

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

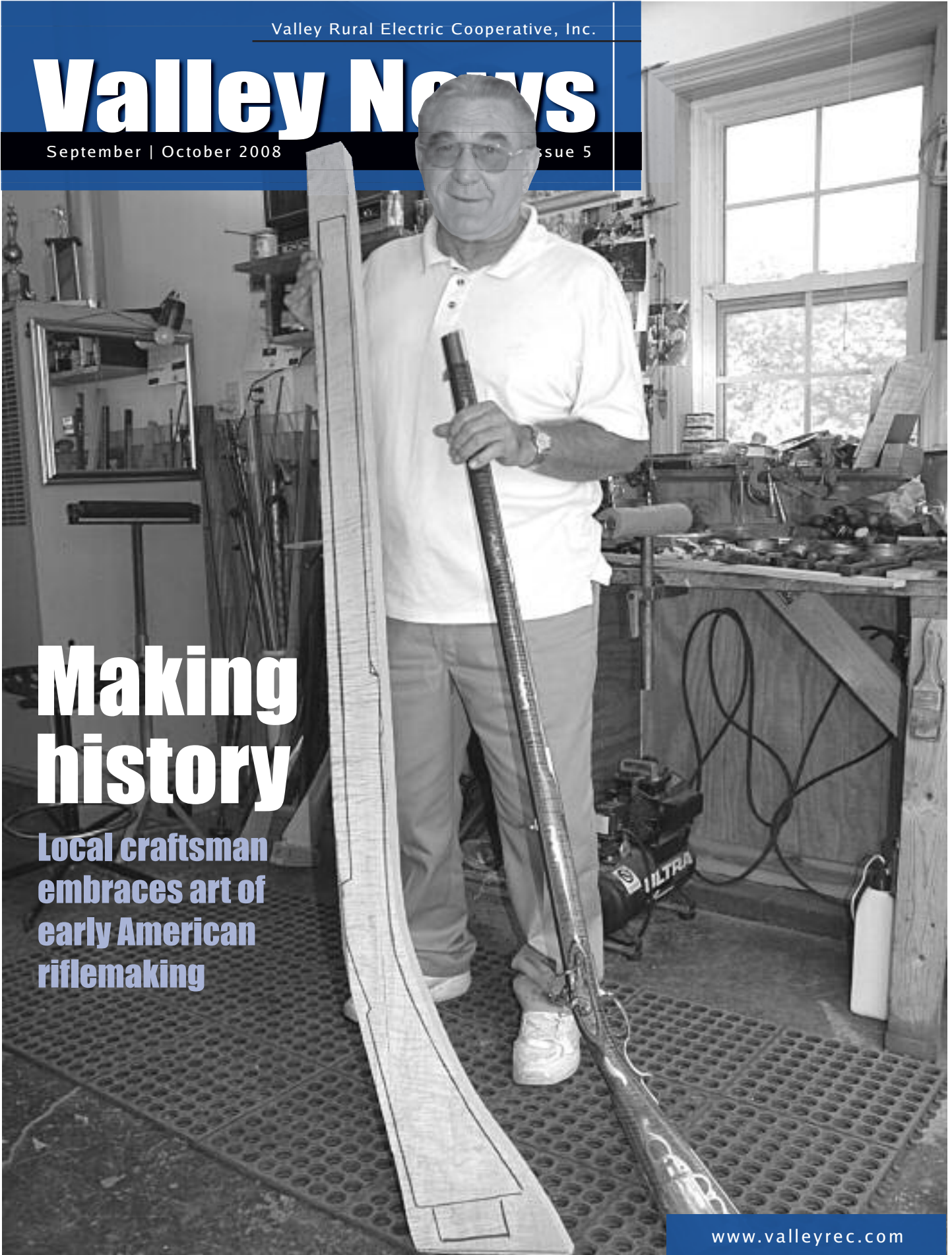
Valley News

September | October 2008

Issue 5

Making history

Local craftsman embraces art of early American riflemaking



www.valleyrec.com

AMR will benefit all of us

EARLY NEXT YEAR, we will start planning to convert the cooperative's standard mechanical electric meters to an electronic automated meter reading (AMR) system. Over the next several years, we want to make our meters capable of reading, recording and transmitting energy use on an hourly basis.

Using technologically advanced components, the AMR system will include new "smart" meters, which have modules inside that accumulate and store data in their memory registers. At a specified time, this information will be transmitted to our computer systems, then used in our billing processes.

How does AMR work? Basically, all of our substations will be linked to our office with voice-grade communication lines. From each substation, data will go to and from the meters over our power lines. A true two-way system, AMR will allow us to send requests to specific meters and get responses back immediately. Essentially, it is a network with each meter acting as its own tiny computer.

The investment in AMR will benefit the co-op in a variety of ways. For example, the meters will transmit data to us on a daily basis, providing unsurpassed accuracy and eliminating the chance of human error. And in the event of an outage, the AMR system will automatically alert us when power is restored, so we won't have to contact consumers to verify that information.

Also, the amount of data we will have available to us will increase exponentially. Right now, all we get is a monthly reading. If you have questions about your consumption, we can't pinpoint exactly what was used on which days. With AMR, we will be able to help you analyze your consumption with a complete record of your use by the hour. For instance, a spike in energy use at odd hours may point to a failing well pump that needs attention or a system running in your home when you don't need it or want it to.

AMR will also allow us to determine your "base load." That's the power your home uses when everyone is asleep and all non-essential appliances and equipment are turned off. With these details, you can



Edward A. Dezich
President & Chief Executive Officer

(Automated) meters will transmit data to us on a daily basis, providing unsurpassed accuracy and eliminating the chance of human error.

begin to look at smart ways to conserve energy.

In addition, the new AMR system will afford you conveniences not available with standard metering solutions. Moving out and need a final reading? We can query your meter without having to send a person to the property. Have a seasonal home and want to turn the power off for winter? We will be able to connect and disconnect your power remotely.

AMR will help increase our efficiencies and give us more complete information when it comes to your electric consumption. It's just another way we are working to provide you with the highest quality service at the lowest possible price.

Cooperatively yours,

Edward A. Dezich
President & CEO

Valley News

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Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

On the cover ...



Valley Rural Electric member Tom Romanchok of Duncansville has been building early American muzzleloaders for about 45 years. For more information on his delicate craft, turn to Pages 4-5.

Your power quality questions answered

What does “power quality” mean?

Power quality refers to electric voltage consistency. Voltage outside the proper range can damage electrical equipment.

Prior to the electronics age, power was used to operate mostly motors and lights. Today, homes and businesses are filled with sophisticated and highly sensitive equipment, such as computers, televisions, stereos, appliances and other devices containing electronic microchips. These devices can be extremely vulnerable to power fluctuations.

What is a power surge?

Spikes and/or surges are sudden increases in voltage that last less than 1/60th of a second. Large spikes can burn or melt electronic components, causing instant failure. Repeated “hits” from small spikes gradually erode components and can shorten their useful lives. Most spikes start inside your home or business and are caused when, for example, the compressor in your refrigerator kicks on or your copy machine or laser printer is turned on and off. A smaller percentage of spikes originate outside your residence, and may be caused by lightning strikes, short circuits in electric lines, or large equipment in businesses turning off and on. While these spikes are less frequent, they tend to be more serious. A lightning strike to a telephone line, cable TV system or satellite dish also carries a voltage spike. Devices connected to more than one wire, such as cordless telephones, answering machines, computer modems and TVs, are especially susceptible to damage from spikes.

What about low voltage?

Low voltage is the most common power quality problem. A decrease in voltage affects electric motors by not giving them the power they need to operate. This dip in voltage usually lasts less than a second. Voltage drops that last longer than one second are called brownouts. When power returns, spikes often occur, as equipment in the system springs back into action. Low voltage situations can cause damage to equipment

because motors may stay in their “start” modes, running on their windings and burning out either immediately or over time.

How is a service interruption or power outage different?

A power interruption or outage is a total loss of power, which may last less than a second or up to several hours. You may not notice a split second interruption, but your computer might restart or your digital clock may start flashing.

Is Valley Rural Electric responsible if my equipment is damaged due to a power fluctuation?

It depends on the circumstances. Power outages or interruptions are often caused by factors that are out of the co-op's control. Squirrels and birds cause many problems as do vehicle accidents involving power poles. Lightning and storms (ice, wind and snow) are also culprits. As a general rule of thumb, some claims are valid if it can be determined that Valley REC personnel were negligent in some way. (Did we do something we shouldn't have done or not do something we should have done?) Because damage can come from within the home as well as outside, and because many times it is impossible to tell exactly what caused the damage, it is the consumer's responsibility to protect his or her equipment with properly rated surge protection devices.

How can I protect my equipment?

Proper grounding of the electrical system is essential. If your home or business doesn't have grounded, three-pronged outlets, the first step is to install them. It's best to put sensitive equipment on its own dedicated circuit.

Fuses and circuit breakers protect building circuits from overheating and causing fires. However, damaging spikes and surges occur so quickly that they pass through circuit breakers. To catch spikes and surges before they damage your equipment, you need surge suppressors.



PROTECT YOUR POSSESSIONS: Surge protection is the best way to safeguard sensitive electronic equipment from damage due to power fluctuations.

Surge suppressors react within one-billionth of a second (called a nanosecond) to divert excess voltage to the building's electrical ground. Most electronic equipment today needs the protection of plug-in surge suppressors. They are the simplest, least expensive and most effective way to prevent problems with electronic appliances. Surge suppressors are installed between the appliance and the wall outlet. Their job is to reduce the size of voltage surges to a safe level. Surge suppressors will not stop digital clocks from blinking after a power interruption. Nor will they prevent loss of data from a computer system due to an interruption or surge. They do, however, protect the equipment from damage in most cases.

Uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) provide a battery back-up for computers. UPS devices ensure power quality during fluctuations, protecting both data and hardware. Most UPSs provide 10-16 minutes of back-up time, allowing you to close files and exit programs. They offer surge suppression as well.

Many retail and hardware stores sell surge suppressors. The co-op furnishes surge protectors and UPSs (at cost) to members. UPSs can also be purchased at computer equipment stores. Be sure to read the fine print and select one that is rated to protect the equipment you own. If you have questions, call the co-op's member services department at 814/643-2650 or 800/432-0680.



Back to basics

FIRED UP: Tom Romanchock fires one of his hand-made muzzleloaders. He frequently hunts and shoots competitively using the pieces.

Art meets accuracy with Romanchock's rifles

BY SUSAN R. PENNING
*Communications Specialist
 Member Services Department*

Each day around 6 a.m., Tom Romanchock perches himself atop a stool in his well-equipped tool shop near Duncansville, Blair County, and begins making something magnificent out of ... well ... nearly nothing.

For about 45 years, the Valley Rural Electric member has been sawing, drilling, whittling, fitting and engraving wood and metal scraps into intricately designed and fully functional early American muzzleloader rifles.

His love affair with the old-time guns began when he was about 14.

"I was working at a junkyard," he recalls. "One day I discovered the butt sections of two muzzleloaders inside one of the old cars. I was fascinated by the decorations and craftsmanship."

Tom acquired the parts he needed to make the guns whole again and discov-



HANDLE WITH CARE: After the gun's stock is carved, a hand-crank drill bores a ramrod shaft the entire length of the barrel.

ered a hobby in the process.

After high school, he frequented gun shows, picking up "junk", restoring guns and selling them for money. He soon learned to fabricate many of the components himself, using whatever materials he had lying around, including car springs and leftover pieces of metal.

"Those first (guns) were a little rough," Tom admits, "but I learned from my mistakes."

FORM MEETS FUNCTION

Tom begins each masterpiece by laying out a pattern on a chunk of curly maple, then cutting it out on a band saw. He routs the wood until the inlet for the gun's steel barrel is at the correct depth. He then works on the ramrod channel. Using a hand-crank drill, he bores through the wood, creating a shaft that runs the entire length of the barrel.

"This is a critical and touchy operation," Tom explains. "It's easy to split the



LINEUP: For about 45 years, Tom has been crafting rifles. So far, he's made more than 70, many of which he's sold. Each gun is one of a kind, with unique carvings and decorative inlays. Prices range from a couple hundred to a couple thousand dollars apiece.



ON THE MARK: Tom stands behind the accuracy of his rifles. He shot the fox target at 25 yards and the bear at 50 yards.

wood and ruin your stock."

After the stock and barrel are assembled, he begins installing the hardware, also known as furniture. He often builds his own lock sets and hand engraves details on the decorative plates using primitive tools. Tom even makes his own wedge nails to secure the inlays.

"I get personal satisfaction out of recycling parts and finding ways to use what I already have. That's what our rural ancestors did when they made these guns," he points out.

A finished Romanchock rifle will bear Tom's name on the top flat of the barrel. Traditionally, that's where the maker is identified.

"This is my mark in the sands of time," he muses.

Tom can build a basic shooter in about 3-4 weeks. Over the years, he has finished about 70 rifles, many of which he has sold. His pieces range in price from a couple hundred to a couple thousand dollars.

DECORATIVE YET DEADLY

All of the muzzleloaders Tom makes are working weapons.

An avid hunter, he enjoys taking his pieces into the woods and claims they're lighter and easier to tote around than other muskets.

"I get personal satisfaction out of recycling parts and finding ways to use what I already have. That's what our rural ancestors did when they made these guns."

"I've been hunting game with my guns even before Pennsylvania opened a season strictly for the sport," he notes.

Tom says hunting with the primitive rifles is exhilarating and a true challenge.

"With a muzzleloader, you only get one good shot. You've got to get it right."

And get it right he does. He uses his guns in local shooting competitions and

can attest to their accuracy.

Aside from the functionality and fun of shooting them, Tom enjoys making muzzleloaders because he shares a deep appreciation for early American artwork and loves shaping wood and metal.

"I come from a long line of craftsmen and I'm very proud of that," he says.

"They taught me to enjoy working with my hands. And after all this time, I'm still not tired of it."

BELOW: Using crude tools, Tom hand carves details on an inlay. Many of the engravings are symbolic, representing attributes like faith, love or peace.



THE

Trading Post

Classified Advertising



Co-op members may submit ads by phone at 800/432-0680; by fax at 814/643-1678; via e-mail at valleynewsads@valleyrec.com; or by mail at Valley REC, PO Box 477, Huntingdon, PA 16652-0477. There is no charge for this service. If consumers wish to continue running particular ads, they are required to resubmit the information on a bimonthly basis. The deadline for submission is the 25th day of the month prior to the issue months. Submissions are viewable on the co-op's Web site at www.valleyrec.com. Items published are printed at the request of our members. The co-op does not endorse, recommend or assume any responsibility for the products or services advertised.

Real Estate

Williamsburg, Blair Co. 11-acre farmette, private bridge, 200 yds. of Clover Creek frontage, wild trout stream, ranch home, outbuildings, 9 miles from Raystown Lake, \$425,000. Call owner, Glen. 814/832-3134.

Juniata Co. 55' x 400' double-story chicken house, includes a double-story feeding building and equipment on 12 acres of ground. Was perked for a home, will finance, \$325,000. 717/734-3275 or 994-5683.

Springfield Twp., Huntingdon Co. 1.8-acre building lot; new, working sand mound; deep well, exc. water; underground utilities; insulated 12' x 24' shed w/ elec.; 24' camper trailer, nice, clean, road ready; riding mower in good cond., \$75,000. 610/913-7372.

House for sale - 2 BR, 1 bath, laundry, kitchen, LR, attic, 1/2 basement & deck, all newly renovated except attic. Comes w/ 1.1 acres & a little animal pen in backyard, beautiful view of mtns. Contact Jessica or Bradley at 717/573-2779 after 3 p.m. during week or 658-3587 weekends.

Bedford County - 1.9 acres, cedar A-frame home, 3,000 sq. ft., large deck, wooded private lot, close to Shy Beaver & Weavers Falls boat launches & state game lands. For more information, call Beth. 814/934-1103.

Log home, garage & barn on 10.24 acres w/ fenced-in pasture & pond. Juniata Valley School District, Alexandria location. Serious inquiries only, please. 814/643-0809.

Great 4-BR, 2-story house near Greenwood Furnace State Park near Huntingdon & State College. Two full baths, central air, oil heat w/ wood stove back-up, 6-person hot tub, fairly remote, balcony & deck overlook east branch of Stone Creek & beautiful view of mtns. 1.75 acres, perfect for a family or multiple-owner hunting camp. Call Lori at 814/364-1024.

Sinking Valley - Gorgeous large home built 1940 w/ one attached & one detached guest cottage, 5 rooms each plus bath & 1-1/2-room apartment over garage. Main house has 3 BR, 1 bath, kitchen, balcony & heated surrounding porch. DR has wood burner & LR has fieldstone fireplace. Located at the foot of Brush Mtn. w/ a spring through property. Good rental property presently occupied. Altoona School District. 10 acres total, 7+ are wooded. Call Tom Hite for details. 508/883-7269.

Land for sale - 1.5 acres at 2955 Carson Valley Rd., Duncansville. Well water/pump, septic, cable, electric, phone, Hollidaysburg schools. Ready for single/doublewide or built home, \$40,000. 814/695-6691.

1-acre lot (business or commercial), Rt. 22, Alexandria - Underground utilities, 2 wells, sewage tank & sand mound permit. Also avail.: 2-room, 12' by 24' office bldg. w/ occupancy permit. 814/669-9592 or 669-4355.

Wanted

Winter maintenance on property. Plowing, shoveling, etc. Water Street area. 814/669-9370.

Straw & hay baling. 814/259-3634.

Highest prices paid for all kinds of American coins, gold & silver items. Call Steve or Ellen. 814/643-1890.

Wire wheel cover w/ center cap for 1985 Cadillac Coupe DeVille. 717/899-6590.

One acre of ground in the Spruce Creek, Alexandria, Petersburg or Tyrone area. Suitable for a doublewide. 814/312-8911.

Brass letters spelling Lucy. 814/447-3956 after 10 a.m.

Autos/Trucks

1994 Ford F-150 XLT, 4x4 ext. cab, 5-speed, cruise, alloy wheels, AC, cap & bed liner, 68,000 orig. miles. Must sell, make offer. 814/793-3303.

1967 Camaro RS Clone, lemon ice yellow w/ black rally stripes. Custom seamless body, completely restored from the frame up, black leather custom interior. 350 bored 30 over. Power steering & brakes, disc brakes on front, less than 3,000 miles on total restoration. One of a kind show winner w/ too many extras to list. Over \$35,000 in parts w/out labor costs, exc. cond., \$30,000 firm. 717/485-9142.

'92 Cadillac DeVille, silver, 4-door, power windows & locks, CD & XM radio, new tires, inspected until 03/09, \$4,000 OBO. 814/944-3931.

1973 Dodge pickup, runs great, new bed, needs some body work. Ideal for farm truck, \$600. 814/312-8911.

Reese car tow bar, \$300. 814/312-8911.

Bed liner for short bed Ford Ranger, used 1 month, \$50. 814/667-3519.

Service

Sipes Fence LLC - All types of agricultural fence installed. Post driving avail. Call for free est. Scot Sipes. 717/491-7539 or 485-3221.

Vintage Art Glass - A magical storefront complete w/ indoor pond. Shop for all your gift needs. Specializing in custom stained glass (any size) & builder of unique ponds & water features. Corner of 5th & Washington St., Huntingdon. 814/643-0636.

Yard work wanted. 814/259-3634.

Antique clock repair & restoration. Call Richard Port. 814/643-1582.

Darrin Fillman, Wildlife Management Specialist - We can handle all of your nuisance wildlife concerns. We remove, bats, skunks, groundhogs, squirrels, birds, snakes, raccoons, flying squirrels. If it's a problem, we can solve it. Licensed and insured. 717/436-9391.

Peters Excavating - Site preparation & clearing, foundations, septic systems, roads, ponds, limestone & shale. Over 35 years experience. 814/667-2240.

Hammaker's Taxidermy - Licensed taxidermist Corey Hammaker. Prompt turnaround time, quality work. Located at Old Airport Road, Martinsburg. 814/793-2818.

Attention scrapbooking enthusiasts - I am offering classes & workshops in the Needmore/Warriorsburg area. My Crop-toberfest is a super-mega crop in September that you won't want to miss. Also coming soon: Scrapbooking retreats in Breezewood &/or Berkeley area. New technique helps you get it done quickly. Call for more info. Both beginner & advanced classes avail. 717/573-2770.

Healthy Living Technology Co. Visit us online at www.ecoquestintl.com/baileyscamp.

Energy costs on your mind? Please go to this Web site now to get more information: www.ecotrustenergy.com/baileyscamp.

TLC Power Wash - Steam pressure washing. Home truck equipment, commercial, agricultural, etc. 814/643-4367, 643-2975 or 644-1173.

Love Shine Rentals - Offering the lowest prices on tents, canopies, tables & chairs (5 styles to choose from), linens, wedding supplies & much more. For a complete list of items & color photos, call 717/734-3335 or visit www.loveshinerentals.com. Or e-mail us at loveshine@pa.net. We make renting affordable!

Warm & cozy in the winter ... cool & comfortable in the summer. My Fujitsu ductless heat pumps will heat your home 6-8 times cheaper than fuel oil & 5 times cheaper than any other kind of electric heat. These units will provide heat w/ no back-up, even when the outside temp. is 0 degrees. You can also cool your home 4 times cheaper than window units or standard central A/C. No ductwork? No problem! You don't have to heat your home anymore w/ expensive Middle Eastern oil. Heat your home w/ American electricity & save thousands of dollars every year compared to oil. Call Myers Heating & Cooling anytime at 814/658-2273 or check out noDUCTwork.com for details.

ES Ministries Thrift Shop is located in the Mooresville United Methodist Church, 5468 Charter Oak Road, Mooresville. Open Thursday & Friday 9 a.m.-6 p.m. & Saturday 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Selling clothing, household goods & toys.

Moore Hair - Where looking good is still affordable. 814/667-2221 for appt.

Appliances

Kenmore refrigerator, white, 16 cu. ft., frost free, \$120. 3 Sanyo stereo speakers for free. Shade Gap area. 814/259-3339.

Recreational

2003 Honda VTX 1800R, 5,700 miles, one owner, garage kept, new tires, new inspection, all synthetic oils. Extras include luggage rack, back rest saddlebags, windshield, driving light, crash bars, highway pets & turned exhausts, \$7,200 OBO. 814/330-2813 or 944-7384.

'79 Suzuki RM-50, completely rebuilt engine & trans. (5 speed manual), shop manual & extra parts, \$650. 814/643-2042.

Boat trailer, 1985 Load-Rite, galv., roller, single axle, 20-22', clear title, extras, good cond., \$575. 814/669-4413.

Climer Evinrude Johnson outboard shop manual, 48-235 hp, 1973-1990 models. Super Bait tank, 20-gallon. 814/658-2235.

Classified Ads

Vacation Rentals

N. Myrtle Beach, S.C. - 2 BR, 2.5 bath villa, sleeps 6. End unit in quiet neighborhood, swimming pool, tennis court, 2 min. to beach. Snow birds welcome. Rent by week or month. For rates, call 717/423-5732.

Blue Tree Resort, Kissimmee, FL - Nov. 23-29 (Thanksgiving holiday), \$500 for week, villa sleeps 8-10, 10 min. from all main Orlando attractions. Swimming pool, tennis court, game room, washer/dryer, 2 BR, full kitchen, bath. 202/726-5432.

Livestock/Pets

National Alpaca Farm Day Sept. 27 & 28 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. each day. Come visit w/ our huggable investment; be sure to bring your camera. Open House at Terrace Mtn. Alpacas will be Nov. 1 & 2 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. each day. 814/643-2854 or visit www.terracemountainalpacas.com for more info.

Tools/Equipment

Ford farm tractor 861 Power Master, very good cond. very low hours, \$5,000 firm. 814/832-9191.

40" circular saw blade, \$65. 3-pt. hitch single-bottom plow, ideal for compact tractor, \$125. 3-pt. hitch 1-row cultivator, ideal for compact tractor, \$125. 814/448-9985.

Backhoe, 1976 Case 580 BCK, diesel, shuttle drive, 7,500 easy hours, no title, no welds, runs great, well serviced. Major drivetrain rebuild at 7,200 hours by Hines Equipment at Tipton, \$15,000 firm. 814/238-1196.

12 hp Cub Cadet 127, 48" mower deck, 36" dozer blade, wheel weights, rear sleeve hitch, engine runs good, \$500. 814/643-2042.

2 reel-type push mowers, \$20 each. 2 Kohler motors, 10 hp & 7 hp, horizontal shaft, \$20 each. 814/447-3956 after 10 a.m.

Thor 7" electric sander/polisher, \$15. Foley-Belsaw 12" cast iron planer/molder, 5 hp Baldor motor, extra sharp blades & molding cutters, \$400. Craftsman 10" 3-hp compound miter saw, \$40. Craftsman 10" table saw on stand w/ casters, \$100. 814/667-3519.

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Yardman garden tractor, 20 hp, 46" cut w/ 32" lawn sweeper, like new. Ryobi gas trimmer included, \$1,000 for all. 814/542-8703.

Miscellaneous

High Bay Cooper garage light fixtures, 150 watts, adjustable shrouds, multi-voltage hookup, for ceilings 10' & higher, 8 left, \$75 each. 814/643-2042.

Wood & coal-burning stove, \$250 OBO. 814/448-3363.

Pellet stove, corner installation, fireproof pad, all chimney pipe included, like new - used one season. 814/251-4408.

Spring for the Lord children's Christian books, signed by author, \$15 each. 814/695-7883.

Hand-made toy boxes for sale. 15" high x 15" deep x 30" wide, \$39. 814/658-3557.

Deluxe winter pool cover for 24' round above-ground pool, \$35. 814/695-1042.

Old comic books (Superman, Batman, Donald Duck, Uncle Scrooge & others). National Geographic magazines, Ideals magazines. Griswold skillet No. 6. Old photographs. 814/542-9838.

2 electric sewing machines, 1 portable, good cond. 814/447-3735.

Antique pump organ. During WWII, Estey made a small organ that would fold up for chaplains. After the war, they put the organ in a small cabinet. Exc. cond., \$100. 431 Blue Knob Rd. 814/239-5545.

Baby crib, mattress & bumper pad, 3 yrs. old, used little, \$100. Cassville area. 717/887-0500.

Home Interiors products & fund raisers. 814/944-7384. Lots of varied items.

Bassett crib & mattress pad, exc. cond., \$150. 814/669-3446.

Coal furnace blower for sale, like new, never used, \$50. 814/643-0987.

Poplar gun cabinet, cherry stained, wildlife back, 2 drawers, 3 side shelves, holds 9 guns. Size is 49" long by 14-1/2" wide by 72" high, exc. cond. 717/485-3281.

Savage 99E .308 caliber, very good cond. 717/987-3826.

Coffee table (glass insert), dough tray, end table, bench w/ storage. 814/627-1496.

2 very old brass & porcelain table lamps. 5'x7' air mattress, 8" thick. 814/658-2235.

Red Devil portable gas grill, great for picnics or camping, \$35. 814/312-8911.

2 steel wheels off corn planter, \$30 each. 814/447-3956.

Collection of 10 dolls, \$100 for all. 814/447-3956 after 10 a.m.

Reddy Heater, 50,000 Btu garage torpedo heater (kerosene or fuel oil), \$60. Patio dining set, glass-top table & 4 chairs w/ cushions, light blue aluminum, \$50. Solid cherry nightstand, exc. cond., \$40. Kenmore sewing machine in walnut cabinet, \$75. 814/667-3519.

1893 Patriotic Order Sons of America (P.O.S. of A.) 6th anniversary bulletin. 1897 State Camp P.O.S. of A. 1899 P.O.S. of A. secretary directory. 1900 & 1901 P.O.S. of A. campaign cards. 1902 P.O.S. of A reunion bulletin. 1903 calendar of E.A. Armstrong Manufacturing Co., Chicago. 1929 8th session ARAA pin. 1901, 1903, 1904 prayer meeting topics for full yr. booklets. 1911 prayer meeting topics for April, May, June booklet. Early & late 1800s photos. 814/542-2422.