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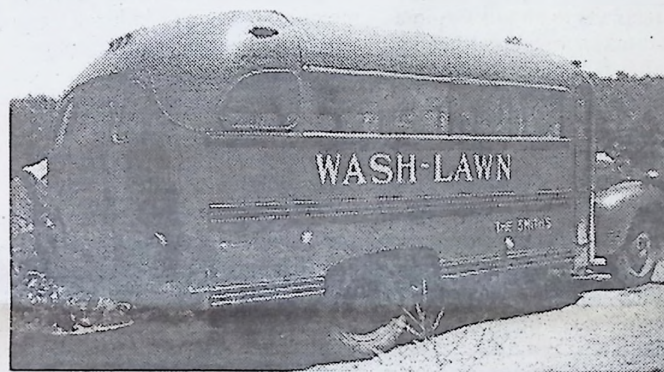


Lexington man recalls  
front row view of  
Hindenburg fire

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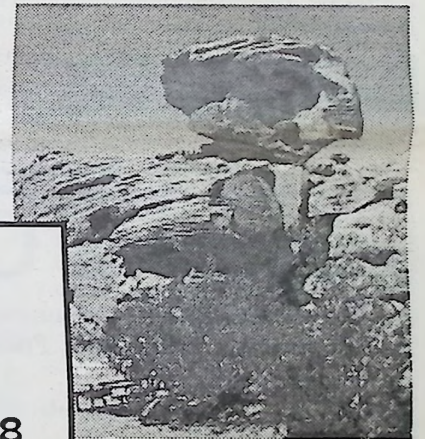
Travel over the mountain  
to Avon and a church  
homecoming that is a  
celebration of family, friends

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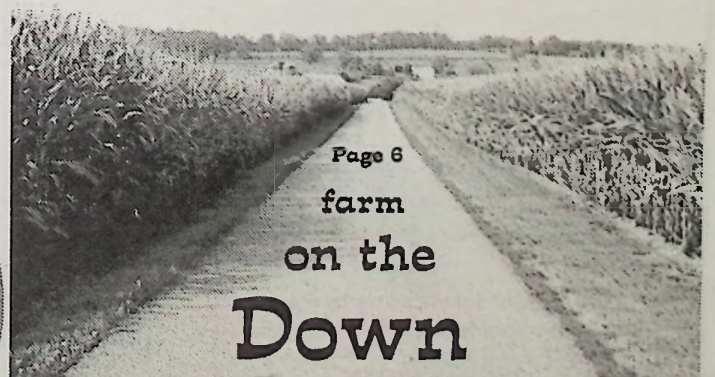
Sights of America's  
Southwest desert  
are out of this world

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Twins may look the same  
but are very different

Page 14



Page 6  
farm  
on the  
Down

# N 2000

# Augusta Farm Bureau honors local youths

## AC staff report

**WEYERS CAVE** — Five Augusta County youths were honored by Augusta Farm Bureau Federation at the group's annual meeting held recently.

Rosalea Riley, Aaron Shiflett, Katie Bunch, Christina Wilson and Kyle Cromer were recognized by AFBF as winners of contests held each year by Farm Bureau.

Miss Riley, a 2000 graduate of Buffalo Gap High School, was chosen Miss Augusta County Farm Bureau. She attends Virginia Tech and is a member of the Agriculture Education Society and volunteers her time to Appal Corps, an organization that helps rebuild communities. At Buffalo Gap she was president of the FFA, vice president of the National Honor Society and a member of the Gap Ruriteens. She is a member of Hebron Presbyterian Church and several state sheep production associations. She is the daughter of Donna and Doug Riley of Rt. 10, Staunton.

Shiflett was selected as the Farm Youth Leadership award recipient and as the Outstanding Young Agriculturist. He attends Fort Defiance School where he is vice president of the FFA. He is Augusta Federation reporter. He is active on the 4-



RILEY



SHIFLETT



WILSON



CROMER

H judging team, is a member of the 4-H Dairy Club and Honor Club. He is president of the Virginia Junior Holstein Association, shows dairy cattle and works on his family's farm. He is the son of Larry and Susie Shiflett of Piedmont.

The Mary Frances Houff Outstanding Citizenship Award was presented to Christina Wilson. She is a student at Buffalo Gap High School where she is FFA president. She has been on the Food Science National Team, public speaking team and parliamentary procedure team. She plans to attend Virginia Tech and major in animal health. She is the daughter of Joel and Edith Wilson of Swoope.

Winner of the AFBF senior essay contest was Kyle Cromer. He is a ninth grader at Buffalo Gap High School where he is a mem-

ber of FFA. He shows cattle in the 4-H and FFA Market Animal Show, runs cross country and helps with cattle and horses on the family farm. He is the son of Mike and Susan Cromer of Churchville.

Augusta Farm Bureau will be represented this year in the state discussion meet by Megan Seibel. A registered nurse, Mrs. Seibel is employed by Augusta Medical Center as a part-time pediatric nurse. She and her husband, Andy, have two daughters. Mrs. Seibel is a part-time faculty member at James Madison University and is case manager of the Harrisonburg Free Clinic.

In other business, Augusta Farm Bureau members considered legislative resolutions on a variety of subjects including everything from Virginia's Standards of Learning

for education to conservation of agriculture land. The group approved the following resolutions: recommend the elimination of Praxis test for college graduates who are entering the field of education or make the test specific to match the student's core area of study; support the state sending back to localities a greater portion of the sales tax revenue in lieu of increased real estate taxes; support the state sending back to localities a greater portion of state income tax revenue in lieu of increased real estate taxes; request implementation and support of Agriculture in the Classroom by local school boards; urge school officials to make sure each student who signs up for ag education is given the opportunity to take the class; support revision of SOLs that makes the test a factor in graduation in-

stead of the sole criterion; recommend Augusta County immediately take action toward conserving ag land by the reduction of the number of residential lots created in land that is zoned agriculture and pursue the purchase of development rights.

Executive officers and directors were elected. Officers elected by Farm Bureau members included Charles Wonderley, president; Daniel Wampler, vice president; and Vickie Drumheller, women's chairman. Elected to three-year board terms were Larry Weeks, Wayne; Shirley Shomo, Beverley Manor; Betty Hawpe, Middle River; Dale Reeves, North River; Ben Howell, Riverheads; Steve Fitzgerald, South River; David Shiflett, Matt Cauley, Thomas Thacker and Mary Ruleman, at-large directors. —

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# Church's homecoming is feast for the body, mind and soul

By NANCY SORRELLS

AVON — In rural Virginia, summertime means church homecomings — those annual Sunday services where families from near and far come home to worship in the church where they or their parents or grandparents were raised. People come from the big cities, from out of state, and from over the mountains to squeeze into pews bulging with visitors. After the services designed to fill the soul, everyone gathers to fill the body with platters and casseroles full of homemade food.

Though there are plenty of homecomings, most pale in comparison to the old-fashioned welcome I experienced at Union Baptist Church in Avon, Va. The hours I spent at this rural African American church were a complete sensory experience — all five senses were engaged at high speed just to keep up with the sights, sounds, and feel of a powerful, active Sunday service. But any exhaustion from the high-energy service was abetted with the bountiful feast which followed and which filled us with the tastes and smells of homemade country cooking from days gone by.

My friend Rita Wilson is the one



The Wash Lawn laundry bus, which belonged to Genivive Smith, was converted to public transportation once each year to transport friends and relatives to homecoming at Union Baptist Church in Avon.

Photo courtesy Rita Wilson

who convinced me to accompany her over Afton Mountain to the homecoming. The trek is an annual renewal of her roots and revives happy childhood memories. Rita's grandparents, Genivive Garland Smith and Nathaniel Smith grew up in Nelson County — Genivive in Avon and Nathaniel in Greenfield. Early in the 20th century, they had moved to Staunton where Genivive established a thriving laundry busi-

ness called Wash Lawn, so named for the sheets and other linen spread on the lawn to dry. The business was so prosperous that Genivive had been able to purchase a bus for laundry pick-up and drop-off service.

Although the Smiths had established themselves in Staunton, they were drawn back to Nelson County every year on the third Sunday in August for Union's homecoming. The small frame church, which runs lengthwise along the crest of a hill, was established in 1866. Times have changed within the African American community, and within the country as a whole in the years since the church's founding right after the Civil War. Through the years congregational members have moved away to find jobs, to secure better educations, to serve in the armed forces, or to be a part of big city life.

Despite being dispersed throughout the country and involved in fast-paced worlds far removed from Avon, their souls are inevitably tugged back every third Sun-

day in August. When Rita was little, her grandmother would load all the relatives and friends with roots in Nelson County into her Wash Lawn bus. The trip over the mountain was an all-day affair complete with several church services interspersed with good food and fellowship.

This year was no different. More than 200 people crowded the sanctuary and the basement and overflowed into the vestibule of the country church. As they testified and greeted old family and friends, we learned that they came from places like New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia, as well as places just a bit closer like Staunton. Those who came home, dressed for the occasion. The best fall foliage display in the Valley is but a dim and murky collection of colors compared to the palette of attire seen at Union. The clothes were nothing if not the cutting edge of fashion, fresh from the big cities, and the hats, oh my, the hats were statements all in themselves.

There were four of us in our caravan over the mountain: Aunt Susie Johnson, Rita, Rita's grandson Matthew Veney, and me. We arrived halfway through the devotional/praise service which is 30 minutes of extemporaneous singing, testifying, speaking, and movement all flowing freely as the spirit moved through the crowd.

At 11 a.m. the worship service began with white-gloved ushers

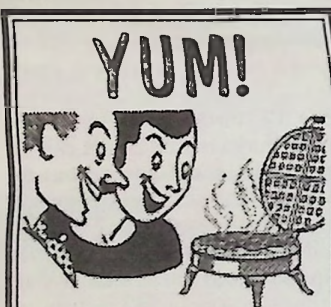
Matthew Veney, grandson of Rita Wilson, represents a new generation celebrating his heritage at Union Baptist Church in Avon.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

leading in the choir and ministers. That's when the excitement and activity level really moved into high gear. Preacher Phillip Carter exhorted us from the pulpit and from the aisles from his knees. from the pews and from in the air when he leapt up, shouted and punctuated the space above his head with his fist. He talked of Jesus as a shepherd of men and then borrowed a deacon's cane and swept through the congregation pulling "sheep" from the pews.

And just when the preacher had pumped everybody into a pitched fervor, the choir moved in to raise the activity level to a new plane of existence. There was clapping, shouting, organ music, and piano playing. The music and rhythm were superb (except for one musically challenged white woman — me — sitting near the front) and the spirit moved through the notes and electrified the congregation. Everyone there (except me) knew the words and was uplifted by the selections. I struggled along trying

See UNION, page 13



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Union Baptist Church in Avon was founded in 1866.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

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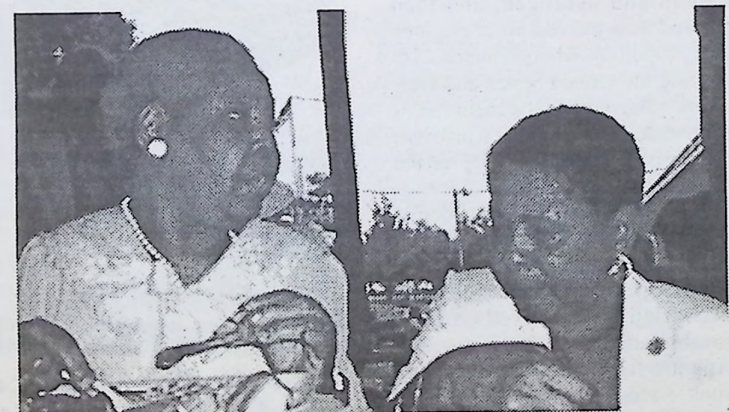
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Rita Wilson (right) of Staunton enjoys homecoming lunch at Union Baptist Church with Susie Johnson, her aunt.

Photo by Matthew Veney

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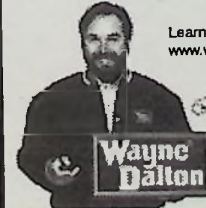
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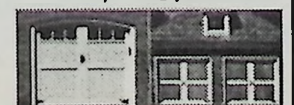
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# Yesterday once more



## Lexington man recalls front row view of Hindenburg fire

By NANCY SORRELLS

LEXINGTON — Frank Ward was a 17-year-old high school student looking for an opportunity to earn a dollar and maybe daydream a little about his own future on May 6, 1937. Little did he know that by the time the day was over he would have witnessed a tragic moment in history.

That was the day that the German dirigible, Hindenburg, crashed onto the sandy airfield in Lakehurst, N.J., in a horrible spectacle of flame and human tragedy.

For Frank the dollar was an added bonus. He was interested in dirigibles and during the five times the Hindenburg had come to Lakehurst in 1936 he had an opportunity to explore the passenger section of the ship.

Lakehurst Naval Air Station was the center of the U.S. Navy's lighter-than-air flight program which involved both dirigibles and blimps. Blimps, the more familiar of the two to Americans today, resembled giant balloons which could be deflated and rolled up, while dirigibles are considered rigid airships, that is they have a structural frame over which is stretched a covering or skin.

Both types of ships were lifted with gases that were lighter than air, helium and hydrogen, and then steered and moved with engines and propellers. Many countries, including the United States and Germany, believed that the main use of such vehicles was military which was the reason that the U.S. Navy ran the airfield at Lakehurst. In the mid-1930s, however, Germany began operating highly successful commercial flights with two of its dirigibles, Graf Zeppelin and Hindenburg. The two dirigibles pioneered safe, enjoyable and relatively fast trans-Atlantic flights and the future of such endeavors was enjoying a bright future in early May 1937.

As an engineer at Lakehurst Naval Air Station, Ward's father was

intimately involved in the lighter-than-air flight programs. As a result, when the Hindenburg began making commercial flights to the U.S. in 1936 and using Lakehurst as a landing strip, Ward was there.

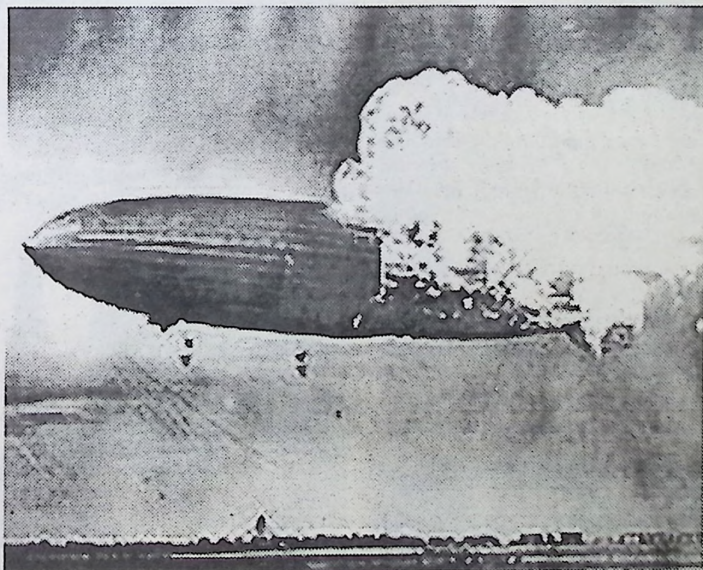
The Hindenburg was an engineering marvel and still holds the record as the largest aircraft ever to fly. It was 804 feet in length and 135 feet in diameter. The gas bags that provided the Hindenburg's lift contained over 7 million cubic feet of hydrogen. Four 1,200 horsepower engines powered the craft which could cruise at a top speed of 84 miles per hour. By comparison, the Titanic was only 78 feet longer than the Hindenburg. With several years of flying and millions of miles logged, the track and safety record of both the Hindenburg and its smaller sister ship, the Graf Zeppelin, was impeccable.

Unlike other similar airships, the Hindenburg carried all the passengers inside the hull in-

stead of in a gondola. The passenger compartment had a dining room, a promenade deck, a state room and a lounge. It was truly a luxury liner and the passengers on that fateful cruise included many high level businessmen.

The period in which these two airships flew was one filled with global political tension so the German dirigibles served another purpose in addition to providing commercial transportation. Adolf Hitler emblazoned the airships with giant swastikas and used them as propaganda tools. The Hindenburg had those symbols of Nazi Germany in prominent places on the tail section.

The Hindenburg had already made five successful voyages to America in 1936, each time docking at Lakehurst. To complete the voyage the ship had to hover over the airfield and drop large coils of ropes which were grabbed by the 200 people on the ground who



Static electricity from atmospheric storms might have ignited the highly flammable aluminum-powder varnish that covered the Hindenburg's skin causing a fire and the resulting explosions which brought the craft down.



Frank Ward of Lexington holds a cutaway diagram of the Hindenburg. Ward was among the ground crew holding lines thrown down from the Hindenburg when it exploded in midair May 6, 1937.

Photo by Nancy Sorrells

worked together to haul the ship to the mooring mast.

Because so many people were required to pull the ship down, the Navy beefed up its ground crew every time the Hindenburg arrived. In addition to the regular naval personnel who made up the bulk of the crew, unemployed men in the area and a few high school kids, like Ward, were asked to help. For their services they were paid one dollar.

"There must be very few people left alive who pulled it down. Most of the men were Navy men or unemployed men in their 20s and 30s. There were only a couple of high schoolers and we were the youngest ones," notes Ward.

In the years since the crash, Ward has studied the history of lighter-than-air transportation and knows all the details of the Hindenburg history. He has become an expert on that fateful voyage that left on a Sunday evening from Frankfort amidst celebration and the playing of bands. For Captain Max Pruss, it was his first time in command. When he gave the "up ship" order

the ropes were dropped and the ship rose 500 feet. Then the motors were turned on and the dirigible moved forward and followed the Rhine River to the North Sea.

At 10 p.m. the passengers enjoyed a meal in the dining room even as their ship was turning west along the North Sea. At 1 a.m. the Hindenburg crossed land's end in Great Britain and headed out to open sea. The next two days were filled with extremely heavy headwinds that slowed the 800-foot ship and forced it to an altitude that, at times, was only 500 feet above the choppy Atlantic.

On Wednesday, May 6, the passengers saw daybreak over Newfoundland, then passed Boston and Providence around noon. At 3 p.m. on a bright and sunny afternoon,

See CRASH, page 5



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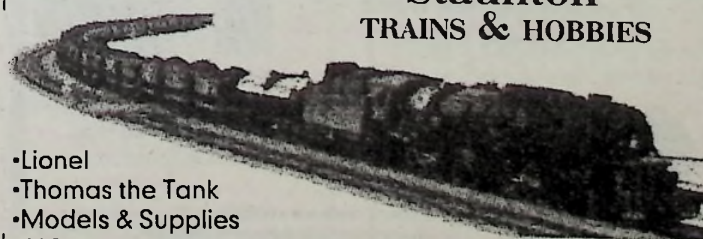
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# Crash

Continued from page 4

the dirigible circled around New York City much to the delight of the crowds below. Boats in the harbor sent sprays of water in celebration and people cheered at the sight of the giant ship. At about 3:30 the ship passed over the Statue of Liberty and headed due west toward Lakehurst which was 60 miles away.

Back at Lakehurst the ground crew was assembling even as black ominous clouds filled the sky. Ward had skipped out of track and baseball practice in order to help pull the Hindenburg in and so he stood with the other members of the group waiting for a glimpse of the ship.

"Suddenly a giant deluge came and soaked those of us on the ground," remembered Ward. Then the dirigible arrived but could not

land due to the stormy conditions. "Capt. Pruss scribbled a note that he could not land, but would go out to sea and await a message. Then he tied it on a weight and dropped it overboard."

It was not long before Pruss received word that the weather had cleared so he turned around and brought his ship back, hours behind the scheduled completion of the journey.

"Suddenly from the south we saw the ship. She was coming in higher and faster than those times when I saw her the year before. The captain knew they needed to get in quickly because of the possibility of more storms and because they were hours late anyway," said Ward.

The ship crossed and made a big slow turn back toward the mooring mast. On the ground the men stood in clusters of 15 waiting for

the ropes to drop. Ward was under the bow and could see the gondola where the captain ran the ship.

"The airship opened its hatches and someone tossed out the curls of ropes. They were big, thick ropes 150 to 200 feet long and had tentacles so everyone had a little rope to grab onto from the big ropes," he explained.

At that moment, Ward said he was engaged in a little bit of high school daydreaming. "Captain Pruss opened the window and put his hands on the sill and looked down at us. I was just dreaming, looking up at Captain Pruss and thinking, 'Wouldn't this be a great job? I'd like to do something like this one day. Gee, that's a great job.'"

Moments later, Ward was distracted from his daydreaming with a shout, "What's going on at the end of the ship?" Then far off in the distance, nearly three football fields away in length, people appeared to be dropping their ropes and running. Then toward the middle the men began dropping their ropes and running.

"Suddenly someone said, 'Hey, she's on fire,' and I looked but was still ignorant of making any move. Then she made a sudden, precipitous dip and someone said, 'She's coming down.'"

At that point, everybody who had not already done so dropped the ropes and ran back about 25 yards as the flaming Hindenburg plunged onto the sandy airfield. Within moments the skin of the dirigible, which was painted with a silver aluminum paint, was seared off the aluminum frame.

"There was a tremendous crash. It was an eerie sound of screeching and the crumbling of metal. Within a matter of seconds the covering was totally burned off and there was nothing left but the cherry red metal," he recalled.

Although the sandy ground at Lakehurst softened the impact of the crash, the conflagration that swept across the airship took its toll on the 36 passengers and 61 crew members.

"The scene was horrible. As soon as the ship crashed, human beings began to emerge. I remember one man walked out with his suit all on fire. He stumbled and fell flat in the mud. Instinctively we all went forward to help but we were told to stand fast that only Navy personnel were to go forward to assist," he remembered.

And so the young high school student could only watch in horror as the scene unfolded and then was compounded by a small, rural air station unprepared for an emergency of such magnitude. "The naval base only had a small hospital and one ambulance and there were maybe six G.I. trucks. The two closest towns were both seven miles away and it took them 20 minutes to get there. People were lying on the ground in agony and then they were picked up and stacked in the back of trucks. There was a great deal of confusion," he added.

The amazing thing is that so

many survived. In all, 36 people lost their lives: 13 passengers, 22 crewmen and one civilian member of the ground crew.

The Hindenburg came down at 7:25 p.m. and it was beginning to get dark when Ward and his father finally left the airfield. "I remember thinking what a terrible thing this was and I can remember turning around and walking away and thinking about the horror of it," he says 64 years later.

The wreckage continued to smolder for two days after the tragedy. The military posted guards around the smoking hulk and launched an immediate investigation. Although the highly flammable hydrogen lifting gas has long been blamed as the culprit for the fire, that was probably not the case. The conclusion of the investigation was that static electricity from the

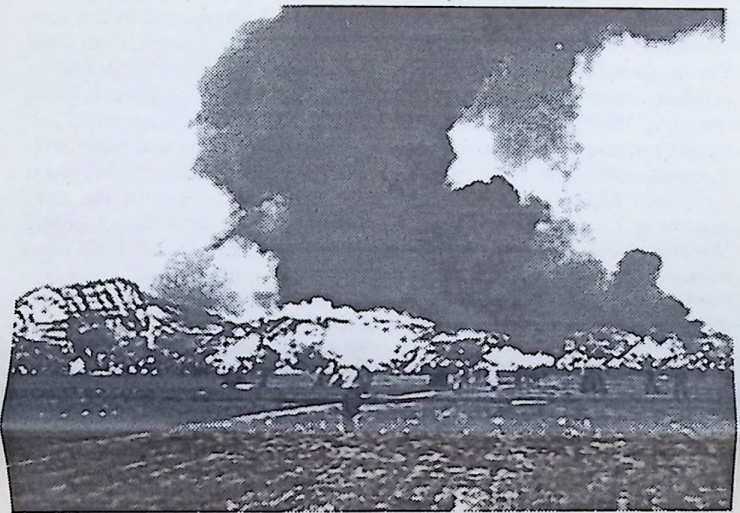
things. I lived 10 miles away and I didn't see that spot where it crashed again until about 10 years ago," Ward explained.

After high school, he went on to college and by then the U.S. was in war so after college he served in the military for several years and finally spent a lifetime teaching and coaching.

He has been back to Lakehurst twice, most recently this past May to attend the memorial service held at the airfield at 7:25 p.m. on May 6 of each year. The Navy Lakehurst Historical Society conducts the service to remember those who lost their lives in the Hindenburg and in all airship accidents throughout history. ([www.nlhs.com](http://www.nlhs.com)) A monument marks the spot where the crash occurred and the museum nearby tells the story of lighter-than-air aviation. While touring the



Within a matter of minutes of the first explosions on board the Hindenburg, the dirigible crashed into the mooring mast to which it had been attempting to dock.



Wreckage from the Hindenburg lies in a heap at Lakehurst Naval Air Station in New Jersey. Of the 97 people on board the craft, 35 were killed. One member of the ground crew also perished in the crash.

atmospheric storms ignited the highly flammable aluminum-powder varnish that covered the ship's skin. Witnesses said that the fire on the covering started first and then ignited the hydrogen. Ironically the hydrogen explosion and fire did little damage to the people on board. Hydrogen is 15 times lighter than air and when the gas ignited the flames went up and away from the people. It was the burning ship and the fire in the diesel fuel and other combustible materials on board the Hindenburg that fell to the ground and burned for hours.

Although Mother Nature has received blame for starting the fire, there is also a continued and persistent group of people which claims sabotage, maybe from within Hitler's own inner circle, was the cause.

As for Ward, when he turned and walked away the image faded from his mind for many years. "I had to go back to school the next day and nobody ever mentioned it. I will say that my track and baseball coaches weren't too happy that I had ducked out on practice the day before and they let me know about that.

"As a youth the world turns and you get caught up in your own

museum with his wife, Jeanne, Ward was asked by a staff member if he had ever received his medal.

When Ward expressed surprise, the staff member laughed and explained that nobody ever received them, but that Hitler had sent an official medal, complete with swastikas, and a signed parchment over as thank-yous to all those who had been involved in the tragedy. The list of those intended to receive medals included Frank Ward. However, the museum official explained that the medals were never distributed because of increasingly hostile relations between the U.S. and Germany. In fact, most of the medals were shipped back to Germany. At least one medal and certificate, however, remained in America and eventually wound up in the Lakehurst museum.

For his part, Ward says he's probably just as glad that he didn't have a medal from a man that he ended up going to Europe and fighting against. As for the Hindenburg crash, it was just one of those coincidences of history.

"I just happened to be there," he said. —

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# What I did on my 19-hour summer vacation

(not to be confused with what I did on my 15 1/2-hour summer vacation)

Down on the farm, I'm thinking that I am a happy woman. And here's why...

I'm sorry if you didn't get to take a vacation this past summer. If you didn't get to take a vacation, maybe it's because I took two vacations. You see, that's how things work in the vacation cosmos — if someone is taking more than their share of vacations, then just so everything will stay on an even keel, someone somewhere is going to miss getting to take a vacation. So if you didn't get to take a vacation, it might have been my fault because I took two.

Well, maybe my vacations weren't typical vacations. If you recall in the summer issue of *Augusta Country* I told you about the rambling 15 1/2-hour "vacation" that took me and my father on a winding four-state odyssey through Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania (remember, it's pronounced Penn-sa-vein-ya, not Pencil-vein-e-a) and Maryland. We were searching for a hay elevator to buy. We closed the deal on the hay elevator a couple days after returning from the 15 1/2-hour vacation during which I also looked at a couple tractors for sale.

The second vacation my father and I took sent us back to Pennsylvania for a second look-see on the tractor buying mission. Although we traveled through the same four-state region as in our previous trip, our second trip found us concentrating our tractor shopping efforts solely in the Keystone State.

My goal for the second trip was two-fold: 1) To find an International Harvester 1066 for sale; and 2) To break my father of his life-enduring compulsion to look at farm equipment wherever he encounters it. It's always nice to achieve one's goals. But then, on the other hand, when you achieve all your goals, is there anything left to work toward? Long-story-short: I found a tractor to buy; I've been invited to appear on Oprah for a show she's putting together about daughters whose fathers have compulsive farm equipment tendencies. (I was close, folks, so close. But more on this later.)

Oh the August air was clear and cool when I picked up my father at 5 a.m. — yes, 5 a.m., she says as she scrubs her hand across her face — to depart for our second summer vacation. We had left at 6 a.m.

## DOWN ON THE FARM

BY  
BETTY JO  
HAMILTON



the morning of our first summer vacation. When I told my father we would be taking a second vacation, he requested an earlier departure time, so I acquiesced to a 5 a.m. departure time. I don't understand the strategy here. What were we going to do — stage pre-dawn sneak attacks on unsuspecting farm equipment dealers and make deals before they had gotten their pencil's sharpened for the day? Anyway, 5 a.m. was the designated time for departure and that's when the rubber hit the road.

We made excellent time heading north on I-81 at that hour of the morning — all the trucks were pulled into the reststops and any travelers who had any sense were snugly tucked in their motel room beds dreaming about free continental breakfasts and waiting for their wake-up calls. But my father and I (also known as the Virginia Farm Equipment Militia) were on the prowl.

My father's first request of the day was to stop at the West Virginia Welcome Center, a request he made while we were still safely within the boundary of Virginia. "We are NOT stopping in West Virginia," I responded rather firmly, then I recalled that someone, having read my previous article when I described my insistence on not stopping in West Virginia so my father could obtain food on our last jaunt and how they were worried that his dietary needs had not been met and perhaps I was being a little harsh in not letting him get food when he wanted it. So I threw on the brakes just in time to launch us off the interstate at the very last Virginia exit of I-81 where we stopped at a convenience store for coffee and leg-stretching.

I will admit that when I travel I do tend to get rather focused on my

final destination. I am a Point A to Point B person, for the most part, and particularly if I'm traveling with some business intent. "I'm here. I want to go there. I don't care about what's in between." The need for gasoline is the only practical reason for de-celeration. Conserving travel time by grouping stops for human amenities with the need to refill the car's gas tank is one of my travel rules. I would make a heck'eva NASCAR pit crew boss.

So my father's request to stop at the West Virginia Welcome Center was breaking two of my personal travel rules: Rule No. 1 — It's West Virginia. Don't stop for anything; and Rule No. 2 — You don't need gas, so why are you stopping? But compromises can always be reached — I agreed to stop, although we didn't need gas, but we didn't stop in West Virginia. Everybody wins.

The Virginia Farm Equipment Militia pressed on and arrived in Shippensburg, Pa., at the first stop of the day. Mind you, I had predetermined three dealers I wanted to visit. By the end of the day, we had visited six dealers. Anybody out there want to guess who came up with the other three dealers to visit??

We rolled onto the first dealer's lot (actually the backyard behind his house) at 7:57 a.m. My father got out of the car and began strolling around the many John Deere tractors — John Deere tractors??? I thought she was looking for an International. What are they doing at a John Deere dealership? As I was saying, my father began strolling around the lot where the many John Deere tractors were sitting and wandered into the machine shop adjacent to the tractor lot. He came out of the machine shop and mumbled something about there

not being anybody around. (Gee, 7:57 a.m., wonder where everyone could be??? Was that my stomach growling or is someone snoring?)

A few minutes later a man came out the backdoor of the house and walked slowly down the walk toward the machine shop. We knew the man was an Amish-Mennonite, although we hadn't previously met him and I wasn't completely prepared for the first Amish-Mennonite encounter of the day. But I got up to speed pretty quickly when, in greeting us, the man said, "Good morning-ga. Somevun must have got up vid de chickens."

The man was very pleasant and courteous to us and was even helpful enough to call across town to an International dealer to see if he had any 1066s on the lot. Now I know you're thinking that most people looking to buy International equipment would just go to an International dealer. But not us. No, we go to a John Deere dealer and have him call an International dealer to find the equipment we want. Part of the problem here is that I wanted an International tractor and my father wanted a John Deere tractor. This splintered the whole focus of the trip. It was like that all day — back and forth — like a game of ping pong — John Deere — International — John Deere — International — John Deere — International — green — red — green — red.

While I would have been happy enough to buy a John Deere tractor, finding one I could afford was another problem all to itself. And I'm not sure all the green paper it takes to buy green paint translates into any genuine mechanical advantage. The company slogan, "Nothing runs like a Deere," is a good one, but they just didn't complete the thought. It really should be, "Nothing runs like a Deere... especially when it's being chased by an International."

The very helpful Amish-Mennonite man at our first stop had an outstanding four-wheel drive John Deere 4050 for sale but it was well beyond my price range. Although I couldn't give him my business, my father talked with the man about repairing one of our tractors, and, ultimately, when we got back home, we shipped the tractor to him and he repaired it.

Back on the road again, I sup-

pose by 9 a.m., and I guess I hadn't told my father that I'd actually been organized enough in advance of the trip to make two appointments with farm equipment dealers to see tractors. (I know, I know — this blatantly violates the "sneak attack" rule of the Virginia Farm Equipment Militia, but I didn't want to drive all the way to Pennsylvania to find that the tractors in which I was interested had already been sold.) I had in my mind that leaving home at 5 a.m. would easily make me on time for my first tractor appointment of the day.

We cruised northward on I-81 and it wasn't long before my father asked the inevitable, "Are-you-getting-on-the-turnpike?" question, to which I calmly responded, "Yes, I am."

I thought with all his previous trips to Pennsylvania and all the personal experience I'd had as a child traveling with my parents in Pennsylvania and how many times my father got on and off the Pennsylvania turnpike during these trips, that he would have great knowledge of turnpike travel, that he would be, so to speak, a fount of knowledge about turnpike travel in Pennsylvania. So it was with this confidence that I took the I-81 exit designated as the "turnpike exit" and was a bit flustered when the exit didn't take us straight to the turnpike. Sitting at the end of the exit and not at the entrance to the turnpike, my father asked, "Where are you going?" I said, "Well, I wanted to get on the turnpike, but this isn't it." He said, "How do you get on the turnpike?" I said, "What do you mean, 'how do you get on the turnpike?' Don't you know?" He said, "No, I don't know."

Well, we did manage to find the turnpike entrance and got on it, but the whole turnpike experience was very anticlimactic. I had brought a jar full of change for the toll booths, I had the jar ready plus a handful of bills to pay what I assumed would be the exorbitant turnpike fee — this always seemed to be a concern when the turnpike had been used in the past, paying to use a road — and steeled myself for toll-booth shock as we prepared to exit when the attendant said, "That'll be 85 cents." Of course, money flew all over the car, and I had to dig

See TURNPIKE, page 7

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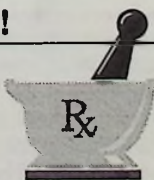
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# Turnpike

Continued from page 6

around just to find 85 cents in small change when I was ready to pay with a 20-dollar bill.

We survived the Pennsylvania Turnpike (They really need to work on that road some if they're going to charge 85 cents for people to use it.) and proceeded south on 283 toward Lancaster. (I can't tell you exactly how to pronounce this but it doesn't rhyme with alabaster. It's more like Lncister, you hardly pronounce the first part at all and you say it real fast.) So we're whizzing toward "Lncister" and my first tractor appointment of the day when my father says, "There's a dealership along here somewhere." Now 283, while not an interstate, is very much like one in that it is restricted access with exits and entrances. When you're traveling along a road like this and someone says, "It's around here somewhere," it's not one of those occasions when you're going to have a lot of time to make a decision of when to turn and you can't poke along looking for it because traffic around you is moving in excess of 60 miles per hour.

"What do you mean, it's 'around here somewhere?'" I asked my father. "Well, it's along here somewhere. It's right off this road," he said.

The dealership my father was talking about was Messick Farm Equipment in Elizabethtown, Pa., and with the aid of my car's antilock brakes, we did manage to take the right exit. I guess there are those who would argue that this shouldn't count as one of the dealerships we visited while in P-A. But I say it does count because we got off a major highway to get to it, we drove through the parking lot, the car stopped, and I remember opening my car door and walking to look at something. But we didn't make any human contact while there. I suppose this was more of a farm equipment foray as opposed to an actual strike.

I was pressing onward because I had the 10:30 tractor appointment I was trying to keep. I thought we were in good shape. We picked up Highway 30 in Lancaster and I had

directions for which exit to take (Intercourse and Bird-in-Hand). Highway 30 was choked with construction and the lanes were narrowed down to white-knuckle widths, permanent signs were missing, temporary signs were scattered everywhere, some exits had no signs at all. So I wasn't too surprised when I ran out of possible exits to take and was trying to decide what to do when restricted-access, dual lane Highway 30 suddenly dumped into a five-lane unrestricted access highway creating the mother of all bottlenecks. It would be the equivalent of I-81 dumping onto Greenville Avenue

him up that morning. I thought he'd simply brought along some reading material to pass the time while we traveled. I was waiting for a break in four lanes of bumper-to-bumper traffic to get back out on the road and it was just impossible. The middle lane — a turning lane — stayed clear. I figured if I could just break through two lanes of traffic and get to the middle lane, then I could wait to find an open space in the other two lanes of traffic.

It was during this trepidatious time when I was trying to remember if my car had ever done 0 to 95 in .8 seconds, that my father began rattling the newspaper he had

ginia Farm Equipment Militia.

Relieved to be out of the traffic, we headed on toward my 10:30 tractor appointment, down the winding roads south out of Lancaster toward New Providence and Lampeter. It wasn't long before we found Herr & Leaman (located just around the corner from Dumas Sapp & Sons — fine used cars since 1947), the farm equipment dealers with whom I had made the 10:30 appointment. They had both John Deere and International tractors. Tucked in the very back corner of their expansive machine shed was a 1066 which they had advertised and I had called about.

new torque and clutch with only 100 hours of use. The cab's air conditioner and radio even worked, and that's remarkable for a 25-year-old tractor. But, you know, I had to shop around — check prices, see what kind of value I might be getting for my money. You wouldn't expect any less of the Virginia Farm Equipment Militia, would you?

My next tractor appointment was set for between 1 and 2 o'clock at Wenger's of Myerstown and I had intentionally left enough time for us to return to Arment's in Reistville for lunch. Our previous dining experience had been so enjoyable that I was determined to patronize them again, so we headed west and north toward Myerstown.

"There's a place up here you should go," my father said. "Where?" I said. "What do you mean?" "It's just up here, you turn along here somewhere," he said. "Where?" I said, which was followed by a long pause with my father gazing around before suddenly saying, "HERE!!!" Anti-lock brakes truly were one of the great inventions of the 20th century.

A few minutes later found us at another off-the-beaten-pigpath, backyard farm equipment dealer where we looked at a tractor that was not even close to what I wanted. Yes, it was red, but that was as close as it came to my preference for the desired tractor.

We got back on the road quickly but had to wend our way back through Lancaster and its traffic. I can't adequately express what a mess the roads are in Pennsylvania. Mysteriously, the state's secondary roadways are quite nice and enjoyable to travel along. The primary intrastate system is a disaster. They could start building roads today, build them day and night for the rest of my natural life and not even make a dent in solving the state's traffic problems. To get some idea of the traffic problems around Lancaster, try to imagine Staunton minus Statler Boulevard, minus the northern and southern loops, minus the U.S. 11 bypass, minus the dual lane improvements to U.S. 250 East and revert Greenville Avenue to a three-lane road and Richmond Road to a two-lane road. Imagine how traffic in Staunton would move without these major roadways and improvements and that traffic nightmare would be equivalent to reality in and around Lancaster.

And neither can I say that the See TRACTORS, page 10



Turn "vest" on Rt. 23 in Morgantown, Pa., look for "de Vindmill Restaurant," then two concrete pillars and you'll find yourself at the head of this lane which leads to

Stoltzfus Motor. The workshop is off there in the distance beyond the dairy barns and next to the poultry house.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

at the mall in Staunton. I can barely think about it without shuddering.

I knew I had gotten misdirected — not lost, mind you — but I knew I had missed the jumping-off spot. But — and I might say new technology brought a whole new dimension to the Virginia Farm Equipment Militia experience — I grabbed my cellular phone and called the dealer with whom I had the 10:30 appointment. I pulled out of the bumper-to-bumper traffic into a business parking lot and got instructions which redirected me back toward the farm equipment dealer.

I hadn't paid much attention to it to this point, but my father had carried a newspaper out of the house with him when I had picked

brought with him. Very distracting it was, this rattling, wrinkling newspaper — rattling, wrinkling, rattling, wrinkling — while I was trying to avoid major vehicular and human bodily damage to re-enter Highway 30. I had just screeched into the middle lane when my father held up the classified section of his newspaper and the cell phone and said, "Call this number. They've got a 1066 advertised for sale."

I was already screaming because of the traffic and was barely able to get out the words, "I can't do that right now. Put that thing down." I think seeing me use the phone to get directions made my father realize how valuable cellular technology could be to the Vir-

They brought the tractor out and both my father and I drove it around. We talked with the dealer about the tractor and its many attributes. The dealer wasn't a "hard-sell" kind of guy. He had a good tractor and he wasn't in a hurry to cut any deals. I could have been content to stop my tractor shopping at that point, because the tractor really was very good and someone had obviously taken very good care of it and the tachometer showed only 3,300 hours of use. The dealer was offering a 50-hour guarantee front to back on the tractor and enumerated the few adjustments he'd made to the tractor since obtaining it from a farm in northeastern Illinois, plus the tractor had a

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# Notes from the road

In this issue, *Augusta Country* staff writer Nancy Sorrells takes us on a scenic journey to America's other-worldly Southwest desert and staff writer Mark Gatewood takes us to Spruce Knob, West Virginia's island in the sky.

## American Southwest offers interplanetary variations

By NANCY SORRELLS

ANOTHER PLANET (OR THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST) — We hadn't been back from our trip for more than a few days when I decided to show the pictures to a friend. I was a little surprised at her silence as she flipped through the photos until she looked up wide-eyed and a little stunned: "What planet did you visit anyway?" she queried.

Okay, I will admit it, our trip to the American Southwest was so unlike anything back in Virginia as to almost defy description. The people are different, the culture is different, the food is different and the landscape is, well... out of this world.

I want to share three different places we visited; all classify as so totally alien and fantastic as to resemble something from another planet. Unfold your map of the U.S. and locate the general area where Nevada, Arizona and Utah come together and that's the region my husband and I set off to explore. As is always the case, we ran out of time long before we ran out of places to investigate, but for two weeks we experienced this wonderful part of the country.

Let me say right up front that the three places to be highlighted in this article don't even include Las Vegas which was our entry and exit portal to this world. A nighttime walk down The Strip is enough to convince anyone that he has been beamed to another planet.

Interplanetary visit No. 1 — Joshua tree forests in the Mojave Desert (Arizona). Hoover Dam is located slightly southeast of Las



Joshua tree forest in Arizona's Mojave Desert

Vegas. There one finds two gigantic lakes, Mohave and Mead, which have been created as a result of this 1930s water control project. Nearly 9 million people a year visit the Lake Mead National Recreational Area but the area is so large (twice the size of Rhode Island) that the people get swallowed up in the enormity of outdoor opportunities.

Take us, for example. It was Memorial Day and we were on a small road heading toward South Cove and Pearce Ferry. Here in the Mojave Desert the Mead recreational area meets Grand Canyon National Park. Our goal was to see some of the finest Joshua tree forests in the world.

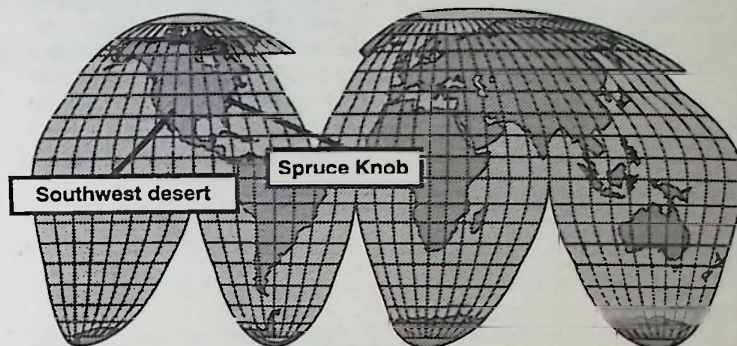
What we would find out is that Arizona ain't the east. There is no bumper-to-bumper traffic sprawl on a holiday weekend and forests here don't look like those in Virginia.

Joshua trees are intriguing plants that bear little resemblance to trees.

According to legend, early Mormon settlers named the tree after the Old Testament's Joshua because it reminded them of that prophet waving his upraised arms to guide them to the promised land. The only place in the world that these largest members of the yucca family grow is in the Mojave Desert. Here they thrive despite conditions so arid that six inches of rain annually would be considered a wet year.

The tallest Joshua trees top out at 40 feet but most are more like 15 or 20 feet. One of the most unique features of Joshuas is their symbiotic relationship with the Pronuba moth. Only this moth can pollinate Joshua trees which, in turn host the female moth's eggs on their flowers. When the moth larvae hatch, they eat yucca seeds. Neither the moth nor the tree could survive without the other.

We had heard that some of the largest Joshua tree forests in the world were located at this eastern end of the recreational area and we were not disappointed. Thousands of trees spread out along the valley floor and then marched up the

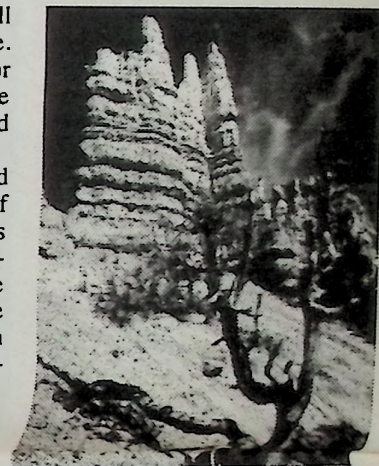


mountainsides resembling for all the world a spiny orange grove. These forests have no canopy or dense understory. Instead they are interspersed with barrel cactus and spiny chollas.

We reached the end of the road in the hot afternoon. We got out of the car at a spot where the waters of Lake Mead recede into the Colorado River and the red cliffs of the Grand Canyon rise up above the water. There wasn't a person in sight on this Memorial Day afternoon. We stood alone at the water's edge, but around us on three sides was hot, baking sand and cacti of all shapes. A breeze stirred the air but with the temperature over 100 degrees it was like the devil's breath blowing around us.

Interplanetary Visit No. 2 — The Valley of Fire State Park (Nevada). We were just north of Las Vegas on our way to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon when we saw the sign for Valley of Fire. We decided to explore and wound up spending the day. It would be 10 more days before we would see the Grand Canyon but the sidetrip to this, Nevada's first state park, was worth the visit. Red rock, sculpted through geologic time by wind and water, petrified sand dunes, rocks vibrant with yellows, whites, purples and reds leave you wondering if you truly have been dropped on Mars.

We took two hikes through the desert sands to see special geologic features. The half-mile hike into Mouse's Tank was as awe-inspiring as visiting some of Europe's cathedrals. Mouse was a renegade Indian who hid out in the canyon in the



Hoodoos in Bryce Canyon, Utah

Photos by Nancy Sorrells

1890s. The tank is a natural rock basin that holds rainwater year-round making it a small oasis in the desert. But what was special about this hike was that it took us through a red rock canyon that had obviously been sacred ground for eons. Over time the red rocks in the park have acquired a black varnish from the weathering process. Centuries ago the Native Americans who explored the valley lightly scratched away the black patina to form drawings: hands, animals, spears, and geometric symbols whose meanings have been lost. The spirit of those

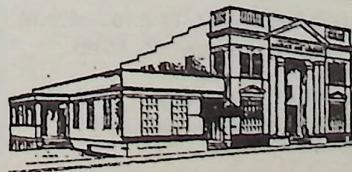
See *DESERT*, page 9



White and red sandstone in the Valley of Fire

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# Spruce Knob is W.Va.'s island in the sky

By MARK GATEWOOD

"I just saw a rabbit the size of a groundhog!" In verification of this, My Wife the Biology Teacher held her hands about groundhog-length apart. "You," I corrected her, "just saw a snowshoe hare!"

In need of a quick fix of high-mountain scenery, we had made the drive to Spruce Knob, West Virginia's highest point at 4,861 feet. It was about 10 a.m. on a cloudy, breezy and cool day in July. Wisps of cloud blew across the path to the observation tower. Visitor traffic hadn't started yet, so it was just us and the mountain — and that big rabbit.

For reasons that only they know, rabbits and hares are two completely different species. And West Virginia does have a population of snowshoe hares — the same animal you see in television shows about Canadian wildlife. The ones that turn white in winter and brown in summer and get eaten by exotic predators like snowy owls and Canada Lynx. But here's the difference: snowshoe hares are restricted to spruce forests above



A view from West Virginia's Spruce Knob

Photo by Mark Gatewood

3,000 feet elevation and the next nearest suitable habitat is in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, some 200 miles north. So West Virginia's hares are literally stranded on islands in the sky, separated from their nearest kin by lowlands where they can't make a living. Not that they seem to mind. Snowshoe hares thrive in the southern mountains, living on blueberry, brambles, grasses, highbush cran-

berry and other "northern" shrubs and trees. They change coloration with the seasons just like their northern brothers. And, they've become the logo of the state's major resort area. I'd call that prosperity.

The other stars of the trip, for us, were the thrushes. In Augusta country in July, we enjoy the cool, rolling trill of the wood thrush at morning and evening. Here, altitude favors two different thrushes,

the hermit and the Swainson's. These are drab birds — the hermit thrush is turned out in shades of brown and the Swainson's in gray — that fit in with the shady gloom of the spruce forest. But they both have that thrush song — rolling, bubbling, flute-like — that always makes me think of water tumbling down a rocky hillside. On the mountain, the Swainson's thrush takes the very highest elevations of pure spruce forest for its nest site. Lower down, where deciduous trees mix with spruce, the hermit thrush takes over. Lower still, in damp deciduous woods, the wood thrush and another family member, the veery, make their homes.

To get a better sample of the spruce forest, we took a hike on the Huckleberry Trail, which heads north from the parking lot. Because little light penetrates the spruce foliage, there are few plants — the so-called understory of herbaceous and shrubby growth — beneath the spruces. In places, it's nothing but spruces, with a brown carpet of fallen needles. It's a featureless forest. I had the disturbing thought that if you got off the trail, you

could wander for a long time in that perpetual twilight before you got back to where you wanted to be — if you made it. My other thought, less disturbing, was that I was back in Vermont, on the Long Trail through the Green Mountains. The trees, the birds, the trail — it all fits that northern model.

When we returned from our hike, traffic was picking up. Spruce Knob is an easy place to get to, comparatively speaking, since you drive right up to the top. The parking lot is paved and even has an area for buses! The trail to the two-story stone observation tower is smooth, wide and flat. You can't get a much more accessible mountain. We puttered around the summit area for awhile — I took some photos and My wife the Biology Teacher did a watercolor of a fireweed blossom. I watched as families and groups shuffled out to the tower, had their look and came back. Total length of visit was about 20 minutes. How sad, I thought, that they're missing the whole story. My park ranger in-

See *SPRUCE*, page 11

## •Desert

*Continued from page 8*  
ancient ones could almost be felt as everywhere you looked more of the petroglyphs appeared.

We explored the Valley of Fire from one end to the other and emerged on the opposite side from which we entered. That put us in Overton, Nevada, home of Sugar's Sports Bar. Maybe it was the fact that we had been hiking in the desert sun for hours, but we

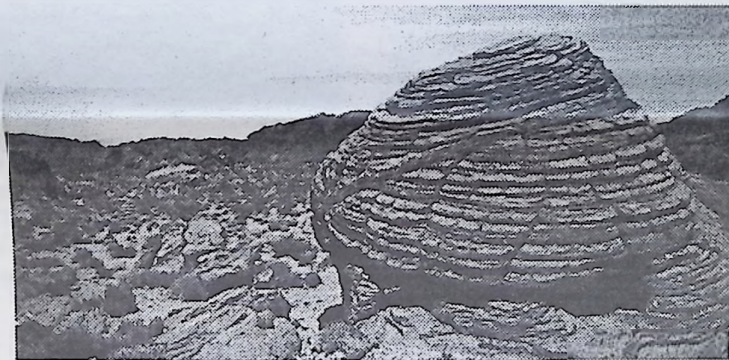
sure were impressed by the biggest, juiciest cheeseburgers and thickest chocolate milkshakes this side of the asteroid belt.

Interplanetary visit No. 3 — The Hoodoos of Bryce Canyon (Utah). It was dusk on Inspiration Point when we first glimpsed Bryce Canyon. We were unprepared for the view. Thousands and thousands of light-colored rock pillars, each as unique as a snowflake in its shape, were spread out under our feet as

we stood on the canyon rim. By the time the sun had set, those rock pillars, called hoodoos, had cast their enchanting spell. The next day we hiked along the rim. A few days later we drove two hours one way in order to hike down to the canyon floor amongst the hoodoos.

The towers of stone are the sedimentary remains of an ancient sea. Over time erosion from water as well as seasonal freezing and thawing removed the softer rock, leaving the bizarre shaped hoodoos behind.

The remoteness of the area meant that it was one of the last to be explored in the continental U.S. However, long before European settlers arrived, the Paiutes knew



The beehive, a petrified sand dune in the Valley of Fire

of the canyon. They called the hoodoos "Legend People" who had been turned to stone by Coyote.

The canyon eventually became known as Bryce after a late 19th-century settler who lived nearby.

Viewing the canyon from the rim at 8,000 feet was spectacular but hiking down into the hoodoos on the canyon floor gave the visit a spiritual twist. Descending down over 500 feet in a short period of time required a trail with nearly 20 switchbacks. Once at the bottom we found ourselves peering up out of a crack canyon that was no wider than our outstretched arms. Growing straight and tall out of that canyon were two Douglas firs reputed to be more than 750 years old.

Suffice to say that the rest of the trek was a film-burner because a new rock formation arose around every turn. In some places stunted pine trees were hanging onto the crumbling pink and cream-colored stone by just a few tenacious roots, while in other areas whole banks of stone were covered in wildflowers.

I suspect that once the spell of the American Southwest has cast itself on you there is no escape. We will return, maybe in another season, to see what new faces this bizarre and alien landscape can reveal. ---

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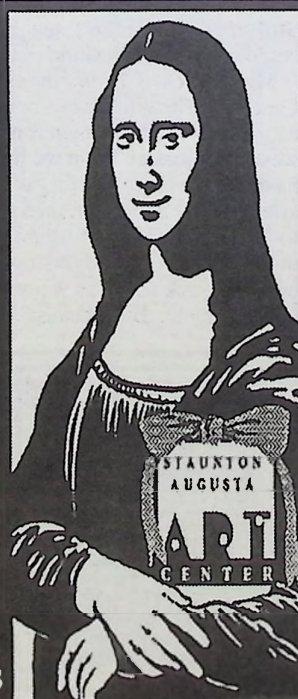
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## •Tractors

Continued from page 7

years have been kind to Lancaster proper. It had been some 30 years since my last visit to that area and I'm sorry to report that the city has lapsed into a state of unpleasant urban decay. Not a pretty picture. There are some areas which have thrived and progressed, however other areas have declined miserably.

Once beyond Lancaster's urban stranglehold, we moved swiftly toward Reistville and Arment's for lunch. Conquering four farm equipment dealerships by noon had left us with Goliath's appetite. Fully sated by our repast at Arment's, we forged on toward Myerstown and Wenger's and my 2 p.m. tractor appointment. This tractor I had seen and driven on our July jaunt. I had called ahead to ask if the tractor could be demonstrated with some PTO-driven equipment attached and had been told the dealer would gladly take the tractor to a local machine shop to have it tested on a dynamometer, or in farm dealer lingo, "have the tractor dyno'd." A dynamometer is a machine used to determine how many horsepower the tractor's engine is generating and reflects whether the engine is putting out the power it is supposed to be cranking.

We arrived at Wenger's and did not find any of the friendly Wenger family around. They were all at a farm show at State College, but we were warmly welcomed by some other Wenger employees who took the tractor and us to a machine shop to have the tractor dyno'd.

The tractor passed the dyno test and the dealer let me drive it the three-mile return trip to the farm equipment lot. The tractor handled very nicely but it wasn't in nearly as good a shape as the tractor I'd looked at in the morning. It had 4,400 hours on the tach but the price was \$1,000 less than the other tractor. Although Wenger's tractor had been cared for quite well, its overall condition wasn't nearly comparable to the one I'd seen in the morning at Herr & Leaman's. Plus, the air conditioner didn't work and neither did the radio.

I had one more farm equipment dealership stop that I wanted to make when we left Wenger's — Stitzel's in Hamburg, Pa., which is about 30 miles northeast of Myerstown. For all the advance travel planning I had done, our trip at this point became completely inefficient and haphazard. I can't blame my father for this. This was all my fault.

Remember the hay elevator we purchased on our previous trip to P-A? Well, that elevator came equipped with a 220-volt motor which we couldn't run on the 110-current in our barn. We had explored ways to have the motor converted to 110-volt, but had learned that it could not be changed, so we would need to find another motor in order to be able to use the elevator. We knew this when we purchased the elevator. We didn't think it would be difficult to make

the change, however in the month's time we'd had the elevator, we had been unsuccessful in adapting the motor to our use.

I had noticed a sticker on the motor which showed where it had originally been purchased — Stoltzfus Motor in Morgantown, Pa. The man from whom we purchased the elevator was a Stoltzfus who lived in Honey Brook, Pa., which is just a stone's throw from Morgantown. I reasoned the two Stoltzfuses were probably kin, but then the name Stoltzfus in Pennsylvania Dutch

made the 2 p.m. appointment at Wenger's before I had impulsively thrown the elevator motor in the trunk of the car, we ended up zig-zagging back and forth across central P-A which really took its toll on us — not just in miles traveled, but we were losing daylight and still had a ways to go.

On to Morgantown and the unknown destination of Stoltzfus Motor we went, traveling west out of Myerstown to Reading where we picked up I-176 south. When we hit the city limits of Morgantown,

of 23 and 10 and I need directions to your business."

"Oh, vell," he said, "you turn vest onto 23, den you come to de Vindmill Restaurant — o.k.? — den you come to de Conestoga Mennonite Church, den just a little further you see two concrete pillars. But don't look south. If you don't see de concrete pillars, you're looking too far to de south. Turn in de lane at de pillars."

"How far is it from where I am?" I asked.

"Oh, it's not far," he said.



We came, we saw, we conquered -- the Virginia Farm Equipment Militia mounted a successful reconnaissance of farm equipment dealers in Pennsylvania to find an In-

ternational Harvester 1066. The former northeastern Illinois tractor was "captured" (i.e. "purchased") and brought to Virginia.

Photo by Betty Jo Hamilton

country is no less unusual than the name Smith is anywhere else. Kind of at the last minute on the evening before we departed for our second vacation, I grabbed the motor which we had removed from the elevator and put it in the trunk of my car thinking that "if we had time," we might go in search of Stoltzfus Motor and see if we could work out some kind of trade.

Morgantown is northeast of Lancaster. Hamburg is due north of Morgantown. Myerstown is northwest of Lancaster. What we should have done was go to Morgantown after leaving Lancaster, then go on to Hamburg from Morgantown, then swing back by Myerstown on our way back south as we headed toward home. But because I had

I pulled into a bank parking lot and gathered up the cellphone. The phone number for Stoltzfus Motor was on the sticker so I called the number hoping to find someone there who could give me directions to the business. An obviously Amish voice answered.

"Could you give me directions to your business?" I asked.

"Oh yah," the man said. "Do you know where de Vindmill Restaurant is?"

"No," I said. "I don't know where anything is."

"Vell," he said, "do you know where de Conestoga Mennonite Church is?"

"No," I said. "I don't know where anything in Morgantown is. I'm sitting here at the intersection

"Well, how much time will it take me to get there?" I asked, hoping for a bit more of an idea of where I was in relation to where I wanted to be.

"Oh," he said, "10 minutes. Come on!"

And that, with a very brief good bye, concluded the conversation.

I had no trouble spotting the Vindmill Restaurant because there was a 40-foot Dutch vindmill out front. The church didn't look very much like a church. There was a solitary concrete pillar standing right at the corner of the church property and then, just a bit further down the road when I was forcing myself to look in any direction but south, I spotted the two concrete pillars the man had mentioned plus a sign directing visitors toward

Stoltzfus Motor. We drove down a long, straight asphalt driveway bordered on either side by row after row of corn.

Stoltzfus Motor turned out to be a small workshop behind one of the dwellings on an Amish dairy and poultry farm. Entering the shop we found an Amish man seated behind a workbench amid wall-to-wall electric motors.

"You made it!" he exclaimed when my father and I walked in the door. Yes, I replied, we'd had no trouble following his directions. I explained to him our purpose and asked if he could help us with the motor.

"You have it vid you?" he said. Yes, I replied. "Vell, bring it on in," he said.

My father and I retrieved the motor from the car and the Amish man went to his store room to look for a 110-volt motor. We tagged along.

"You say you vant a horse-and-a-half?" he asked. Yes, we answered.

"Vell, I don't think I have any — no, wait, here's vun, here's a horse-and-a-half," he said.

The man took the motor to his workbench and began the process of wiring it for 110 current. He found a cord and a plug, tested the motor to make sure it worked, tested the motor we had brought with us to make sure it worked. While affixing the cord to the new motor, the man kept up a steady stream of conversation, which included revealing to us that the man from whom we purchased the elevator was his nephew.

"He lives just over de mountain in Honey Brook," he said. Now we had spent a lot of time traveling all around that area, and I hadn't seen any geographic formation which resembled a mountain, but I suppose a mountain in Pennsylvania may not be the same as a mountain in Virginia.

"Where is your farm?" he asked.

I supplied that it was in Virginia. He gave me a puzzled look which I interpreted to mean he wondered what we were doing in Pennsylvania. "We farm in Virginia but we horse trade in Pennsylvania," I offered. The man asked my father what he did and my father answered that he farmed. "Just farm," he said. "It's all I've ever done."

"And you farm too?" he directed to me.

"Yes," I said, "I farm too. I've tried a few other things but I've never been able to break myself of

See MOTOR, page 11

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## •Spruce

Continued from page 9

instincts made me want to gather them up and give them a nature appreciation moment to take home, complete with hares, thrushes and islands in the sky.

I said that Spruce Knob is easy to get to. For those of us accustomed to zipping up and down the I-81 corridor, nothing in West Virginia is easy to get to, but this isn't bad. We took U.S. 33 west from Harrisonburg and went up and over Shenandoah and North Fork Mountains through Judy Gap. About a mile north of Judy Gap, we turned left on Briery Gap Road (33/4) and went up... and up... and up. It's paved for awhile, then pavement gives way to a well-maintained gravel road to the top. The ride up furnished its share of interesting sights. The Biology Teacher somehow spotted a barred owl perched in a tree. I didn't see the bird until we stopped and it

flew. There were dazzling displays of bright red bee-balm and blue bellflower along the roadside. It's about 10 miles from U.S. 33 to the top. Other than the rather swift ascent on Briery Gap Road, it's a mild grade all the way and easy driving. Drive time is about 2 1/2 hours and 90 miles one-way.

If you've not been to the area before, you would do well to continue north on 33 for about 10 miles past the Spruce Knob turnoff to Seneca Rocks, where the U.S. Forest Service maintains a visitor center for the Spruce Knob/Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area. The town of Seneca Rocks is a destination in itself, serving as mecca to rock climbers. It offers food, lodging and, last time we were there, a climbing wall for those who aren't quite ready for the rocks. But if you can tear yourself away from the big city and the bright lights, take the leisurely route up Spruce Knob and visit the island in the sky. —



Betty Gatewood (a.k.a. My Wife the Biology Teacher) studies some fireweed along the trail to Spruce Knob observation tower in West Virginia.

Photo by Mark Gatewood

## •Motor

Continued from page 10

farming." All during the conversation my father had been wandering around the man's shop looking at motors scattered everywhere. This is the part of the story where it gets really neat, because this is when my father got his Amish name. (You know, like in the old western movies when a white man went to live among the Indians and they accepted him as one of their own, they would give him an Indian name like "White Cloud" or "Thundering Hooves.") The Amish man, who I mentally guessed was 80-plus years old, looked up from his work on the motor and nodded

in my father's direction and said, "How old is Pappy?"

The man continued to work on wiring the motor and was having a terrible time finding the right size — oh, I don't know what you call them — they're the little plastic cap thingys you screw down on wires to connect them. He tried many different sizes and couldn't find exactly the right size he needed. "Vell, vell, vell," he said in frustration after he had tried the umpteenth plastic connector without success. Finally he found the connectors he needed.

All the while he had been talking to us, the cord he was attaching to the motor was dangling down onto the floor and I had paid no particular attention to what he was doing. After the cord was attached, he reached for the cord preparing

to plug it in to make sure the motor worked. When he brought the plug to eye level, he saw for the first time that the cord he had attached to the motor was for 220 current. He had spent all that time putting the wrong cord on the motor.

"Vell, I de-clare," he said. "I put de wrong vun on. You wanted 110 didn't you?"

By this time I had been eyeing my watch trying to determine just how we were going to make it to our last farm equipment dealer stop of the day before it closed. The man removed the 220 cord and found a 110 cord then attached it to the motor. He gave us \$50 credit on the motor we brought with us and we paid him the balance on the new motor. Despite the fact that we were losing time

and had strayed from our farm equipment militia mission, I was glad to have the elevator motor dilemma settled just the same.

It was 4:30 when we left Stoltzfus Motor. "Are you still going to Stitzel's?" my father asked.

"Well," I said, "I had my heart set on it. If we don't go, I'll always wish we had."

So in the 12th hour of our journey we backtracked through Reading and then pressed north toward Hamburg. Again, we didn't know exactly the fine details of the whereabouts of our destination. We hit Hamburg five minutes shy of 5 p.m. and I called on the cellphone to see if they were still open and to get directions. The man who answered gave me instructions to get there and said they would be there until at least 5:30 because they were unloading a truck.

I guess my desire to see Stitzel's was about 20 percent practical and 80 percent curiosity. They had several 1066s advertised but their list of tractors was so extensive I could hardly imagine what kind of dealership it could be. There were some jaw-dropping moments for both me and my father when we rounded the last bend and the Stitzel operation came into sight — acres and acres of farm machinery and tractors of every imaginable make, model and size. I don't know if you would best describe it as a junk yard or a farm equipment dealership — there were tractors there that hadn't moved in 50 years and some that had just been unloaded off the truck.

I found the proprietor and told him what I was looking for. He had four tractors that fit the bill and walked me around to see each one. The best of the bunch was inside a machine shed and surrounded by other tractors. I asked if he could get it out without removing the roof of the shed and bringing in a helicopter to hoist the tractor from

among the others. He met my request and had to move no less than seven other tractors, almost all of which had to be jumped with battery cables to start, including the one I wanted to see operate. He pulled the tractor out and my father and I each took a turn driving it.

This tractor was in good shape, however the tachometer had broken at some point and didn't reflect the correct hours although the man said he would guarantee it at less than 3,000 hours. The price of this tractor was a \$1,000 more than the tractor we had seen at Herr & Leaman's. Despite the guarantee of low hours, the tractor's overall condition was not nearly comparable to my first choice. After spending some time looking the tractor over and talking with the proprietor, my father and I said our "thank yous" and left the dealership/junkyard.

Just a mile from Stitzel's my father let out a long sigh, shook his head and said, "I've seen enough tractors to last me a lifetime." "Yes!!!" I said to myself, "I've broken him. This is the end of my father's farm equipment compulsion." It was exhilarating for me to think that I had achieved my two goals for the day — I believed I'd found the tractor of my dreams and it appeared my father's farm equipment compulsion had been conquered. Add in the fact that we had solved the elevator motor dilemma and I couldn't have been more content and happy than if I had just completed an eight-day Carnival cruise — and all in the course of a one-day circuit to Pennsylvania and back.

But the Virginia Farm Equipment Militia had some grueling ground to cover before the trip was complete. It was 6:30 by the time we made our way back to I-78 which put us some five hours away from home. The traffic on the interstate was fluid but thick. I found myself in a situation where the

See TRAFFIC, page 18

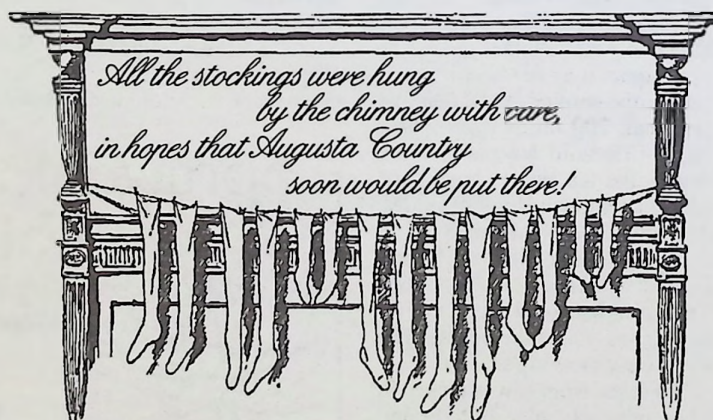
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# Take some time for tea

As you can see from the accompanying poem, hot tea brings back many memories for me. And although I love my herbal teas, there is something about Constant Comment that I can't live without — especially in the fall and winter. Maybe it is the best tea in the world. Maybe it's just because of the warm memories I have sitting with my mom and Aunt Judy drinking tea.

Tea has become fashionable in many circles — some Americans are now observing tea time in the afternoons and taking a little break from the day's activities while enjoying an afternoon pick-me-up. And lately green tea has been in the news a great deal being touted as a cancer and heart disease fighter. I have also noticed tea cropping up as health drinks, mixed with fruit juices and things like ginkgo and folic acid. Whatever the venue for tea, I am glad to see it becoming more popular in the states. I have made many different kinds of herb teas through the years — mint, lemon verbena, chamomile, and sage, just to name a few. You can also just add herbs to your tea, which can add a unique twist to any kind of tea, or you can dry them yourself and grind them and place them into tea bags or a tea ball. Actually "herb tea" is a misnomer — unless it is tea mixed with herbs. If it is just herbs, then it really is a tisane or infusion. There are hundreds of varieties of teas, but all are grown and harvested in the same way. The plant, a flowering evergreen is usually pruned to a height of between three and five feet. Like coffee and wine, tea differs according to the region in which it is grown, the amount of sun and rainfall, and the altitude, the soils, and the time of day it's picked and the skill of the picker. As

## Strong Tea

Three women sit like the Fates, weaving their families lives, as they sip Constant Comment from speckled gray-brown mugs. Spoons fish for spent bags, the fingers find tags and wrap the muddy stained strings around the bag, squeezing the last flavored drop. The not-quite-silver spoons stir sugar and clang, clang, clang, ring in their ears — singing of money, husbands, and children.

Steam floats into the air. Tea-smell comforts three women around the kitchen table. Aunt Judy dribbles and giggles. The room fills with the sound. Mom and Aunt Mart light-up as they laugh. Orange and icy-pink lipstick scars white cigarettes and marks their mugs with painted lip stain.

Bittersweet tea-tastes linger.  
"The stronger the better" they would all say to me between puffs, songs, and tears.  
Their sounds steep into me and fill my cup —  
I taste the strength.

with coffee, the best tea is grown at a high altitude where the leaves mature more slowly than in hot lowlands. Most tea is grown in India, Sri Lanka, Japan, China, Taiwan, Indonesia and parts of Africa.

From what I understand, there are basically three kinds of tea: green, black, and oolong. And then you have hundreds of varieties of the three basic teas.

Black tea, the most popular tea in the West, is the same tea of the fancy tea parties and the Southern iced tea. The crucial step in making black tea is to allow the juices in the rolled fresh leaves to darken from contact with the air. Tea makers call this process "fer-

mentation," although, technically, it is "oxidation." Looking at the different kinds of black tea available, you can see the regional differences in tea.

Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) produces black teas with rich aromas and full flavors. Flowering orange pekoe is the most subtle. China and Formosa black teas are milder than those from Sri Lanka or India. Some of those teas are Keemun, Formosa oolong, and gunpowder tea. The teas from India are full-bodied and strong. Some say one of its teas — Darjeeling, is one of the best in the world. And then you have your tea blends, like Earl Grey, a mix of black China and Darjeeling teas with a hint of bergamot, an Italian citrus fruit. Another popular blend is English breakfast, which consists of strong teas from India and Ceylon. There are even black tea and green tea blends like Jasmine tea, which is made with green tea, or a mix of green and black tea, with Jasmine flowers. Green teas are very popular in Asia and are only just beginning to catch on here. Green tea is made by preventing the tea leaves from ever oxidizing at all. Instead, the leaves are steamed right after the withering stage, which destroys the enzymes that would otherwise cause the darkening. The steamed leaves are rolled and immediately fired. So the dried tea leaves remain green, and the brewed tea, a pale green liquid, has a subtle, slightly bitter flavor, with grassy hints of the flavor of the fresh plant. Because the tannins do not go through the oxidizing process, which has a mellowing effect, green tea can be more bitter, more astringent than black, especially if it is steeped for a long time.

Green tea is currently being studied in the United States. One of the sound bites I have heard recently is that Japanese males smoke twice as much as American males but the

Green tea is currently being studied in the United States. One of the sound bites I have heard recently is that Japanese males smoke twice as much as American males but the

## Down to Earth

By  
Mollie Bryan



incidence of lung cancer in Japan is half that of the U.S. — experts believe it may be because of their large consumption of green tea. But, the jury is still out on that.

Oolongs and pouchongs, the third basic kind of tea, are "semi-fermented" teas. That is, they are processed the same way that black teas are, but they aren't allowed to oxidize fully. For pouchong tea, the oxidizing step is reduced to about one-quarter of the full length. Oolongs ferment longer, about half as long as a black tea. One of the best of these, Formosa Oolong, is produced on the island of Taiwan. The word Formosa comes from the name given to Taiwan by 16th-century Portuguese explorers — Ilha Formosa, they called it "Beautiful Island."

A good cup of tea can sometimes make you feel like you are on an island, or in front of a warm fire, or maybe on top of a mountain, alone with the trees and the birds. Also, there is nothing like drinking tea with a good, comfortable group of friends. One warm memory I have about tea is having tea parties with my then-three-year-old niece Carly. She will soon be 15, yet she still talks about those tea parties. *Fifteen can be a difficult age, but I hope that even with all of life's complications (and it keeps getting more so) she, my other nieces, and my daughters, will have warm memories of simple but strong moments in their lives to sustain them — whatever comes their way.*

## Beyond basics

Once you've mastered the basics of tea, there are still many variables to consider.

**Pekoe teas** -- The word "pekoe," which is used in grading black teas, is a corruption of the Chinese word meaning "silver-haired." This refers to the silvery down found on especially young tea leaves. "Orange Pekoe" is a type familiar to most tea drinkers, and those who have tasted it are aware that it is neither flavored with oranges nor especially orange-colored.

In this case, "orange" probably comes from the Dutch royal family, the House of Orange. (The Dutch played a major role in bringing tea to the West, and the Dutch East India Company was the first large tea trading company in Europe.) So Orange Pekoe tea is a fancy grade of black tea, as indicated by the reference to Dutch nobility and the fact that it contains particularly young tea leaves.

There are numerous grades of and variations on pekoe tea. In brief, the fancier it is, the younger the leaves used to make it — and the less likely they are to have broken during processing. Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe, for example, is made with the very tips of the branches, the leaf buds, which turn golden during fermenting.

Broken Pekoe is made with fewer leaf tips, more stems, and the leaves are no longer whole. Pekoe Fannings and the smaller Pekoe Dust are tea leaves that have been crushed even more during processing. Fannings and dust are often used in tea bags because they release color and flavor into hot water more rapidly than larger or more tightly rolled pieces.

**Gunpowder, Imperial, and Hyson teas** -- Among Chinese green teas, Gunpowder, Hyson, and Imperial are popular. Gunpowder is made with high-grade, young leaves that have been rolled into small, tight balls. The loose tea looks a little like small lead shot. Hyson (the word means "young spring") teas are also made with young leaves, but they are not rolled so tightly. The Imperial designation indicates that a tea has been made with slightly older leaves.

**Darjeeling and Assam teas** -- The climate and terrain in the area where tea shrubs are grown have a considerable effect on the flavor of the harvest, so regions of origin are often a part of a tea's name. Assam and Darjeeling teas, two favorites from India, are examples of this.

In the early 19th century, the British, eager to gain control of a

tea-producing area, were thrilled to discover tea plants (now known as *Camellia sinensis*, var. *assamica*) growing wild in Assam, the very northeastern region of India. Soon, they had their colonists producing great quantities of Assam tea to supply the empire. At Darjeeling, less than 200 miles from where those first wild tea plants were found, the tea estates have been built at famously high altitudes. The town is in the Himalayas, in fact, and has a view of Mount Everest when the weather permits. The altitude is credited with giving the tea plants the benefit of a long, slow growing season.

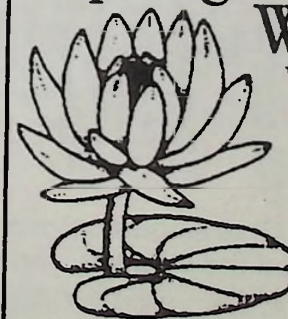
Tea made from leaves picked in May and early June is light and flowery; the best, most complex, and most expensive teas are made from leaves harvested in June and July. By August, the approaching monsoon has diminished the quality of the harvest, and from January to April the plants do not produce usable growth.

**Matcha** -- The greenest of the green teas, matcha, is made from very high-quality tea leaves ground into a fine powder. It is associated especially with the ritual Japanese ceremony, the Chado, or the "Way of Tea." The powder, which is

stored in a container called a natsume, is bright spring-leaf green. It is prepared by using a special bamboo whisk to mix the powder and hot water. The final product is a cloudy emerald liquid topped with a layer of brilliant green foam. It is traditionally sipped

out of a small bowl. Because the actual tea particles are held in suspension in the water, rather than being steeped and strained out in the usual way, matcha is very strong and bitter. Most westerners take some time to become accustomed to its flavor. ---

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# The world of conifers

With the advent of the winter season, evergreens take center stage as the flowers of autumn fade and fall as they are touched by frost. Conifers play a worldwide role since there are around 50 genera and 630 species growing in the wild. They are most abundant in temperate and mountainous regions. Many are used in the timber industry while others grow in gardens, parks, and woodlands.

The word "conifer" comes from Latin (*Coniferae*) and means "to produce cones." Two exceptions are junipers and yews that produce fleshy, berry-like fruits in blue and red. Most conifers are evergreen and have rigid, scale-like, or awl-shaped needlelike leaves. Two exceptions are cypress and larch, which drop their leaves in the fall. Flowers are inconspicuous.

We find some interesting statistics in the record books. The California redwoods feature prominently. The world's oldest living tree is a 12,000-year-old redwood (*sequoia*) known as the Eternal God tree. The world's tallest tree is *Sequoia sempervirens*, a coastal redwood. It is 367 feet tall and 1,000 years old. The world's heaviest conifer is *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, the giant redwood. It weighs 2,000 tons and is known as General Sherman.

On a culinary note, pine nuts (from the stone or umbrella pine, *Pinus pinea*) are used in pesto, and retsina (a Greek wine) is stored in

pine barrels to give it a resinous taste.

In the landscape garden conifers make wonderful silhouettes, whether small or large. They come in a wide range of colors, forms, and sizes.

**Colors** -- Shades of foliage vary from green, blue, yellow, purple, or orange. Some are bicolored. Some have variegated foliage. Many have seasonal changes with lighter colors changing to darker shades. Cones and seed-bearing fruits are decorative and colorful throughout the year.

**Forms** -- We tend to think of the traditional conical shape, but the range actually includes eight variations: 1. Globe-like or rounded. 2. Pendulous or weeping. 3. Narrow upright or columnar. 4. Broad upright. 5. Prostrate or ground-hugging. 6. Spreading (wider than tall). 7. Irregular. 8. Culturally altered (cut into formal shapes).

**Sizes** -- The American Conifer Society lists four categories: miniature (growth of less than 3 inches per year); dwarf (3-6 inches growth per year); intermediate (6-12 inches growth per year); and large (12 inches or more growth per year). Size varies according to region, climate, and culture.

**Species/pruning** -- Yews and hemlocks are easy to grow and the easiest to prune and shear since they bud on old and new wood. They

## In the Garden

By Jenifer Bradford



make fine hedges. Prune in early spring.

Cedars, spruce, and firs set buds on new growth. They can be pruned or sheared while the growth is young. Cedars and spruce grow well in the Valley but firs prefer higher elevations such as Highland County.

Pines grow soft candles each spring. By

cutting back each candle by half a nice symmetrical shape can be maintained. White pines don't grow well in Staunton.

*Arborvitae*, junipers, and *Chamaecyparis* are very handsome specimens but are not easily pruned. Cuts must be made where there are fresh buds and green needles in the spring.

**Uses** -- The miniature and dwarf varieties make handsome island bed additions, and add interest to rock gardens or in trough and container gardens. Medium conifers make good accent plants around doorways or entrances. Tall, large specimens make attractive accents in vast lawns or grouped at the edge of woodlands or large estates. They make good windbreaks.

For more information on conifers contact the American Conifer Society via Maud Henne, ACS National Office, P.O. Box 360, Keswick, Va. 22947-0360 or by phone or fax: (804) 984-3660. —

## ~~~ Garden tips for November ~~~

We've had several frosts as of mid-October so it is time to close down the garden for another year. I hope that you followed my tips earlier in the fall so that the bulk of your cleanup was done while temperatures were pleasant.

My husband and I returned in late September from a visit to my 92-year-old father who still gardens in Yorkshire, England. We helped him prepare for winter. There's nothing like looking over a neatly trimmed landscape with all warm season accessories stored away.

Here's my suggested list for this month. Aim to be finished before Thanksgiving so that you can enjoy the holiday season guilt free:

— Water, water, water. In the Staunton area we are several inches below the norm for this time of year, so do water all plants thoroughly before a hard freeze sets in. Pay particular attention to evergreens, young trees and shrubs, and perennials. Water plants and trees until their leaves drop off. Water evergreens as long as possible. Dry plants lead to wind desiccation and die back.

— Pull up any remaining annuals.

— Empty, wash, and store all planter boxes, hanging baskets, and containers.

— Clean all garden furniture with warm, soapy water, dry, and store indoors.

— Wash all garden ornaments, bird baths, sundials; dry, and store in a frost-free place (wrap and pack small ornaments in cardboard boxes).

— Clean and oil garden tools; hang up on pegboard.

— Drain hoses after the ground freezes, roll, and store indoors.

— Cut lawns as long as the grass is actively growing (set blades on a high setting). Then drain gasoline mowers, disconnect spark plugs, clean. Have mowers serviced and blades sharpened.

— Rake leaves from lawns onto flower beds.

— Cut back the last of the perennials to within one foot of the base.

— Pull up errant weeds.

— Dig up old, jaded perennials and discard.

— Divide and share large clumps of favorite perennials.

— Cut back old, woody herbs. They need replacing every 2-3 years with young plants.

— Plant spring bulbs while the soil is still workable.

— Plant shrubs and trees until the ground freezes.

— Turn the compost pile.

— Clean up vegetable beds. Do not leave any garden debris over the winter to encourage disease or insects. Fork over bed.

— Winterize pools. Clean out leaves and dead foliage. Sink hardy water lilies. Install a pool heater if you overwinter fish.

— Fertilize lawns.

— Plant winter pansies.

— Give the garden a last look over to see if you missed anything. Retreat inside for a mug of hot cocoa and reach for a good book. —

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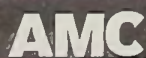
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## •Union

Continued from page 3

to follow the few songs that were in the book, but realized quickly that the printed words and notes set down in black and white didn't hold a candle to what I was hearing and sensing all around me.

For an hour-and-a-half we heard the Word shouted, sung, whispered and praised. When it came time to pass the collection plate, there were two sweeps through the crowd: the first for the small change and bills and the second for the pledge envelopes and bigger bills. Green paper puffed and fluttered out of every plate, every time.

After Carter delivered the benediction and Deacon Thomas Davis, the minister of music, had played his last note, then the crowd flowed out to the fellowship hall. The building, which had once served as a school for the community's black children, was, on this day, serving as a banquet hall. There were no neat covered dishes and quart casseroles here. The food was in kettles and pans that each held gallons of food: country ham, chicken, biscuits, baked beans, green beans, lima beans, macaroni and cheese, and more

pies and cookies and cakes than anyone could eat in a week. It was a feast that came straight off the stove, lingered momentarily in the huge kettles, then moved swiftly to plates where it finally disappeared forever with a satisfactory swallow.

Even as we ate, young and old mingled and talked and caught up on a year's worth or sometimes a generation's worth of news. There was nothing pretentious here — just people using the church to come together and be soothed in body and soul.

We headed back over the mountain in mid-afternoon, although many in the crowd were preparing to stay for the evening revival. In the Wash Lawn bus days, of course, the family would have lingered on and even visited several homes in the area. But these modern times are usually too fast-paced and hectic to take a whole day out of our busy schedule for such things. It's too bad. The loss is ours. But next year, for a few hours at least, I will probably accompany Rita back over the mountain on the third Sunday in August for a homecoming tradition of which I now have become a part of, even if in a very small way. —

# Schoolhouse News

## Teen turns coping with diabetes into life lesson

By STEHPANIE RATHBURN

About three years ago, I went to the doctor hoping to get a prescription for an infection. Instead I was diagnosed with juvenile onset or insulin dependent diabetes. I learned that I would be taking prescription medication for the rest of my life. I was upset and very scared. I thought I would never be able to eat my favorite foods again. I knew that diabetes

could cause blindness, but I also learned it can cause kidney problems, strokes, heart attacks, bad circulation, poor healing, comas and other health complications. I just couldn't understand why this had to happen to me. I thought my life was ruined.

At first, I had to take two injections of insulin each day, but the chemical changes that take place during the teenage years required more discipline with my diet and

medication. Pre-filled insulin pens became a more desirable option because they would simplify the ordeal I had to go through at each meal. Recently, I took yet another step to simplify my treatment. I got a Mini Med insulin pump. I wear it on my pocket and it pumps insulin into my body through a small tube inserted in my stomach. It supplies me with an even dose all day long just as a real pancreas would. At each meal I can take enough insu-

lin to counteract the food I eat with just the touch of a few buttons.

The whole experience of having diabetes has forced me to mature a lot quicker than most teens. I've had to learn to take responsibility for my health and know my limits. This challenge that life has thrown me has actually inspired me to overcome it and anything else that might stand in my way. I've even been asked to speak at a meeting for new and prospective

users of the insulin pump. I hope that I will be of help to anyone who has any questions or concerns. I especially recommend the pump to teens because it contributes to a healthier and less restricted lifestyle. Now I am 16 and like any teenager, my life is full of changes, activities, and new challenges. I am determined not to let diabetes slow me down. —

*Stephanie Rathburn is a student at Riverheads High School.*

## Cheerleaders play important part in school spirit

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a three-part series on school spirit at Riverheads High School.

By AMY BARNETT and ERIN FINNEGAN

Being a cheerleader is harder than it looks. We are not only responsible for charging up our student body's school spirit, but also motivating our athletes to do their best. School spirit is in every way critical to us as cheerleaders because it is indeed what makes us

cheerleaders. Without promoting school spirit, students and the local community would not participate as much in athletic events or be as interested in RHS as a whole. We provide enthusiasm as well as support for our school's benefit.

From August through March we work hard around the county and the state to prove that our school is the best. We demonstrate this through our performance at athletic events, our many signs decorating the school, and the fundraisers which help us with all our activities.

Spirit Week, the week before Homecoming is one of our busiest times. We sponsor dress-up days all week. The Friday of the game is "Big Red Day" when students have the opportunity to show off their individual school spirit in unique and interesting ways. On "Big Red Day," students look forward to coming to school to see what the cheerleaders have done. We decorate the football players' and cheerleaders' lockers to make them stand out and feel special. Also, for a small fee, we

decorate car windows for the Homecoming game and provide temporary tattoos so everyone can show better school spirit.

Not only do we cheerleaders cheer and pump up our school, but we act as good role models for students to follow. To do this, we follow rules on how to conduct ourselves inside and outside of school. We are not just cheerleaders, we are inspirational leaders. —

*Amy Barnett and Erin Finnegan are cheerleaders at Riverheads High School.*



Amy Barnett (left) and Erin Finnegan

## Twins know differences between each other

By SARAH BERNIER

"Rachel, no wait, Sarah, oh..... whichever one you are!" This phrase is not an uncommon one for my sister and me. Being identical twins, there's no wonder why.

Some may find it hard to see any difference in us going by our looks. But once you get to know us, you realize that we have completely different personalities.

Some people seem to think twins are alike in every way, just because we look alike, but of course this isn't true. We each have our own personality and style.

Being a twin can be cool, but sometimes it also can be annoying. Most of the time though, my sister and I get along the best out of anyone in our family because we obviously are the closest, in more ways than one. However, when we don't get along, you better watch out! I think the reason that we are so close is because we have grown up side by side, doing almost everything together.

On the first day of school, we both knew that we had a friend to be scared with. And through all other big events, there has always



SARAH BERNIER



RACHEL BERNIER

been someone there. That's the best part of being twins. That's what is really great. One downside however is that by being twins, we also have to share. We share practically everything: birthdays, bedrooms, and a car!! It takes patience, but being a twin, you get used to it, and it's not so bad.

Many people wonder if twins have ESP. They think that when one gets hurt, the other feels the pain too. Personally, Rachel and I definitely don't have ESP, and we've never really felt each other's pain. Sometimes we do happen to think of the same thing at the same time, but that's happened with my other friends before, not just with my twin. Of course, there have been a couple times that we've both dressed alike for school, not meaning to do so. So, I guess you could say we do think a little bit more alike than some people.

The one thing that I have always been able to say however, is that we both have different tastes, different likes and dislikes; and that's what makes us individuals. —

*Sarah Bernier is a student at Riverheads High School.*



Twin sisters Rachel (left) and Sarah Bernier, 10 months old

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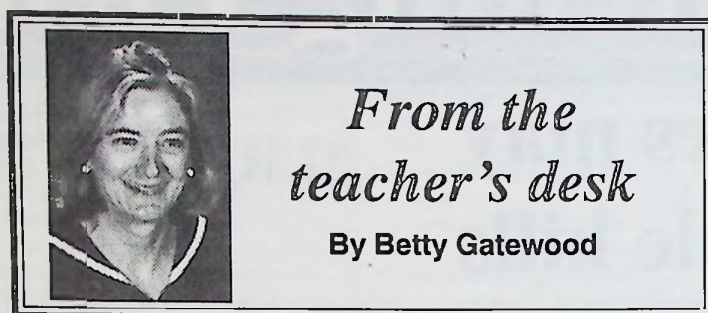
# Beauty of fall draws teachers, students to outdoors

It's been quite a week — actually quite a season — of superlatives for this science teacher! For openers, my students this year earned the highest number of "As" ever for any six weeks I've taught in Augusta County middle schools. They ARE extremely motivated and I'm pleased to say that I'm also learning about some wonderful character traits of a select few within that whole wonderful seventh grade population at Stewart Middle School.

A few years ago, Jane Cox and Liz Nicholson (also seventh grade science teachers at Stewart) began an ecology/environmental studies/outdoor club at Stewart Middle School. George Savage and I had a similar club at Beverley Manor Middle School and we all consulted with each other about topics and club activity ideas. Since the Standards of Learning for seventh grade science are very environmentally focused, the club membership in both schools was for only seventh grade students who were science oriented and had a high interest in the outdoors. Both clubs required high academic standards, appropriate behavior and a sincere interest in the environment for its members. Club meetings, outings, and trips provided memorable, rewarding and exceptional experiences for students and teachers. As teachers, we were able to see those academically aggressive science students in that special "outside science" setting that fostered environmental stewardship. Another benefit is that in the small groups of the club meetings and outings, we really got to know our students on a more individual basis. That has been rewarding and quite a pleasure.

In transferring schools three years ago, I became involved in the Stewart Middle School club and the superlatives just abound. What amazing, teachable moments we have had already this year! (Jane and I now co-sponsor the club since Liz is now in eighth grade, but we keep her informed and she joins us when she can.) Here's how we've started the year. . .

Our first outing was Oct. 6 when



## From the teacher's desk

By Betty Gatewood

Jane and I took 13 kids and 11 parents to Shenandoah National Park to hike Hawksbill Mountain on the Appalachian Trail near Big Meadows. The forecast and the morning weather were questionable, but we decided to go for it. As we drove along Keezletown Road, we could see clearing to the west and knew we had made the right decision. My Husband the Taxonomist helped me remember what Thoreau said

hike up except to gather the group together at the trail intersections. The kids were so enthusiastic and energetic! Each time we came to an overlook, they thought it was the summit and exclaimed about the view. We were all impressed with the fact that this was our first outing and we were hiking to the highest peak in the park at one of the most beautiful times of the year. Superlatives all!! The colors were magnificent!!! The views



Project Real World students from Stewart Middle School conduct biomonitoring of the north fork of the Shenandoah River at Elkhorn Lake.

Photo by Betty Gatewood

about such weather — (this is paraphrasing Henry David) — "It is worth going out in bad weather just to be there when it clears." What dramatic and incredible views we had on Skyline Drive! We made a rest stop in Byrd Visitor Center, then headed for the trail head. We put on our packs and, with The Taxonomist in the lead, we headed up. The weather was cool, brisk and windy now, but it had cleared!

We didn't dawdle much on the

from the windy summit were... breathtaking!!! And the kids were the best. We didn't have any problems, hear any complaints or whining, just expressions of appreciation and involvement in the moment. It was great.

After doing pictures on the observation deck, we headed for protection from the wind in the shelter on top to have lunch. After lunch, Jane and I did a little mini-lesson about the peregrine falcons and their hacking that had been done this summer on Hawksbill. Then as we headed down, The Taxonomist had his botany moment with the kids explaining about the "friendly" balsam firs, those arboreal Ice Age relics that are on the summit. 'Twas a great hike.

As I write this, I'm basking in the glow that comes after another successful outing of the club. Jane and I took 31 students to Elkhorn Lake on Oct. 12 for a water quality study with the Virginia Watershed Education Program of the

## Elkhorn Lake Group Poem

Oct. 12, 2001

Floating, watching, waiting. Eagerly I sit.

Getting all wet.

Having fun in the sun.

Having fun eating a hotdog bun.

Watching birds soar up high

The sound of the wind in the trees sounds like river water going over a waterfall.

The sound of the breeze in the foliage sounds like a fisherman's cast  
The sound of the breeze on the water sounds like someone reeling in a fish that doesn't want to be brought in

Feel it coming up behind, beside and under you

The cold water, the transportation for human life, the water.

Water is needed, so please don't pollute, but salute!

If we take care of the water, we will have more good drinking water

We use water for many different reasons.

Water makes up most of our body

Water makes up most of our world

We must take care of all our waters.

And at the end of the week,

What a beautiful calm lake to rest upon and hear God speak. ---

Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Pat Calvert, our trip leader and the field educator for Chesapeake Bay Foundation, has always been so flexible in meeting our needs over the past several years that he's done these programs for us.

This year when he called to confirm the trip, I mentioned that we have such a great group of kids and that over 30 signed up for the trip and I knew he could only fit 20 in the canoes! "Is there any way that we could take all the kids — divide the group and flip morning and afternoon activities with the groups so all could do everything?" He was eager to accommodate us, and soon the plan was hatched. This arrangement enabled us to take a couple more adults — George Savage (a.k.a. Duit Wong) jumped at the opportunity to do one of our favorite trips, and Larry Mohn, father of one of our club members and fisheries biologist for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, was eager to add another dimension to the day.

The focus of the day was to determine water quality of this part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed here in Augusta County. Upon arrival at Elkhorn, our big group divided and Jane's group trekked over the dam and did aquatic insect bio-monitoring and fish studies of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River that begins beyond the dam at Elkhorn Lake. My group began on dry land with introductions via nature similes and we all found out that not only are these kids interested in taking care of the environment, but they are devoted to taking care of each other! They are such caring, sharing, compassionate, and perceptive kids!

After those awesome introductions, we unloaded canoes, got fitted with life vests and paddles, had a dry land paddling session and

chat about safety. Then we launched into the beautiful lake skirted with the most amazing fall colors. "Earth's eye" is what Thoreau called his Walden Pond, and after we paddled near beaver lodges and the feeder stream, we gunned up and had a literature moment in which I read them Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken* hoping that they'd transfer those thoughts to their activities of land stewardship. I also read them that excerpt from Thoreau's *Walden*. That opened the opportunity to do a group poem, then we paddled the rest of the length of the lake and went ashore for lunch at the dam.

By that time Jane's group with Ann Hutchinson, another CBF educator, and Larry Mohn, our fisheries biologist, were finished with their fish shocking and bio-monitoring and we all had lunch together. Jane's group had a wonderful morning too doing water chemistry, identifying aquatic insects and fish species. We swapped stories tantalizing members in the other group about what was in store for them in the afternoon. At that time, our group poem was read — it was a special time for all. The poem crystallized why we were there — the importance of water and our need to take care of it.

Our day ended with a wrap-up on shore with everyone telling of their reflections from the day. The analysis of the water quality testing results had determined that the water quality in this part of Augusta County was in excellent shape for the Chesapeake Bay. The teachers' analysis of the day's activities gave Jane, George, Larry, Pat, Ann and me faith that this little part of the environment was in good hands with these interested, caring, perceptive, and sensitive kids.

This trip gave all of us the coolest opportunities for the greatest teachable moments with the neatest kids! The kids had the best time, and we educators had the most rewarding experience. It was certainly a day full of autumn superlatives. —

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# The Hitching Post

## Problems with horses may be mountains or mole hills



**Q:** How do I correct "windsucking?" My horse has this vice and it is annoying. I have a cribbing collar, which helps, but it doesn't stop him from doing it. Is it incurable?

—g.m.

Cribbing, stump sucking, windsucking or swallowing are all names given to a vice that horses sometimes get. There are different viewpoints about how the vice develops. Boredom is one thought. Another idea is that it is taught by another horse. Some people think that confinement is a factor. Regardless of how it starts, it is almost impossible to cure. The cribbing strap minimizes the damage the horse can cause itself.

Windsucking can draw air into the horse's stomach. Because horses cannot belch or "burp," the air must pass through as flatulence. This is also another unattractive feature of a windsucker.

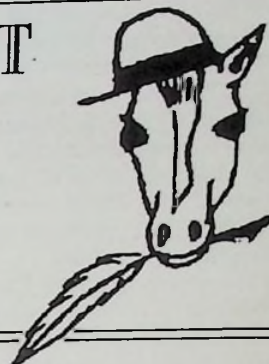
The cribbing strap is one way to prevent the horse from drawing air into its stomach. The strap fits around the horse's throat latch and the metal piece presses into the throat as the horse arches its neck making it difficult and unpleasant

to swallow air. When the horse is swallowing normally it hangs loosely and doesn't interfere with eating. Unfortunately the horse must wear it all the time.

Stalls can be made "crib" proof. This means that there are no protruding boards, fence posts or anything that the horse can actually hook its upper teeth on. When the horse braces on a fence post or stall door with its top teeth it will arch its neck and suck in the air. Making the stall crib proof can help minimize the horse's bad habit.

When looking to purchase a horse potential buyers can often spot a cribber by looking closely at the throat latch area for marks of the cribbing strap. Marks might also be left on the area behind the poll. Checking into potential bad

I.B. HOOFINIT  
From  
the  
Horse's Mouth



habits is important for any buyer to consider. Knowing a horse's bad habits does not necessarily mean a poor purchase. It can just mean that the buyer must be prepared to deal with the problems associated with the vice.

One vice a buyer might watch for is a horse that is hard to catch. If the horse is stall kept and fed inside, then the situation is workable. If the horse is kept in a pasture or open field, the situation would probably make an owner very frustrated.

An educated purchase is always the best way to buy. Learning about the different problems that are common to horses is one way to start. If there are vices that do not affect your use of the horse or your

enjoyment of him, then they are minor annoyances. A vice such as bucking or kicking might be a problem too dangerous for the novice rider. An experienced rider or trainer might see a way to cure the problem.

If you can still enjoy the use of your horse and the windsucking is something you can live with, then it is a minor problem. Curing the situation is not likely and you might decide to sell the animal because of it. Take it from the horse's mouth, a vice is a bad habit that every rider will sooner or later come across. Whether the problem is a mountain or a mole hill will depend upon what your horse means to you.

## 4-H horse clubs merge; plan events

The Staunton 4-H Horse Club is excited to announce the merging of two clubs into one. The Crazy Horse Club will take over the Staunton 4-H Horse Club. The following dates are important events for anyone interested in continuing their membership with these 4-H clubs.

The Crazy Horse Club will relocate its meetings to the Independent Horsemanship Riding Academy. The IHRA is located on Sangers Lane about one mile behind Shoney's of Staunton. Take Sangers Lane beside

Shoney's, bear right at the fork and the stable is on the left about one-quarter-mile past the fork.

Oct. 30, 7:30 p.m., IHRA, Halloween Party — Anyone interested in decorating can come at 7 p.m. Everyone should bring a snack or drink to share and costumes are encouraged!

Nov. 10, 4 to 5:30 p.m. IHRA — We will be signing up for the new 4-H year, so bring your \$2 dues. We will also have a bandaging and grooming clinic and choose officers at this meeting, so if you want

an office make sure you attend.

Nov. 24, 4 to 5:30 p.m., IHRA — We will be discussing lounging and learning body language. Dues each meeting from the Nov. 24 on will be \$1 upon attendance.

Anyone interested may attend any of these meetings to get started. The club co-leaders are Sarah Twichell, 337-9402 or 255-9402; or Chris Marrs, 337-0737 or 430-2692. —

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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# James tames a bully

By JEAN H. BRYDGE

James nodded appreciatively as the ventriloquist threw his voice into a sock and cried, "Let me out of this smelly hole!"

Suddenly James realized he had the answer to his problems with his cousin, George. Learning ventriloquism would provide an advantage over George's despicable ways.

James visited his grandparents' farm in the Shenandoah Valley the last two or three summers and it was wonderful to get out of the city. He looked forward to the visit. The only drawback was his loudmouth cousin, George, who was a bully, an unusually obnoxious person, and lived two houses away from his grandparents. James, on the other hand, was polite, well behaved and a rather gentle person. If James complained about George to his grandparents, they in turn complained to George's Mother who complained to George. The cycle then started again because George would be meaner than ever.

After the show, James went backstage and told Mr. Arnow, the ventriloquist, he wanted to learn ventriloquism. Mr. Arnow knew James was smart because he taught him in computer class but didn't know if James realized how long it would take to become a good ventriloquist. Understanding the amount of time involved just made

James more determined so Mr. Arnow agreed to teach him with his parents' permission.

James rushed home that day and told his parents Mr. Arnow had some extra things he wanted to teach him but it involved staying after school. Because his grades were excellent, his parents agreed. Sitting pensively in his room, James could still feel his face reddening when he recalled the swimming hole incident.

\*\*\*\*\*

George walked up on the porch at his grandparents, turned to James said, "Want to go swimming?"

James replied, "Sure. Just wait 'til I get my bathing suit" thinking they were going to town to the pool.

Walking down the road away from town, James asked, "Where we going?"

"Oh, this is an old country swimming hole on the river. I thought you might enjoy going where we usually swim."

They walked for about a mile and turned into the woods. James heard voices and then in a clearing saw eight or 10 boys in bathing suits gathered around the edge of what appeared to be a rather small pond. They stopped talking as George and James approached. George stepped up and said, "This is my cousin, James. He's from Richmond."

Several of them said, "Hey, James" and he thought they looked at each other slyly. "Do you swim, James?"

"Sure," he responded, "I was a regional champ in Richmond."

"Well, come on," they cried, "last one in is a rotten egg."

James took a flying leap and landed in about two feet of water, but, it happened to be water which the cows had been using for a bathroom. When he looked up, no one was in the water but him and all of the boys were doubled over laughing. The edges of the pond were covered with cow manure which now was all over him and his cousin George was dancing around laughing and yelling, "I was a regional champ. I swam in cow piles."

James got out of the water and walked home alone. He knew none of the other boys had intended to go swimming. George had them come dressed in their bathing suits so he would jump in the water.

James loved the farm animals especially an old ram named Buster. With horns that resembled cement, he liked to have his head rubbed so while James rubbed his head he told Buster his troubles. Well, that day, they had a long conversation. He finally patted Buster's nose and said, "I have to find some way to beat that rotten George but at this point, I'm not sure what to do."

By the second winter, James was

glad he had learned to throw his voice because the summer before was terrible. George was his usual obnoxious self but James did not expect him to do anything to really cause injury. Well, so much for being naive!

George invited James to go horseback riding and said, "We have two great riding horses which I'll bring tomorrow."

James protested, "But I can't ride."

"Don't worry. I'll teach you."

The next day George brought two beautiful horses which looked so big to James. George carefully put the saddles on and was nicer than he had ever been but James wasn't sure he wanted to get up on the back of that big beast. Finally, they were ready to go and George helped James up in the saddle. He told him to put his feet in the stirrups and hold on to the reins. He actually took the horse by the bridle and led him around the barnyard. Then he mounted his horse, went by James in a flash, swatting James' horse across the rump as he went. The horse was pretty skittish and when George whacked him, he reared up and took off at a gallop. He soared over the first jump in the pasture and left James behind on the ground with a broken ankle and a broken arm.

When questioned about the accident, George innocently replied, "Well, James told me he could ride so I put him on the best horse."

James didn't say anything, just promised himself that George would pay for this one.

\*\*\*\*\*

James' work with Mr. Arnow was complete when the instructor pronounced James a good enough ventriloquist to fool anyone and it was time to go to the country.

James' grandparents greeted him fondly upon his arrival and his first question was, "When is George coming over?"

They replied, "Probably later this afternoon."

James visited his old friend, Buster, the ram and said, "You

and I have a little bit of work to do this afternoon. Promise you'll be good."

Upon his arrival George said, "Let's go to the barn. I want to see the animals." When they reached the barn, James saw George's friends there and knew something was up. George said, "Hey, fellows, let's have a rodeo. We'll see who can ride the bull the longest. I'll put numbers 1 through 10 in a hat and number '1' will be the first rider."

James knew he would get number '1' and as soon as all of the congratulations were over, the bull, Maelstrom was brought into the lot. He pawed the ground and slobbered as he flung his head from side to side, then to everyone's astonishment, the bull, spoke up and said, "No one had a number but you, James. But I don't know why it's so important to ride me. George can't even ride Ol Snorty, the hog."

George was standing there in disbelief. "Did you hear that bull talk?"

All of his buddies looked bewildered for a moment and then one of them said, "Come on, George. Show us you can ride a hog."

The old ram was standing close to the hog pen and James reached down and patted his head. Buster looked up at James and said, "George can't ride a hog!" George looked at the ram with wide-open eyes. "That ram's talking too."

"Oh, sure," James said, "he and I talk a lot. He said you couldn't ride a hog. Is that true? I thought anybody could ride a hog."

"Can you ride a hog?" George asked.

The ram said, "James can ride a hog but you can't ride a hog, George. Can you?"

George's buddies started yelling, "Come on, George. Ride the hog. Come on."

George wasn't about to let an animal accuse him of inadequacies. "Of course, I can ride a hog. I'll show you."

He hesitated at the hog pen gate but James and all of his buddies were watching. Not wanting to lose face he opened the gate determinedly and jumped on the back of the closest hog, which happened to be "Ol Snorty."

The hog let out a hog squeal as it went careening through the pig pen with George desperately trying to stay on his back. His arms and legs were flailing the air and his head was bobbing like an apple on a string. When Ol Snorty finally dislodged George, it was into the smelliest, muddiest puddle in the pen. George got up, wiped the hog manure off his face, slammed the gate shut and left. He never said a word. His buddies all guffawed and slapped each other on the back, and as they were walking away, they were saying, "Boy, that George is a hog rider. Ha, ha, ha."

James looked at Buster, patted him on the head and said, "Well, we won that one." For a moment, he thought he saw Buster wink and, for some strange reason, the rest of that summer was the quietest one James had ever spent. —

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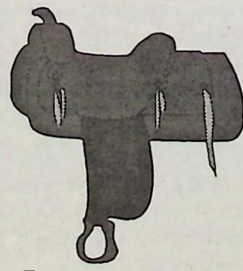
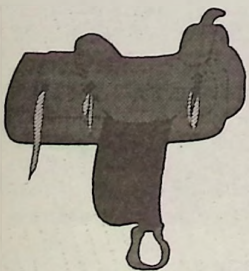
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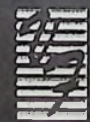
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# Country Crossroads

## Reflecting pool reflections

By Roberta Hamlin



October 2001

Dear Maude,

What strange weeks we have experienced since I last wrote!! Usually this time of year we are so busy. Everyone from the members of Congress and the lobbyists to those of us who work in the background are pushing to get the bulk of the year's business done. Usually we stay really busy once summer vacation time is over and before the winter holidays begin. It's then or never, unless, of course it is an election year when, to be very honest, not much of anything gets done.

But this year we have another excuse why those special little interest matters cannot be smoothly moved through the legislative process. No longer are our days filled with trying to keep up with who is going to sponsor legislation which might be of importance to our clients, and who is for or against other bills, and how their votes might affect our clients (as well as the income of the boss.) Certainly this year, so many of those little things we have always watched are no longer important. Right now all the legislation has resulted from the events of Sept. 11.

The astounding thing is that everyone in Congress seemed to be in a mood to agree with everyone else and pass whatever legislation was necessary. It is indeed a rare treat to watch our legislators work together for the people of the nation. None of them seemed to be too interested in messing up any of the important bills by adding little bits of special interest legislation as amendments.

It is really wonderful that they all are agreeing on things, but the change of personalities in the fundraising professionals seems to have stunned the boss. What can he do? There are no occasions for a little bit of gentle persuasion over a good lunch and at an expensive restaurant. There are no occasions to whisper some little request in the ear of an important player over a fundraiser cocktail.

The legislators even seem to have lost interest (a little bit, but not completely of course) in the raising of money for the moment. It will not last long, one is certain. The boss can still hang around the Hill and mention those small things so important to him, but it does not appear that anyone is paying much attention — they have other things on their minds.

As for the rest of us, we have adjusted to the beefed up security here in the city. Some people are complaining about the extra time it takes to get into their offices, but most just realize that the extra security is for their benefit and therefore worth it. One friend who works for the Coast Guard says he simply has to remember to leave home earlier, takes a steaming cup of coffee with him, and does not mind that his car has to go through the security check before he can get into the garage, with lights and cameras and all sorts of checking around and under his car. All this results in some time spent waiting in line for your turn, but then, that's what the hot cup of coffee is for. For most of us, life was about to get back to normal when the anthrax crisis began.

I guess we should have expected something to happen. And for those of us downtown, the panic was certainly not as great as for those staff members on the Hill. By now things have quieted down a little, but there for a couple of days it was crazy.

When the problem was discovered in Senator Tom Daschle's office everyone was in a state of shock. Next came a meeting at the White House where it was agreed that it would probably be wise to close the offices on the Hill in order to check them thoroughly.

So the House leadership dashed back and closed up all the House offices and that side of the Capitol. The Senators, however, had things to finish and decided to stay in session until the next day. There were various comments about the fact that the problem was in a Senate

Office building, and that the House of Representatives, three or so blocks away, closed down. Some thought this a bit strange. Then the members of the House became annoyed and fussed about the Senate not doing what they had agreed to do. Why would they not close down also? Could they not be trusted to keep their word?! Those past weeks when they all had to agree with one another must have been just too much.

Oh the strain of it all!! They just had to have something to argue about. So they started insulting one another over why this or that office had not locked its doors. Things were back to normal.

Meanwhile, Senate staffers were lining up in the hallways of the Russell Office Building to be tested for anthrax (and other non-Hill employees began joining the line, just to be tested also.) And all the while, irate legislators were setting up makeshift offices here and there for themselves and their top aides. The rest of the staff members got a couple of days off with pay. Some may have been worried, but got themselves home quickly and out of harm's way.

And what about the boss? Well, he is about to drive us all crazy. He simply wanders around the office muttering. It is one thing to have someone say that they cannot join you for lunch because they are busy, but, oh horror of all horrors, he now cannot even reach them to invite them out. All of the telephone calls to the hill are being directed to the district offices in the home states. And with the boss around acting grouchy and irritable, it is difficult for me to try to get away from the office long enough to do my civic, economic duty and go check out the October sales. (I really do need another new suit and some shoes as well!)

Maybe I should just come home for a week — certainly don't have to worry about getting much done here — and see what is happening, and on sale, in Augusta County. Love to all, LuLu

## Celebrate nature's victory amid diversity, disorder

By MARK GATEWOOD

That cool last week of September got me to thinking about November. It can be sort of a neither/nor month, not quite winter, not quite autumn. I remember taking off for a 15-mile bike ride on a sunny, 65-degree November afternoon and returning — cutting five miles off my goal — with my hands clenched to the bars in 51 degrees and rain. Then, there are years when late November is so warm that the deer hunters must get their deer out of the woods before the meat starts to spoil.

The birds seemed to be thinking Novemberish, too. Up on the hill, the leaves were still in place, but the bird sounds were wintry: cardinal chips, chickadee and titmouse

scolds, woodpecker calls. And they were already heavy on the feeders. We keep a limited array of feeders going all summer and on the last Monday of September I hung everything out — all properly cleaned and disinfected.

There can be more to bird feeding than just feed and feeders. Since we have a bit of room here on the hill, we naturally got interested in that sub-discipline of bird feeding called wildlife gardening. The Augusta Bird Club's September meeting featured a program on wildlife gardening, and since My Wife the Biology Teacher was giving a report on her activities as education chair, I tagged along. The speaker had a masterful command of plant material, characteristics and attributes. His slides showed

breath-taking views of home landscapes and gardens. But about halfway through the program, it hit me. These places are nice, but they're so blasted neat! I couldn't imagine a bird arriving in one of these manicured yards without an invitation: Mr. & Mrs. Titmouse can sit with Mr. & Mrs. Chickadee at feeder number 7; they'll have so much to chat about! The Jays don't get along with anybody so we'll put them at number 2. And so on. Yeah, there was just too much order there.

Here are some of the things we didn't see in that program:

A stand of sunflowers near the feeder area. The birds can feed on the seeds right from the heads. The plants, left standing until spring, serve as a staging and cover area for birds coming into the feeders.

Other plants, such as goosefoot, will come up among the sunflowers and also provide winter feed.

A couple of rows of corn. Same location, same purpose. Even if you harvest sweet corn, leave the plants standing for cover and for downy woodpeckers which like to forage among the stalks in the winter.

A brushpile. Well, after all, these houses were in the suburbs and the owners would have risked jail time for not properly disposing of brush, but if you want birds, they've got to have some secure places to hide while they check out your feeders.

Here's the sad truth about our gardening efforts: the only thing I clean out in the fall is the old tomato plants, and that's only because freezing turns them into ugly clots of goo that are nasty to handle.

Everything else stays until spring, after the birds have had a chance to clean up whatever seeds or berries they can use for winter feed.

So let's hear it for garden disorder because, in the natural world, disorder leads to diversity. The rest of the world is headed for a period where diversity will not be cherished, where everything will have to be black or white, us or them, good or evil. At least our home landscapes can still be places of diverse life and beauty. There's nothing more reassuring than stepping out back on a frozen winter morning and hearing the musical chip of a little downy woodpecker among the dead sunflower stalks, finding life in the remnants of last summer's growth. That's my Victory Garden. —

## •Traffic

Continued from page 11

posted speed limit was 65, I was going 70 and traffic was still whizzing past me. Just out of curiosity, after a tractor trailer passed me, I accelerated enough to try and keep up. I drove 80 mph for quite some

time and distance and still did not manage to pull within 20 car lengths of the tractor trailer much less keep up. I called it quits and de-celerated to 70, wanting to make it home in one piece to tell the story of the by-now legendary Virginia Farm Equipment Militia.

The remainder of the trip was

uneventful. I got my father home to roost just before midnight. When I powered down my militia machine and returned to my barracks at the completion of the journey I was more than a little road weary and worn. I vowed to burn the clothes I was wearing, take a shower for about three hours and

sleep for four days — 19 hours, 680 miles, six farm equipment dealerships in one day. We came, we saw, we conquered.

I did not reveal to my father what I had decided about the tractor. In fact, I didn't decide what I would do until later the next day. I had a few phone calls to make regarding

purchase of the tractor before I could actually call the dealer to broker the final deal. I had some things in mind I wanted the dealer to do to the tractor and had to make a list to see if he would comply. Finally, I called the dealer and although he wouldn't budge one

See PRICE, page 19

# Struggle in Afghanistan all too familiar for Waynesboro family

By MOLLIE BRYAN

Waynesboro's Daud Mahmoud is a simple, hard-working man. He loves his wife, children, and extended family, loves to watch football, and play basketball with his sons. He speaks as a proud father when he talks of his daughter attending college, his sons making the honor roll. In his life — first in Afghanistan and now in America — he has seen more strife than most people. When he speaks of his family in Afghanistan, there is a lowering of his voice, an attempt not to cry.

Mahmoud came to the United States in 1989, during intense civil war in his homeland. "I did not come here for any fancy reason. I came here because I wanted to keep my wife and children safe," he said.

He lived in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan and at the time, it was being bombed nightly. He decided it was best for his family to leave. He and his wife Adela, carrying the couple's fifth child, and their four children, left in the middle of the night, taking care in the way they dressed so as not to arouse suspicion. "We left a war in Afghanistan, but now it is coming here," he says. Mahmoud felt the Sept. 11 tragedy intensely — maybe even more so than many Americans. "I was very sad at the loss of life, but also it hurts me that Afghanistan is the place where the terrorists are being supported," he said. "It also hurts me that they are using the religion this way. This has nothing to do with Islam."

Mahmoud and his family are Muslim, which means that they practice the faith of Islam. And they are disheartened to see the terrorists using misinterpretation of a faith that is already misunderstood

by many Americans. The word "jihad" which is often used by the terrorists to mean "holy war" actually means "struggle against injustice and temptation" to most Moslems.

It is similar to the way that some American politicians use language to influence people. This kind of interpretation of the religion is where Al Qaida (the actual terrorist group headed by Osama bin Laden) and the Taliban (the current ruling group in Afghanistan) have a strange meeting of the minds. The Taliban mostly consists of people who were trained in neighboring Pakistan at extremist Islamic "medrasas" or schools. They are the group in charge and imposing strict regulations in the name of Islam, but nowhere in any of their holy books does it mention such things as men having to wear beards a certain length or not allowing women to be educated or to work.

"When I graduated from college in 1974 (in Afghanistan), there were many women that attended colleges. The women were free to walk in the streets like American women. Now, things have gotten backwards, it's like medieval days or something," says Mahmoud.

After graduating from the College of Agriculture, Mahmoud worked in agricultural research. His eyes light up when he talks of the many fruits and vegetables the country was able to grow and export. His focus was on grapes. "We had a collection of 70 varieties of grapes in germ plasm. Now there is nothing left of the country's agriculture," he said.

Mahmoud describes Afghani-

stan as a once beautiful country, with a welcoming climate. "Where we lived in Kabul, during the warm summer, we could drive 10 miles to the north and be in the snow covered mountains. In the winter, we could drive 60 miles to the east and be in the warmth and sun."

When he left his country, its beauty was gone. Now there are burned bodies of abandoned tanks and helicopters along the roads from the war with Russia. "What is left is dirt and many cemeteries," Mahmoud said.

He also points out that the infrastructure was crumbling. Bridges, dams, and roads are destroyed. Irrigation canals are filled with dirt and debris. "I don't know how the people are living there," he said. Many Afghan citizens are now in refugee camps in Pakistan, with hardly any food or water, no electricity, and sickness is rife.

After the war with Russia, the country was left with 2 million dead, half a million handicapped from mines (which are still active in parts of the country), and little infrastructure. That is when civil war broke out and the Taliban came from Pakistan to Afghanistan. Bin Laden is from Saudia Arabia and many in his group are from Egypt and other Arab countries. Mahmoud does not pretend to know the answers to a very complicated situation. "I am not a politician. And this is not an easy situation to solve," he said. He adds that he hopes that the United States' objective in Afghanistan will be met soon, with as little bloodshed as possible. "It is horrible

what happens to people in a war," he noted. "Even when you try not to involve civilians, they are affected."

If anybody knows this it is Mahmoud. Those rockets he heard every night while living in Afghanistan, and the devastation of the people and the land, still seem to haunt him. Since being laid-off by a local nursery where he was a manager the Friday before Sept. 11, Mahmoud has been glued to the television. His family sometimes has to pry him away. "They thought I was sick or something because I was just sitting and watching the news," he said.

Mahmoud had worked for 11 years at the nursery and is currently looking for work. When he first moved here, he had a very hard time getting a job. But the nursery hired him, first as a temporary minimum wage worker, but when he helped the nursery with its white fly problem, they decided to keep him on as a regular and he worked his way up to nursery manager. Since the Sept. 11 tragedy, Mahmoud has heard of some Moslems being picked on or hurt, but he says that has not been the experience of him and his family. "We have many supportive friends and neighbors," he said.

When President Bush talks of helping Afghanistan to create a new government, Mahmoud is hopeful. "If they do get rid of the Taliban, and place a new better government there, I will be the first to go and work for them," he said. "I feel it is my duty, because of my knowledge in agriculture, to help them grow food. They need food." —

## Parade to honor vets

STAUNTON -- VFW Post 2216 is in the final planning stages for the Veteran's Day parade to be held at 11 a.m., Nov. 10 in downtown Staunton.

This year's parade will honor all veterans, their families and especially Gold Star families.

Special tributes will be made to the 60th anniversary of World War II vets, the 50th anniversary of Korean War vets, the 25th anniversary of Vietnam War vets and the 10th anniversary of Gulf War vets. ---

## Development rights to be topic of program at Rockbridge H.S.

LEXINGTON -- Purchasing development rights to save open space and critical resources will be the topic of a seminar to be held 7-9 p.m., Oct. 29 at Rockbridge High School.

Mel Atkinson, director of the Virginia Beach Agricultural Reserve Program and Ches Goodall, administrator of Albemarle County Acquisition of Conservation Easements Program, will speak. Topics to be covered will include what lands are targeted for protection, how landowners are paid, how landowners participate in these programs, how the programs are funded and why Virginia localities began using these kinds of programs.

The program is sponsored by Valley Conservation Council and Rockbridge Area Conservation Council.

See *RIGHTS*, page 20

## •Price

Continued from page 18

penny from his asking price, he did agree to do a few things to the tractor without additional charges for labor — charge the air conditioner, install two new batteries (which I paid for but at his cost which was cheaper than I could buy them myself). The tractor needed a new seat and the steps into the cab were dangerous. I wanted to order a seat and an after-factory step kit and would have them shipped to the dealer if he would install them for

me. The arms of the three-point hitch were frozen and I asked if he would free them up. The wheel base on the tractor was too narrow for my purposes. I asked if he would spread the front and back wheels. The dealer agreed to all my requests for help adapting the tractor to my preferences and I sent him a check for the down payment.

Most of the day passed and I still had not revealed to my father my decision about the tractor. Once I made the decision, the whole thing mostly slipped from my mind. Late in the afternoon my father called

me on the telephone. I heard this rattling, wrinkling, rattling, wrinkling in the background.

"There's a number here in the paper for someone who has a John Deere 4430 for sale," he said. "You ought to give them a call." Yes, folks, this from the man who not 24 hours earlier had professed, "I've seen enough tractors to last me a lifetime."

I told my father I'd bought the tractor at Herr & Leaman's, hung up the phone and logged on the internet to search for support groups for daughters of fathers with farm equipment compulsions. That's how I got invited to go on Oprah.

Less than a week later — the lin-

gering pall of my failure to cure my father's farm equipment compulsion still heavy on my mind — my new tractor was delivered. It arrived in time to use for corn chopping and it ran like a hot knife pulling through butter — 120 thundering horses of American-made power — sweet, folks, sweet.

Right now I'm satisfied with my new tractor and the fact that I got to take two vacations in one summer. And who knows? Maybe next summer I'll take another crack at breaking my father's farm equipment compulsion. So that's why, for the time being anyway, I am a happy woman down on the farm. —

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# Riding in Cars with Boys is no joyride

It isn't *Riding in Cars with Boys* that got Beverly Donofrio in trouble. It's what happened when she parked in cars with boys.

Her story begins with Jason Hasek (Adam Garcia; *Coyote Ugly, Wilde*) driving his mother Beverly Donofrio (Drew Barrymore; *ET, Ever After*) to his father's (and her ex-husband's) house to get the father's signature on a release form. "For me," Jason tells the viewer, "it's not how Ray let her down, it's about how my mere presence at the age of 3 crushed all of her dreams."

The story flashes back to 1965 and we find out that Bev's life got sidetracked when she ends up pregnant after a summer fling with bad-boy Ray Hasek (Steve Zahn; *Stuart Little, You've Got Mail*). Pressured by her parents (James Woods and Lorraine Bracco), who want to be spared their daughter's shame, and by Ray, who promises his undying devotion, Bev shelves her dreams of going to college and becoming a writer to become a wife and mother. She ends up living a dead-

end life on a dead-end street with a shiftless husband and an endearing if demanding son Jason (also played as a child by Cody Arens and Logan Arens).

Bev's life is one disappointment after another. Every time she struggles to salvage something of her life's dream or at least formulate some sort of life's plan, something happens to destroy it. Most of the time that something is of her own making, however. Bev's biggest fault, though, is that she blames everyone but herself for her problems — especially her son, who pays a high price for Bev's unhappiness.

Directed by Penny Marshall (*Big, A League of Their Own, Awakenings*) and written by Beverly Donofrio, who penned the memoir by the same name, the movie teeters between sappy and bittersweet. At times it tries to be lighthearted and funny — like when Bev tries to throw herself down the stairs before she has to tell her parents of her pregnancy or when she tries to give her son back to the nurse because

she was supposed to have a girl — even in the face of some of life's harshest realities.

Some critics have said this is Drew Barrymore's coming-of-age film. A child actress, who battled alcoholism and drug addiction by the time she was 15, Barrymore breathes a reality into Bev. She manages to make Bev a person with whom we both identify and sympathize. Everyone of us knows and loves someone just like Bev and, though she might drive us crazy, we want her to be happy.

The real gem in the movie is Steve Zahn who plays Ray, a man who, as one of my friends unkindly describes, is TDTL — too dumb to live. He is one of life's losers, a do-less alcoholic and drug addict born on the wrong side of the tracks who just can't seem to make it come out right.

Yet Zahn's Ray wins our empathy and arouses our pity. Ray wants to be better, to do better, but he can't. There is no doubt that he loves his son and that he never

blames anyone, least of all his child, for his own failings. Ray pays a terrible price for his choices, yet in the end, he accepts complete responsibility for his own life.

While watching *Riding in Cars with Boys*, I found myself wondering what I thought about it. So unsure was I, that when we left, I asked Hannah, "Did we like that movie? Were we supposed to like that movie? Why did we like that movie?"

The film could easily be categorized as a "chick flick," yet it isn't one. Marshall employed no hackneyed tricks to advance the plot. It would have been easy to kill Ray off in a car crash or of a drug overdose; some knight in shining armor could have come along and saved Bev from herself; Bev could have had an epiphany and turned her own life around. But this is not a tale of redemption — this is no formula movie. Even though Bev realizes one life dream by the end of the movie, the viewer cannot be sure she'll be happy because we aren't sure if she was ever happy.

FLICK



A movie review by

Hannah's mom, Sue Simmons

The real point of *Riding in Cars with Boys* is that, *House of Mirth*-like, the choices we make in life have their consequences. Like it or not, life isn't a story where you can re-direct the plot or re-write the ending, trying one out and then another, until you find one that suits. Life is what you make it and happiness what you make of it.

Oddly enough, I found myself thinking a great deal about *Riding in Cars with Boys* hours and hours after I left the theater. So I guess I liked it.

Hannah's mom gives *Riding in Cars with Boys* three bananas. The film is rated PG-13 for adult themes, some sexual content and drug use. —

## FCE meets; hears state convention report

New Hope Family Community Educators held its September meeting at New Hope United Methodist Church with a program on "Elder Abuse" given by Jean Critzer and Brenda Mosby. Various handouts were given to each member on facts and signs of abuse. Ms. Critzer stated the three forms of abuse are emotional, sexual and physical and gave situations of each.

Election of the 2002 president and secretary was held during the business session. Elected to serve were Judy Grove, president and Catherine Crickenberger, secretary. Other busi-

ness completed included appointing committee chairs; announcement of Stephanie Diehl as new FCS Extension Agent for Rockingham County; and telling members of the West Central Regional Meeting at Rocky Mount on Oct. 17.

Plans were made to have a display at the Augusta County Library to celebrate National FCE Week, Oct. 14-20. It was noted that eight members went on the club's trip to Berkeley Springs in August. Ms. Mosby showed members how to make a wire wreath using sisal rope.

Linda Howdyshe, Helen

Stogdale and Judy Grove attended the VAFCE Conference at Holiday Inn Sept. 17-19 and gave a report to members. There were 91 members and numerous guests present. Conference speakers were: Mrs. John Hagar on "The Women's Vision for Virginia Families in this Decade," Dr. Danielle Torisky on "Civil War" and Dr. Eleanor Schenker.

Educational workshops were: "Getting to Know Your Antiques," "Safety in the Home," and "Alzheimer's." Fun Workshops included making a wire angel pin

and paper twist bag basket. Members were entertained by a singing group from Mary Baldwin College and a "fun" fashion show presented by five members.

The awards ceremony included presentation of the State FCE Heart award to Carol Sheffer of Edinburg. Marilyn Branch-Mitchell and Rosa Lee Branch of Chesterfield were presented the State Outstanding FCE Family award. State winner of the essay contest on "Character Counts" was presented a \$500 savings bond. Other county winners were present including Lauren Brady of Waynesboro. A total of \$5,500 in

school scholarships was awarded to 11 people for higher education. The "Best in Show" of the 100 entries in the Cultural Arts Contest was a counted cross stitch from Rockingham County. Of New Hope's 12 entries in the contest, 11 were awarded blue ribbons.

During the business meeting there were reports from each state program chair and standing committee, passage of 2002 budget and updates to by-laws. State officers for 2002 were elected and installed as follows: Janet Kline, president; Gladys Taylor, president elect; Ann Dancy, vice president programs; Carol Shaffer, secretary; and Mary Gough, treasurer. —

## 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. Nov. 3, 1890 — The temperature at Los Angeles, Calif., reached 96 degrees, a November record for 76 years. Nov. 7, 1940 — The Galloping Gertie bridge at Tacoma, Wash., collapsed in strong winds resulting in a \$6 million loss, just four months after the grand opening of the new bridge. The winds caused the evenly sized spans of the

bridge to begin to vibrate until the central one finally collapsed. From that point on bridges were constructed with spans of varying size. Nov. 13, 1946 — General Electric scientists produced snow in the Massachusetts Berkshires in the first modern-day cloud seeding experiment.

Nov. 17, 1927 — A tornado cut a 17-mile path across Alexandria and southeastern Washington, D.C. injuring 31 persons. The tornado struck the Naval Air Station where a wind gust of 93 mph was recorded. A waterspout was seen over the Potomac River 90 minutes later.

Nov. 18, 1873 — A severe storm raged from Georgia to Nova Scotia causing great losses to fishing fleets along the coast. In Maine, the

barometric pressure reached 28.49 inches at Portland.

Nov. 20, 1979 — A blizzard struck Cheyenne, Wyo., producing a record 19.8 inches of snow in 24 hours, and a record total of 25.6 inches in 40 hours. Strong winds created huge drifts stopping all transportation. (19th-21st)

Nov. 23, 1909 — Rattlesnake Creek was deluged with 7.17 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a record for the state of Idaho.

Nov. 29, 1987 — Snow blanketed the Upper Mississippi Valley, with heavy snow reported near Lake Superior. Up to 10 inches of snow was reported in Douglas County and Bayfield County of Wisconsin. Heavy rain soaked the Middle Atlantic Coast States, while gale force winds lashed the coastline. Flooding was reported in Maryland and Virginia. —



## Rights

Continued from page 19

There is no charge for the program and refreshments will be provided. Rockbridge High School is lo-

cated at the intersection of U.S. 11 and Greenhouse Road on the outskirts of Lexington. Use the first exit off I-64 and go south on U.S. 11.

For information call 540/463-2330 or 886-3541. ---

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