Farewell to Family Farms?

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after May 26
A closer look...

Curious?
You probably are, and that's why you watch the evening news or read a daily newspaper.

You can't afford to be uninformed in this fast-paced world. Because so many things happen so quickly, your local broadcaster or newspaper must work on the run.

We don't. We "walk" through the Valley, bringing you stories about people, their homes, their crafts, their work, and their outlooks. We believe the Valley has a distinctive identity.

The Valley has always been identified as farmland. That is still true, but the problems that recently prompted farmers to plow lawns and snarl traffic in Washington strike closer to home than the image on your TV.

A Valley institution—the family farm—may be in danger of vanishing. Developments in "agribusiness" challenge the lifestyles of many local families. We know—one of our writers, Dwayne Yancey, grew up on a family farm in eastern Rockingham County. But Yancey's family no longer farms. In our cover story, he questions Valley people involved in farming to find out why so many families, like his own, have given up the plow.

Farmers are not alone facing change.
Roger Bergey, Ralph Sampson's coach, lives at a faster pace than he did two years ago. In our sports section, we visit the Bergey home to talk about collegiate recruiting and its effects on a coach's family.

We also visit other homes. Our homes section takes you back with a restored 200-year-old farmhouse, brings you up to date with a modern mansion built "economically" and splits the difference with exciting modern execution of an ancient design.

Valley crafts comprise another section, featuring a tinsmith, a chairmaker and a metalcrafting factory.

We talk with James J. Kilpatrick of "Sixty Minutes" fame, Mrs. Thomas of local culinary fame and Ted Allen, a man with no fame, only a mission.

We tell you how to recycle your trash and where to find a beautiful waterfall. We fish for big bass, stroll through a barn of bargain-price books, run with the local track club, visit a den of handicapped Cub Scouts and discuss life with a rock & roller dedicated to helping the less fortunate.

We've enjoyed our contact with Valley people. Now it's your turn.

Please give us your suggestions for future articles and your opinions of our past work. Letters, addressed to Curio, Department of Communication Arts, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807, will be considered for a readers' page we hope to develop.

Curio is the product of a journalism class, Feature Magazine Production. We are non-profit, funded primarily through advertising and produced with an unpaid staff.

Special thanks are extended the School of Fine Arts and Communication and Dean Donald McConkey for a grant partially funding this endeavor.

Last spring our inaugural issue appeared as an experiment. With our second issue, we're here to stay. Look for us on local newsstands each spring and fall!

—editor
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**Cover photo by Bill Tarangelo**

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James J. Kilpatrick

Country living freshens the approach
of the nation’s foremost political columnist

by Dwayne Yancey

Charlie Settle, a friendly little man usually covered with grease, runs the Exxon station in Sperryville. He and his boys can sell you gas, give your car an official state inspection, or repair an engine. He can also tell you how to get to James J. Kilpatrick’s house.

It’s not exactly like asking for a fill-up but requests for directions to the house of the nation’s top political columnist are fairly common at Settle’s station. Kilpatrick doesn’t attempt to describe all the twists and turns and road numbers to visitors who come calling to his Rappahannock County retreat. He just tells them to stop at the Sperryville Exxon and ask for his friend Charlie Settle. And even though he was probably called out from an important lube job, Charlie is only too happy to oblige.

“Ya take a right down here at the sign,” he motions, not even questioning who you are or why you’re looking for Kilpatrick. “Then ya take a left at the flashing light and go down the road to Woodville. There’s a dirt road goin’ off to the left right after you get there. Take that and Jack’s house is on back there on the left. Ya can’t miss it.”

But you could miss Woodville. It’s hardly so much as an interruption in the landscape. A few white frame houses hidden behind trees that were there at the turn of the century, Burke’s General Store, the post office, a boarded-up gas station and that’s about it.

Yet it’s one of the larger communities in Rappahannock County. Although only 80 miles from Washington, D.C., it’s well out of reach of the frenzied capital. Backed up against the Blue Ridge, more move out of the county than move in.

James Jackson Kilpatrick makes his living writing about political shenanigans in Washington. In Rappahannock County, where hog butchering is front-page news in the local paper, Capitol Hill high jinks are practically another world.

Yet Kilpatrick not only lives on a farm down a winding dirt road a few miles from Woodville, he writes from there as well.

Why does he work in such an unlikely setting? And how, from Rappahannock County, is he able to maintain a reputation worthy of the nation’s most widely-syndicated political columnist?

Kilpatrick has a ready answer.

“I think as long as I’m 80 miles away from Washington, I have just the right distance for a reasonable perspective on the news,” says the balding, 58-year-old columnist. “I don’t think I’m as subject to other people’s perspectives up here as I was in Washington.

“The newsmen spend so much of their time talking with other newsmen. You hang around the White House press room a great deal and you’re talking with your colleagues all the time. You hang around the Senate press gallery or the House press gallery or the Supreme Court press gallery or you go to the embassy parties, the cocktail parties, the receptions, the dinner parties and so on.

“You pretty much, in Washington, meet all the same people all the time and what has been called ‘herd journalism’ begins to take over in a way. It’s quite different when I’m working here.”

But there’s more to living in Rappahannock County that appeals to Kilpatrick besides avoiding the press gallery gossip.

“There is something about living in the country that adds a dimension to your approach, not only to public affairs but to all sorts of philosophical issues,” he says. “We are much closer to nature and to all the particular inventions of the Grand Design here in the country than when you are in the heart of Washington.

“I think this has helped me. Living in the country is a stabilizing, calming sort of influence on a person’s life. You learn respect for natural forces in ways I don’t believe you learn as long as you’re in the heart of the city.”

While his colleagues are battling traffic rushing to an interview, Kilpatrick can relax in his office, with the breeze rustling the trees just outside his window, and get the information he needs by telephone.

And while other columnists are nursing drinks, unwinding from their work, Kilpatrick can be found out on his tennis court, or puttering in his garden.

“I am my own boss completely,” he says smiling. “I fix my own hours and I go wherever in the world. And when I want to go, I go.”

It’s an enviable life.

Kilpatrick doesn’t actually spend all his time secluded in the foothills of the Blue Ridge—but just about. He drives into Washington on Thursdays and Fridays, but much of that time is spent filming his “60 Minutes” point-counterpoints with Shana Alexander, and a Washington news program, “Agornsky and Co.”

The unusual arrangement of writing about Washington from a distance began in the early ’60s when Kilpatrick, then editor of the Richmond News-Leader, started his column.

When it began requiring that he spend more and more time in Washington, Kilpatrick began looking for a weekend home near both cities.

After unsuccessfully pondering road maps and studying the classifieds, his wife Marie found a Washington Star ad for a 36-acre farm in Rappahannock County. It fit the bill. Even though by Kilpatrick’s own admission the place wasn’t...
much—an abandoned cottage, a barn in serious danger of collapsing and a few dilapidated outbuildings, including an outdoor john—he bought it.

Kilpatrick saw more than the clutter of shacks. He saw the mountains that seem to rise out of the back yard, and sensed the solitude that pervades the county. After years of urban life, he was more than ready for a taste of country living.

That was February, 1966. By the end of the year, Kilpatrick had bid his inevitable adieu to the News-Leader to become a full-time columnist. Living in Washington, he visited Rappahannock County on weekends.

"The old June Corbin place" became White Walnut Hall. Fences were mended, broomsage uprooted. The shack "ole man" June Corbin lived in near the pigpen after his wife kicked him out of the house was transformed into Marie Kilpatrick's art studio. The four-room house was completely remodeled, except for the "C" on the door.

It wasn't long before Kilpatrick, a folksy, down home sort at heart, fell in love with Rappahannock County.

The outside has changed too. Under journalistic canons, he datelined "Scrabble" dateline, in November, 1966.

Taking a breather from politics, Kilpatrick penned a column devoted to life in the country. Instead of the usual "Washington," he datelined the piece "Scrabble." Actually, there is no such town as Scrabble, at least not any more. The community had disappeared long ago but the place name had stuck to describe a crossroads near Kilpatrick's house.

Under journalistic canons, he should have used Woodville, the nearest post office. "But what writer," he once wrote in mock self-defense, "with an ounce of poetry in his veins would choose Woodville as a dateline when with a spark of honest larceny he could latch onto Scrabble instead?"

The "Scrabble piece" prompted a series of rural reminiscences and birhday letters to his granddaughter Heather. Although a political writer, these bucolic dispatches became Kilpatrick's favorite columns—and also his readers'. He has even received letters addressed to the non-existent Scrabble Chamber of Commerce requesting information on available real estate and city services.

A new frame house, designed to blend into the landscape, appeared at White Walnut Hall the next year and the cottage was turned into Kilpatrick's office. Mae Corbin, who lived there after husband June had bought it, is a swimming pool permanently.

"By 1973," he says, "I felt I had my contacts pretty well established in the key committees, among the leadership of the House and Senate, within the White House, within the executive agencies. I felt I could handle most of my journalistic needs by telephone, so I didn't have to be on the scene.

"And then it occurred to me, because by that time we had built our house up here, and I'd had a good taste of country living, that I was likely to get a better perspective on public affairs from almost the Blue Ridge Mountains than I would right in the heart of Washington."

So White Walnut Hall became home. And Kilpatrick is quick to state, "It's worked out very well."

"Here I can form my own judgments in a way, because I don't think I was forming them totally on my own in Washington," he says. "I think was getting much influence from other people's opinions. So my judgment of public affairs is probably a little better because of the relative solitude in which I work."

As Kilpatrick notes, that solitude is only relative. He takes six daily newspapers, countless periodicals (the Rappahannock News among them) and he snorted that the telephone is "constantly intruding."

Kilpatrick's fondness for country living reflects the agrarian philosophy of his principal heroes—the British statesman Edmund Burke, and Americans like Thomas Jefferson and John Calhoun. Not unexpectedly, all three can be described, like Kilpatrick, as conservative.

Why is he a right-winger?

Kilpatrick chuckles, as if he has had to defend himself on that point many times before. I could no more explain than you can explain why birds fly or fish swim. There's just something in me that responds affirmatively to the doctrines of conservative thought.

"I like the body of ideas. I like the idea of the individuality of the human being. I resent the super-state. I resent the compulsions of government beyond the necessary compulsions of any organized society."

Then he adds with a smile, "And it's just the way I am."

Quite naturally, Kilpatrick sees this conservative philosophy as what he terms the nation's greatest strengths—"The whole relationship between the state on the one hand and the individual citizen on the other."

This relationship, he says, goes on to include rights most Americans

Continued on Page 60
AN INTERVIEW WITH BILL RULE, PRESIDENT OF RULE, INC., STAUNTON, VIRGINIA

1979 Honda Prelude

"WHEN YOU TEST-DRIVE A FRONT-WHEEL DRIVE AUTOMOBILE SAVE IT FOR A RAINY DAY."

1979 Honda Prelude

RULE: in bad conditions, front-wheel drive cars show how good a car can really be. In fair weather nearly every car is good; but in rain, ice, snow or a strong crosswind, it's a different story. That's the time to try a Front Drive. If you've never driven a front-wheel drive car on a slippery road, you're in for a surprise. The engine weight over the drive wheels gives excellent traction on rain, ice, and snow. The center of gravity is closer to the front: the car is more stable in crosswinds. And up to this point import cars have led in the Front Drive concept.

RULE: No, but front-wheel drive provides so many advantages that even American engineers are using it in their "cars of the future." Chrysler's Front-wheel drive Horizon was named "Car of the Year for 1978." It is the first of the successful Front Drive American economy cars, to be followed by G.M. and Ford. It is my prediction that all economy cars sold in volume will be Front Drive within the next year or two.

RULE: I believe American engineers are superior in many things: Just a few examples are electronics, air conditioning, and cruise control. And without question, production techniques are more flexible to accommodate marketing men and stylists. It may be that I'm a little prejudiced because I'm an American engineer. The majority of American buyers have always demanded many styles. We can always learn from others, but our philosophies are different.

RULE: Yes, many Americans feel that for a car to hold the road well and be comfortable, it has to be heavy. But weight is wasteful. In the past gasoline has been cheap here compared to Europe and Japan, but that is changing. Weight is the name of the "miles per gallon" game. And foreign designs are many years ahead in weight, space, and economy for very obvious reasons. As our country gets more like theirs, the absolute need for these economy designs will increase and U.S. manufacturers will adapt in a hurry. Not to mention E.P.A.'s regulations forcing the car makers in this direction. It's an exciting time in the automobile business—challenging too! Volkswagen A. G. seems to come closest to meeting the environmental and American economic challenge in philosophy.

RULE: Well, maybe I would spend more money on the interior of the car; it would be fancier. I suppose. But Volkswagen spent the money under the hood on engineering innovations; trouble-free fuel injection that uses the cheapest regular gas without a catalytic converter. Also front-wheel drive. And they were right, because it is the most successful import ever introduced. They made the interior cheerful and calm, so the driver and the passengers would be comfortable and relaxed. I think it is elegant myself.

RULE: Yes, it is the most popular car since we started selling them in 1976. It is really good looking. And it has a very simple engine concept called CVCC (or Controlled Vortex Combustion Chamber). Sound complicated? Not at all. It uses regular gas or any other gasoline without requiring a complicated catalytic converter. That's really important today. This CVCC engine was invented by Dr. Soichiro Honda, the truly great automotive genius of our time. Honda will go down in automotive history with the likes of Henry Ford, Ferdinand Porsche and Harvey Firestone. Incidentally, all Honda automobiles are front-wheel drive—Honda would not think of building them any other way.

RULE: It was clever of you to photograph me with a raincoat and umbrella. I guess that kind of thing helps publicize our front-wheel drive cars.
Seven years and 1,300 tons of newsprint later...

Earthkeepers quietly maintains the environmental ethic

by Lawrence Emerson

An estimated 20 million Americans hit the streets. Wearing gas masks, waving signs and carrying coffins draped with green-and-white ecology flags, they pass before TV cameras in the nation's largest demonstration ever. So many Congressmen are involved in the hoopla that the House and Senate recess for the day.

It's April 22, 1970—Earth Day. From coast to coast, in rural hamlets and urban centers, people of all descriptions join in a common cause—reversing the nation's ecological self-destruction. Most of the demonstrators are peaceful. Others present their views more emphatically. Students dump non-recyclable, steel soft drink cans on the lawn of Coca Cola's offices in Atlanta. At Indiana University, protesters steal concrete from construction sites to plug sewage discharge lines along the Jordan River's banks. Regardless of their methods, all the protesters call for an end of the throwaway-the-future-be-damned era.

Nine years later, the media's "unblinking" eye focuses elsewhere, and ecology flags are collector's items. But many people continue to work in quiet ways, attempting to save the planet.

Thick dark clouds loom above the Eastern Mennonite College campus Saturday at 9 a.m., when Keith Watts and Janet Jantzi arrive at a plain, tan-colored metal building. Inside the structure sit huge stacks of newspaper, a bunch of 55-gallon cardboard drums, a battered orange Nissan forklift and a couple of strange-looking machines. There is one touch of comfort—an old car seat leans against one wall. It's not the type of place one expects to find
the average college student on Saturday morning.

The 30' x 50' Farmstead metal building belongs to Earthkeepers, an EMC-sponsored ecology group. For about thirty minutes, Janet, a senior nursing major, and Keith, a junior Spanish major, clean up and move 600-pound bales of newspapers with the battered forklift.

Then they jump in an equally battered green Chevy van and head for the Red-Front Supermarket on Chicago Avenue, one of the six grocery stores they will visit this morning. With armloads of papers, they shuttle back and forth between the van and green wooden racks near the store entrances. Neither complains of the slick magazines continually found among the newspapers, even though Earthkeepers cannot recycle them. The magazines just go into the van to be thrown away later.

At the end of the hour-long route, which did not include three stops checked on different days, the van holds a ton of newspapers worth $30. Made of higher quality paper, computer cards bring up to $135 a ton.

Back at the warehouse, two freshmen roommates, Eric Stoltzfus, a social work major, and Tim Kennel, a music education major, have come to work. Eric climbs into a rectangular steel box about six feet tall. "Economy Bailing Press—bailing for all purposes," reads the fading red label. Tim fires up the forklift, which has been known to leave a bit of hydraulic fluid on the floor, and brings over a skid of papers. The two begin stacking the discarded journals in the baler, overlapping the edges carefully to ensure a tight bale. They work efficiently.

"I guess it goes back to the Puritan work ethic," Tim says with an honest smile. "My father taught me the importance of work, and I enjoy it."

Thirty minutes later, the baler full, Eric cranks the thick wooden top into place. He sticks the prongs of a long steel bar into slots on either side of a gear with a catch and pulls hard. The top moves down slightly, compressing the bale. Eric gets another "bite" with the bar and pulls again. Soon, he must force his entire weight down on the bar to make it move.

With the top still tight, Tim and Eric open the baler's hinged front and back. They fasten one-half-inch steel bands around the compressed bale. After "popping" the baler top, they push the finished bale onto the forklift and stack it among the others awaiting shipment to a plant in Richmond, where they will become cardboard boxes. The process starts over.

Diversion and excitement are sparse, although the roommates constantly rib one another in humorous restrained style.

"Not a bad bale," Eric quips, referring to the latest 600-pounder Tim stacked.

"I owe everything I know to you, Eric," Tim returns pleasantly without pause.

The two compete constantly to produce the better bale, but they have other reasons for their involvement.

"When I was growing up in Pennsylvania, I didn't have any job except to collect papers from neighbors and sell them to recyclers. So I knew a little about the process," Eric says. "I also agree with the philosophy behind recycling."

"We're recycling just a fraction of the paper in Harrisonburg that gets thrown away. Harrisonburg is just one small city in the U.S. The potential for recycling is much greater. It's definitely the way of the future if man thinks he's going to survive."

Tim agrees, "It's kind of obvious..."
that there’s not an overabundance of
resources.”

Eric, Janet, Keith, Tim and three
other Earthkeepers have added
incentive to work in the program—
they are paid, depending upon
experience, an average of $3 per
hour under the college’s federally-
subsidized work-study program.
Earthkeepers, founded with “a
certain style of volunteerism” seven
years ago, now functions primarily
with paid student labor, according to
Dr. A. Clair Mellinger, an EMC
biology professor and Earthkeepers’
faculty sponsor. But volunteers,
including Mellinger and Kevin King,
student chairman of Earthkeepers,
still play a major role, particularly
in administration and paperwork.

And, adding to its seven-year total
of 1,300 tons of recycled newspant,
gives the Earthkeepers plenty of
“paperwork.” With an annual
income nearing $11,000, the
organization has matured somewhat
financially since the early years
when it worked, at different times,
out of an old chicken house, an
abandoned gas station and a laundry
undergoing remodeling. Profits go
to the building debt, campus
beautification, community service
projects and wages.

The organization grew out of a
1972 EMC seminar, “Christianity in
the Future,” with most of the
support coming from the nursing
and life sciences departments. The
nurses suggested putting racks for
old newspapers at grocery stores so
people could bring them in while
shopping. With a little newspaper
advertising and some public-service
spots on local radio, the idea caught
on. Soon, Earthkeepers had “so
much paper that we had to have our
own building,” Mellinger explains.
Early in 1974, Earthkeepers
moved into the new metal building,
built on land donated by the college,
with a loan backed by the college.

Inside the enameled exterior
shell, work continues much the
same way it always has.

At the monthly Earthkeepers
meeting, someone occasionally
mentions purchasing a new
hydraulic baler. Mellinger says,
from his administrative point of
view, the automated baler would
relieve a few headaches. Paper
can come in faster than it
can be baled, especially during
elementary school paper drives and
the summer, when labor is scarce.

But Mellinger concurs with the
ecological point of view, often
presented to thwart the new-bailer
talk—that the simple hand machine
saves electricity—thus fossil fuel.

And environmental concerns
usually dictate Earthkeepers policy,
thus the group collects glass, even
though it is a money-losing venture.

---

CURIO’s Guide to Recycling

Before you set your trash out next
time, stop and think. How much
aluminum, glass and newspaper are
you throwing away? Residents of
the Harrisonburg area can easily
recycle all three.

Thus, for your convenience, a
short guide to recycling:

ALUMINUM

The Reynolds Aluminum
Recycling van is at Cloverleaf
Shopping Center in Harrisonburg
the second and fourth Tuesday of
each month from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
— Reynolds pays 20 cents per
pound for aluminum.
— Approximately 23 12-ounce
cans make a pound.
— Aluminum cans are light and
seamless. But many steel cans,
which are not acceptable, have no
seams. Only cans not attracted by a
magnet (the best way to tell) are
aluminum.
— Preferably, cans should be
crushed.
— Foil and pie pans are
acceptable, but should not be mixed
with cans.
— Window frames, screens,
lawn furniture and other aluminum
articles are accepted. They should
be completely free of foreign matter
such as steel rivets. Objects more
than three feet in length must be
broken up and bundled.
— Cast aluminum, used in auto
and motorcycle parts, is
unacceptable. Hubcaps are
unacceptable.
— Earthkeepers also takes
aluminum, but doesn’t pay for it.
Aluminum may be dropped off at the
warehouse. To get there: take Rt.
42 north from Harrisonburg; turn
left on Parkwood Drive three-tenths
of a mile out of town, go one-fourth
of a mile, and turn right opposite the
Earthkeepers sign on the left at
Eastern Mennonite High School.
Aluminum may be dropped off any
time. The warehouse is manned all
day Saturday.

GLASS:

Locally, only Earthkeepers takes
glass. It pays nothing for glass.
— Glass should be clean and free
of metal caps and rings.
— Large quantities should be
separated by color—brown, clear,
and green.

NEWSPAPERS:

Dave’s Recycling, one-tenth of a
mile north of city limits on the right-
hand side of Rt. 42, pays 50 cents
per hundred pounds. (The market is
extremely volatile, thus the price
may change.) All the newspaper
from Dave’s is turned into cellulose
insulation, which is also sold on the
premises. And Dave’s rents out
blowers to install the insulation.
Dave’s receives papers Friday 9
a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m.
to 4 p.m. Papers should not be in
boxes.

Earthkeepers has green racks for
newspapers near the entrances of
eight local grocery stores. Paper
may also be delivered to the
warehouse. (see ALUMINUM for
location).

— Newspapers should be dry,
free of slick magazines and bound
with string or put in grocery bags,
which Earthkeepers also recycles.

QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions of an
environmental or recycling nature,
call Dr. A. Clair Mellinger at 433-
2771, extension 414. Anyone
interested in volunteering his or her
services to Earthkeepers should
also call this number.

Several Virginia aluminum
manufacturers have collaborated to
set up an aluminum recycling
information line. Their toll-free
number is 800-223-6830.
Keith Watts loads Earthkeepers' van at a local supermarket. The group checks its racks at grocery stores three times weekly and collects nearly a ton of paper each time.

A custom-built machine in one corner of the warehouse crushes glass, separated by color and stored in the cardboard drums.

The group also collects aluminum, but suggests that people take it to the Reynolds recycling truck, where it brings 20 cents per pound.

"We should be doing more on the other end of this thing, in education," Mellinger says. "They should stop making aluminum cans and come up with something more substantial that can be reused. But if they're going to keep making them, we might as well recycle them."

Members of Earthkeepers do work on the educational end occasionally, lecturing and showing films to schoolchildren, answering recycling questions over the phone and organizing seminars on environmental topics, such as solar energy.

"Our purpose has always been to help people think about recycling," Mellinger explains. "I don't think there's quite the fever there was (in the early '70s). But there are many people in the Harrisonburg-Rockingham area who are very serious about recycling."

Mellinger leans back in his office chair. Behind him, stuck to a filing cabinet, is a small green decal—an ecology flag.

Make "My Bank" Your Bank

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434-6761

located next to the Valley Mall
Ex-con with a mission

Ted Allen spent 18 years in prison for murder.

But now he's a Big Brother,

trying to help kids avoid the hell he went through.

by Jack Dalby
Ted Allen does not look like a man who spent 18 years of his life in prison. There is no trace of menace in the man sitting behind a large wire spool table, eyeing a hastily-prepared bowl of oatmeal. Steam from the oatmeal fogs his glasses and he wipes them clear with powerful, weatherworn hands. His clothes are as simple as his food. The gray trousers and black turtleneck sweater look as if they have kept him warm through many winters. His shoes have a comfortable-looking quality brought on by age. The looks are not deceiving. Ted is a gentle 56-year-old black man who has been through hell, a hell he hopes he can keep others from entering.

"When I was a kid, I thought the world owed me a living," Ted explains. "I didn't care about anything or anyone." Many children are still like that; they need to belong, to be part of a group. Lack of proper judgment, though, can get them involved with the wrong people.

"It's easy to get into trouble, but it ain't too easy to get out," he asserts.

Ted discovered the Big Brother-Big Sister program can offer guidance to troubled children. "Kids need someone to look up to," says Ted, who has been a volunteer big brother since October 1978. Unfortunately for a number of children, there are no role models. When a parent is missing, the child must turn elsewhere for instruction. Too often that teacher is television.

"You know what TV teaches a black kid... that hoods make easy money and drive fancy cars," Ted says. He believes that children need to know it is more important to have pride in themselves than money and cars.

Ted shakes his head and gazes out the window thoughtfully, as if mentioning crime brings back memories of his own past.

Ted left his home in Bluefield, West Virginia at the age of 15 and travelled around the country, eventually settling in Richmond. It was there in 1955 that Ted got into a fight with another man and sent him to the hospital. Three weeks later, the man died from a combination of the beating and a heart condition. Ted was charged with murder, tried and found guilty. The prosecution asked for the death penalty. He was sent to a Richmond prison to await sentencing.

Ted realized there was a very real chance that he was going to die. With nowhere else to turn, he prayed.

"I told God that if he would spare my life, I would help people when I got out," Ted explains, "I've never forgotten that I owe my life to God."

"You know what TV teaches a black kid...that hoods make easy money and drive fancy cars."

Ted has been keeping his promise to God ever since he was paroled in 1973. Through the social service branch of the Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, Ted started visiting inmates at the correctional institution in Linville.

Four years later, he became a volunteer in the Big Brother-Big Sister program in the same church.

"People tend to misunderstand themselves and their purposes," he says. "Kids without guidance go astray. My mission is to provide the kids I come in contact with some kind of guidance... I don't need to be looked up to, but if they know everyone is not down on them, then I have succeeded."

Ted emphasizes the need for self-reliance. His personal hero is Andrew Jackson, a man who stuck by his convictions despite what others thought. Ted tries to instill the same confidence and pride in the people he talks with. "If you're not proud of yourself, no one else is going to be."

Ted learned that lesson while in jail. "Prison is the worst place you can put someone," he says. "They do nothing to help you. The only way to overcome it is by relying on yourself and God."

Ted read every book in the prison library and obtained a high school diploma through an equivalency test. He stayed out of trouble by avoiding association with any groups. "You can meet anyone you want in prison," Ted says, "But you don't want to join for protective coloration 'cause that's when you start to get into trouble."

Ted believes this country's prison system needs to be overhauled. He joined a prison reform committee sponsored by the local Council of Churches, where he gives advice as the resident ex-con.

Ted smiles from across the table and crushes a partially-smoked cigarette into an ashtray. "You know, I wouldn't go to prison again for my mother," Ted says, "but if I can prevent one kid from going, then that's what I'm about."

Interested in becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister? Call 433-8886 for an application. There are no special qualifications or age limits.

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DEN 5, PACK 61

A group of retarded scouts are gaining confidence and ability with the guidance of James Madison University students.

by Dennis Smith
and Lindsey Boteler

Nearly 200 people stood silently as Tony marched with two companions toward the stage, his small body struggling under the weight of the American flag he carried.

Fighting to keep the flagpole steady, Tony faced the crowd and smiled as another boy recited the Pledge of Allegiance. The words were slightly garbled, but no one at Muhlenberg Lutheran Church seemed to notice.

Tony glowed with pride as the ceremony ended and he returned down the aisle.

"We did good," said Tony. "We did real good."

For Tony and his companions the 30-second ritual is an accomplishment. But overcoming obstacles is not new to the boys in Den Five of Harrisonburg's Cub Scout Pack 61. Their goal is to get the most out of life, despite mental retardation.

"We can't keep our children behind closed doors," says Tony's father. "They must get the chance to experience everything normal kids do.

Providing these experiences for the six members of Den Five is a group of James Madison University students headed by Linda Deacon and Kathleen "Meenie" Carrington.

Both juniors at JMU majoring in Special Education, Deacon and Carrington are outgoing with a flair for working with children.

Their intentions are twofold, according to Deacon. One is to help the kids learn and have fun, and the other is to give themselves the practical experience not available in college classrooms. It's one thing to read about working with handicapped children, she says, but another to actually do it.

Three other students assist in leading the den and getting volunteers is no problem, Deacon says. With her graduation from JMU coming within the next year, she is keeping an eye open for someone capable of assuming the responsibilities of den mother.

The idea for a program like Den Five originally came from a Dayton Elementary School teacher, amid criticisms of the Scouts for not adequately catering to the needs of
handicapped children. In January of 1978, Deacon and Mary Shea, a former JMU student, turned the idea into a reality with the formation of Den 101 of Special Pack 101. Since then, Den 101 merged with Pack 61 to become Den Five.

The parents of each child are required to join the Association of Retarded Citizens before their children can become part of Den Five. Until the merger with Pack 61, the association met most of the financial needs. Now Pack 61 will provide the money necessary to keep Den Five going.

As in other dens, requirements are set to gain achievement pins and badges, but since the scouts in Den Five lack the size and coordination of other children, allowances are made.

"All we ask of the scouts is to perform the requirement the best they can," says Deacon. "We show them how to do it, then they keep practicing until we believe they're doing the best they can."

The den meets every Wednesday in a JMU dormitory lounge, where they spend time on both physical and mental activities. According to the parents, the efforts of the den mothers have been successful.

"I exposed my child (the scouts) to many things which they have to use their fullest abilities in some and develop completely new ones in others," says one parent. "I've noticed my son's speech has improved greatly since they taught him some of the mottos and ceremonies."

Other parents noted that their boys have become more confident and gained an improved outlook on life since joining the Cub Scouts, which, according to Deacon, is usually the boy's only extracurricular activity.

Before becoming scouts, the boys in Den Five had only the schools in which to develop themselves. Now they participate in activities ranging from softball to drama, and have even learned the workings of a fire station. Although it took time to adjust to being Cub Scouts, the boys are at the point now that they look forward to den meetings, says Deacon.

For the students in charge of running Den Five, there is not only the practical experience in disciplining and planning activities for handicapped children, but a sense of accomplishment.

"I get a proud feeling when they achieve something," says Deacon, "I feel as though they are almost my kids."

For the parents, Den Five means an opportunity for their children to experience the same things as other children, and they intend to keep the boys in scouting as long as possible.

"For the first time my son feels like he's accomplishing something," says one parent, "He's really starting to develop confidence in himself. As a matter of fact, he's starting to think he's hot stuff."
Ma Thomas hankers for simpler times

by Dan McNiel

Ma Thomas has a personal flavor, including a spice for life and more than a grain of salt for the world in which she lives, that even her locally renowned, home-cooked food cannot match.

The aging restauranteur owns and operates Thomas House and Home Bakery, visible from Route 42 in the heart of Dayton. Dayton was once the home of Shenandoah College which provided the catalyst for the bakery Ma Thomas opened in 1942.

"The reason I got into it was that the Shenandoah College kids pulled me into it," remembers Mrs. Thomas. "When I had my bake shop, I didn’t expect to feed anybody. Then they (the students) would turn around and want coffee, a piece of pie and maybe some ice cream. Then their parents would come and they would say, ‘would you feed us?’ It just kind of took off."

Mrs. Thomas’ husband died in 1959, the year she switched the bakery to a restaurant after the former “had gotten so big I couldn’t take care of it myself.”

Taking care of herself has not been easy for the elderly lady since a childhood skating accident left her “in terrible shape, a real cripple.”

Thomas’ condition did not improve until 1938 when a chiropractor in Washington, D.C.,
The fire returns to her eyes with mention of another pilfering of one of her treasured moments. There is no empty space this time since Thomas has replaced the missing plate with another colorful addition. "I had a beautiful Mary Gregory plate that was stolen too. Whoever stole it had to crawl on the table and reach up here to grab it."

Ma Thomas cites thievery and loose morals as the two biggest differences between the Shenandoah Valley of today and the area 20 years ago. "We have a lot more stealing and a lot more immoral men and women living with each other. You used to not hear of that in our country," Thomas remarks.

The dramatic upward spiral in prices is another unwelcome change that has incurred obvious impact on her business. "You have to raise the prices just to exist, to pay all these bills. It just keeps going up and up all the time."

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The walls of Thomas' restaurant resemble a jigsaw puzzle with each plate filling its proper place designed by the master of the colorful scheme. "There's my history wall. The graying widow points to a select array of numerous plates depicting heroes from Robert E. Lee to Harry F. Truman. Thomas' personal, historical tribute boasts a French collection of plates, distributed during the U.S.'s bicentennial which illustrates the role France played during the American Revolution. Marring the wall is a small nail in the middle of the bottom row, the former home of one of Ma's favorites.

"Just yesterday they stole one of my copper plates I had gotten in Africa." Thomas says with an indignation that softens when she describes the plate. "It had a lion carved on the back and it was awful pretty too," she sighs.

"I call them my memory plates; plates around here bring back memories."

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"My daughter brought me a hanging plant a few weeks ago and it was stolen too. You used to never even lock your doors. I guess the Shenandoah Valley is getting like the rest of the world with corruption," Ma laughs and reflects upon a more simple era. "It didn't used to be like that I'll tell you. I'll be 80 years old in January and I can tell a big difference in that sort of thing, a big difference. You have to lock everything now."

"They raise their price year after year. Then the wages go up, and there's no need for wages to go up every year. But you can't do without steel. Think of how many things are..."
Rising prices are an unwelcome change for Thomas House, Mrs. Thomas says. "I don't want a big business, just enough to pay expenses."

MRS. THOMAS has decided to reside in this area, providing "as wholesome food as I can to nourish the bodies." She says. The number of bodies formerly numbered groups of up to a hundred people, but Thomas now only accepts crowds of 40 or less. "I used to take care of a lot of people but that got to be too much for me. I don't want a big business, just enough to occupy my mind and time and pay expenses."

A native of Rockingham County, Ma reserves a unique place in her heart for the Shenandoah Valley which holds up quite well in the comparison of the various attractions around the world. "Every country has beautiful things and they're all different and interesting to me. I enjoyed them all. I like living in the Shenandoah Valley," she says.

And the folks who have eaten at her restaurant are grateful Ma Thomas has decided to reside in this area, providing "as wholesome food as I can to nourish the bodies."

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Mrs. Thomas pays wages to "four or five" cooks in addition to herself to comprise a kitchen staff that has created a minor legend for good eating in the surrounding area. Thomas takes her staff on trips for "one or two days" to places such as Williamsburg, Hershey, Pa., Washington D.C., Philadelphia and New York.

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Leighton Evans,
The Book Fair Man

by Jim Dawson

"I'm here to get the books to the general public at a price that they feel like they can afford." That's how Leighton Evans describes his family-operated Book Fairs, which have become almost an obsession with many local and not-so-local book lovers.

Periodically during the year, Evans offers thousands of new and used books for sale at $2 each or less, regardless of their original prices. The fairs always start on a Saturday at 9 a.m., but customers are waiting in line by six. Some have even been known to camp out overnight in the open field beside the Evans' barn to insure a good place in line the next day.

Yes, beside the barn. You see, Leighton Evans does not have a store. What he does have is a large, two-story barn surrounded by lots of open land behind his house in Mt. Crawford. The barn is about a half-mile back from the highway on a gravel-covered dirt road. Customers park in a field, and even the portable restrooms have only recently been added.

Needless to say, overhead is kept at a minimum—and, because of the resulting low book prices, not many people are likely to complain about the situation. With the exception of a few special titles, every current hardcover in the barn sells for $2.

The only thing which distinguishes a Book Fair book from a book store book is that most of the books at the fair lack dustjackets.


Evans got the idea for the Book Fairs when he was operating a mail-order out-of-print book business. By offering new, used, and out-of-print books during specified "Book Fair" weekends at fractions of their original prices, Evans thought he could draw out enough local bibliophiliacs to make such a venture succeed.

Other book dealers Evans asked to
join him in the project thought the enterprise was doomed to failure in this area, however, and Evans ended up going it alone. Almost ten years later, the Book Fairs have become Evans' main source of income, with an estimated 1500 people showing up for the first day of each fair. Evans sells between five and ten thousand books during each of the four fairs yearly, with two-thirds of that number sold on the first Saturday. Starting with the next fair, Evans will institute a new policy of holding back some copies of the more popular titles until the second Saturday of the fair. Any title which Evans has more than ten copies of will be available to both the first and second Saturday customers.

Although quantities of some titles are small, it is something of a comfort to know that Evans will generally allow only two copies of any title to be sold to any individual or dealer. The only books which dealers can buy in bulk are those of sufficient quantities to leave plenty more for individual customers.

"I'm not interested in selling everything to one person...I'm more interested in fifteen people having one copy than I am in one person having fifteen," Evans says. "It's all at the same price. (Any dealer) pays me the same price for a book that you pay me. I put the price down to where it should be to start off.

"Really, I'm not in the book fair business to supply dealers with books."

Evans keeps his book supply sources a family secret, and rejects completely the notion of restricting his fairs to dealers only—though selling in bulk would probably take much less of his family's time and energy. "You get a lot of self-satisfaction out of selling to the public. That sounds kind of like a tall tale, but it's the truth," Evans says.

The business of the Book Fair resides entirely within the Evans family; in fact, one of the reasons Evans is not interested in branching out to other areas is because it would mean having to take a partner.

Evans' location in Mt. Crawford is also an appropriate one as far as Leighton Evans' own reading preference for out-of-print Civil War and southern United States history books is concerned. "As I live right between three battlefields—Port Republic, Cross Keys, and New Market, with Piedmont right up the road—I tend to lean towards the southern books," Evans says.

Other subject areas of books to be found at every Book Fair include the arts and sciences, games, politics, reference books, mysteries, humor and song books, biographies, and a large variety of current and classic poetry and literature. There are hardbacks and paperbacks and oversized versions of each, magazines, record albums, and sheet music—and Evans even provides cardboard boxes for customers to carry away their hoards.

In Leighton's own words, "I like what I'm doing...sure, you're in it for the money—don't let anybody tell you that you don't do it to make a living, because you do. But at the same time there's a lot of difference between just doing something that you like, that you feel like you're not out there taking advantage of somebody in order to make the buck. And I at no time feel like I'm taking advantage of anybody."

The next Book Fair dates are Saturday, April 28 (9 a.m.—5 p.m.), July 7, 8, and 14, and September 22, 23, and 29. Take exit 61 from I-81. Signs are posted.

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End of the road for the small family farm?

by Dwayne Yancey
Most other boys had their G. I. Joes or played cowboys and Indians. But when I was five years old and growing up in McGaheysville, I spent my afternoons playing "farm."

My toy tractor had wheels that really turned, and I would spend hours pushing it back and forth through a "field" of rice or dried beans, depending on what I could find in the kitchen. Celophane grass, salvaged from an Easter basket, was stuffed into a toy barn for hay.

From the back porch of my grandmother's farm house, I could watch the men working at the barn or in the fields, and I rearranged my plastic farmhands accordingly. When the winter came, I moved my operation inside and took up residence on a corner of the living room floor.

Whenever they’d let me, I’d follow my grandmother to the shed to watch her milk her cow, or sit on my grandfather’s lap when he and my father discussed the farm’s finances.

I, like my father, and his father, and practically every Yancey before him, was going to be a farmer.

Now I’m 20 years old. My old farm is collecting dust in my grandmother’s basement—but not the old farm house. That, along with most of the land and farm buildings I explored as a child, was sold seven years ago. What’s left today of the old family farm is rented out.

My father now holds down a 9 to 5 job at a Harrisonburg store. And I’ve sent off applications to jobs in some of the largest cities in the state. I never even joined the FFA. Our case is not unusual. Ten farmers within a mile of our house have ceased full-time operations during the past 15 years. A few still farm, but are no longer dependent on agriculture for their main source of income. The rest have sold, or rented, their land to other farmers. Four of the one-time family farms have been absorbed by the same man.

Caught between soaring production costs and not-so-soaring farm prices, the small family farm as we once knew it has become a thing of the past. With farmers’ return on their investment decreasing, the farmer today must either expand his operation into a mini-corporation or get out. Latest figures show that since 1960, Rockingham County has lost 620 farms and more than 45,000 farm acres. And fewer young men are going into farming, for a variety of economic and social reasons.

"We’re losing people real fast," says Bailey Carpenter, who runs a dairy farm near Cross Keys, "but fortunately, we’re not losing cows."

Generally, the old time family farmers have already sold out or retired. The sons who would have succeeded them in running the farm have opted for better paying jobs. Many have been attracted to the factories that have sprung up around Harrisonburg. Those who have gone to college often wind up far from "the old home place."

Those who have stayed in farming are a different breed. They are as much business executives, accountants and purchasing agents as they are tractor drivers, hay makers and egg gatherers. Many have titles like "corporation president" and work in carpeted offices with bookshelves crammed with economic studies and computer print-outs. Some have advanced college degrees in various facets of agri-business.

The poultry industry, the backbone of agriculture in Rockingham County, has been converted entirely to farmers growing birds on contract for a corporation. The concept of a "family farm" has survived in dairying, the county’s second highest source of farm income, but even that requires an investment in the neighborhood of $300,000, not to mention the necessary bookkeeping skills.

Wilmer Landis, a former dairyman who now operates a poultry farm near Singers Glen, was one of the first in the county to rely heavily on financial analyses and other economic reports from VPI.

"A lot of farmers frowned on us being book farmers," he says.

But in the long run, it has been the book farmers who have survived.

The family farm used to be a self-sufficient economic unit that got along nicely without cash. Large families constituted the chief labor supply. If there was a "hired man," he was paid mainly in goods and services.

Perhaps right there lies the key to the demise of the small family farm—mechanization.

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Changes in farming through the years can be seen in this comparison of turkey houses on a Rocco farm near Penn Laird. The 12-by-12 house, above, was built in 1940. The farmer had to feed and water the birds by hand and fire the stove every morning. Rocco has just built eight new houses on the same farm. Fifty-by-300, they will produce 1.5 million pounds of turkey a year. Since feeding, watering and medication is automated, one man can care for all eight houses. New technologies will make the equipment obsolete in seven years.
meant farmers had to begin raising products specifically for sale. Specialization was on the way.

Strickler's father chose poultry. He tore down a Civilian Conservation Corps camp and built 12 tiny, by modern standards, turkey houses. The Stricklers raised 1,000 a year, at that time one of the largest operations in Rockingham County.

Today such figures would be laughed at.

"Processing plants don't even want to send a truck to pick up 10,000 eggs," says Everett Smith, president of the Rockingham Farm Bureau Association, who owns his own egg processing and distribution plant near McGaheysville.

Smith's poultry operation, one of the largest in the area, went through the same metamorphosis that Strickler's did. He started with 200 laying hens in 1937. His newest, and by no means only, chicken house holds 60,000 birds.

But Smith notes that when his son-in-law, who works with him on Faraway Farms, attended a recent convention, "he was so small he was hardly noticed. If you didn't have a million birds, you didn't count."

Smith also owns a large dairy herd and has watched the same changes take place in that field.

"We used to have three cows. We used all the cream we wanted and sold what was left," he says. "That's not economically feasible anymore. It's hard for a man to make a living on less than 75 cows."

Specialization meant the end of self-sufficiency. No longer could the farmer raise everything he ate. Thus he became a consumer, just as much as the suburban housewife.

Although that housewife may not realize it in the grocery store, the farmer is not making a killing. In fact, considering the prices of land and machinery, it's surprising the farmer is making anything. Just the packaging, such as the cellophane bag for carrots, usually costs more than what the farmer got for the product inside.

The old adage that "the farmer is the only businessman who buys retail and sells wholesale," or actually less than wholesale, is even more true today.

Farmers point out that most farm products sell for little more today than they did 40 years ago. Yet the farmers' own costs have skyrocketed. Where a horse was practically free, the typical tractor costs $30,000. Where Strickler's first turkey houses were constructed of second-hand wood and tree bark, the smallest poultry house built today costs $100,000.

"The cost-price squeeze has really hit hard," agrees Paul Rogers of the Harrisonburg office of the VPI extension service. To keep up with inflation and rising production costs, he figures that hamburger should be selling at more than $2 per pound.

Ironically, it's been the low return that has saved agriculture from being taken over by corporations such as General Motors, says Nelson Gardner, a Bridgewater dairyman many remember as the man who sold several herds of cattle to ex-Beatle John Lennon last fall.

"You can make more money on interest than in farming," he says. "That's why corporations will never take over. If farmers ever become dependent on giant corporations, food won't be cheap anymore. They'll control the market and see

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The very nature of farming is that you have to pour money back in. It's not like the man with a $25,000 income who can take it home in his pocket.

Strickler, "compared to two percent in industry. We would have no inflation if other industries were near approaching what we're doing where production keeps up with wage hikes."

For example, it used to take 14 weeks to raise a three pound chick. Five pounds of feed produced one pound of meat. Now it takes only eight weeks for a four pound bird, with two pounds of feed producing one pound of meat.

But improved feed and research takes money. And where manure once sufficed for fertilizer, chemicals are now required to reach the necessary production levels.

"The very nature of farming is that you have to pour money back in," says Gardner. "It's not like the man with a $25,000 income who can take it home in his pocket. Over the years, you build up an equity and with increasing land values, it makes an excellent return. But you don't have cash in your pocket. It's on the balance sheet. That's why a lot of farmers live poor and die rich."

Even though the percentage of return is small, Gardner says "the capital required is 10 times what it used to be."

And that's why, when asked about the future of farming, people like Bailey Carpenter sigh and say only, "I don't know...I don't know how a young man wanting to go into farming today could do it."

At one time, it was easy to inherit land. But increasing land values have put farms in a higher tax bracket. Often heirs must sell as much as half the estate just to pay the inheritance taxes.

It was also relatively simple in those days to buy a farm. A young man could work as a tenant farmer, or rent a farm, and save enough money to buy his own land, says Garst. "At one time you could buy land for $50 an acre and a plow and a horse was all you needed."

But no more. Today farm land typically sells for $1,000-1,500 an acre. And that doesn't count investments for buildings and
machinery.

"Any man who goes to a bank wanting a loan to set up a dairy has to handle 75 cows," says Smith. That's $200,000-300,000. "Multiply that by 10 percent interest and what do you have?" asks Gardner.

The figure for poultry is comparable, although that field is easier to break into since a poultry farmer doesn't have to be a financial wizard.

"All he has to do is know how to convert feed to meat," says Strickler. The company takes care of purchasing and marketing, and will protect its investment. If the farmer can come up with $30,000 cash, the bank will loan him the remaining $270,000 necessary to set up a full-time poultry outfit.

Thus farmers, who once survived without any cash at all, are now frequent visitors to loan offices. "I imagine most of the young farmers today are in debt," says Garst. "I've heard a lot of them say they are."

Farming is becoming open only to those who have grown up in a farm family or marry into one. And even those numbers are diminishing.

It's the prospect of long term debt that makes the outlook for young people entering farming "somewhat discouraging," according to Dwight Newman, an agriculture teacher at Montevideo High School who works with the FFA. Those boys who don't already have access to a farm "are having a rough time getting started," he says.

Gardner is more emphatic, declaring "It's not impossible but it is very improbable." Consequently, high school agriculture programs are stressing agri-business and related fields over actual production. Farming is thus becoming open only to those who have grown up in a farm family or marry into one. And even those numbers are diminishing.

Emphasizing the point is the latest J. C. Penney catalog, whose toy section features just one farm set. And that doesn't even include a barn.
An Antiquated Art Revived

'There are only a few tinsmiths left in Virginia.'

by Deborah Yard

As he shapes, bends and hammers the small piece of tin that is to become a candleholder, Don Bradley of Bridgewater explains that tinsmithing is becoming a lost art. "I didn't know how rare it was when I got into it," says Bradley, who began the craft as a hobby in 1974. "There are only a few tinsmiths left in Virginia."

Surprisingly, there are no tinsmiths in Colonial Williamsburg, the home of many crafts shops. The town prides itself on its authentic representation of colonial life and there was no tinsmith in Williamsburg originally. Bradley says the popular theory is that tinsmiths were prevalent in the New England states and tinware was brought to the South by peddlers.

Berlin, Connecticut is thought to be the home of the first tinsmiths in America. In the early 1700s, two brothers from Ireland opened a shop in Berlin where they made kitchen utensils and other housewares from tin.

Bradley explains that two kinds of tin were, and are, used for these products. Kitchen utensils must be made of the shiny type of tin called tinplate. Other wares, such as candleholders, lanterns and chandeliers are made of terneplate, a duller-looking tin that, because of its chemical properties, cannot come in contact with food.

Terneplate is sometimes called "poor man's pewter," since it looks similar to the more expensive metal.

Bradley became interested in this art after meeting a tinsmith at a Harper's Ferry, West Virginia crafts show. One thing led to another, and after a six-month apprenticeship, he began his own crafts shop in Bridgewater, where he sold some of his own products, along with quilts, pillows, dolls, ceramics and pottery, all supplied by Don Bradley shapes a piece of tin on a blowhorn stake, a tool which is more than 100 years old.
Handcrafting History

Not a business to get rich at, but one that is extremely satisfying.

by Deborah Yard

"You don't see many places making Windsor chairs anymore. There are a lot of different problems involved in making Windsors—bending, digging and smoothing the wood. A lot of places don't want to fool with all that handwork."

So says John Weissenberger of Broadway, Virginia, a maker of the graceful and light Windsor chair. Everything involved in his chairmaking is done by hand.

Weissenberger, who has been working with wood all of his life, began making Windsor chairs at the Virginia Craftsmen in Harrisonburg. He later moved to Pennsylvania, continuing his chairmaking and recently returned to the area where he now makes chairs full-time.
“It's not a business you get rich at, but I enjoy it,” he says, smiling. “People like dealing with someone who will individualize a chair to their particular needs,” he says. “They can mix and match the styles of chairs they buy or I can widen the seat of the chair for a larger person.”

The theory behind the style of the chair is twofold. “Most everything on the chair serves both an aesthetic and functional purpose,” he says. “The slanted legs provide good support for the chair and are attractive too.

“The bulbs on the stretchers between the legs are thick for support and are also nice-looking,” he adds.

A chair can take anywhere from two and one-half days to two weeks to complete, depending on its complexity. Four kinds of wood are used in each chair and the process for making each is pretty much the same, Weissenberger says.

First, the legs, made of hard maple, must be turned, thus smoothing the bulbs and thinner parts of each leg. Maple is used because it is a hardwood and doesn't show wear as much as a softer wood might.

After turning the legs, the seat is marked out on yellow poplar, then thinned and smoothed. Poplar is chosen for its softness in contrast to the hardwood of the legs. “The seat ties everything together,” he says, “it must be dug out and carved, but it must be thick enough to take the strain put on the chair.”

Holes are bored in the seat for the legs, which are then wedged and glued into place.

Next, a groove is cut in the seat to align the spindles used in the back of the chair. The spindles are cut from logs of hickory, used because of its toughness and strength. Because the split of the wood follows the grain, the spindle is stronger.

Spindles completed, the bent parts of the chair are made. A white oak log is cut, scraped and steamed at more than two hundred degrees for about four hours to soften it. When it is removed from the steaming box, the wood is very pliable, but must be bent within 30 seconds before it cools. The wood is tied in the specified shape and left that way for several weeks till it dries and holds the shape.

From this point, the chair is assembled. “It goes together very hard, but the stress and strain is what keeps the chair together,” he says.

The chair is then stained or painted.

Weissenberger works on several chairs simultaneously, doing all the legs or seats or spindles at one time. Chairs must be ordered more than a year in advance.

Chairs range in price from $107 for a simple chair to $350 for an elaborate one.

Windsor chairs are believed to have been made in England originally and were supposedly brought to the United States in about the 18th century. The style changed dramatically during that time and the chair assumed its new characteristic gracefulness.

Historians believe that some of the first chairs were made with wheels on them so that the rich owners could be pushed around in them by their servants. “In fact, wheelwrights were the first craftsmen to make the Windsor chair,” he said.
Antique Reproductions in Metal

by Deborah Yard
The Virginia Metalcrafters make brass, tin, pewter, cast iron, and aluminum into the antiques that are sold in restored colonial towns.

The Virginia Metalcrafters in Waynesboro, Virginia, boasts metalwork of "the world's highest quality."

"For virtually everything we make, there is a genuine antique somewhere in the world," says John Foster, sales manager for the Virginia Metalcrafters.

"In our pattern shop, workers can reproduce any antique given them," he says, "these men are very talented."

The Virginia Metalcrafters are known best for their brass products, but they also work with tin, pewter, cast iron, and aluminum.

Pieces sold by the Virginia Metalcrafters are sold wholesale to such fine stores as Woodward and Lothrop, Altman's, and Wanamaker's. Other buyers include the gift shops of the Smithsonian Institution and the Washington Cathedral, both in the District of Columbia, as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

Colonial Williamsburg; Old Sturbridge, Massachusetts; Mystic Seaport, Connecticut; Old Salem, North Carolina; and Newport, Rhode Island, all the sites of restored colonial towns, also buy from the Metalcrafters.

A factory showroom and outlet store is located near the factory on Route 250, four miles west of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Both are open to the public on Monday through Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Slightly imperfect and discontinued items are sold in the outlet store at a lower cost.

The process by which brass is transformed from a molten liquid to a shining trivet or candlestick is an interesting one. Foster explains the process as a time consuming one in which the brass pieces are continually checked for flaws. Badly flawed pieces are rejected and melted down to avoid waste.

The process begins by heating numerous 20-pound brass ingots in a furnace to 1800-2000 degrees Fahrenheit. Impurities, known as slag, rise to the top of the bubbling liquid and are skimmed off. The liquid is then poured into sand molds.

The sand molds are made by filling two box-like forms, called flasks, with sand and placing a metal template over each. Both parts are squeezed together under great pressure. When the template is removed, the sand is rock-hard. The two sides are then put together, one on top of the other, to form a mold for the brass.

The molten brass is poured into the sand mold and left to harden, which takes several minutes. The sand is dusted away from the rough brass pieces which are then put into

Shopper examines a brass candlestick on display in the showroom.
A Virginia Metalcrafters worker welds a piece of brass. Visitors can view this process, along with brass pouring and mold making, from an enclosed area Monday through Saturday 9 a.m.—4 p.m.

A shodblaster that tumbles them and removes even more sand. The sand is reused for new molds, also eliminating waste, Foster says.

At this point, the brass pieces are dull and rough and look nothing like the finished product.

The pieces then begin their long journey through the various refining and inspection rooms. They are sanded to remove the roughness, buffed with a greasy compound and then dipped in an ammonia bath to degrease them. The buffing and degreasing processes are repeated.

When the pieces come to the polishing room, they are nearly ready to be packaged, and are shined to a beautiful glow. Following this step, the pieces must undergo a rigorous inspection to insure against imperfections.

A thin clear coat of protective lacquer is applied to all the pieces except those being sent to The Craft House at Colonial Williamsburg. Williamsburg retains such respect for authenticity that it will not accept lacquered brass since the original crafters did not lacquer their products. The lacquer is unnoticeable on the pieces that are done, however, and it eliminates the need to polish the brass for some years to come.

Pieces requiring assembly are put together and sent to the packaging room. Even this process is painstaking since each of the 600 metal articles made by the Metalcrafters has its own special packaging.

Foster shows several other pieces and relates short stories about each. One is a cast-iron fire-marker, which he explains was placed in front of the colonial home to show from which fire company the homeowner had purchased his insurance policy. The marker bore the insignia of that particular fire company.

In the event of fire, the closest fire company would send out its horse-drawn pumper. The firemen would look at the marker and, if it showed a different company's insignia, turn around and go back to the firehouse leaving the home to burn.

The most popular item made by the Metalcrafters is the brass Queen A pair of brass horsehead bookends are for sale in the showroom. Pieces sold in the outlet store are 25 percent less than those sold in the retail store.
Anne cypher trivet, which bears her initials. A brass pineapple trivet is also popular, the pineapple being the recognized symbol of hospitality, according to Foster.

A traveler's candlestick is also an interesting piece. Made of brass, the two dish-like bottoms of the candleholders are screwed together and resemble a brass doughnut. When unscrewed, the customer finds two candlestick holders which screw into the center, thus creating matching holders from each side.

The Virginia Metalcrafters are proud of their fine handcraftsmanship, Foster says. "Nothing is absolutely perfect, as it would be if it were mass produced, but that's what makes it appealing to a lot of people."

ABOVE: The showroom of the Virginia Metalcrafters is open Monday through Saturday 9 a.m.—4 p.m. BELOW: An 18th century cast-iron firemarker.
The Artist and the Atrium

In Dr. Crystal Theodore’s modern country home, the outside comes in through an open patio called an atrium

by Kris Carlson
The atrium provides an enclosed outdoor space in the center of the house. This is the view from Theodore's studio.

"He came up to me and said, 'You're going to think I'm crazy, but I want to buy your house.'

"I told him, 'Yes, I think you're crazy!'"

A total stranger wanted to buy her home, even though he had never seen the best part—the inside.

Dr. Crystal Theodore has had several offers to buy her house on Route 33 about five miles west of Harrisonburg, although all of them aren't so unusual. She just takes the names and puts them in a file of "future buyers."

A Valley resident for 21 years, Theodore teaches art at James Madison University. She is an ex-Marine, a world traveler, the winner of four Carnegie Foundation Fellowship awards and one Rockefeller Foundation award. The author of a hypothesis on patterns of change in art forms and man's attitudes, the 61-year-old is currently writing a book on creativity and gerontology and another book as an expansion of her hypothesis.

When the native South Carolinian designed and built her home 13 years ago, it was a personal reaction against the Duke Fine Arts Building at JMU, which she said disappointed her because of its small size and overall impractical design.

If the stranger wanted to buy on the basis of the exterior attractiveness of the one-story red brick house with gray wood trim alone, what would he have said if he knew about the open patio or atrium in the center of the home, or of the comfortable interior design, or that the heating costs are less than those of most traditional homes?

These factors make the house so appealing: the mix of old and new, of aesthetic and practical, of an ancient Greek and Roman floor plan built with contemporary materials, furnished with modern designer chairs and ancient African art.

And the house reflects its location in the Shenandoah Valley, since the Valley is also a mixture of old and new—of Mennonite farmers and college students, of Victorian homes and modern shopping malls.

The home faces the highway on a hilltop that it shares with a few other houses. The 1½-acre lot includes a garage, a garden and a big silver
maple tree in the front yard. A bay window occupies the center of the front of the house and to the right is the gray front door.

The rectangular floor plan centers around the atrium which is surrounded by an interior hallway with adjacent rooms.

Next to the foyer is the living room, where the traditional meets the novel. Standing amid contemporary designer chairs by Saarinin, Bertoia and Eames, a "perfectly ordinary divan," a wall of books on one side and a glass-covered fireplace on the other, one can gaze out through the sliding glass doors into the peace and nature of the atrium.

The 20-by-20 foot open area with a flagstone floor is naturally at its best in the summer. A holly tree stands near the small pool, waterfall and fountain area opposite the living room. In the summer, potted plants and outdoor furniture also decorate the area.

The atrium's beauty is supplemented by its practicality. Air conditioning isn't necessary because the many sliding glass doors open to the atrium and allow a breeze to enter.

Theodore spends hours in one of the more "practical" rooms—her studio.
"I like the inside open, because I can be 'outdoors' and can still be completely private at the same time," Theodore says. "That is until airplanes started taking tours over my house."

Although no longer a problem, Theodore's house was such a curiosity when it was first built that local aviators continually flew over to "get a peek."

In the winter, therma-pane glass and rubberized thermal drapes keep the warmth of the electric ceiling-heat. The house is well-built and well-insulated, Theodore maintains, and her $78-a-month electric bill substantiates her claim.

The art in her home sustains the contrasting theme of old and new without discord. The human face abstractions of the African masks blend well with the paintings by Theodore depicting abstract landscapes.

The floorplan of Theodore's home clearly illustrates the simple design which centers on the atrium.

When first built, Theodore's house was such a curiosity that local aviators flew over to "get a peek."

The painting by Theodore in the dining room was one of 50 chosen to hang in a national art exhibit by the internationally-renowned artist Marcel Duchamp.

It is important to Theodore that her home be practical and reflect what she likes, hence her "pure Theodore design. It's just what I'm comfortable with," she says with confidence. She shares her home with her two dogs: a wire-haired terrier named Lizzy and a Chinese Shih Tzu puppy named Ming Lee; and occasionally her mother.

The idea for Theodore's floor plan comes from an architect in Washington State who designed a similar house for his family. Theodore bought his plans and revised them so that about one-third of the house is her own design.

When she built her home 13 years ago, it cost about $30,000, but today Theodore declines to comment on its worth because of selling purposes. And Theodore may indeed sell her home in the next four or five years when she retires and possibly moves.

Undoubtedly there will be someone in her file of 'future buyers' who will pay her price for an attractive, unusual, and practical home.
Rebirth of an Historic Home

by Maureen Riley
Ten years ago the Stone House was on the death list. Dr. and Mrs. Fletcher have since restored their home, where modern conveniences blend subtly with 18th century comfort and charm.

"Is the doctor in?" the visitor asks.
The farmer cuts off the tractor's motor, rests his hand on the large wheel and grins mischievously as he replies "Yep, he sure is."
"Is he in the house?" says the visitor, pointing to the impressive stone structure to his left.
"The boss is the only one in there; you're looking at the doctor right now," the farmer says, delighting at the surprise that comes over the visitor's face.
Dr. William Fletcher has had this experience many times while working on his 100-acre farm off Port Republic Road. He practices medicine at Rockingham Memorial Hospital every weekday, but early mornings, evenings and weekends find him doing regular farm chores in well-worn denims, a loose shirt and ventilated baseball cap.
Without hired help, he and his wife, whom he affectionately calls "the boss," run the farm, which boasts 42 Angus cows, three horses and several gardens.
But that isn't their most outstanding accomplishment.
The Stone House, where they live on the farm, was on the death list ten years ago. Its 200-year heritage had been ignored for too long. The house's imposing stone exterior was disguised by a white clapboard porch draped awkwardly across its face. Bird nests were lodged securely behind the chipped shutters that framed the broken windows.
Inside, six layers of assorted wallpaper hung in shreds. The rotting wooden floors were unlevel and rough. Plumbing, electricity and heat were nonexistent.
In 1969, despite the house's derelict condition, the Fletchers "fell in love with the place" and purchased the house, built about 1770, and surrounding farmland.
The Fletchers and their four children worked diligently and quickly to make the house livable. After three months, the house was clean and had heat, electricity and water. They moved from their temporary abode, a pre-fabricated A-frame cottage in Massanetta Springs, and called the Stone House their home.
Through continued restoration during the past ten years, they have also successfully re-created the early American charm of the house.
Mrs. Fletcher, a petite, attractive woman, has followed the examples of the Williamsburg and Pennsylvania houses they have visited to restore and preserve the Stone House's 18th century charm.
She sits comfortably in the den, their favorite room, and points to the room's fireplace as one of the best examples of the house's historical significance, because of its keystone arch. Four of the house's six fireplaces have keystone arches, patterned after ancient Roman architectural techniques.
However, when they bought the house they had no idea about the keystone arches because all the fireplaces were bricked in and wood
stoves had been used for heat. “It was one night around 10:00 when we pulled off the mantle of a fireplace, and there was the keystone arch. We were so surprised and excited, we stayed up until two in the morning ripping the mantles off the rest of the fireplaces,” Mrs. Fletcher says.

Of all the features of the house, the Fletchers take the most pride in the keystone-arched fireplaces; “the most outstanding architectural aspect of the house,” says Mrs. Fletcher.

When visitors tour the inside of the house, they usually notice the wide windowsills first, says Mrs. Fletcher. These windowsills show the thickness of the walls.

The most striking effect of the restoration was removing “the huge, sightly Victorian porch” that was tacked onto the house by the Long family, which owned the house from about 1900 to 1967, she says.

The chipped exterior shutters were also taken off because every house they had seen from the same time period had shutters inside, rather than outside, says Mrs. Fletcher.

With these changes, it now recaptures the essence of an 18th century farmhouse. Other renovations inside enhance this first impression.

They sanded off the wallpaper and paint that concealed the 20-inch thick walls, typical of houses from that period. The walls and chairboards are now coated with subdued tones of Williamsburg paints.

They also resurrected the original Dr. Fletcher adds wood to the fire in one of the four keystone-arched fireplaces in the house. The arches were built by using ancient Roman architectural techniques.

Taking time off from farming chores the Fletchers relax on the front steps with their dog Tigger.
floorboards, which were put down after a fire that probably started in the living room fireplace in 1880 and "gutted the house," says Mrs. Fletcher. Their primitive furniture not only provides atmosphere for the house, it suits the Fletcher's simple lifestyle. The only formality encountered in the house is in the living room. Even there, the elegance of the crushed velvet furniture is offset by a muted oval braided rug, the family portraits on the walls and the plants lodged comfortably on the wide windowsills.

"Really what we've done is what is pleasing to us; we liked the period of the house and we made it functional," says Mrs. Fletcher. They attacked the kitchen first. The only conveniences it offered were cupboards and a sink with a hand pump. Mrs. Fletcher, an avid cook, had it modernized, but the contemporary influence is mellowed by the original cupboards and the simple brown and white decor.

The kitchen is part of a two-story addition that was affixed to the back of the house in 1880. The Fletchers removed the second story and renovated the kitchen and dining room downstairs.

A collection of pewter pieces, Jefferson cups and spoons decorates three walls of the dining room. The fourth wall, which separates the addition from the house, is the house's original stone exterior. The unique jutting stones add natural adornment.

When standing at the front door, one can see the original back door of the surprisingly small house. It was designed in the classic three-over-three English architecture; three rooms upstairs and three downstairs. They open off of a wide center hall on both stories.

The Fletchers knocked out the wall between two upstairs bedrooms, forming an unusually-shaped master bedroom that narrows to an alcove in the northwest corner.
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Later, they built an enclosed porch. The back entrance to the house is attached to the side of the addition. The 123-year-old granaries from the barn were transformed into paneling for the porch's walls. The aged but sturdy wood gives the new structure an antiquated appearance.

The impetus for tackling the restoration was partially Mrs. Fletcher's interest in interior and exterior design, subjects she studied in college.

"I've always had a latent desire to redo an old house," says Mrs. Fletcher. Sentimentality also played a part in the process. "I love to see something that is old and loved put back into use," she adds.

Now, it is time to start over. Walls need repainting and replastering. The floors' varnished surfaces have dulled, and Mrs. Fletcher has some projects left over that she would like to get started on.

She becomes excited as she explains, in detail, an idea for the back of the house. "See, we could knock out that window there, put in a door and make a storage room. We could panel the walls and insulate the room to preserve my canned goods," Mrs. Fletcher catches herself and grins knowingly, "You see how these ideas can snowball."
Out of wood, rock and steel, Hugh McLaughlin has created a warm haven for his family

The design for Hugh and Joan McLaughlin's five-level, 21-room house was drawn on a restaurant paper napkin.

Their home in Mint Spring, Va. never deviated from that original design.

While he was a construction engineering major at Virginia Tech, McLaughlin and his wife rarely went out to dinner. During one of the two occasions they did, Joan asked her husband what the home he had been designing would look like. He grabbed the napkin and drew the entire structure for her.

That was in 1959. Today their dream home on eight acres with a 50-mile view remains unfinished—while it looks complete—even though the McLaughlins have lived there since 1970.

"When we moved in that summer, the house was an empty shell—no wallpaper and no flooring except carpeting in the master bedroom and the children's bedrooms," Joan says.

Nine years later, the house still needs an exterior railing, an entrance-foyer fountain and a circular staircase.

Yet, the home is a masterpiece.

by Julie Summers
Combining wood, rock and steel, McLaughlin has created a warm haven with what are usually considered cold elements.

Fifteen tons of green limestone from Albemarle County scale one 17 1/2-foot wall in the 18-by-25 living room. The rocks form a fireplace, holding up the second floor and a suspended staircase. Two parallel wood beams, steel cross-beams and carpeting form the staircase which seems to hang from nowhere. Siding from an 1846 barn lines the den walls. There is only one hallway in the open-space dwelling.

The exterior of the house is redwood, limestone and glass. Porches hang from almost every room and paneless windows look out from all sides of the house.

The back yard climbs to the top of a hill. Deer feed regularly there, and Joan has seen as many as 17 squirrels cracking nuts and seeds on the porch.

"I think sometimes I've seen every bird in the world back here," she muses.

There's a "beautiful, rustic feeling," as Joan says, in the Mint Spring home. But "eclectic" seems a more fitting term than "rustic" to describe her home's furnishings.

A heavy, solid mahogany Italian sofa and chair sit in the living room facing the green limestone fireplace with 300-year-old andirons from a French castle. An "unbelievably sturdy" Chinese Chippendale bed and matching dresser are in the bedroom to the right of the living room. Dutch straight-back chairs and an English chest-of-drawers, both made from turned black oak, are in the dining room.

The wallpaper in the living room is grass cloth from Korea. The kitchen and den walls are of laminated cork from Portugal. Most of the walls are papered with washable vinyl. Except for the kitchen carpet, most of the floor coverings are acrylic blends and son John's bedroom flooring is industrial carpeting. Joan's kitchen has a wash-and-wax flooring.

"My kitchen is so workable," she says. An effective work triangle of refrigerator, sink and stove top is within easy reach. When the home housed nine people (the McLaughlins and their children),

The most unusual feature in the McLaughlin den is a wooden model of a Spanish galleon with leather sails acquired from the Smithsonian Institution.

RIGHT: Fifteen feet of green limestone from Albemarle County, Va., climbs the McLaughlin living room wall. Joan McLaughlin stands next to the Virginian stove which saved them $150 per month on their heating bill last winter. The McLaughlin's son John stands in the second floor den overlooking the living room.

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Joan often fixed gargantuan meals. It wasn't difficult with an indoor grill and a Jenn-air oven with four burners.

The McLaughlins have attempted to create a nautical atmosphere in the kitchen and adjoining den. A large captain's table provides an eating area for the family. Ship's lamps hang from the ceiling and there's a ship's wheel on the den wall. From the Smithsonian Institution, McLaughlin acquired the most unusual feature in the den—a wooden model of a Spanish galleon with leather sails. Joan says it isn't much fun to dust.

In every room and on every wall is some notable piece—a solid brass clock from the Black Forest, a 300-year-old copper tea kettle, a vase from the Ming dynasty. And the bathrooms—green-marble bathtubs and tortoise-shell tiling! The master bedroom has a complete walk-through bathroom with a pair of sinks. One bath has a curtained tub to create total privacy.

Joan makes draperies for interior designers and homeowners; examples of her work hang throughout the house. Hugh collects most everything that's collectible. The second-floor den is the home of his extensive military collection. Downstairs is Joan's drapery workroom and a six-room apartment, rented to a young couple, with its own entrance.

"When we started to build a friend said, 'Hugh's building a castle for Joan,' but this is Hugh's castle, it's a builder's house," Joan says. Fixtures, baseboards and wiring are all "throw-aways" from homes McLaughlin worked on as he was building his own. "We just put everything together and gave it a new face," she says. Because of the throw-aways and other cost-savers only a builder could know about, the McLaughlin's home cost a "smidgin" of what a home its size could have.

"It was fun to design, to create and to build," Joan says. "But I'm ready to move on." The children are all gone except 17-year-old John, and husband Hugh is often on the road with the construction company Brown and Root, Inc. "Here I am with this big, beautiful home. It's too much house for just me. It needs a new family," she says.

The McLaughlin home went on the open market at the end of March. The asking price is $260,000. The McLaughlins are hoping to tie up all the loose ends before they leave—a circular staircase, an exterior railing, maybe that fountain in the foyer...
Hugh McLaughlin.

In the past year, he has spent three months in Africa and eight in Oklahoma. With the Army Corps of Engineers in 1953-55, he was stationed in Europe and studied at the Sorbonne and at the University of Heidelberg. He lived with gypsies for two months in France.

He has land in France and in Florida and wants to buy some in Nova Scotia, “to live with the birds.” He hasn’t been everywhere but is working on it, and says there aren’t many places he dislikes.

Except maybe Africa. “All they do is kill each other. I thought maybe they had me too when they bombed the airport as I arrived,” he says.

McLaughlin, a native of Staunton, Va., was born in a 15-foot snowdrift 10 miles from his custom-designed home in Mint Spring. A graduate engineer with an architectural minor from Virginia Tech, he started serious traveling about the same time he started serious designing—in the army.

Working with the architectural division of the Corps of Engineers, he designed “everything from mess halls to mortuaries.” Stationed in Orleans, France he studied architecture at Paris’ Sorbonne. He was later transferred to Paris, as a courier flying from the French capital to Heidelberg, and took classes in medicine at the university there.

Overseas, McLaughlin began collecting ideas and objects for his home. In his dining room, he copied the type of floor he saw in Napoleon’s house in Versailles, France. A walnut parquet, each piece is individually laid in a herringbone pattern.

While in the army McLaughlin received an ancient Belgian pinfire pistol from Paris’ police commissioner whose daughter he dated. In more recent years, he has collected guns, and studied and collected antique furniture.

McLaughlin’s military collection is his largest and most unusual. Any “antique collectible” of military nature, McLaughlin has in his collection, his wife Joan says. He has an extensive uniform collection that includes Nazi Africa Korps, Civil War and Calvary uniforms. His great-grandfather rode with Kit Carson, and McLaughlin has his saddle.

He has guns and hats from what seems to be every major war and even a few minor ones.

At 47, McLaughlin is now collecting and restoring old and antique cars.

He also collects ideas—his own. “I design homes in my head as I drive,” he says. “I have plans for one home I’d like to put underground.”

The McLaughlins are planning to sell their home in Mint Spring because it has gotten too big for the two of them and their son, John. The other six people who lived there (the daughters and their husbands) have all moved to homes of their own. And perhaps McLaughlin is ready to try out another of his designs.

“If I could find a place with year-round Spring, that’s where I’d move to,” he laughs.

McLaughlin recently got out of the hospital, where he had been a patient since October. While he was in Oklahoma as an iron worker for Brown and Root, the world’s largest construction company, a heavy steel beam fell across McLaughlin’s legs. Since then he has been trying to get back on his feet to pursue his car collecting. When last seen, he was up and working on a little red Volvo.
The fisherman pops his lure gently across the water. Waits...retrieves again.

Without warning the water explodes beneath the lure and the fisherman yanks back to set the hook. The line dives straight down and then sharply to the right.

The fisherman struggles to guide the line away from the weeds. With a shake of its head, the bass spits out the lure, winking at the angler as it dives back home.

To most fishermen, this is not unusual. It's the largest contributing reason for the dreaded largemouth-bass syndrome.

All it takes is to hook a four or five-pound largemouth for just a few seconds. Even if the bass shakes the hook, the fisherman won't. And from that first bass on, the angler will buy and try almost anything to catch another.

Every year thousands of fishermen sink their dollars into Jitterbugs, Rabble Rousers, Mud Dogs, Yum Yum Worms, and the like, in hopes of finding the lure that will drive bass to a frenzy.

Every year fishermen buy depth-finders, fish-finders, trolling motors, and any other gizmo they can think of to help find that lunker largemouth. They find a hole in the water and pour their money into it.

Like any individual sport, however, it's up to the fisherman to determine how successful he'll be. There are basically three things any angler will need: experience; advice from other fishermen; and luck.

It's impossible to get experience sitting in your home reading a magazine, and luck changes with the weather, but a little advice on how to persuade the oversized largemouth to leave the water for your frying pan is possible.

There are essentially two ways to catch largemouth. One is to use artificial bait, and the other is to use live bait. Both are highly effective if fished properly and at the right time.

Before deciding what type of lure to use, it is mandatory that the angler know something about the habits of his prey. Although many fishermen say the fish winked before spitting out the lure, bass do not have eyelids. Therefore they spend most of their time avoiding direct sunlight.

The lunker largemouth did not get that big by being stupid and foolhardy. He's more likely to hide under cover and wait for lunch to come to him. The angler's job is to put the meal right in front of his nose.

Because it's virtually impossible to see where the bass are from the shore or a boat, the angler must try as many spots as possible. The odds of finding the largemouth can be increased by using some common sense in casting.

Fishermen often refer to structure as a good place to find fish. Structure is a fallen tree, weeds, submerged rocks, or anything else that would provide the lunker a good hiding place. If there is a distinguishable shaded side to the structure, fish that side and be ready!

Having found some structure that looks like it might be productive, a decision must be made on what lure to use. A thousand new lures come out on the market every year and most are designed to catch anglers rather than fish. One of the most widely accepted artificial lures for largemouth is the plastic worm. It's inexpensive and deadly.

"Texas Rig" is the term applied to the plastic worm rig. It consists of a small, cone-shaped, sliding weight, a worm hook or weedless hook, and the plastic worm. The weight is threaded on the line, narrow side towards the rod tip, the hook tied on, and the worm attached by pushing the point through the worm's head, bringing it out about a half inch down. With a worm hook, which has a bent shaft, the point is pushed back into the worm, but not with a weedless one.

The finished rig should hang straight, otherwise it will spin in the water and twist your line. Some anglers worry about smell because plastic does retain odors, but others claim it makes little difference. To be safe, wash your hands before handling the plastic worm.

Color is the next consideration, and plastic worms come in every imaginable hue. The standards are blue, black, and purple, but it takes trial and error to find which the bass are looking for. It's no problem to
ups are noticeable only by a slight fishing line be visible. Many pick-ups are noticeable only by a slight movement in the line. From the moment of the pick-up, there are two theories. One is to let the fish take the worm before setting the hook, and the other is to set it the second the strike is noticed. The first method requires great self-control, so I always hit the instant I suspect a strike.

There are times when worm fishing just won't work, and plug casting is a good alternative. There are two main categories of plugs, those that float and those that sink. Included with the floating plugs are crank-baits, which are floaters that will dive to varying depths when retrieved, or cranked.

The type of plug you select will depend on the time of year, the weather, the temperature of the water, and what you can afford. Most plugs are expensive and many are junk.

One of the more popular plugs for bass is the Speed Shad. It's a floater that dives deep when cranked. Other effective crank-baits are the Water Dog and Mud Dog. All plugs come in a variety of colors, but a general rule of thumb is to use brightly colored lures in murky water and silvery or light-reflecting ones in clear water.

The maximum depth of a floating-diving plug is about 10 feet. Varying the retrieve speed will change the depth, faster for deeper. During early spring or on hot summer days, deep-running and sinking plugs are a must in every tackle box.

Bass are partial to cold water, and stay deep during summer days until evenings when they hunt the shallow water. During the middle of the day, the best way to get to the fish is with a deep lure. Cast beyond where the bass should be so that the lure will be at its maximum depth when it passes that spot.

When evening approaches, it's time to get out the surface plugs. Two very popular floating lures are the Jitterbug and Broken-Back Rapala. They are fished much the same as poppers on a fly-rod. Cast to the desired spot and wait till the ripples clear. Twitch the rod tip several times gently and retrieve a bit. Wait and repeat.

Surface-plug fishing is probably the most exciting way to catch largemouth because the strike is both visible and audible. But don't let it delay your reactions! At the first hint of a strike set the hook.

After the sun sets, a black Jitterbug cast right at the shore and brought slowly out can make for exciting night fishing, whether for largemouth or, in the rivers, for smallmouth bass.

The plugs mentioned are only a few of those available and by no means the only ones you should try. A well stocked tackle box, however, will carry an assortment of floating, sinking, and diving lures in its arsenal.

Although many bass fishermen refuse to use live bait, some days nothing else will work. The most readily available and effective of these are minnows.

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‘Keep in mind that bass fishing takes a lot of time, so you want to be comfortable. The common practice is installing bass-seats, which are bucket-seats mounted on swivel stands to the boat.’
There are two standard methods for baiting a minnow on a hook. The first is to push the hook point up through the bottom of its mouth and out through its upper lip, and the other is to hook it through the tail. Some believe the latter provides the minnow more freedom to swim making a more appetizing entree for any neighboring largemouth, but either method will work.

The livelier the minnow, the more success you will have, so handle it as little as possible when baiting the hook and keep them in an aerated can. Some bait shops sell minnows in treated water and minnow buckets are available to help keep them kicking.

The live minnow can be fished almost any way you want. A small split-shot weight will sink it deep, a float can be used to keep it at a certain level, or it can be casted with no weight if hooked in the tail and eventually it will swim deep.

When the strike occurs, wait. Let the bass get a good grip on the minnow and try to swallow or run with it. When you are sure he has it, set the hook. Although minnows can be used year round, it is not uncommon to find they are the only thing on the bass menu some days.

Now that we’ve discussed several methods to catch a citation-size largemouth, it might be a good idea to talk boats. Obviously, increasing mobility will also increase your chances of catching fish. Although many anglers do fish from the shore, a boat is far more comfortable and provides access to places not open to land fishermen.

Assuming most people are on a tight budget, the most economical boats are the Johnboat and the V-hull. The Johnboat is usually more comfortable and, being flat-bottomed, does better in shallow water. The V-hull, however, tends to move faster through the water.

In terms of propulsion, it depends largely on where you fish and how fast you want to go. A good motor to start with on a 14 or 16 foot Johnboat is seven and one-half horses. All boats have ratings for the maximum size engine, but for a boat this size used in lakes, 15 horses is probably the most you would want.

Keep in mind that bass fishing takes a lot of time, so you want to be comfortable. The common practice is installing bass-seats, which are bucket-seats mounted on swivel stands to the boat. Bass-seats can cost anywhere from $10 to $100, depending on how comfortable you want to be.

Aside from the usual safety equipment required in all boats, the next item a bass fisherman would want is an electric trolling-motor.
Usually mounted in the front and operated by a foot-pedal, the trolling motor provides quiet mobility while stalking potential areas.

It is not unreasonable to say that almost 90 percent of largemouth bass caught are taken by about 10 percent of the anglers. To get in that elite group takes perseverance, a degree of knowledge, and some common sense, not to mention luck.

Remember that the bigger the bass, the more wary he's going to be, so don't make a lot of noise or wear brightly colored clothes. As a rule, fishermen will not offer advice freely unless you ask, so don't be afraid to ask when you're not catching anything and the people next to you are.

It's always a good idea to inquire about a particular fishing pond or lake before going, and most bait and tackle shops will know the answers. Once you've caught a good size largemouth-bass, though, you won't want to stop.

Lake Anna:

30,000 Fishermen Can't Be Wrong

One of the most popular fishing areas with Shenandoah Valley anglers is Lake Anna in Louisa County. Formed in 1972 by a Virginia Electric and Power Company project, the lake offers a wide variety of fishing as well as camping and water skiing.

An estimated 30,325 fishermen try their luck at Lake Anna each year for largemouth bass, chain pickerel, walleye, striped bass, crappie, bluegill, and catfish. A recent state study suggests that fishing conditions will improve during the next few years.

Designed as a cooling facility for Vepco's nuclear reactors, Lake Anna is divided into two sections referred to as the hot and cold sides. The hot-side shoreline is controlled by property owners making boat access difficult, but there are several state owned ramps and marinas on the cold side.

Fishing on the hot side starts early in the year because of its warmer water temperature, but around May the cold side becomes active and the fishing pressure heavy. Several largemouth weighing 10 pounds were taken from the hot side in March off deep-diving plugs and spinner baits, and one angler managed an 18-pound striper in April.

Boat rentals, fishing parties, and almost any other services anglers may require, from live bait to lake structure maps, are available on the cold side. The 200-mile shoreline provides attractive scenery for outdoor lovers and several campgrounds rent trailer facilities.

For information concerning Lake Anna and the facilities available, contact the North Anna Visitor's Center at: (703)-894-4394.
The Bergeys:

Sports was always a way of life

They met on a blind date — and went to a basketball game

by Steve Snyder

Sports was always a way of life for Roger Bergey.

But recently, Harrisonburg High's basketball coach has been drawn into the limelight with his star player, Ralph Sampson. Bergey's involvement with athletics wasn't always so complicated.

One of six children who grew up playing and talking sports, Bergey was born in Pennsylvania, but his family moved to Strasburg, Va., when he was nine months old. His parents and sisters still live there.

"My father, who was known for his baseball ability, just let us go out and play. My mother cooked a lot of late suppers."

"My youngest sister was a cheerleader and my oldest sister played basketball. My two youngest brothers both played basketball and baseball."

Bergey's eldest brother played college baseball. His life was tragically cut short by an automobile accident.

Bergey himself played basketball and baseball in high school, then attended Massanutten Military Academy in Woodstock, Va., on a basketball scholarship. After a year he transferred to the College of William and Mary, from which he was graduated in 1963. He received his master's degree from the University of Virginia in 1970.

Bergey speaks warmly of the coaches he played under in his high school days, calling them "outstanding." Through a strange quirk of fate, one of his high school coaches, Harold Logan, is now a teacher at Harrisonburg High, and another, Bobby Crantz, was a student at H.H.S. Bergey is particularly complimentary toward the late Leroy Glunt, his basketball coach during his first year of college.

"I knew that I wanted to go into coaching and teaching while I was still in high school," Bergey says. "It's been a very challenging profession, a very rewarding profession. Like all professions, you have your ups and downs."

Bergey landed his first job right out of college, at Patrick Henry High School in Ashland, Va., where he coached and taught for five years. During his third year there, Leroy Glunts's son arranged a blind date for Bergey with a girl Glunt knew at VCU. The blind date eventually became Bergey's wife.

"Roger and I had been putting him off for months," laughs Pam Bergey, a gracious, pretty woman, the coach's wife for the last 12 years. "I think it got to where the only way we could hush him up was to go out."

"Our first date I took her to a basketball game," interrupts Bergey, with a smile. "Our second date we went sled-riding."

The Bergeys have three daughters, Melissa, 7, Liza, 5, and Crystal, 2. Bergey expressed no regret over the lack of a son.

Following his years at Patrick Henry, Bergey coached at Varina High School in Richmond for four years. Seven years ago he made the move that would bring him into the national spotlight of the NCAA recruiting scene.

"My first team at Harrisonburg High didn't win any championships, but they were 14-8," remembers Bergey. "I thought they had an outstanding year. I found out later in the year that they weren't even
expected to finish at .500."  

Three years later, Ralph Sampson first played for an 11-7 Harrisonburg High junior varsity team, and was called up to the varsity for the end of the season.

The following season he became the varsity's starting center and has remained so ever since. He has led the Blue Streaks to consecutive Virginia Group AA State Championships and a 51-2 record over the last two years. But it hasn't all been that simple.

"People seem to think it's easy to coach a 7'3" guy," says an incredulous Bergey, adding that, "It's not as easy as you think. There's a lot involved.

"You've got a team you're working with. There are other guys on the team besides Ralph Sampson and they've got to do their job, too. The supporting cast is very important.

"I've had college coaches come up to me and ask, "Well, how did you practice? What did you do?" We tried to make Ralph subject to the whole game of basketball. He was involved in playing the game in our program. We didn't say 'here's a great big guy, let's just stand him there and we'll lob the ball to him.'

"He went through dribbling drills, passing drills, ball-handling drills, quickness drills. We've played him high post and low post, we've moved him around, and he fills the lane on fast breaks. We tried to teach him the all-around game. And he's done it. People come along and marvel at him and say 'Wow, a 7-foot guy that can shoot from 20 feet out.'"

Bergey has nothing but praise for Sampson, whom he affectionately refers to as "the big guy") whether speaking of him as a basketball player or as a human being.

"He's been a great young man to work with and that's what made it all worthwhile," Bergey says. "He has a great attitude. He's a great team player. He enjoys his teammates. He's worked awful hard to achieve his greatness. He's so coachable."

Although Bergey has weathered the recruiting storm in impeccable fashion, he regrets that the recruiting has forced him to sacrifice time with his family and his teaching.

"It's taken a lot of time away from my family," he admits. "I guess you could say I'm sort of a private person and my family is very important to me. Pam is a great coach's wife. Very understanding and a big help."

"I just kiss him goodbye in November and say hello again in March," Mrs. Bergey interjects with a laugh.

Bergey's teaching schedule calls for him to teach classroom driver education and physical education. "I think the recruiting has taken a little bit away from my classes, or the time I put into my classes. I can only do so much in one day. And I get a lot of calls at school. Somedays it would take me an hour, an hour-and-a-half, to get from my last class up to the office because as soon as I start to leave, the phone would ring again.

"I think the saddest thing in the recruiting has been the rumors that start. Rumors about Ralph doing this or doing that, rumors about the family, about me, or about me and Ralph together. But I guess that's all part of the recruiting scene and you have to adjust in this kind of situation."

This leads to the inevitable question of whether Bergey would consider moving on to a college job with Ralph. He replies, "I've thought of it and checked into it some in the past, but after seeing this recruiting, well, I don't think the recruiting's for me. I just don't think I'd like to be on the road all the time away from my family."

Mrs. Bergey relays an anecdote concerning an assistant coach she had met who said he "didn't have time to have children."

"He had a two-hour stopover at his school between flights and his wife had to come to the school just to see him," she says, amazed. "It's a pretty hectic job for those fellows."

Besides, Bergey genuinely likes coaching high school basketball. "I call high school coaching the only true coaching," he openly admits, "because you have to take what comes your way and make it work."

With the Sampson hoopla drawing to a close, the Bergeys will be glad to have their lives return to normal.

"It'll be good to have Roger back," Pam Bergey admits, "but we enjoy basketball. The routine, it keeps you so busy and when it gets to be this time of the year we're all pretty tired and exhausted. But we rest up a little bit, and then I'm ready for next year to come. We really enjoy it."

Bergey met his wife, Pam, on a blind date arranged by his former coach's son.
Caught in the Eye of a Storm:

Coach Roger Bergey weathers the recruiting of Ralph Sampson

by Steve Snyder

What's it like being Ralph Sampson's basketball coach and living with him in the eye of the recruiting storm for almost two years?

"It's been quite an experience," asserts Roger Bergey, Sampson's basketball coach during his four years at Harrisonburg High School.

"I never dreamed I'd be coaching one of the all-time high school greats," laughs Bergey, who, despite seeming occasionally dazzled by the whole affair, has handled the recruiting situation with courtesy, aplomb, finesse and intelligence. Organization and preparation have been the keys to this, he says.

"I put a lot of thought into this. I've read a lot about the evil things done in recruiting and it's stuck with me. I didn't want any of that. I didn't want anybody to have to run out the back door or hide or anything like that."

Over the past several years Bergey has been in constant touch with the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the Virginia High School League, checking and re-checking recruiting matters.

"It's all part of the research I've had to do," he explains. "Can he do this? Can we do that? How will this affect him and so on. I've had to put out the extra effort to make sure the recruiting of this young man was done on the up and up. I wanted Ralph to enjoy his basketball years at Harrisonburg High."

Throughout the recruiting, Bergey has maintained constant contact with Ralph and his parents.

"Ralph comes by my office all the time and we talk," Bergey says. "I give him advice, we discuss the things that will affect his decision—what he's got to look for. His parents have been great in this. We've worked real well together.

"We never set up any timetable for making the decision. He's taken
his time, we’ve tried not to force him. We just discussed things as they came up, whether they be positive or negative, and made decisions concerning certain schools as we went along.

A by-product of handling the recruiting process in this way, Bergey says, is that some colleges’ coaches, when told they were out of the running, “came up and thanked me. No hard feelings. Thanked me for the way it was set up, for the hospitality they’d been shown, for letting them come in, and for just telling them that they were no longer involved so they wouldn’t waste their time or money.”

When asked if many of the colleges had tried to short-circuit their arbitrary recruiting guidelines, Bergey replies, “no, not too much. Of course, I’m not with Ralph 24 hours a day, but it’s gone pretty well. We’ve had an NCAA investigator in here discussing things. And he’ll probably be back.”

Basketball ability aside, Bergey felt that most of the schools recruiting Ralph, who will be an undecided college major, were also concerned about his academic ability, if for no other reason than the fact that he must have a 2.0 high school average to qualify for an NCAA scholarship.

“Most schools nowadays, all of them really, have tutors to help the athletes. They also have academic advisors, and some schools have these for each team. Most of them can really help the athletes this way. I think most of them will be concerned for Ralph Sampson wherever he goes.”

Bergey’s learned a lot during his four years with Sampson, and doubts that the average basketball fan could even begin to understand all the ramifications of the recruiting scene.

“They’ll (the fans) say, ‘Aw, it would be nice if he’d go here’ or ‘It would be nice if he went there,’” he mimicks with a chuckle. “Well, Ralph Sampson is the one who’s got to make the decision. He’s got to be happy.

“‘It’s a two-way street, this recruiting. They’ll say ‘Look what he can do for this school,’ but hey, what can this school do for him?’ I’m talking about socially, being concerned for him. He’ll have his ups and downs, but will they help him out, will they try to see that he gets a good education. The guy’s a human being, not a piece of meat.”

Would Bergey want to go through this recruiting business again?

“I wouldn’t mind,” he replies unhesitatingly, allowing a loud laugh to escape. “I’ll take another 7’3” center any day.”
Families and friends in the Shenandoah Valley Track Club take their marks, get set and go, as a second season gets under way

OFF AND RUNNING!

by Bruce Osborne
“How far do you think you can run?” Steve asked.
I pondered his query awhile, trying to decide whether to let pride or fear of collapse guide my response. Swallowing hard, I replied.

“Four or five miles.”
Steve looked at Mike, his running partner, then back at me. I eyed the pair while my apprehension grew. Steve started to speak, but before he could I lost my nerve.

“I’d be willing to settle for one or two,” I said hastily.

Deciding on a course of approximately 2.5 miles from the James Madison University track to Purcell Park and back, we started out at a leisurely pace.

Conversation during the run concentrated on the Shenandoah Valley Track Club. Steve Gardner, the Broadway High School track coach, and Mike Kidd, an accountant and former outstanding Bridgewater College distance man, are active members of the club, formed a year ago to serve the Valley’s track needs. Picking up speed as we went, Steve and Mike strode along, chatting easily about their enthusiasm for running, their devotion to the club, and their desire and efforts to make it thrive. I struggled to keep up and gasped out a few questions whenever possible.

These two are a good example of one aspect of the SVTC, the buddy running system. Friends, or people who live near each other, run together or check up on each other’s activities.

“I’ve found it gets boring sometimes to go out and run by yourself, and to not have anything to look forward to,” says Eastern Mennonite College student Duane Frederick, the club’s co-founder and executive vice president. “We encourage them to find somebody they know, or to get to know new people.”

About 20 families also play an important role in the 150-member club.

“It’s kind of a nice sport to have the whole family involved in because everybody can kind of do their own thing without worrying too much about how good they are... We’ve been promoting family involvement because it’s good for families to do something like that together and also it’s good for health.”

Father of four SVTC members, Richard Runion, an electrician who enjoys the distance events, agrees with Frederick. “It’s a natural thing for a family to participate together,” Runion says.

First grader Damon Runion is the youngest SVTC member. Damon ran in a few short sprints at last summer’s “all-comers” meets. Damon and brothers, Richard, 17, Kevin, 16 and Phillip, 13, all run with their dad.

His sons get to see a different view of their father when he runs with them, Mr. Runion, 40, says. “They learn to respect an older person’s ability. They don’t have that attitude that I’m old and over the hill.”

Runion didn’t have the opportunity to compete when he was young, but he did run nine miles back and forth to school every day. He believes his sons’ abilities (Kevin ran a 4:26 mile as a sophomore at Stonewall Jackson High School) are inherited and hopes their talents will help earn college scholarships. Runion hasn’t been able to convince his wife to compete yet, but she comes to some of the meets, along with the youngest Runion, John, 3, who is eager to join and start competing.

The club caters to those who run for fun and health as well as to competitive, out of school athletes. For the joggers, the SVTC events offer “something they can look forward to... It’s not so much beating other people but just seeing if they can better their own time,” Frederick says.

About 115 males and 35 females, ranging in age from six to 60, make
up the membership. Three counties—Rockingham, Augusta and Shenandoah—are represented, with most of the members living in the Harrisonburg area. Membership fees are $5 for adults, $3 for high schoolers and $10 for an entire family. Anyone can join at any of the events.

Last year, the club, which is affiliated with the Amateur Athletic Union, sponsored four all-comers meets.

“We just kind of had a good time at these meets,” Frederick says.

Competitors were divided by sex and age in four field and five running events. Top finishers received ribbons and medals. Anyone can compete, but non-members were charged $1. Meets were held at Stonewall Jackson and Montevideo high schools, and usually lasted about 2½ hours.

The club’s plans for the future include sponsoring an all-comers meet every other week during the summer, holding fundraising events to pay for extra equipment and a 10,000-meter race once a month. “Fun runs” and predict-your-own-time races are also planned, as well as relays and clinics.

The club may form a cross country team to compete against other teams.

The blond-haired, soft-spoken Frederick, a standout collegiate distance runner before his eligibility ran out, says valley residents had shown “quite a bit” of enthusiasm about the club. “Unfortunately, participation hasn’t quite lived up to enthusiasm,” he adds.

“We need more people to help in the organization, more people involved, but it’s kind of hard to get people who have time.”

On the other hand, the young club has a large membership and managed to send 13 members to the Junior Olympics Regional Championship meet, one of whom went on to compete in the nationals in Lincoln, Neb.

“The Junior Olympics is set up for high school and younger kids (ages 15-18) as sort of a miniature Olympics, just to give them an idea of what it’s like.”

Besides offering members a chance at out-of-state competition, another advantage of belonging lies in the wealth of information a novice runner can learn from experienced members.

“For people who are older, it’s good to have the information. If you’re in your 40’s, it’s not good just to go out and start running 10 miles a day. We have the information; we have people who know. They’re experienced.”

Frederick and four friends founded the club.

“We’re all Christian guys and we all had an interest in track.” At first, the five wanted to sponsor some races. This idea blossomed into the concept of starting a club. There was a need for it because of the abundance of track interest in the area and the lack of a common bond for those interested.

Frederick has enjoyed his involvement with the club and its membership.

“I had a chance this summer to share with some of the kids. I tried to help them out, to get them to understand what it means to be an athlete and getting their priorities straight as far as not getting carried away with having to win all the time, with learning to accept that if they’ve done their best, that’s good enough, and yet to encourage them to keep going when things are rough.”

Grooming Olympic hopefuls obviously isn’t the only purpose Frederick sees for the club. Instead, a genuine human warmth pervades the club’s atmosphere.

“We do have a special interest in the people, just, you know, as people.”
Crabtree Falls:

An arduous climb, but what a view

by Steve Reed

My body exerts all the pressure it can muster on the massive rock wall. Below is a hundred-and-forty-foot plunge down the face of the waterfall. Five feet to my right, a steady stream of water cascades along the rough surface.

Thirty feet from the top, my faltering left arm, its fingers tucked into a miniscule crack in the stone, provides my sole support. Desperately, I hug the coarse rock. The thought of giving up—letting go!—passes quickly.

Five minutes later, after regaining my composure and completing the climb, I sit atop beautiful Crabtree Falls. The exhilarating trek up this lengthy series of towering waterfalls offers the nature enthusiast a showcase of outdoor wonders, while challenging the climber with its intensity.

Until recently, Crabtree, located an hour south of Harrisonburg, functioned mainly as a site for rock climbers. Now, with the construction of a parking lot and a bridge at the base, the falls are more accessible, though still not crowded, more campers and hikers are utilizing the facilities than before.

George Washington National Forest maintains the trail that runs beside the falls for the less advanced or the less courageous. But the falls themselves, consisting of huge rock faces varying in width from 20 to 60 feet, provide the most thrilling ascent.

After a spell of easy walking along the creek at the bottom, the trees open up revealing the first of the falls. The lower falls are small, requiring jumping from rock to rock rather than actually climbing. The incline gets progressively steeper up to the initial major waterfall, where the difficult traveling begins.

The lofty falls demand an ability to scale basically flat stone faces, using any available supports. Some of the falls are easily tackled in minutes, while others are virtually impassable, forcing the climber into neighboring forests. He must now use roots, trees and the like to reach the next level of falls.

Clambering up these levels, the climber may overlook Crabtree's outstanding backdrop. Perhaps the best place to admire the scenery is just before the final waterfall.

Above looms the most arduous climb—a 70-foot wall sloping abruptly with a few hand or footholds. Below lies the natural grandeur of the Shenandoah Valley. A pause here will also adequately prepare the already exhausted body for the last part of the climb.

There are several possible paths to the summit, including some relatively easy choices. The most challenging route, however, goes right up the middle of the wall. This route poses problems since there are few potential handholds, and the water tumbles by only a few feet away. Only the skilled and brave should attempt this course.

Regardless of the means, arriving at the top of Crabtree Falls is inspiring. The valley below remains untouched by the advancing hand of growth and the surrounding mountains form geometric patterns with their rises and drops. This is the time to fully appreciate the ascent, because the journey down must soon begin.

To reach Crabtree Falls from Harrisonburg, head south on Interstate 81 to the Greenville exit (exit 55 S). Take Route 11 south ten miles to Route 56, and follow Route 56 east 12 miles to the parking lot on the right.
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Kilpatrick

Continued from Page 6

take for granted—free elections, free speech, free press, free religion, trial by jury, etc. In short, the whole Bill of Rights.
"All of these things constitute the strength of the American public. Our greatest weakness is that we don’t understand them," he laments.
Kilpatrick, born in Oklahoma and educated in Missouri, "felt a call toward journalism while still a youngster." He was writing poetry by age five and edited his school paper in grade school. And junior high. "I never had any ambition to be anything else," he confesses.

"There’s just something in me that responds affirmatively to the doctrines of conservative thought."

He wanted to work in the South and "because I’m a p.m. sort of guy" preferred an afternoon paper. When he graduated from college, he wrote to three—in New Orleans, Atlanta and Richmond. The News-Leader was the first to respond and that’s where he went. Until he became a full-time columnist, it was the only place he ever worked.
Kilpatrick began as a cub reporter in 1941, later moving up to cover the General Assembly and eventually became editor while still in his thirties.

Now, at an age when most men are looking forward to retirement, Kilpatrick has no desire to stop writing. "I’d like to keep working, if God gives me good health, another 10 years till I’m 68 or 70 years old," he asserts. But even then he isn’t willing to abandon his first love. "I’d like to do a little teaching, or a few lectures, but I’d also want to do some book reviews, magazine stuff and keep hitting on this thing until I drop dead."

There aren’t many people who can boast "I’m doing what I always wanted to do."
Kilpatrick, working in his plush office tucked away in the mountains, is one of those who can.
by Julie Crane

"Music should exorcise the evil demons of the work week. The music came from the poor people, who had depressed lives and only four hours on Saturday night to laugh, talk and forget about the world," according to the doctrine of Rev. Billy Wirths.

Although he preaches about music, rocking and rolling is what Rev. Wirths does best, playing keyboard for Sidewinder, a band from Harrisonburg. "Reverend" is merely a prefix Billy acquired when he filled out a coupon in Rolling Stone that "ordained him as a minister" and supplied him with a card labeling him such.

Visual presentation is a crucial part of a band's performance. "An act should contain sensory assault and emotional appeal. You should make people involved in what you are doing," Billy says.

Rev. Wirths believes redemption could come from a "rhythm and blues back-up band with a couple of featured vocalists and maybe a comedian — something that provides total entertainment."

"I believe in the definite effects of rock and roll as therapy," he explains.

Billy transforms the therapy derived from his music into therapy for retarded people.

In May, Billy will graduate from James Madison University with a degree in special education. He wants to teach retarded adults and "give them a chance to do all that they are capable of."

Wirths worked for two years at a camp for trainable, retarded adults and decided he would like to continue his education in the field.

"I do well, enjoy it, and it gives my life substance and a sense of activity and fulfillment," he explains.

There are theories and practices that Billy disagrees with and he
feels training is not carried far enough. "We teach academics and basic functions, but socialization is neglected," Billy says. "You train someone to use tools so that he is employable, but he is 25 years old with a crew cut, and wears orange pants with a green shirt and purple socks, and runs up and hugs strange women. Too many people are afraid to say 'that's not cool,' but it would give them a better chance if you did," he says.

"I was raised around different people and learned to adapt to and accept the atypical. I don't feel pity for their (retarded peoples') organic condition, just for what people haven't told them and that they are capable of so much more," says Wirths.

Billy prefers working with adults rather than children because he needs feedback and "kids don't provide as much," he says. His plans for after graduation are indefinite, says Billy, though he does intend to pursue a career in teaching. But that doesn't mean he is leaving his music behind.

"Music is me. It is an escape, a drug. I'd get into bad mental and emotional shape if I didn't have it," explains Billy, stretching out his legs that constitute a large portion of his slim, 6'5" build.

Wirths describes his music as a combination of "main line blues, straight country, new wave rock and traditional boogie woogie."

"It doesn't take a lot for me to have a good time. A nice bar, good band and reasonable choice of female company will do."

Chuck Berry, Memphis Slim, Ronnie Milsap and Commander Cody all influenced Billy's style and among his favorites are James Brown, Roy Orbison and Ray Charles.

Billy's broad taste in music is indicated by his record collection that is "impossible to count," according to Wirths. Among his collection is a Carl Perkins album produced by Sun Records that contains the first recording of "Blue Suede Shoes" and is worth about $300.

Classical music doesn't quite suit his taste and he swears against disco. "I can think of no reason for the existence of such non-music (as disco)," Billy says.

Not only is its music a little different from typical disco or rock, Sidewinder's act "strikes some as off the wall," Billy explains. He is recognized for his Jerry Lee Lewis manner of attacking the keyboard, while dressed in anything from a 50's pin-striped suit to hot pink jock shorts.

A friend once said that Billy lives the blues, but his appearance reflects the variety of music he plays. His black pans and T-shirt suggest early rock and roll; cowboy boots show his country side; and a French style hat, tilted slightly to the right, hints at jazz and the blues. Billy's facial features resemble Wolfman Jack, but his hair and face are fairer.

His arms are covered with ten tattoos that he got "because he always wanted one," and then got carried away. His favorite is a demon and wizard that covers his right forearm.

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Wirths' appearance, like his music, is a unique blend. With just a second glance, one can get an idea of what Billy is made of. The goal Billy has for his music is to “go as far as I can” and teach in order to assure a steady income of approximately $15,000 a year. He wants to live comfortably. “I don't live comfortably now, but I make enough to get by.” Wirths explains. “It doesn't take a lot for me to have a good time. A nice bar, good band, cheap beer, and a reasonable choice in female company will do.”

One of the fringe benefits of playing in a band is female groupies. They have on more than one occasion put Billy in an uncomfortable position. He relates one incident that occurred during a "gig" in Winchester, Va. There was a girl who had had a fight with her boyfriend and made a move toward Billy. She told him that she was going to another bar and suggested that he might follow when he was finished playing.

“She was nice looking, so I went,” Wirths explains. “We were talking when this guy came up who was about four feet wide.” Billy tried to explain that she had initiated it and that there had been a mistake. “I quickly exited stage left and headed

Billy discusses lesson plans with his cooperating teacher during his eight weeks as a special education student teacher. “We teach academics and basic functions, but socialization is neglected,” according to Billy.

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for my Cadillac hearse," remembers Billy.

It seems that Wirths lives much the same style of life now as he did in high school, in Rockville, Maryland. His friends then thought of him as an "intellectual hoodlum," Billy says. He did well in classes, read a lot, and was into politics, but he ran around with a "wild" crowd. I was only a junior level, grade Z executive."

These "greasers" were into gang violence, stealing cars for a joy ride, shop lifting, drinking wine and "feeling up girls in parking lots," says Wirths, chuckling.

Then his face drops, and his voice quiets as he focuses on a thought. "It was self-destructive. About one­third of those guys are dead from suicide, overdose, or getting shot; and another third are in jail. The last third somehow straightened up enough to exist," explains Billy.

He was part of the last third, and Billy has done much more than just exist. After making it through high school, Wirths spent a couple of years moving around. He tried studying communication arts at two colleges, worked as a disc jockey and camp counselor, "rode my thumb" to California and Mexico, and lived in Maryland, Ohio, Georgia and Washington, D.C. In

1976, Billy moved to Winchester where he began playing the piano seriously. He joined "Charlie, Terry and the Swinging Countrymen," a band that played at "corner bars and small road houses" on Sunday afternoons, and whose music was what Wirths describes as "C level." When he left this band, Billy formed one of his own. "The Honky-Tonk Outlaw Band" lasted only six months and Billy moved to Harrisonburg. He played with three bands before Sidewinder was formed in February 1978.

Sidewinder's first engagement was a disaster, as Billy remembers it. "We played in Winchester and the equipment kept breaking down. It seems like that happens whenever we play in Winchester."

The reaction to the band in Winchester was "lukewarm," but not because of technical problems, Billy says. "Most places want pure country rock or Top 40, not original stuff. This place (The Elbow Room, a rustic little bar in Harrisonburg) isn't like that. They are interested in drawing artists as well as crowds," according to Wirths.

Billy drained the last of the beer from his glass and casually remarked that he had to go to the pet store. Why? "There is a monkey that gets bored being there alone at night. So I'm going to try to teach him to play the harmonica. Even if he can't really play it, it will give him something to fool around with," says Billy.

He gets up from the table, says "Thank you," and strolls away returning many a "Hey, Reverend" as he goes.
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