As the Page Turns

By Katharine Bloodworth

It has been a busy week for the library as we get into the holiday season with community outreach and winter programs. Don't forget to stop by the circulation desk for a Winter/Christmas-inspired craft-project-to-go.

On Wednesday, December 6th, the library hosted their weekly Preschool Story & Craft Time. The Library Fairy, aka the Christmas elf, read the book "How to Catch a Reindeer" by Alice Walstead and Andy Elkerton. The kids got to choose from an assortment of Christmas tree ornament crafts that reflected the story, followed by juice and snacks. The next Story & Craft Time will be on Wednesday, December 13th, hosted by the Robert E Lee Soil and Water Conservation District, featuring a holiday-themed book and craft.

Don't forget to join the library staff in welcoming Santa for "Cookies With Santa" on Thursday, December 14th, from 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Kids have those lists ready, and parents have those cameras and phones ready!

We wrapped up another "Wrapping for a Claws" on Thursday, December 7th, as a library employee helped the ladies of Miss American Star Achievement with a gift wrapping program. This program gives back to the community in many ways: the young ladies get an opportunity to earn pet food and other pet-related items for the local shelter as they fulfill their community service obligations. You can bring your own holiday gifts to the library and get them wrapped with a festive flare in exchange for a monetary donation or pet-related items. All monetary donations will be used to buy much-needed supplies, and all donations will be given to the local animal shelter. We do ask that all pet food and other pet-related items be new and unopened and that all monetary donations be fair and generous. The last two "Wrapping for a Claws" will be on Saturday, December 16th, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Tuesday, December 19th, from 5 to 8 p.m.

KATHARINE G. BLOODWORTH/CONTRIBUTED

Having fun at Story & Craft Time!

In observance of the Christmas holiday, the library will be closing at noon on Friday, December 22nd, and will be closed on Monday, December 25th. We will reopen for normal business hours on Tuesday, December 26th, starting at 9:30 a.m. The book depository, located at the back of the building, will remain open during this time.

In observance of the New Year holiday, the library will be closed on Monday, January 1st, 2024. We wish all our patrons a safe and happy New Year as we look forward to 2024!

If you have any questions or concerns about this article or other library-related topics, please feel free to call us during normal business hours at 434-352-5340.

The library receives a steady supply of new and donated items, and would like to highlight the following titles:

DVDs
- I am David
- J.L. Family Ranch
- Rocky II
- 13 Hours
- Chronicle of the Third Reich
- Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State
- Honey, I Shrunk the Kids
- In & Out

HORSES 101

BY NAN EDWARDS

Clothing the Horse in Winter

Hello horse lovers! It isn't officially winter yet but the temperatures are already dropping below freezing and there may be some questions about blanketing that hopefully I can make more clear. So here goes!

Most horses and ponies that are healthy, in good weight and have grown a winter coat don't need blanketing for much of the winter. What they do need is some sort of shelter, run in, or stall for the horse to get under when the weather turns windy, rainy, snowy or icy. If your horse is on the older side, has trouble keeping weight on, is clipped for training or showing reasons, or has a minimal amount of winter coat, blanketing becomes necessary.

If you do plan on clipping the horses' coat, plan on having a sheet as well as a blanket for different weather, and plan on plenty of observation. On sunny, milder days, horses can easily get overheated in a blanket, which cannot be detected from a distance. Hands underneath the blanket is the best way to make sure the horse is comfortable. On days that are warmer, a lighter sheet instead of a blanket will be more comfortable. On warmer days when it isn't too cold in the stable, remove blankets and sheets and give the horse a break from them. Blankets should not be left on day after day without removal to check for rubbing sores, a quick groom and a general examination to make sure all is well. Clipping is a necessary evil in many situations, but it is removing the horses' natural way of fluffing out the hair to keep warm, and it does make for more work.

Now you have the task of finding the right blanket for the job and one that also fits. While horses are stabled they can wear a regular blanket as opposed to turn-out sheets and blankets for pasture use. The amount of fill a blanket contains equals its warmth factor or power. The fill is measured in grams, with 220 grams being the lighter weight blanket. Sheets are just on layer and have no fills.

Most blankets and sheets manufactured now have hind leg straps, which help keep the horses clothing from shifting too much when the horse lays down or rolls. Be safety conscious when adjusting these straps, especially with sensitive horses or horses that may be prone to kicking. Pay attention to the horses' body language and use a helper for added safety. On the blanket surcingles that go around the horse barrel, leave about a hand's width of room between the straps and the horse so he can move around comfortably. If the strays are fitted too loosely, a hind leg or hoof can get caught up when the horse lies down.

The main differences of the "turnout" style versus blankets is that the turnout is made of a more durable, rip resistant and weather proof material. They have strong reinforced areas of stress and usually have a tail flap. The toughness of these blankets' butter shells are measured in their denier rating. The higher the number, the stronger the blanket (and the more it will hurt your wallet). A turnout blanket can be worn indoors, but a blanket is not water resistant or waterproof so it should not be used outside the stable.

Heres my blanket cleaning tip. DON'T try to wash them at home. Either have it professionally cleaned or take it to the laundromat and use a front loading machine.

May you and your horse stay cozy and warm throughout the winter!

Nan Edwards

Hunt Smart -- Fish Hard

By Leon Mettler

Doe Fights Rancher

I was talking with the guys at the bus shop about a story of a man and a deer, and we all busted out laughing. I dug deep into the archives and found it. I hope everybody enjoys this funny story.

This is what the rancher had to say:

I had this idea that I could rope a deer, put it in a stall, feed it up on corn for a couple of weeks, then kill it and eat it. The first step in this adventure was getting a deer. I figured that since they all congregate at my cattle feeder and do not seem to have much fear of me when we are there (a bold one will sometimes come right up and sniff at the bags of feed while I am in the back of the truck not four feet away), it should not be difficult to rope one, get up to it and toss a bag over its head (to calm it down), then hog tie it and transport it home for some good venison meals.

I filled the cattle feeder then hid down at the end with my rope. The cattle, having seen the roping thing before, stayed well back. They were not having any of it. After about 20 minutes, my deer showed up, three of them. I picked out a likely-looking one, stepped out from the end of the feeder, and threw my rope. The deer just stood there and stared at me. I wrapped the rope around my waist and twisted the end so I would have a good hold.

The deer still just stood and stared at me but you could tell it was mildly concerned about the whole rope situation. I took a step towards it, it took a step away. I put a little tension on the rope and then received an education. The first thing that I learned is that while a deer may just stand there looking at you funny while you rope it, they are spurred into action as soon as you start pulling on that rope — the deer exploded. The second thing I learned is that pound-for-pound, a deer is a lot stronger than a cow or a colt. A cow or a colt in that weight range I could fight down with a rope and with some dignity. A deer? Not a chance. That thing ran and bucked and twisted and pulled. There was no controlling it and certainly no getting close to it. As it jerked me off my feet and started dragging me across the ground, it occurred to me that having a deer on a rope was not nearly as good an idea as I had originally imagined. The only upside is that they do not have as much stamina as many other animals.

A brief 10-minute ride later, it was tired and not nearly as quick to jerk me off my feet and drag me when I managed to get back up. It took me a few minutes to realize this, since I was mostly blinded by the blood flowing out of the later nine-stapled gash in my head. At that point, I had lost my taste for corn-fed venison. I just wanted to get that devil creature off the end of that rope. I figured if I just let it go with the rope hanging around its neck, it would likely die slow and painfully somewhere. At the time, there was no love at all between me and that deer.

At that moment, I hated the thing, and I would venture a guess that the feelings were mutual. Despite the gash in my head and the several large knots where I had cleverly arrested the deer's momentum by bracing my head against various large rocks as it dragged me across the ground, I could still think clearly enough to recognize that there was a small chance that I shared some amount of responsibility for the situation we were both in. I didn't want the deer to have to suffer a slow death, so I managed to get it lined back up in between my truck and the feeder — a little trap I had set beforehand, kind of like a squeeze chute.

I got it to back in there and I started moving up so I could get my rope back. Did you know that deer bite? They really do and I have the scars to prove so! I never in a million years would have thought that a deer would bite somebody, so I was very surprised when I reached up there to grab that rope and the deer grabbed hold of my wrist. Now, when a deer bites you, it is not like being bit by a horse where they just bite you and then let go. A deer bites you and shakes its head, almost like a pit bull. They bite hard and it hurts. The proper thing to do when a deer bites you is probably to freeze and draw back slowly. I tried screaming like a little girl and shaking instead. My method was ineffective. It seemed like the deer was biting and shaking me around for hours but it was likely only several seconds.

Being smarter than a deer (though you may be questioning that claim by now), I tricked it. While I kept it busy tearing the tendons out of my right arm, I reached up with my left hand and pulled that rope loose. That was when I got my final lesson in deer behavior for the day. Deer will strike at you with their front feet. They rear right up on their back feet and strike right about head and shoulder level, and their hooves are surprisingly sharp. I learned a long time ago that, when an animal like a horse strikes at you with their hooves and you can't get away easily, the best thing to do is try to make a loud noise and make an aggressive move towards the animal. This will usually cause them to back down a bit so you can escape.

This was not a horse. This was a deer, so obviously, such trickery would not work. In the course of a millisecond, I devised a different strategy. I screamed like a little girl again and tried to turn and run. The reason I had always been told not to try to turn and run from a horse that paws at you is that there is a good chance that it will hit you in the back of the head. Deer may not be so different from horses after all, besides being twice as strong and three times as evil, because the second I turned to run it hit me right in the back of the head and knocked me down again.

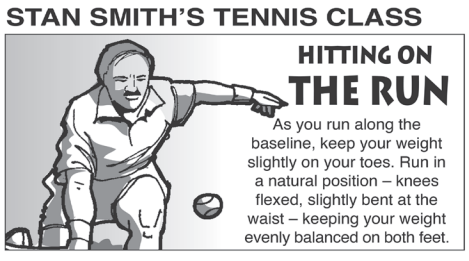
Now, when a deer paws at you and knocks you down, it does not immediately leave. I suspect it does not recognize that the danger has passed. What they do instead is paw your back and jump up and down on you while you are lying there crying in pain and covering your head. I finally managed to crawl under the truck and the deer went away. So now I know why when people go deer hunting they bring a big rifle with a scope — it is just to even the odds.

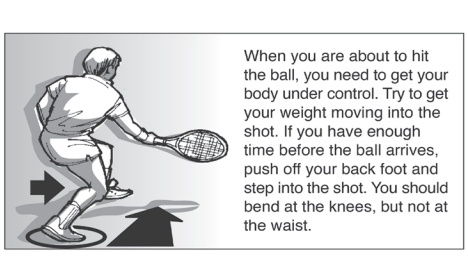
The doctors said I can get out of intensive care next week and should be able to walk again and use my right arm after another eight weeks of physical therapy. By the time I pay off these hospital and doctor bills, I will need to sell my ranch so that I can afford a good lawyer as the Deptartment of Fish and Game have already cited me for inhumane hunting and animal cruelty. My wife, who also recently filed for a divorce while I still have some assets, says that deer is eating at the trough every day with four or five more does that look like they really admire him.

Signed: An Educated Rancher.

Until next week-H.S.F.H.-L.M.
Merry Christmas Everyone!

STAN SMITH'S TENNIS CLASS





Our Mission: *to be a written and visual record of what makes our community special.*

TIMES VIRGINIAN
Serving Appomattox County Since 1892
Award Winning Newspaper
www.timesvirginian.com

Published each week by Womack Publishing Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 2097, Appomattox, Virginia 24522
Phone: 434-352-8215
Email: cconrad@womackpublishing.com
(USPS 630-800 - ISSN: 1074-5165)
A Periodical Postage paid at Appomattox, Virginia

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
The Times-Virginian welcomes letters to the editor on matters of public concern. Letters must be signed with full name and include the writer's address and telephone number. (Telephone numbers are used for verification only.) Letters may be edited for length, clarity, accuracy and grammar. Letters should be mailed to the Times-Virginian, P.O. Box 2097, Appomattox, VA 24522 or faxed to (434) 352-2216.

The Virginia Press Association Award Winner 1st 2021

Charles Conrad
STAFF WRITER
cconrad@womackpublishing.com

Lisa Coleman
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR
lcoleman@womackpublising.com

Ashleigh Eldridge
ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE
aeldridge@womackpublishing.com

DRIVERS Gene Hamlett, Robert Croner, and Coleman Harlow Jr.

Subscription Rates: Appomattox County- $66/Year; Elsewhere - $84/Year; $34/E-Edition.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Times-Virginian, P.O. Box 2097, Appomattox, Virginia 24522.

Womack Publishing Co. Inc.

© 2023 Womack Publishing Company

All rights reserved. Reproduction or use in whole or in part in any medium without written permission of the publisher is strictly prohibited.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SUBMISSION

Womack Publishing welcomes letters to the editor on matters of local concern. Letters may be sent to cconrad@womackpublishing.com by noon on Fridays. They must be less than 500 words and include the writer's full name, address and telephone number (telephone numbers are not printed). Letters may be edited for length, clarity, accuracy and grammar. Womack Publishing will accept no more than one letter per week, per person or organization. Womack Publishing reserves the right to edit or reject any letter at its discretion.