



### Declamation Contest Winners

The 15th annual Declamation Contest was held in the Murphy High School gymnasium on Wednesday of last week, sponsored by the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution and directed by Postmaster Joe Ray. Carlton Van Horn won first prize for his delivery of "The Black Horse

and His Rider." Chris Christy was second and Terry Sanders got honorable mention. Seated, left to right, are Sanders, Van Horn and Christy. Other contestants, standing (L-R) were Vaughn Gibson, Terry Newman, Herbie Gibson, Mike Godfrey, Eddie Ledford and David Alexander. (Staff Photo)

### TAR HEEL OUTDOORS



by Joel Arrington  
Outdoor Editor, North Carolina Travel & Promotion Division

**FONTANA DAM** - We had left Spence Field Shelter on the Appalachian Trail in a slow rain and dense fog. Three of us had hiked the five miles to Mollies Ridge Shelter, lunched on pemmican and beef jerky, and had set out again for our overnight camp at Birch Spring Gap shelter.

It was impossible to know whether it was raining or merely water dripping steadily from the trees. To our right, Tennessee fell away into the mist. On the left, North Carolina was convoluted mountains in the early burst of spring.

Sudden movement on the path ahead stopped Annette Rhinehart dead in her tracks. We must have seen them at the same time, because instantly I whispered for Julian Rhinehart, behind me, to stop.

Seven young, wild Russian bear rooted and frolicked directly in our path. Through the fog we could distinguish stripes that mark all immature bear. Then, off the trail in hick cover, we saw the adults. Three of them. Great black hulking masses of bristled wild animal. Their deep guttural grunts now rolled out of the fog and down the slopes. Necessarily they did not smell as we.

With mouths agape we watched for several minutes - curious, but cautious - forgetting the cameras that hung from our necks. Then we remembered and tried for shots through the fog. Someone made a noise in the brush and the adult raised her head, pruned and trotted away with her tail erect and the little tuft on the end wagging. The others followed in a sudden grunting rush down the mountain.

I do not know how frequently bear are seen by Appalachian Trail hikers in the Smokies. Probably not often. However, on this trip, my first effort at backpacking, we saw bear sign almost constantly along the trail between Spence Field Shelter and Shuckstack Mountain near Fontana Dam where our hike ended. Again, after leaving Birch Spring Gap shelter, we saw, just briefly, another herd of bear in good light but in dense cover.

Even without the bear, this trip would have been memorable. It was a new experience. The prospect of meeting the challenge for comfort, with 35 pounds of equipment and food on my back, was exciting and for a long time had appealed to me. But mostly there was the wish of wilderness retreat, the sitting out and away for a time that unexplainably nourishes the inner man.

Experts advise careful planning before attempting an initial overnight trip on the Appalachian Trail. Better still, go with experienced backpackers. My guides were Mr. and Mrs. Julian Rhinehart. The Rhineharts are enthusiastic hikers and amateur

naturalists. From their home in Atlanta, they are frequent visitors to the Florida Keys, the Okefenokee Park in Georgia and the Smokies. They always camp on these trips, but they prefer wilderness camping to the developed campground.

Like most amateur naturalists, the Rhineharts are photographers. They especially like to photograph wildflowers and have developed into competent biontologists through their hobby.

Every mile of our trip brought a new set of flowers. High on the ridges, where spring had just arrived, serviceberry bloomed. Farther down the early species gave way to pink lady slipper, May apple, jack-in-the-pulpit, violets, and showy orchids. As we descended Shuckstack we saw flame azalea and dogwood, Indian paint brush and Solomon's seal.

Backpacking equipment is a special kind of camping gear. The idea is to carry everything you will need for food, shelter and comfort with the least possible weight. My equipment is from Colorado Outdoor Sports Corp., P.O. Box 5544, Denver, Colorado. The basic gear includes a nylon pack, down sleeping bag with a foam pad, a mess kit and canteen. We did not need tents on this trip because we utilized shelters that are located along the trail at intervals of about a day's hike.

Most experienced backpackers are fussy about weight and insist that unnecessary items be left a home. One told me, in fact, that he cut the handle off his toothbrush.

Menu planning for a trip such as ours is most important. The Rhineharts handled this detail and provided us with tasty meals. Dinner one night was country ham and instant grits, split pea soup, Pop Tarts and coffee. We breakfasted one night on a freeze-dried delight called Lipton Chicken Barometer.

The Appalachian Trail Conference, 1718 N. St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, is the source for information. For backpacking trips in Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia, hikers should purchase "Suggestions for Appalachian Trail Users," at 35 cents, "Guide to the Appalachian Trail in Tennessee and North Carolina: Cherokee, Pisgah, and Great Smokies," at \$3.75 or "Guide to the Appalachian Trail in the Great Smokies, the Nanatahalas, and Georgia," also at \$3.75, depending upon which sections of the trail you wish to hike.

Make no mistake about it, backpacking is an athletic event. Your biggest problems are fatigue and sore muscles. Consequently, it is not for everyone. But many will find it, as I did, one of the most fulfilling forms of outdoor recreation.



### Your Weekly Horoscope

May 28 thru June 3

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** You should find a neat little niche before week is over. Ari. However, if you use your noggin you will use it not for nocturnal nonsense. The novelty is nice, an excess can leave you with a bad case of nerves. Not to mention a neurosis.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Emotionally charged situation still looms. Probably involving mate or partner. Dummy-up if given third degree. Reach not for that which is over. Have confidence in your tomorrows. Present circumstance not nearly as rotten as it may appear to be.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Watch that fluent tongue of yours during coming week, Gem. Conceal your anger. You have ability to cut another down to the ankles with your razor-sharp wit. Save your mots. As week wanes, career pressures build and you may be tempted to neglect family. Don't.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Social relations should go swimmingly in week ahead, Moonbaby, and contacts should broaden considerably. Domestic scene may be a bit tangled over week end, but you'll disengage yourself with aplomb. On last day of week seek companionship from intellectual equal.

**LEO (July 23-August 22):** Don't allow work to pile up in week ahead, Leo. You know how you fret when things get out of control. On third day you may find yourself at odds with the entire universe. It will be due to circumstances beyond your control. By end of week events will level off and you'll be your old smiling self again.

**VIRGO (August 23-September 22):** Phoney praise coming your way, Virg. Don't let it turn your head. By mid-week a conversation with one whom you respect could yield new insight to old problem. Before week is over single cut a newcomer and offer friendship. The newcomer just could be that Moonbaby we mentioned last week. Check it out.

**LIBRA (September 23-October 22):** Keep a light foot on the gas pedal, Libra. You tend to race when often times slow and easy would be more fun. On fourth day you may have encounter with one who is about as flexible as a telephone pole. Stand your ground and tell this so-and-so to go climb one.

**SCORPIO (October 23-November 21):** Your craving for freedom and independence will be unusually strong in week ahead, Scorp. However, your obligations to family will keep you from flying off into the wild blue. Simplified associate may drive you to drink before week is over. If so, have one on old Olga.

**SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21):** Forget phony excuses on first day of week, Sai, as far as business commitments are concerned. One in authority will see thru you. Not that this person is so intuitive, it is just that at times, Sai, you are downright transparent. Daily associate may try to cause you mental anguish on last day of week. Ignore. Ignore.

**CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19):** Minor changes in the wind, Cap. Weekend could find you utterly confused. If so, step back ten paces and see if you can seek out root cause. As week draws to a close you may meet one who will find you completely fascinating. Unless you are a glutton for punishment, watch out. This person could lead you down the path of unrequited love.

**AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18):** Home fires may need tending, Aquarius. Olga suggests you poke around a bit. If the ashes are completely cold, then relax. After all, summer is just around the corner. And anything could happen. And probably will.

**PISCES (February 19-March 20):** For pity's sake Pisces, will you please hang on to your wallet? AND your keys? Much is at stake. And if you lose your wallet you'll have neither steak nor anything else. Last two days of week are excellent to get together with old and trusted chum. Thrash out mutual problems over a pint or two.

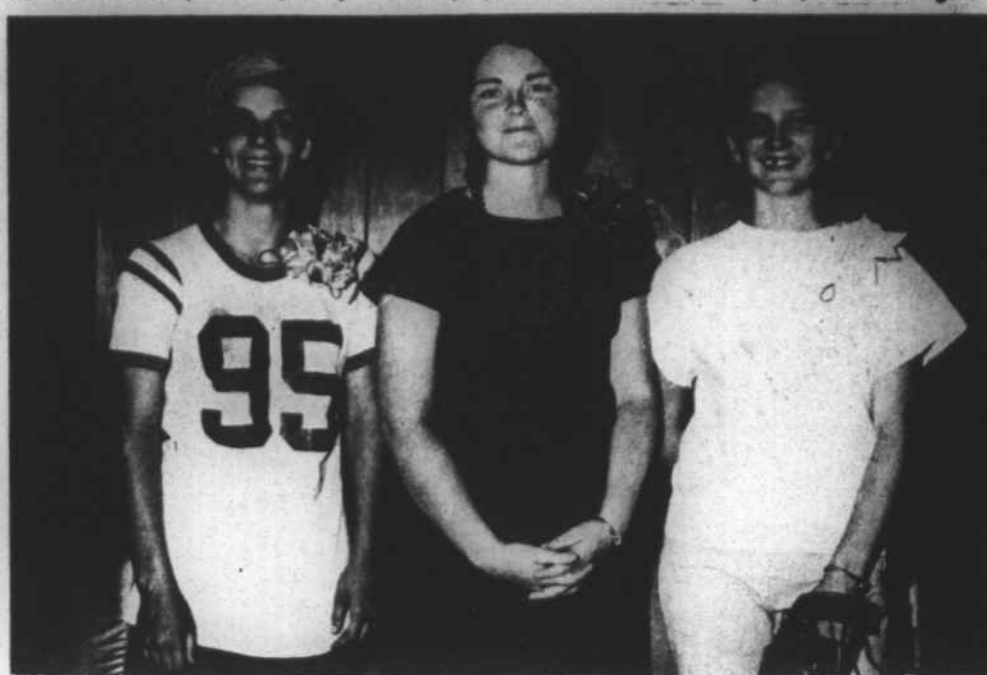
### Softball Scoreboard

Thurs. May 21  
Men: Ranger 17 vs Rimco 4  
Peachtree 15 vs P'tree C. 5  
Levi Str. 18 vs Clifton 17  
Fri. May 22  
Men: Wachovia 16 vs Martins C. 13  
Girls: Levi Str. 13 vs Brumby 7  
Mon May 25  
Men: Wachovia 6 vs Ranger 5

Girls: Amer. Thread 7 vs Andrews 4  
Men: P'tree C. 9 vs Rimco 6  
Tues May 26  
Men: WCVP 8 vs Peachtree 2  
Girls: Martins Cr. 16 vs Clifton 4  
Men: Martins Creek 13 vs Texana 3

Schedule  
Thurs May 28:  
Men: Wachovia vs P'tree Com.  
Girls: Andrews vs Brumby  
Men: Peachtree vs Rimco  
Fri May 29  
Men WCVP vs Martins Creek  
Girls - Clifton vs Amer. Thread  
Men WCVP vs Texana  
Mon June 1  
Men: Peachtree vs Martins Creek  
Girls Levi Str. Vs Martins Creek  
Men - Rimco vs Wachovia  
Tues June 2  
Men - WCVP vs Ranger  
Girls Brumby vs Clifton  
Men - Texana vs Peachtree

Bookmobile Schedule  
Clay County  
Monday - Shooting Creek, Eagle Fork, Vineyard Road, Elf, Scrougetown.  
Tuesday - Fire's Creek, Tusquitee, Lick Log, Myers Chapel, Sweetwater.  
Wednesday - Brasstown, Trout Cove, Upper Blair Creek, Pine Log, Hayesville School.  
Thursday - Open for new stations. Call Nantahala Regional Library, Murphy, if you are interested in bookmobile service.



### Recitation Winners

The annual recitation contest at Murphy High School, sponsored by the Business and Professional Women's Club, was held last Friday. Winners were, left to right, Brenda Morris, first; Kathy Dalrymple, second; Peggy Martin, third prize. (Staff Photo)

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