

Points East

By: Ike Adams

It must have been August or even earlier than that last summer when all the local cattle farmers sold off their herds and let their pastures hereabouts go dormant.

I don't keep up with the going price of hamburger on the hoof but it doesn't take a genius to figure out when the prices are favorable for selling and when they are favorable for stocking up. And for the last several months, the fields around me have been barren of four legged feeders.

Farmers have half-heartedly mowed down grass fields and used commercial equipment to turn them into huge round bales of hay when the seed pods ripened and the blades began to turn to gold. Grass that would ordinarily have been chopped off at the top of the roots by hungry cattle has been silently harvested and stacked along the edges of huge fields in anticipation of better times to come. Grass that isn't worth a nickel, unless it leaves the farm walking on four healthy hooves.

So imagine my surprise when I came home from work last Friday and found my little homestead surrounded by a couple of every sort and color. A few pure Angus, Charolais, Limousine and White faced Herefords. Maybe a hundred crossbreeds between the pure stock but extremely healthy, herds worth having and easily the best looking stock, overall that I've seen in ages.

The first thought that crossed my mind was that I should get in touch

with John Henderson and/or Joe Brown who own the pastures around my house and see if I couldn't pick out a prime steer that I might finish off with a couple or three hundred pounds of sweet old, corn, barley and molasses feed before I sent him to the slaughter house if they would let me pen him up in the barn where I could feed and water him properly before he became steak and burger.

And then I noticed the calves. At first glance you don't see the calves but when you walk up to the fence and all the big cattle-back off because they have learned, with just cause, to distrust humans, there are a dozen or more curious calves that have not yet been proscribed and made to stay in-line by having electric shockers poked into their privates.

The calves are singularly red or black or tawny-colored all over. Occasionally they have mixed colors because Mom was Hereford and Dad was Angus, etc. Unlike their mam-

mas who weigh upwards of 800 pounds, who moo-coo-coo and paw the ground in warning, the calves, just a few days or weeks old will walk right up to you and explore the beginnings of a relationship. Molasses, of which I have several quarts because I support the local economy, dropped off one's finger, will make fast friends of a calf faster than anything I know.

Tonight, after work I drove up the parking lane to my home and seven

calves came tearing from their respective herds. I had calves on three sides of my two-acre black cat muzzled to the fence. The fourth side fronts the road. I didn't have any molasses but I made a point of scratching each on the head and that seemed to be enough. My buddies. I wish I had a dog so faithful.

When I was growing up it was not unusual to hear names to pigs and calves and even chickens that were new destined for slaughter. Somehow it was possible to put the personal relationship behind you it

came time to turn livestock into table fare.

But I've forgotten how we did that. Tonight I let a little black cat rub its head against my hand as though it were a kitten and I wanted to badly to name him Tom, or Harry or whatever and I can't even stand the thought of that little guy growing into a steer and winding up on the menu counter within a year.

Becoming a vegetarian suddenly has appeal. We get this way, I suppose, when we lose touch with reality.

Sweet and Sour

By Zi Graves

Headline News II

The headline of today's *Herald-Leader* was, "PATTON TO SEEK FEDERAL AID." I do have a sense of humor and this announcement struck my funny bone, and brought back memories of my youth when an exclamation of "Oh, no," was followed by a meaningless phrase of "and the band played 'who'd a thunk it,'" when something unusual happened or was announced. This headline of Governor Patton asking for federal aid brought back the image of a young man and poverty.

So, as I said, be sure you read what follows the bold print headlines. We all know, or think we know, Governor Patton doesn't need personal federal aid that is unless he had invested his retirement wealth in "Enron," as a common employee, not a board member or auditor. The aid he was requesting was federal help for road repair, building new cities and helping with disaster from natural causes.

In fact, I like many other readers, never read the whole thing. These requests for help from the federal government to fund programs politicians are using to feather their own nests is old stuff and not worthy of wasting time on. I still think Governor Patton should either join the McConnell clique or stop circumventing him as a co-sponsor and let the law get to get things done behind the backs of his constituents. They have become two of a kind and neither need help in hoodwinking their constituents when it comes time to wheedle the government out of a few million dollars to further their popularity and panderings by building

roads where they aren't needed, instead of repairing those that do need fixing. Oh, well, maybe the aid our governor asked for will help out after all. I am sure one of the requests, the one to widen the road at Renfro Valley to attract more tourists and a walkway to make it safer for them to get just that. The next problem, or way to attract tourists, is: what is there to do once they get here? Eat? If that is the only way to kill a few hours after experiencing the thrill of finally seeing what Renfro Valley looks like, a boy, and once a very pretty valley at the foothills of the Appalachians, that is now busy with curious folks from every state and country in the world trying for eats, and scents, then that is the place to be.

The beautiful peaceful valley John Lay made famous when he introduced the song, "I was born in Renfro Valley," on the radio show, and was conducting in Chicago, Illinois. I think it was in 1933, has been transformed from the tranquility of a country boy singing about his home and birthright of peace in the valley to one of tourism, blaring horns, gas fumes, fast food odors and human secrets of too much or too little perfume. The mountains seem to have receded as development centers and trailer parks have taken their place.

Fishbowl and grazing cattle have been pushed to the background. Even the casual friendliness of clerks in department stores has vanished along with the stores that met all the needs of the housewife, from groceries to hardware and cleaning equipment. The business of today's lifestyles and necessity to keep up with the wants of a family instead of the needs has changed many things including the peace and quiet of times still like Renfro Valley where time stood still.

There are things to do in and around Rockcastle County if only those born to be leaders would do off their wits and take the role of doing instead of talking about. "It could have been."

I attended a council meeting several years ago when tourists was a possibility to look into. So I suggested a mini bus or large touring car might be handy to escort tourists around the county to see the sights many of our own citizens don't know about or recognized as places where signs could identify their historical significance. How many know that two historically important roads, "the Booneway and the Dixie" met and became one, in Mt. Vernon some-

where close to where the red light is now?

At a community meeting our club sponsored several years ago at the County Courthouse in Mt. Vernon, Mr. Bill Best, history and sociology teacher at Berea College, was invited and accepted, to be the speaker. His knowledge of the history of Rockcastle County surprised many of us. One of them being the historical importance of these two highways becoming one in our county seat, Mt. Vernon. Another was when Mr. Best explained how the actions of the leaders and decision makers at that time determined how the area progressed or regressed. Mr. Best not only spoke of the need for common sense and intellect when new roads and a community were being built, but also the growth and handling of affairs by the elected officials and leadership. We were entering a century where things were changing faster than the population could keep up with. The educational system, of course, became one.

Then the subject of Berea College and its influence to the area were discussed and Mr. Best told of how Mr. Fee, the founder of Berea College, looked for and found a choice location in Rockcastle County where a college, later known as Berea, could be built. But, when Mr. Fee revealed his dreams and plans of this being a coed college for all Appalachian youth regardless of poverty, color or creed, to the owners of the property and leaders of the community, his offer to buy and build a school for learning was refused. Why? Were the dreamers of a better life for the uneducated poor in Appalachia wrong? It was the narrow mind of a few business men trying to keep their children safe from the educators who just may teach them something different from what they had been used to?

So, Mr. Fee and his supporters dreams of a school of higher learning in Appalachia where all underprivileged children regardless of poverty or color could be educated and taught the dignity of work and the benefits of learning at the same time was quashed. And Madison County was chosen by Mr. Fee to establish

the college of his dreams, that has since become known as one of the finest in the country. It is an honor to be accepted as a student there, and one can brag with pride when saying, "I am an alumna of Berea College."

The way I remember being told the reason was: The citizens of Rockcastle County, leaders and decision makers at that time, were not willing for outsiders to tell them when a school was needed or who would do the teaching. In other words outsiders were not welcome. These are not the exact words spoken by Mr. Best, but the implication was, there in power back in the eighteen hundreds must have been unconcerned or ignorant of what and how education could help solve the illiteracy that was prevalent in the Appalachian mountains. See what Rockcastle County missed when the neighboring county reaped the benefits of the school that produced professional student graduates scattered around the world using the skill learned at Berea College, in the foothills of the Appalachia mountains. One can spend a full day visiting the campus of Berea College, then visit in old town Berea where gift shops, abound, many of the gifts being made by local students. Places to see if an ambitious and interesting guide would set up a touring service to take those who are interested in local folklore to see places such as Salspeter Cave, and Skeggs Creek crossing where our fore parents crossed the river to enter Rockcastle County, and many lost their lives when they were ambushed by Indians. William McClure told me about how a whole family of his ancestors were massacred there. And only a few miles from where William and Kena live now, Rockcastle River, being the only designated wild river in the area is always a place to visit.

I kinda got away from (bold headlines) but occasionally I may get a chuckle out of the citizens of Mt. Vernon advertising his need for Federal Aid. And how a simple message can be distorted by reading the headlines only.

Forthcoming Marriage

Mr. and Mrs. Junior Gray would like to announce the forthcoming marriage of their son, Chuck Gray to Ella Jones on 4/4/04, at 12:30 p.m. at the Poplar Grove Baptist Church. All family and friends are invited to attend.

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TIME FOR A CHANGE

VOTE for Gary V. Linville

Rockcastle Co. Sheriff

May 28, 2002 (Lever 8)

With your vote and support, when elected Sheriff, we will give new meaning to **Protect and Serve** in the Sheriff's Dept.

SOME OF MY OBJECTIVES WHEN YOU ELECT ME AS YOUR SHERIFF WILL BE:

1. To pave the way and be involved in an effective drug education and prevention program to not only inform, enlighten and educate our youth but also the parents of Rockcastle Co.
2. As the budget permits we will hire and have trained more deputies to patrol, protect and serve our county more effectively.
3. We will create a crime prevention program to curb the crime in our county. Such as a countywide crime watch. **PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE AND WORKING CLOSE WITH THE SHERIFF'S DEPT.**
4. When elected, **"THE NEW SHERIFF DEPT."** will respond to the call of our county swiftly and aggressively.
5. We will enforce the laws of our commonwealth to the best of our ability with honesty and integrity. Keep watching for our ads in the *Mt. Vernon Signal* as we want you to be informed of our intentions, when you elect Gary V. Linville, Sheriff of Rockcastle Co.

Don't forget it's time for a change!!!!

One man can make a difference with God's help. Again, special thanks to the people all over the county and country that are working with us in our campaign for Rockcastle Co. Sheriff

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