'" Nutt said as he pointed to a

couple of stones that probably tip the scale at a quarter ton.

Although the project was mostly Nutt's brainchild, he cited a number of other people who have contributed including Clay Hewitt, owner of Staunton Union Stock Yard, who loaned the corner tract of land and Valley Feed employees who built the concrete pad to which the plow is anchored. Nutt has even added a pair of lights and is working on some appropriate signage for the businesses along that section of New Hope Road.

The plow itself took four men about four weeks to complete, said Ferguson. To him the project was "enjoyable," particularly the challenge of reproducing the big nuts and bolts on the back of the plow.

Ferguson has been in the business of welding and fabricating for 15 or 20 years, and his fame as an artist has spread. He now has quite

a few metal sculptures throughout the state. Despite that, he insists that he does not consider himself an artist, but rather a metalsmith who pursues art as a hobby.

The response to Ferguson's newest piece has been phenomenal, according to Nutt, who sees the project as his gift to the city. It is his hope that the results will spur other people to spruce up Staunton's street corners.

"It seems to me that we need 15 or 20 other people to do the same thing. It would have a tremendous impact on the city. I would like to see a corner beautification prize in place for Staunton, of maybe \$1,000, by the year 2002. Staunton is a lovely town with lots to offer. This idea is not unique. There are similar programs elsewhere where businesses sponsor plantings and take care of the maintenance of them," he explained. —



The iron plow commissioned by Bob Nutt measures 21 feet in length, six feet high at the beam, 11 feet high at the handles and weighs about half a ton.

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•Pottery

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Rudy Tucker, at the Association of Virginia Artisans.

Currently Stiso is trying out new glazes with a dry matt and a great deal of flexibility as to the different oxides that can be added and who knows where that will lead her. "I'm so excited about it," she says.

Stiso is also excited about the new Virginian Artisan Center,

where her work is currently on display and can be purchased. "I think it is fantastic," she said. "And what better place for it? I wasn't joking when I said there's something in the air here." —

The recently-opened Virginia Artisan Center is located in the Waynesboro Factory Outlet complex at the intersection of I-64 and U.S. 340 at Waynesboro's western city limits.



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Yesterday once more

Spindler event salutes legacy, reveals unknown genealogical link

By NANCY SORRELLS

MIDDLEBROOK — For 40 years the Rev. Adam Adolph Spindler ministered to half a dozen or so German-speaking congregations in the Upper Valley. During those four decades he married and buried them, baptized them, and did more than his share of preaching and teaching to his flocks in their native language. Many of those churches were union churches, often combinations of Lutheran and German Reformed denominations, drawn together by their common German heritage.

Spindler died in 1826 and was buried at St. John's Reformed United Church of Christ near Middlebrook. In the nearly 175 years since his death, times have changed. No longer do ministers have to make their circuit on horseback under the difficult conditions faced by Spindler. But the changes are much deeper than that.

Gradually the people of the Valley forgot much of their German heritage and blended with the Scotch-Irish and English neighbors around them. When their common German language disappeared, many of the German union churches decided the time was right to amicably divide and build churches for just their own denominations. Such

was the case of Mt. Tabor Lutheran and St. John's, and today, within a few miles of each other, are two fine brick structures that owe their beginnings to Spindler.

As the churches evolved, so too did the people. Spindler's children and the children of his congregational members grew up, married and, more often than not, moved westward toward new lands and opportunity.

Except for the tireless research of two women married to Spindler descendants, this story would be a footnote in some history book. But Marilyn Wright Thomas and Katie Spindell have spent years and countless hours piecing together the history of the good pastor who figures so prominently in their husbands' family trees. Marilyn, from Illinois and married to Ross, "rediscovered" Spindler's Augusta County grave in 1977 during a heavy rainstorm. Katie, who calls Tom, her husband of 35 years, the "greatest gift of my life," feels she "owes" one to Rev. Spindler. She produces a family newsletter called "Spindler's Meeting House."

Katie also helped organize a family reunion in Illinois three years ago. That reunion was such a success that it sparked an idea for a reunion back in Augusta County where the family's American roots reach deep into the soul of the community.



The descendants of Adam Adolph Spindler as well as the descendants of members of his original congregations gathered recently at St. John's Reformed United Church of Christ near Middlebrook. The two-day

event served as a family reunion for Spindler's descendants and a historical tribute to the minister who served several German congregations in the late 1700s and early 1800s.

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

"I couldn't sleep last night, I was so excited. I would rather do genealogy than eat. I think it is one of the most exciting things to do."

Betty Davis Lowe, Kentucky
Spindler reunion attendee

welcome the others home.

Everyone had been brought together by the ability of Katie and Vicki to get the word out and through the power of the Internet, however, the arrival of Betty Davis Lowe from Kentucky was considered almost providential.

Betty has been researching the families of Engleman and Hanger. After a day of comparing notes with fellow researchers she soon realized that Adam Spindler's second wife, Maria Catherine Engleman, was the sister of her own ancestor who came to Augusta County. Armed with what Betty knew about the Englemans and what Katie knew about the Spindlers, the genealogy sleuths filled in a missing slot of the family tree and were able to do what they had not been able to do before, which is trace Spindler back to a family in Germany, the von

See SPINDLER, page 7



Lois Louise (Spindell) Stilson from Ohio gave the opening invocation at the Adam Adolph Spindler reunion/tribute in the vicinity of the original church (in the middle of St. John's present-day cemetery) which is marked by this stone.

And so on a weekend in mid-July, more than 80 people from 16 states "returned" to Augusta County. They came from as far away as Hawaii and they ranged from newborns to octogenarians. But this "family" reunion was unlike any other. Somewhere in the planning, done by Katie, from California, and Vicki Thomas Yorlan, of Connecticut, the focus shifted subtly.

"It started as a family reunion, but it metamorphosed to include descendants of Adam Spindler's original congregations," Katie explained. As she told those assembled for a meal and some his-

torical talks on Saturday afternoon: "This is not the Spindler family reunion. This is a congregational reunion. Adam Spindler was the man who baptized your ancestors. He performed many ceremonies among them and sometimes his heart broke when he buried them. When you look into the eyes of each other, you are seeing history and that is why we are here today."

Amazingly, more than 20 of the attendees were not related to Spindler, but to descendants of the members of his congregations. Some of those people still hail from Augusta County and they helped

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•Spindler

Continued from page 6

Spindlers. In one weekend the Spindler family tree had leaped back to the 14th century.

"I couldn't sleep last night, I was so excited," said Betty of the events at the reunion. "I would rather do genealogy than eat. I think it is one of the most exciting things to do."

Although finding those missing links was thrilling, it was just one of many highlights to those gathered. The reunion began informally on Friday with guided tours of two historic structures in the area, Sugar Loaf Farm and Baylor Mill. Gene and Beth Spidler own Baylor Mill, one of the few surviving antebellum mills in Augusta County. Gene's great-great-great grandfather was Martin Baylor, a member of Spindler's Lutheran congregation. Beth's family, the Ellingers, were part of the Reformed congregation.

The formal part of the reunion started at mid-day on Saturday at St. John's. There, in the cemetery, the family gathered around the stone that marked the site of the first church. Rev. Spindler's headstone was just a few feet away. Lois Louise (Spindell) Stilson from Ohio gave the opening invocation in memory of Adam Adolph Spindler as the group stood on the spot of his original pulpit. "It is so special to be standing on the spot where my great-great-great grandfather stood. He came from good,

strong people who were honest, solid and God-fearing," she said.

Following the invocation, members of the group donned thematic white T-shirts, which sported an artist's rendition of the original Spindler's Meeting House, and gathered on the steps of St. John's for a group photograph. That was followed by an informal exchange of family information and history and then a hearty meal. After the meal, Lewis Coiner, Paul Engleman, Ruth Baylor Cline and Ed Cowman gave short history presentations about the family lines represented at the reunion.

Lewis talked about the Coiners and Henkels and the history of Spindler's Meeting House, north of Waynesboro, which later was known as Koiner's Meeting House. He had several precious artifacts from his family and the church, including a 17th-century family Bible.

Ruth talked about the Beard family who were members of St. John's. "They had a deep faith, were good stewards of the land and humble people. There have been 11 generations of Beards from Germany to the present. When I think about how much history there is in Augusta County, I get goosebumps," she said.

Paul talked about his family's path from their 1741 landing in Philadelphia to Augusta County. There, five children stayed and one went on to Indiana. He is descended

from the one with the itchy feet.

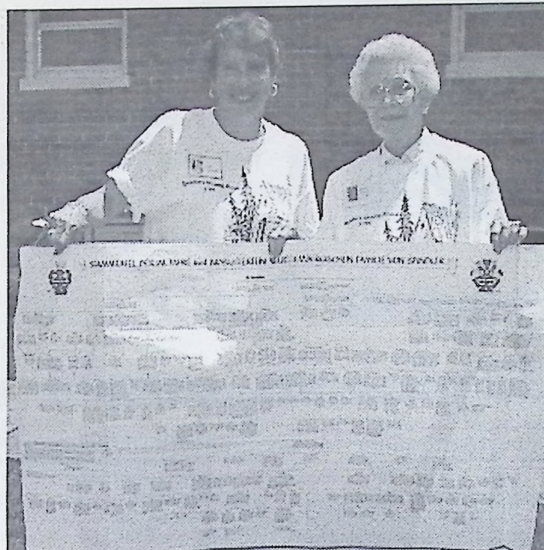
The conclusion of the reunion on Sunday would surely have made the Rev. Spindler proud, for it included a combined service of the St. John's and Mt. Tabor churches at Mt. Tabor. One hundred and sixty two years after the union church split into two congregations, the descendants were again reunited in worship under one roof. Interim pastor Kenneth Price of Mt. Tabor and the Rev. Tom Arner of St. John's conducted the service which included a late 18th-century Confession, Prayer of the Day and Special Offertory hymn which would have been familiar to Spindler.

Rev. Arner's message to those gathered reflected on God's use of Spindler as a messenger. "He felt compelled to speak...so that ears in a new land could be opened. He was dedicated and had a passion for getting God's word out," he said.

"He spoke to all those called the Palatines and we gather today to remember the faithfulness of Adam Adolph Spindler," he concluded.

Following a meal and some serenading and guitar playing compliments of Harold Spindel of Hawaii, the crowd began to slowly and reluctantly disperse.

As cars pulled off and arms came out of windows to wave good-bye, Katie began to power down her high-speed organizational efforts. By all counts the reunion of



Katie Spindell of California and Betty Davis Lowe of Kentucky, together filled in the missing links that enabled them to take the Rev. Spindler's ancestry chart back to the 14th century. They are holding the von Spindler family tree. Spindler descendants from all over the United States recently gathered at St. John's U.C.C. near Middlebrook for a reunion and tribute to Spindler.

Spindler descendants and his congregational descendants was a success. Katie had words of thanks for all the local efforts in bringing

about such an unprecedented event.

Finally, Katie stopped, smiled and took a deep breath. "This really was a homecoming!" she said. —

•Concerts

Continued from page 3

on harpsichord. Music will include sonatas by J.S. Bach, Handel, Telemann, Begaia as well as harpsichord music by Froberger and D'Anglebert. Robert Turner, who is also a master flute maker, will perform on his own baroque recorders and flute.

The second concert in the festival is "The Presidential Years: An International Program of Chamber

Music and Songs, Focusing on the Years of Woodrow Wilson's Presidency (1913-1921)," which is presented in cooperation with the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace at Stuart Hall, 7 p.m., Aug. 5. A sampling of the many changes that occurred in music during this time period, the performances will include violin sonatas by Debussy and Janacek, and songs by Roussel, Haha, Ives, and others. The performers will be John

Wesley Wright, tenor; Diane Pascal, violin; Gabriel Dobner, piano; and Carsten Schmidt, piano.

On Aug. 6, "From Bach to Spirituals" will be held 3 p.m. at Francis Auditorium, Mary Baldwin College. John Hilliard, composer-in-residence and professor of music at James Madison University, will be featured. Songs ranging from Bach to Schubert to spirituals will be the focus. Made possible in part by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the concert will conclude with Schubert's Piano Trio in E flat Major. Performers are John Wesley Wright, tenor; Diane Pascal, violin; Natasha Farni, cello; Gabriel Dobner, piano; and Carsten Schmidt, piano.

"Baroque Outdoors" is slated for the gardens at the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace 7 p.m., Aug. 13 (rain location: Beverley Street Galleries). Presented in cooperation with the Birthplace, works by J.S. Bach, Handel, Corelli, and Vivaldi,

will be spotlighted. Before the concert, a free Musical Fun and Games, geared toward children ages 5 and up, will introduce instruments and classical music to participants. Performers are Robert Turner, Baroque flute and Baroque recorder; Kirsten Hadden Lipkens, oboe; Eva Lundell, violin; Lynda Edwards, bassoon; Masayuki Yasuhara, harpsichord; and Carsten Schmidt, harpsichord.

The gardens of Merrillat House will be the space in which festival-goers can experience "An Evening of Traditional Japanese Music," 7 p.m., Aug. 19 (rain location: Beverley Street Galleries) which is supported by the Japan Foundation. The traditional bamboo flute and two stringed instruments will be played by masters of this repertoire: Bruce Huebner, shakuhachi; Etsuko Takezawa, voice, koto, sangen; and Kazuhiro Isekiia, voice, koto, sangen.

Makoto Nakura, an international

acclaimed marimbist, will perform his own versions of works by Bach and Albeniz, as well as several contemporary works that were composed for him, at the "Marimba Recital," 3 p.m., Aug. 20, Beverley Street Galleries.

The festival climaxes with "Festival Finale: East Meets West," 7 p.m., Aug. 23, Stuart Hall Auditorium. The concert combines traditional Japanese music with several works by western composer that were influenced by eastern music traditions. In addition, the premiere of a piece for oboe and electronics by composer Jack Freilicher, who is a resident of Verona, will be highlighted. The concert concludes with a trio sonata by J.S. Bach. Other performers are Kirsten Hadden Lipkens, oboe; Paige Riggs, cello; Robert Turner, Baroque recorder; Bruce Huebner, shakuhachi; Etsuko Takezawa, koto; Kazuhiro Isekiia, koto; Lise Keiter, piano; Carsten Schmidt, piano and harpsichord. —

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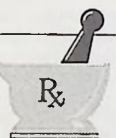
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Notes from the road

In this issue, *Augusta Country* contributing writer Betty Gatewood (Mark's Wife The Biology Teacher) takes us on a trip to Port Isobel in the waters of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay. The trip proved very eye opening for The Biology Teacher and the Stewart Middle School students who traveled there with her.

Augusta County/Chesapeake Bay lessons learned 'on it, in it'

By BETTY GATEWOOD

In the early hours of the morning of our departure, my daughter sleepily said, "I hope you have a thunderstorm and I hope you have mud..." She relished the memory of the tremendous light show and the "fun in the marsh mud" she and her group had last year when we went to Port Isobel.

After watching the long range forecast for days, it looked like we were in for hot and sunny weather instead. And after the Chesapeake Bay Foundation staff mentioned that they were trying to conserve water in all possible ways (discouraging showers), I doubted that we'd have our fun in the mud. Despite those concerns, we were all excited about the prospect of spending three days on an island in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay.

Even though communication between teacher and bus company is always very efficient and frequent leading up to the actual trip, any teacher breathes a definite sigh of relief when the bus shows up. The Quick's bus was there and waiting before 8 a.m.!

YEEEESSSS!!!

Packing of the food, equipment and personal bags under the Quicks' bus was efficiently done, some last-minute concerns from parents were addressed, then departure was on schedule as we pulled out of the

Stewart Middle School's parking lot at 8:30 on the dot. Kids and teachers alike were wired and jazzed for quite an experience. Spending three days on an island in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay — who wouldn't be?

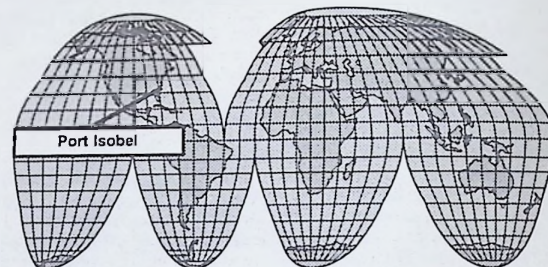
This was the culminating experience for two years of Project Real World's students. Project Real World is an ecology club at Stewart Middle School with Jane Cox and Liz Nicholson, club sponsors. The club of talented and gifted seventh and eighth graders is very active, learning to be stewards of the environment by planting trees, building bluebird houses, and bio-monitoring Middle River. But this year was the first year that this culminating field trip to Port Isobel was a reality — one that was long awaited by many. Jane and Liz graciously invited George Savage (from Beverley Manor Middle School) and me (recently from BMMS and now at Stewart Middle School). Last year George and I had taken our outdoor club, Project Adventure, to Port Isobel. George's wife, Nan, took on the responsibility of kitchen organizing and medical caregiver. This was a together group!

Local land use, its impact on the environment and the methods of good environmental stewardship, are focal points of Virginia's seventh grade life science Standards of Learning. Particular emphasis is

placed on appropriate farming practices, prevention of erosion, and prudent household use of fertilizers and pesticides and how all of these impact the waters of Augusta County and, ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay. The Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation Service/ Natural Resource Conservation Service of USDA (whose offices are in Verona) make a variety of wonderful resources available to teachers in Augusta County so that we can help students become better caretakers of the soil and Chesapeake Bay watershed. Helping students realize that what they do here affects life in the bay is a natural yet challenging goal. How better to do that than to determine water quality here near Middle River farmland, then travel to the Chesapeake Bay to discover how it all pans out?

Our bus arrived on schedule at Smith Point Marina at 12:30 and we were met there by Colin, a Chesapeake Bay Foundation staff member. We loaded our gear on the *Loni Carol II*, our mobile classroom for the next three days, and met our skipper, Captain Charles Parks. He and Colin oriented us to the boat and what to expect for the next few days, then we were off for our beautiful hour-long boat ride across the Bay to our destination. Port Isobel is one of Chesapeake Bay Foundation's study centers for students and is located on a little marshy island near Tangier — it actually was part of Tangier until a hurricane in the early 1900s separated it.

We arrived at a very low tide at Port Isobel and this necessitated that we carry our gear quite a way to our dorm, the Snow Goose. After getting gear into Snow Goose and food into Bakers (dining/meeting hall), we were met by another CBF staffer, Tiffany, who oriented us to the rules of the dorm. Then during a snack in the dining hall, she and Colin together oriented us to the methods of living closely with the land, especially on a closed system on an island. Recycling (all plastic, glass, metal, paper packaging and trash would go back home with us for us to recycle or throw away), discouraging SLOP ("Stuff Left On Plate") to reduce waste, composting of



Emily Harris of Stewart Middle School shows off her prize — a clawless blue crab.

kitchen refuse, using the waterless toilet (Klivos Multrum composting toilet), reducing water use (no showering), and reducing paper waste (no paper towels or napkins — we were to use our own bandanas). We were given the challenge to be on the "Wall of Honor for The Triple Crown":

- 1) No SLOP;
- 2) averaging less than five gallons of water use per person per day;
- 3) identifying at least 80 organisms during the trip.

Dinner that night was a lesson learned in reducing SLOP — quite a lesson to learn for some of those whose "eyes were bigger than their stomachs," but we passed the test with help from each other. It was definitely going to be a different type of field trip for some of these students. We had our challenges mapped out for us.

Speaking of maps, one of our

first activities was identifying the Chesapeake Bay watershed using See *CHESAPEAKE*, page 9



Captain Charles Park tells Stewart Middle School students about the blue crab — its ecology, importance and how to set a crab pot to catch one.

Photos by Betty Gatewood



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•Chesapeake

Continued from page 8

a landsat (satellite) photo that graphically identifies the contributing rivers that drain the metropolitan and agricultural areas and therefore show the potential problem areas. Using white plastic sheeting that represented the bay watershed, each small group "adopted a river," stood at the edge of the sheeting where that river entered the bay and estimated its comparative contribution of water to the bay by filling up a vessel. Land use around their river determined what possible problems and contaminants their river would dump into the bay.

Silt, pesticides, and fertilizers were represented by colored water and dirt that were added to their samples. After discussion regarding their rivers and the land use of the watershed use, edges of the sheeting were held up by the group and then all groups added their samples and "made the bay" by letting the waters flow from the watershed and "its rivers" into the bay. This impressive demonstration set the tone for the discussion and all activities that related to the bay and its watershed.

Because of the extremely low tide, a hike instead of a canoe trip to the far beach was the early evening activity. We did what the locals do at a low tide: "proggin'" (beach combed) for cool stuff left behind by the high



Liz Nicholson, seventh grade science teacher at Stewart Middle School, shows off a whelk which she caught in a crab pot.

tide. We found wonderful stuff (and some not so wonderful) that the bay brought to us, and together we made a totem pole that showcased our finds and represented what

makes the bay. Crushed crab pot, driftwood, rope, shells, feathers and... litter. This was a really nice opener; some of these kids had never been to a beach.

Dusk found us learning the basics of canoeing, then we were off to the marsh for a beautifully moonlight trip punctuated by a powerful story told to us by Tiffany as we beached our canoes in the marsh. After our story, we paddled back to Snow Goose to turn in. Tiffany read us a bedtime story in the dorm, and we drifted off with thoughts of the 5 a.m. wake-up call so we could see sunrise on the bay.

Breakfast — cereal, pop tarts, and fruit — was served on the *Loni Carol II* at 5:30 the next morning! What an experience to be out on the bay at this time. This being Sunday morning and baccalaureate Sunday on Tangier, not many watermen were out, but we scraped the grass beds and found a plethora of marine life in this habitat. SAVs (submerged aquatic vegetation) are the nurs-

eries, shelter, feeding ground of so many types of bay animals.

The SAVs are very sensitive to nutrient loading and siltation. Too much nitrogen (as in fertilizers running off from the watershed) can cause a bloom of algae and depletion of oxygen when they decompose. Siltation (as in loss of soil from the watershed) can smother the grass beds, depleting organisms there of life-sustaining oxygen. These grass beds of Tangier Sound are well known locally as a very healthy, productive area and our scrape was teaming with life such as the famous blue crab, pipefish, isopods, shrimp and bryozoans. We picked through the eel grass and carefully placed our finds in the temporary aquariums on board the boat. After identification, we replaced everything back in the eelgrass and lowered it back into the bay.

Setting our crab pots was an entertaining experience. "Historically, the Chesapeake Bay has been the center of hard shell blue

See BAY, page 15



Chesapeake Bay Foundation staffers Tiffany, far left, and Colin, at water's edge, assist SMMS students with the oyster reef restoration project near Port Isabel. Tangier Island can be seen in the background.

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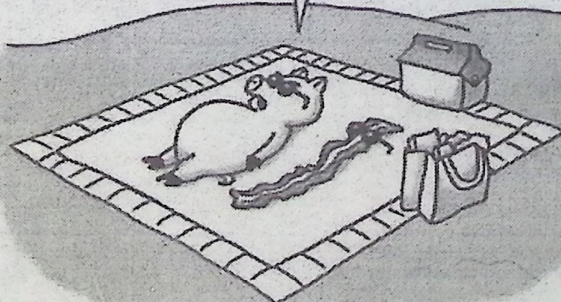
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The fertile fields of summer dreamland

Down on the farm we're thinking about rain. Glorious rain. Last summer's drought left us almost dreading this summer, suffering from a kind of drought shell shock. But the heavens have poured out their blessing upon the land giving us green pastures, luxurious corn fields and verdant gardens. The rain we've enjoyed this summer has me recollecting a summer of a decade past when bountiful rain brought forth even more bountiful gardens. It was the summer of 1990. The summer I put out my last garden to date. After that fateful summer, I would never again venture into the domain of vegetable propagation. Because that was the summer of **THE BIG ZUCCHINI**... read on if you dare.

The
ZUCCHINI
that almost
ate
Middlebrook
or
How I cooked
my way out of a
zucchini meltdown

The haze of a steamy August day became patchy fog which settled over Middlebrook in the cool of a midsummer's night. A cloud-shrouded full moon cast white light across hills and dells surrounding the micro-metropolis. Residents of the rural hamlet, unaware of impending doom, floated in sleep. Little did they know that... even as they slept... **IT** was out there.

Rising out of the darkness, black-green and just visible in the moon's eerie glow, sprang the... (insert scary music here) **GIANT ZUCCHINI**.

The first person to spot the gargantuan gourd, growing in the third garden on the right as one enters the village, was a passerby on her way home from work. The traveler shook her head and blinked in disbelief hoping the image would disappear with the other "thought-I-saw's" of the wee morning hours.

A heartbeat later the car screeched to a stop. The woman

DOWN ON THE FARM

BY
**BETTY JO
HAMILTON**



threw open the door and leaped from the vehicle. Standing stock still in the middle of the street and gazing up at the demon squash which towered menacingly over the defenseless village, a scream hung in the woman's throat. In her heart she knew she would be the first to perish when... (insert scary music)... **THE GIANT ZUCCHINI ATE MIDDLEBROOK.**

But instead, zucchini seeds come in a packet of about a hundred and any ordinary waste-not-want-not gardener simply cannot bear to throw any away.

I planted 10 hills (Mistake No. 1) with seven seeds to a hill (Mistake No. 2). During an early season dry spell I watered the hills with Stern's Miracle-Gro (Mistake Nos. 3-6) and then worked hard to keep the zucchini patch weeded (Mistake No. 7) and cultivated (Mistake No. 8). (I have resigned myself to a life of leap frogging from one mistake to the next.)

Had I been an unscientific gardener and let survival of the fittest reign in my garden, I probably would have ended up with about the right number of zucchini for my purposes. But now supply has exceeded demand and I am hoping the Stern Co. will come out with a new product, Miracle-Stunt, which will arrest zucchini production.



A rainy season comes along every decade or so which spurs prolific zucchini production.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

They are everywhere. They are piled in a pyramid on a chair on my porch. They take up an entire shelf in my refrigerator. I put some in a brown bag as if hiding them from view denies their existence. Football-sized ones are piled between the rows in my garden. After a two-week rainy spell, I find myself smack-dab in the middle of a zucchini meltdown. Knowing that I am about to be zucked is a very uncomfortable feeling and ground zero is not a place I want to be.

Zucchini seeds should be controlled by the United States Department of Agriculture which would, by law, be allowed to dispense only four seeds per gardener per season.

horn. She was screaming at the top of her lungs. Finally, a bleary-eyed resident stumbled into the street.

"What the h— is goin' on out here?" the bathrobe-clad man said. "Are you outta' your cottonpickin' mind lady?" he asked the panic-stricken woman. If only he knew what she knew. Moments later, after the woman had pointed skyward, the man—bathrobe flapping in the breeze—joined in the community alert.

"You take that side of the street, I'll take this side and sound the alarm," the man, who happened to be a member of the community's volunteer fire company, directed. Within minutes the village's entire populace huddled in a trembling mass outside the post office which was veiled in the darkness of the giant zucchini's shadow...

When I spotted a zucchini the size of an overweight infant I knew I was in trouble. Only a few days before I had checked the plants and seen the small, shiny green shapes which would be the first fruits of the season. I salivated just thinking about a dish of ratatouille which I would make with the fresh zucchini. I could almost smell the aroma of cinnamon-sweet zucchini bread baking.

I promised myself to keep a close watch on the much-longed-for veggies so they might be harvested while still young and tender... and small. But alas the rains came and the garden became off limits. Once I was able to return to my zucchini watch, things squash-wise were well out of control.

For those zucchini still within a manageable size, I had several culinary alternatives. Unfortunately, squash beyond cookable dimensions had to be zucchiniized. These zucchini were cut from the plants and hoisted across the fence into the vast green expanse of the pasture beyond—an area tender-hearted zucchini aficionados refer to as zucchini heaven.

Now the zucchini plants have taken over an entire corner of my garden. The 10 hills have merged into one and it is no longer possible to walk between the plants. The leaves are large enough for children to hide beneath. This is

why small children are not allowed in my garden.

A child could easily become lost among the zucchini. Imagine, if you will, the problems with socialization which might confront a child raised by zucchini. Picture a kindergartner, attired in zucchini leaf clothing, making the obligatory parent-teacher introduction: "This is my mother, the vine."

Luckily for Middlebrook, the growth of the giant zucchini seemed to abate somewhat during the night.

Residents of the community clung to one another on the post office's front stoop until daybreak—infants and toddlers sleeping heavily on mothers' and fathers' shoulders. A hushed buzz of conversation rose from the cluster of village dwellers as they considered the threat posed to life and limb by the squash behemoth. When the buzz had increased to an uneasy drone, the village postmaster stepped away from the group.

"O.K. folks, let's try to stay calm," the postmaster, always the voice of reason, said. (Since the village has no elected municipal officials, the postmaster had to assume a leadership role—he being the highest ranking government official on the scene.)

Suddenly from the back of the crowd a hysterical woman shrieked: "We're all gonna' be squashed!" She then swooned and crumpled into an unconscious heap on the pavement.

"I've got kinfolks in Greenville," a man exclaimed. "I'm gettin' here missus and gettin' outta' here while the gettin's good!"

"Now just a minute," the postmaster said, "let's look at this thing rationally."

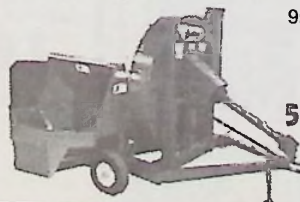
"Do you think that giant zucchini is rational?" a heckler shouted. "What are you gonna' do, ask it politely to please leave? We're all gonna' get eaten alive by that thing," the man said excitedly.

"Not if we eat it first," the postmaster countered coolly.

Actually, the zucchini is a much maligned and misunderstood vegetable. It wasn't until recently that

See ZUKE, page 11

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Time to renew?
See page 2

•Zuke

Continued from page 10

zucchini recipes were even listed separately in the indexes of cookbooks. Older cookbooks lump zucchini recipes under "squash" however recent editions of cookbooks, having been compiled by forward-thinking editors, show separate entries for zucchini recipes.

Zucchini may be steamed until just tender and is quite tasty as is without embellishment. It is also the perfect complement to vegetable kabobs — alternate mushrooms, baby onions, cherry tomatoes, and zucchini wedges on a skewer — cooked over an open grill and basted with melted butter.

It is also perfect for stir-frying or may be added raw to tossed salad. One of the zucchini's best qualities is that it does not have to be skinned, shucked or shelled (say that three times fast) to cook. Just rinse off the zucchini, cut an inch of so off both ends and you're ready to cook.

While small tender zukes — 1-2 inches in diameter — are prime candidates for cooking, medium or large zucchini may also be used. However any zucchini over 4 or 5 inches in diameter are probably best left for the recordbooks; although 3/4-inch cross sections from these zucchini do make dandy Frisbees. This is why there is a slab of zucchini on the roof of my washhouse. Not to worry, it's completely biodegradable. Large zucchini also may be used as wheel scoches to prevent heavy equipment from rolling off inclines.

Within minutes the postmaster, a zucchini connoisseur, had the situation well in hand. Instructions were issued to the populace and

the masses banded together in what would become a zucchini cooking marathon. Residents of Middlebrook became galvanized in their effort to thwart the big zucchini. Before long, the community was virtually abuzz with activity.

Women of the village marched in single file, carrying pressure cooker lids like shields, to the community fire hall which was set up

a load of zucchini was on the way.

A county Extension agent came by to record the official measurements — 78 feet from stem to bloom, 29 feet in diameter, estimated weight: 4 3/4 tons — of the giant zucchini and a photographer and reporter were dispatched by the local newspaper.

Once the story about the giant zucchini and the ensuing



To sleep, perchance to dream. Who knows what monsters lumber through the dreary shadows of sleep?

Photo by Nancy Sorrie's

as Zucchini Command Central. Every Mason jar, every Ziploc bag, every pound of sugar and flour was commissioned into service. Assembly lines for cleaning, chopping and cooking the zucchini were set up.

Using an old-timey crosscut saw, the zucchini was cut loose from its vine. Farmers from the surrounding countryside brought in heavy equipment to move the zucchini. Men of the village used chain saws to cut the zucchini into pieces which were hauled on hay wagons to Command Central where the women waited with recipes ready.

An auxiliary command post was set up at the site of the big zucchini. The postmaster appointed a retired mechanical engineer as Keeper of the Zucchini — (O.K., O.K., so what if he was the postmaster's brother-in-law? It never hurts to have well-placed relatives.) — who rode his mint-condition 1947 Cushman motorscooter back and forth from the site of the zucchini to the fire hall to alert the women when

cookathon hit the news wire services, all the major television networks picked up the story. NBC sent Willard Scott to the scene and ABC Nightly News broadcast live from the base of the big zucchini. CBS sent Bob Sheaffer and a film crew and CNN paid little 10-year-old Johnny James, an aspiring filmmaker, \$100 for his home video which the lad had begun filming the moment the zucchini alarm had been sounded.

Recipes I use for zucchini have one thing in common: they were all selected on the basis of the quantity of zucchini each requires. I always choose recipes which use the largest volume of zucchini and take the least time to make giving me the greatest advantage over the ever-increasing zucchini population. All of the following recipes have been kitchen tested many, many times. Take my word for it. With 10 hills of zucchini to cook my way through, I know them by memory.

Zucchini Bread & Butter

8 cups thinly sliced zucchini
4 bell peppers, thinly sliced

2 cups thinly sliced onions
2 teaspoons mustard seed
3 cups sugar
2 cups vinegar
1/3 cup salt

Combine zucchini, peppers and onions in a large bowl. Sprinkle with salt and let stand one hour. Drain in a colander. Mix remaining ingredients and bring to a rapid boil. Put zucchini mixture in sterilized canning jars, add hot syrup to cover pickle in jars and seal.

Yield: 3 to 4 pints of pickle.

POLISH PIZZA

3 cups thinly sliced zucchini
1 cup Bisquick
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
2 T. dried parsley
1/2 tsp. dried oregano
1 clove garlic, minced
4 eggs

Mix all ingredients in medium sized mixing bowl. Spread in greased 15x10x1-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown on top. (This is great hot or cold and is good to pack for lunch. Your kids will love it. Just don't tell them what's in it.)

Through all the chopping and cooking, the village of Middlebrook took on an almost festive air. Over at Zucchini Command Central, the women all sang, in a melodic falsetto, to the tune "We're off to see the Wizard."

"We-e-e-e-e-e'll cook the big zucchini, before it eats us alive!"

We'll freeze, fry, boil and bake, we even might make a cake.

If ever a ever a squash there was, the giant zucchini is one because, because, because, because, beca-a-a-a-a-ause, because there's no part we can't u-ti-lize!

We'll cook the big zucchini, before it eats us alive!"

Meanwhile back at the zucchini, the men — while dancing a merry jig — all harmonized in perfect bass and tenor (to the same tune of course):

"We-e-e-e-e-e'll cut the big zucchini, before it eats us alive!"

We'll slice, dice and Osterize it down to a smaller size.

If ever a big squash needed squishing, it would be this one, it should be this one, because, because, because, because, beca-a-a-a-ause, because of this squash's whale-like size!

We'll cut the big zucchini, before it eats alive!"

The children of the village even

got into the act with a few fever-pitched rounds of "Ring around the zucchini, a pocketful of linguini." (Sure it sounds stupid, but see if you can find anything that rhymes with zucchini.)

One of my favorite zucchini recipes follows. It can be adjusted to whatever size batch you want to make. I freeze the zucchini/tomato/onion base in pint or quart containers then thaw, top with bread and cheese and cook. It's a good rainy day project. Fresh tomatoes can be substituted for canned tomatoes.

RATATOUILLE

AU GRATIN

1 pint canned whole tomatoes
1 large onion, sliced in rings
3-4 medium zucchini cut into 1/4-inch thick slices
2 slices of bread, toasted and crumbled
1/4 cup Parmesan (or grated sharp) cheese

Butter

Combine tomatoes and onions in a two-quart saucepan. Add 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1 tablespoon of sugar. Cook uncovered over medium heat until onions are tender; about 15 minutes. Add zucchini. Cover and cook over medium heat about 20 minutes or until zucchini is fork tender. Pour mixture into a two-quart casserole dish. Top with bread crumbs and cheese. Dot with butter. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes or until golden brown and bubbling.

ZUCCHINI BREAD

3 cups flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. ground nutmeg
1 cup chopped nuts
3/4 cup vegetable oil
3 eggs
2 cups sugar
2 tsp. vanilla
3 cups shredded zucchini

Combine first six ingredients in a mixing bowl; make a well in center of mixture. In another mixing bowl, combine oil, eggs, sugar and vanilla; mix well. Stir in shredded zucchini. Add this mixture to dry ingredients and stir just until moistened. Spoon mixture into two greased-and-floured 8 1/2x4 1/2x3-inch loaf pans. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour. Cool loaves 10 minutes in pans. Remove to wire rack and cool completely before

See BREAD, page 12

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Augusta County 4-H judging team wins state contest

BLACKSBURG — The Augusta County 4-H livestock judging team won the state senior 4-H contest held recently in Blacksburg.

The winning team of Rachel Swartzel, Jonathan Coleman, Emily Curry and Jason Arehart placed second in sheep, cattle and reasons and first in swine. Individually Rachel placed second in sheep, first in reasons and was high individual in the contest. Emily placed fourth in swine and overall. Jonathan Coleman placed ninth in swine, sixth in cattle and sixth overall. Jason Arehart placed ninth in reasons.

The second Augusta County senior team which consisted of Jonathan Riley, Jimmy Crosby, Jeff

Hewitt and Amanda Hemp, placed sixth overall and first in sheep. Jeff Hewitt placed fourth in sheep and ninth overall. Jimmy Crosby placed third in sheep and Amanda Hemp was 10th in sheep. Jeff Hewitt, Emily Curry, Rachel Swartzel, and Jonathan Coleman were chosen to the state team.

In addition to the two senior teams, Augusta County had four junior teams. They were as follows: Team A — Will Earhart, Isaac Swartzel, Sarah Heizer, and Jessica Rohrbaugh; Team B — Ashley Pitsenbarger, Kaitlyn Ambler and Brandon Reeves; Team C — Jeff Buchanan, Hannah Burtner and Robert Grogg; Team D — Jack Shira, Jeremy Heizer and Corey Stogdale.

Team A placed second overall in the contest, ranking second in sheep and swine. Team B placed fifth overall, topping the competition in cattle and placing fifth in sheep. Team D placed fifth in cattle and 10th overall. Team C placed 15th overall.

Individually Ashley Pitsenbarger placed second in cattle and 10th in sheep. Jeff Buchanan placed third in cattle. Kaitlyn Ambler was fourth in cattle, sixth in swine and sixth overall. Sarah Heizer placed eighth in swine. Isaac Swartzel placed 10th in swine and fourth in sheep. Will Earhart placed second in swine, fourth in reasons and fourth overall.

The teams are coached by Shirley Kaufman. —



Augusta County's junior and senior 4-H livestock judging teams competed recently in state competition held in Blacksburg. Team members include (first row, from left) Jeff Buchanan, Jimmy Crosby, Jeff Hewitt, Jason Arehart; (second row, from left) Robert Grogg, Will Earhart, Jonathan Coleman, Jonathan Riley, Amanda Hemp; (third row, from left) Emily Curry, Jeremy Heizer, Jessica Rohrbaugh, Kaitlyn Amber, Rachel Swartzel, Isaac Swartzel; (fourth row, from left) Corey Stogdale, Brandon Reeves, Jack Shira, Ashley Pitsenbarger, Sarah Heizer, and Hannah Burtner

Down on the farm update

Bovine Big Foot surrenders to authorities

AC staff report

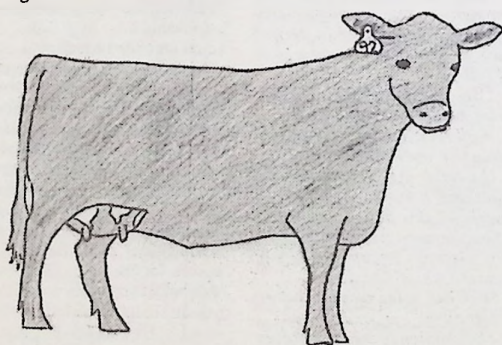
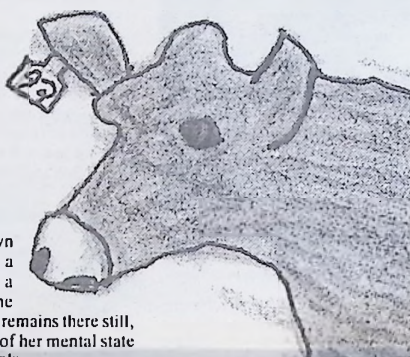
The Bovine Big Foot which was at large in the greater Middlebrook area turned herself into bovine police authorities recently without incident.

The cow had been roaming at large in an expanse of unfenced hayfields and woods for three weeks before surrendering to authorities.

A highly trained team of bovine temperament experts was called in on the case. Late one evening two brave souls went to the area in which the Bovine Big Foot was last sighted. It took almost two hours of negotiations before the cow

came of her own will through a gate and into a pasture with some other cattle. She remains there still, pending review of her mental state by bovine officials.

Although now confined within the limits of a fenced pasture, the cow must yet be corralled and extradited to her home farm. The cow's case is being reviewed to determine if she can be rehabilitated to return to her former pasture of residence. It is not known whether the cow, who was unavailable for comment, will resist extradition. —



•Bread

Continued from page 11
slicing. (These loaves freeze very nicely. Or better yet, give a loaf, a copy of the recipe and two medium zucchini to a friend. Anything to get rid of the zucchini.

It took three days and two nights of non-stop cooking before Middlebrook residents had finally rid themselves of the last of the zucchini. A case of zucchini delights was sent to President and Mrs. Bush. Middlebrook, which had donated most of the preserved zucchini to inner-city shelters for the homeless, was named a Point-of-Light by the president.

The only thing that remained of the zucchini was its stem end which was hauled to the ball field through a ticker-tape parade at the end of the third day.

And so, as the sun disappeared in the west beneath a pink and

blue cotton candy sky, residents of the once-again happy little village gathered on the hill overlooking the ball field. A fire was lit at the base of the zucchini stem and everyone cheered and hooted as sparks rose into the darkening night sky.

The village dwellers had made the best of times of the worst of times. The zucchini which came to eat Middlebrook became the zucchini which Middlebrook ate. And as the scene faded to black, a child's small sweet voice was heard saying: "There's no place like Middlebrook."

Suddenly it is morning. A beautiful midsummer morning and I am in my garden the day after I have packed pickle, baked bread, panned pizza and rendered ratatouille from every last zucchini in sight. But then, just when I think it's safe to go back in the garden, I

hear the unnerving theme music from one of those killer shark movies... "doo-do, doo-do, doo-do-doo-do"... it's out there somewhere, lurking in the murky green depths of my zucchini patch... **THE BIG ZUCCHINI.**

I wake up with a start. Wide awake I sit up and look around. I am safe in my bed. Boy, that's the last time I'll eat zucchini bread as a midnight snack after seeing one of those summer blockbuster movies. —

This article was originally published Aug. 8, 1990. It appears here in its original form with a few minor adjustments. The author reports she has been unable to plant a vegetable garden since the zucchini meltdown. USDA officials confiscated all her garden tools and zucchini seeds. She has been barred from ever buying Stern's Miracle-Gro again.

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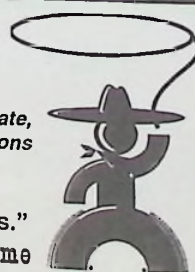
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2000 Augusta County Fair features music, exhibitions, entertainment

AC staff report

FISHERSVILLE—Five days in August will be filled with a virtual extravaganza of activities and events appealing to a wide range of ages and interests. The 2000 edition of the Augusta County Fair, to be held Aug. 8-12 at Expo Hall in Fishersville, promises family fun and a whole lot more.

Fair organizers have planned entertainment and events for this year's exposition which will be sure to draw crowds through the gates at Expo Hall. As in past years, gate admission covers the cost of most entertainment at the fair. Passes for the week are \$10. Advance tickets are available at the Augusta County Extension office. Admission prices at the gate will be \$4 for adults, \$2 for youth 6-15. Children under 6 are free.

The fair kickoffs Tuesday, Aug. 8, at 4 p.m. with the Exhibit Hall opening. Judging of exhibits will be finalized by 5 p.m. Opening ceremonies will be held at 6 p.m. The midway, by World Wide Shows, will open at 6 p.m. Events planned for the evening include Barnyard Olympics, a beauty contest, and a street truck and farm tractor pull. Local bands will be featured in an

open stage performance.

Wednesday, Aug. 9, is Kids' Day when the midway will open at 5 p.m. Afternoon activities include a tractor driving contest and a haystacking contest in the horse show ring. Evening events include the junior and open sheep show, a garden tractor pull and the livestock costume class. Musical entertainment for the evening will be provided in two performances by 4th Avenue Band.

Flower exhibits will be received Wednesday morning and judged in the afternoon. Entries will be on display in the Beam Annex.

Livestock exhibitions continue Thursday, Aug. 10 with the showmanship and junior beef show and the open beef show.

Thursday evening's gate lure should prove tempting to folks with a sweet tooth. The first 1,000 people through the gate will receive a free Hershey candy bar. The midway will open at 5 p.m. A new offering this year will be an Ugly Truck Contest with entrants to be on display in the horse show ring.

The crunch of metal on metal and revving engines will fill the air in the night's entertainment when the Demolition Derby roars into action at 7 p.m. "Kid Power" will

be centerstage at 6 p.m. Thursday with the popular Pedal Power Tractor Pull. There will be more than one kind of squealing to be heard during the youth greased pig contest, another new offering for the fair.

A special feature of Thursday's events includes an appearance by Cooter and the General Lee of television's popular Dukes of Hazard fame.

Livestock exhibitions continue Friday, Aug. 11, with the sheep leadline, showmanship, market lamb and commercial sheep shows. The dairy show, including the livestock obstacle course, also will be featured Friday. The midway will open at 5 p.m. Friday.

Musical entertainment Friday

will be provided by local bands in open stage performances followed by a clogging exhibition. The barnyard dance will be held at 9 p.m.

Special entertainment Friday will be the Davis Rodeo at 7 p.m. Admission to the rodeo is \$8 in addition to regular gate admission.

The fair's final day, Saturday, Aug. 12, promises to be a day filled with entertainment of all varieties. Horse enthusiasts will get an early start with the fair's horse show beginning at 9 a.m. The show will be split into two categories — Hunter and Western.

Two new livestock events for the fair this year will be a goat show and a hog show, both of which will be held during the day Saturday.

Saturday's daytime events also



Cooter and the General Lee, of television's Duke's of Hazard fame, will be appearing at the Augusta County Fair, Aug. 10 at Augusta Expo in Fishersville.

include a dog show, the antique tractor pull, a horseshoe tournament, a cruise in and open stage performances by local bands throughout the afternoon.

For musical tastes, Saturday's fair activities include performances by the gospel band, Sunset Mountain Boys and Rivers Edge and Eric Heatherly. In addition to the regular gate admission there is a \$6 admission charge for the Rivers Edge/Heatherly concert.

Featured in Expo Hall throughout the week at the fair will be commercial exhibits from various businesses and organizations. Commercial exhibits will be open 4 p.m. through 10 p.m. each weeknight of the fair. Expo Hall will open at noon on Saturday.

Among other displays of interest at the fair will be the many entries in the home arts, crafts, floral, crop, and vegetable contests. Home arts, crafts and floral contests will be on display in the Beam Annex. The crop and vegetable exhibition will be in the Coffey Pavilion. Livestock exhibited at the fair will be on display throughout the week in the barns adjacent to the Coffey Pavilion.

Fair catalogs are available at the Augusta County Extension office and locations of the Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau.



Eric Heatherly will perform Aug. 12 at the Augusta County Fair.

Augusta County Fair

August 8th-12th • Augusta Expo
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~SHOW STOPPER EVENTS~

TUESDAY, AUG. 8TH:

- Opening Ceremonies
- Street Truck and Farm Tractor Pull
- Armband Night
- Barnyard Olympics
- Beauty Contest, Open Stage

Ride all rides for 1 price

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 9TH:

- Hay stacking Contest
- Tractor Driving contest
- 4th Avenue Band
- Flower Show
- Garden Tractor Pull
- Sheep Shows

THURSDAY, AUG. 10TH:

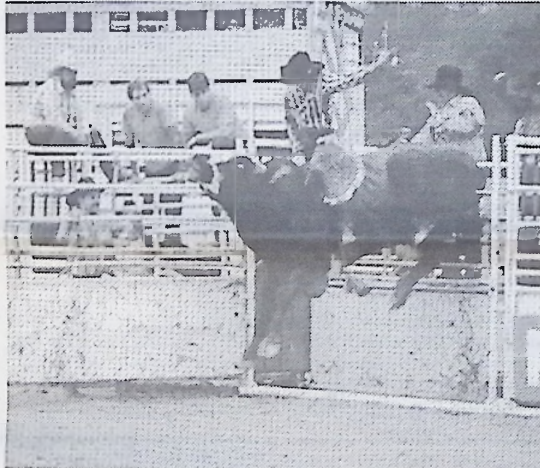
- Cooter & the General Lee
- Demolition Derby
- Ugly Truck Contest
- Greased Pig Contest
- Beef Shows
- Pedal Power Tractor Pull

FRIDAY, AUG. 11TH

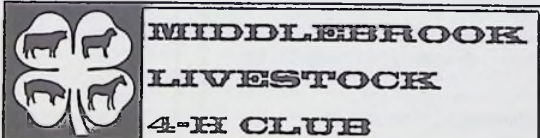
- Davis Rodeo (additional charge)
- Daily Show - Open Stage
- Barnyard Dance
- Cloggers
- Supremo Showmanship
- Livestock Obstacle Course

SATURDAY, AUG. 12TH:

- Eric Heatherly (additional charge)
- Dog Show, Hog Show, Goat Show
- Antique Tractor Show
- Horse Show, Cruise In
- Sunset Mountain Boys
- River's Edge Band & More



Davis Rodeo will be the featured event Aug. 11 at the Augusta County Fair.



Stop by the Middlebrook Livestock 4-H Club food booth at the Augusta County Fair Aug. 8-12 in Expo's R.L. Coffey Pavilion for the best eats in the Valley!

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Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
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Friday	Saturday	
Pork tenderloin and gravy	Barbecue chicken	

Drink included with dinners.

Fresh-picked corn on the cob will be served each night.

Breakfast and lunch also will be served. Individual food items will be available in the evenings in addition to full dinner menus.



Schoolhouse News

Stewart sixth graders win top awards in state poetry contest

By BETTY GATEWOOD

Teaching middle school science is always hectic, sometimes challenging, frequently stimulating, AND occasionally rewarding. One of my favorite themes (part of Virginia's sixth and seventh grade science Standards of Learning, of course) is environmental awareness.

With guest speakers, class activities, outdoor labs, and interdisciplinary projects as well as text material, I attempt to excite, enlighten, and instill environmental stewardship in my students. For the last two years I have encouraged my students to enter the International River of Words Art and Poetry Contest. I wanted them to stretch their knowledge, examine their emotions and state their passions about the environment. Augusta County is an easy place in which to do this — our resources and government agencies are plentiful and extremely helpful.

Here in Augusta County, I am fortunate to have a cooperative school administration that encourages interdisciplinary projects such as this contest. Also in my school district we have local offices of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Department of

Environmental Quality and Natural Resources Conservation. They all provide materials, personnel and opportunities for students to learn about and appreciate their environment. These agencies proved a wonderful support system. As I said recently at a joint meeting of these agencies, these people make it easy to teach environmental education in Augusta County.

Information about the River of Words Art and Poetry contest came to me in the fall of 1998 from Sandy Greene of the NRCS. It was in a packet of materials from her office and since the contest theme was "Virginia's Watersheds," it provided a natural culminating activity after our recent Chesapeake Bay watershed field day. I offered the idea to all my classes and had only one student decide to enter. Zechariah Jones, my seventh grade science student from Beverley Manor Middle School, was the entrant and he won first place in seventh grade division in the state!

This year at Stewart Middle School, information came directly to me and it also came via the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with some information regarding fresh water fishes I had requested. Composing poetry is

part of the sixth grade reading SOLs, so there was the fit for this year! Of the 40 or so who wrote poems for me about our watershed, two were chosen as first place winners in the 6th grade division in the state! I was flabbergasted and oh, so proud!

An awards ceremony was held June 7 at the Library of Virginia in Richmond to commend the state winners. I attended along with my two winning students, Ryan Bugas and Kristen Swanson. According to the Department of Natural Resources press release about the event: "Secretary of Natural Resources John Paul Woodley, Jr., recognized 47 student winners of the second annual Virginia River of Words Environmental Poetry and Art Contest... Nearly 400 students in kindergarten through 12th grade entered the competition, which focused on the theme 'Virginia's watersheds'."

"The River of Words contest is about getting younger Virginians excited about their environment, especially the health of their waterways," Woodley said. "All Virginians should take great pride in not only their display of wonderful art and poetry, but in these students' commitment to our natural resources."



Virginia Natural Resources Secretary John Paul Woodley, Jr. congratulates Stewart Middle School students Ryan Bugas and Kristen Swanson for their first place state winning entries in the River of Words poetry competition. Betty Gatewood, a sixth grade science instructor at Stewart, joined her students at an awards ceremony held recently in Richmond at the Library of Virginia.

Photo courtesy Virginia Natural Resources

"The contest is a component of Gov. Jim Gilmore's Virginia Naturally 2000 environmental education campaign. The state River of Words program is a branch of the International River of Words competition, founded by former Poet Laureate Robert Hass."

Printed below is the poetry and passion of my young environmentalist winners from this year. If the health of Virginia's watersheds rests in their hands, I have hope for the future of Virginia's rivers as they run through Augusta County. —

To Save your Life Save the Water

By KRISTEN SWANSON

Flowing water from the Susquehanna, the Potomac, the York, the James, and even a river known as the Rappahannock feed fresh water to the Chesapeake Bay. These are the exciting rivers, we all laugh and play in.

Though it is muddy, from pollution dumping in, trout swim playfully, otters look for prey, Blue crabs search for mates, and plankton floats in the water. Have you heard about pollution, from farms, people, and factories?

We need to build partnerships, and work together, to repair our damaged environment.

What about water recreation?

Have you been fishing, hunting, swimming, or boating?

We all like to do them, but if our water loses its brightness and shine, we will no longer be able to enjoy water.

The watershed, where everyone lives, also needs caring, start recycling, stop littering, or someday all our water will disappear, and each one of us depends on water.

Now you know the story of the watershed and the Chesapeake Bay. Such devastating stories, we all need to help and change.

To Save Your Life, Save Water

Ripples in the Water

By RYAN BUGAS

The river echoes between rocks, first a trickle, then a splash
The smell of autumn is coming fast

Crunches of leaves tingle my toes, smells of fall fill my nose

River curls upstream, rolling toward the sunset

In thought, the watershed acts like veins to the inland

They are always creeping along getting smaller the further they explore

The elegant current splashes across the land, giving it an environment to live from

In clear water there lies many secrets unknown to the human world

Mayflies hide beneath the rocks and dragonflies cling to sunken wood

This is where the cycle of life begins

Swiftly moving shad climb the rivers to spawn

Save the Bay, that is the motto

And it is up to you to save it, because everything has an effect on stream life

In the moonlight far away, there lies a running stream

If you don't protect its gushing fresh water it will never gleam

When the frost bites in the morn along the blades of dew

There is but one person who can prevent harmful water pollution and it begins with you

Only you can save our streams

If you would like to view and read all the Virginia winners, visit this website:
http://www.snrvipnet.org/2000_river_of_words_awards.htm

RHS FCCLA members earn national recognition

ORLANDO, Fla. — Nine members and two advisers of the Riverheads chapter of Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America recently returned from the National Leadership Meeting held in Orlando, Fla.

Riverheads members participated in National level STAR Event competition along with 3,000 youth. Earning a gold medal in Chapter Service Project was Kathleen Fornadel, daughter of Ron and Mary Jo Fornadel. Kathleen has been an officer for the past two years. Jennifer Campbell, daughter of Debbie Campbell, brought home a gold medal as she presented an illustrated talk on the topic of abortion.

Crystal Smith, 2001 chapter president, earned a silver medal in Interpersonal Communication. Crystal is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Smith. In the Focus on Children event, Megan Dean, daughter of Beth Bowers of Middlebrook, received a silver medal.

In the Applied Technology event a silver medal was earned by Jami Daugherty, Stacey Bower, and Emily Glenn. Their power point presentation dealt with facts on taking a stand against violence. Jami is the daughter of James and Donna Daugherty; Stacey is the daughter of Kenton and Robin Bower, and Emily is the daughter of Mrs. and Mrs. Bobby Glenn of Stuarts Draft. Brooke Smith, daughter of

Tommy and Lucy Smith, and Jenny Gardner, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Gardner of Stuarts Draft brought home a silver medal as they entered the Applied Technology event, offering safety tips and information to young children.

During an adult general session, Kathleen Buchanan, Riverheads FCCLA adviser, was presented the Spirit of Advising Award. This award recognizes one adviser from each state for working with students to ensure their success. Roena Barbre also accompanied the delegation and served as a STAR Event evaluator.

The weeklong national FCCLA event featured speakers, workshops, exhibits, and national level competition. Special emphasis was given to introduction of a new national program, STOP the Violence. This peer education program is designed to empower teens to recognize, report, and reduce all forms of violence, as it is committed by and to youth in the United States.

Chapters across the nation will continue to place emphasis on other programs like Families First, Financial Fitness, Community Service, Career Connection, and Student Body. The 250,000 members of FCCLA focus on the roles of family member, wage earner, and community leader by developing skills for life through character development, creative and critical



Riverheads FCCLA members and advisers attending the group's national meeting in Orlando, Fla., recently included (back row, from left) Crystal Smith, Stacey Bower, Kathleen Buchanan, Megan Dean, Roena

Barbre, and Emily Glenn; (front row, from left) Jami Daugherty, Kathleen Fornadel, Brooke Smith, Jennifer Campbell, and Jenny Gardner.

Photo courtesy Riverheads FCCLA

thinking, interpersonal communication, practical knowledge, and vocational preparation.

The week allowed time for exploring the sights of Orlando with the 225 conference delegates from the state of Virginia. Trips in-

cluded Animal Kingdom, MGM, Magic Kingdom, Epcot, and Universal Studios. Delegates were also part of a community service project benefiting five agencies that assist families, children, and elders of the Orlando area.

The Riverheads delegation wishes to thank all school and community individuals and groups that helped make the trip possible financially. Special thanks to the families of the students and school administration. —

•Bay

Continued from page 9

crab fisheries in the United States and supplies most of the nation's soft shell blue crabs," according to Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Captain Charles and Tiffany related information about the importance of crabbing in the Chesapeake Bay. Watermen make their living keeping track of how healthy

the bay's waters are. Healthy waters mean healthy crabs which mean healthy income.

The main bait fish is the menhaden, an oily, stinky fish, that is torn in half and stuffed into the bait chamber of the crab pot. BUT before it is torn and stuffed, it has to be kissed for good luck! Each kid kissed a menhaden, tore it in half and stuffed it, then took the crab

pot over to the gunwale of the boat waiting for the nod from Captain Charles. When Tiffany saw that nod, the crab pot and the buoy were tossed overboard. Great fun.

Oysters and the waters of the Bay became our focus for several hours. Jane Cox had brought water collection devices so we could test the bay's water chemistry at different levels using graphing calculators and probes. The mysteries of the unseen environmental factors were highlighted with those water samples.

Captain Charles then took us to the oyster reef and we did a scrape there. Our bounty was dumped on the engine box of the boat and we

sorted through the shells for live ones. Tiffany fascinated us with her tale of how oysters change sex (!), how they reproduce and how important they are to the health of the bay. Oysters are filter feeders, eating plankton that drifts in the waters of the bay. They clean the bay's waters as they feed.

Captain Charles said that the population of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay is only 1 percent of what it was a century ago. The oysters in the bay could once filter the entire body of water in three to six days. The job would take the remaining bay oysters almost one full year now due to the re-

duced numbers of oysters.

Oyster shell provides habitat for other bay animals too, so we put the live oysters back on the reef, and took the dead shells back to Port Isobel to dump in the newly constructed reef there. To carry out the stewardship focus of oysters, the Bay Foundation is doing an oyster restoration and cultivation project right near the dorm. The rest of the early afternoon found students pulling up the floats (bathtub size baskets), taking the cultivated oysters out of mesh bags, scrubbing the oysters free of sediment, sorting them by size, counting numbers

See OYSTERS, page 17

Springdale



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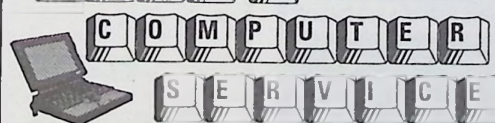
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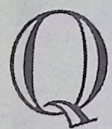
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The Hitching Post

Grooming, first aid kits helpful in horse care



Q: I need to put together a grooming kit for my new horse. What should go in it?

- C.M.

A good grooming kit should have the basics in brushes, combs, and some first aid treatments. There are two kits that you can put together — one for showing, and another for daily grooming.

First you will need a curry comb for brushing off mud and loosening up dirt. You will also need a stiff brush and a soft brush. The soft brush is for the face and tender skin

areas, such as the cannon bones. A hoof pick or two is essential, as well as a mane and tail comb. If you pull your horse's mane then you will need a pulling comb. A shedding blade is also nice to have as well as a pair of scissors. These are the basics in brushes and combs.

Your groom kit should also have some supplies in first aid and cleansers. When grooming you will

often come across nicks and cuts. Sometimes you will find rain rot, hooves that are too dry or with thrush. It is also important to keep the udder (mare) and sheath (gelding/stallions) areas clean. Keeping some ointments and medicines on hand will make your grooming job easier and quicker.

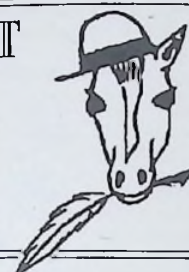
Baby Oil is great for the udder and sheath area. Putting baby oil on the areas before riding helps loosen up the dirt and can be washed off with a betadine scrub after the workout. The heat and exercise of the ride help loosen up the dirt and it will come off easily.

Betadine scrub is helpful in washing cuts and scrapes. Keeping a furazone ointment or spray (wound dressing) can help keep the cut from getting infected and aid in healing.

For the hoof you will need hoof oil and a thrush treatment. During wet rainy weather the hooves tend to become saturated and can develop an odor that is a sign of a fungus much like athlete's foot. Use of a thrush treatment during this time can work as a preventive. During dry hot weather the hooves can become dry, brittle, and sometimes crack. Use of a hoof oil during this time can prevent cracking.

Fly spray is a must during summer weather. And don't forget a

I.B. HOOFINIT
From
the
Horse's Mouth



handy tote to carry all your supplies in! Summer is bath time and your grooming kit can include sponges, shampoo, and a good sized bucket. A sweat scraper comes in handy, too.

If you are getting your horse ready for show season you can prepare with some extra items such as clippers, hair polish, a mane braiding kit, liniments, and vet wrap. The grooming kit should have the supplies necessary to brush out the horse, care for the hooves, treat minor injuries, and if needed, prepare for a horse show. Start with the basics such as brushes and first aid supplies and in time add to the list. It is the "make up" box for a horse. Some grooms can get by with the minimum, and some grooms go all out.

Good grooming is part of horse care. Put together a kit that gets the results you want. Think about daily care versus show season. You will find most of the products you are looking for in tack stores and your local pharmacy.

I've known horse owners that own a simple set of brushes, and I've known grooms that were professionals in their field. Some groom kits look more like first aid kits — a reflection of the future vet tech tendencies. The groom kit is your personal expression of horse care. Take it from the Horse's Mouth, start with the basics and what you add from there will represent your interests, whether they are cosmetic, medical, or just plain practical. —

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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New Hope FCE names cultural arts winners

NEW HOPE — The New Hope FCE Club held its June meeting at the New Hope United Methodist Church with a program on Medicare and the club's cultural arts contest.

Pat Ewers judged the club's cultural arts contest of over 45 entries in 24 categories. Ribbons were awarded. Blue ribbon entries that will represent New Hope FCE at the state contest in September are Christmas Crafts, Children's, Genealogy, and Hand Sewn Smocking, Helen Stogdale; Stamped Cross Stitch and Embroidered Pillows,

Mary Jane Shaver; Embroidery and Knitted Clothing, Jean Critzer; Quilting, Catherine Crickenberger; and Writing, Lena Mahone.

Jim Blake of Ameri-Life & Health Services of Roanoke County, Inc. informed members how a person can qualify for Medicare and explained Part A and Part B of Medicare.

During the business meeting members were reminded of the upcoming meal to be served at the Augusta County Government Center and the FCE State Conference in September at Ingleside Resort.

Three members gave reports on the TRIAD Conference for Senior Citizens they attended in Harrisonburg. During this conference members heard talks on "Senior Safety Issues" (home, walking, hotel/motel and traveling), "Elder Rights," "Senior Targeted Scams & Fraud" (hang up, tear up & shut the door), and "Medicare & Medicaid Fraud."

Several members won blue ribbons at the Greater Shenandoah Valley Fair and they stressed the need for more exhibits. It was announced that the West Virginia

Poultry Festival was held July 27 in Moorefield.

Cold Sulphur Springs, located two miles southwest of Goshen in Rockbridge County, was the study of the month. It was a flourishing resort when James Leech purchased it in 1858 and but was inactive during the Civil War. A hotel was reported to have been built in 1872 but in the summer of 1876 it was closed because of a typhoid fever epidemic.

During the late 1800s the resort was very popular with Staunton and Augusta people, being filled

even after season. A new hotel was built in 1895 but it burned to the ground with other cottages in 1908 and all remaining buildings were gone by the 1920s. Today part of the resort is a campground and the remains of the spring house can be seen a mile from the campground. Some foundation stones and a possible water well can still be found close to the spring house, if one looks carefully. That is all that remains of Cold Sulphur Springs.

Contact Nellie Flora at 540/363-5204 for details about the New Hope FCE. —

•Oysters

Continued from page 15

of oysters in each size and putting them back into the floats so they could continue to grow.

After lunch back at the dining hall, we cleaned ourselves up a little and boarded the boat again to go over to Tangier Island. Upon arrival at the dock, Colin gave each small group a laminated set of questions that they could ask residents. Tangier Islanders are used to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation students being on the island and were tolerant, if not enthusiastic, about answering questions about "island life."

Tangier Island was settled in 1686 by farmer John Crockett and his eight sons. Because of isolation and early English settlement, islanders have maintained a unique speech dialect — it's an unusual blend of English and Southern accents. The students met island students, watermen, businessmen and had to listen closely to understand the dialect. They learned how "the islanders" earn their living, what they do for entertainment, where they shop, what their school is like, and in general what life is like on this beautiful, and somewhat isolated Chesapeake island.

Our morning wake-up was a luxurious 7:30 the next morning, with breakfast at the dining hall, then out onto the bay to pull our crab pots. We had set 17 pots and each one had at least one crab. The pot that Liz Nicholson pulled had a live whelk/conch in it! It was amazing to see a live specimen. This is the shell that maybe as a kid you put to your ear "to hear the ocean roar"! It was great to make the connection from books/stories to the real thing! We got about a half-bushel of crabs, but since this was our last day on

the bay, we didn't keep them. We handed them off to a local waterman for an addition to his harvest for the day — maybe he would get \$35 for the half bushel.

"Get on your marsh and mud clothes!" Tiffany called as we got off the *Loni Carol II*. Our adventure was drawing to a close but our wrap-up activity involved canoeing (yeah!) into the beautiful salt marsh just before lunch. A salt marsh is such a pungent, rich expanse, and so important as a filter and nursery for the bay. We beached our canoes and investigated the life of the marsh — detritus, grasses, fiddler crabs, willets, ospreys, sand fleas, sand — and MUD.

When we had finished our marsh exploring, Tiffany and Colin surprised us with an unforgettable send-off — mud sliding and wrestling! Now that we knew the marsh, we were going to REALLY know it! Who could belly-slide the farthest???? Who could get the mud-diets???? What a kick — just one more vote for Colin and Tiffany's ability to play and teach these students. The thunderstorm that my daughter had hoped for would have provided more mud, but her wish for us to have mud was realized. Total immersion into the environment! Great fun for sliders, wrestlers and spectators alike!

Full days, short nights, fleeting times. We yearned to stay longer, but knew it was time to go. We fixed lunch, packed our bags, then cleaned the dorm, bathrooms, sand porch, and dining hall. Carrying our belongings and trash and recyclables to the *Loni Carol II* wasn't quite as far this time because the tide was higher now.

We said our goodbyes to Tiffany who was staying behind. We were their last group of the spring, so she had some things to do to get ready

for their staff training the next week. She was waving at us and Colin as we pulled out, then she suddenly leapt off the dock! She surfaced laughing and waving at us — quite a send-off. As we headed back to Reedville and Smith Point Marina, Colin told George and some of the guys that we had indeed made the "Triple Crown"! We had 81 critters, no SLOP and our average water consumption was 4.7 gallons per person per day. What a successful trip in many ways!

Living close to the land (and water!) enabled our students to learn the importance of conserving water, and that a healthy Chesapeake Bay watershed means a healthy Chesapeake Bay. Learning at Port Isabel was easy because Tiffany, Colin and Captain Charles made it fun, engaging, entertaining and relevant. Lessons learned there were brought home to Augusta County: wise land use here determines healthy habitats and livelihoods there. Regardless of how far we are up the watershed, we are all interconnected in the web of life and the life of the Chesapeake Bay.

For Augusta County students this all started back in 1998 when the

Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District of the Natural Resources Conversation Service provided a grant to take teachers to Port Isabel and participate in the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's program there. Bobby Whitescarver and Sandy Greene (of Headwaters district) knew that there was a need to get students from Augusta County down to the bay, and what better way to do that than to take the science supervisor and teachers?! Augusta County science curriculum supervisor Jenny Groh, teachers from all three county middle schools, three county high schools and Lee High School in Staunton attended the program in August that year and obviously came back determined to take students there.

In October 1998, the Augusta County School Board approved the first request for three-day field trip to the bay for middle school students. During that school year, George and I took the Beverley Manor Middle School outdoor club, Project Adventure, in April 1999 and Karen Fairchild took her environmental club, SAVE, from Stuarts Draft Middle School in May of the same year. The program

continued this school year with our trip from Stewart Middle School in June. Sally Shomo of Beverley Manor Middle School took her agriscience students and Karen Fairchild took her SAVE club in July.

We all feel committed to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's credo that says "the best place to teach people about the Chesapeake is on it and in it." The Chesapeake Bay Foundation's education program has now served 1.5 million people through 16 study centers like Port Isabel. Environmental education is a priority for them. Hats off to the foundation and its capable staff for continuing its mission of environmental education.

In Augusta County our waters flow from parking lots, lawns, forests and farms to streams to branches of the Potomac and James rivers then into the Chesapeake Bay. Now the understanding of the bay's ecology, the wise land use and sound conservation principles in its watershed flow along with that water because some lucky Augusta County students have experienced the bigger picture of the Chesapeake Bay by being "on it and in it." —

•Ships

Continued from page 17

The next morning at 10:30 was the Parade of Sail, with the ships leaving the harbor and sailing up the Delaware toward New York. We decided to watch from Ft. McHenry, where they would all turn, pass under Key Bridge, and head north. What we had not planned on was the heavy traffic again. To get to Ft. McHenry, there is only one street. There are many others, but they all lead into that one. If we had been impressed by the mass of traffic in the early afternoon of the day before, it was nothing to what we encountered early on Thursday. After almost an hour, with the boys

becoming a little testy, we decided the thing to do was to put that car somewhere and get out and walk. So we did. Annalee knew of a little shopping center off one of the side streets, so we popped in there and parked. The walk was not a short one — probably a little over a mile — but we had on comfortable shoes, and arrived a lot sooner than those people who kept to their automobiles. We got to the park just in time to see the first of the great ships turn and sail out under the bridge. Many of the ships had their sails up. On some the masts were filled with the crew members standing all the way to the top. The Dewaruci from In-

donesia had a band on board, crew members doing Indonesian dances, and the rest all up the rigging with brightly colored flags. Quite an impressive sight!

We had taken a picnic lunch which we enjoyed as we watched all those magnificent sailing vessels pass by the fort and give a salute with their cannons before turning and sailing away. What a way to start my vacation! No matter how many days I have left, I doubt that they can equal the excitement and fun of those first two!

Annalee and the boys join me in sending our love to everyone at home.

Love, LuLu

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Country Crossroads

Reflecting pool reflections

July 2000

Dear Maude,

Summer is supposed to be a time of relaxation and fun. But in this city of Washington they try their best to make sure one has little of either. Hearings in one committee, another committee complaining about congressmen lacking on private matters to unrelated issues, threats of vetos. All these things don't bother the regular workers so much, but they sure do seem to upset bosses who run around like mad men, worrying about their clients' little loopholes. The only way to make it through an election-year summer is to be sure and find some time for a little diversion. We had such an opportunity with the arrival of the tall ships in Baltimore at the end of last month.

Annalee called to say that she had a schedule and the ships were supposed to start arriving on a Thursday and Friday, and would stay until the following Thursday. It was an event that neither she, the boys, nor I had any intention of missing.

Baltimore's Inner Harbor is more crowded than we like, even on a slow weekend, so after talking things over, we decided not to try to see the ships on either Saturday or Sunday but to go during the following week. That meant vacation days for me — and it took a bit of listening to grumbling by the boss — but I managed to get my two days of vacation. Off I went to spend Wednesday and Thursday in Baltimore with Annalee.

Annalee's friends, Phil and Carrie, also agreed to join us on Thursday. Phil's father had been in the U.S. Coast Guard

during World War II. Between the years of 1942 and 1945, the coast guard used the Danish tall ship, the Danmark, as a training vessel for their cadets. He had spent 3 or 4 months aboard her in 1943, climbing the rigging and handling the sails. He had not seen the ship since. He and Phil's mother drove up from southern Maryland on Wednesday just for the day and we all headed downtown to the Inner Harbor together with Phil's father driving. The traffic was barely crawling as we got near the harbor.

"Make a quick right at this corner, and we will park in the garage there," Phil said to his father, who managed to work his way to the right in time to zip around the corner where there was a big "FULL" sign. "Go around the next corner, and we will try that entrance." We came to another "Lot Filled" sign.

"I know what we will do," Phil said. "Turn left."

Now, a left turn was certainly no easy matter in four lanes of crawling traffic, but Phil's father was brave, and finally, in the far left lane, at the corner, turn signal on, he said to Phil, "Now, just what is it you want me to do here!"

"Turn into that parking lot across the street."

"You mean the one with all the barricades at the entrance?"

"That's the one."

Living in a city like Baltimore, one learns the tricks. We were all a bit skeptical, but by now Phil's father was beginning to enjoy this game of trying to find a parking space. The light changed. Around the corner we went and around the barricade (with at least 3 inches of clear-

ance on each side) and around again to the left. There right across from the ships was a nice empty parking space. We took it, got out all full of smiles, and strolled across the little patch of grass toward the water. As we looked up, there, moored in all her splendor, was the Danmark.

We had arrived just as the ship was opening for touring. There was a bit of a line, but not much, and we soon were on board. It certainly is an impressive vessel — over 250 feet in length. The young Danish crew members were wonderful (and quite attractive!) They seemed to be happy to talk to Phil's father and tell him about their life aboard (also as trainees.) We went below to the mess, where the crew lives. The Danmark is one of the few sailing ships where the crew still sleep in hammocks, and Phil, Sr. found the area where he thought his hammock had been. The one thing that he said he regretted was that the crew was all male in 1943. Now of the 80 or so trainees, 19 are women. Can you imagine what a wonderful time those women must have! After some picture taking and listening to music coming from aboard some of the ships, we headed back out of town.

Later Annalee and I went down to Fell's Point for dinner and while waiting for a table (people were still everywhere) we toured another of the ships which was anchored at the Broadway Pier — The Esmeralda, from Chili, which is even larger than the Danmark (over 370 feet long!)

See SHIPS, page 17



By Roberta Hamlin

'X' marks the spot for birding near Culpeper

By MARK GATEWOOD

Most birders can remember the avian encounter that first turned them on to birds. I can't, which comes as no surprise to my co-workers. But My Wife the Biology Teacher vividly remembers her "first" bird and it's a good one: the scissor-tailed flycatcher.

This is a flamboyantly tropical-looking bird, pearly gray in color with startling salmon-pink patches beneath the wings. An adult scissor-tail is about 13 inches long and two thirds of that is devoted to an extravagant forked tail. The normal nesting range for these birds is the southern Great Plains states, from New Mexico to Louisiana and Nebraska southward to southern Texas and Mexico. When a pair set up housekeeping in June on a power line tower near Culpeper, it caused quite a stir in the Mid-Atlantic birding community.

The biggest stir was right here on Seawright Springs Road; the Biology Teacher had to go see "her" birds. So, on a mercifully cool day in early July we set out, bristling with optics and armed with precise directions from Yulee Lerner, who had made the trip a week earlier.

Being somewhat of a stay-at-home birder, I'd never gone on a

rare bird chase before and I didn't know what to expect when I reached the site. I was hoping for sort of a festival atmosphere — some portable toilets, the local Boy Scout Troop parking cars, the Ruritans selling funnel cakes and embroidered ball caps saying, "I Saw the scissor-tails."

Of course, I was disappointed. When we reached the spot, there were three cars parked on the side of the road and half a dozen birders were milling about on the pavement, directing their scopes and binocs in no particular direction. This was alarming; I'd expected to find at least one birder who could point me to "The Bird" so we could check off our sighting and go back home. "We saw one about 10 minutes ago," one birder said. None of them had even definitely located the nest on the huge steel Tinker Toy tower in the hayfield along the road. The two-hour drive was starting to weigh heavily on my mood when someone said, "There he is!"

The first thing you notice about a scissor-tail is that it really does have a heck of a long tail. In flight, the bird looks like a big italic letter X. The second thing you'll probably notice is that the tail is something of an aeronautical liability; the poor bird seems to be tipped

backwards as if the tail were dragging him to the ground. A little research back home revealed that the tail is used in courtship display. It's one of those fashion statements that seem necessary in bringing the sexes together, even though the practical applications are limited — kind of like high-heels or wearing a ball cap backwards.

Now the long drive was forgotten. Friends, we stayed there for two hours, standing on the pavement, watching these birds fly back and forth from the nest to feeding areas. The family from Silver Spring, Md., and the folks from Northern Virginia left, replaced by a trio from Baltimore and some others from D.C. Baltimore Guy #1 had the best optics — one of these telescopes that cost as much as my car — and he got a good fix on the nest. It was about 12 feet off the ground, in the junction of three of the steel angle-iron members of the tower frame. The goal now was to determine what was going on in there.

We couldn't see in to the nest the way it was situated. Only the female's head and tail — the latter jutting up at a 45 degree angle — were visible, so we concentrated on watching what happened when the longer-tailed male returned from foraging trips. The female would briefly leave the nest and the male would land and stick his head in. The telescope man said he could see the male's throat working as though

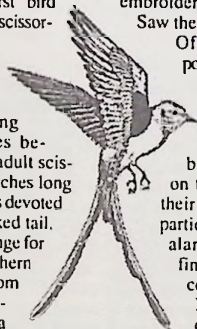
the bird was regurgitating (I'm sorry if you're reading this over a meal; I'm just reporting the facts). This meant that the eggs had hatched and the birds were feeding young.

The best show was when the male flew over our heads to the mowed field across the road from the tower. Although we saw him take a few insects on the wing, he did most of his foraging on the ground. I think it goes back to that tail thing, being too unwieldy to allow for agile flying needed to catch bugs in flight. The bird's activity on the ground gave us the best

opportunities to see the salmon-pink underwing patches and gave rise to a little bit of birder humor — just in case you didn't think there was such a thing. Baltimore Guy #1: "Boy, you can really see the salmon under his wings;" Baltimore Guy #2: "Where'd he get salmon? From the river?" (The Rapidan River was about half a mile away; get it?)

The Biology Teacher was in Bird Nirvana the whole time. After all, this was not only about the birds, but about recollections of her

See FLYCATCHER, page 20



The scissor-tailed flycatcher viewing area is little more than a lonely stretch of road near Culpeper where a few eager souls wait for a sighting of the bird.

Photo by Mark Gatewood

Chinese chestnut tree pushes tree hugger to the brink

Having been a tree hugger all my life, I am having a hard time dealing with my feelings of hatred toward my neighbor's Chinese chestnut tree. Usually, I am the one arguing NOT to cut down trees; but in this case, I'd love to be the one to take a saw to it.

The tree is absolutely beautiful, this must be said. But it reeks. It smelled so bad that I spent several days dealing with allergic-type reactions to it. I even actually became nauseous. It reeks so bad that when we recently had company, one of our guests thought it was a sewer problem.

"Oh, I'm so glad you mentioned the tree," she said. "I thought you were having some bad sewer problems, and I didn't really want to mention it."

This is one pretty foul smelling tree.

My husband, a Chinese-chestnut-tree-hater from way back, grew up with one in his neighborhood. He always hated them. I don't find that hard to believe since he always wants to chop down some tree for a variety of reasons — either it's too close to the house or it's not a "good tree," or what

ever. The thing is, though I hate to admit it, he is usually right. And this time he is absolutely right. The tree must go.

I mentioned it to my mom and she immediately said, "Hey those are the best kind of chestnuts. They are what I use in my stuffing at Thanksgiving."

More reason to feel guilty over my treacherous feelings about the tree. All of these years, I have enjoyed mom's chestnut stuffing. And here I am, herbalist/vegetarian/earth-loving person, having no appreciation for the tree that actually bears the nut we have come to long for at Thanksgiving.

Oh, well.

I mentioned this to my husband, who I can always depend on to be a fount of information (most of which is useless to me, but I humor him), and he tells me that the American chestnut tree no longer exists as it once did. That it was wiped out by a blight that was brought here from Asia. Maybe, he says, it was the import of the Chinese chestnut tree that did it in. Hmm. Maybe I do have a good reason to hate the

tree. I decided to check into it.

What I found out is that like many of our plants and trees, the American chestnut tree has a fascinating, albeit, tragic history.

According to the American Chestnut Foundation, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the American Chestnut was one of the most important trees in the forests from Maine south to Florida, from the Piedmont west to the Ohio Valley. In the middle of its range only a few generations ago, a count of trees would have turned up one chestnut for every four oaks, birches, maples and other hardwoods. And the trees were huge. In virgin forests throughout their range, mature chestnuts averaged up to five feet in diameter and up to 100 feet tall. Many specimens of eight to 10 feet in diameter were recorded.

Native wildlife from birds to bears, squirrels to deer, depended on the tree's abundant crops of nutritious nuts.

What wasn't consumed was sold. Chestnuts were an important cash crop for many Appalachian families. As the year-end holidays approached, nuts were sent to New York and Philadelphia and other big cities where street vendors sold them fresh-roasted.

The wood of the trees was reddish-brown, lightweight, soft, easy to split, resistant to decay, and it did not warp or shrink. Because of its resistance to decay, industries sprang up throughout the region to use wood from the American chestnut for posts, poles, piling, railroad ties, and split-rail fences. Its straight-grained wood was ideal for building log cabins, furniture, and caskets.

The bark and wood were rich in tannic acid, which provided tannins for use in the tanning of leather. More than half of the vegetable tannin used by the American leather industry at the turn of the century came from the American chestnut.

So, you see, it was a very big deal when the tree became ill with blight (*Endothia parasitica*) that was indeed brought over from Asia about 1904. Within 50 years, the tree was wiped out. It is believed that the fungus was unintentionally introduced into America from Asian chestnut trees that were imported as nursery stock. It was considered chic by certain members

Down to Earth

By
Mollie Bryan



of our culture to have such trees.

Was it actually from the Chinese chestnut tree variety that sits in my neighbor's yard? Well, that is yet to be discovered; scientists are not really certain.

The good people at the American Chestnut Foundation, the American Chestnut Cooperators' Foundation, and several other institutes and research facilities are attempting to bring back the American chestnut. For now, it only matures to a certain point, and dies way before it even blooms.

We gardeners are active participants in our ecosystem. And I have to wonder what kind of lessons there are for us in the saga of the American chestnut. I leave that for you to ponder.

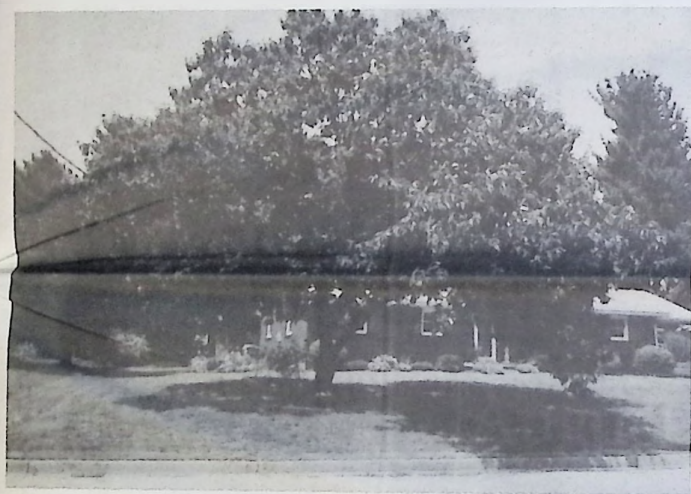
As a garden/nature columnist, I am interested in gardening and plants in the holistic sense. I want to learn more about the uses and folklore of herbs, plants, and trees. Also, I sometimes fear that we will lose the old ways and traditions in this hurried culture of e-mails, beepers, and overnight mail. This column is my way of starting a conversation, helping to keep plant traditions alive. I'd like to hear from you.

As for the tree across the street, my neighbor mentioned to me that she was feeling nauseous one day while doing the yard work. "I think it's the heat," she said.

"Either that, or it's the smell from that tree," I volunteered.

"You know, I have several people after me to cut that thing down. Not only does it smell, but it's hard to clean-up after, with those spiky nuts," she said.

"Well, that's a really pretty tree," I said. "But I believe I'd cut it down." —



Yes, it's a beautiful Chinese chestnut tree. But is it worth the stink?

Photo by Mollie Bryan

Crape Myrtle: A late summer favorite

Any tree or shrub that flowers in the summer has to be a favorite with gardeners. Crape Myrtle or Crepe Myrtle — *Lagerstroemia indica* — fits the bill. It is a small ornamental with an attractive multi-stemmed trunk and exfoliating pink/gray bark that makes a nice specimen in the lawn or shrub border.

All crape myrtles prefer full sun, grow in most soils, and need fertilizing once a year in the spring. Water in dry summer and prune lightly in late winter while dormant. Remove only diseased or crossed branches. Similar to dogwoods, crape myrtles look best when left to grow naturally.

Once the heavy clusters of

flowers have faded, large green seedpods form that tend to weigh down the branches. Some gardeners believe the seedpods are flowerbuds. Don't be fooled. Flowerbuds are smaller. Clip directly behind the seed clusters with sharp clippers. New flowers will appear. The same is true of butterfly bush (*buddleia*). Remove the faded blossoms to generate new flowers.

At this year's Crape Myrtle Festival (July 15-16) in the Tidewater area, two new crape myrtles were introduced.

"Dynamite" is the first true red tree form. The cherry red flowers open in July and will continue to

In the Garden

By Jenifer Bradford



bloom until frost. It needs almost no pruning, will reach 20 feet at maturity, is drought tolerant, and is resistant to powdery mildew.

"Pocomoke" is a true miniature hybrid with deep rose-pink flowers. It will grow to 19 inches tall and 35 inches wide in a pot after eight years. Think of an azalea and "Pocomoke" can double as a patio plant, a border shrub, or in a mass planting.

Always buy the new cultivars because they are hardier and more resistant to powdery mildew. These cultivars were introduced by the National Arboretum. Look for their native American names such as "Yuma," "Cherokee," and "Seminole."

I would always choose a sheltered site out of bitter winds, but the crape myrtle is definitely a prime choice for summer gardeners. —

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Summer blockbusters

The Perfect Storm drowns audiences; The Patriot revolutionizes history

Is it unpatriotic to wish for a perfect summer movie?

Judging from *The Perfect Storm* and *The Patriot*, it is! Both movies are based on past events and both movies could have delivered so much more than they do.

First — *The Perfect Storm*. Based on Sebastian Junger's book by the same name, this is a story about the men of the *Andrea Gail* and its collision with the worst storm ever to hit New England. (I think this was the storm Pat Robertson prayed away from Virginia. It made landfall off Gloucester, Mass., perhaps explaining why his presidential bid didn't get off the ground in the 1992 primaries.) Fishing boat Captain Billy Tyne (George Clooney) is having a run of bad luck. Even chick-captain Linda Greenlaw (Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio) makes a better haul.

Determined to prove his fishing prowess and make some real money, he and his mate Bobby (Mark Wahlberg — *Boogie Nights*, *Three Kings*) and a crew of Gloucestermen (William Fichtner, John Reilly, Alfred Pierre, and John Hawkes) sail far out into the Atlantic to the Flemish Cap for the catch of their lives. As they haul in the fish, they don't realize that three storms are converging over the Atlantic to create *The Perfect Storm*. That's when they meet the real star of the movie — The Storm.

Foreshadowing starts early and dominates the first hour of the movie along with an attempt to make you care about any and all of the characters. Clooney (*Three Kings*, *One Fine Day*) is relatively uninspiring as the tormented sea captain whose love affair with fishing too often goes unrequited, and Mastrantonio (*The Abyss*, *Robin Hood Prince of Thieves*) spends most of her film time shrieking into a radio. A talented supporting cast (Karen Allen, Cherry Jones and the above mentioned actors) do little with their cardboard characters. Not that they could because everyone knows cardboard collapses when soaked with this much water.

Screenwriter William Wittliff (*Lonesome Dove*, *Honeysuckle Rose*) fails to capture the complexity or texture of Gloucester or the men and women who make their

living from the sea. Given Wittliff's trove of work, it's disappointing. A subplot of the rescuers and yet another group of people plucked from the stormy sea gets washed overboard in the film's confusing sequence of events and locales. Perhaps director Wolfgang Peterson shares some of the blame but he does give us the movie's title role in *The Perfect Storm*.

The Storm is incredible. The Storm (as digital as it may be) deserves an Oscar. (Will the Academy open a new category for best leading actor not played by a person?) The Storm takes your breath away. Peterson is a master of environment — he also directed *Das Boot*, *Air Force One*, and *Outbreak* — and he treats the audience to the full terror of *The Perfect Storm*.

In this summer's other big blockbuster-wannabe, writer Robert Rodat tries in his way to capture the horror of war in *The Patriot* — something he did credibly in 1999's *Saving Private Ryan*. With the direction of Roland Emmerich (*Stargate*, *Independence Day*, *Godzilla*) it is perhaps the only thing he accomplishes in this movie but it isn't as thrilling as *The Perfect Storm*. Actually, it leaves one wondering if it was actually Steven Spielberg who saved Private Ryan.

Having read many accounts of battles fought back in the days when the two opposing armies actually faced each other on the field of battle, it never ceases to amaze me how men lined up, shot at each other and, if they were left standing, reloaded and fired again. Where did their grit come from? How did they will themselves to fill the gap created by a fallen comrade? What kept them from running away as men to their right and to their left were blown apart by cannon or artillery? How did they face death and keep on fighting? *The Patriot* doesn't answer any of these questions. It too is filled with cardboard characters and virtual history. It has no depth.

The Patriot tells the tale of Benjamin Martin (Mel Gibson), South Carolina planter and French and Indian War Veteran, who is reluctant to join the revolutionary cause.

Having participated in atrocities against the French, he fears his sins will come back to haunt him. He forbids his oldest son Gabriel to join the patriots' cause. Gabriel, of course, defies him and joins the Continental Army anyway.

Then one day the war arrives in Martin's front yard in the form of Colonel William Tavington (Jason Isaacs) and his Redcoats. One of the soldiers guns down son Thomas Martin as the rest lead Gabriel away to be hung as a spy. Martin goes on a bloody rampage that immediately draws him into the conflict. Six years later (or two hours and 50 minutes in Hollywood time), America wins.

Mel Gibson's (*Payback*, *Braveheart*, *Lethal Weapon 1* through *35*) attempt at a more mature role needs some work. Don't get me wrong, Gibson is a favorite and he's good even when he's bad. (As my friend Susan Vass said, "No one can cry like Mel!") He simply couldn't sustain the tortured father role before reverting to Murdoch/William Wallace does 1776.

Heath Ledger (*10 Things I Hate about You*), a young Aussie now on the cover of every magazine in America, does a passable job as son Gabriel. And Jason Isaac's Tavington (*Armageddon*, *St. Ives*) is the best bad guy to come along in a long time. You can't wait for him to get his just reward.

The rest of the cast? Oy. Chris Cooper (*October Sky*, *A Thousand Pieces of Gold*) is given little to do with his massive talent. Joely Richardson (*King Ralph*, *The Echo*), as Charlotte and Martin's love interest, basically sits around, covertly eyeing Martin.

And Lisa Brenner (we don't care what she's been in, only whatever she is going to be in, we don't want to see it!), as Ann Howard, Gabriel's love interest, overacts her way through most of the movie. In a ridiculous scene, she stands up in a church and convinces most of the men to join the militia. It's a poorly written and poorly acted scene in which Howard coyly eyes Gabriel each time she quits ranting to draw a breath. I kept wishing one of the patriots-to-be would yell, "Sit down and shut up, woman!" Mercifully, the British

silence her, but not soon enough.

Skye McClure Bartusiak as the youngest Martin daughter probably gives the most riveting performance in the movie when she begs her father not to leave her. Even Hannah's mom could see that the movie was in serious need of editing (or in need of serious editing.) At some early point Colonel Burwell announces his wife is having a baby. After four years pass and the war ends, he tells Martin his wife had a baby three weeks ago. Boy, life was hard in the old days. Charlotte embraces Martin midway through the movie. Then in her next scene and the last scene in the movie she pops up holding an infant. Phew, childbearing was dangerous back then.

Most odious of all is how fast and loose this movie plays with history. The only thing it got right was that there was a revolution and the British did wear red coats. There were myriad historical inaccuracies both large and small. Benjamin Martin's character is loosely based on Francis Marion of Swamp Fox fame and Tavington is supposed to be the dastardly General Tarleton.

In reality, Marion wasn't a stellar human being and Tarleton wasn't a brutal psychopath. More atrocities were committed in South Carolina than perhaps anywhere else in the war. But South Carolina also produced more than its share of Tories,



loyalists to the crown rather than the patriot cause. Fortunately for us, Generals Cornwallis and Gates were too foolish to use them to their advantage and when the British vacated South Carolina for Virginia, Tory resistance collapsed. The final climactic battle scene is a composite of Guilford Courthouse and the Battle of Cowpens. The battle scenes were perhaps the most authentic but the blood and gore was gratuitous. *The Patriot* was supposed to be an epic. It turned out to be a disappointment of epic proportions.

Hannah's mom gives *The Perfect Storm* two-and-a-half bananas and *The Patriot* one-and-a-half bananas. *The Perfect Storm* is rated PG-13; contains language and sexual innuendo. *The Patriot* is rated R; no sex, no language, but violence and plenty of it. —

oFlycatcher

Continued from page 18

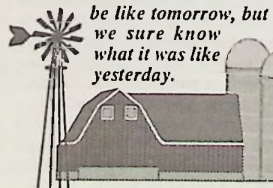
home territory where she grew up in the southwestern corner of Missouri. I'll have to admit, I can't remember the last time I've had so much fun standing in the middle of a country road. It was great fun being with a cosmopolitan group of savvy birders. We even hit the small world jackpot: Dr. Pinkston, if you're reading this, Amy says, "Hi!" Two hours was enough though and hunger and thirst started to become important factors, so we said our goodbyes to birds and birders and headed home.

Much later that night, the Biology Teacher got on the Internet and found some terrific information on scissor-tailed flycatchers through the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center of the United States Geological Survey (<http://www-npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/othrdata/okscisso/tropics.htm>).

Everything we had seen fit right in with the data: the female taking the incubating and brooding chores, the male in attendance to feed the young and chase intruders, even the nest site on an unforgiving steel structure. What were the birds doing here in Virginia? They do tend to wander as far north and east as Hudson Bay and New Brunswick — I think it's the aerodynamics of that tail again — and have been seen in Augusta County during the summer. Their preferred habitat for nesting is grassland with scattered trees or, apparently, utility towers. The Culpeper site was perfect, but there's plenty of good habitat around here, too. I'm sure that site will be watched closely next year to determine whether this nesting was a fluke or a trend. Stay tuned. And watch for the flying X in Augusta country. —

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.



Aug. 1, 1954 — Mount Rainier in Washington State was still covered with 16 inches of snow at the 5,500 foot level following a big snow season.

Aug. 11, 1940 — A major hurricane struck Savannah, Ga., and Charleston, S.C., causing the worst inland flooding since 1607.

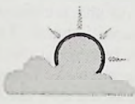
Aug. 26, 1976 — A weak tornado touched down briefly in the Hockley Hills near Kiana, Alaska, about 29 miles north of

the Arctic Circle.

Sept. 3, 1961 — Denver, Colo., received 4.2 inches of snow, its earliest snow of record.

Sept. 14, 1972 — Lightning struck a man near Waldport, Ore. — a young man who, it so happened, was carrying 35 pieces of dynamite.

Sept. 20, 1845 — A tornado traveled 275 miles across Lake Ontario, New York and Lake Champlain. —



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

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