

# Balsams May Survive Aphids

## Heard And Seen

By POP

This week's column is dedicated to people 60 or older.

The month of May has been designated by the president, governor and Land-of-Sky Regional Council's board as Older Americans Month for the purpose of recognizing the needs and butions of this age group.

I would like to share some facts with you concerning those over the age of 65 determined as a result of Dr. Erdman Palmore's research and that of his colleagues at Duke University.

These facts are TRUE:

1. The five senses related to sight, hearing, etc., to decline with old age.
2. Aged drivers have fewer accidents per person than drivers under age 65.
3. About 80 percent of the aged are healthy enough to carry out their normal activities.
4. Most older people are not set in their ways and unable to change.
5. Older workers have fewer accidents than younger workers.
6. The majority of old people are working or would like to have some kind of work to do (including housework and volunteer work).
7. The reaction time of most old people tends to be slower than reaction time of younger people.
8. The majority of old people are seldom irritated or angry.
9. Physical strength tends to decline in old age.
10. Lung capacity tends to decline in old age.

These facts are FALSE:

1. The majority of old people are senile (i.e., defective memory, disoriented, or demented).
  2. Most old people have no interest in, or capacity for, sexual relations.
  3. The majority of old people feel miserable most of the time.
  4. Most older workers cannot work as effectively as younger workers.
  5. Most old people are set in their ways and unable to change.
  6. It is almost impossible for most old people to learn new things.
  7. In general, most old people are pretty much alike.
  8. The majority of old people are socially isolated and lonely.
  9. Older people tend to become more religious as they age.
  10. The health and socio-economic status of older people (compared to younger people) in the year 2000 will probably be about the same as that of today's older people.
- Older Americans are the fastest growing segment of the American population. Last year, their numbers increased at a rate 2.9 times faster than the under-60 population. Since 1900, the over 60's have increased four times as fast as the under-60's. Today, older Americans number 34 million whereas there were 4.8 million in 1900. Today, one of every seven persons in America is 60 or over and it will be one in every four Americans in 2035, if projections hold true.
- Won't you take time to recognize an older person during May?

### Wade Huey Participates In Dedication

Wade Huey of Marshall was one of the participants who spoke recently at the dedication of the Western North Carolina Baptist Home at Richmond Hill, Asheville. Huey, chairman of the building committee, presented the keys to the \$1,650,000 building to officials. The event was attended by an estimated 1,000 people. The event climaxed efforts initiated three and one-half years ago when a campaign was launched to raise \$1 million for the home. Baptists have five similar facilities throughout the state, but this is the first one to be built west of Winston-Salem.

Dr. Cecil A. Ray, general secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention, was the main speaker at the 3 p.m. ceremony.

"On behalf of the 1,100,000 Baptists across the state, I want to say thank you to all of you who have given birth to a dream, conceptualized that dream into a plan and then implemented that plan into a reality," Ray told those present.

Since the dedication, many prominent Baptists have complimented the committees on the splendid achievement. Also congratulating Huey and other officials was Gov. Jim Hunt.

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BALSAMS LIVE AND DEAD stand along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Mile 431, at Richland Balsam. Visitors and scientists

worry about the parade of death caused by Balsam Woolly Aphids, but a recent theory indicates the unique species may survive.

## 1978 Wool Payments

Sheep growers will receive in the next few weeks about \$36 million in federal incentive payments on their 1978 marketings of shorn wool, according to Ray Fitzgerald, administrator of USDA-ASCS.

Payments for 1978 marketings will be higher than for 1977 because the support price for shorn wool was increased from 99 to 108 cents per pound by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. The 1978 national average market price for shorn wool was 74.5 cents per pound, 33.5 cents under the support price. Therefore, the payment rate for 1978 marketings of shorn wool — the amount required to bring the average price up to the incentive price — will be 45.0 percent, compared to 37.5 percent in 1977.

The wool program is intended to encourage a grower to improve the quality of wool

with a grower's incentive payment determined by multiplying the payment rate times the net dollar return received from the sale of wool.

Deductions of 2.5 cents per pound from 1978 shorn wool payments and 12.5 cents per hundred pounds of liveweight from 1978 lamb payments will be made to finance advertising, sales promotion, and related market development activities.

Two Madison County wool producers will receive approximately \$26 as a wool incentive payment for 1978.

**NOT PURIFIERS**  
LOMBARD, Ill. (AP) — Those water-filtering devices that fit on the faucet or go under the sink can be called almost anything you like, but don't call them purifiers, advises the Water Quality Association.



LARRY WHITT

### Whitt Named Caswell Chairman

Larry Whitt, a native of Madison County, has been appointed chairman of the Caswell County Board of Commissioners. His appointment becomes effective June 1.

Whitt graduated from N.C. State University with a degree in Animal Husbandry. He is a member of the Central Caswell Ruritan Club, having served as charter president. He is also a member of the Northwestern County Agents Association and the Caswell County Cattleman's Association. He served as co-chairman of the Bi-centennial Celebration held in Caswell County.

He is married to the former Sandra Smith, also of Madison County, and they are parents of one daughter. They are members of the Purley United Methodist Church.

Whitt is the son of Mrs. Irene Whitt, of Weaverville, and the late Glenn Whitt.

**PEARSON SHOW**  
WASHINGTON (AP) — A showing of works by Ronald Pearson is being held at the National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, through Oct. 15.

"A noted craftsman who has worked in metal for 30 years, Pearson is concerned with the reflective quality of silver and gold and with the fluidity of form," the museum says. It adds, "His jewelry is so strikingly handsome that he considers it sculpture as well as adornment."

The exhibit contains 42 pieces of jewelry as well as letter openers and two small sculptural works.

introduced from Europe about 1900, according to a research bulletin written by Dr. Smathers. In 1966, an infestation was reported at Mt. Mitchell. It has spread southward and much research has been done by the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service and others.

The Balsam Woolly Aphid population is all female. Each Aphid can lay more than 200 eggs. Adults are about one millimeter long. Twenty-five could line up side by side in an inch-long space. The spherical creatures vary in color from dark purple to black, and at the stage when they get woolly coats, they can float on the wind.

Actually, Balsam Woolly isn't an Aphid but an Adelges, scientists agree. Its scientific designation — Adelges Piceae — oddly enough refers to Spruce. But Balsam Woolly is fussy about her food.

She likes a diet of juice from the trees called Abies Fraser (Pursh) Poir, the famous high-ridge Balsams of North Carolina. The trees are particularly noticeable at 8,000-foot Richland Balsam, at Water Rock Knob, Devil's Courthouse, Mt. Pisgah and other high points along the 1,000-foot wide parkway.

Because of the terrain, tree sizes and other factors, Balsam Woolly isn't easily or profitably fought with chemicals or biological warfare in park, parkway and forest.

Among cultivators of the Fraser fir for Christmas trees, though, the battle is a continuous one. Balsam Woolly is a "serious problem" to commercial growers of the popular Christmas trees, says Steve West, Haywood County agricultural extension specialist. Annual chemical pesticide spraying is done the first or second week in May.

Balsam Woolly doesn't otherwise bother commercial and amateur shrub, garden and house plant growers. If you have Aphid trouble, it's from one of Balsam Woolly's cousins. Aphids are a "tremendous family," West says. They can be green, yellow, red, white or other color. Most aphids can readily move about during their lifetimes.

Balsam Woolly is immobile once she implants her mouth in a fir tree. She kills, not by dehydrating the tree, but by inoculating the tree with a toxic substance that causes cells of the tree to malfunction. The malformed cells can't carry life-sustaining fluids on the leaves to roots cycle, Dr. Garrett explained.

As man can build immunities to certain diseases through contact with them, so, possibly can the Fraser Fir become immune to the Balsam Woolly toxin.

In centuries to come, the famous Balsams of the high ridges still will be there, Dr. Garrett believes.

says. "They are giving us a gene pool, and by biological evolution, the species may survive." These trees that seem to be survivors in the Balsam Woolly Aphids war spread their seeds to give birth to what is hoped may be a new and resistant strain.

"Many colleagues don't share my opinion," Dr. Smathers admits. But he can point to tiny new Balsams just starting life in the unusual climate of the highest ridges. And he can show growing trees he can't encircle with his hands growing well in the midst of older, dying ones.

Concern of scientists and visiting lovers of nature along the parkway isn't for just a few trees but for a unique species that grows only in a less than 200-mile long area from southern Virginia through southwestern North Carolina. While these trees growing at the highest elevations of the Appalachian and Blue Ridge are related to the Canadian and northern state's Balsam firs, there is a difference that sets these apart.

Balsam Woolly Aphid was

### Angel Heads Recreation Commission

The Madison County Recreation Commission elected new officers for the coming year at its May 3 meeting. Dr. Grover Angel was selected to fill the post of chairman, taking the place of Dr. Bobby Jean Rice who will continue her service to the commission as vice chairperson. The commission also discussed plans for the summer program with director Kevin Morley.

Morley described preparations for softball leagues, the swimming pool, summer centers, and the Summer Olympics. He also informed the commission that he hoped to organize an "anything goes" competition which has been a popular countywide event in the past.

The softball season will start on June 4 with a pre-season tournament. The pool hopefully will be open soon after school closes, and the summer centers will begin operation around June 18. A complete schedule of summer activities will be published at a later date.

### County Addresses Checked

Workers for the U.S. Census Bureau are now compiling house-by-house address lists in Madison County.

"The purpose of the address listing program is to compile a complete list of households in the county for use next year when the 1980 census questionnaire will be mailed to each residence," said Ms. Mary Garris, census office manager in Charlotte.

Census workers will be walking or driving on streets and roads in the county to prepare the address lists. They will be knocking on doors and asking householders for a correct mailing address.

Ms. Garris said residents can identify the census employees by a red, white and blue census identification card which all will carry. Census workers also will carry 11 inch by 16 inch books or address registers in which the addresses are written.

These address lists will play a vital role in the nationwide 1980 census. They will be used to produce mailing labels for the census questionnaires. Census Day is April 1, 1980.

**TUCHMAN ELECTED**  
NEW YORK (AP) — Author-historian Barbara W. Tuchman has been elected president of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

She replaced Jacques Barzun, who had served as president for two years.

Ms. Tuchman, whose most recent work in "A Distant Mirror," became a member of the Academy in 1971 and had been serving recently as vice chancellor for literature. Eudora Welty has been elected to this post in Ms. Tuchman's place.



**MARSHALL 'HILLBILLIES'**, shown above, appeared on WLOS-TV Saturday morning displaying their talents at square dancing. First row, left to right: Dewayne Buckner, Neil Lewis, Tim Denton, James Griffin; second row: Teresa Keller, Sandra Ball, Pam Buckner, Kim Taylor; third row:

Randy Riddle, Ricky Roberts, Bobby Morrow, Scott Treadway, Larry Malone; fourth row: Lori Sams, Diane Clemmons, Stacy Rector, Autumn Taylor, and Julie Allison. Teachers of the group are Cathy Price and Billie Jean Redmon.

Blue Ridge Balsams may yet outgrow the death grip of the Balsam Woolly Aphids.

Not really Aphids at all, the tiny pin-head size creatures have been killing the giant trees along the Blue Ridge Parkway and adjacent lands for two decades. But now a scientist sees hope for the future of the Balsam firs.

The Balsams, specifically Fraser fir, came here from the far north ahead of the glacier eons ago. They had been revered by man for centuries before the white man gazed on them. Localities bear the Balsam name — Balsam Gap, Richland Balsam, Black Balsam and more.

Many are now asking whether the malady that seems to be growing progressively worse will wipe out the Balsams, the Fraser fir, the "he-Balsams" as were the American chestnuts in this century.

There are individual trees that seem to be immune to the attack of the Balsam Woolly Aphids, says Dr. Garrett A. Smathers of Canton, a biologist at Western Carolina University for the National Park Service.

"This may be an interesting phase of ecology," Smathers said. The biggest, most beautiful Balsams seem particularly susceptible to attack. That's plain to visitors who worry about the dying lovelies.

"But there are some of those older trees that are surviving," the reseracher

### W.N.C. Lung Association

#### Holds Meeting

The annual meeting of WNC Lung Association was held on April 22 in the governor's western residence.

Mrs. Nancy Gatewood was elected president to succeed Mrs. Debs Ditt and other officers nominated in a slate presented by Dr. Ozmer Henry as nominating committee chairman were the Rev. David Cox, president elect; Mrs. Colleen Miller, second vice president; James Pressley, first vice president; and Lib Baker of Walnut, secretary.

A budget of approximately \$50,000 for the fiscal 1979-80 year was adopted. This budget is several thousand dollars lower than the 1978-79 budget, so some belt-tightening is called for.

In addition to the dissolution of WNC Lung Association, various legal matters in connection with change-over to American Lung Association of North Carolina Western Region were taken care of.

A program of work for 1979-80 was presented by Gertrude Ramsey, program director, in the absence of Robert Cannoles, committee chairman, and was adopted. The association areas of concern are pediatric lung disease, adult lung disease, environmental health, smoking education and community health services.

Mrs. Leonard (Lib) Baker of Walnut and Mrs. Jim (Bill) Story of Marshall are members of the board of directors.



**SHIRRAL DAVIS**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Davis, of Smithfield, Va., and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Tubie Norton, of Route 5, Marshall, has graduated from Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va., with a degree in Electrical Engineering and has accepted a job with IBM. He and his wife, Pamela, will leave May 21 for Burlington, Vt., where they will reside.