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Sun Valley Celebrates Christmas Season

Sun Valley Rest Home had a Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 18, and the Santa Claus who has been at the Ben Franklin Store helped to make the party a happy one. Santa gave out gifts to the oldest and youngest person present, and gave Whitman's Samplers to everyone from Ben Franklin Store. Susannah Jones from Music in the Mountains, along

with Amos Jones who played the violin and Billy Gouge who played the piano, provided Christmas music. The Cane River Beta Club arrived later with fruit baskets for all. The people at Sun Valley wish to thank the many churches and other organizations who have helped to make their Christmas a merry one.

Yancey Railroad Stockholders Discuss Future Of Railroad; Abandonment Considered As Last Resort

The serious financial problems of the Yancey Railroad were aired at the annual meeting of stockholders held on December 15. Revenue has declined to the point where the road is continually losing money, and even the possibility of abandoning the road is under consideration.

invested their money to save the road from abandonment at that time. If the road were abandoned now, the sale of real estate, locomotives and rails would presumably provide enough to repay stockholders.

railroad were re-elected for the coming year. These are Luther Ayers, Chairman of the Board; Bill Banks, President; Pete Coletta, Vice President; Phillip Ray, Second Vice President; and Charles Laws, Secretary-Treasurer. Dr. E. R. Ohle was elected a new direc-

tor, replacing Stanley Bailey; other directors were all re-elected.

It was agreed to keep the principal shippers of the railroad informed regarding the road's problems. Their cooperation in solving the problems is clearly needed.

President Bill Banks reviewed the unhappy facts. The present revenue of less than \$30,000 a year is simply insufficient to operate and maintain a railroad twelve miles long. The directors have diligently explored various possible ways of restoring the road to profitability, including possible ways of increasing traffic, the reduction of service to only two days a week, and the possible sale of the road to people who might exploit scenic passenger service to tourists. No very hopeful developments are now in sight.

Banks explained that the directors are very reluctant to abandon the road, which was taken over by the locally owned company in 1955 principally as a project to help the economy of the county, rather than as a money making venture. Abandonment would constitute a serious blow to the economy of the county, and would also preclude the possibility of attracting new industry that requires rail service.

At the same time, the directors recognize an obligation to the 58 stockholders, nearly all of whom are Yancey County people. Continued operation of the road at a loss will dissipate the road's assets, leaving little or nothing for the stockholders, who in 1955



Officers Complete Training Course

The recently formed "Tri County Law Enforcement Academy has graduated its first course in "Introduction to Police Science". The course of 160 hours consists of History and Constitutional Law, N.C. Criminal Law, Laws of Arrest, Search and Seizure, Laws and Rules of Evidence, Criminal Investigation, Motor Vehicle Laws and Investigation Reporting, N.C. ABC Laws, Recognition and Identification of Drugs, Riot Control and Civil Disorder, Court Structure and Procedures, Report Writing and Note Taking, Juveniles, Defensive Tactics, Firearms, Public Relations, Communica-

tions, First Aid and Patrol Operations. Officers were honored and given certificates for completing the training. The officers graduating included Horace Biggs, Kenneth Bradstock, Keith Entress, Gary Gardner, Jimmy Keener, Robert Kester, Fred Lowe, Carl Lyster, John Mercer, Wade Renfro, Dan Ray, Betty Rector, John Silver, John Slayton, and John Waggoner. Also pictured are Dr. O.M. Blake, MAY Tech president; Frank Puessy, Banner Elk Police Chief; Brownloe Moffitt, Mitchell County Sheriff; Beverly Daniels, Avery Sheriff and Paul English, MAY Tech Director of Adult Education.

Classes At Correction Unit Here

Yancey County Correctional Unit and Mayland Technical Institute combined efforts and successfully offered three thirty-hour courses in small engine repair--the first occupational extension classes to be conducted at the correctional unit.

The content of the courses consisted of inspection and analysis of ignition and fuel systems, complete motor disassembly, inspection and re-assembly.

Participants in the classes included William Wilson, Ogle Worley, Samuel Grier, Ben Clark, Edward Beck, Russell Jones, Randall Stimate, Adam Cooper, Billy Armstrong, Preston Banner, Norris Davis, Carl Hill, Ray Jackson, Will Johnson, Pedro Navarro, Glen McMillan, Joseph Mains, Gary Laws, Richard Leyda, Franklin Thompson, Franklin Byrd, Roland Smith, Donald Morgan, Gary Mecimore, Larry Johnson, Claude Braswell, William Monroe, Roy Helton, Sammy Carter, J.D. Blankenship, Thomas Degree, David Estes, George Farris, James Knighten, Jerry C. McClung, Harold Miller, James Hayden, Ernest Hicks, K. B. Frye, J.C. Littlejohn, Adam Cooper, Carroll Elrod, Frank Strader, Robert Smathers, Danny Shatley, Curtis Riggles.



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20 ~ 7



Ayers Places Starter Comb Along Bottom Edge

Beekeeping Business Requires Skill, Knowledge; Yancey Man Supplies Both

"There's more to the beekeeping business than meets the eye," said John Ayers as he sat down on the porch of his home on Upper Pigpen Road, Green Mountain, and began filling the "super" with frames to replace the one filled with honey that would be removed when he "robbed" his bees.

The super is placed on top of the bee hive or "bee gum" as it is usually called by mountain beekeepers. It is in the frames, placed side by side in a vertical position in the super, that the bees make the wax combs they fill with honey made from the nectar of the blooming trees and plants.

"The super is what you rob out," explained Ayers, "you don't mess with the hive body. That's their home, where the baby bees are raised. If you rob them the first of July you can extract honey from both the super and the hive body, but you will have to feed them so they will have the equivalent of 50 pounds of sugar to each colony. And since you have destroyed their natural bee bread that the young feed on, you will have to replace it with soybean oil cakes. Old bees don't need it, but the young ones have to have that pollen. The old bees can live just as well on sugar syrup as he can on honey."

Ayers took out a thin sheet of wax and cut it into one inch strips which he placed in a slit along the bottom edge of each frame. This strip helps the bees to work faster and encourages them to make their comb "plum" or in the straight pattern of the starter comb.

"Now I'm a cheat!" the bees and I'm helping my customers and I'm saving myself a little money by putting in this strip of super foundation comb."

By putting in a sheet as large as the frame, Ayers estimated that the bees could fill the frame in 10 days if there was a good nectar flow. "But we have a slow nectar flow, so I just use it to direct my bees to keep them from crossing up when they make the comb, and besides, I don't like that old tough comb in the middle of my honey. The customers don't know the difference, but I know," he said.

Ayers said that he hopes to

get over 1,000 pounds of honey from his 40 hives next year. "The bees will do it if I do my part." "This was a good year for honey. There was a good nectar flow. The only thing was there was too much rain in the beginning of the season for the bees to work, but it was just about the best sourwood year we have had in five years."

Some honey, gathered at the end of the blooming season of a particular flower, is more sought after than others because of its special flavor and coloring. Honey made from the bloom of the sourwood tree, ranging in color from "a light amber to a clear white," is highly prized in this area, especially by tourists.

"A lot of people sell any kind of honey for sourwood. I've seen sourwood honey being sold before the sourwood tree even bloomed. If you've never had it how do you know that what you're eating is sourwood? I don't mis-represent my honey."

What I tell you I've got is what I've got."

"The honey season begins here the first of April and lasts through the last frost bloom," Ayers explained as he continued his work.

Besides sourwood, the hives are robbed to get the honey made predominantly from the blooms of the poplar tree which produces a thick bodied, dark honey; and the locust tree and white clover which produce a clear, white honey. "The bees will mix honey," Ayers said. "Now if you have a cucumber patch, you'll want to rob your bees before the crop blooms. The cucumber nectar is bitter and it'll ruin the other honey."

It takes knowledge and skill to raise bees, and being around bees since he was a young boy, John Ayers has acquired both.

For instance, placing the hive in the right position protects it from too much wind or sun. Obstructions can interfere

(Cont'd on page 2)



Ayers Removes Frames Filled With Honey As Helper Smokes The Bees Down