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A Closer Look

They may wake you up before the sun or keep you company with their humorous barbs as you go about your early-morning chores. Shenandoah Valley residents share their mornings with them, making Wip and Arnold's pre-dawn radio broadcast an institution in the Valley—one that reflects the simple lifestyle and basic values of this area.

The show offers a down-home approach to daily living with useful information and interesting stories. What better subject for a Valley-based magazine, such as Curio, to focus on than the two colorful, dynamic men behind that show?

Curio's aim is to give its readers the same personalized coverage in print that Wip and Arnold provide on-the-air.

Like the show, we find not-so-well known people, places and events appealing. As is shown by the popularity of the Wip and Arnold show, we think Valley residents find these subjects appealing too.

A feature introduced in this issue is the photo gallery. We chose to display the photography of 25-year-old Lindy Keast, a photographer for The Daily News Record. Look for the works of other Valley photographers in upcoming issues.

Another first for this magazine is an article written by someone outside James Madison University's journalism program, Mr. John Zirkle of Harrisonburg. His article can be found on page 21.

Other Valley residents have participated in Curio by submitting ideas for stories. Through telephone calls and letters we received many story ideas from our readers. Three were developed into articles for this issue. Several others will be featured in upcoming issues already in the planning stages.

The Curio staff, this semester comprised of 15 JMU students, encourages our readers to submit story ideas or manuscripts. The magazine is produced by a journalism class, Feature Magazine Production, and is published each Fall and Spring. We are a non-profit organization with an unpaid staff.

Special thanks to David H. Wendelken, our adviser, without whose efforts this magazine would not have been possible.

Curio is a learning experience for all of us, so we appreciate your ideas for the magazine.

Maureen
editor

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I am writing to ask if it would be possible to get the first issue of this great magazine, CURIO. Have read it from cover to cover and it is well worth the price—and will be looking for the next issue in the Fall—just hope I don’t miss it.

Mrs. Duane H. Hensley
Penn Laird

We hope you don’t either! We have had many requests for copies of our first and second issues. Unfortunately our supply of both issues is exhausted. The press run for the current issue has been increased 50 percent to meet the demand.

I would like to recommend several individuals to contact to write a feature on for the CURIO magazine. (Enclosed were three suggestions for features.) Your magazine is great.

Janet Armentrout
Harrisonburg

As a resident of the Shenandoah Valley the majority of my life, I was pleased to find your Spring 1979 publication very interesting. The “happenings” about the pleasant people and the unusual types of manufacturing that exist in the Valley aren’t known to a lot of residents. Yes, you did take a closer look, “a great job.” (Also enclosed were three suggestions for stories.)

Bruce Thomas
Verona

Many readers wrote or called to suggest ideas. We appreciate the interest and hope to pay it back by following up on as many suggestions as possible. Three of the stories in this issue were suggested by readers, and others are planned for the future. Keep those ideas coming.
While broadcasting their show, Wip (below) and Arnold (above) can't see one another. Each has his own cubicle, separated by a glass partition and machinery.
Wip and Arnold

Off the air and on, their down-home personalities remain the same

At two minutes before the hour, buttons are pushed, switches flipped, microphones adjusted and earphones put in place. The red on-the-air light flashes brilliantly.

It's five a.m., and Wip and Arnold are ready to begin another morning radio show on WSVA-AAA. They greet each other, their listeners and the morning. Wip and Arnold's dialogue is unrehearsed and unplanned; they just say what comes naturally.

Wip teases Arnold about his appetite at a social affair they attended the night before, and Arnold complains about Wip slamming his car door everytime he got out.

They continue their good-natured ribbing until the time for a commercial. After the 60-second spot, Wip gives his version of the weather, and Arnold catches him at the end of it. "I was going to look in the almanac to see when you'd stop talking," he says to Wip.

And the ribbing continues. The three-hour show follows much the same format—spontaneous conversation, weather reports, commercials and, no music.

Wip and Arnold's show is tremendously popular in the Shenandoah Valley, due partially to the fact that it tells listeners what they want to hear in the morning.

But its popularity also stems from the personalities. Although their names are used synonymously when speaking of the show, Wip and Arnold are distinctly different. Yet their personalities blend to create a successful unformated show—a type of broadcast not common anymore.

Perhaps their personalities blend so well because of the one characteristic they do share. Wip and Arnold are both unpretentious. Neither puts on airs, they are just themselves.

And we present them to you here—close up.

Articles by Maureen Riley

Photography by Sandra Paetow
He's
Just
Himself

'I don't tailor myself to people,' says Arnold Felsher.

“I could have been a hell of a success there,” he says, his expressive brown eyes thoughtfully looking to the side. But Universal City, California, where he worked for a year, was too artificial for him.

He looks directly at me, eyebrows raised as he reaches his main point; “It just wasn't me."

Arnold Felsher, moderator for the WSVA Candid Comments show and part of the Wip and Arnold early-morning show, has been successful because, as he points out, “I don’t tailor myself to the people—I’m just myself.”

No wonder then, that he left the glamour of “big-time” broadcasting for the friendly, casual radio station in the Shenandoah Valley.

"Out there (in California) you feel as though it’s just a spot from somewhere to somewhere else—there's no feeling of permanency," he says. Arnold likes this area where "you feel you belong." In his hometown, Arnold knew everyone, and everyone knew him.

And the years since then haven’t changed Arnold’s likability. While eating lunch in the Harrisonburg Sheraton Inn dining room, he pauses several times during our conversation to greet friends passing by the table. The restaurant’s waitress and hostess know him by name, and he them.

He also knows the cook. Arnold had arrived at the restaurant early for our luncheon interview and gone back to the kitchen to see what the day’s special looked like.

Obviously satisfied with what he saw, Arnold ordered the special for lunch, and recommended it to me.

But now, halfway through our interview and meal, the brown gravy had long since dripped into a muddy puddle around the edges of his half-eaten hot roast beef sandwich.

After hearing Wip tease him about his eating habits during their early morning broadcasts, I am disappointed not to witness Arnold’s celebrated appetite today.

But Arnold has a ready explanation.

"Between eight and nine this morning I had two ham-and-egg sandwiches; between 10:15 and 10:30 I had a couple of sweet pastries and now, at 11:30, I'm fooling around with this," he says with a wide grin and a youthful sparkle in his eyes, negating the wrinkles extending from their corners.

Arnold's hearty appetite is on a different time schedule than those who work a normal nine-to-five day. He rises at three every morning at his home in Staunton, and drives 45 minutes to the radio station in Harrisonburg.

The long drive is worth it for Arnold because he enjoys his job, which puts him in contact with people. Arnold is optimistic about people, a trait he attributes to his parents. "I was raised thinking people were great."

"People have been good to me, and it's not because of me, it's because of people," he says, drawing from a cigarette and pausing to explain.

He leans over the table and uses his hands to illustrate his words. "This isn’t a lecture or sermon, but we all have the capability to love, not amorous love, but caring love." He leans back, stretching his arms across the booth behind him. "And I've been lucky—I've been blessed with people who care."

Arnold didn’t finish his hot roast beef sandwich during our luncheon interview at the Sheraton Inn dining room. But he had a ready explanation.
As a public figure, Arnold's job gives him contact with many strangers.

"People come up to me and say 'Oh, have you ever met so-and-so' and I say 'No' and they say 'Yes you have, it was at such-and-such a place.' That's embarrassing, so I fake it."

Arnold believes he and Wip don't fully realize how many listeners they have, which may be good, according to Arnold. "If we did know, we might just think we're a helluva lot better than we are."

The job itself isn't as glamorous as most listeners think. "Sure, it's nice to be recognized, it's nice to know people listen to us, but when you get up at three in the morning, like we do, a bricklayer's job could be more glamorous," he chuckles.

But Arnold has never considered a career in bricklaying. His other interests reflect his admitted love for "the good life."

As a public relations man, he could enjoy "living a good life on an expense account." As a chef or cook, he could enjoy preparing simple but hearty meals, like steak, mashed potatoes and tomatoes—one of his favorites.

As a military man he could have retired at 42-years-old and lived off a pension. Arnold was in the Air Force for four-and-a-half years during World War II and is sorry he didn't stay in. "At that time, I couldn't wait to get out—you know, we see how silly we are when it's too late."

But he is happy where he is now. And he got there with "no big breaks," he says. Arnold used to "hang around" KDKA radio station in Pittsburgh, Pa. as a kid. It was only 30 minutes away from Beaver Falls, where he grew up as an only child.

Radio was "just something I've always wanted to do, and at that time it was a very easy job—all you had to do every 15 minutes was get on the radio and announce the radio station's call name and location," he says.

When Arnold was about 30 years old he heard about a radio station being started in Beaver Falls. Arnold went to visit the prospective manager in Pittsburgh who gave him a job that day, after an audition. Arnold says he helped build the station, literally. He dug ditches and helped put in the ground station, for $35 a week.

When he came to this area, Arnold had a unique experience. He worked for a station in Staunton where he "followed a ghost"—the man he replaced had just recently died, making it "tough to be accepted."

Fifteen months later, when he came to WSVA in Harrisonburg, he took the place of a man who had "been there for years as a morning man and was great favorite.' In both situations, Arnold was immediately accepted. "I didn't come in expecting them to accept me or not accept me. I was just me."

Although he did attend broadcasting school, Arnold says he got absolutely nothing out of it. His on-the-air ease and capability comes from experience and an inbred ability.

"You either have it or you don't," he says simply. "Ability is something you can't acquire; all the schools, (Continued on Page 64)"
A Not-so-ordinary Joe

Although he doesn’t consider himself a celebrity, Wip Robinson’s companionable, witty personality makes him special.

He unfolds his crossed legs and rises from the well-worn green leather chair. His finely-shaped features are shaded as he saunters towards the fireplace and away from the dim circle of light emitted from the reading lamp above his chair.

He turns his back, red bandana tucked neatly in his back pocket, and casually pokes the fire. Satisfied, he faces me and slips his long, lean hands into the wide pockets of his baggy khaki pants. He twitches his mouth and jingles the change low in his pockets. Clear blue eyes meet mine, and a friendly smile transforms his otherwise distinguished appearance.

“I consider myself just an ordinary Joe with a curiosity,” he says, as if summing up his personality.

A modest statement coming from part of the popular early-morning radio broadcast, the Wip and Arnold show.

He walks slowly back to his chair and fumbles for a cigarette from the ever-present pack of Kools in the top pocket of his shirt.

During our conversation at his home, he relaxes in his favorite spot near the fire. His easygoing, friendly personality makes me feel comfortable and right at home.

It is this ability to project his warm, companionable personality over-the-air that makes Wip anything but ordinary.

Earlier, I watched Wip broadcasting. His weather reports and commercials are easy to understand and punctuated with “friend” or “neighbor.”

"By George, we have a mostly clear sky," says Wip from his weather box behind the radio station.
Wip's cubicle at the station is filled with steel tape machines, organized stacks of cassettes and uniform piles of Associated Press wire copy. The technical, cold atmosphere dissolves when Wip speaks into the microphone—talking to his listeners as if they were sitting beside him in front of his fireplace, sipping hot chocolate.

But Wip is most comfortable in his home. The cabin, made with 150-year-old logs, houses Wip's many collections as well as antique furniture and well-worn braided rugs. Today we sit in the large living-dining area.

The room is dimly-lit, which suits Wip, who is not a loud person. Nothing gaudy interrupts the serene atmosphere, although many items blend with it. Framed Indian prints, one of Wip's collections, grace the walls. A three-foot "Texan-Jim" slouches in front of a window. The chalk statue depicts a thin, lazy cowboy with drooping pants, a vest and a ten-gallon hat.

"It's typical of what people think a Tex looks like," says Wip as he stoops down to pose with his friend for a picture, "and there's damn few of them that really look like that."

Beside the statue is a stack of books; others are randomly placed in overflowing bookshelves, windowsills or on the floor. Wip relates his love for reading with his enjoyment of the show. "Frankly, I don't know why the show is fun. I guess it might be that I do a lot of reading, and I like to share with someone else what is interesting to me."

He also enjoys the show because he can be impulsive. Once, Wip asked for a rooster over the air. A listener called him and invited him to take a look at a rooster she had.

"The rooster was low chicken on the pecking order—his back was raw from being pecked," says Wip, who claims to have saved the rooster's life.

Wip wanted to name him "Deuteronomy" because he liked the word, but the rooster already had a name—Bronzie—from the previous owners.

Apparently Bronzie is not grateful to Wip. "He just hates my guts; the bastard doesn't know I saved his life," chuckles Wip.

Peggy Robinson, Wip's wife of 10 years, feeds Bronzie twice a day. When they were first married, Mrs. Robinson used to get up at three a.m., when Wip did, to make him breakfast before he went to work. "But, she doesn't do that now, she's not trying to impress me anymore."

Wip savors the privacy of his home, and doesn't believe strangers who find the winding, rutted road to the cabin, and say they were just in the area and thought they'd drop by.

Wip likes to "visit with people" over-the-air, but is not as comfortable meeting people face-to-face. "I'm not an extrovert," he says simply. "Oh, I used to love public attention, but now I don't know why I don't like it—don't know if it's age or what," he says and pauses, "but I have thought about it."

"'Stranger or not, Wip is personable to whomever he meets. He is polite and gentlemanly in an old-South sort of way. During conversation, which for Wip is slow, but not deliberate, he adds the person's name to whom he is speaking several times. Wip also takes his time during his broadcasts. He is perhaps best-known for his weather reports—and rightly so—they are dashed with Wip's comments. They just don't sound like the standard Associated Press weather, although they usually are.

"I don't like to rush the weather, I like to personalize it and make it understandable so you know what I said when I finished."

To emphasize this philosophy, three times a morning Wip dons a baseball cap and walks outside the station to his white weather box. There, Wip gives temperature and barometer readings from the not-too-fancy equipment in the box, and adds such comments as: "Things sure do smell good this morning," or "By George, we have a mostly clear sky."

Yet, Wip claims to know nothing about the weather. He relies on Gubers Almanac, published in Hagerstown, Maryland. Wip reveals his curious nature as he discusses the almanac.

"I'd like to find out how they get their information," he says with determination. "How do they know what's a fact and what isn't?"

Wip often takes an afternoon nap in his favorite chair.
His enthusiasm for finding out about the almanac is also demonstrated when he discusses the Bible. "I'd like a scholar to tell me the history of the Bible; who wrote what books, under what conditions and what the writers were like."

But his interest in the Bible is not necessarily because he is a religious person.

"I don't think you'd call me religious," Wip says. "I have a feeling of religion, but I don't know how you'd classify it." He is earnest, but cautious, in explaining his meaning and continues the discussion with slow-paced thoughtfulness.

"I'm an emotional person—I like the shoutin' type of gospel singin'." But Wip doesn't like people who "wear religion on their sleeves. I don't mind people pursuing their religions, but they ought to be diplomatic about it."

His serious mood shifts as he laughs heartily and recalls religion when he was young.

"I was born in the Bible Belt and was reared in a church family. Mammy made sure we went to Sunday school every Sunday."

Wip is fond of his two sisters and brings them into the conversation often and easily. Nona lives in Texas and Sitter lives in Oklahoma—both keep in close contact with him.

They grew up in Wewoka, Oklahoma, then a backwoods town in Indian country. Wip's accent has long since disappeared—it was the only thing he changed about himself when he went into broadcasting. "I had the damndest twang; worse than Harry Truman when he went before the Congress," says Wip.

He never attended broadcasting school, but his impressive education in other fields includes a bachelor's degree in government and a master's degree in history from the University of Oklahoma. Wip also did doctoral work at Northwestern—something his inlaws prodded him into doing, which he considers "a waste of a year."

Wip went through the "oil boom" in Oklahoma when he worked for an oil company after acquiring his master's. While at that job, Wip heard about a radio station in Illinois that needed an announcer. He got a job there a month later. Wip's career followed from there to West Virginia, back to the Midwest and, in 1942, he went to work for WSVA. He left for World War II duty and eventually came back to WSVA in the early fifties. And he's been there ever since.

Some of Wip's past is revealed in a room in his home. "I laughingly call this room the study," says Wip as he opens the door. At first glance, it looks like an unorganized clutter. A small school desk, long since forgotten, sits in the far corner, overwhelmed with books. Ceiling-high shelves consume two walls and are stuffed with books. An antique Remington typewriter, which Wip still uses, is shoved near the desk.

However unorganized, Wip knows where things are. He rummages around and picks up an old music book, which has square instead of round notes. "I come in here when I need to look something up," says Wip pointing to the numerous books about Shenandoah Valley history.

The room is uniquely Wip—collector, investigator, and reader.

As we leave Wip's study, he ignores the many broadcasting awards hanging listlessly by the door. They are evidence of the respected talent of a not-so-ordinary Joe.

MAUREEN RILEY, of Fort Ritchie, Md., is a senior at JMU majoring in Communication Arts. She is interested in magazine work as a career.
CPR utilizes both artificial respiration and cardiac compressions.

The call comes in at 1:15 p.m. “Man collapsed on the job.”

We respond immediately and arrive on the scene at 1:17 p.m. I check the victim for chest expansions, listen for breathing, and feel for a pulse. None are present—an apparent cardiac arrest.

My partner and I begin standard CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). I insert an esophageal airway and begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, while my partner begins cardiac compressions. We continue the procedure for about five minutes and a faint pulse appears—the color begins to return to the victim’s face.

We switch to one-man CPR, and my partner retrieves a backboard from the rescue unit. We interrupt the procedure for five seconds to place the victim on the board. After two to three minutes, we interrupt again to put the victim in the ambulance and proceed to the hospital.
While enroute, the pulse becomes stronger, and I am able to discontinue CPR. The victim’s heart is beating regularly now, and an oxygen mask aids him in breathing. We check the victim into the emergency room at 1:38 p.m., and the doctor takes over.

Although most of us would be lost in such a situation, Ernest Shifflett talks about this type of experience with assurance. For him, it is an everyday event.

Shifflett, a 40-year veteran of the fire department and rescue squad in Harrisonburg, speaks about CPR and its importance. “CPR is used primarily in aiding electrical shock, drowning, and heart attack victims. None of these conditions is a rare occurrence.”

CPR provides artificial circulation and breathing to a person whose heart and lungs have stopped functioning. External cardiac compressions alternated with artificial respiration help to stimulate the body’s natural functions. In an emergency situation, this procedure could very well save someone’s life.

Who should take CPR training? You should. CPR is a skill that could save the life of anyone, anytime, anywhere. More than 650,000 people die from acute heart attacks each year—at least 350,000 occur outside of a hospital.

CPR is an essential part of the training for millions of police officers, firefighters, rescue squad workers and paramedics each year. In many areas, CPR is required for the Red Cross lifesaving or water safety certification. “We should be able to depend on the average citizen for help, not just paid professionals,” says Judy Miller, a Harrisonburg CPR instructor.

Jim Sowers, CPR coordinator at the Community Services Center, talks about the availability of classes in the Valley.

“Our main problem here is a shortage of manpower. We are an all-volunteer organization, and there are few qualified instructors in the area who are available for community work.” Presently there are about 15 to 18 instructors in the area, but many are involved in the nursing programs at Eastern Mennonite College and Rockingham Memorial Hospital. There is only one trainer qualified to teach the instructor course in Harrisonburg.

The city of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County are in the Washington, D.C. division of the American Red Cross. All of the paid personnel are in the D.C. area. “They tend to forget about us out here,” Sowers says.

Qualified trainers must be sent down from D.C. to train instructors, or the people must go there for the training. “ Needless to say, there are not many people in the community with that kind of free time,” Sowers says.

Many people, including Sowers, would like to see a CPR program initiated in area schools. But, once again, manpower is a problem. “And,” Sowers adds, “the state would have to be willing to provide a lot of money for equipment and instructor training programs, and at this time, the system just isn’t sold on the idea.”

So, how do we sell CPR to the “average citizen”? Perhaps some of the CPR enthusiasts in the area could publicize the value of CPR. If more certified people went on to obtain instructors’ and trainers’ certification, more classes could be offered in the area.

Mannequins with recording devices are used to test breathing and compression techniques.
Mrs. Jean Crompton of Keezletown had her Girl Scout troop take the CPR course for their first aid badges. "If you catch the kids early, I think you'll have them for life," she says. "I know several of the girls have been recertified and have gone on to take more first aid courses."

'We should be able to depend on the average citizen for help, not just paid professionals'

How does CPR training work? There are two basic types of training programs—the lecture-discussion course and the modular system course.

The lecture-discussion course combines lectures by authorized Red Cross instructors with active demonstrations and practice on life-size mannequins. The longest of the training classes, it entails two-hour meetings twice a week for three weeks.

The modular system course is a self-pace learning program. This program uses individual workbooks, mannequin and peer practice, and final evaluation by an authorized instructor.

Both of these classes cover several aspects of the CPR procedure. They include one rescuer-adult victim, two rescuer-adult victim, care for a choking victim (conscious or unconscious), breathing techniques and CPR for infants and small children.

Also available in some areas is the "Race for Life" course which uses only two of the workbook units and covers only the one rescuer-adult victim CPR procedure. This class is usually taught in one two-to-three hour session.

Each of these courses, successfully completed, will result in Red Cross certification in the specific achievement level. Initial training certification is valid for one year. Review certification is available after a two-to-four hour refresher course and is valid for three years.

Although the initial steps for a CPR program were taken 16 years ago, it is only within the last five years that the training has become available to the public.

In 1963, the American Heart Association established the first committee on CPR and studied the feasibility of a widespread program. Three years later, a national conference recommended CPR training for medical, allied health and professional paramedical personnel. The CPR technique used today was standardized and made public in the February, 1974 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The responsibility for other people lies on you. As Mrs. Crompton says, "It's just an important part of being a good citizen—like voting."

SUSAN TINNELL, of Richmond, Va., is a senior at JMU majoring in Communications Arts. She hopes to work in advertising and public relations after graduation.

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Curio Photo Gallery

For Lindy Keast, it all began with a toy camera

Article by Jackie Mollenauer

Sending away for a toy on the back of a cereal box is rarely a serious indicator of a child's future vocation. But Lindy Keast was an exception. She acquired her first camera—a plastic one—by sending away for it. Now, at 25, she's a busy, energetic photographer for The Daily News-Record in Harrisonburg.

Lindy is a petite figure of 5'1", 100 pounds, but her talent is, by contrast, immense and speaks for itself through her works and awards from the Virginia Press Association and the Virginia News Photographers Association for her portraits and picture stories. She is also a member of the National Press Photographers Association.

In spite of these awards, Lindy says she is not that competitive. She enjoys working for a small, Valley newspaper where "it's not a cat-and-dog fight for a picture space."

"There's a lot more room to grow and it's less competitive here," Lindy explains. "People go out of their way to help you with a project. It's like a big, happy family." She enjoys working with a small staff and believes the reporters are easy to work with.

Lindy also likes this area, especially when she is searching for subjects to photograph. "It's fun here—no traffic. It's fun trying to get lost. You'll always come out on a main road."

Lindy has not always had photography as her number one priority. She put it aside during most of high school, and for graduation her parents gave her a Nikon camera. She decided to take a photography course her freshman year at James Madison University. Her advisor even put a note in Lindy's folder saying she was being "adamant and impractical." But she took the class just the same.

Lindy looks back on how she first started working at her current job. She says she knew a guy at school named Joe Lacompte who had been working at The Daily News-Record but planned to leave for a job at a television station. Lindy had met the chief photographer, Allen Litten before, but was surprised when he called and asked her to apply for Joe's old job. Lindy decided to finish up at JMU as a part-time student and work full-time at the newspaper.

"I had no experience in photojournalism," but Alan's the kind of person "who loves to give people chances." He has always helped and encouraged her along the way, Lindy says.

She also has another source of help and encouragement to keep her enthusiastic about photography. Recently, she received a letter from Mr. Robert Gilka, director of photography for the National Geographic Society, asking to see her works. Mr. Gilka is "perceptive and well-respected by everyone who knows him," Lindy says. He follows the work of all types of photographers across the country. "He's given me a lot of encouragement. He helps me and recommends me for jobs at different places."

Last month, The Daily News-Record sent Lindy to attend a week-long workshop for professional photographers sponsored by the University of Missouri. "The university has a young faculty mostly, and it's exciting for them too. The energy there is so incredible."

The photographers attending the workshop put in 17 to 20 hours a day. Lindy is "enthusiastic and happy" with her work right now at the newspaper where, she says, they "just let you be yourself."

Lindy expresses herself best through her photography, a sampling of which is presented here.

JACKIE MOLLENAUER, of Portsmouth, Va., is a senior at JMU majoring in Communication Arts. She is interested in a broadcasting or magazine publishing career.
Nothin' to Do
Homeward Bound

'There's No Place Like Home'
Stairway to Heaven
Small Town, Big Cannon

Dayton, Virginia has many stories to tell, one of which involves a Civil War general, a World War I band and a German cannon

Article by John Zirkle

During the early 1930s small boys in Dayton were sure of one important historical fact—Dayton had a bigger cannon than Harrisonburg. The same boys in that Rockingham County town may not have realized any connection between their important historical discovery and events that took place more than three generations earlier.

Few communities in the United States have been ordered burned to the ground by the commanding general of an invading army. Fewer still, have a half-century later, voluntarily contributed a complete military unit to that same invader's army.

Dayton is such a community.

Orders to burn all dwellings in this Shenandoah Valley town came from Gen. Phillip Sheridan's headquarters at nearby Harrisonburg in October, 1864. The reason for the order, issued during the last months of the Civil War, was the death of Lt. John Meigs, one of Sheridan's staff officers, who was killed during an encounter with three Confederate scouts. The brief skirmish was reported to Sheridan by one survivor as an attack by bushwackers.

Enraged by what he considered the unprovoked murder of a promising young officer, Sheridan ordered all buildings within five miles of Dayton to be burned to the ground. Gen. George C. Custer, Sheridan's cavalry chieftain, enthusiastically began to execute the order. Townspeople were evacuated from their homes into the fields surrounding Dayton for the night.

Gen. Thomas B. Wildes, former commanding officer of the 116th Ohio stationed in Dayton, and some of his men, realized that Meigs' death was not caused by bushwackers but by authorized Confederate soldiers.

Wildes sent a petition to Sheridan signed by men of the Ohio Regiment asking him to spare Dayton. Until he received an answer, Wildes delayed burning the town. Though Sheridan never mentioned the petition or appeal, he did rescind his order for Dayton's destruction.

Photography by Cade Smith
A sequel to this story began in 1916 with worsening relations between Mexico and the United States. Trouble with Mexico and the war in Europe increased the interest in U.S. Army and National Guard service. A Harrisonburg newspaper of March 17, 1916 carried this news item: "Smallest town in America with a Regimental Band Putting Dayton on the Map." The account continued, "Capt. C. G. Mason of the 2nd Infantry Virginia Volunteers spent a day in Dayton this week in which the enlistment of the 2nd Regiment Band was consummated. This completes the regimental band organization of the state... It is to be hoped that this will favor the bands in this section of the state and that Rockingham (County) will soon boast, without flattery, of having one of the best regimental bands in the service."

By June 1916, the Dayton Band was inducted into federal service and sent to Brownsville, Texas, near the Mexican border. After eight months duty, the unit returned and was met in Elkton by a crowd of 800 people. From there, band members came by a special Chesapeake & Western train through Harrisonburg to Dayton. At the county seat, they were greeted by the Daily News Band and in response "the Regimental Band gave two selections which were roundly applauded and cheered. At Dayton, the soldier musicians were welcomed by one of the largest crowds ever assembled in that town."

Band members remained in Dayton for barely a month before they were recalled for service in World War I. They were redesignated the 116th Infantry Band, part of the 58th Brigade 29th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. The 29th Division was named the Blue and Gray Division because its units were made up of men from both the North and South.

After training at Camp McClellan, Ala., the 29th including the 116th Infantry Band, was to go overseas to join the American Expeditionary Force in France. During the last days of June, 1918, relatives of the bandsmen began to receive cards announcing the safe arrival of the band in Europe. In local newspapers of the time was this account "... W. H. Ruebush, the Director, has composed
several new marches and has been mentioned many times by army officers for his splendid work.

People who lived in Dayton between the two world wars remember “W.H.” as local postmaster, music composer, bandleader, college teacher and superb story teller. They may tell you that any resemblance to a cracker-barrel teller of tall tales disappeared when he rose to direct a band or an orchestra.

His qualifications as a musician were unquestioned and former students of Dayton schools can easily recollect that it was ‘Professor W.H.’ who composed the music for the song ‘Old Virginia’. In the late 1920s and 30s, Dayton public school students considered “Old Virginia” the equivalent of a state song.

In the American Army of 1918, band musicians did combat duty as medical corpsmen. It is reported that during the Meuse-Argonne campaign of October, 1918, the 116th Infantry Band cared for 80 percent of the regiment’s casualties. The 29th Division itself lost more than 4,000 men during this month-long battle.

After the armistice of Nov. 11, 1918, the 116th Infantry was selected by Gen. John J. Pershing for a special review by British Commander-in-Chief Sir Douglas Haig on April 4, 1919. A few months later, the entire division was on its way home.

Ten years after the Dayton band returned, the Dayton community dedicated a war trophy to the men of Dayton and vicinity who had served during the Great War of 1914-18.

The war trophy was the cannon of which Dayton boys were so proud. It was an eight-inch German field gun—one of the two largest cannons captured by the American Expeditionary Forces and brought back to this country. Largely through the efforts of Shenandoah College officials, the gun was given to Dayton for being the smallest American town to furnish a complete military unit during World War I.

To understand why a town as small as Dayton could furnish enough qualified musicians for an Army band, one must realize that Dayton was a music center for Western Virginia at this time. Shenandoah Collegiate Institute (later Shenandoah College and Conservatory of Music in Winchester, Va.) was largely influenced by the family of W. H. Ruebush. The family was connected with the Ruebush-Kieffer music publishing firm which traced its business origins to Joseph Funk, a Valley music publisher, as far back as 1816.

A community interest in music made it possible to enlist qualified musicians in 1916.

JOHN ZIRKLE, of Harrisonburg, Va., has been writing for the last few years, and is working towards a master’s degree in history from James Madison University.
A Success Story

Zane Showker got in the fresh produce business by chance, but the growth of his wholesale food operation was no accident

Article by Vance Richardson
Photography by Glenn Petty and Chuck Fazio

A borrowed truck and a little bit of cash were all Zane Showker had in 1950 when he started selling fresh fruit and produce in Harrisonburg. He worked up to 20 hours a day, taking customer orders in the afternoon and driving to the produce markets in Richmond, Lynchburg, and Baltimore during the evening.

At night he slept in the back of the truck while an associate drove to Harrisonburg, where in the morning, Showker would begin delivering to his customers. On weekends Showker sold fruits and vegetables from a roadside stand to help make ends meet.

Today, as president of Harrisonburg Fruit and Produce Company (HFP), Showker oversees some 100 employees and a fleet of the most modern delivery vehicles in the Shenandoah Valley. His 55,000-square-foot warehouse contains everything needed to supply a food service business. There are 5,000 food-related items under one roof—fresh produce to walk-in freezers, microwave ovens to bar supplies, and garbage cans to detergents.

Showker's success story is one of a man who worked his way up to the top, always conscious of those who helped him along the way.

Showker leans back, rocking slowly but persistently in his swivel chair behind his office desk. His dark complexion is complimented by thick black hair with only an occasional streak of grey. His feet swing back and forth under the desk, just shy of the floor. His hands accentuate his
words as he speaks of the important role his customers have played in HFP's success. "A satisfied customer is our first consideration. We do care about our customer," he says, looking his visitor straight in the eye as if to convey that he really means what he's saying. "If our customers are not successful, we have no one to sell to."

Showker got involved in the fresh produce business by chance. His father and uncle immigrated together to the United States from Beirut, Lebanon. They married sisters and settled in Craigsville, Va., where at the turn of the century, they operated country stores two blocks apart.

Although a twin, Showker was still the last of nine children, born 20 minutes after his brother. His parents died within two months of each other when Showker was 12.

When their father died in 1937, the older brothers took over the store and ran it until 1944, when they sold out and started in the wholesale food business, hauling fresh produce to merchants.

Showker was called away from pre-med studies at the University of Richmond to help with the family business when one of his brothers died in an auto accident in 1945.

He ran the Harrisonburg branch of the business. "I not only developed contacts, but I learned the procedure for buying and handling produce. That's what the produce business is all about," he says.

Showker had originally planned to help with his brothers' business for only a year. He had "pretty good grades" and wished to return to school. "But then I found I liked the business, so I stayed with it."

Showker Brother's Inc. soon became overextended, and by 1949 the company had gone bankrupt. Showker then went to work for himself, delivering produce "direct from grower to retailer."

All the debts incurred by his brothers' business were repaid by Showker, according to Bob Breene, owner and operator of Breene's Willowbank Motel, just south of HFP on Route 11. Breene has known Showker for over 30 years.

"Zane was the kid brother, Breene says, and when the family business went broke, "he got left holding the frying pan." Breene commends Showker for feeling the moral obligation to pay off the business' debts. "Not many bankruptcies bother to pay off their debts."

Zane is meticulously honest and ethical, Breene says. "I don't know of anyone in a business capacity I'd trust more. If this man tells you something, you can rely on it. He wants to make the buck, but he wants to make it right."

Breene remembers when M.O. Showalter was competing against Showker. "They were fierce competitors, yet they were close personal friends." They'd exchange Christmas gifts and even borrow goods from one another if needed. "They'd cut each others throats over prices," Breene chuckles, "but if one of them needed to borrow a bag of potatoes, he knew where to get it."

"Those were the days when doing business was fun." But Breene says he's afraid those days are gone.

At one time HFP was serving a dozen "small Mom and Pop grocery stores," Showker recalls. "They were the backbone of the retail food business." But with the growth of the supermarket, it became harder and harder for these small, privately-owned stores to compete, Breene says. He and Showker each shipped 40 feet high in HFP's warehouse with the use of forklifts.
owned stores to compete, and one by one they disappeared.

"The loss of these 'Mom and Pop' stores took a lot of personality out of the retail food business," says Showker with sincere sorrow. "You hate to see a certain lifestyle move out of memory."

Breene recalls first purchasing produce from Showker. "He was operating out of a small portion of a downtown building. Zane was literally starting from scratch, rebuilding the business and re-establishing his good name."

"Zane worked hellacious hours," Breene recalls. "He never knew what a clock was. He performed all aspects of the business—if you bought a bag of potatoes, Zane would carry them out for you on his shoulder."

Breene says people "thought Zane was nuts" when, in 1953, he moved HFP a few miles south of downtown to a converted service station on Route 11. "They thought you couldn't make it outside the city limits."

But as Harrisonburg grew, HFP expanded and the surrounding area developed rapidly. Today, HFP hardly stands out from the myriad of commercial establishments that have sprung up as the city expanded in all directions.

In 1957, Showker bought the building HFP had been renting along with an adjoining cafe. He has since built several additions to his operations center, increasing its size several fold.

Showker remodeled and added on to his turn-of-the-century Victorian house at Breezy Hill Farm.

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In the early 1960’s HFP moved into the frozen food and dry goods business. By 1970 Showker was focusing his attention on “food service interests” in the Valley. He began to create for HFP an image as a full-service, wholesale foods, equipment and supplies distributor.

Showker then made one of the major decisions of his life—he decided to merge his company with SYSCO (System and Service Corporation), the nation’s largest independent food-service marketer and distributor.

Showker says he merged with SYSCO to give HFP more buying power and the ability to grow at a competitive pace. HFP became a full-line, full-service, wholesale distribution center—something that Showker had envisioned over a decade earlier.

Since merging with SYSCO, HFP’s business has tripled, partly due to expansion into Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, Winchester, Manassas, Richmond, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.

Showker attributes his success to being able to constantly increase productivity and efficiency. “That’s the key to success,” he emphasizes.

Although he still puts in a lot of time at the office—sometimes as much as 50 hours a week, Showker has time to devote to several community and civic organizations. He also finds time to relax among the utter solitude of Breezy Hill Farm—his home in Burktown.

VANCE RICHARDSON, of Richmond, Va., is a senior at JMU double-majoring in Political Science and Communication Arts. He hopes to pursue a writing career.

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Students' pool skills join with classroom skills in each dive.

Scuba in the Valley

Area residents are discovering this unusual sport in large numbers

Article by Gina Gareri

The scuba diver checks his air gauge and lets it drop weightlessly as it indicates an ample air supply. Tilting his head back, he watches the expelled air bubbles race upwards to rupture on the surface, marking his location underwater. Beside him, his diving companion floats stationary, buoyed effortlessly by his wetsuit, weightbelt and flotation vest. Signalling towards the surface, the two kick the water, sending spirals of silt upwards as they rise.

Scene from a Jacques Cousteau special? Hardly. The setting is Harrisonburg, and the pair are part of a growing number of Valley residents that are donning life-support equipment and discovering underwater worlds.

Under the guidance of Ken McCracken, local dive shop owner and scuba teacher, people are descending in nearby swimming pool waters at James Madison University and local quarries for instruction.

McCracken, 32, originates from Arlington, Virginia where he

GINA GARERI of Annandale, Va., is a senior at JMU majoring in Communication Arts. She hopes to work in governmental publications and free-lance.
McCracken's students learn the safe uses and limitations of their equipment. During their water instruction they are taught the diving terms to gradually gain competence. Safety is emphasized and students are taught skills to aid in emergencies. A common problem is loss of air. Whether due to equipment failure or simply running out of air, McCracken teaches his divers to be proficient in “buddy breathing,” or sharing air underwater. “They could probably buddy breathe in their sleep,” he says proudly.

McCracken has had only one student sustain a diving injury. “The worst thing I've had happen is a perforated ear drum. In 300 students, that's about it,” says McCracken. That injury was due to the student failing to equalize his ears with the pressure increase at a change of water depth. McCracken cites the most common diving accidents he's seen as near-drowning cases. “Somebody gets to the surface and they're tired and they're out of air, or there's a strong current and they have difficulty getting back to the boat and they panic.” McCracken adds, “We've never had any problems with members of our group getting in trouble; of course that's because I think they're well trained.”

The students' pool skills join with classroom skills as many aspects of diving are taught, and 40 hours of instruction and tests pay off when the certification card comes in the mail. Certification is not required to dive, but without it one cannot purchase the necessary air, or more importantly, dive safely. With experience, the cumbersome equipment, tangle of straps and clumsy fins will slip on easily as the pool confines are traded for the Florida reefs.

Their dive over, the divers travel back to shore and lumber out under gear no longer buoyed by water. After removing their equipment and peeling out of wetsuits, the briskness of the fall air hits them. Shivering and exhausted, they dress and pile into the warmth of the car. The mist has changed to rain and as the now muddy incline marking their dive site leads into Route 11, they thread their way through New Market to reach the Interstate. Scene of many land excursions, the Shenandoah Valley is now beginning to also offer underwater experiences.
On the CW Line

Article by
Vance Richardson

Photography by
Sandra Paetow
"Hello, Roanoke. This is yer man in Elkton. Like ta git a unit an a load." He waits for the expected reply. "Okay, thank ya."

Lowell Wright replaces the phone on its hook attached to a pole between the main line of the Chesapeake Western Railway and that of the Norfolk and Western Railway. He has received permission to move CW's engine onto the N&W main line to pick up a load of rail cars and an additional engine for CW's early-morning run to Harrisonburg.

As the sun's rays begin to peek through the barren trees, another day has begun for the CW crew. After nearly two hours of connecting engines, coupling cars, switching tracks, dropping off cars to reduce tonnage and finally hooking onto the caboose, the CW is practically ready to leave the Elkton station.

Wright darts up and down the track, pausing between each rail car to be certain it is properly coupled to the next one and to record its serial number. Although 42 years old, the lean conductor moves with vigor.

Dressed in bib-overalls, a denim jacket and a blue-and-white striped denim cap, Wright looks like a typical railroader. His face bears the deep-set wrinkles of a man much his senior, but his trim physique and agile movements are those of a young man.

After informing the CW dispatcher in Harrisonburg by phone of the number of rail cars to be delivered, their serial numbers and contents, Wright is finally ready to retire to the cramped but cozy confines of the last car—the little red caboose.

He stokes up the potbellied stove in a corner of his cabin with a shovelful of coal. "It's just as cold in here in the wintertime as it is hot in the summertime," he says in a mountain drawl.

The hot coals quickly spread warmth throughout the soot-covered pale-green interior of the caboose. With his back to the wall, Wright makes himself comfortable on the cushioned bench and props his conductor's book on his lap. He gathers his "weigh bills" together and begins recording the weight and contents of each car. In the diffused morning light, he pours cup after cup of steaming coffee from a thermos, never spilling a drop though the cabin is constantly jerked and swayed as the train rattles down the track.

Although a short-line railroad, the CW plays a major role in rail traffic by serving as a connecting link between three major railroads.
Clockwise from left, the CW crosses the Shenandoah River. A once thriving transportation center, Pleasant Valley depot now stands abandoned. The coupler is the link between the railcars. Millard Baughner releases a blaring whistle at every state road crossing. Lowell Wright records the weight and contents of each car.
Manning the 120-ton engine is Millard Baugher, a 39-year veteran of the railroad. Baugher operates the lead engine, which controls the other two engines, as the train crosses the Shenandoah River at Elkton and winds its way through a series of small towns at the base of Massanutten Mountain.

Baugher began working for the CW on his 20th birthday at 30 cents an hour. He has never held another job. He plans to retire next year at 60, but says he could stay with the company until he’s 70. Like his father before him, Baugher started out on the “section gang,” laying rail ties and performing general maintenance of the roadbed. After ten years, he advanced to brakeman, and eight years later became engineer. Baugher recalls working as a fireman on the steam engines before CW converted to diesel.

The railroad business is “more or less like it’s always been,” according to Baugher, but government regulations have increased. “We used to go any speed we wanted—15 or 20 miles per hour.” Today the Federal Railroad Administration restricts the CW to a 10-mile-per-hour speed limit for safety reasons.

The CW, with just 52 miles of main line running between Bridgewater, Elkton, Harrisonburg and Staunton, is considered a “short-line” railroad. Although small, the CW plays an important role in rail traffic by serving as a connecting link between three major railroads: Chesapeake and Ohio at Staunton; Southern at Harrisonburg; and Norfolk and Western at Elkton.

Unlike its parent company, the N&W, which operates by timetable, the CW runs by “extras,” according to its general manager, Jim Bowman. “When sufficient freight warrants it, we’ll run a train,” he says. When there is demand, the CW frequently makes a run from Harrisonburg to Staunton in addition to its weekday Harrisonburg-Elkton run.

The CW passes over hundreds of farm crossings during each trip. Baugher tugs on a cord and releases a blaring whistle at every state road crossing, but only at harvest time does he bother with blowing for each farm crossing. At night he can pull a little easier on the cord, emitting a less bothersome whistle.

Once in Harrisonburg, CW is required to “flag” every state crossing. The front brakeman must stop the engine at the crossing, hop off and walk to the middle of the road. After signaling the engineer that it’s safe to continue, the brakeman hops back on. The engine jolts forward, halts abruptly, and jolts forward again.

In the caboose the sudden movements don’t bother Wright, who has finished his paperwork long before reaching Harrisonburg. If there is no delay, and all the cars stay on the track, he’ll have an uneventful morning. There’s always time to step onto the platform at the back of the caboose and take in the scenery or wave to his friends.

Although it has passed by thousands of times before, a train never goes unnoticed. People step out on their porches to wave as the train rolls by. “I don’t know their names,” he says, “but I know their faces.”

Waving like a politician on the campaign trail, Wright returns the greetings of his supporters. A mischievous grin spreads over his face, accentuating the wrinkles around his eyes and forehead.

An occasional dog chases the train, running up to the caboose and barking, only to retreat before attacking once again.

Even the cattle grazing along the side of the track can’t ignore the rumbling boxcars. Most merely look up, nonchalantly, and then turn away. But there’s always one or two that bolt away, frightened by the intrusion.

On this particular run, Baugher and Wright are separated by 28 rail cars pulled by three engines. Two-way radio allows them to communicate with each other and the main station in Harrisonburg. In fact, the CW was the first railroad in America to use two-way radio as part of its operations, beginning in 1948. Two years earlier, the company had scored another first when it became the first railroad to convert from steam engines to diesel engines.

The CW is steeped in the history of the Shenandoah Valley. W.E.D. Stokes of New York started the railroad in 1896 in hopes of providing a key link connecting the coal fields of West Virginia with the Chesapeake Bay—hence the name Chesapeake and Western Railway.

Track was laid from Elkton to Bridgewater in 1896, and the end of the line was extended to the North River Gap area in 1902. Stokesville, a thriving community named after CW’s founder, sprung up there. But the young community soon went the way of other boomtowns, and in 1938 the unproductive line from Bridgewater to Stokesville was discontinued. Today, the former depot at Stokesville has been restored to its original color scheme as a private home.

Lowell Wright stokes up the caboose’s pot-bellied stove with a shovelful of coal.

Baugher began working for the CW on his 20th birthday—he’s never held another job.
Abandoned depots, once thriving transportation and social centers, dot the landscape along the CW railway. Whether at Fort Defiance, Pleasant Valley, Weyers Cave, Mount Crawford, Verona, Stokesville, Bridgewater, or Staunton, these former depots were once the center of business for the CW line, even after passenger service was discontinued decades ago.

'I just got it in my blood. Diesel smoke done got in my hair and I just can't get it out'

As technology increased and other modes of transportation became available, these railroad depots became less and less effective, according to Bowman. Eventually they became obsolete.

However Bowman doesn't see a bleak future for the railroad industry.

"As demands for fuel increase, railroads will assume a greater role in our transportation needs," he says. "We know that, with the possible exception of river-barge transportation, rail is by far the most energy-efficient means of moving freight, although it may not be the fastest."

Whatever the opinion on the railroad's future, one thing appears certain—those people whose livelihoods depend on the railroad seem optimistic.

According to Wright, railroads are making a comeback. "Even the passenger trains are coming back," he predicts.

And where will Wright be in the future? "If nothing happens, I'll be here, until I retire or kick the bucket. I just got it in my blood. Diesel smoke done got in my hair and I just can't get it out."

SANDRA PAETOW, of Baltimore, Md., is a senior at JMU majoring in Communication Arts. She enjoys photography and plans a career in photojournalism.
Crafting a Tradition

Article by Tricia Fischetti
Photography by Sandra Paetow
"Everyone in a business has to have some sort of gimmick to get people to buy his product," says David Ray Pine of Mount Crawford, a cabinetmaker. "My gimmick is authenticity."

A cabinetmaker is traditionally a person who makes cupboards, chests, chairs and desks. In 18th-century America, an alternate term for cabinetmaker was joiner. A joiner or cabinetmaker often did carpentry work.

"An 18th-century joiner might do some paneling one day and then build a chest of drawers the next," Pine says.

Pine follows the 18th-century tradition in his work which includes making anything from a reproduction of a four-poster bed c. 1780, to doing colonial-style wall paneling. He prides himself on the authenticity of the style of his work. He has books and magazines illustrating antique furniture from which customers may choose a particular style or combination of styles.

About 98 percent of Pine's work consists of orders placed before he ever starts a piece. "By sticking to custom work, I can better give the customer exactly what he wants. That way, nobody has to compromise."

When a customer decides on a piece, Pine usually draws a sketch of it and makes an estimate of the cost based on materials, time and labor. Ordinarily, materials are from one-fourth to one-half the price of the piece.

He estimates the cost of a reproduction of an 18th-century cherry wood bed, which takes him about a week to build, to be about $700. About half of that price is for materials.

"I often tell people that I don't do the cheapest work I know how to do," Pine says, "but that I do do the best work I know how to do."

The use of traditional joints and construction in Pine's pieces often adds to its cost, but it also adds to the quality, he says. He only uses power tools when they will achieve the same effect as work done by hand.

If this philosophy brings to mind the vision of an older man who has been making furniture for decades, forget it. Pine is a young man who is devoted to his wife and their 18-month-old son Aaron. He also is a hard-working young man who is serious about his craft.
Near his home and his family, Pine works in his shop, a former garage.

He found more satisfaction in working with furniture. "Furniture satisfies my creative urge, he says. "And it gives me something to look at." Now, Pine says he is a student of furniture.

Early training for Pine was at a cabinet shop near his home in Clark County, Va. He worked there for about a year rebuilding old furniture, restoring antiques and picking up a lot of his knowledge of antiques and period furniture.

"I got to see different styles and also which techniques held together through time and which didn't," Pine says.

When Pine and his wife Debbie married, she was attending Madison College, so he looked for a job in the Harrisonburg area. He worked at the Virginia Craftsmen for about 15 months and then worked for about three years as a foreman of a cabinet shop in Rockingham County.

Pine had his own shop in western Rockingham County for a little more than a year and then moved to his present home and shop on Route 693 in Mount Crawford where he has been for two years.

Pine's shop is a former garage and farming machine shed that stands beside his 19th-century home. To accommodate his work, he removed one wall and put up another, laid a hard floor and put in some extra wiring and insulation.

The shop has a friendly atmosphere with a radio playing country music in one corner, and a couple of cats wandering in and out. On the walls hang saws and other tools with a cartoon reading "You want it when?" and a poster reading "The Hurrider I Go the Behinder I Get."
Pine encourages his customers to come by his shop while he is working on their order, hoping that they will get a better idea of what they're paying for if they see what goes into it.

Seventy-five percent of Pine's customers are repeat customers. They are his best advertisers, he says. Many of his new customers have heard of his work through a friend or have admired one of his pieces in someone's home.

"When you don't advertise, you have to depend on a local market," he says. About half of his business is in the Rockingham County area, with other customers coming to him from Charlottesville and the Northern Virginia area. Pine also shows his work at craft shows.

Some of Pine's pieces are now in other states. "They have a way of spreading out," he says. He signs and dates all his pieces, saying his pride demands him to, and that this practice will keep the piece from being confused with an original in the future.

Pine delivers his furniture to his customers himself unless size or distance prohibits it.

In his spare time, Pine works on the restoration of his 19th-century home where he and his young family live. He has redone some of the walls and paneling in the house and has made some of the furniture. Also in the house are several gifts Pine has made for his wife Debbie, including a cherry wood jewelry chest and a pen and pencil case of mahogany with inlay of holly and ebony.

A big reason the Pines bought their old home was so that Pine could learn more about his craft. "To be a good cabinetmaker, one has to be a bit of a history buff," he says. "The more I learn about the 18th-century cabinetmaker, the better my work will be."

Pine says he is constantly learning more and more about his craft and that he is always striving for perfection.

There are many shops in the Valley, large and small, offering antique reproductions, Pine says. "There's a lot of competition. But I feel that the standards I set for myself keep me a cut above the rest."

"For me, furniture is not just my job, it's my hobby."
J. I. Miller grew up around brooms. Now retired, he makes them for business, but mostly for pleasure.

Article by Tricia Fischetti
Photography by Chuck Fazio

At Lickside, Miller displays a newly-crafted hearth broom which is ready to be stitched. For each layer put on the handle, Miller hammers (right) wire tightly around the broomcorn.
Lick Run is a small stream in Mount Solon, Va. that runs down from the top of Narrowback Mountain. It flows by a mineral spring where deer and other wild animals come to lick the salty banks.

The stream also flows beside J. I. Miller's home in Mount Solon and by his shop, Lickside, where he handcrafts brooms. The Lick Run legend is printed on a yellow card that is attached to every handmade broom Miller sells.

The legend tells the story of how hunters would hide up in a tall pine tree standing beside the spring and shoot the deer as they came to lick the banks.

Miller, who has lived in or around Mount Solon all his life and is deeply rooted in the area, first learned broom-making from his father. His father was a farmer, and he made and sold brooms in the community when the weather was bad, Miller says.

He began making and selling brooms on a regular basis in 1976. "It started more-or-less as a diversion. I didn't have the time before," says Miller, who had retired after 35 years of maintenance work at Bridgewater College.

Miller's brooms are not advertised. He obtains customers mostly by showing his work at craft shows and participates in about 12 to 15 shows a year. His wife Freda goes with him to the shows and helps to set up and sell the brooms.

"We don't travel too far, though," he says. "You don't get enough money for brooms to pay for lodging, so I stick mostly to local shows."

Miller makes most of his brooms with imported Mexican broomcorn which he orders in 350 lb. bales from a North Carolina supplier. It costs 62 cents a pound. The cost is really higher, however, because the corn often has to be clipped and some may be inferior.

Broomcorn was once plentiful in America, Miller says. He remembers when just about everybody had a patch of broomcorn in their yards when he was a boy. Broomcorn is scarce in America today because it needs to be harvested manually, he says.

The broomcorn is shipped to Miller in yard-long stalks. Sorting the corn by length and quality is the first step in the making of a kitchen broom.

Miller carefully examines the corn for quality and uses the best and longest pieces for the outer covering of the broom, the hurl. When sorted, the ends of the corn are soaked in hot water to make them pliable.

Miller cuts the corn into groups of three lengths of 20, 22 and 24 inches.
each. He then tightly wraps it around the broom handle in three layers with wire. The ends of the corn are evened off and cut as they are wrapped and bound.

The wrapping is done on a machine called a winder which stands prominently in the center of Miller's small workshop. He uses an early 20th century model which is operated by a wooden wheel below the machine which Miller turns with his foot.

"The winder I was taught to make brooms on did not use foot power. It was a much older model and had a wooden wheel similar to a ship's wheel which you turned with your elbow as you worked."

The second layer of corn put on the broom handle is called the wrapper. It hides some of the poorer or shorter corn that is on the inside. The hurl is then put on.

To cover up the bare ends where the corn meets the handle, Miller hammers a piece of metal called a lock onto the broom.

Miller says the broom then must be left to air-dry overnight so that it will not loosen on the press when it is stitched.

The broom is held upright with the broom end up on a manual press for stitching. Miller uses a large needle with a center eye and a strong red twine especially made for brooms. He bends over the broom intently as he sews the five rows for one of his kitchen brooms with a kind of figure-eight stitch. He pushes the needle back through the broom with thimbles he wears on his wrists attached to well-worn leather bands.

When the stitching is finished, Miller removes the broom from the press and trims the ends of the twine to complete the kitchen broom. The entire process takes about an hour. "I just don't get in a hurry when I make brooms," he says.

Miller’s kitchen broom, a common design, sells for $5. "I like to think that all my other brooms are originals," he says proudly.

His other styles include various kinds of hearth brooms which sell for $4 to $5. His hearth brooms are accented with bright yarn. Some are on handles of sassafras or cedar.

Miller cuts the wood for his handles himself. He searches for them on his property or his neighbors' or at a nearby swampy area. "Sometimes it takes me half a day to find just half-a-dozen handles," he says. "It's hard to find just what you're looking for."

Miller also makes stove brooms which he says are handy to have around the kitchen or in the car. Other brooms include a double broom which may be used on either end, a corner broom for sweeping hard-to-reach places, and a tiny broom for dollhouses.

One of Miller’s "hot items" is his cake tester. "In the old days, grandmas would pull a strand from an old broom to stick into a cake or meatloaf to see if it was done," Miller says.

The cake tester is a bound bunch of broomcorn about six inches long that may be used in the kitchen for 229 North Main Street
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testing. Miller says many of his customers buy them as gifts. They sell for $2.

The type of broom which sells the best varies for Miller. It often depends on the time of year, he says, with hearth brooms being especially popular in the winter months, for example.

The durability of Miller's handcrafted brooms depends on their amount of use. He says that a good way to keep a broom in top condition is to store it on its handle end. “If you always stand a broom on the broom end, it will soon be bending sideways,” he says.

Miller, who also does some furniture refinishing and restoring at Lickside, enjoys his craft. “I find the work very satisfying,” he says.

He has found that many customers who buy one broom come back for another one. “Country people like a homemade broom.”

“And I think people have come to realize that the homemade broom is superior to other brooms.”

Cut and measured broomcorn lies on the winder, as Miller prepares to begin a broom.
Artist with Stone

John S. Wenger began his stone work to fulfill a personal need. Now, his work graces several communities.

Article by Tricia Fischetti
Photography by Glenn Petty

If all the stone walls John S. Wenger of Harrisonburg built were put end to end, they just might reach all the way from Harrisonburg to Staunton.

Wenger, who has earned a reputation in the Valley for his stone masonry, began his stone work with the building of limestone retaining walls to prevent erosion.

"The whole thing started out first as a personal need and then as a community need," says Wenger. When he moved to Harrisonburg and his Upland Drive home in 1962, Wenger was faced with the problem of severe erosion of his property.

To prevent the erosion, Wenger built several low walls on his land with previously-used limestone gathered from building sites or old foundations. He found that the walls, along with some landscaping, solved his erosion problem.

Before long, Wenger's neighbors, who also had erosion problems, wanted walls for their property. And now, Wenger says there is hardly a property in the area that isn't protected from erosion by one of his walls.

The retaining walls were Wenger's first effort in constructing with stone. He is a self-taught mason.

Originally from Lancaster County, Pa., Wenger retired in June, 1978, after a 45-year career of teaching elementary, high school and college students. His interest in stone began

Armed with hammer and chisel, Wenger cuts sandstone for a job.
in 1937 when he did some part-time bookkeeping for a school board member in his teaching district who was operating a stone quarry.

"There were many quarries in the area," Wenger says, "and this one's business was slow. But I was young and ambitious and wanted to help it along."

To aid the business, Wenger kept up with the latest research described in agricultural magazines. He got the idea of selling ground limestone to the farmers instead of the burnt limestone they usually bought to neutralize the acid in their soil.

The ground limestone was more easily retained in the soil than the burnt limestone. The new idea caught on, and business at the quarry greatly increased, Wenger says proudly.

With his knowledge of stone, Wenger became more directly involved in stone work when he moved to Harrisonburg and began building his first stone walls.

When the success of his retaining walls spread, Wenger soon had requests to build walls outside his immediate neighborhood, including such places as the Eastern Mennonite College campus and the Ashby Heights area of Harrisonburg. It was after the completion of a wall and some landscaping for an Ashby Heights residence that a customer's neighbor told Wenger he was an artist.

"It wasn't until then that I realized I was involved in an art," Wenger says. "It was an unconscious sort of thing—a pure art." This realization became a creative force in Wenger's work.

From that point, Wenger's stone work broadened to include more artistic construction. The first construction he did for "art's sake" was a garden house.

He used his background from teaching geometry to design a six-sided building with three sides open and three sides closed that was used to house a fountain. For the job, Wenger and his men used cut Dry River sandstone.

They obtain their own sandstone usually by driving a truck into a dried-up river bed and splitting the stone as it lies. When cut, the sandstone yields many colors, including various shades of browns, reds and golds. Wenger also uses cut sandstone for fireplaces.

The tool used for cutting sandstone is a rifter. It is a harp-pointed tool with a five-inch cutting edge. To make a cut, the rifter is set on top of the stone and hit with a 12 to 15 pound sledge hammer. Wenger, at 66, still wields a powerful sledge hammer.

"There's an old saying that it takes a strong body and a weak mind to do this kind of work," Wenger says. But he has found that a strong mind is...
essential for a good stone mason. "There is an art to working with stone. You have to design as you build." He has a lot of pride in the men he has taught this art and trained to work for him.

His "men" consist mostly of students he hires in the summer. While he was still teaching, Wenger did most of his work during the summer, and it is still his busiest time. Of the seven men he had working for him last summer, two were high school students and two were college students.

Wenger and his men used their artistic touch in restoring one of the original Hessian houses in the Valley located in Augusta County. The house was built during the Revolutionary War by captured Hessian soldiers, many of whom were stone masons, hired to fight for the British.

The house had fallen into decay when Wenger was hired to do the restoration work. He speaks with pride of his job which included rebuilding the walls and chimneys and doing some inside woodwork. This type of restoration work is especially satisfying for Wenger.

He also finds satisfaction through other means. A deeply committed Christian, Wenger has continued teaching even after his retirement by teaching Saturday nights at the Virginia Mennonite Home and Sunday mornings at Weavers Mennonite Church. He also serves as president of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Retired Teachers Association.

For his stone business, Wenger has only had to do occasional advertising, with the majority of his customers coming to him through word-of-mouth. "Almost every time we set up in an area to do one job," he says, "we get a couple of people up and down the street who also want some kind of job done. We tend to do little jobs that no one else will do."

The soft-spoken Wenger often develops a personal relationship with his customers. "Most of these folks aren't just people to me," he says. "They're friends."

TRICIA FISCHETTI, of Suffolk, Va., is a junior at JMU double-majoring in English and Communication Arts. She plans to go into magazine work as a career.

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A Coed’s Calling

Student at James Madison University spends a summer as a missionary in Mexico

Article by Cynthia C. Wills

Mention the word “missionary” to most people, and it’s doubtful that the image that comes to their minds is one of an outgoing, attractive, 20-year-old psychology student. In fact, Cheryl Dickerson, who hails from a Richmond suburb, looks more like a high school cheerleader than a college woman with a calling for missionary work.

One can easily imagine her small, 5’3” frame bouncing beside a football field, brown curls flying, brown eyes sparkling, and teeth glittering in the floodlights. It’s difficult to imagine that same small frame in a dirty, noisy, foreign city, walking the streets carrying a Bible. But that is precisely what she did, for two months last summer following her sophomore year at James Madison University. Cheryl lived and worked in Mexico City, as part of the Student Training in Missions (STIM) Program, sponsored by Inter-Varsity, an international Christian organization dedicated to the fostering of fellowship among college students—and now she wants to go back.

“There was a moment when I first got off the plane that I asked myself, ‘What am I doing here?’” Cheryl confesses. “The airport was crowded, I didn’t know my way around, nobody was speaking English... it was very confusing. Then suddenly I saw a sign being held up with English written on it and I made a mad dash for it. Luckily, it turned out to be my group.”

Through the Student Mission Program, which Cheryl heard about through her involvement with JMU’s chapter of Inter-Varsity, Cheryl worked with an organization called Spearhead, part of Latin American Missions, which is designed primarily for college students and recent graduates. She was part of a 45-member group which was divided into three teams of 15 people. Aside from working within assigned churches by holding coffeehouses, giving testimonies, and singing, the students were required to visit within the surrounding neighborhoods. Visitation included selling copies of the New Testament, as well as holding Bible studies and sharing with the community.

“In the beginning,” Cheryl says, “I found it hard to accept the idea of selling the Bibles. However, I soon found out that the reasoning behind this was valid—a person who spends the equivalent of eighty cents for a Bible is more likely to read it. And our basic goal was to encourage the people to read the Bible.

“Mexico is a very religious country, but its people have some misconceptions,” she continues. “Some of their ideas are not scripturally based. For example, Mexican males are very influenced by the concept of ‘machismo,’—the need to prove their manhood. This caused many of the men to take on mistresses and have numerous children. Some of the men even resort to beating their wives and children. The father image in Mexico is not a good one. So, when you say, ‘God, the Father’ to a Mexican he does not get a favorable impression of God. Through reading the Bible, the people are able to come to know what God the Father is really like.”

Cheryl had to raise the $1,500 needed to finance her summer in
Mexico, which she did with the help of family, friends, and the JMU chapter of Inter-Varsity. Often, the fund raising was a painfully slow experience for Cheryl. Her own Baptist church in Richmond would not sponsor her since their church funds were already channeled into other mission programs. As the deadline approached for the money, Cheryl made an emotional appeal to her fellow students in Inter-Varsity asking for their support. Her mother contributed by holding plant sales and donating the proceeds to Cheryl. The ability to raise the money in spite of obstacles was, according to Cheryl, her way of confirming that God wanted her in Mexico.

Once there, she lived in the Federal District with “a marvelous Christian family,” consisting of a widow and her five children. The family was poor by American standards, living in a small, shabby house, badly in need of repairs. Yet, according to Cheryl, their living situation was not intolerable because Mexicans place a heavy emphasis on people, rather than on “things.”

“Our culture is too concerned with time, privacy, and materialism,” she says. “The Mexican culture is far more people-oriented. The families are more united. Mine was no exception, and they made me feel as though I were a part of the family.”

The pleasant home atmosphere was a welcome bonus to Cheryl, who was faced with many frustrating experiences as she tried to adjust to the Mexican society.

Although she has had four years of Spanish between high school and college, dealing with the language proved to be difficult.

“One of the hardest things,” she says, “was having to wake up and immediately think and speak in Spanish. I have enough trouble with English early in the morning. I remember saying, very often, ‘Oh Lord, if you would only let me hear English for the first hour!’”

Another area which she found difficult was Mexican attitudes toward such things as work. At one point, while helping to clear out the inside of a new church that was being constructed, she recalls, “I remember being asked by one of the workers to stack and move a pile of wood to one place, only to have someone ask me to move it again in an hour because it was in the way . . . and then being asked to move it again
before leaving! The Mexicans seem to have a whole different concept of organization.

She is confident as she talks, with an exuberance that quickly turns to determination when she speaks of the need for missions in poor countries. "One thing I saw most was the opportunity that we, Americans, have to share the Gospel," she says. "The Mexicans were interested to know why we would leave our luxuries to come to a poor country and work. This curiosity opened the doors for us to share what we knew. There's a real hunger for the Word out there, and as Christians, we should feel responsible for spreading it."

Her experiences in Mexico have given Cheryl, already a deeply committed Christian, a new perspective on her personal responsibilities as a Christian, as well as the responsibilities of all Christians to "help their brothers to see the light."

This point was emphasized for Cheryl when she and her "family" helped bring an "Espiritualista" to Christ. An Espiritualista is a man involved with spirits, who prays through mediums.

"We met this man, Don Pepe, and spent a lot of time with him. God's love was revealed through the interest we took in this lonely, old man. We sat down and explained to him why we wanted him to know Christ. He eventually decided that the Bible is the Word of God, and he gave up his belief in spirits."

"This was not an isolated experience. Many of us in the group saw people come to Christ. It proved to me that if you are willing to be used, God can and will use you."

Cheryl's willingness to be used by God is evident. Although originally she had planned on spending only one summer in Mexico, she now feels she wants to return, possibly for a year, to continue her work. The thought of postponing her 1981 graduation from college doesn't seem to bother her. "If it's God's will, I'll go back," she says with assurance. "And if it's not, then I won't."

She smiles and glances skyward. "Right now I'm just waiting on Him."

CYNTHIA WILLS is a senior at JMU majoring in English. She is interested in all types of writing and plans to enter the field of publishing and continue to free-lance.
Home Cooking in Country Coziness

Mrs. Aleene Evan's dream of her own restaurant is a realization at the Candlelight Inn

Article by Dawn Richardson

Dining at the Candlelight Inn in Bridgewater is like going to Grandma's house for Thanksgiving dinner. The familiar musty smell of an old house and the aromas of home cooking overtake the diner as he enters the foyer of the 115-year-old brick house. One can almost envision small grandchildren playing around the table during after-meal coffee and conversation.

Mrs. Aleene Evans, owner and head cook, made sure that the atmosphere of her restaurant would be cozy and warm. Her fresh face and short dark hair combined with a distinctive glow of vitality, disguise Mrs. Evans as much younger than her 51 years. Concerning running her own restaurant, Mrs. Evans says that, "It's just something I had always wanted to do."

Photography by Sandra Paetow

In the spring of 1976, she and her husband, Lloyd, decided the old house at 317 Main Street, which they rented out, would be ideal to convert into a unique, homey place for public dining. In just three months, the Evanses completely renovated the home based on Mrs. Evans' life-long dream. Since her teenage years as a waitress in Lansing, Mich., she
This 115-year-old house (left) was converted into The Candlelight Inn in 1976. A bee smoker (right), one of Mrs. Evans favorite pieces, decorates "The Brass and Copper Room." Mrs. Evans (below) seats guests in "The President's Room."
imagined the decor and atmosphere of the restaurant she hoped to have one day. The Evanses had no complications in the home's conversion to an inn due to their previous experience constructing the Church of the Brethren in Montezuma where, from 1963-77, Mr. Evans had been the minister. They painted the restaurant, inside and out, and did the interior decorating as well.

The Inn has four separate and unique dining rooms with five to six tables in each. The sturdy book shelves of "The Library" now hold over 400 pieces of antique ironstone tealeaf china that were made between 1890 and 1910. The Evanses collected the china from the MidWest and New England. Some of the pieces have darkened. These pieces, says Mrs. Evans proudly, were used extensively in their day or had been stored near an old cook stove.

In the cold months of winter, the glow of the fireplace is mirrored in the glass of the oil lamps situated on each linen-covered table. And in warmer months, the lamps are accompanied by freshly-cut flowers, grown on the property and arranged by Mrs. Evans.

Through the years, the Evanses had collected pictures of United States presidents but didn't quite know what to do with them. Now these pictures adorn the walls of the "Presidents' Room." If one looks closely at the picture of President McKinley, the border seems old and yellowed, for indeed, the signature at the bottom is an original.

Behind this room is "The Brass and Copper Room" where nearly 40 pieces of brass and copper can be found. Collecting such pieces that were originally covered with nickel is a favorite hobby of Mrs. Evans. Various shapes and sizes of coffee pots and tea kettles, some of both copper and brass, are situated in the shelf case and cabinet of this room. Mrs. Evans' oldest and favorite pieces are a railroad flare spotted with small dents, and an odd-looking contraption called a bee smoker made of welded copper pieces with an accordion-like fan on one side. On

A guest book, located at the entrance, adds to the Inn's personal appeal. Complimentary remarks abound in the book, praising the cooking, service and atmosphere.
the shelf, they accompany the family portrait of the Evanses with their three sons and four grandchildren.

Lloyd and Aleene married in Michigan when she was only 17 years old; as a result, she dropped out of high school. "Those were the days when a young woman just didn't go to school if she was married," Mrs. Evans says. After having her children, she returned to school to receive her high school and college degrees. She attended Central Michigan University and graduated with four minors: English, music, geography, and history.

Her English education, which she has expanded by completing over 40 hours of courses at James Madison University, has indeed been applied. Mrs. Evans was a teacher at Turner Ashby High School in Dayton for 14 years and is now the author of a book of poems, "Stripes of Life."

Because her husband's ministry took them to Manassas in 1977, Mrs. Evans must drive two hours to Bridgewater four days a week to manage the Inn. She also does all the lawn mowing and yard work for the three homes the Evanses own and lease in the Valley. She composes poetry in her car on these long excursions. Beside her on the seat she keeps a tape recorder. Here, she recorded many poems, and now she works on a novel in the same manner.

Mrs. Evans applied her music minor when she directed the choir of her husband's church in Montezuma. Amidst all the confusion of the week before the Inn's opening, she recorded an album with the choir. "You can do anything you want to if you want to badly enough," she says confidently.

Her interests in geography have led Mrs. Evans to all but one continental American state and to Europe. Sparked by her interest in American heritage, she has collected many antiques from all over the United States. Most of her favorites she keeps at home, while a few decorate the Candlelight Inn. Mrs. Evans also sells some of these collectors' items in "The Antique Room" of the Inn, which is at the top of the wide staircase in the entranceway. Here she has antique tables, cabinets, rockers, china, tea sets, bells, jugs, oil lamps, kettles, old National Geographics, and other odds and ends. She has refinished a number of the furniture pieces herself.

Mrs. Evans also teaches Sunday School, and amazingly enough, claims to have plenty of time to spend with her husband. Paula Wheelbarger, waitress at the Inn since its opening, says that Mrs. Evans' toughest competitor is herself. "She does it all."

Most of her time, though, involves the Inn where she prepares all the meals. Three-out-of-the-four nights the Inn is open, each guest is met by Mrs. Evans with a friendly greeting and a warm smile. Mrs. Evans is a joy to work with, says Wheelbarger. "She never asks anyone to do anything she wouldn't do herself, and she never stops until we are all finished at the end of the night," which sometimes means arriving home at 2 or 3 a.m.

The menu at the Inn is a selection of dishes that includes turkey and ham, scallops, spiced shrimp, Swiss steak, Cornish hen, stuffed pork chops, veal cordon bleu, and more. The price of each entree, ranging from $4.95 to $6.95, includes appetizer, baked or sweet potato, salad bar, vegetable, rolls and butter, beverage, and dessert.

Wheelbarger does all the serving with pleasant efficiency. Carolyn White, who works back in the kitchen, "makes things back in the kitchen, "makes things easy out in front," says Mrs. Evans. All the dishes are handwashed, and everyone does a little bit of everything.

The Inn was given one of the top ratings in the state by the Virginia state inspector, says Mrs. Evans. It seats 64 diners and is open from 5 to 9 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Reservations are required, since homecooked meals take time to prepare.

Mrs. Evans, who always wants to know how her customers enjoyed their meals, remembers one response from a little boy: "It was almost as good as McDonald's."

DAWN RICHARDSON, of McLean, Va., is a senior at JMU majoring in Communication Arts. She plans a career in magazine journalism.
Building Your Own Home

Articles by Julie Summers

Illustrations by Andrew Black

Photography by Chuck Fazio and Bill Tarangelo

My uncle is a contractor, as was my grandfather and his father. Watching the construction of a house is nothing new to me. But I never realized, until recently, the difference between building a house and building a home.

Today's homebuilder wants more than four walls and a roof. And he needs the challenge of truly making something his own.

Owner-built homes are making a comeback as housing costs skyrocket and suburban-development homes continue to look more and more alike.

With a little research and the knowledge absorbed from spending time with contractors, I've found that building your own home is not the easiest endeavor, but neither is it an impossible one.

There are many practical as well as aesthetic advantages to building your own home, and there are just as many pitfalls.

The most practical and important advantage to owner-built homes is the savings. Estimates for a $45,000 owner-built home in this area can amount to a 10 percent savings if the home-builder acts as his own general contractor. My uncle would not appreciate these estimates.

Neither would he appreciate, though I'm sure he already knows, the fact that a home-builder becomes a contractor when his house-plans are approved by county or city building inspectors.

Other money-saving advantages to owner-built construction include: an estimated half the new-house cost because labor is free; savings on mortgage interest; and protection against inflation because housing values are rising faster than the inflation rate.

Of course there are other sides to this shiny coin, so let's take the basics step by step.

The first step is making the decision to build your own home. It shouldn't be an easy one since many before you have sacrificed a year's salary to put the time into construction, made mistakes forcing the final costs up and suffered losses because they were unaware of building codes until too late.

In fact, the land my home now stands on was formerly owned by an owner-builder who had built half a house when he was told it would not pass building codes. It was bulldozed.

Taking all the pitfalls into consideration, the next step is creating the plan. This includes more than an architectural rendering of your dream house, it also includes a materials list, an electrical wiring plan, a plumbing plan and engineer approval—among other things.

You really have five viable options in creating the plan. The first, and most obvious, is to hire an architect.
Dr. David Holdridge's home (above) is the successful result of one man's experience as an owner-builder. His fruitful efforts are discussed on page 58. The classic modern home of Mike and Pam Johnson (below) was "fairly simple" to build according to Johnson, a professional contractor, but difficult to finance. See their story on page 57.
Most affordable architects, unfortunately, will show you development-homes with variations on the four-walls- and-a-roof theme or designs for a vacation home. They will also charge you 10 to 12 percent of the finished house cost as their fee.

Magazines such as Better Homes and Gardens, Southern Living and House Beautiful advertise house plans. These plans usually cost between $30 and $100, sometimes more for very ambitious projects. There is usually an extra charge for plumbing and wiring plan." Often this plan is just what it says—typical—it was not designed for any specific house.

Two related options highly favored by owner-builders are pre-fabricated and pre-cut homes.

With both options, you pay for a kit and instructions, but the similarity ends here. A pre-fabricated kit usually consists of the rough carpentry for the exterior design. The kit does not include the foundation, plumbing, wiring, insulation, roofing, interior wall coverings, cabinetry, floor coverings, gutters, driveways, weather stripping or paint.

With a pre-cut home, you have the option of buying a total package which, depending on the company, can include everything needed for the interior and exterior of the house. This package can include stoves, refrigerators, cabinetry and bathroom fixtures as well as walls and roofing. You can buy any or all of the features in the kit. Pre-cut homes are becoming a large industry and offer a great variety of styles that can be adjusted to individual tastes. Since it is a young industry, you must be very careful about which company you deal with.

The fifth option is to do it yourself. You may work from other plans, teaching yourself as you go, to develop a workable design. After choosing and gaining approval of your plan, the next basic step is finding a place to build. Whether the area is gorgeous or not, the first consideration is if the land you've chosen is suitable for a building site.

The land must have a water supply. Unless your system can be hooked into the city's water lines, you will have to drill a well. Locally, it costs an average $10 per vertical foot to drill a well which includes casing and a pressure tank.

There must also be a sewer system on your homesite. In developed areas, your lines usually can be hooked up to a sewer. Occasionally, pipes may be "frozen" to prevent further development in the area or because the line is already overworked. If this is the case, you must construct a septic tank. A septic tank will not work in overly-developed areas, hillsides or very hard soil because the waste will not sink. The ground must be tested to see if it will "perk," or accept liquids, before a tank can be installed. The approximate cost for septic tank installation in Rockingham County is $1,000.

Your land also cannot become a building site if it is not properly zoned. In this area, the site must be residentially or agriculturally zoned. It is also wise to investigate the zoning restrictions around your property as you will most likely not enjoy living near an industrial or commercial site.

Some routine suggested questions for land buyers are:

1. Is the lot buildable?
2. Is a sewer system or septic tank available?
3. Is a water source available?
4. Is power available?
5. What are the building restrictions?

The last question is a vital one. Housing is controlled by many codes and regulations that differ all over the country. Five basic permits must be obtained before you can begin building. Costs are based on the estimated price of the home to be built. Listed below are the permits and their costs (based on a $45,000 home in Rockingham County.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>$105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>$15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>$38</td>
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<td>Sewer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>$500</td>
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</tbody>
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The last step is buying the land. What you face is aesthetic versus practical considerations. Whether your lot has a road access is an important consideration as is whether your lot can support a normal foundation.

Remember, when you are looking for land, just because there is no For Sale sign on a lot, it doesn't mean the owner won't sell. Knock on a few doors and visit people in the area you wish to build. They, as well as local bankers who keep good titles of the like, may know of available land.

Many do-it-yourself home builders have built their homes by reading books and consulting manuals. Below is a list of books I found helpful in my research. Also, many local lumber yards sell and sometimes give away how-to books on every aspect of house construction. One writer said, the manuals only instruct you piece-by-piece, but I can't imagine how you'd do it any other way. Good luck!

A detailed description of Clarneau's construction of his own home with anecdotes. Easy to read, Clarneau dislikes the piece-by-piece construction and attempts to guide, rather than instruct, the owner-builder.

A collection of articles written by architects, contractors and owner-builders on practical considerations and how-to's. More factual that the Clarneau book.

Comprehensive account of how all the structural parts of a house are put together. Doesn't say how to put it in so much as why to put it in. In encyclopedia form.

Wade contributed to Eccli's book. A very positive book, Wade says you can do it. Offers examples of 30 owner-built homes and how they were constructed. An idea book.

Lighthearted look at the "dream house" and how it was finally built. A little out-dated, some hints stemming from Watson's experience. Good for comic relief.
Ed. note: Many local residents are turning to owner-built homes and it was not difficult to find owner-builders happy to talk about their experiences. Both the Johnsons and Dr. David Holdridge are members of the James Madison University community. Pam Johnson is costume designer for the JMU theater and Dr. Holdridge is director of the Television-Film Center there. Since Mike Johnson is a professional contractor, the story on their home focuses on financing owner-built homes. Dr. Holdridge is a non-professional handyman and we believed his story would be more valuable focusing on his construction experiences. Both the Johnsons and Dr. Holdridge opted for pre-cut homes. Dr. Holdridge purchased his home from Continental Homes, Inc. of Boones Mill, Va., 334-5000. The Johnsons bought their home from the Boise Cascade Corporation of Locust Grove, Va., 591-7118. Many thanks to the Johnsons and Dr. Holdridge for letting us “invade” their homes.

Mike and Pam Johnson’s Home was Easier to Build than to Finance

Do not go to visit the home of Mike and Pam Johnson if you have a faint heart. Especially do not go at night. And if the couple tells you to call them before you leave the safety and comfort of your home—call. You will realize they were very serious about their advice if you do as I did and neglect to call before you leave. It’s not that the Johnson’s live in a dangerous section of town, as a matter of fact, their home is in the middle of nowhere. It doesn’t seem possible that sane people would chose to live three miles down Route 910, off Route 721 off Route 42 at Singer’s Glen.

Route 910 is no more than a dirt road cutting through some of the most beautiful wooded land in Rockingham County. Unfortunately, the woods do not seem beautiful at night.

If you get three-quarters of the way down 910, after crossing virtual lakes and hitting every bump and rut in the road, you’ll be rewarded with the faint lights from a rustic log cabin home to the left. It is the wrong house. But the Ray Prince family will be very happy to point you in the right direction—they do it all the time.

Unfortunately, the worst is yet to come. The Johnson’s mailbox points you to the right, up an abrupt hill and down—straight down. Lying in wait are the rushing waters of a stream swelled by recent rains. The bridge crossing the stream is under a foot of water. Nature has no respect for automobiles.

What awaits you when you ford that stream and head straight up...
another hill is worth the trip. The Johnson’s 2,300 square-foot home crowns the hill overlooking stretches of wooded acreage the Valley is famous for. The Johnson’s home is a tribute to its contractor owner-builder.

According to Mike Johnson, financing his owner-built home was the tough part, the rest was “fairly simple.”

Reluctant to borrow money from their parents for the home, Mike and Pam, then in their mid-twenties, could not obtain finances for the type of home they wished to build. They finally entered in an agreement with another young couple to obtain construction loans.

“It’s virtually impossible to get the financing,” Johnson said, and his wife Pam agreed, “It’s killing young couples today.”

“What young couple has the finances to put five percent down on a new home?” Johnson continued. “The key is to get a house, no matter how crummy, because it’s a bargain. The property value will not depreciate, it’ll keep pace with inflation and you’ll have equity for something better later.”

The Johnson home is a perfect example of escalating housing costs. The house is a pre-cut from Boise Cascade Corporation in Locust Grove, Va. The Johnson’s paid approximately $12,000 for the 2,300-square-foot home package. The total home cost them $35,000 including the eight acres. Three years later they have been offered $60,000 for the home and land. Friends of theirs who are presently building virtually the same house the Johnsons did are spending double.

The Johnsons said they spent more on the construction than they had anticipated. “You can nickle and dime yourself to death,” Pam said. “It’s hard to limit yourself, to say ‘no.’ Price differences seem small, so you go with what you like better. But if you do that over and over again, it really adds up.”

Many unexpected things crop up in construction to make the venture more and more expensive. The Johnsons blasted 80 times in order to build a basement.

“The well is a frightening thing,” Pam said. “We drilled 110 feet down before we hit water, but neighbors down the road drilled 450 feet down.”

Johnson advocates owner-built construction, especially with a good pre-cut home package.

“The future of housing lies in package homes,” he said. “It enables you to build faster, because the walls come built. One price covers all your materials, so you don’t have to worry about cutting corners to save money.”

Johnson also said pre-cut homes do not limit individuality. “They’re very flexible,” he said. “And at the same time,” commented Pam, “you get to see something that’s been tried and tested, with all the expensive kinks worked out.”

Six men helped Johnson with the basic construction of the house. After they got it “under roof,” Johnson finished the house alone. Started in mid-May, the house was livable by mid-September. It has nine rooms and two-and-one-half baths in two-and-one-half levels. The master bedroom is a loft which overlooks the living room.

The home that Pam loves “like a child,” Johnson considers selling because of the financial benefits. “If we did this another four or five times, with the rising cost of housing, we’d soon be able to build and own a home free and clear.”

Lots of Hard Work Later...

Dr. David Holdridge continues the ‘never-ending process’ of building his home

“When do you think you’ll be finished,” I asked.

“Oh, about 1995.”

“You’re kidding.”

“I can see you’ve never built a house before,” quipped Dr. David Holdridge the owner-builder of a 1,000 square-foot home in Massanutten Village. According to Holdridge, building a home is a never-ending process—a process, it seems, that he really doesn’t want to end.

Since Holdridge conceived the idea of building his own home—two months before he began construction—he has drawn blueprints, carried cement block, supervised backhoe work and hung doors—among other things. They are tasks that Holdridge, director of the Television-Film Center at James Madison University, said have been challenging but not insurmountable. Some knowledge of construction garnered from work as a construction foreman at Antioch College, plus an ability to read blueprints, made Holdridge not completely unprepared for the “never-ending process.”

He had no plans of building his own home when, in early 1979, the rent on his apartment went up, and he decided it was time to have a home of his own. Holdridge contacted various real estate firms and was shown homes throughout the Valley. One agent asked if he’d ever thought of

Dr. Holdridge adjusts a 4 x 4 on the railing leading to his home’s back deck.
building in Massanutten.

"That's rich-man's country," Holdridge told the agent, but the two drove up to the resort community anyway.

Holdridge weighed the advantages and disadvantages of the Massanutten lot and decided to buy it. The area comes with a septic tank, well and hook-up for electricity and plumbing making it, according to Holdridge, a lot cheaper in the long run. Just under one-half an acre, the wooded lot is located in a cul-de-sac and the backyard gently slopes downward. No one can build behind him.

The total cost of the home was approximately $35,000 which includes the price of the lot. Holdridge estimates the house would sell for between $40 and $42,000 today.

Opting to purchase a pre-cut home from Continental Homes, Inc. in Boones Mill, Va. Holdridge spent $17,500 for the roofing, dry wall, paint, insulation, stove, refrigerator, kitchen cabinetry, bathroom fixtures and wall units of the three-bedroom house. He figures he made a good investment because the price included the foundation excavation and Douglas Fir siding on the home’s exterior.

Holdridge took the basic plan, reversed it to fit his lot and added two feet to extend the bathroom. He also designed and added a front and back deck. The back deck is built around a large oak tree Holdridge was reluctant to cut down. The deck has large, wide steps leading down to the yard. Holdridge said he built the steps wide so that guests could sit and talk yet still allow others to walk by.

Holdridge did the construction “in stages.” It took two weeks to dig the foundation and footers including a basement at the right-hand end of the house. It was during this stage that Holdridge met with his first, and probably worst, calamity. He fell into a footer trench and tore cartilage in his knee.

"Before I began work I vowed I wouldn't get mad at the house. It wrecks you," Holdridge said. "I didn't want to stop enjoying what I have."

Undaunted, he continued construction. He employed college students at $3 an hour plus $1 for gas and "beer, lunch, dinner—whatever they wanted, whenever they were here."

Holdridge, acting as his own contractor, employed subcontractors for various stages of the construction, such as hanging the dry wall, but kept his hand in the process at all times. He supervised the backhoe work during the excavation of the foundation and carried cement block as the foundation was laid.

"I think they (the contractors) were surprised to see this college professor carrying block, but I told them I'd fetch and tote all day long," Holdridge said.

He approached the construction as a contractor would, but, "I knew I was going to live there, so I made the changes as I wanted them."

He said his home is built like a "Sherman tank." There are double 2 x 4's in the walls and battens in the partitions. The house is also, “insulated like it's going out of style.”

Holdridge moved into his home four months after he began construction. Holdridge, divorced with a 21-year-old son, said that one advantage he had in building his own home is that he is single. Why? Well, when he moved in, the house had no heat and no hot water, only an electrical drop cord running from a construction outlet. Few women would care to live in such primitive surroundings, according to Holdridge. He had nails in every wall on which he hung the construction lamp he carried around at night on the drop-cord. There were no doors, no cabinets, only rough flooring, and the furniture was stacked up in corners. Every morning a cold shower woke him up, and at night, a toaster oven kept him warm.

"It was like camping out with a roof over my head, instead of a tent," Holdridge laughed.

When Holdridge envisioned what his finished home would look like, he saw a cabin-like exterior and a cozy, comfortable interior. He has achieved just that. There is still much work to be done—he has a different conception for the design of each room—but, Holdridge said he is happy with his owner-built home.

"It's been fun," he said. "I have more than my share of bumps and bruises, and I pulled a back muscle, but I love it up here. I'm creating and having a ball."

JULIE SUMMERS, of Frederick, Md., is a senior at JMU majoring in Communication Arts. She will be studying in London next semester and plans to work with magazines as a career.
Ramsey's Draft

Article by Tom Parks

The gentle breeze glided softly past my ears, whispering sadly of a time when man lived with nature. This was a time when a man got up in the morning, looked out his window upon the beauty of the land—the essence of his existence—instead of into his neighbor's bedroom.

My wife, Ruth, and I were standing before the entrance of the Ramsey's Draft Trail, surveying for the best possible crossing. We had just walked the three-quarters mile from U.S. 250, leaving our car at the picnic area, about 14 miles west of Churchville. A rushing, knee-deep, cold river, a rock bed and fallen trees greeted us at the trail's starting point.

Ramsey's Draft Trail is a six-and-one-half mile hiking trail located in Ramsey's Draft Proposed Wilderness Area. The trail is wide and clear, with the only obstacle being the Ramsey's Draft Wilderness River, which crosses the trail twelve times.

Ramsey's Draft Wilderness Area is a 6,700-acre mountainous tract set aside by the federal government for public recreation. The only permitted, or possible travel into the area is by horse or foot. Ramsey's Draft is ideal for hiking, backpacking and camping. There are no hunting restrictions, but a special trout license is required in addition to a regular fishing license.

We were not here to hunt or fish—just to walk the trails. Ruth started across the tree trunk, carrying our provisions for the excursion. I followed, carrying a camera and a walking stick. I immediately caught the stick on a tree branch, lost my balance, and fell into the water.

After struggling across the river and changing my socks, we started up the old Civilian Conservation Road, half hoping we would run into wood elves, or at least an Indian or
two. We had walked for only about ten minutes when we came to the river again. We waded right in. Another change of socks.

We strolled on in silence, the wilderness of the area disapproving of even the slightest vocalization. Another ten-or-fifteen-minute walk, and again the river crossed our path. Ruth took off her shoes, rolled up her pants, cautiously entered the river and picked her way over the slippery, rocky, river bed. I plunged in, exhilarating in the frigid wetness. Somehow it seemed out of place to try to keep dry. My only caution was not to slip or turn my ankle on the slippery rocks. In midstream, I stooped down and gulped in as much of the shivery water as possible—cold, clear, clean, chemical-free mountain water.

We sauntered on up the trail, glorying in the cool breeze, the smell of freshness, and the rumbling of the river. Birds chirped, and squirrels fuzzed noisily as we plodded up the trail. Beneath our feet, on the sun-splotted path, small creatures scurried out of the way of our clumsy, noisy footfalls. Civilization had faded into the past.

After hiking for three miles, we came to Jerry's Run Trail, which leads off to the left of Ramsey's Draft. Up to this point we had crossed the river seven times. By now we were tired and wet, but the solitude and stillness of the wilderness more than compensated for the luxury we had left behind—a Sunday afternoon of TV, overeating, traffic, telephones, and general laziness.

We started up Jerry's Run, a narrow, rocky path, slightly steeper than Ramsey's Draft, but more secluded and wilder. Trees and vegetation grow more closely to the sides of the trail.

As we plodded up the trail, we stopped to admire the toadstools and
mushrooms of varying sizes and color. One clump of toadstools in particular attracted our attention. There were five stools the shade of a cardinal, standing about three inches tall.

Another mile up the trail, we came to Sexton Shelter, a small cabin built by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, where we met a group of hikers from the Virginia Beach area. To them, the main attraction of Ramsey's Draft was the "aloneness" of the trails. They had passed only three other people that day. They were the first people we had seen all day. It is quite possible to hike the Ramsey's Draft trails all day and not see anyone, especially on a weekday. Even if you should run into hikers, it is rare that they would be willing to spend more than a few minutes talking. Most people who go into the wilderness want to be alone, and are inclined to pass by with just a "Hi, how are you doing?" Some may ask how the trail is farther down, but only those who have a short time to spend in the forest bother to ask how far it is to the highway.

Up here in Ramsey's Draft, time and distance are of no importance. You can walk as long as you want, rest when you want, eat when you want, and camp when and where you want. You aren't really going anywhere; you are just leaving time schedules and pressures behind. The only clock is the sun, and the only pace is your own.

Three-quarters of a mile from Sexton Shelter, the trail runs into the Shenandoah Trail. With two miles to hike before reaching U.S. 250, we were already beginning to get sore and stiff. It became harder and harder to get up after resting on a moss-covered log or rock. The climb, although not steep or rocky, wound around the Shenandoah Mountain, and fatigue had overtaken our out-of-shape bodies. A buzzard circled overhead, as if waiting for the alien bodies to drop. It was almost as if he knew we were out of our natural habitat, and could eventually provide him with a gourmet meal.

Around 4 p.m., we emerged from the forest, on to 250, at the top of the Shenandoah Mountain. We had been on the trail for seven miles and seven hours. Footsore and physically drained, we bummed a ride to the foot of the mountain, where we had left our car.

Two days later, I was back on the trail, this time following Ramsey's Draft Trail all the way to the Natural Area, another mile-and-a-half from Jerry's Run. The remaining one-and-a-half miles of the Draft Trail are much the same as the first three miles, with the exception of a thicker canopy of trees.

You have to cross the river five
times before coming to the natural area. The natural area is free of man's interference. There has never been any cutting of the trees, not even to clear the trail. The forest is denser, the rock path is steeper, and the trail is just wide enough for one person. The trail begins at about a forty-degree climb, and continues for two miles, where it comes out at Hardscrabble Knob.

The virgin stand of hemlocks line the trail, like giants guarding their home. These hemlocks tower about 80 feet, and it would take two men to wrap their arms around their trunks. Their age is unknown, according to forest rangers.

Ramsey's Draft was acquired in 1913 as a national forest. In 1935, 1,794 acres in the headwater area were classified as the Natural Area, to be used exclusively for scientific and educational purposes. In 1975, 6,700 acres, including the Natural Area, were designated for study to determine suitability for a wilderness area.

There are presently four hiking trails in Ramsey's Draft. Ramsey's Draft Trail (the old CCC road) begins at the foot of Shenandoah Mountain and runs for six and a half miles, coming out at Hardscrabble Knob. Jerry's Run begins two miles up the Ramsey's Draft Trail, and continues for two miles, where it meets the Shenandoah Trail. The Shenandoah Mountain Trail contains 7.1 miles of hiking in the Draft area, although it runs the length of the Shenandoah Mountains. Dividing Ridge is a 4.8 mile hike. An additional trail, The Bald Ridge Trail, soon to be completed by the end of 1979, will provide another 6.5 miles of hiking.

As in any wilderness area, anyone going into Ramsey's Draft should be aware of the environment. The trails are fairly easy, making it a good area for beginning hikers, but boots and dry clothing changes are advisable. For summer hiking, tennis shoes and shorts are preferable for the river crossings. However, good hiking boots are needed in the Natural Area.

Should you want to do some winter hiking, at least knee-high waterproof boots will be needed. Much of the area is inaccessible after heavy rains, which swell the river.

Should anyone wish to escape the pressure of modern society, the wilderness of Ramsey's Draft can envelop you, and it's only a 45-minute drive up U.S. 250 west of Staunton.

If you would like more information on Ramsey's Draft, contact the Deerfield Ranger Station, 2304 West Beverly Street, Staunton, Virginia.

TOM PARKS, of Verona, Va., is a senior at JMU and majoring in Communication Arts. He hopes to pursue a career in communication.
and all the teaching aren't going to give it to you."

Arnold is successful because in his shows, he doesn't try to be someone he's not. "Don't pretend because, although your listeners can't see you, the vibes go out and they can read phoniness."

While moderating the Candid Comments show, Arnold's reactions are also important because he must be prepared for anything when listeners call. "Candid Comments is where you are fooling with the unknown," Arnold says, grinning.

I sat in on a Candid Comments show one day and was amazed at the fast pace required for Arnold's job. It was obvious he enjoyed the spontaneity of the show. In his cubicle, Arnold resembled a pilot in front of his panel. He was surrounded by confusing machinery and a ceiling-high rack of cassette tapes. In a matter of seconds, Arnold answered the phone, gripped it between his shoulder and ear, popped in a cassette for the next commercial, glanced at the clock and kept his finger over the "off-the-air" button. He mouthed his callers' words to himself and usually responded with more than a "goodbye" or "thank you."

"You can train a monkey to sit there and say hello, goodbye and thank you, and I'm not a monkey, so I give my opinions," Arnold says, as we discuss the show during our luncheon interview.

'Ability isn't something you can acquire'

In fact, Arnold has been taken to task by management several times for giving his own opinions too much, he says. Arnold justifies his actions because he believes his opinions are necessary to spark some degree of controversy.

"In this area especially, you have to be careful what you say—not that I want to be a fence-strapper, I don't, but if I think there are going to be repercussions, I don't say anything."

The fast pace of Candid Comments is similar to the pace Arnold had as a newsguy several years ago. "I used to be a hell of a newsguy, nothing stopped me. It wasn't because I was hard-nosed, but because I had an insatiable appetite to find out." But Arnold got away from news for awhile and didn't get back into it because "it got to the point where, to find out, you sometimes weren't a nice guy."

He pauses, lights another Winston cigarette, holds it between bent fingers, and says; "But you know, if this is what life is all about, it's been a good one."

As we walk out of the Sheraton dining room, a man passes by and says hello to Arnold. Arnold responds and, when he is out of earshot, turns to me and asks, "Who was that?"

He pauses, lights another Winston cigarette, holds it between bent fingers, and says; "But you know, if this is what life is all about, it's been a good one."

As we walk out of the Sheraton dining room, a man passes by and says hello to Arnold. Arnold responds and, when he is out of earshot, turns to me and asks, "Who was that?"

After a thoughtful pause, Arnold's insatiable appetite to find out, his honesty and spontaneity, prompt him to button his sports jacket and politely excuse himself. He turns back towards the dining room to find out how he knew the man.

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